

Kids' Planet... with Thorne Nature Experience



Kids Plan It!



by Dr. Oakleigh Thorne, II

With the recent **March for Our Lives**, organized by students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida after the tragic shooting there, our familiar “Kids Planet” heading has turned into “Kids Plan It.” What these young people were able to plan and accomplish in such a short time was amazing. Their effort quickly spread from local to national and in a little over one month they “did the impossible.” Hundreds of thousands of people around the USA responded to their call and marched!

I know that they are determined to get some meaningful gun control legislation passed, but I feel what they have unleashed is far more encompassing. These young people are now prepared to take bold action on many fronts that affect their lives and it seems that nothing can stop them.

So many of our country's youth now feel that “Kids Planet” also means that they must take action to save our planet because it is indeed THEIR planet! It's their future that is at stake.



March at the State Capital in downtown Denver.

They understand the science behind climate change. They see environmental pollution and exploitation. They see exploding human population and its negative effects. They understand what sustainability is. But mostly, they see the importance of political action for the first time in their lives and they are ready to move forward...no more leaving it to the “grown-ups” to fix. They're going to get it done themselves and this time they are not giving up until the job is done.

I've always had great admiration and respect for the idealism of youth, but now for the first time in my almost 90 years of life I see that it has fully blossomed and it's not going away. Their battle cry is “enough is enough!”

It will not come easily... usually nothing good ever does. It takes a lot of hard work and discipline. It requires a clear understanding of the problems and the goals that need to be reached in order to solve them. If the Congress and the Administration do little or

nothing, they will be replaced by the groundswell that our youth have started. Of this I am sure.

There certainly are clear-thinking members of both the major political parties who will be identified and elected. In fact, in the past, it was with openly cooperative bi-partisan effort that some of our country's most important environmental laws were passed, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air Act, and the Clean Water Act, just to mention a few. It took great statesmanship to work these out and get them passed through Congress. I was very pleased back then to see such wisdom and future-thinking coming from our legislators. The young people of today are looking for this same kind of well-informed and courageous leadership. In fact, they are demanding it!

I have been involved with environmental education for a major part of my life and have worked to support the environment through an

understanding of ecological principles and how these actually interact in nature. I have taught and mentored young people about nature and the environment and have seen firsthand how well they have responded and how wise they have become. I see them seeking truth and working for fairness, kindness, and honesty. They are the leaders of the future. I strongly believe in them

Dr. Thorne is founder and honorary president of Thorne Nature Experience (formerly Thorne Ecological Institute) in Boulder. They have helped “connect youth to nature” for 64 years! For information about their summer camp and other programs for kids and youth, check their website at www.thornenature.org or please email info@thornenature.org or call (303) 499-3647, ext. 100.

