

2013 Barron Prize Winners and Honorees

E = Environmental Project

WINNERS

Ariana Luterman (13), Texas

Ariana formed Team Ariana as a way to combine her passions for racing triathlons and helping homeless children. In one year, she has raised over \$50,000 for the Vogel Alcove, a Dallas non-profit that provides free childcare and case management services for homeless children and their families. A seasoned and nationally ranked triathlete with a following of over 10,000 adults and children, Ariana wanted to refocus much of the media attention and sponsorships away from her racing and toward her cause of homelessness. She landed on a simple but powerful idea: Corporate sponsors would “purchase” logo positions on Team Ariana athletic gear by making a donation to the Vogel Alcove. All proceeds from the sale of the athletic gear would be donated, as well.

Ariana’s idea proved wildly successful. Corporate sponsors from all over the world jumped at the idea, and fans at races and on her website clambered to purchase Team Ariana running shorts, cycling jerseys, and socks. Within three months, she’d surpassed her first-year fundraising goal of \$10,000. Ariana continues to visit Vogel Alcove often, something she’s done since age six, when she would call the center to ask what items were most needed and then ask for those things instead of presents for her birthday. Ariana also speaks to thousands of racers at triathlons, challenging them to join her in the fight to end homelessness. **“The future of our country is riding on this next generation and we have the power to help,” says Ariana. “It’s our duty. It’s our obligation.”**

Additional Media Coverage

Justine Magazine – 12/2014

Cassie Priebe (10), California (E)

Cassie has raised money to fund the planting of over 7,800 trees in areas of the world in desperate need of reforestation. She creates clay sculptures, artwork, and jewelry to sell to her classmates, then donates the proceeds to the non-profit Trees for the Future. She began her work as an 8-year-old when, unbeknownst to her parents, she began selling drawings of animals to her friends as a way to raise money to purchase a mate for her pet bearded dragon. When her parents informed her that, money or no money, she wasn’t allowed to breed her lizard, she decided to put the \$20 she’d collected toward buying trees. She wanted to “grow a forest,” which she defined as 5,000 trees, and so launched “Cassie’s 5,000 New Trees Fund.” After quickly meeting that mark, she set her sights on funding 7,000 and has most recently raised her goal to 10,000 trees.

Cassie is passionate about animals and realizes the vital role that trees play in their health and well-being. She explains that, because the majority of her donations come from her peers, her project inspires other kids to protect the planet and actually helps reverse some of the damage

we've done to it. She has also created the Green Gecko Garden at her school using native plants and has recruited classmates to revitalize a rarely-used school composting bin. **"I've learned that I'm capable of much more than I thought," says Cassie. "I feel like I can do the impossible."**

Additional Media Coverage

San Diego Union Tribune – 11/27/2013

Charles Orgbon (17), Georgia (E)

Charles founded Greening Forward, a non-profit that provides grants, networking, and mentoring to young environmental leaders to help them put their ideas into action. Since founding his group six years ago, Charles has raised over \$100,000 and has distributed \$30,000 in grants to young environmental changemakers. His volunteer staff of students works with over 1,500 young people and fifty organizational partners in over fifteen communities. Grantees have planted over 200 trees, built more than 80 compost bins, installed over 200 rain barrels, recycled 60 tons of waste, and are monitoring eleven streams.

Charles began his work as a fifth grader, picking up trash on his school campus in order to fulfill a community service requirement. From there, he formed the Earth Savers Club and led his middle school peers in projects such as planting a community garden and starting a school recycling program. He expanded on his club in creating Greening Forward so as to reach and support a broader network of his peers. His annual week-long Youth Service Days brings together community partners and youth from dozens of schools to remove invasive species from parks, tend to school gardens, and lead eco-literacy activities for kids at the local library. Greening Forward recently held its first annual Young Environmentalists Youth Summit in Atlanta, convening over 140 young leaders for three days of workshops on topics such as project planning, grant writing, volunteer recruitment, and succession-planning. **"My work has brought me much meaning and purpose," says Charles. "I have come to fully understand Gandhi's quote, 'The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.'"**

Dylan Vecchione (15), California (E)

Dylan founded ReefQuest, an environmental conservation and education initiative committed to protecting the world's oceans and coral reefs. He has traveled extensively to image coral reefs for scientific monitoring using specialized underwater cameras that create 3D panoramas of real coral reefs. Dylan developed the process to create these 3D Virtual Reefs, which are being used as a platform for citizen science environmental programs in 48 countries. Over 60,000 students have participated in ReefQuest-sponsored research.

