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Lila Copeland: Eco Hero

Viscous Flow (Jon Raybin and Julia Murphy) PGC2017 Day 26 Greener

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"I feel it is time for children to not only be given a human right to determine their own health story, but to make the choice to be responsible citizens. We can't selfishly continue to consume animals and destroy our planet and expect any escape from the environmental ramifications of our disregard for science."



http://vegnews.com/articles/page.do?pageld=7963&catld=1

Getting to Know Our Eco Hero:

Lila Copeland is a 14-year-old high schooler from Los Angeles, California. Three years ago, she created the Earth Peace Foundation which works to introduce youth to vegan lifestyles through youth-to-youth discussions in school and a free informational guide called "What Young People Need to Know to Go and Stay Vegan." After noticing that her school offered mainly unhealthy lunch options, such as hamburgers, chicken tenders, and milk, she launched the Healthy Freedom Campaign in order to bring vegan options to 600,000 students in Los Angeles schools. She brought Pamela Anderson, Dr. Michael Klaper, and Torre Washington into the campaign and presented to the Los Angeles Unified School District Board to demand that a vegan entree be available at every school, every day of the school week. Lila hopes to have the Healthy Freedom Campaign implemented at the federal level by 2020.

Lila has faced prejudices based on her age. Many people have refused to support her efforts or listen to the information she has to share simply because of how young she is. In an interview with One Green Planet in July 2016, Lila said, "With the people who I contacted trying to get help with the kick-off, I think it was harder because I am just a kid and not a famous kid or child of anyone famous. I got a whole lot of no's from those people." Despite these initial setbacks, Lila persevered and is making waves with her message.

Lila's success is a great reminder that it doesn't matter how old you are, or what obstacles you face, what your education level is to make a difference in the world. As long as you stick to your passion and your message, you can create change.



https://www.kcet.org/food/los-angeles-marches-against-monsanto

11-year-old Lila giving a speech at March Against Monsanto in 2013

Questions I'd Ask Lila:

- What was the turning point when you decided to take action and start an organization advocating for change?
- How have you dealt with prejudices and judgments based on your age?
- What advice do you have for others hoping to drive change?