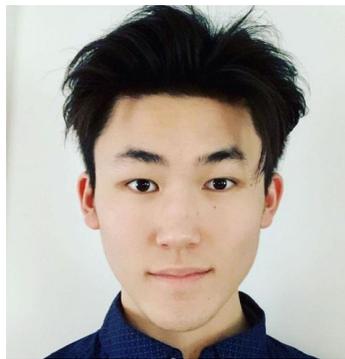


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CLIMATE CREW

Jericho High School; Jericho, New York



One of the things I love about PGC is that it brings people from around the globe together to participate. Today, I had the chance to speak to Climate Crew from Jericho High School in Jericho, New York. To be able to reach out and connect to a group of challengers that were quite literally on the other end of the country brought into perspective just how diverse PGC challengers all are: in

ethnicity, in gender, in socio-economic status, and in the places we call home.

While there are 4 members of Climate Crew, I spoke to Davesh Valagolam. We began by discussing why we joined PGC, to which he said: "I joined PGC to address climate change issues and be more involved in local initiatives. I am an aspiring vegan and hope to reduce my carbon footprint through environmental initiatives such as PGC, where I can simultaneously learn more about the harsh environmental consequences we direly need to solve."

When the discussion moved to carrying PGC themes and our learnings beyond October, I was inspired by how Davesh found himself able to strengthen his passion for STEM through his PGC challenge

takeaways, even discovering potential career paths. Davesh spoke about these impacts in a way that I felt I could relate to. “This experience has truly opened my eyes to the world of environmental science and I’m excited about my future in environmental engineering. The themes of sustainability and overall global conservation have directly translated to building my enthusiasm for environmental conservation. Moving forward, I want to apply my innate passion for STEM to environmental issues.” As I worked on PGC challenges throughout the month, I also found myself considering how design and urban planning affect current environmental issues--how these passions of mine could be both the problem and the solution. Having careers that intersect with climate action and environmental understanding was something I had thought about before, but now I was seeing it from the perspective of someone interested in a different field.

Being a part of PGC means stepping out of your comfort zone--doing things that you normally would not do in the name of climate justice. On Day 8: Vote, Davesh did just that by creating a rap about the importance of voting, and chose this as his eco-hero moment. About this experience, he imparted some thoughts that resonated with me greatly: “[H]eroes step up to the challenge regardless of their own personal feelings--since there are greater issues at hand, such as climate change.” It was a subtle reminder that change comes when we are willing to take risks, even if we are moving into unfamiliar territory, so to speak.

To close off our conversation, we both reflected on the changes PGC has inspired in us at personal, community, and global levels. Davesh spoke about changing his lifestyle choices to be more conscious, especially with things like energy consumption and food choices. He detailed his community efforts to combat environmental injustice, describing his campaign to raise awareness surrounding the landfill contamination issue present on Long Island. And on a global scale, he shared his aspirations: “I strive to research and diminish the

effects of local carbon dioxide emissions on global biocapacity, which I eventually hope to scale to a nation-wide movement. With PGC, I am enabled to pursue my environmental vision of making our world a cleaner and safer place, one step at a time.”

One of the submissions from Climate Crew that I loved was their Fair Trade product swap! I thought their choices were not only very informed but also super interesting (who would have known that Maltesers are fair trade?!). However, this is just one of many well-done posts that Climate Crew has made, and I hope to keep up with their journey as we move into the last few days of October.



INSTAGRAM POST



Davesh joined PGC because he wanted to address climate change and be more involved in local initiatives: "I am an aspiring vegan and hope to reduce my carbon footprint through environmental initiatives such as PGC, where I can simultaneously learn more about the harsh environmental consequences we direly need to solve."

One of Climate Crew's eco-hero moments was on Day 8: Vote, when they created a rap about the importance of voting. About this experience, Davesh imparted some thoughts that resonated with me greatly: "[H]eroes step up to the challenge regardless of their own personal feelings—since there are greater issues at hand, such as climate change." It was a subtle reminder that change comes when we are willing to take risks.

Lastly, on the personal, community, and global impacts Climate Crew hopes to have, Davesh spoke about changing his lifestyle choices to be more conscious and also detailed his community efforts to combat environmental injustice, describing his campaign to raise awareness surrounding the landfill contamination issue present on Long Island. And on a global scale, he shared his aspirations: "With PGC, I am enabled to pursue my environmental vision of making our world a cleaner and safer place, one step at a time."