



THE “OUR GREEN FUTURE” PANEL

America’s Young Environmental Leaders Speak Out

The Millennial generation, or Generation Y, is the largest – and most eco-savvy – generation in American history. Born between 1978 and 2000, 95 million youth are inheriting ecosystems on the brink. Environmental challenges and the climate crisis are the defining issues of this generation, and youth leaders are spearheading a period of sweeping solutions. This crisis has birthed a bright new environmentalism—diverse in its leadership, global in scope, and driven by youth.

The “Our Green Future” panel features three recipients of the Brower Youth Award – North America’s top prize for bold young environmental leaders. Each panelist will speak for twenty minutes and share their own story and perspective. The one-hour formal presentation (which can also be tailored to scheduling needs) is followed by a Q & A session. The program is designed to inform, empower and inspire action to secure a green future. In addition to the panel, each speaker can be available (travel permitting) to offer a leadership workshop, participate in a roundtable discussion or to meet with campus/community environmental groups and campus/community leaders.

ABOUT THE BROWER YOUTH AWARDS

Earth Island Institute established the Brower Youth Awards in 2000 to honor its founder and legendary environmental activist, David R. Brower, and to celebrate a new generation of leaders. Dave was a pioneering leader in the evolution of the 20th century environmental movement.

Each year, the Brower Youth Awards shine a spotlight on six of the most successful environmentalists across North America between the ages of 13 and 22. In addition to developing the environmental leaders of tomorrow, the Awards help people of all ages come to understand that environmentalists are ordinary people who, like David Brower, see a problem and take action to make a difference.

THE “OUR GREEN FUTURE” PANELISTS

Billy Parish, Ashoka Fellow

In 2003, as it became clear that the United States was the biggest obstacle to solving the climate crisis, Billy decided to leave Yale University during the middle of his junior year. He started the Energy Action Coalition, which has since become the largest youth advocacy organization in the world working on climate change issues. Billy and the coalition have brought together 50 diverse organizations, raised nearly \$10 million in four years, helped get over 600 colleges to commit to climate neutrality, trained and empowered tens of thousands of young people, and built a base of 340,000 young voters who elevated climate issues in the 2008 elections. In March 2009, the Energy action Coalition organized Power Shift '09, which brought over 12,000 young people to Washington D.C. for the largest climate-focused training, lobby day and non-violent civil disobedience action in U.S. history. Since early 2008, Billy has expanded his work beyond the Energy Action Coalition into a focus on building the green economy and creating green jobs for young people.

Erica Fernandez, Stanford student

At the age of 16, Erica Fernandez took on a major multinational corporation in her city of Oxnard, California. As Earth Island Institute said, “When Fernandez learned that a liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility was proposed for the coast of Oxnard and Malibu that would include a 36-inch pipeline routed through low-income neighborhoods, she was outraged. She worked in concert with the Sierra Club and the Latino No on LNG group to mobilize the youth and Latino voices in protests and public meetings. She organized weekly protests at the BHP Billiton offices in Oxnard, met regularly with community members, marched through neighborhoods that would be most impacted, and brought more than 250 high school students to a critical rally. Her passionate testimony at the California State Lands Commission meeting was widely quoted in news articles, and helped convince the Commission to vote to deny the project.

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Next, she helped convince the California Coastal Commission to vote 12–0 against the project, and worked on a campaign to the governor asking him to veto the project. Fernandez’s dogged determination played a crucial role in helping her community to resist a multinational corporation. The company listened, and four years later, the pipeline idea was dead. Her message for everyone is “Si Se Puede! (Yes We Can)” create change in our communities, nation, and our planet.

Erica is a recipient of the Jane Goodall 2009 Global Leadership Award in the “Roots & Shoots Youth Leadership” category, which recognizes a young person (age 13 to 24) who carries on the work of Dr. Jane Goodall to preserve and protect our natural world.

Rachel Barge, Director and Founder of Campus InPower

InPower (campusinpower.org) is a non-profit consulting firm that promotes innovative financial mechanisms to support campus sustainability initiatives at universities nationwide. In 2009, Rachel helped students raise \$15.5 million dollars to fund campus greening, and trained thousands of students from over 250 institutions.

Rachel was an avid contributor to various environmental initiatives at the University of California, Berkeley beginning in her freshman year. She realized that one underlying factor preventing her campus from becoming more sustainable was a lack of funding for necessary projects. To overcome this challenge, as an undergraduate at UC Berkeley, Rachel co-created The Green Initiative Fund, a 10-year, \$2 million student fee-based revolving loan that enacts large-scale energy, infrastructure, and sustainability upgrades led by students. This success inspired her creation of InPower, which now gives student organizers everywhere the tools to create revolving loan funds, green fee campaigns, and other funding mechanisms to pay for large-scale sustainability projects on their campuses. In December 2009, Rachel will serve as a SustainUS delegate at the COP15 Climate Negotiations in Copenhagen, representing the youth of the United States. She is winner of the David Brower Youth Award, Wild Gift Fellowship, Friends of the Earth Green Hero Award, Morris K. Udall Scholarship, and World Wildlife Fund Environmental Leadership Award.

