

# Environmental Advocacy Webinar Series

Presented by:



## **When Kids Fight for Environmental Justice, Words have Power**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2020  
12:00 PM-1:00 PM ET**

# Moderator

**Sue Byers, M.A.**

Director

MAED Urban Environmental Education

**Antioch University Seattle**



# Webinar Logistics



Everyone should be connected via Audio Broadcast upon entering the webinar. You do not need to call in & you are automatically muted



The presentation will be recorded and posted to the Antioch CCPCR web site within one week



Please submit any questions you have for the presenter in the Q& A section



If you are having trouble with any aspect of the broadcast, use the Chat section to message the Host directly

# Presenter



## Jaysa Hunter-Mellers

At 10 years old, **Jaysa Hunter-Mellers'** dynamic speeches at rallies and her testimony at City Hall helped shut down the coal-fired power plant that was causing her asthma. Her story is told in the short film, "Words Have Power", one of thirteen award-winning [Young Voices for the Planet \(YVFP\)](#) films produced by Lynne Cherry, documenting youth solutions to the climate crisis and other environmental and social justice issues.

Now 15 years old, Jaysa continues to galvanize audiences with a courage and wisdom that belie her years.

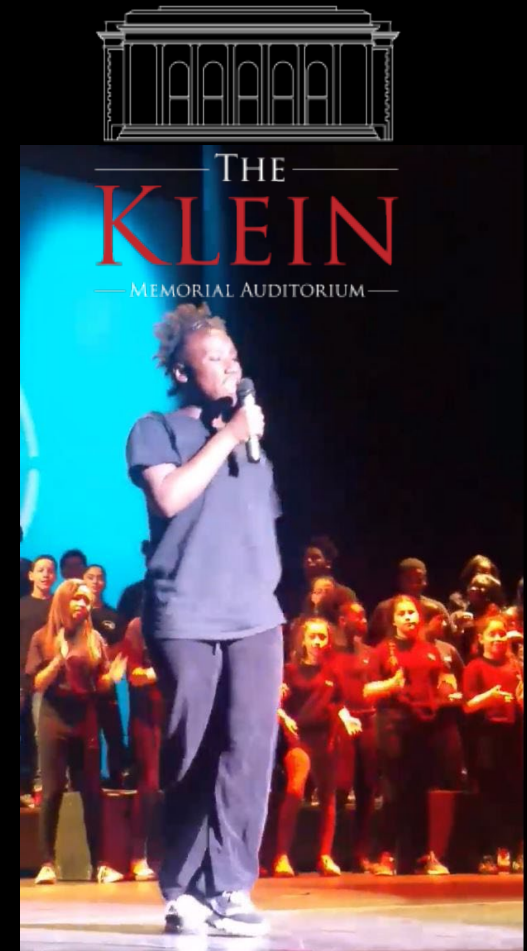
# WHEN KIDS FIGHT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE WORDS HAVE POWER

A KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY JAYSA HUNTER-RIEGLERS



# WHO IS JAYSA HUNTERMELLERS

- Turned 15 years old in May 2020
- First speech at age 6; Became an activist at the age of 10
- Dancer, Singer and Performer in the Klein Dance Company
- Honor Roll Student at Fairchild Wheeler Information and Software Engineering Magnet Highschool in CT
- Student Council and Robotics Club
- Young Voices for the Planet Youth Ambassador
- Winner of Best Of Best Award At The “My Hero International Film Festival”



