

A lot can happen in 18 months. In January, 2016 we wrote an editorial to this paper. Johannah was five months pregnant. A Climate to Thrive (ACTT), MDI's initiative working towards energy independence, was about to hold our launch event. We were fairly well-rested human beings with very little grey hair and ample free time.

Today we have a thirteen month-old daughter, more grey hairs, a lot less free time, and an overabundance of love in our lives. And just over a year after its launch, ACTT has established Eastern Maine's first community solar farm, launched the "Solarize MDI" group purchase initiative, distributed thousands of energy-saving LED light bulbs, initiated a Municipal Energy Benchmarking Collaboration, facilitated composting workshops and a Ride Share Program and established the first (of many) island EV charging stations. We are already becoming a model for local action on climate change.

In our editorial of January 2016, we explored the emotional nuances involved in deciding to bring a baby into today's world - a world full of unpredictability, especially when it comes to climate change. What will the world of our daughter's future look like? How inhabitable will it be?

When we last publicly explored these difficult questions, our daughter, Gwinna, was a fetus weighing about a pound. Today, she is a vigorous walking, talking toddler. Her determination knows no bounds.

Having a child is a bit like placing your heart outside your body and watching it walk around. Everyone tells you this, but nothing prepares you for the terrifying nature of that experience.

As we let Gwinna explore, hold her when she tumbles and watch her fall in love with the world around her, the complex emotions explored in our last editorial deepen. We want to assure her safety, her health and her happiness. We want to tell her that she will always be okay and that the world that so captivates her senses will thrive right alongside her. But these would be empty promises.

The knock of climate change on the door of human existence grows ever stronger: extreme weather events increase, the Greenland and Arctic ice sheets are melting, the Great Barrier Reef reaches a "terminal" stage, all the canaries in the coal mine are singing and our current President has pulled the U.S. out of the Paris Climate Accord. Naively, he believes he must choose business over renewable energy and that in so doing he is putting "America First".

We know better. We know that renewable energy brings jobs. We know that renewables are the future, and that to avoid that future only puts America last, behind other countries that are pushing forward.

And so we don't make false promises to our daughter about her safety. We don't try to keep her from falling. We let her explore and we let her love the increasingly

fragile world. We try to teach her the lesson we all so desperately must learn: we humans are both fragile and powerful. Our existence is fragile, dependent on a complex system that is quickly tipping too far out of balance. Our ability to impact that system is powerful in a way we still don't fully comprehend.

Some of our greatest comfort comes from A Climate to Thrive. Right here on MDI we are showing what is possible when citizens match our concern about climate change with both our capacity to act and the solutions that do exist if we will only put them to use.

It's only been 18 months. We are really curious about where we will be in 18 years. As nineteen year-old Gwinna heads out into the world, we hope she will look back at an island community that led the march towards solutions to climate change and parents who were right there in the midst of that march the whole, exciting way.

To learn more about A Climate to Thrive and to get involved, visit www.aclimatetothrive.org.

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