

## ***L. A. Teens Win Barron Prize for Young Heroes***

*L. A. Parent*

by Christina Elston

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Wyatt Workman, 9; Sophia Salmore, 18; and Zach Selby, 18 are honored for ocean conservation, sustainable gardening, and efforts to feed those in need.

In his books, author T. A. Barron creates young, heroic characters who venture far and wide—from other galaxies to below the seas—and bravely face daunting challenges. In books like *The Ancient One*, *Heartlight* and *The Merlin Effect*, he explores the fragility of our environment and the power of just one person to make a difference.



Sophia Salmore, 17, of Los Angeles, created the Seedling Project, a gardening initiative at her school.

The prize he founded in honor of his mother, The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, recognizes young people who are making a difference in the real world. Each year the Barron Prize honors 25 outstanding young leaders ages 8 to 18 who have made a positive difference to people and our planet. Ten winners each receive \$2,500 to support their service work or higher education. This year one Southland student is among the finalists, and two have been honored with the prize itself.

Other winners hail from Florida, New York, Hawaii, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Ohio, and New Jersey.

Sophia Salmore, 17, of Los Angeles, was awarded the prize for her founding of the Seedling Project, a farm-to-school initiative at the Marlborough School, an all-girls campus she attends. The project is built around an edible garden that provides produce for the school's cafeteria and teaches students and community members about food systems, agriculture and sustainability. Salmore and her Action Team of 12 students have also created an eco-literacy program that teaches K-12 students across Los Angeles how to garden, compost, and prepare healthy meals.

Salmore was inspired to start her project three years ago, when her school launched a "go green" initiative that included plans for a new cafeteria. She drew up a garden proposal and after nine months of planning, speaking and persuading school administrators, her project was approved. Just a few months later, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) learned of her plans and offered her a summer internship and national platform.

With NRDC support, Salmore created an online forum at [www.theseedlingproject.net](http://www.theseedlingproject.net) where people across the country can share school-based gardening and nutrition projects. Salmore and her team plant vegetables four times a year, and harvest produce for the school's cafeteria all year long. She has organized a cooking class for students and a speaker's series featuring women passionate about

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nutrition and sustainability. She has also developed a composting program, creating compost from her school's food waste and selling what she cannot use to other gardeners. Proceeds benefit the Los Angeles Food Bank.

"Witnessing my seed of an idea grow into a living, vibrant reality has given me independence and confidence," Salmore says.



Wyatt Workman, 9, of Glendale, earned "hero" status by combining his passion for creating art with his love of the ocean. He has raised more than \$5,000 for ocean conservation efforts.

Workman spent eight months creating 70 clay sculptures of sea creatures, then used them to make a 6-minute claymation film called *Save the Sea From the Trash Monster*. The film tells the story of sea creatures dying from all of the plastic in our oceans, and ends with a human holding the secret to overcoming the Trash Monster.

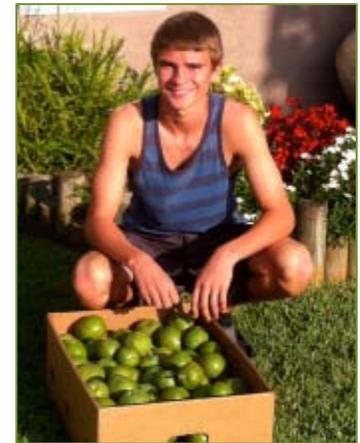
Workman photographed his clay figures and also created a book with the same title as his film. He also organized a gallery showing, attended by 350 visitors, where he sold all of his sculptures and raised nearly \$3,000 for Oceana, an ocean conservation group.

He has also created a website, [www.wyattworks.com](http://www.wyattworks.com), where people can view his film and purchase his artwork and book. Visitors to the site can also sign a pledge to try seven things to save our oceans—including only using reusable shopping bags and water bottles.

Once so shy he passed up the opportunity to speak on his school's intercom system, Workman has overcome his fear of public speaking and now gives presentations to audiences of more than 300 people. "I've learned that we can't just sit back and wait for the ocean to be destroyed," he says. "We should stand up and help as many things as we can."

Zach Selby, 18, of Arcadia, was named a Barron finalist as the founder of Fruit For All, a nonprofit group that harvests fruit from homeowners' trees and donates it to local food banks and rescue missions. Since creating the group in 2010, Selby and his volunteers have picked more than 75,000 pounds of fruit to help nearly 7,000 families in need.

Selby was inspired to launch his efforts when he noticed thousands of pounds of fruit on the ground in his own neighborhood. "I found this unacceptable," he says, "and I went to work on a solution." He recruited his younger brother (who will take over the group once Selby leaves for college) and cousin to help him, and the trio started knocking on doors.



Within a few months they were hauling 2,000 pounds of fruit to the local food bank nearly every weekend. They have also delivered fruit to a rescue mission in downtown L.A. that serves 3,000 meals to the homeless every day. Selby now has dozens of volunteers who help him harvest fruit from 300 trees in 170 homeowners' yards. "Since starting Fruit For All, I've become more aware of both the abundance in my life and the lack of it in others'," he says. "Realizing this makes me even more determined to do my part to help."

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Learn more about Fruit For All at [www.fruitforallkids.com](http://www.fruitforallkids.com).

For more information about the Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes, visit [www.barronprize.org](http://www.barronprize.org).