Dylan was inspired by his family's annual trips to Hawaii, where he watched many areas of his favorite coral reef – thousands of years in-the-making – die over the span of just a few years. After learning that the same thing was happening all over the world due to climate change and pollution, "I decided to do something about it," says Dylan. At age 9, he created a brochure about the plight of the coral reefs for a hotel chain in Hawaii. His work caught the attention of scientists at the State of Hawaii as well as the Coral Reef Alliance, who introduced him to the idea of

“citizen science” as a way for ordinary people to help the handful of scientists who are trying to monitor the world’s oceans and coral reefs. Dylan began building a website that would allow people to engage in coral reef citizen science and at age 10, officially launched ReefQuest.

He soon realized the challenge in exciting people about the oceans and coral reefs if they couldn’t dive and experience them firsthand, so he decided to bring the reefs to the people through the power of the Internet. He began designing and creating a way to do underwater 3D photography and received a grant to bring his vision to reality. His work resulted in the creation of the Virtual Reef. ReefQuest has grown to become one of the world’s largest documentation projects of coral reefs. Dylan is now working to develop an interactive textbook for middle and high school students using his website and work. **“I’ve learned the importance of mentorship and perseverance,” says Dylan. “I’ve also learned that the journey of discovery is just as important as the outcomes from it.”**

Gabrielle Posard (16), California (E)

Gabrielle created Donate Don’t Dump as a way to get surplus and short-dated food from grocers, growers, and food companies donated to the hungry instead of dumped into landfills. Her non-profit organization is 100% volunteer and teen-run with over seventeen chapters and 4,000 members and partners in four states. The group distributes 20,000 pounds of donated food each month to struggling families and seniors. The North County Food Bank in Northern San Diego County credits Gabrielle’s group with an increase of 800,000 pounds per year (or 650,000 meals) in rescued food donations. Gabrielle also serves on a number of hunger and food policy councils, and lobbies legislators in Sacramento on issues tied to hunger and the environment.

Gabrielle’s goal is to change the paradigm of food waste and usher in the next generation of recycling. She created the “Donate Don’t Dump” logo – a creative spin on the universally-recognized recycle symbol – to raise consumer awareness about food waste and hunger. She provides staggering statistics: Over 96 billion pounds of good food is dumped into landfills each year and 40% of all food grown goes from farm to landfill. Yet one in four kids in the U.S. goes hungry. Additionally, she points out that food left to rot in landfills is a major source of methane gas pollution, a potent greenhouse gas, and is the largest source of solid waste by weight. **“Teens care about helping the environment and helping the hungry, but both issues can seem overwhelming and insurmountable,” explains Gabrielle. “Donate Don’t Dump creates ripples of change that I hope will one day become a tidal wave.”**

Additional Media Coverage

Teen Ink – 11/2013

San Diego Union Tribune – 11/27/2013

Isabelle Adams (9), Texas

Isabelle has raised nearly \$175,000 to fund water wells in developing countries by creating and selling handmade origami ornaments. She and her younger sister co-founded Paper For Water in 2011 after learning that a child dies every 20 seconds for lack of clean drinking water. Determined to help change that statistic and with the December holidays drawing near, the girls

decided to make and sell origami ornaments, a craft they'd learned from their father, who is half-Japanese. At their first fundraising event, the sisters took dozens of their intricate paper ornaments to a local Starbucks, planning to create a sales exhibit that would last a month. They sold out before the evening was over.

