



Education Champions

President Kennedy’s Call to Action for teachers, inspired me to become a teacher. I’ve dedicated my life to working with young people, and to finding better ways to build a more humanistic, sustainable, just, and equitable world.

Under the leadership of Dwight Allen, Dean, School of Education at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, I pursued a socially progressive humanistic education. For my junior year of college, I traveled to Europe in search of a more humane education, especially for children with special needs. Fortunately, I discovered the Rudolf Steiner International Training Center in Aberdeen, Scotland, and became immersed in their “whole child” teaching model.

As a “special needs” teacher, I’ve treasured being with children who have these “superpowers.” When I met Greta, I sensed the importance of listening to her urgent message.

We’ve woven Steiner’s whole child teaching model into the Institute’s books, curriculums, trainings, youth leadership initiatives, and Sustainability Summits. Given the Institute’s mission of inclusivity and equity, we emphasize multicultural education through our bilingual tools so we can inspire, educate and empower all children to build a more sustainable world.

The young and emerging leaders in this chapter know that education is at the heart of all social change: from Adenike Oladosu in Nigeria to Shreya K.C in Nepal, from Jett Zhang at FridaysforFuture Digital, to Angelique Pouponneau in the Seychelles, from Aadya Joshi in India to Benita Davis in Guyana, Jasper Ralph on Martha’s Vineyard, and Joshua Gorman of Generation Waking Up!

After graduating from Harvard University Shilpa Jain spent 10 years as a “learning activist” at Shikshantar: The Peoples’ Institute for Rethinking Education and Development in India. There she was able to create an integrated life, “where living is



learning and learning is living.” Later she learned about YES! The Jam, which she describes as “an ever-expanding network; a melting pot of human potential.” Now as Executive Director of YES! Shilpa offers Jams for artists, activists, educators, dreamers, and visionaries. She hopes her Jams will transform people’s lives and give them the courage to join others in building a new world.

As the son of an American diplomat, Scott Warren grew up in countries where he discovered that democracy is more appreciated than it is in the U.S. One of the most important lessons he learned growing up abroad is that democracy is very fragile. When he returned to the U.S. for college, he was shocked to see that young Americans weren’t more involved in the politics – and making change in their own communities. He founded Generation Citizen, an action-oriented program in our schools to educate young people about the political process.

On her first day as a Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi, East Africa Jill Bhowmik was welcomed by one of her students, who told her, right off the bat, “I’ll be a great student!” But as the student showed her how to plant seed potatoes in her yard, Jill quickly realized that she would be learning as much from her students as they would be learning from her. Jill is now a journalism teacher at Granite High School in San Diego. What she learned in Malawi is relevant today, since some of the answers to creating a sustainable world can be found in the agricultural practices of traditional cultures.

The young heroes featured in this chapter have discovered a myriad of ways to make education fun, effective, and above all meaningful. Their stories can inspire all of us to find ways to both learn and share knowledge that can help us expand our thinking about education and find a way to make a better world for tomorrow’s children.

