

Secondary Winner Op-ed

OP-ED regarding the recent climate change strikes

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“We want CHANGE, we want it NOW, what do we want? CHANGE, when do we want it? NOW!” Roars from passionate protestors reverberated through streets globally all echoing the same message; something must be done about climate change. Friday, 20th of September, 2019 signified a day of desperate action and fierce urgency against the Climate Crisis. According to The Guardian, 2million people worldwide, both young and old, took to the streets to speak out against the political inaction and procrastination of our leaders regarding the deteriorating environment and climate.

The beginning of the Global Week for Future couldn't have started more intensely, as marches and protests all over the globe all unified in a single purpose: combating the climate crisis. Some were holding signs and banners with creative and fierce slogans on them targeting climate crisis inaction, while others were screaming at the top of their lungs, calling out politicians and leaders to act on the situation at hand. These protests were an accumulation of procrastination toward climate change, inspired by a 16-year-old Swedish climate activist, Greta Thunberg's "Fridays for Future" school strikes.

"How we can get more young people involved - I think to just tell them the truth, tell them how it is because when I found out how it actually was, that made me furious so I wanted to do something about it." Said Thunberg courageously at her address in Battery Park, New York City, where the New York Department of Education tweeted that students who had parental approval would not be penalised for their absence, but they are instead being commended for raising awareness about a global issue in a peaceful yet effective manner. "We applaud our students when they raise their voices safely and respectfully on issues that matter to them. Young people around the world are joining the [#ClimateStrike](#) this week -- showing that student action will lead us forward," the department tweeted on the 11th of September, days before the protests and marches would take place.

These public displays of courage and intolerance are a beacon of hope as we continue to battle climate change and global warming. Politicians and leaders globally must put their differences aside and make a collective effort to protect the future generations of the planet and help prevent the downfall of humanity and the earth. At the end of the day, we cannot eat plastic or breathe smoke, we cannot continue to argue over power or money because none of that matters, if we don't have water or clean air and people, especially leaders, must recognise this, then ACT ON IT.

If we do not do something about climate change, who will? There will come a day when the world will have a global countdown, there will be a timer everywhere you look counting down the hours, minutes and seconds until the human race cannot survive further on earth because we were too careless to realize what we had and let it deteriorate into dreadful uninhabitable conditions. The end of the world, the apocalypse, all of that is the climate crisis. Climate change is eternal, it will be the fall of humanity. No war, no illness, no disease is more deadly than

climate change. But it is preventable and people must recognise that steps can indeed be taken to decrease the amount of air and plastic pollution, rising sea levels, elevated temperatures and heatwaves and abnormal weather patterns.

It starts with simple things like cleanups, recycling, buying more environmentally friendly items (metal/ wooden straws instead of plastic straws), using tote bags to avoid the use of single-use plastic and even just picking up rubbish when you see it and refusing to litter in public. As Greta Thunberg said, "No one is too small to make a difference". If something is not done, there will be no such thing as followers, subscribers, likes, tweets, tik tok, youtube, friend requests, emojis because there will be no planet. Influencers and social media "stars" are just people who need air, water and food just like EVERY OTHER ORGANISM IN EXISTENCE. People need to stop singing about their love life and go plant some trees.

Awareness has been raised, campaigns have been made, crowds have been addressed, speeches have been said and now action must take place because as Conservation International states in all their chilling videos addressing the evolution of the earth, "Nature doesn't need us. We need nature".