The girls work on their origami creations daily, often sitting at the kitchen counter well past their bedtime, and sell them at art shows, lemonade stands, and local gift shops. The sisters initially hoped to raise \$9,200 to fund a well in Ethiopia. They met that mark within six weeks and set their next goal at \$50,000 – enough for ten wells in India. They easily met that goal, as well, enlisting classmates, neighbors, and church members to help them fold 37,000 pieces of paper. To date, Paper for Water has funded over 30 wells through Living Water International and is working to raise \$250,000 by the end of 2013. **“I believe that everyone can make a difference in this world,” says Isabelle. “Even a 9-year-old can have a voice that can help lead change.”**

Jack Andraka (16), Maryland

Jack has invented an inexpensive dipstick-like sensor for the rapid and early detection of pancreatic, ovarian, and lung cancers. His test detects a protein biomarker for these cancers and is 168 times faster, 26,000 times less expensive, and over 400 times more sensitive than the current method of detection. For his work, Jack won the grand prize at the 2012 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair, competing with 1,500 other young scientists from 70 countries.

Jack began his work at age 13 following the death of a close family friend from pancreatic cancer. Disheartened to learn that the current test for the disease can only detect late-stage cancer and is incredibly expensive, he resolved to find a better way. He began scouring the Internet and reading countless articles and came to understand that he needed to find a protein biomarker to test for. This meant sifting through a huge database of 8,000 proteins to research each one and evaluate its validity as a biomarker. Jack dug in and on the 4,000th try, finally found the protein he was looking for.

Next, he set about figuring out a way to detect the biomarker and landed on a way to do so during Biology class one day, while covertly reading a scientific journal article under his desk. From there, he created a budget, timeline, and procedure and emailed his packet to 200 professors who were studying anything to do with pancreatic cancer. He received 199 rejections and one lukewarm reply from a research scientist at Johns Hopkins. Within a few months, Jack had arranged a meeting with her and had gained permission to use her lab. Seven months and many long nights later, he had created a patent-pending sensor that has the potential to lift the survival rates of pancreatic cancer from 5.5% to close to 100%. **To his peers, Jack says, “The world needs you! If a 15-year-old who didn’t even know what a pancreas was can develop a new way to detect pancreatic cancer, just imagine what you could do!”**

Additional Media Coverage

Capital Gazette – 10/11/2013

Boys’ Life – 03/2014

Josiah Utsch (13) and Ridgely Kelly (12), Montana and Maine (E)

Josiah and Ridgely founded Save the Nautilus to raise awareness of the plight of the nautilus, one of the Earth's oldest creatures. The two friends have raised over \$11,000 to support nautilus research and are working to get the animal listed as an endangered species. The boys, both animal lovers and long-time fans of the 500 million-year-old nautilus, launched their campaign two years ago after reading an article about overfishing of the animal, whose shell is often used to make jewelry. As Josiah began searching the Internet for groups working to protect the nautilus, he learned of Dr. Peter Ward, a research scientist at the University of Washington with a passion for saving the ancient animal.

Josiah emailed Dr. Ward and was delighted to receive an almost immediate reply. The scientist confirmed that there was no charity working to protect the nautilus and that someone really needed to start one. "So that was exactly what I did," says Josiah, and he asked his best friend Ridgely to join his cause. The boys created a website and Ridgely drew a picture of the nautilus, which they put on t-shirts and note cards to sell. Eight months later, the boys had raised \$9,000. They flew across the country and presented the money to Dr. Ward to help fund expensive underwater cameras needed to document the nautilus. The boys have since traveled with Dr. Ward to Samoa to search for and photograph the animal. **"I want to inspire other kids to protect the animals and things they love," says Josiah. "If you notice there's something wrong in the world, it's your job to fix it," adds Ridgely.**

Additional Media Coverage

KBZK News – 9/13/2013

Bozeman Daily Chronicle – 10/6/2013

Coastal Journal – 01/02/2014

Ranger Rick – 3/2014

Lulu Cerone (14), California

Lulu created LemonAID Warriors to help kids use their passions and skills to create big changes in the world. She began her work four years ago by organizing a Boys vs. Girls LemonAID War competition with her fifth grade class that raised \$4,000 for Haitian earthquake victims. Fueled by that success, Lulu decided to create more opportunities for kids to act on their compassionate instincts and use their creativity to make community service a commonplace thing.

