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STONE SOUP FOR A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Life-changing Stories Of Young Heroes

Marianne Larned

BOOK REVIEW

A collection of profiles of young people working toward a more sustainable world.

In this follow-up to *Stone Soup for the World* (1998), Larned, the founder of the nonprofit Stone Soup Leadership Institute, presents numerous profiles of activists and leaders—mostly youth and young adults. The profiles are organized around seven subjects—climate change, environmental justice, education, entrepreneurship, business, intergenerational activism, and islands—and they reflect a diversity of interests and experiences, although most of the people profiled focus mainly on combating climate change. They come from different parts of the world and a variety of socio-economic backgrounds; some have received significant financial help from their parents, while others have worked more independently to pursue their interests. Many of the youth featured have launched their own organizations or local branches of international nonprofits, and many cite activist Greta Thunberg and the Fridays for Future movement or former Vice President Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* as their influences. Some of them began their activism as young children, while others reached their teen years before finding their callings; some are still in school, while others have turned their passion for changing the world into a career. All are concerned about the future of the planet, but they're also optimistic as young people join their movements in numbers that exceed their expectations. Each profile ends with a suggestion for how readers can support the specific cause or organization under discussion.

Larned has pulled together dozens of compelling stories in this book, and she does an excellent job of bringing attention to people who are making small but significant progress toward a better future. The profiles all allow their subjects to speak for themselves in numerous direct quotes, and these demonstrate both their youth and their thoughtful understanding of the world's problems: "I practiced my Dutch by counting all of these cans, bottles, and pieces of plastic. I counted 91 pieces!" says a 12-year-old who began his activism by organizing local trash pickups. Larned shows how each person has been shaped by their advocacy work and by interacting with others around the world, and each profile reflects the impact that the subject has had on their community. Although Larned does an excellent job of displaying the unique characteristics of each figure, the sheer number of stories—there are 100 here—can become overwhelming, and readers may find that the book is best consumed in small chunks. It is also unclear why a book focused on young leaders includes a number of profiles of people who are a long way from their youth activist days (politician Kerry Kennedy, actor Ed Begley Jr., Ben & Jerry's co-founder Ben Cohen, journalist Maria Ressa), although they all have made noteworthy contributions in the years since. As a whole, though, the book is an engaging introduction to the work of dozens of people aspiring to make the world a more sustainable place.

A lengthy but informative set of tales of fascinating activists.

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