



# Action For Nature

Encouraging young people to take personal action to nurture and protect a healthy environment on which all life depends

www.actionfornature.org

Winter 2012

## Our 2012 Eco-Heroes

Celebrating 10 Years of the International Young Eco-Hero Awards



Above: 2011 Eco Hero Avalon Theisen and AFN Program Coordinator Fiume Drummond Simnacher. Below: From left, B Shimon Schwarzschild (AFN Founder), Joan Crotty (AFN Reading Panel), Beryl Kay (AFN President) and Kathy McGuire (AFN supporter).

Our celebration held at the Bently Reserve in San Francisco, on October 19, was heartwarming and inspirational. Eight Young Eco-Heroes, aged 9 to 16, gave outstanding presentations to the more than eighty people in attendance. The Eco-Heroes also had an opportunity to meet each other. The keynote speaker, Dr. Chris Pincetich, a marine biologist and environmental campaigner who specializes in sea turtle protection, spoke about his own passion to preserve the natural world and educate others. Our founder, Shimon Schwarzschild journeyed from New York to congratulate the Eco-Heroes. Tamsin Orion of Tamzina Films produced a beautiful video describing the success of Eco-Heroes who were not able to be present. The event was underwritten by the International Furnishings and Design Association Northern California Chapter, to whom we are immensely grateful.

Above: Our eight Eco-Hero Presenters stand on stage with keynote speaker Dr. Chris Pincetich and IFDA Board members. (From Left: Dianne Hynes, Diane Nicolson, Judith Clark, Molly Paul, Meagan Bethel, Avalon Theisen, Zola Berger-Schmitz, Jason Li, Gabrielle Posard, Pavan Gowda, Cassandra Priebe, Christ Surunis, Dr. Chris Pincetich, Barbara Daher)



Right: Clockwise from top left: Molly Paul, Cassandra Priebe, Jason Li, Meagan Bethel, Avalon Theisen, Gabrielle Posard, Pavan Gowda, Zola Berger-Schmitz, B Shimon Schwarzschild at center



### Action For Nature

2269 Chestnut Street, #263  
San Francisco, CA 94123

Phone: 415 513-2421  
Fax: 415-922-5117  
mail@actionfornature.org  
www.actionfornature.org

### Board of Directors

Minna B. Baughman (Treasurer)  
Carol Chang  
Keith Kawamura  
Beryl C. D. Kay (President)  
William F. King  
Judith Schiff  
Adrienne Scroggie (Secretary)

B Shimon Schwarzschild  
Founder, Emeritus

Evelyn Ballard de Ghetaldi  
Past Chair, Emerita

### And Also...

Fiume Drummond Simnacher  
(2012/13)  
Public Allies, Program Coordinator

Ian Pereida-Perry (2011/12)  
Public Allies, Program Coordinator

Tamsin Orion  
Tamzina Films

Andre Scroggie  
Volunteer

Newsletter:  
Editor, Fiume Drummond Simnacher  
Design/Layout, Carol Chang

## INTERNATIONAL YOUNG ECO-HERO PROGRAM

In this, our 10th year, we honored nineteen inspirational winners aged 10 to 16 from around the USA and from Canada, Rwanda, India, and South Africa. We hope you enjoy reading some of the profiles in this newsletter and invite you to visit our web site to read about all the winners. The DEADLINE for the 2013 Eco-Hero Awards is January 15, 2013!

### Erek Hansen

Did you know that clothing waste takes up an astounding 5% of all landfill space? The new “fast-fashion” business that has emerged has as many damaging consequences for our earth as the fast-food industry.

Erek Hansen is helping to reduce this environmental impact. His denim recycling campaign has, since 2009, collected well over 13,500 pairs of used jeans

which are shredded into cotton fibers and re-purposed as housing insulation to benefit those affected by natural disasters. In the past, the denim insulation has gone to Habitat for Humanity to help hurricane- devastated communities in the USA Gulf Coast region.

Erek has also collected over 6,000 pairs of shoes destined for the landfill that have instead been delivered to those in need, or, if in bad condition, turned into material for car insulation or playground surfaces.

