

Athena Hanna

9 years old

Third grader at Manzano Day School



How did you start being an environmental activist?

When I saw a picture of polar bears stranded in the middle of the ocean with their small blocks of ice disappearing right under their feet, then I knew I had to do something. When I thought about my water, food, dreams, and future being stolen right in front of my very own eyes, I started speaking out so that it wouldn't happen to me and to all children.

What changes have you seen or helped with in ABQ?

I went to the ABQ City Council seven times to speak about my worries - I talked about plastic bags and to pass the climate emergency resolution. I saw a lot of people speaking there, and kids just like me. I got to see the plastic bag ban signed into law in Albuquerque. I was standing on stage when the mayor signed it. What worries me is that some stores switched to thicker plastic bags, this doesn't make any sense. I will keep protesting until they change.

What gives you inspiration and makes you feel like you can make a difference?

Greta Thunberg gives me inspiration, because she's young and she is not afraid. She speaks to thousands of people about how we all need to change so the world can be healthy.



Artemisio Romero y Carver

17 years old

What do you do to help save water and the environment?

I became an activist in the official sense about 9 months ago, when I formed YUCCA (Youth United for Climate Crisis Action) with a small team of other young people. We formed YUCCA to raise the voices of teenagers and people of color, so they could be heard by the politicians and corporations that endanger our peoples and our generation



What changes have you seen or helped within ABQ?

Across the State of New Mexico, I have seen a youth-led climate action growing. As a member of YUCCA, I have worked to educate New Mexican citizens and pressure state politicians. In ABQ I have seen the growth of climate action movements like Fight For Our Lives and Extinction Rebellion.

What gives you inspiration and makes you feel like you can make a difference?

I am constantly inspired by my fellow activists. Struggling for justice is hard, but I know that I am not alone in that struggle.

youthunited4climatecrisisaction.org



Felina Romero

Started at 16, now is 20 years old



What do you do to help save water and the environment?

I choose not drive because I love riding my skateboard. I choose to only ride my skateboard because I found out that riding my skateboard reduced my carbon emission, which is good for the environment. I do not cause the polar ice to melt.

I ride my skateboard to be connected to what the earth gives me that day. I love the when the wind blows and removes negatives energy. Sunshine gives me energy and life. I get to smell fresh air and see the sunrise and set which empower, motivates and energizes me. And each time I travel somewhere I strengthen my body over time.

What gives you inspiration and makes you feel like you can make a difference?

I realized a lot of time people do not know why things are happening to the planet and how they are causing the climate to change. I teach people about what I know whenever I can. I suggest you learn as much as you can now you are young... Always speak and teach at the age you are at now.

Felina also is also a environmental activist routinely present at events and meetings held by local organizations on various subjects.



Felix Finkbeiner

Started at 9 years old



Felix Finkbeiner began worrying about global warming in elementary school. When Felix was nine, his fourth grade teacher in Germany gave him an assignment to write a report on climate change. While doing research for his paper, Felix learned about Wangari Maathai, a woman who planted 30 million trees across Africa. He felt inspired reading about the ways one person had made a great change. Felix told his classmates that he believed children in the world could plant one million trees in every country on Earth and offset CO2 emissions and fight global warming.

On March 28, 2007, the first tree was planted at Felix's school. Children in other schools heard about Felix's idea and within one year, students in Felix's hometown had planted 50,000 seedlings.

Felix made a website called Plant-for-the-Planet.org and started a campaign called "Stop Talking and Start Planting." By 2011, 12 billion trees had been planted around the world through Felix's organization. Today, Plant for The Planet has helped to plant 15 billion seedlings in 193 countries.



"Back then, our aim was to save the polar bear. But soon we understood that it's not about saving the polar bear, it's about saving our future."



Boyan Slat
16 years old



When Boyan Slat was sixteen years old, he went on vacation. While exploring the Mediterranean Sea, Boyan was shocked to see that there was more plastic bags than fish in the ocean! He wondered, "Why don't people clean this trash up?" It turned out that cleaning the plastic out of the ocean was very complicated because you have to be able to pull plastic out without harming sea life, and there is more trash in the ocean than most people can even imagine. Boyan decided to research the best ways to clean up the ocean.



When he turned eighteen, he started an organization called The Ocean Cleanup. Boyan is designing solar-powered ocean cleanup technology that moves with the currents to catch plastic in rivers and oceans. His goal is the clean up 90% of the world's ocean-plastic by the year 2040.

Every year, millions of tons of plastic ends up in our oceans, mainly through our rivers. The plastic floating in our oceans is not going to go away by itself, because plastic doesn't decompose. Plastic in the ocean breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces, becoming increasingly easier to mistake for food by sea life.

"Everyone said to me 'Oh, there's nothing you can do about plastic once it gets into the oceans,' and I kept wondering.... Is that true?"

Greta Thunberg

Started at 8 years old



From Stockholm, Sweden; Greta was eight years when she started learning about climate change.

Confused and sad about it, at 11 Greta decided to take action. Instead of going to school, she made a big sign that said 'SCHOOL STRIKE FOR CLIMATE', and sat down outside the Swedish government building. Her parents were not happy about Greta skipping school, but they could see that when Greta took action in the world, she became less depressed.

Greta continued to hold signs outside the Swedish parliament, hoping lawmakers would notice her message and take action to stop global warming. She asked her classmates to join her in the strikes, but they didn't want to. So Greta posted pictures of her strike on Instagram and Twitter. Soon there were 35 people joining her, and the Newspapers and TV reporters began talking about Greta's message. Soon, thousands of students from around the world began using her hashtag #FridaysforFuture - and joined her in striking on Fridays to protest climate change.

In March of 2019, Greta inspired the first Global Strike for Climate. It was huge! 1.6 million people from 125 countries took part in this strike. Greta Thunberg continues to be the most famous climate change activist in the world. People of all ages now participate in Fridays For Future strikes and Greta's speeches around the world have helped people to wake up to the reality of the climate crisis.

"I want you to act as you would in a crisis. I want you to act as if your house is on fire, because it is."

Make your own Kid Hero Card!



Know someone who is an environmental hero? Are you inspired to be one yourself? Make a card like the others!

Name of Hero
Age

What inspired them/you to take action?

What did they/you do to help save water and the environment?

Are they/you a local (in New Mexico) or global hero?

Add a quote!

Discussion ideas for fourth graders:

What do these heroes have in common?

What do you think it takes for one person to start a movement?

What changes would you like to see, and how might you use your passion to make a difference?

What is a strike?

Why does planting millions of trees have an affect on global warming?

Have you ever seen trash left next to the Rio Grande river? How does it make you feel?