

## **Greenfield Peace Writing Scholarship 2020**

**2<sup>nd</sup> place**

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2 degrees. All it takes is the rise of 2 degrees in global temperature, for my children to never be able to see where their ancestors come from. I sit uncomfortably knowing whole nations have the potential to diminish and be wiped of existence, one of them being where my parents were from, and where their parents were from, and all the generations before. The Marshall Islands is an island nation that is subject to this tragedy we call climate change. It is the place where 100% of my culture is derived from and a culture of which is so uncommon, that I worry of the lives of those still there and the community that will potentially no longer exist.

It is imperative that an effective movement for climate justice is put in place for nations like the one where my culture lies. Nations like this must be protected and raising awareness is the most important step. We as humans are selfish, so often, that we do not act on things until they affect us. But who is to say that we are not next? Perhaps it is just our obliviousness that blinds us to the realities of what is going on in the world around us. However, educating your neighbors could create a ripple effect. It could cause an epidemic that could create a large step for climate change recovery. Everybody will benefit.

An effective movement for climate justice would help immigrant communities in many ways. Whether it be knowing they still have a place to call home or improve their own standard of living, any motion to advocate for our environment benefits not only immigrant communities but every community. In more vulnerable communities, immigrant groups are forced to remain silent about corporate pollution in hopes to keep their families together. Always being under a threat of deportation leaves these immigrants with no voice. A lot of immigrant workers come here for better living to escape uncertainty and lead a better life in a promising country. Much of them work in fields, with all the exposure to pesticides and chemicals in areas where air qualities are most affected by the impact of greenhouse gas emission. By setting systems and policies to decrease these dangerous factors to climate change, we would not only be doing the environment a favor but immigrants as well.

Now, I might not know everything there is to know about climate change. There is far more that I need to learn myself before I start talking about educating others. But having the conversation, regardless, is what we should be striving for. The fact is, the world will still spin as we bask in this state of environmental unconsciousness... but for how long? These issues with our environment will still persist. However, if it takes an ounce of impact from a second-generation immigrant talking about the dangerous realities to the country she was born in and the dire existence of the one her parents came from, any word is worthy. The right movement for effective climate change is the movement it would take to rise to the occasion.