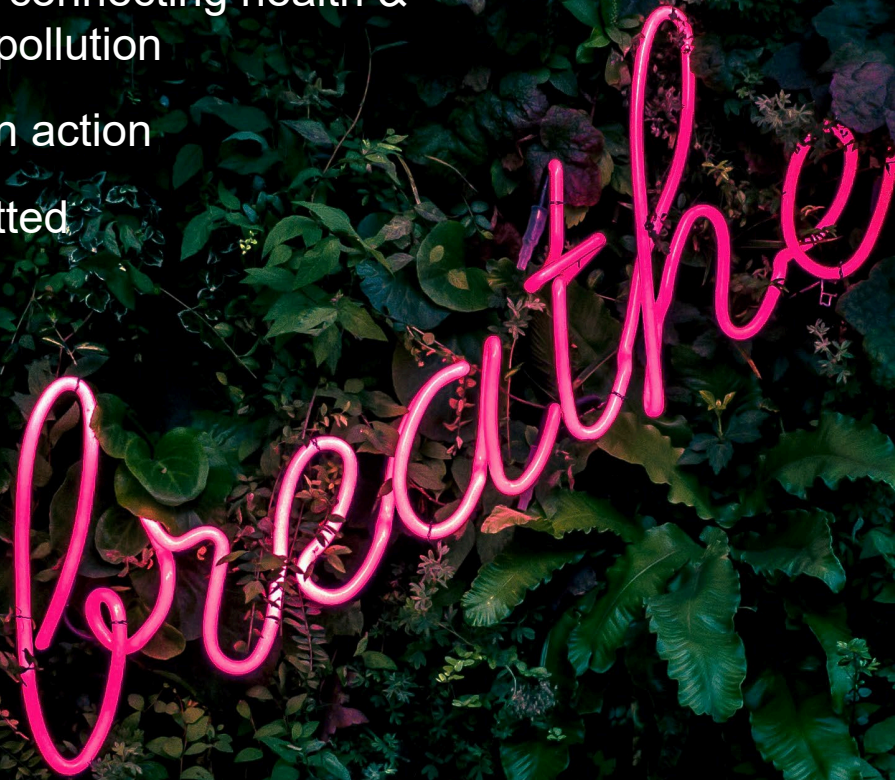
# BEST OF THE FEST

My Hero International Film Festival



# HOW I GOT INTO CLIMATE ACTIVISM

- Childhood asthma – death of a friend
- Healthy CT Alliance – role models; cause & effect: connecting health & environmental pollution
- Intro to Civics in action
- Staying committed





# RACISM & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- *"Our racial inequality crisis is intertwined with our climate crisis. If we don't work on both, we will succeed at neither."* *Dr. Ayana Elizabeth*

- According to the NAACP report, 78 percent of African Americans live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant
- 71 percent of African Americans live in counties that violate federal air pollution standards, as compared to 58 percent of the white population
- Asthma affects African Americans at a 36 percent higher rate of incidence than white
- According to Yale Environment 360, an African American child is three times more likely to go to the emergency room for an asthma attack than a white child and die of asthma at twice the rate of whites

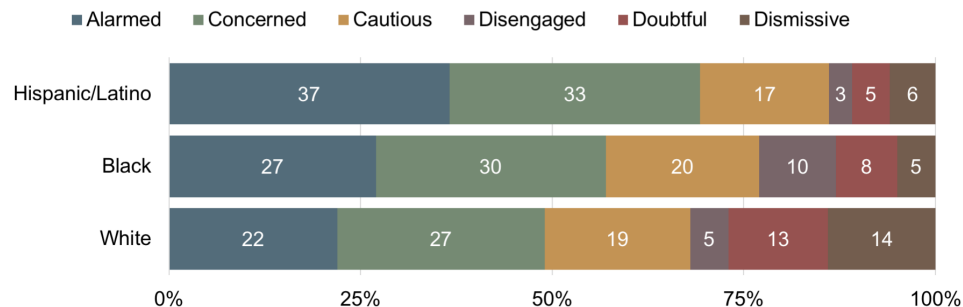
## MY COMMUNITY — BRIDGEPORT, CT

- Largest & poorest city in state
- One of CT's few ethnic communities
- Fairfield County has some of the worst air pollution in the Northeast
- 20.3% White / 35% Black / 40% Hispanic & Latino (crossover)
- Medium household income per household is \$45K
- 21.4% of people live below the poverty level
- Lack of comprehensive, affordable health care

Jaysa Mellers  
13 years old

# CHANGE THE NARRATIVE— YOUNG PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE MOST CONCERNED & WILLING TO TAKE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

## Hispanic/Latino and Black Americans are more likely to be Alarmed or Concerned about global warming than are Whites



Global Warming's Six Americas  
 April 2019, November 2019. Base: 2,386 U.S. adults  
 (White n = 1,833; Hispanic/Latino n = 304; Black n = 249)



Yale Program on Climate Change Communication's recent research shows that:

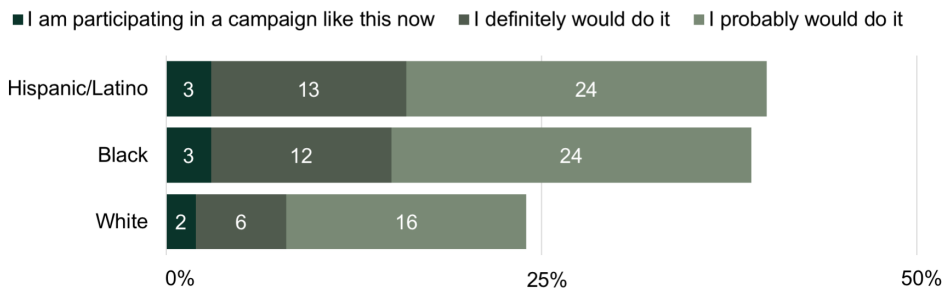
People of color in the U.S., including Hispanics/Latinos, African Americans, and other non-White racial/ethnic groups, are more concerned than Whites about climate change.

