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Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life-Changing Stories of Young Heroes

What Does Sustainability Mean to You?

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Trevor Tanaka grew up on the Big Island of Hawaii, and from an early age he was taught by his family to honor the land. In middle school, he attempted to enter an essay writing competition that asked the question “What does sustainability mean to you?” When he realized that he didn’t have an answer to that question, he figured out that it was because he hadn’t been taught about sustainability in school. Knowing that other students needed to be taught about something so important, he worked with legislators to implement a law requiring all schools to teach Hawaiians how to live sustainably. But that wasn’t enough for Trevor: he also went on to create an online toolkit making it possible for Hawaiians, and people in a number of other states, to find the best sustainability resources, listings for green jobs, and other useful information. Now studying to achieve his MBA, he is also working with other members of the Stone Soup team to create a Sustainable Workforce Development Network --an online ecosystem to connect youth, educators, and companies who are dedicated to building a sustainable economy.

Values : Passionate Determined Persistent Resourceful Risktaker

Lessons Learned

- Many ideas can be great ideas, but acting on them requires consistent effort and persistence.
- Everyone’s voice matters, regardless of their age, stature, or background.
- Young people have the right to demand a good education.
- It’s important to address people who hold positions of power with both respect and confidence.

Language Arts

- Write a resolution on a topic related to sustainability or climate that is important to you, and create a five-minute presentation to support your resolution. Practice your presentation in front of family and friends.
- Invite your friends and family to participate in a brainstorming session in which you will come up with three ideas for implementing sustainability practices in your community. Then, as a group, start a letter-writing campaign to your elected officials, asking them to implement these practices.
- Create an information campaign to educate other students in your community about sustainability: what it

means, what efforts are being made in your community to make sustainability more feasible, and what kinds of sustainability projects would benefit your community.

STEM Activities

- Research and rank 10 colleges based on the STEM, sustainability, and climate change courses offered.
- Ask teachers or administrators at your school to offer STEM, sustainability, and climate change courses.
- Research organizations that need volunteers and would be willing to partner with your school to start a sustainability initiative for the community (for example, a club or an internship program, or a community clean-up project).
- Use SurveyMonkey to collect data about issues that are affecting your school or local community. Create a website to share that data, and use social media to educate your community on the most prevalent issues and to suggest some possible solutions.

Sustainability Innovations

- Research to learn about resolutions that have been created by youth in your state, country, or in the world. Write a paper or create a presentation on your findings to your class.
- Learn about the young people of Our Children's Trust who filed a lawsuit against the U.S. government, and Greta Thunberg's lawsuit concerning the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Based on what you learned through your research as well as your opinion, explain the importance of these lawsuits.
- Have two students, or a group of students build an effective argument about a specific sustainability issue through research. Then hold a debate, with one student or group for and the other against the issue. Have the audience reflect on and discuss which argument was the most convincing, and why.
- Hold a Model United Nations where students represent different countries at a climate change council. This online guide may help in structuring the activity: <https://www.startthechange.eu/2019/11/07/caras-un/?lang=en>.

Sustainability Career Pathways

- **Environmental Educator.** A surprising number of schools lack educators who are versed in sustainability and environmental issues. Educators who either indirectly incorporate sustainability, or directly introduce sustainability into the curriculum by teaching environmental studies, whether in schools or in other forums, are essential in helping future generations understand the environmental challenges we face--and their possible solutions. [Learn more about this field here.](#)
- **Environmental Lawyers.** Environmental lawyers are also an essential part of the blue/green economy, and law is a great career path for protecting and restoring nature. Here are three resources for exploring this field:
 - [What is an Environmental Lawyer?](#)
 - [How To Be an Environmental Lawyer](#) (Sierra Club)
 - [A Trail Guide to Careers in Environmental Law](#) (Harvard guide)
- **Government Employee.** The government plays an essential role in regulating and enforcing environmentally sustainable behavior. Working for a national or state government agency or local government can be a rewarding and useful career path: for example, working with the Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA employs 15,000 people around the United States and needs people with a variety of skills, from communications to computer programming. [Want to learn more? Visit here.](#)
- **Legislative Staffer.** Another important path is working for a senator or representative as part of their legislative staff. Representatives and senators drive new policies and start new bills. Working with them as a "staffer" can be fun and rewarding, and as you go up the ranks you could help in writing and driving a new piece of legislation. Does this sound like the path for you? [Explore this introduction.](#)
- **Elected Official.** Finally, if you'd rather run for office than work for an elected official, that's a possible path too, though typically one starts by running for local office or working for an elected official to learn the ropes.

Curious? [Listen to this NPR story to get a better sense of the process.](#)

Call to Action: To learn more about opportunities to learn and build a sustainable world visit:

- Sustainable Hawaii Toolkit: <http://sustainablehawaii toolkit.com/>
- SustainWDN.com
- SustainabilityisFun.com

Stone Soup Leadership Institute • www.stonesoupleadership.org • www.soup4youngworld.com