She started creating action plans and templates for events she calls philanthro-parties – simple ways to get kids to turn their everyday gatherings into opportunities to give. Ideas include bringing gently-used blankets to a sleepover to donate to a shelter and bringing cans of food as "admission" to a school dance. Lulu posts ideas on her website's blog and shares those sent in by other kids. She has raised \$32,000 through her philanthro-parties and another \$30,000 for sustainable water projects in Africa through backyard concerts and her annual Water Walk, when she rallies friends to collect pledges and walk two miles carrying gallon jugs of water, just as many kids in Africa must do every day.

Lulu co-produced and hosted a weekly radio show, spotlighting a fundraising "Warrior of the Week." She also convinced the head of an online party invitation company to include philanthro-

party invitations and ideas on his website. Several months ago, toy giant Mattel invited Lulu to partner with them in sharing her concept with millions of their Monster High brand fans, ages 7 to 14. She has helped Mattel create a “Ghouls Helping Ghouls” campaign and a “skullership” program, where girls post their philanthro-parties online for a chance to win \$1,000 for their favorite charity. Mattel has even created a Monster High animated character named BOO-Lu Cerone, a LemonAID Warrior and “ghost-who-gives-back.”

“I’ve learned that feeling compassion for people in need makes us compassionate toward one another,” says Lulu. “I’ve realized a ripple effect of philanthro-parties is that they make us kinder and more peaceful people.”

Additional Media Coverage

Young Entertainment Magazine – 05/09/2017

Miranda (14), British Columbia

Miranda Andersen is an environmental filmmaker committed to raising people’s awareness of the need to protect the planet and challenging them to change their behavior. She has created ten films on topics such as using less plastic, disposing of e-waste ethically, and saving salmon habitats. Many of her films document environmental heroes, such as a woman committed to living a completely plastic-free life, as a way to inspire others to action. Her most recent film, *The Child in Nature*, focuses on the work of author Richard Louv, well-known for his book about nature deficit disorder.

Miranda writes, films, edits, and narrates her projects, and creates original guitar tracks for them. Her films have played to packed audiences at a number of festivals in the U.S. and Canada and have garnered numerous first-place awards at them. She has also organized two Earth Day e-waste collection and education events in her community and has lobbied local officials to offer safe e-waste collection services to residents. Miranda relays how she has radically changed her own consumerism and lifestyle as a result of her work, refusing to use things that aren’t good for the earth. **“I want to inspire other people, especially other kids, to get involved and do their small part,” explains Miranda. “I’ve learned that there is hope for the world – lots of it – and that if everyone does their small part, change can happen.”**

Additional Media Coverage

The Vancouver Sun – 10/10/2013

Relate Magazine – 11/19/2013

Nick Lowinger (15), Rhode Island

Nick founded the Gotta Have Sole Foundation to provide brand-new footwear to children in homeless shelters across the U.S. He has raised over \$175,000 and collected more than 6,500 pairs of new shoes, allowing him to donate new footwear each time their feet grow to over 10,000 children in homeless shelters in 21 states. Nick has enlisted over 1,000 volunteers to help him and with their support, hopes to expand his program to shelters in all 50 states.