They also report greater willingness to join a campaign to convince elected officials to take action.

Climate change disproportionately affects members of disadvantaged communities and groups who face socioeconomic inequalities, including many people of color.

As the United States becomes more racially and ethnically diverse, promoting public engagement with climate change across diverse audiences is becoming increasingly important.

## Hispanic/Latino and Black Americans are more willing than Whites to join a campaign to convince elected officials to take action to reduce global warming



How willing or unwilling would you be to join a campaign to convince elected officials to take action to reduce global warming?  
 April 2019, November 2019. Base: 2,386 U.S. adults  
 (White n = 1,833; Hispanic/Latino n = 304; Black n = 249)



# FIND COURAGE TO SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER

- I started speaking at environmental rallies and found my calling. **Words show my passion & outrage** ; Call people's attention to environmental racism through my story; Leaders listened; **The plant was shut down!!!**
- Different ways to commit to activism; **Find your love language!**
- **The power of young voices:** to tell the truth, speak to the heart, wake people up;
- **The power of success stories, especially of diverse young role models**
- **Young Voices for the Planet model:** Teach with hope & action vs. doom & gloom
- **"Hopelessness is the enemy of Justice."**  
— Bryan Stevenson, Equal Justice Initiative



# AMPLIFY YOUNG VOICES FOR CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE USING SOCIAL MEDIA AND MICRO-INFLUENCERS

## WHY DO THEY MATTER?

THEY DELIVER ENGAGEMENT



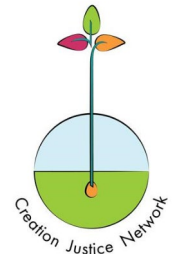
THEY'RE COST EFFECTIVE



THEY DRIVE SOCIAL BUZZ



- 1M followers => \$50k per post
- 60% higher engagement
- Underpriced (6.7X more cost-efficient per engagement)
- 22.2% more weekly conversations than the average consumer
- 1k followers is stronger than 100k



Words Have Power', Young Voices for the Planet's award-winning film reached audiences across the country and is **being used to catalyze community conversations and youth-led climate action in other environmental justice communities, particularly in Western PA** where the fracking and petrochemical industries dominate and people's health is suffering from air and water pollution.

# BUILD A JUST DEMOCRACY WHERE ALL VOICES ARE HEARD



**Talking Civics Education**

*“Research proves that  
“demographics are not destiny,”  
and that universally-available,  
high-quality, school-based civic  
learning opportunities can close  
the racial and socioeconomic  
empowerment gap that cripples  
our democracy.”*

— Sue E. Spote & Joseph Kahne  
Educating the Democracy  
Lessons from Chicago, 2007

# THE CLIMATE CRISIS = A DEMOCRACY CRISIS

Many Americans are ignorant regarding governance, particularly at the local and regional levels where decision-making particularly affects our communities! This allows our leaders to assert too much control.

Communities of color have been routinely disenfranchised and oppressed by the political system and consequently, young people of color are particularly frustrated.

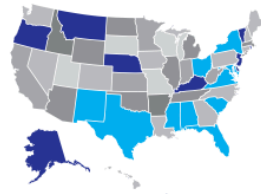
**We need a commitment to Participatory Democracy through civic education — taught comprehensively and equitably across schools, so more young know how they can make a difference!**

Image: Jerome Foster II — Founder of One Million of Us and fellow YVFP Ambassador, working to get 1 million youth engaged in voting

# THE STATE OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

**The current state of education falls short.**

Civic  
education  
by the  
numbers...



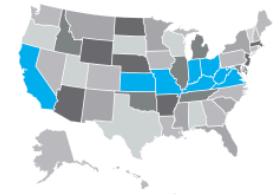
**ONLY 9 STATES**  
require a full year  
of civic education  
in high school.  
**10 STATES**  
don't require it at all.



