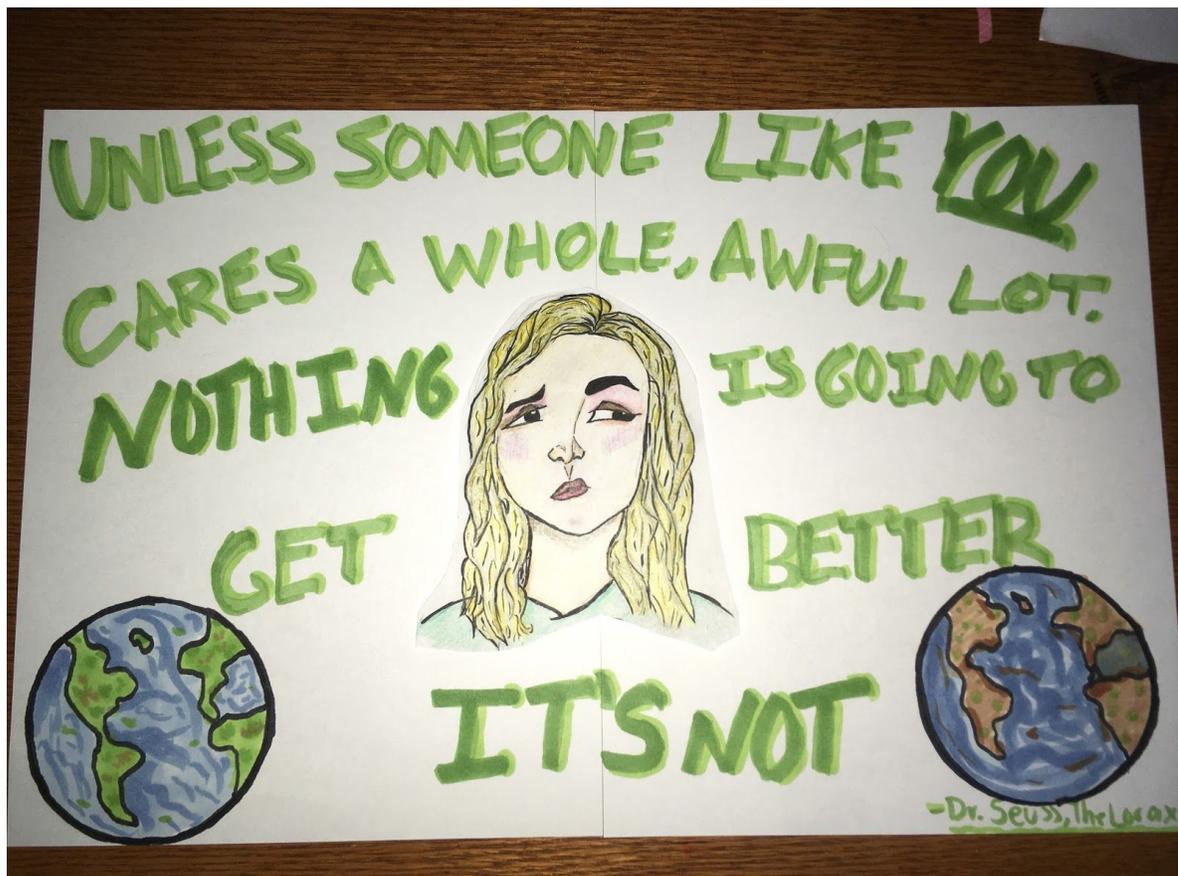


Josephine Sparks  
josephine\_sparks  
[igymnastsparky@gmail.com](mailto:igymnastsparky@gmail.com)  
Bloomington South High School

**Eco-hero moment:**

I made the decision to start PGC because I knew I did not know enough about this issue. During PGC, I was invited to a school board meeting to present a statement on one of our topics. When I finished, the president of the school board told me to report back on “what’s going on” in the future. In that moment, I felt like I had a place at the table. Speaking to them didn't really make a difference in how I felt, did not make me feel at all like an eco-hero, more of an advocate. I was presenting an issue, but what would they do with it? When she told me to come back, I realized I was being asked to hold the school system accountable. I was held as a student but also as a force of change by a predominant person in my community, something I had not yet felt. Suddenly, I was a voice worth listening to, and my decision to expand my knowledge on this topic meant that I had a voice that was valued, needed, and was changing things for the better.

**Ecoo-hero image:**



My decision to educate myself on issues we are facing meant that I earned a place in the discussion. I chose to care. I chose to act. And now I have to help others make that same choice. Education, as I have personally experienced, is the crux where change takes place.

[#PGC2019](#)



### **Reflection and Future:**

The picture I drew is of me contemplating whether or not to do PGC, and also the thought process that I am always going through everywhere I go, looking for the negative exports and harmful practices. I started questioning everything through this challenge. But I am learning how to make change happen. I have already been working these past three weeks on a waste reduction and education project that I went to an Environmental Summit for today, and my group is ready to keep pushing on this issue until we see results. Other than following this plan through, PGC has helped me realize the pairing of writing, journalism, and environmental science that could shape a future career. I will not be a scientist or a full time activist, but I could write grants for green projects to be implemented at school like we are trying to do at home. I could write articles that keep the public updated on the actions of local governments and businesses that affect our environment. I could help organize youth education, another of my passions, and affect change around the state or even country. Why? Because I care about the future of our planet, a planet that can sustain human existence for all its best attributes. And that future is children, their education, and their accessibility to the information I have learned in this amazing experience.

Replying to [@JOSESPARKY61](#)

I will start yesterday, building a group of friends to meet with adults that make policy in our school system. We will make presentations, host demonstrations, and gather a following of people that want to learn more. We will educate the next generation to be a sustainable one.

