

Day 25: Greener

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Dante emceeding the climate strike at UC Berkeley on September 20, 2019!

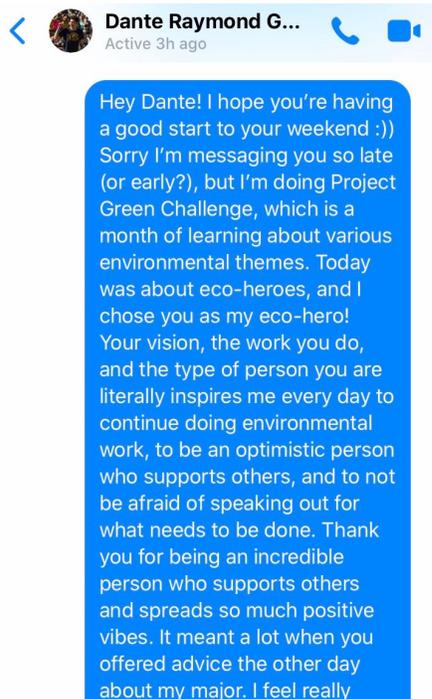
My local eco-hero is Dante Gonzales. I first met him through the Student Environmental Resource Center (SERC), which is where we both work. He is a senior studying Society & Environment and Conservation & Resource Studies. Dante is the Carbon Crew Team Leader and one of the UC system's Bonnie Reiss Carbon Neutrality Initiative Engagement Fellow, which means that he works on a variety of carbon neutrality efforts. Several initiatives he's pursued and is continuing to do is institutionalizing more plant-forward/less carbon-intensive recipes in our college dining halls, hosting events and workshops that engage the campus with the goals and strategies of the Carbon Neutrality Initiative, and developing carbon neutrality/environmental curriculum to teach at local K-12 schools in the Berkeley and Oakland Area.

Dante is an incredible youth organizer with a vision. He works tirelessly to galvanize our fellow peers into putting pressure on politicians to enact change. As a member of Students for Climate Action, he helped organize the climate strike on our campus that had an estimated 1,200 to 1,300 people in attendance. He always seems to be doing something: most recently, he and other students created QTies for Climate Justice, which seeks to foster a space of growth and resiliency for queer and transgender students who are interested in Climate Action. I always see him in various environmental spaces or meetings on campus, and he is always posting and sharing environmental (particularly indigenous and climate justice-related) content on Facebook. I learn so much just from the online content. I cannot imagine how much he must have gone through in order to make all of the above happen, especially as a working student. I already find it difficult to work ten hours a week!

Everything he's done inspires me to keep working for change. However, what I've been the most inspired by is his personality. Dante is such a supportive, passionate, caring, and all-around amazing person. The other day I was at my workplace talking with my friend about a major I was considering. I didn't know he was a Peer Adviser for the major I was considering, but he happened to be there and took the time to give me some advice. He also takes the time and effort to recognize the people around him, and he always does his best to show up for others in the community. At the same time, he's the kind of person who recognizes the importance of wellbeing, which is something that's especially important when doing climate justice work. He's the kind of person who's just got good vibes.

I feel incredibly lucky to be able to know Dante and to be surrounded by so many eco-heroes in my organization, as well as in the environmental community at large. Right now, I'm picturing my friends, coworkers, and fellow students passionate about climate justice and climate action. They are the ones who teach me, support me, and inspire me. I only hope that I can do the same for them.

Dante is someone I already know, but I decided to personally message him and let him know how amazing he is and how much he inspires me. I also asked him a few questions! Screenshots below :))



<  **Dante Raymond G...** Active 3h ago  

about my major. I feel really lucky that I get to know you and all of the amazing people in SERC and in the environmental community. I've learned so much and have been supported by y'all, and I hope that I can do the same for y'all and everyone else in my life. Also, all the stories and links you share on your fb are top-notch. I legit feel like I get a curated dose of climate justice news from your feed :))

As part of today's theme, I wanted to ask you three questions if you have time! If not, definitely no worries :))

1. What was your journey to becoming an activist like, and how did you become a youth organizer for climate action?

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1. What was your journey to becoming an activist like, and how did you become a youth organizer for climate action?
2. What challenges do you face as a youth activist, and how do you deal with them?
3. What's some advice you have for students who want to advocate for climate justice and climate action?

Have a good, restful weekend, and I'll see you sometime soon!