Nick began his work at age 5, tagging along with family members as they volunteered at homeless shelters. He was struck by how many of the children were wearing shoes several sizes too big or too small, and by how some attended school only on alternate days because they shared shoes with a sibling. Nick began handing down his own shoes and clothing and then at age 12, founded Gotta Have Sole as a non-profit organization. He contacted businesses, footwear manufacturers, and religious organizations for donations of money and shoes. He then called shelters to find out which shoe sizes were needed and started filling orders. He continues this practice today and personally delivers the shoes whenever he can. He recently launched two new pilot programs, providing shoes to young people interested in playing sports and to military vets and their families who are living at or below the poverty line. **“Helping others has added a dimension and purpose to my life that is indescribable,” explains Nick. “I know that youth can make a difference in the world.”**

Additional Media Coverage

State of Mind (WPRI) – 01/31/2014

Sruthi Ramaswami (18), California

Sruthi founded the Mitty Advocacy Project (MAP) to empower young people to make a difference in their communities through political advocacy. She has created a legislative network of over 1,000 students who represent social justice issues and interface directly with state and federal legislators. Teams of students research issues such as poverty, education, immigration, and criminal justice, and then identify bills designed to address these issues. Students lobby legislators in California’s capital, Sacramento, and have traveled to Washington D.C. to do so at the national level. Five of the six bills they have lobbied for have been signed into law.

Sruthi began her work as a high school freshman, invited by a teacher to prepare for and participate in Catholic Lobby Day, an advocacy event to mobilize Catholics in California to lobby state legislators. Inspired and empowered by that experience, she created MAP in her sophomore year to form a community of youth lobbyists to represent the interests of the less fortunate. As the cornerstone of MAP, she founded California Youth Advocacy Day, an annual event to promote civic engagement. For the past three years, over 600 high school students have taken part in the event, participating in issue-specific workshops led by MAP students and then lobbying their legislators at the state Capitol. MAP has grown to involve 100 students at Sruthi’s school and has expanded to over 50 schools nationwide. **“I’ve learned that mobilizing people to believe in and work towards a common goal is not the purview of adulthood,” says Sruthi. “Motivation and self-belief trump age.”**

Additional Media Coverage

India West – 10/3/2013

The American Bazaar – 10/4/2013

Relate Magazine – 11/18/2013

Los Altos Town Crier – 11/18/2013

Teagan Stedman (13), California

Teagan founded Shred Kids' Cancer, a non-profit that has raised over \$100,000 for pediatric cancer research. Teagan created the organization to give kids a way to help their peers who are fighting cancer. His signature annual fundraising event, a battle of the bands for young musicians called Shredfest, features Grammy-award-winning professional guest performers and celebrity judges. A passionate guitarist, Teagan holds his concerts at well-known Los Angeles music venues, where hundreds of guests bid on more than 200 silent auction items. He also holds bone marrow registry drives and Shredfeasts, when restaurants donate a portion of a night's proceeds to Teagan's cause, and recently organized the first annual Rock the Run 5K/10K run/walk.

Teagan began his work at age 8 following his friend Alex's diagnosis with cancer. Determined to help Alex and frustrated to find he was too young to volunteer with any pediatric cancer charities, Teagan decided to start his own. He spent the summer before fifth grade doing online research and paperwork to incorporate Shred Kids' Cancer as a non-profit. He assembled a Board of Directors and appointed five of his peers to it. Since then, he has begun mentoring other kids around the world interested in hosting their own Shred Kids Cancer events. He has partnered with organizations such as the L.A. Marathon and the Be Bold, Be Bald campaign, establishing Shred Kids Cancer as a beneficiary of their events. Teagan is also promoting a letter-writing campaign to congressmen and women, lobbying for increased funding for pediatric cancer research, and has created a petition to the White House to appoint a pediatric oncologist to the board of the National Cancer Institute. **"I've learned that if you really want to make a change, you can accomplish whatever you set your mind to," says Teagan.**

