Changemaking from the Nation's Capital

Jerome Foster II, OneMillionOfUs, Washington DC

☀ Call to Action

Get informed on the latest global news on climate & sustainability at Jerome's online hub, The Climate Reporter - medium.com/the-climate-reporter.

☀ Values

- Innovative
- Committed
- Collaborative
- Leader
- Environmentalist

☀ Lessons Learned

When you find an issue that interests you, read everything you can about it.

It is important to understand that social and environmental issues are often interconnected.

When you see a problem, you can be part of the solution.

Social media can help raise awareness of how various social and environmental issues are interrelated, by promoting communication between people of different cultures and backgrounds.

Jerome Foster grew up near our nation's capital. I always understood what BLM (Black Lives Matter), women's rights, and other mainstream social justice movements were about," he says. "But I never realized that these had anything to do with climate change. And when I did, I decided to do something about it."

In 2017 he founded The Climate Reporter, a collection of writing by international youth about climate change, global warming, environmental justice, and other sustainability issues around the world. This environmental news site now receives roughly 600,000 views a month. In 2019, Jerome also organized the DC chapter of the worldwide youth movement, School Strikes for Climate. To show her support for the Global Climate Strikes, Greta Thunberg traveled for the very first time by sailboat from Europe to New York, and then went on to Washington D.C. to join with Jerome in increasing media attention to the issue.

☀ Language Arts

Choose an environmental issue you feel passionate about. Using the app "Fakebook"[1] , create a fake profile for an organization that would deal with the issue you have chosen. The profile must have at least three images in addition to the profile and background pictures. You must also create a "favorites" list, and at least five posts for the organization. In a separate document, explain why you made the choices you made in terms of images and posts.

Make a list of 10 strategies you would use to create a successful social media campaign including creating profiles on several different social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik-Tok, Snapchat, etc.). Explain which platforms you would use and why.

Create a Tik-Tok video aimed at creating awareness of the link between the climate change and social justice

movements. Then write a five-paragraph essay explaining why you chose those particular issues, and how they are connected.warm summers.

☀ STEM Activities

Jerome started a company that uses VR technology to bring virtual experiences to students in the classroom. VR headsets are used to "translate" a 2D image from a phone into a 3D environment; but this technology is often expensive. Google offers an affordable option with their Google Cardboard. Depending on available resources, obtain Google Cardboard kits ($20-$25) and have students think of ways to improve the design of this basic VR headset. For example, how could they be made more comfortable to wear, or easier to hold for a longer period of time? Or how could a head strap be added? Alternatively, students can build their own cardboard headset by downloading the Google Cardboard design specifications [2] and obtaining some lenses like these[3]. Have students test and evaluate their improved headsets by following the engineering process.

OneMillionOfUs is a nonprofit organization founded by Jerome to promote and encourage youth voting. However, for many young people, the Electoral College system in U.S. elections is confusing. This activity will show students how proportional reasoning can be used to show how some election methods work better than others. To model different election systems, students will hold a class election to establish the best candy, with the winning candy shared with the class at the end. Select three or four different types of candies, but do not identify them until after the first round of voting. Then have students evaluate the fairness and efficiency of each voting method. Are there problems with any of them? How could they be improved?

- **The first round will model the direct popular vote, in which each person gets one vote, and each vote is weighted equally.** Students will submit their favorite candy in a secret ballot and the winner will be the candy with the most votes.
- **The second round will model representative voting, in which one representative is chosen to vote on behalf of a group. Announce the candies that the class will be voting on.** Then arrange the students in groups of different sizes, and have each group select one person to represent them. Each representative will then vote for their favorite candy without consulting the rest of the group.
- **The third round of elections will model a modified version of the electoral college.** Using the same groups as in the last round, have each elector consult with the other members of the group and establish the group's favorite candy. Any ties should be dealt with within the group. The elector will then vote for the group's choice, and the candy with the most electoral votes wins.
- **Suppose that the total number of votes equals the number of students in the class: ask students how the votes should be distributed among the groups.** Now suppose that 100 votes must be received: how would they distribute the votes then? Students should explain their solutions using proportional reasoning.

Jerome runs a blog called The Climate Reporter[4] to spread awareness about climate issues. Have students pick an issue they are passionate about, or interested in, and build a simple static website using HTML. The site should include text, images, and links. Students can take these HTML and CSS tutorials on Codecademy to learn the basics of HTML[5] and CSS[6]. For an optional challenge, students can follow this tutorial[7] on deploying their website to the internet using GitHub.

☀ Sustainability Innovations

Jerome's inner motivation has led him to work toward engaging and enabling youth to understand the current state of the world and how we can make positive, sustainable changes for a better future. Research one policy or law that is addressing sustainability in the U.S. and create a blog post that you would send to The Climate Reporter to raise awareness on

this issue. See [examples](#).[8]

Through the work of his company, his blog, and his nonprofit organization Jerome has found a way to connect young people for the purpose of reaching common goals.

• Identify one issue facing the students in your community/school and design a school club to connect students with similar viewpoints. Create three goals that you would like to accomplish, and research one organization/company in the community where your "club" would like to volunteer.

☀ Sustainability Career Pathways

Digital Entrepreneur. The internet is a vast frontier that offers countless opportunities for innovation. Every day people are creating new apps, games, media platforms, and tools to connect; and are raising funds, or educating others through blogs and online courses. All of these can help inform people about how to live more sustainably. Would you like to be a digital entrepreneur? [Here's an article introducing the field of digital entrepreneurship.](#)[9]

Environmental Journalist. Jerome created his own Medium channel, The Climate Reporter. But many people who love to write, including about the climate and environmental issues, make their careers as full-time journalists. Some are freelancers, pitching stories to a variety of outlets. Others work full time for a news outlet. To learn more about this career, [read here](#)[10]. [The Society of Environmental Journalists](#)[11] is a valuable resource that offers job boards, mentoring, annual conferences, and listservs for environmental journalists.

Organizer. Engaging one's community around important environmental and social challenges, as well as in getting out the vote and strengthening democracy, is an important career path, and a valuable community service. There are many programs for learning organizing skills and strategies, from online courses ([such as this one](#)[12]), to one-year environmental organizing field schools like [Green Corps.](#)[13]

Elected Official. Along with getting people to vote, it's important that they have good candidates to vote for. Perhaps you should run for elected office? One typically starts by running for a local office, or working for an elected official to learn the ropes. But there are many paths. [Listen to this NPR story to get a better sense of the process](#)[14] of running for office.

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1   https://www.classtools.net/FB/home-page

2   https://arvr.google.com/cardboard/

3   https://www.amazon.com/Biconvex-Pop-Tech-Bi-convex-Diameter-Cardboard/dp/B012HYF4A2/ref=sr_1_6?dchild=1&keywords=google+cardboard+lenses&qid=1608519175&sr=8-6&tag=sciencebuddie-20

4   https://medium.com/the-climate-reporter

5   https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-html

6   https://www.codecademy.com/learn/learn-css

7   https://www.khanacademy.org/computing/computer-programming/html-css/web-development-tools/a/hosting-your-website-on-github

8   https://thesustainabilityalliance.us/environmental-sustainability/

9   https://copyblogger.com/digital-entrepreneur/

10   https://www.openschoolofjournalism.com/specializations/environmental-journalism

11   https://www.sej.org/

12   https://www.coursera.org/learn/community-organizing

13   https://greencorps.org/

14   https://www.npr.org/2019/10/15/770332855/how-to-run-for-office