

A Hope for the Future

As I wander through the lush forest of my childhood, my eyes are filled with a fascinating beauty. Golden light from the morning sun shines through the dense forest filled with trees. Plants of all types surround me, making me feel as if I'm completely isolated in the wilderness. Birds cheerfully chirp as they build nests for their babies in the sturdy branches. The natural smell of pine trees drifting through the air creates a delightful aroma. I am amazed as I carefully observe a mother raccoon and her baby silently drink from the trickling creek nearby. A white-tailed deer pauses to glance at me before it dashes into the dense forest. The bright colors of the blooming flowers and grass beneath my feet cause me to smile and laugh at the wonder of nature.

Nowadays, as I stroll deeper into the forest, these lush images of paradise begin to change. The animals have disappeared, and few trees are in sight. Stumps scatter the ground where the trees were clear-cut. Sounds of busy, everyday traffic can be heard, destroying the magnificence of the natural setting. Empty coke cans and plastic bags cover the ground that was once flourishing with plants. It's difficult to understand that we, the humans, have caused our extraordinary planet to be in ruins.

Many people have realized that our world is beginning to lose its brilliance due to our destructive behaviors. Recognizing this problem is only the beginning. We must immediately begin to fix our mistakes before it becomes too late. Our generation is the generation that needs to end these problems; we can no longer rely on others to fix it. A common false belief is that we are unable to help because we are too young or poor, but this is definitely not true.

Being green means helping clean up the planet and working to solve the environmental issues in large or small ways. Each person, no matter how young or old, can help. Recycling, planting trees, and carpooling are some obvious, but wonderful, ways to help the environment. Every time I spend less than a minute cutting the plastic six pack rings, I think of the innocent sea turtles that are saved from suffocation. Each planted tree reduces the greenhouse effect which is causing a devastating impact to our environment. It's incredibly easy for me to help by visiting therainforestsite.com where each click results in habitat protection. Every time I carpool, I realize it lessens air pollution and smog which covers our cities and increases global warming. I can only imagine the unbelievable amount of energy that could be saved if each person replaced one normal light bulb with an energy efficient compact fluorescent bulb. Whenever possible, I try to use the search engine "Blackle" whose black background helps save energy. As a teenager who can drive in a year, I look forward to the day when I will own a car, preferably a hybrid or other fuel-efficient car. Some of these ways to help the environment are simple and require little effort. I try to do one good deed each day to help the Earth. This makes me wonder what a significant and lasting impact we could make on the environment if everyone would do the same. People often think that doing a small deed for the planet is useless since one person can't make a difference, but this is just another common misconception. For example, one child recycling can lead to a family recycling which can lead to a neighborhood recycling and eventually to an entire community recycling. In my opinion, that is making a difference!

Many years from now, I imagine walking through the forest with my grandchildren. We walk side by side, and I am filled with pure joy as I watch their faces

light up with amazement at the wondrous sight of nature. Animals and plants have once again returned to this place of astonishing beauty, and the natural smells and sounds of nature dance around in the air. The sounds of waterfalls, frogs croaking, and birds singing fill me with a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment. Our beautiful planet had been trashed and almost destroyed, but we were able to overcome the difficulties and change the Earth back to the wondrous place it used to be. This is my hope for the future.