PRESS RELEASE

Acterra’s “Promise to Our Planet” Event Will Celebrate Climate Progress

Online Benefit to Recognize Local Sustainability Heroes, Community Efforts in Climate Action

PALO ALTO, CA—March 7, 2023

For the third year in a row, Acterra, the Bay Area-based nonprofit that promotes climate change action and awareness, will host “Promise to Our Planet,” its spring benefit. This year the virtual celebration will take place on Thursday, March 23, 2023 from 6:00 to 7:30 PM, with a live networking reception beginning at 5:00 PM.

The evening includes informative, high-profile guest speakers as well as the presentation of the 2023 Champions of Promise Awards to seven local leaders in climate action.

“Charting Progress, Celebrating Community,” the event’s theme, alludes to a slew of recent accomplishments for the broader climate movement, including numerous local reach codes for all-electric construction, major advances in consumer adoption of EVs, the passing of Senate Bill 1383 to promote food recovery and diversion of organics from landfill, and the year’s biggest milestone: the Inflation Reduction Act, which commits $391 billion in spending on climate and energy programs. At the same time, the consequences of the climate crisis — such as worsening drought and extreme heat, winter storm damage and loss of life, or rising climate anxiety among youth — have reached record levels.

“The climate crisis is being keenly felt — and when California acts, more cities and towns elsewhere are paying attention,” said Lauren Weston, Acterra’s Executive Director. “With this event, we want to express our huge gratitude to everyone in our community for taking action on the climate. In order to meet strong climate goals, joining and learning together continues to be our best strategy.”

Promise to Our Planet will feature speakers of national and international renown as well as local experts on areas of Acterra’s work. Funds raised prior to and on the night of — via Acterra’s “Fund-A-Future” portal — will support Acterra’s community based programs across its pillars: Youth Education, Beneficial Electrification for All, Food and Climate Change, and Advocacy.

List of speakers and special guests:

- **Ertharin Cousin**, Distinguished Fellow, Global Food and Agriculture at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs – Welcoming remarks (Networking hour).
- **Dr. Jonathan Foley**, Executive Director, Project Drawdown – Closing remarks.
- **State Senator Josh Becker** – Senator, California’s 13th District – Policy overview.
● D’mani Thomas, Spoken word performance.
● Katie Cantrell - Food and climate breakout.
● Juan Estrada - Advocacy breakout.
● Tom Kabat - Beneficial electrification breakout.
● Kamille Lang - Youth education breakout.

Champions of Promise Awardees:

● The San Mateo Climate Action Team (SMCAT), co-led by Michelle Hudson and Robert Whitehair, supports local solutions to the climate crisis that promote equity for all. The lead organizing team within SMCAT created a grassroots movement involving 180 passionate members of the San Mateo community to call for city-wide decarbonization by 2030. San Mateo Climate Action Team advocated for passage of San Mateo’s groundbreaking Reach Code applicable to existing buildings through many actions including hundreds of letters to the City Council, Commissions, and local media; hundreds of comments at public meetings; one-on-one meetings with elected officials and appointed staff; engaged in significant outreach and advising to local students; and neighborhood canvassing.

● Roxana Franco and Adriana Fernandez Arriaga co-started Conservacion Cultura at Green Foothill’s Leadership Academy in 2020. Conservacion Cultura aims to build a celebratory oral history around conservation traditions in the Latinx/e community of San Mateo County while also building trust in the community. They have created a video with OTCinema showcasing one of the many stories shared and our hope is to have a clothes swap and video release in the near future to continue sharing these powerful stories. Additionally, Roxana is raising her two beautiful daughters and Adriana is the Program Coordinator for the San Mateo County Parks Foundation

● Christine Luong is a climate change and sustainability advocate with extensive experience managing sustainability, advocacy, membership, environmental health and safety, and public health programs. As the Sustainability Manager for the City of Palo Alto, she collaborates with City departments, community partners, and residents to implement Palo Alto’s Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, with a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions 80% below 1990 levels and achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

● Oscar Anderson and Kai Mirchandani, juniors at Palo Alto High School, co-founded People Plates Planet to combat food waste and hunger, promoting sustainable and climate justice. Every school day, they collect surplus food from campuses and turn it into nutritious meals for those in need, while conserving resources and reducing methane emissions from food in landfills. Additionally, they are part of 350SV Palo Alto and PA Student Climate Coalition to accelerate the city’s Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.

Tickets ($0 – $75) are available at bit.ly/promiseplanetmarch23. Ticket pricing is intentionally inclusive, allowing people to join the event regardless of financial means. For event information including detailed agenda and sponsors, go to www.acterra.org/promise.

About Acterra: Acterra (acterra.org) is a San Francisco Bay Area 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Palo Alto that brings people together to create local solutions for a healthy planet. Through education and policy advocacy, Acterra helps accelerate the beneficial electrification of homes, businesses, and transportation, support more climate-friendly food choices such as plant-forward diets and reduced food waste, and empower youth to better understand and act on the climate crisis.

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**Calendar Item.** Acterra’s 3rd Annual Promise to Our Planet: Charting Progress, Celebrating Community. Thursday, March 23, 2023, from 5:00 to 7:30 pm Pacific Time. Virtual benefit featuring guest speakers (Ertharin Cousin, Dr. Jon Foley, State Senator Josh Becker, and more) and the presentation of the Champions of Promise Awards. Tickets are free, donations encouraged.

**Link to Register**

Tickets at the $75/person level include an interactive networking reception from 5:00 - 6:00 pm including spoken word performance.