



W I N T E R 2 0 1 6

# Action For Nature

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



## Eco-Hero Award Ceremony 2016

Each action taken to create a healthier environment is an act of bravery — especially for young kids. Our International Young Eco-Heroes inspire us here at Action for Nature because they started with one courageous action — in Sonali's case, taking up her parent's challenge of spending \$100 not on herself, but on recycling to create a fund for kids who need dental surgery.

At our 2016 Eco-Hero Award Ceremony, naturalist John (Jack) Muir Laws exuberantly encouraged all to take an "ecologist's" eye view of our connection with our possessions: to step out of our "boxes" - or comfort zones - to find the connections between ourselves and others, the things we surround ourselves with, and our environment. For instance, Eco-Hero, Ryan (9) shared his love of sharks — which inspired him to take action to prevent them from choking on plastic debris.

Ryan has channeled his passion for saving sharks into creative endeavors with his school and community, which has rewarded him with joyous connections as he inspires his peers to action.

Our Eco-Heroes teach us that when we stretch beyond our comfort zones to take a brave action that supports the environment and each other- we create meaningful relationships that add value to our lives and contribute to a sustainable planet! View their presentations at:

[Actionfornature.org/eco-hero-awards/2016-awards/](http://Actionfornature.org/eco-hero-awards/2016-awards/)



From top to bottom: Joris, Ryan, Sonali, Eric

## FEATURED 2016 ECO-HERO AWARD WINNERS

**APPLY TO  
BECOME A  
2017  
ECO-HERO!**



### **JOSHUA: ECO-INVENTOR**

Joshua invented a novel, affordable material that, with just sunlight, detoxifies common water pollutants more efficiently than commercial and EPA-endorsed remediation methods. His material, he suggests, presents a clean, low cost technology to address worsening pollution issues today. After reading *Life on the Brink* and inventing this material, he sees sustainable technologies as fueling the future of sustainable living.

### **FRANNY & RUPERT: ECO-ACTIVISTS**

In 2014, Franny and Rupert learned that environmental rights had been formally recognized by over 110 countries, but their country, Canada, was not one of them. Appalled, they sprang into action: writing letters, attending rallies, meeting with officials from all three levels of Canadian government, and encouraging other children to get involved.



In December 2014, Rupert led a rally in front of Victoria City Hall. One hundred supporters attended, including lots of children. As a result, the City of Victoria adopted an environmental rights declaration!



### **OLIVIA: "ORDINARY ANGEL"**

Olivia's home was destroyed in Hurricane Katrina when she was 7 and her family lost everything. During that terrible tragedy, volunteers from across the country helped her family rebuild. Olivia wanted to pay it forward.

Olivia created her own non-profit, called Save the Earth Projects (S.T.E.P.) One of her projects, through STEP, is 'Leave a GOOD Footprint,' where she arranges for the collection of gently used shoes from around the USA and UK.

Olivia and STEP have collected and re-distributed over 22,000 pairs of shoes.

Olivia planned to attend our October event, but was trapped in Florida by another storm. As Hurricane Matthew angrily approached, she managed to send us a video message. Fortunately, her family home was not damaged this time.

Find out more on  
our website here:  
[actionfornature.org  
/eco-hero awards  
/application-form](http://actionfornature.org/eco-hero-awards/application-form)

View the 2016 Eco-  
Hero Ceremony  
Video:  
[bit.ly/2fm10L3](http://bit.ly/2fm10L3)

Our Facebook page  
for Eco-Hero  
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Submit applications  
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mail--see mailing  
address on page 4

**Climate Change is  
REAL!**

**Help us support  
youth and a  
sustainable future!**





## OUR WILDLIFE ALUM GO WILD WITH ACTIVISM!

### LIBBY: ECO HERO 2015

In the 1970s, there were thirty thousand Maui's Dolphins swimming in the shallow waters off the west coast of the North island of New Zealand. Today there are an estimated fifty adults left. 2015 Eco-Hero, Libby, now 16, is among those fighting to save them.

The tiny dolphins, only 1.5 meters long, the smallest and rarest cetaceans on earth, feed on small fish and squid. Their declining numbers are due to being entangled and drowned in commercial and recreational fishing nets. Although ocean areas have been set aside for them and laws created, regulation of such laws is difficult, especially as fishing is a big industry in New Zealand.

Libby is re-launching her global campaign and plans to create a "Hope Spot" similar to those created by USA environmentalist Dr. Sylvia Earle, and supported by President Obama. If she is successful, this will be the first Hope Spot in New Zealand. A Hope Spot is any special place that is critical to the health of the ocean. Libby has written to Dr. Earle to ask for her help.

