

Name: Melanie Staszewski

Username: emjs

School: Poolesville High School

Team Name: emjs

Email: melanie.staszewski@yahoo.com

On a national or global context, who is a person that you would call out as an eco-hero, a person that you really admire? Identify that person, get to know them and then introduce them to us.

*Al Gore*

The 45<sup>th</sup> Vice President of the United States is a modern day “Eco Hero”. In a time of a controversial election, one can’t help but look back upon candidates we liked in the past. Al Gore stands for most everything I believe in, and he has the power to make a change.



Approach this challenge as if you were writing a story for your campus newspaper, the New York Times or a favorite blog.

Share the name and a photo of your hero

ABOVE

Tell us their story in 500 words; where are they from, what they have accomplished, speak about challenges and obstacles they faced, and why you were drawn to them

Al Gore was born on March 31, 1948 in Washington D.C. From a young age, Gore was exposed to political influence - his father, Albert Gore, Sr., was a member of both the U.S. House from Tennessee and the U.S. Senate. Gore attended Harvard and earned a degree with high honors in government. In August 1969, the same year he graduated, Gore enlisted in the army. He was assigned a job as a military journalist writing for the base newspaper at Fort Rucker. When he returned to the States in 1971, he continued to work as a reporter. He also studied philosophy and phenomenology at Vanderbilt University and, in 1974, he enrolled in Vanderbilt’s law school. However, Gore quit law school in to run for the U.S. House from Tennessee, and was elected four times. In 1984, Gore successfully ran for a seat in the U.S. Senate and pushed the High Performance Computer and Communication Act of 1991, which greatly expanded the Internet.

In 1988, Gore made a bid for the Democratic nomination for the presidency, but remained in the Senate until presidential candidate Bill Clinton chose him as his running mate in 1992. They were elected into office that year and re-elected in 1996. During his vice-presidency, he worked to cut back on government bureaucracy, but his image suffered when he was investigated by the Justice Department for his fund-raising activities.

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In the 2000 presidential election, Gore won the Democratic presidential nomination after facing down an early challenge from former Senator Bill Bradley. Gore chose Senator Joseph Lieberman as his running mate. He won the popular vote, but eventually lost to Republican George W. Bush. Gore has stated that he does not plan on running for the presidency again.

Gore is the author of the bestsellers *Earth in the Balance*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *The Assault on Reason*, *Our Choice: A Plan to Solve the Climate Crisis*, and most recently, *The Future: Six Drivers of Global Change*, and is also the subject of an Oscar-winning documentary. He was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize on December 10, 2007, Gore for his work on global warming. In accepting the prize, he urged the world's biggest carbon emitters to "make the boldest moves on climate change" or "stand accountable before history for their failure to act." Gore shared the prize with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for raising public awareness about global warming and providing the public with information on how to counteract it. "We, the human species, are confronting a planetary emergency—a threat to the survival of our civilization that is gathering ominous and destructive potential even as we gather here."

I am drawn to Al Gore as an "Eco Hero" because he is someone who has changed us and our relationship with the environment for the better. Not only is he supportive of environmental causes, but he has the power to make and inspire change. Many politicians continue their careers after running for office, and Al Gore is in no way an exception, which makes him a good resource and public figure to look up to.

### What resonated for you from their experience?

I found it incredibly interesting that he grew up surrounded by politics and high education, which may have led to his interest in politics, as well as his drive to achieve.

### If you were to meet this person, what would you share about how they have impacted you?

Although I am not interested in politics, I can use what's around me to my advantage when I try to help the environment, such as green clubs at my school.

### Write up three questions you would ask your hero?

1. What inspired you to attend law school in the first place?
2. Would you say that writing to our politicians, as students, makes any difference?
3. How has a focus on environmental issues impacted your career and your lifestyle?



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See if you can find an email address for your hero and tell them how they have inspired you. Extra points will be awarded for emails sent.

