



Ripples of Hope

Kerry Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy Foundation
Washington D.C

☀ Call to Action

Learn more about Kerry's work, & explore the extensive humanitarian network supporting equal rights for everyone around the world at **Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights: rfkhumanrights.org/people/kerry-kennedy**.

☀ Values

- Community Service
- Justice
- Compassion
- Generosity
- Commitment

☀ Lessons Learned

If you are looking for personal fulfillment, remember: helping others gives meaning to life.

It is both our duty and our honor to bring hope to those who need it. Defending human rights is defending our shared humanity.

If you want to change the world, start by using your position in your community to help those who are less fortunate. Make ripples. Be seen helping, and others will follow.

Kerry Kennedy learned from her father early on that public service was “just really what you wanted to do because that was what made life meaningful.”

So it wasn't so much a sense of obligation or a burden, or a demand to serve others that she heard coming from him: it was just something you did because it was right, and it made you feel better to be helping. But one day, after experiencing extreme poverty in the Mississippi Delta, she remembers her father saying to a roomful of people, “You have to be involved.” That moment, as much as any other, Kerry says, set her on her lifelong journey in advocacy – a journey aimed at “exposing the many abuses that go on around this world, in all of its forms.” She has always kept her father's words before her as a beacon, to keep striving toward a better world. “Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope...and those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

☀ Language Arts

Kerry's father, Robert F. Kennedy, taught her that our actions should create “a ripple of hope.” Create a series of Tik Tok videos or tweets in which you offer concrete ways in which people can generate a “tiny ripple of hope” in their communities.

What is Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights? Create a five-minute video in which you explain the organization's mission, the relevance of its work, the causes it supports, and how people can support it.

What is the current state of poverty and hunger in the United States, specifically in the region of Appalachia?

Write a research essay in which you describe the poverty rate and the number of people who experience hunger in Appalachia today;

and how this population is being disproportionately affected by environmental threats.

STEM Activities

Climate change negatively affects people’s health and quality of life. Those who are already disadvantaged because of their race or income are usually the most affected by environmental hazards and disasters. Use the [EPA’s environmental justice screening and mapping tool](#)¹ to identify and analyze an area near you with increased environmental burdens and vulnerable populations. [Activity link](#)².

Research and describe the impacts of changing climate conditions on human health with an emphasis on vulnerable populations; then apply systems thinking to create a visual model of the various health implications arising from climate change. Finally, use local, state, or regional data and the [US Climate Resilience Toolkit](#) to evaluate climate adaptation and mitigation strategies that protect human health. [Activity link](#)³.

Using your research from the activity above, plan a project to address a human health impact that is related to climate change and is relevant in your community.

In this [activity](#)⁴, students will analyze the income distribution of the three most populous racial/ethnic groups in the United States to evaluate whether or not these distributions have become more equitable over time. Using data from the 2013 U.S. Census, students will compare the percentages of total income earned by different subgroups, and decide whether or not the “American Dream” is equally achievable by all Americans.

Sustainability Innovations

As a part of her leadership role in Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, Kerry participated in [#breakbreadnotfamilies](#)⁵ by fasting for 24 days to protest the 2,400 students that have been separated from their families.

As a leader in Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, Kerry engages in the organization’s work of teaching and protecting human rights, inspiring young leaders, and engaging the business community. Go to the teaching [human rights resource](#)⁶ and complete the virtual field trip. What did you learn by watching these videos? Did you expand your knowledge of activism?

In addition to RFK Human Rights personal projects, they have partnerships with Discovery Education, Civic Works, and many other organizations, to promote and expand Speaking Truth to Power!

Sustainability Career Pathways

Public Servant. There are countless ways to become a public servant: working for a government agency like the [EPA](#)⁷, [running for office](#)⁸, or being an [organizer](#)⁹, whether for the climate, environmental justice, or agricultural reform, like Cesar Chavez, who was one of Kerry’s heroes. The only limit on where to put your energy is your own imagination.

Sustainable Development. There is a vast field of people working in sustainable development--from rural Appalachia to Africa, from Indianapolis to India. Here is a [large database of international development jobs](#)¹⁰. Or explore working with [The Peace Corps](#)¹¹ or [AmeriCorps](#)¹², in which you help with development projects either internationally or within the U.S.

Human Rights Advocate. As Kerry has demonstrated, there are many ways to fight for human rights. Within this sector, there are educators, lawyers, social media experts, programmers, campaigners, and fundraisers. Here is an [introduction to all the ways you can](#)

[help advance human rights](#)¹³ and a list of [five exciting human rights careers to explore](#)¹⁴.

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- 1 <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>
 - 2 <https://grist.org/climate/lesson-plan-environmental-justice-climate-change/>
 - 3 https://www.nichs.nih.gov/health/assets/docs_a_c/climate_change_and_human_health_lesson_plan_a_508.pdf
 - 4 <https://www.citizenmath.com/lessons>
 - 5 <https://www.breakbreadnotfamilies.org/>
 - 6 <https://rfkhumanrights.org/our-programs/speak-truth-to-power>
 - 7 <https://www.epa.gov/careers/why-work-epa>
 - 8 <https://www.npr.org/2019/10/15/770332855/how-to-run-for-office>
 - 9 <https://www.idealists.org/en/careers/a-career-as-a-community-organizer>
 - 10 <https://www.devnetjobs.org/>
 - 11 <https://www.peacecorps.gov/>
 - 12 <https://americorps.gov/>
 - 13 <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/careers/>
 - 14 <https://www.humanrightscareers.com/magazine/5-exciting-human-rights-career-paths/>