HONOREES

Chandler Burke (18), Texas

Chandler spearheaded large-scale conservation efforts at Connemara Conservancy between Dallas and Fort Worth, a 72-acre land trust dedicated to preserving the nearly-extinct Blackland Prairie ecosystem. He rallied more than 100 volunteers who worked for over 1,000 hours on erosion control, invasive species removal, and improving wildlife habitat. Chandler designed and supervised the installation of a rock apron and dam to prevent soil erosion into the Blackland Prairie Meadow, the cornerstone of the Conservancy, and to redirect water into the meadow. He also led the clean-up of a Conservancy creek, with its Poison Ivy covered banks and poisonous snakes, where his team hauled car doors and tires out of the water. **"I introduced volunteers to a local problem and showed them that, despite their young age, their actions can improve our community," says Chandler.**

Emma Freedman (13), California

Emma founded the non-profit Jungleheroes to help save orangutans from extinction. She has created a website, raised \$3,000 for her cause, and spoken to thousands of people to encourage them to protect the environment. She began her work at age 10 following a family trip to Borneo, where she learned how the clearing of rainforests for palm oil plantations severely threatens the orangutans. Emma challenges kids to take her Jungleheroes pledge to protect the rainforest, provides palm-oil-free recipes on her website, and helps other children start Jungleheroes chapters. **"No one person can save the rainforest," says Emma. "But together, we can change the world."**

Emma Rider (15), Delaware

Emma has collected over 65,000 pairs of shoes that have been sold to provide clean drinking water for people in developing countries. Her work has generated over \$30,000 to train volunteers and manufacture water chlorination systems, each impacting a community of 500 to 10,000 people, and has kept 30 tons of shoes out of landfills. Emma began her shoe drive three years ago after visiting the non-profit WaterStep and learning of their water and hygiene work around the world. She resolved to collect 4,000 pairs of shoes and within five months, had collected 8,500 pairs, storing them in a horse stall in her family's barn. **"In Kenya, we were sharing information about health, hygiene, and clean water," explains Emma. "But the Kenyans were sharing the importance of relationships and how we need to slow down to appreciate what we have."**

Erek Hansen (12), Ohio

Erek created the EcoErek Recycling Initiative to collect items that can be recycled into new products and to spread recycling awareness. He began his work at age 8 after learning that denim jeans can be shredded and remade into housing insulation. Each summer since then, Erek has held denim collection drives all over northwest Ohio. He has shipped over 15,000 pairs of jeans to be repurposed into housing insulation that is donated to families rebuilding their homes after natural disasters. Two years ago, he began collecting shoes, as well, and has sent over 7,500 pairs to a company that either re-directs them to those in need or recycles them into sidewalks and playground mulch. **"I've learned that with a lot of hard work, you can make a difference when you believe in something so much," explains Erek.**

Jen Rubino (18), Illinois

Jen has distributed over 30,000 handmade cards to children who are hospitalized or seriously ill through her non-profit Cards for Hospitalized Kids. Over 1,000 volunteers from all over the world create and send the cards to Jen, which she distributes to children in hospitals in all 50 states and to Ronald McDonald Houses nationwide. She began her work in 2011, inspired by her own six-year-battle with a chronic illness that required over twenty surgeries. Her website includes card-making guidelines for Scout troops, sports teams, and other groups to use in creating cards. It also allows families to request cards for their children, which Jen sends within a few days. **"I've seen that no act of kindness is too small and that anything is possible when people come together," says Jen.**

Joel Bervell (17), Washington

Joel co-founded Hugs for Ghana, an entirely student-led non-profit that raises money and collects supplies to give children in Ghana better access to education and medical care. Each summer, Joel hand-delivers the supplies to schools, hospitals and orphanages in Ghana, his parents' homeland. In five years, his group has raised over \$14,000 and delivered \$2,000 worth of medical supplies. He has also collected and distributed 6,000 school supplies, 6,000 stuffed animals, and will soon deliver nearly \$12,000 worth of sports equipment. Joel has raised funds by organizing a Ghanaian Night of Culture to celebrate the food, music, and customs of the country. **"I've found that people truly do want to help their fellow human beings," says Joel. "They just need the opportunity to do so."**