"If the dolphins are not saved, they will be gone by 2030, and," laments Libby, "New Zealand will become the first country to drive a species to extinction." <https://www.mission-blue.org/>

Support Libby at

<http://savemaui.wixsite.com/the-maui-movement>

### DESMOND (DESSI): ECO-HERO 2015

Since winning our 2015 award for his work fundraising to save bird habitat and campaigning for the protection of the California Condors, Dessi, now aged 14, has been developing his skills as a researcher and journalist. Dessi journeyed to Alaska to study with Nils Warnock, an ornithologist, and to observe, photograph and learn about the Bar Tailed Godwit. This extraordinary bird has been known to fly from its winter breeding grounds in Alaska to Australia and New Zealand, a journey of some 8,000 miles, without stopping - the longest migration of any bird! Dessi wrote about this bird for the American Birding Young Birders website.

Since then he has participated in research at the bird specimen collection at the Moore Lab of Zoology at Occidental College, Los Angeles. He was studying the Golden-cheeked Woodpecker, a little-known species and resident of Mexico. He presented his research results to the Western Field Ornithology Conference in Colorado.

"Birds face many threats," he says, "such as trash, lead poisoning, outdoor cats, window crashes, pesticides, habitat loss and rat poison. I want to make a difference and help the birds." Follow Dessi here: [protectingourbirds.my-free.website/](http://protectingourbirds.my-free.website/)

### WILDLIFE HERO JORIS

2016 Eco-Hero, Joris, is raising funds to purchase cheetah tracking collars in Namibia for a sanctuary which is collaborating with local farmers to ensure the survival of the cheetahs and the safety of the local farm animals.



**Newsletter Designer/ Editor: AFN Program Coordinator Sara Grimes. Reach Sara at [sara@actionfornature.org](mailto:sara@actionfornature.org)**

## MESSAGE TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

### WE CANNOT CONTINUE WITHOUT YOU!

Heartfelt thanks and deep gratitude to our loyal donors who over the years have sustained us and made possible this annual award, now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year. Please help us move forward by: continuing your generous support; introducing us to new donors; nominating Eco-Heroes; featuring us on your Facebook pages; suggesting other organizations we can contact for outreach and partnership; introducing us to new potential board members; hosting a house party. Please contact us at [mail@actionfornature.org](mailto:mail@actionfornature.org) with questions/suggestions. Send donations to:

**2269 Chestnut Street #263, San Francisco, CA, 94123**

Action For Nature is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit registered with the State of California, USA, and founded in Assisi Italy in 1992 to successfully save the song birds visiting St. Francis of Assisi's Mount Subasio.

Board Members: Chris Giorni, Beryl Kay, Judith Schiff, Bruce Stegiel, Shimon Schwarzschild, Barbara Wein.

### NEW BOARD MEMBERS



#### BARBARA WEIN

Executive Director for 25 years of Hostelling International's Golden Gate Council. Barbara brings both her administrative abilities and nonprofit knowledge to our board. She has been an AFN award Judge for several years.



#### CHRIS GIORNI

An AFN awards Judge for many years, Chris is the founder and Director of Tree Frog Treks, a very successful program which makes science come alive for Bay Area kids. Chris is a passionate environmentalist who loves kids and science.

Below reception attendees from left to right: Kevin Lucero-Wicker (with Tree Frog Treks), Kevin Huo (former Eco-Hero), Troy Tournat (2015-16 AFN program coordinator), John (Jack) Muir Laws (naturalist)

Photo Credits: Judith Schiff & Barbara Wein

### 2016 ECO-HEROS HELP PEOPLE BY HELPING THE ENVIRONMENT!

- **Alfredo** (Florida, age 12) designed and built a portable PVC based loom on which he wove sleeping mats from discarded plastic bags to donate to homeless people.
- **Eric** (Texas, age 15) co-founded We Care Act to help people suffering from natural disasters by collecting and sending them used items such as clothes, books and toys. So far he has supported more than 46,000 people in 20 countries. He also refurbishes and gifts used computers.  
[www.wecareact.org](http://www.wecareact.org).
- **Sonali** (California, age 15), raises funds through collecting discarded bottles and cans to fund her program *Recycling4Smiles* to which she has donated over \$60,000 to provide cleft lip and palate surgery for children in developing countries.
- **Shirley** (Indonesia, age 15) collects used cooking oil from local vendors, which she makes into domestic soap which is donated to students.

