



Session 1 Program & Participants

July 28 at 1:00 pm ET

Opening Remarks

Barbara Ann Richman, Executive Director of the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes

STEM Panel + Q&A

Panelists will discuss their STEM projects and offer advice to young people hoping to make a difference in their own communities.

Participants include:

Josiah Utsch, moderator. In 2013, Josiah was awarded the Barron Prize in recognition of his work to protect the nautilus, which is one of Earth's oldest creatures. He and a friend founded Save the Nautilus, raising over \$11,000 dollars to support much-needed research and advocate for the protection of this endangered species. These days, Josiah attends Colorado College.

Anna Du, panelist. Anna is committed to protecting one of our most important and beautiful natural wonders – the ocean. After learning about how plastic pollution hurts the environment, Anna invented a Remotely Operated Vehicle that detects microplastics on the ocean floor. She has also created a campaign called the [Deep Plastics Initiative](#) to educate others about preventing and cleaning up ocean plastics pollution.

Gitanjali Rao, panelist. After learning about the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, [Gitanjali](#) invented an easy-to-use and inexpensive device called Tethys that detects lead contamination in water. Through research, she learned about nanotechnology, which is used to detect harmful chemicals in the air. Using that same approach for lead detection, Gitanjali went through a series of trials to develop certain nanotubes and is currently partnering with a manufacturer to make it a product. Gitanjali is also the inventor for Epione, a device for early diagnosis of prescription opioid addiction using genetic engineering, and "[Kindly](#)," an anti-cyberbullying service using AI and Natural Language processing. She was honored as TIME Top Young Innovator for her innovation sessions she conducts globally, which have inspired around 28,000 students in the last two years. In her sessions, she shares her own process of innovation that can be used by students all over the world.

Shreya Ramachandran, panelist. Shreya founded a nonprofit called [The Grey Water Project](#), where she teaches water conservation and shows people how to safely reuse water from household sinks, showers, and laundry. She began her work after traveling to rural California and India and realizing the far-reaching effects of drought. Prior to starting her nonprofit, Shreya researched soap nuts, a soapberry whose grey water could be used for irrigation without affecting the environment. As part of her initiative, Shreya has worked with several environmental

organizations and designed a school curriculum for elementary students on grey water systems. Shreya's story is featured on [Inspiring Young Heroes](#).

Environmental Panel + Q&A

Panelists will discuss their environmental activism and offer advice to young people hoping to make a difference in their own communities.

Participants include:

Shawn Henry, moderator. When Shawn was a student, he started an initiative called Garden Angels. He transformed a vacant, overgrown lot near his school in Brooklyn, New York into a vibrant and beautiful community garden. Shawn is now a Program Director for Voyages Preparatory High School, located in South Queens. Voyages is a small, academically rigorous, full-time high school designed to re-engage students who have dropped out or who have fallen behind in credits at their previous schools. Voyages serves 315 students annually and Shawn supervises a staff of eight counselors. Shawn still works with the Barron Prize to this day, helping us judge all the wonderful submissions we receive.

Claire Vlases, panelist. When she was in the seventh grade, Claire worked to add solar panels to her middle school in Montana, starting a project called Solar Makes Sense. She and a group of friends raised money in the community, ultimately earning enough to put panels not just on her school, but on another local school as well. Claire's story is featured on [Inspiring Young Heroes](#).

Genevieve Leroux, panelist. Known as "the Butterfly Girl," Genevieve works to protect monarch butterflies from extinction. She started Milkweed for Monarchs, a movement that focuses on planting and nurturing milkweed, which is the Monarch's only food source during their caterpillar phase. As part of her work, Genevieve has collaborated with the mayor of her California hometown and has conducted research with California Polytechnic State University's Monarch Alert. Today, Genevieve continues to work with local governments from her new home in Eastern Canada to advance monarch conservation within her new community. She is a member of The David Suzuki Foundation's Patrouille Papillon (Butterfly Rangers) in Quebec, and was recently tasked by Dr. Jane Goodall herself to lead a tri-national project that will connect all Roots and Shoots Monarch Butterfly projects in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. This new campaign aims to show the combined impact of these efforts, while offering a platform for young conservationists to learn from each other in their efforts to save this iconic species from extinction. Genevieve's story is featured on [Inspiring Young Heroes](#).

Robbie Bond, panelist. Kids will experience the consequences of today's environmental actions long into the future. Robbie Bond believes that's powerful and why the world is listening to what kids have to say. An ocean advocate headed into 8th grade, Robbie's Google Expeditions free virtual reality video will help kids experience how plastic pollution devastates ocean life. His campaign featuring one of his favorite apps, [Litterati](#), to keep single-use plastics out of U.S. National Parks, is part of his work for [Kids Speak for Parks](#), an organization he founded at age nine. Robbie is grateful for the many awards and opportunities that have amplified his efforts, including the

Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes. A Delta Airlines Green up Youth Advisory Board member, Google Expeditions partner, National Park Trust student ambassador, and international youth ambassador for Litterati, Robbie has an episode of Marvel's Hero Project "[Roving Robbie](#)" now streaming on Disney +. Robbie's story is featured on [Inspiring Young Heroes](#).

Addy Barrett, panelist. *Since she was in first grade, Addy has been working to protect endangered mountain gorillas. She started her project [Gorilla Heroes](#) to raise awareness and raise money for these gentle giants. Over the years, she has donated more than \$13,000 dollars to various conservation groups, raising money through lemonade stands, T-shirt sales, and an annual event called the Gorilla Gala.*