Joshua Williams (12), Florida

Joshua founded Joshua's Heart Foundation, a non-profit organization that provides food to low-income children, seniors, and families in South Florida and Jamaica West Indies. With the help of more than 600 youth volunteers, Joshua has collected or purchased over 500,000 pounds of food and distributed it to over 10,000 people. Joshua began his work to "stomp out hunger" at age 5, when he gave a homeless man the \$20 his grandmother had given him as a gift. Joshua recently launched his Backpack Program, sending 20-60 children home from school each weekend with a backpack full of food. He has also begun offering cooking demonstrations on how to prepare easy, nutritious meals. **"Edward Everett Hale said, 'I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something,'" says Joshua.**

Konner Robison (17), Nevada

Konner created the Scholastic Gateway Fund in order to provide grants to local schools in need of technology for their students. He has raised \$100,000 to help schools in his community purchase advanced graphing calculators, headsets, laptops, and science data collection systems. Konner raises money by asking local businesses, charitable foundations, and individuals for donations. He was inspired to create the fund after learning of a classmate's inability to purchase the expensive graphing calculator needed for her advanced math class. **"I know I will be a member of the philanthropy community for the rest of my life," says Konner. "There's nothing like giving back, especially when we have all been given so much."**

Lauren Sundstrom (18), Massachusetts

Lauren founded Clothes for Hope, a large-scale clothing resale initiative that in two years, has raised over \$90,000 to buy books, educational materials, and uniforms for children in Ghana, Africa. She has also commissioned local workers there to build the Clothes for Hope Middle School and Library at a village orphanage, as well as desks to seat over 100 students. She began her work after volunteering in Ghana, where she was struck by the lack of educational resources. She returned to the U.S. determined to help and enlisted over 200 volunteers to help her collect thousands of articles of new and gently used clothing for her massive Shop for a Cause clothing sale, now an annual event. **"This journey has allowed me to discover my ability to speak on behalf of those without a voice," says Lauren. "And I've learned that I can inspire other people to open their hearts to love and to give to others in need."**

Peyton Medick (15), Wisconsin

Peyton founded the non-profit Peyton's Promise in order to "make the world a better place, one can at a time." In the past seven years, she has collected over 100 tons of food and more than \$30,000 for 25 food pantries throughout the U.S. She and her cadre of volunteers raise money by selling bracelets and t-shirts and use it to purchase meat, dairy, and produce to stock the local food pantry's freezer and cooler (obtained through a grant Peyton helped write). Peyton also organizes teams of volunteers to distribute lists of most-needed items to shoppers as they enter grocery stores and to collect donations as they leave. **"I've learned that I can't fix the hunger problem," explains Peyton. "But I've realized that I can continue to inspire others to work together to help with the problem and to make the world a better place."**

Samuel Reiss (17), California

Samuel created X-Change the World, which pairs young people in the U.S. with students in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Kenya. The students hold "x-changes" with each other once a week through an online classroom that allows the American students to guide their counterparts overseas through textbooks, videos, and interactive games. Samuel's goal is to bring English

speaking skills and other educational opportunities to youth across the world while fostering cross-cultural friendships, global curiosity, and compassion. So far, sixty students have “x-changed” through his program. **“I’ve realized that if we, as young people, could come to realize our interconnectedness, we could foster a more peaceful and just world,” says Samuel.**

Xiuhtezcatl Martinez (12), Colorado

Xiuhtezcatl is an indigenous environmental activist and leader with the Earth Guardians, a team of young people committed to global sustainability. He led a successful effort to rid city parks of pesticides in his hometown outside of Denver and helped convince local grocery stores to charge customers for using plastic bags. He has also worked to encourage the EPA to put stricter regulations on fly ash at a local coal-fired power plant and to ban genetically modified organisms from county open space land. He is currently leading the Earth Guardians’ effort to ban fracking. He has spoken at rallies and conferences around the world and has established Earth Guardians chapters in Australia, Africa, Brazil, and India. **“Through my work, I’ve seen that I have the power to make huge changes, not only in my local community, but globally,” says Xiuhtezcatl.**