



ACTION FOR NATURE

2269 CHESTNUT STREET, No. 263, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94123, USA

PHONE: (415) 922-6155 FAX: (415) 922-5717

WEB SITE: www.actionfornature.org EMAIL: mail@actionfornature.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 12, 2016

Press contact:

Beryl Kay, President, Action for Nature

E-mail: beryl@actionfornature.org

Phone: 1-415-370-1300 or 1-415-922-6155

2016 International Young Eco-Hero Award winners to be honored in San Francisco on October 8

Awards celebration at the Children's Creativity Museum is free and open to the public

San Francisco, CA — Fifteen young environmental activists from around the world will be honored at the 14th annual International Young Eco-Hero Awards celebration on Saturday, October 8, 2016, from 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the Children's Creativity Museum Theater in San Francisco. Ranging from age 8 to 16, and hailing from around the U.S. as well as Canada, India, Indonesia, Iraq, and Kenya, these youth are being recognized by the San Francisco-based nonprofit Action for Nature for their creative projects aimed at solving the world's environmental problems.

- Alfredo Gonzalez-Tax (age 12, Indiantown, Florida) designed a portable, low-cost loom in order to produce sleeping mats for the homeless, woven out of discarded plastic bags. Made from PVC piping, the loom allows a mat to be produced in 6.5 hours, and is currently being used by enrichment groups at five elementary schools in Marin County.
- Joshua Zhou (age 16, Chapel Hill, North Carolina) invented a low-cost semiconductor material that, with just sunlight, detoxifies common air and water pollutants more efficiently than commercial and EPA-endorsed remediation methods. Deployed in a porous pad or pervious concrete, it can remove pollutants from incoming storm water, wastewater, and reservoir waters; as a transparent coating on building exteriors or domestic objects, it can remove smog, automobile fumes, and other pollutants from the air in both the city and the home.
- Sonali Ranaweera (age 15, San Jose, California) collects discarded bottles and cans to fund her program, Recycling4Smiles. So far, she has donated \$63,000 to cover the cost of 65 cleft lip surgeries, dental care for 1,300 kids in rural Sri Lanka, and school lunches for child brides through the World Food Program.
- Himangi Halder (age 9, Chhattisgarh, India), spurred to action when a classmate was killed in an auto accident in front of her school, co-led an initiative to change the traffic patterns around the campus. Within three months, the project resulted in an 80% reduction in traffic congestion, leading to a decrease in accidents and pollution, and the elimination of the need for daily traffic monitoring by police.



ACTION FOR NATURE

2269 CHESTNUT STREET, No. 263, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94123, USA

PHONE: (415) 922-6155 FAX: (415) 922-5717

WEB SITE: www.actionfornature.org EMAIL: mail@actionfornature.org

- Eric Li (age 15, Manvel, Texas) co-founded the nonprofit We Care Act with his two sisters in 2008. Together they have raised funds and collected more than 30,000 used items including clothes, books, and toys, distributing them to young victims of 12 natural disasters. Eric has also recycled hundreds of electronic items, delivering 46 refurbished computers, smart phones, and Kindles to organizations in Nicaragua, China, Nepal, South Sudan, and Houston, Texas.
- Shirley Waskito (age 15, Bali, Indonesia) collects used cooking oil from local vendors and households, and uses it to produce homemade bio-diesel as well as household soap. Her efforts raise awareness about the health dangers of cooking with used oil while preventing it from being disposed of in a way that harms the environment.
- Simon Omuthiambo (age 15, Busio, Kenya) created a nursery to grow indigenous seedlings and educate his community about the benefits of planting trees. So far, he has raised 15,000 seedlings which he gives to his neighbors, and has helped 75 families plant trees.
- Rupert and Franny Yakelashek (ages 11 and 9, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada) are working with all three levels of Canadian government to formally recognize their citizen's right to live in a healthy environment. Through community organizing, letter-writing campaigns, speaking at council meetings, and lobbying civic leaders, they have contributed to 23 municipal declarations for environmental rights being made on Vancouver Island since 2014.
- Olivia Russo-Hood (age 14, Deltona, Florida) created her own nonprofit, Save the Earth Projects, which has collected more than 22,000 pairs of gently used shoes that have been distributed internationally, reducing waste in landfills and providing shoes to those in need.
- Abdulrahman Al-Rayyis (age 16, Kurdistan, Iraq) co-founded a student organization, Our Beautiful Nature, organizing environmental seminars at his school as well neighborhood clean-ups. Using social media and posters to raise environmental awareness, he is currently lobbying for a paper recycling plant in Kurdistan.
- Joris Hutchison (age 8, Seattle, Washington) uses social media and old-fashioned lemonade stands to raise funds for a wildlife sanctuary in Namibia, so that they can buy GPS collars for their cheetah conservation efforts.
- Miranda Andersen (age 16, British Columbia, Canada) created an educational website offering lesson plans she's designed and films she's created on environmental topics to be used by teachers with youth.
- Silas Swanson (age 16, Saranac Lake, New York) is working to preserve and protect the Adirondack Park in upstate New York, and mobilize the local community to combat the effects of global warming. A member of the planning committee for the Adirondack Youth Climate Summit,



ACTION FOR NATURE

2269 CHESTNUT STREET, No. 263, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94123, USA

PHONE: (415) 922-6155 FAX: (415) 922-5717

WEB SITE: www.actionfornature.org EMAIL: mail@actionfornature.org

he has presented on climate change to his town, village, and school boards, and is currently lobbying for a local tax on single-use plastic bags.

Free and open to the public, the awards celebration will feature keynote speaker **John Muir Laws**, a naturalist, author, educator, and artist who is the founder of the Nature Journal Club and a Research Associate at the California Academy of Sciences. Laws will speak about sustaining stewardship through a connection with nature. Honorees Olivia Russo Hood, Joris Hutchison, Eric Li, Sonali Ranaweera, and Rupert and Franny Yakalashkek are expected to attend.

Attn: Calendar Editors

WHAT: International Young Eco-Heroes Awards

WHEN: Saturday, October 8, 2016, 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. (Program, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. with complimentary reception and silent auction to follow)

WHERE: Children's Creativity Museum Theater, 221 Fourth Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

ADMISSION: Free. RSVPs appreciated to mail@actionfornature.org

CONTACT FOR PUBLICATION: mail@actionfornature.org

MORE INFO: www.actionfornature.org

About Action for Nature

Action For Nature is an international nonprofit organization based in San Francisco, California, USA, that encourages young people to develop a love and respect for nature and to take personal action to protect the Earth's natural resources. The International Young Eco-Hero Awards recognize young people ages 8-16 who are taking important steps to solve tough environmental problems. Awarded annually, AFN's Eco-Heroes are determined by a panel of judges including experts in environmental science, biology, and education. Since 2003, Action for Nature has recognized more than 150 young people from 21 countries and 25 U.S. states.

###