In May, Erek was the featured young entrepreneur at Bowling Green State University’s “Camp Millionaire” summer camp program for 8th graders. Erek shared his message of recycling advocacy with students, and the campers are holding their own recycling program to benefit EcoErek’s 2012 Recycling Drive. Recently, Erek organized an athletic shoe collection to help set a new Guinness World Record for “The Longest Chain of Shoes” tied together. Ultimately, the shoes will be recycled into basketball courts. For more details and to learn how YOU can help reduce clothing waste, visit [www.ecoerek.org](http://www.ecoerek.org)



### Letter from the President

Dear Action For Nature Supporters,

It is amazing to realize that we have now been offering the International Young Eco-Hero awards for TEN YEARS! During this time we have been honored to meet many awesome young people from around the world whose hopefulness, perseverance, and incredible activities provide an inspiring record of accomplishment and environmental action. Now we

are preparing for 2013. We have already started to receive applications and are looking ahead confidently to another great year.

It is wonderful to know we can count on friends like you for the crucial support needed to continue to encourage youth and their environmental efforts. All of us at Action for Nature appreciate your contributions, which make a huge difference. We cannot deliver the International Young Eco-Hero Awards without

you and we hope we can again count on your commitment, which is so important to us and which we deeply appreciate.

As we head into a new year, please join us in wishing the youth of the world a bright and sustainable future.

With warmest wishes to each of you from all of us at Action For Nature,

*Beryl C. D. Kay, AFN President*

## Jonny Cohen



Jonny Cohen was twelve years old when he was struck by the unwieldy build of school buses. Drawing from his passion for science and engineering, Jonny had a novel idea about attaching poly-carbonate shields to streamline buses for aerodynamic efficiency, and reduce their emissions. Jonny's idea for the GreenShield began to coalesce and with the help of an ever-expanding team of mostly young people, the GreenShields project is taking big strides towards making his innovative device a reality.

Having recently received official testing permission, GreenShields will be tested at an EPA approved emissions testing facility in AnnArbor, MI. The prototype weighs 8 pounds, is easy to install and saves 10-20% gas mileage, according to testing. Jonny has received support from many politicians and is awaiting approval from the EPA and the Department of Transportation. In July, GreenShields won a grant from the Consumer Bankers Association at the Banking On Youth "pitch off" in Washington DC.

Jonny was featured in Scientific American magazine in August 2012, and he is on the 2012 Forbes 30 Under 30 list as one of "tomorrow's brightest stars" in the Energy category ([www.forbes.com/special-report/2011/30-under30-12/30-under-30-12\\_energy.html](http://www.forbes.com/special-report/2011/30-under30-12/30-under-30-12_energy.html)).

Jonny has been honored with many awards for his innovation and environmental leadership, he has been a speaker at Harvard College at the Global Energy Initiative, and has blogged about GreenShields and youth empowerment for the White House and the Huffington Post. Read more about Jonny and Greenshields at [www.greenshield-sproject.com](http://www.greenshield-sproject.com)

### INTERNET SEARCHES?

Please use [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and designate Action For Nature as your charity of choice. We will receive one penny per search.

## Nissan Abraham Pani

Nissan Abraham Pani saw how the move toward urbanization and industrialization was driving deforestation and pollution in his home state of Odisha, India and he decided to take action. Starting with a small amount of birthday money from his grandparents, Nissan began recruiting his family and church members to help make his ideas a reality. Working with the help of his community, Nissan has provided 3,000 saplings to three communities, formed seven Save the Planet youth groups, and educated over three thousand people and twenty different churches about how to better care for the earth.

This October, Nissan and his mother organized and facilitated a seminar at two churches in their home state. The first of their kind in the churches, these helped to spread Nissan's message of environmental awareness to even more people. In November, Nissan presented at the Evangelical Fellowship of India mega-conference. The conference brings together women from five different states in India: Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Sikkim, and Bihar.