**NEARLY 75%**  
of Americans  
cannot name  
all three branches  
of government.



**FEWER THAN 1 IN 4**  
students reach a  
“proficient” score  
in civics on the  
National Assessment  
of Educational  
Progress (NAEP).



**ONLY 8 STATES**  
have a stand-alone  
assessment  
in civics.\*

\*does not include the  
U.S. Citizenship and  
Immigration Services  
Civics Test as an  
assessment

Source: CivXNow



# ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE IN CIVICS



- **My introduction:** iCivics / Newsfeed Defenders / Spotting Fake News & Campaign for CT State Senator, Marilyn Moore
- The basics – what all kids need to know! Know/contact your local govt, participate in public meetings, find candidates that represent you, connect with amplifiers – producers, news outlets! **Remember your power.**

# THE BENEFITS OF CIVIC EDUCATION— NOW & FOR OUR FUTURE



Robert R. McCormick Foundation: [https:// bit.ly /civics -benefits](https://bit.ly/civics-benefits)

- Increases Creativity...
- Critical Thinking
- News Literacy
- Collaboration
- Global Awareness
- Positive School Climate
- Interdisciplinary Learning Experiences
- Community Engagement
- Civic Action & Volunteerism
- Professional Opportunities
- Lowers High School Dropout Rate

# CIVIC & CLIMATE EDUCATION RESOURCES



- CivXNow – policy & educational resources. [www.icivics.org](http://www.icivics.org)
- Zinn Education Project : Climate Justice & Racial Justice Resources  
[www.zinnedproject.org](http://www.zinnedproject.org)
- Young Voices for the Planet : Films, Civic Engagement & Democracy Curriculum for Grades 3 -12  
[www.youngvoicesfortheplanet.com/](http://www.youngvoicesfortheplanet.com/)
- Our Children’s Trust : Making the Case for Science-Based Climate Action - focuses on Juliana v. United States  
[www.ourchildrenstrust.org/curriculum](http://www.ourchildrenstrust.org/curriculum)
- Children’s Environmental Literacy Foundation (CELF) Citizen Science & Social Justice [www.celfeducation.org/](http://www.celfeducation.org/)

# EVERYBODY CAN DO SOMETHING

## A BETTER WORLD - WHICH KIND OF **ACTIVIST** ARE YOU?

No one can do everything.  
But **everyone** can do something.

As part of a growing movement of people across the world who want to end extreme poverty and tackle climate chaos all kinds of activists are needed. But which kind of activist for a better world might you be?



### THE CITIZEN

Describes a vision of the good society, is trusted by others, able and willing to defend the movement against criticism from those in power and supports a non-violent approach.

**You are:** Grounded, diplomatic, articulate, business casual optional



### THE REBEL

Draws attention to issues on society's agenda, represents society's moral vanguard in the gap between what is and what should be, and leads in the 'take off' phase of a social movement when 'trigger events' gains mass attention for the movement.

**You are:** Courageous, risk taker, brave, probably has a Ché Guevara t-shirt



### THE Social Change Agent

Nurtures agreement in the community, continuously learns through dialogue, promotes alternatives and educates, convinces and involves majority of ordinary citizens and whole society in change.

**You are:** Charismatic, strategic, good communicator, has a tie for each occasion



### THE REFORMER

Promotes major reforms in negotiations with 'the system' to get movement goals, values, alternatives adopted into official laws, policies and conventional wisdom through lobbying, lawsuits, referenda, official rallies, corporations, local authorities, candidates etc.

**You are:** Headstrong, resourceful, with multiple suits

Source  
DevelopmentEducation.ie  
Infographic: which kind of  
activist are you?  
18th September 2015  
By Tony Daly and Grace  
McManus

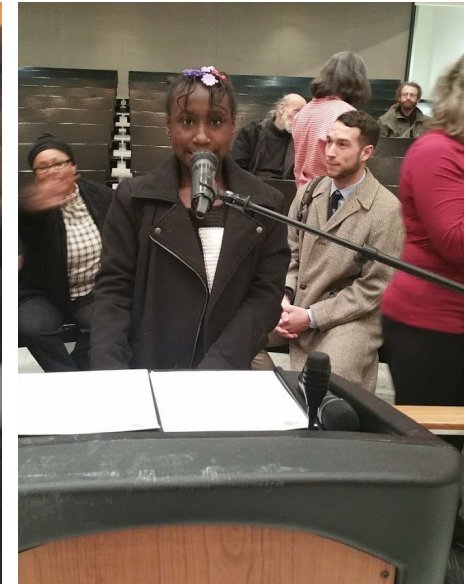
# ACTION PLAN – FIND YOUR PASSION, PEOPLE & POWER

