



Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life-Changing Stories of Young Heroes

Introduction by Ted Danson

Walking on the beach in Santa Monica with my young children, we came upon a sign: "Water polluted, no swimming" it said. It was heartbreaking to have to explain to them what this meant. That was in 1986, and it got me questioning a lot of things. The next year I co-founded the American Ocean Campaign - which led me to Oceana, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary, working in 10 countries to Save the Oceans, Feed the World.

Last year I met remarkable young people who joined with Jane Fonda for Fire Drill Friday in Washington D.C. They reminded me of the mid-1980's when we organized local protest to oppose offshore oil drilling off Santa Monica's beaches.

I was happy to read stories about young people who are passionate about the ocean in the book, *Stone Soup for a Sustainable World: Life-Changing Stories of Young Heroes*. From 14-year-old award-winning photographer Cruz Erdman, who captures the beauty of New Zealand's fish and coral reefs; to 22-year-old Mitzi Jonelle Tan, who stands with and amplifies the voices of the indigenous fisherfolk in the Philippines, to oyster fisherman Perry Raso who feeds his Rhode Island community sustainably farmed seafood. At 16 years old, Trevor Tanaka got his Sustainability Resolution passed in both of Hawaii's House and Senate in just six months. At 19, Daniela Fernandez created the Sustainable Oceans Alliance to fund start-ups in the blue economy, and at 24, Angelique Pouponneau created the Seychelles' Conservation and Climate Adaptation Fund to "Invest in the Country's Blue Future." And 22-year-old Guyana's Benita Davis is currently rallying support for the Policy Forum Guyana, and the country's "Green State Development Strategy."

As the son of an archaeologist and anthropologist, I grew up with an appreciation for how people leave an imprint on the Earth. These dedicated young people are a shining example of how we can imagine a more sustainable world. As an actor I've learned the power of celebrities have to amplify these important causes.

I'm impressed with the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's commitment to empowering thousands of multicultural youth to become leaders of their ocean communities -- from Rhode Island to Puerto Rico, from Hawaii to Virgin Gorda and Martha's Vineyard, to the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Every day these young people see the drastic impact of climate change on their islands - from depleted fish supplies, to rising sea levels, increasing hurricanes, and coastal erosion. Their stories in this book show how they are speaking truth to power, and challenging their leaders to create policies for adapting to climate change realities. They represent their island communities at state, national and global events like U.S. Secretary Kerry's Ocean Summit, along with leaders like Dr. Sylvia Earle, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Monaco's Prince Albert.

At Senator Whitehouse's 2021 Environmental Leadership Conference, I encouraged young people to *Be purposeful in your activism. Find the joy and happiness in solving these problems. Support organizations that are doing this work internationally.*

Young people can create the sense of urgency that our leaders desperately need to address in order to rally the political will to ensure that sustainable policies are implemented, and legislation is quickly passed.

The scientists tell us that we only have ten years to save our oceans. One day, I really hope my three-year-old granddaughter will be able to enjoy our oceans with *her* grandchildren.

I was heartened by the announcement made by President Biden on Climate Day, 2021. Our situation is precarious, but with new leadership, we have a chance to right this ship.

I encourage you to read the inspiring stories in this book. Listen to these young people. Learn from them. Join with them. Support them. Let's get to work!

It's going to take all of us working together. The planet is counting on us, and so are our children.

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