Ethan Schaeffer, Founder, GrowFood.org

Ethan created Organic Volunteers, a national outreach and education program for sustainability and organic food systems. Surviving lymphoma cancer at age fifteen led Ethan to explore healthy and sustainable living by working on organic farms in New Zealand. Revitalized by the experience, Ethan realized that the solution to both health and environmental problems lay in individuals learning to live sustainably. Today Organic Volunteers has over 2000 members in 41 states, with over 300 educational opportunities available to those who wish to live, eat, and grow food more sustainably. In 2001, he founded GrowFood.org, an international organization supporting organic farming with over 20,000 members. GrowFood.org has plotted more than 2,000 farming organizations using Google Maps. Ethan is currently Director of Major Gifts at Climate Solutions, and consults with Pivotal Investments, the Northwest’s first venture capital firm enabling the sustainable economy. Ethan grew up on a farm in northern Idaho and graduated from the Evergreen State College. He speaks Spanish and has traveled and worked extensively in South America.

Jessica Rimington, Founder, One World Youth Project

At 19, Jessica visited South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Morocco, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Costa Rica and Mexico to create a path toward better communication between the young people in these countries and the United States. Taking a year off between high school and Georgetown’s School of Foreign Service, she launched the “One World Youth Project” (www.oneworldyouthproject.org) to promote cultural exchange, youth leadership and community service around the world. The program was made up of 36 schools in 16 countries. The students, who were paired with a student from another country, started out by learning about each other’s culture, and then working together on a community service project inspired by the UN Millennium Development Goals. Teachers were provided with a year-long curriculum to facilitate the exchange. Jessica has been a keynote speaker alongside Dr. Jane Goodall and former President Bill Clinton, as well as a speaker at UN World Environment Day, the UN Youth Assembly and

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the Green Festival. “As young people we are not just the future; we are the present,” said Jessica. “If we want to change the world we have to not only take action ourselves, but also inspire others to do the same.” Jessica speaks about how to approach a ‘Green Future’ through international development and cooperation. She works with teens throughout the world to achieve U.N. Millennium Development Goal 7: Ensuring Environmental Sustainability. Her message is that anyone can make a difference and take action: it’s not as overwhelming as it seems. She helps young people answer the question: “How do I possibly get started?”

Illai Kenney, Howard University student

Illai is a leader within the powerful black youth vote movement working to increase civic participation. She is currently a student organizer for the Responsible Endowments Coalition working to increase awareness about socially responsible investing and community development at Howard University. She co-founded Georgia Kids Against Pollution when she was 12 and has traveled the world advocating environmental justice. Illai was the youngest delegate to the UN World Conference on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Alec Loorz, Founder, Kids vs. Global Warming

Alec was invited to become the youngest presenter of Al Gore’s “Inconvenient Truth” presentation. Since then, Alec has gone on to give upwards of 75 presentations to over 10,000 people and founded his own non-profit, Kids vs. Global Warming (www.kids-vs-global-warming.com). Its mission is to educate youth on the science of climate change and empower them to take action. Kids vs. Global Warming accomplishes this goal through launching school Global Warming Action Teams, training new presenters, and campaigns such as the Declaration of Independence from Fossil Fuels that will be signed by 1 million youth and presented to President Obama in October of 2010.

QUOTES OF NOTE

“Young people all over the world are rising to the occasion, taking inspiring stands, and committing themselves to incredible actions on behalf of all the life that is also our lives. David Brower believed in this, believed in the youth, and for many of us, was and continues to be a powerful inspiration and guide in our lives and our work.”

Julia Butterfly Hill

environmental activist, author, and founder, Circle of Life Foundation

“David Brower was a true American hero and visionary. He would be proud knowing that the light he provided is being passed on to another generation of young environmental leaders.”

Woody Harrelson

actor and environmental activist

“For a lot of the time I knew David, he acted like he was 17 years old. Some people said that this made him unrealistic. He was never unrealistic; his vision was just bigger than everyone else’s. The Brower Youth Awards honor the spirit and unique fountain of wisdom that we call “Brower Youth.”

Adam Werbach

President, Saatchi and Saatchi S., and former president of the Sierra Club

“As we’re told that one solution to our current problem in this country is to ‘spend more money - go out and buy stuff,’ we need to hear differing opinions. We need to know that our youth is interested in charting another path that does not equal wholesale liquidation of the natural world. The Brower Youth Awards offer us the best opportunity to find and celebrate those young individuals.”

Ed Begley, Jr.

actor and environmental activist

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