## Young Voices for the Planet A.C.T.I.O.N. Plan Knowing what to do vs DOING IT!

- **Assess & Analyze** : Find your passion; what concerns you & what do you want to change?
- **Collaborate**: Find your team & shared purpose
- **Timetable** : Strategize steps towards your goal
- **Identify**: Mentors - what people & organizations can help you:
- **Organize**: Roles & responsibilities, meetings, milestones
- **News**: Get the word out – amplify your work and successes! Write letters to the editor, contact news outlets, share on social media



# JOIN ME! TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE CLIMATE & ENV. JUSTICE REAL



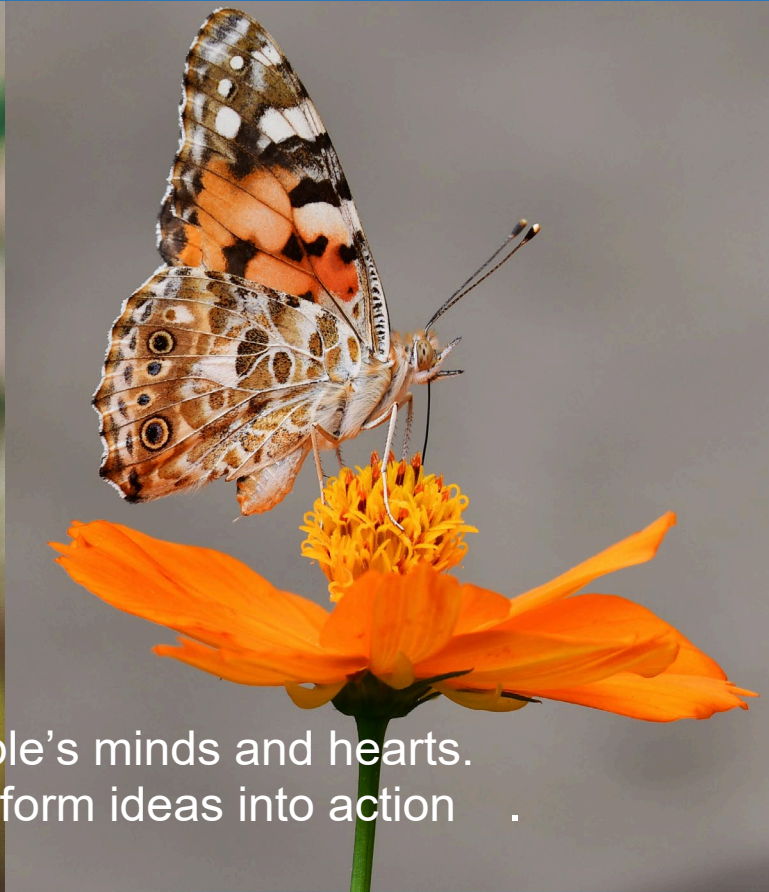
# SUMMARY

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- My journey and its impact – PSE&G  
Coal Plant Closed 2016
- WORDS HAVE POWER
- Civics is CRITICAL
- Today's world has plenty of amplifiers  
for your voice
- You can start today by choosing a role,  
making a plan and executing it



# MOST IMPORTANTLY– USE YOUR GIFTS TO INFORM & TRANSFORM



Like a caterpillar...worm your way into people's minds and hearts.  
Use your passion / love -language to transform ideas into action .

"Well-behaved women, seldom make history."

— Laurel Thatcher Ulrich —





*Thank You*

Questions?

Save these dates for the rest of the Environmental Advocacy Webinar series!



## **Environmental Advocacy Webinar Series**

### **Environmental Advocacy Webinar Series Lineup for 2020-2021 Wednesdays 12:00 PM Eastern time**

- **Research on Climate Advocacy – August 19, 2020**
- **Direct Action Training – September 23, 2020**
- **Advocacy Training - November 11, 2020**
- **Teaching Advocacy: Planting the Seeds of Change - January 13, 2021**
- **Environmental Advocacy as a Career – February 24, 2021**

**Registration and additional information about this series will be updated at [www.communityresilience-center.org/environmental-advocacy-webinar-series/](http://www.communityresilience-center.org/environmental-advocacy-webinar-series/)**