Nissan sees how people in Odisha are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and lack the fiscal resources to insure their safety against the extreme weather related to human impact on the planet. "My desire," Nissan says, "is to provide more plants to the community and organize more awareness among the people." He is hoping that the conference will increase the visibility of his efforts, and help to bring in new volunteers to join him as fellow speakers and educators.



### YOUTH BLOGGER PANEL

Check out the Youth Bloggers at our web site. Interested in becoming a Youth Blogger? Visit our web site [www.action-fornature.org](http://www.action-fornature.org) and click on Youth Blog

### Like us on FACEBOOK

## OUR THANKS

To all our individual donors, we offer our heartfelt thanks for your support. We are able to continue only because of your interest and generosity. As Action For Nature has no major revenue reserves or endowments we depend upon your gifts.

We are proud and grateful to have received support this year from:

Our 2012 Eco-Hero Reception Underwriter: International Furnishings and Design Association - Northern California Chapter

Our Award Underwriters: Michael Lee Environmental Foundation, Parnassus Investments, State Farm Insurance Companies Foundation, & a host of generous individual donors

Our thanks to the following donors who contributed to our 2012 reception: Anonymous, Olive Bavins, Bay Area Discovery Museum, Books Inc., Creativity Inc., Edenvale Inn of Placerville, Essential Wellness Acupuncture, Sharon Garske, Fog City Diner, Frey Wines, Icon Chiropractic, Jean LaPez, Peet's Coffee & Tea, B Shimon Schwarzschild, SF Playhouse, T&T Nail Salon, Touchstone Climbing Inc., Tree Frog Treks

## Xiuhtezcatl Martinez

Xiuhtezcatl Martinez has been speaking out for the earth publicly since he was six years old. His activism is greatly informed by his Aztec heritage. As in many indigenous wisdom traditions from all

over the world, the earth and all of life are recognized as sacred in the Aztec tradition. As a lead speaker and organizer for Earth Guardians, he has organized more than 35 rallies and actions. Xiuhtezcatl writes and performs environmental music with Voice of Youth. Along with other youth activists, he successfully sued the City of Boulder to ban the use of pesticides in six Boulder parks. And he played an integral role in working with Boulder's City Council to contain coal ash, instate a fee on plastic bags, and end the city's long-standing contract with Xcel energy to help move the city towards renewable sources of energy.

This past summer, Xiuhtezcatl sat alongside Maurice Strong, former Secretary General of the UN, as the youngest member of the Intergenerational Panel at the Rio+20 UN Summit. He also presented the inspiring closing speech for the World Congress of Youth at the Summit.

Xiuhtezcatl is a passionate advocate for the importance of the voice of the young generations. The E.A.R.T.H. traveling presentations he and other young activists developed raise awareness and encourage people everywhere to work together to address the threats to our environment and our future. Learn more at: [www.EarthGuardians.org](http://www.EarthGuardians.org)



## Miranda Andersen



Miranda Andersen was only nine years old when she produced her first film, and four years later she is recognized as a leader in her com-

munity and a role model for young people and adults alike. A young environmentalist, Miranda uses her skills as a documentary filmmaker to raise awareness about such issues as threatened salmon populations, coral reef health, the plastic impact, global deforestation, and electronic waste, among others. She is currently working on a film about Nature Deficit Disorder, to be shown at a TEDx event in British Columbia. You can find the preview, and view Miranda's six completed films, at her YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/Mirandatuber99/videos?flow=grid&view=0>

In October 2012, Miranda was a featured guest blogger on the Child & Nature website which was co-

founded by Richard Louv, who coined the term Nature Deficit Disorder. She also took part in a distance learning broadcast by WetlandsLIVE (<http://wetlandslive.pwnet.org>) which was aired all over the world with questions from students being sent in and answered live on the air.

In addition to her filmmaking and public-speaking, Miranda is also an accomplished painter. She says, "Next to learning about nature and protecting it, painting nature is one of my favorite things to do." To view Miranda's artwork, and discover more about how she is making a difference for the environment, please visit her website: <http://mirandaandersen.wordpress.com/>