

2016 Greenfield Peace Writing Scholarship 3rd Place Entry

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Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity today. A successful movement to stop these changes will allow all of us a better life.

As climate change progresses we are seeing its consequences more clearly. As scientists warn us, the impact of climate change on wildlife is devastating. All through the natural world, animals and plants must face environmental conditions which they have never encountered before. Many of them cannot adapt quickly enough and go extinct.

Even for those who do not understand the profound impact a mass extinction poses to the human race, climate change poses threats in the short term as well. Because of climate change, extreme weather such as hurricanes and tornados will become more frequent and more intense.¹ This means more danger to people's property and to people's lives. The rising sea levels threaten the homes of billions of people, and already many people are forced to leave their now uninhabitable houses.

A movement to confront climate change will help mitigate the impact of these issues on our lives, and the lives of others. This kind of movement will have to be focused on helping those who suffer the effects of climate change the most. It will come from a willingness to sacrifice our short-term comfort in order to help confront the pressing issues which are destroying our planet. As such, this movement will help connect people. Because climate change is a global issue, interaction between people from all over the world will be required for the movement to succeed. Having to join forces with others will allow us to come together, all in the name of a cause which will better the lives of all people; fighting climate change. As this movement gains power, so will the connections built between people of different nations become stronger. This will help us fight racism and ethnic discrimination; great causes of injustice. With fewer prejudices, many people will live happier lives.

Even though some claim that the economy will suffer from a successful movement for climate change, this is false. A movement for climate change will help create jobs. In 2009, the Union of Concerned Scientists conducted an analysis of the economic benefits of a 25 percent renewable energy standard by 2025. They found it would create three times as many jobs as an equivalent amount of electricity coming from fossil fuels.

Climate change is by its nature unjust. The harmful results of it affect us regardless of the extent to which we contributed to it. On top of that, the means with which we deal with these effects are not proportional to the effect they have on us. They depend on our country and economic status. The pollution caused by factories in the United States contributes to climate change, and might cause a drought in a society which depends water for its crops. If we fight climate change, we can allow all people to enjoy our great planet, instead of undermining its ability to support all of us in order to benefit the few. By fighting against this type of action, we will help bring justice to those who are hurt by these changes the most.

If this kind of movement were successful, its values would be embedded into the ethos of many of us. The kind of selfless actions which will be required for this movement to succeed will become part of who we are. The view that the well-being of others is no less important than our own will become commonplace, making the world into a more just and peaceful place.

¹ "Global Warming and Extreme Weather - National Wildlife Federation." *Global Warming and Extreme Weather - National Wildlife Federation*. National Wildlife Federation, n.d. Web. 13 Mar. 2016.