



Nevada City Retreats Earth Justice ministries Nevada City Farmer's Market



Climate Change Agents Campers:

Grateful for a Plate Full

How does climate change contribute to food insecurity? What innovations increase the nutritional content of the soil while sequestering carbon? How can we show gratitude for those who work to bring nutritious food from the farm to the families? How much time are we willing to give to the well being of the human family?



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These questions inspired advocacy and action during an intense week at the 2018 Climate Change Agents Camp. Each year, youth strive to master one habit-of-heart as they tackle a specific local and global challenge. This year, they applied the habit of advocacy to address food insecurity and climate change.

Sponsored by the Nevada County Climate Change Coalition (NC-CCC), with the help of Full-Circle Learning (FCL), funders of the five-day, four-night scholarship-based camp included the Audubon Society, Forest Issues Group, Earth Justice Ministries, Nevada City Retreats, Nevada City Farmer's Market, and the local agricultural community. Guest presenters from those supporting groups included Rene Sprattling, Drew Speroni, Renee and Tom Wade, Don Rivenes, Rudy Darling, and Debbie Gibbs. Katie Smith traveled from Long Beach as a teacher. Other members of NC-CCC and FCL volunteered.

In the camp, the definition of advocacy included addressing the needs of one another, around the meal table and at the Talking Tree, and though service to others, in addition people suffering from food insecurity around the globe. Problem-solving challenges left students "grateful for a plate full" and eager to offer their talents to create a system of solutions.

Fertile-Field Trips Linked Climate and Food

The 2018 camp culminated June 30 with an educational exhibit and performance at the Nevada City Farmer's market. The "Voices of Hunger" reading emphasized the many regional perspectives and strategies needed to harness the cause of hunger. The song "Gratitude" extended thanks to local farmers and volunteers.





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The previous day, the Climate Change Agents sponsored a pancake breakfast to show gratitude for the Interfaith Food Ministry (IFM) volunteers who quell hunger throughout the year. The award-winning IFM and its executive director, Phil Alonso, and members received a wall plate designed by the students, based on the theme, "Grateful for a Plate Full." The IFM volunteers told inspiring stories of their experiences serving those in need, as the Change Agents served *them* pancakes made from the milled wheat of Early Bird Farm and fruit from Bluebird Farm. Cooks-for-the-day David Langness and Chris Newsom piled up additional platters of pancakes to save for the hungry.



Pancake breakfast - Presenting plate to IFM



Climate agents preparing the plate at the Lodge



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Earlier in the week, the Change Agents heard motivational stories at Early Bird Farm about the importance of overcoming personal obstacles to serve the community. There, the role of small farmers in feeding a community came to life, along with the value of permaculture and low-till farming. Students as workers experienced the value of collaboration on various farm projects, while learning about hedge rows, crop rotation and how to advocate for people, beyond profit.

On another field trip, to Bluebird Farm, the Change Agents tested soil for nutritional content, with Renee and Tom Wade. They compared tilled and untilled soil tilled for microbial content. They saw the benefits of lush biodiversity and learned how to invite lady bugs in as pest deterrents. They reproduced the effects of mob grazing as they trampled a field to compact its nutrients. They also picked berries for the pancake breakfast. The Change Agents later practiced shopping and cooking a meal of foods in season, on a budget, without contributing undue carbon emissions.



Jessica covers row- Sophie/Lucy pull weeds



Lucy covers row



Malena and Z plant basil



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Exhibit Offered Global Ideas; Tips for Local Gardeners

At the farmer's market, the Change Agents exhibited concepts such as uses for a soil-less food computer – a device invented by the World Food Programme and MIT to grow food for Syrian refugees. High school students extended its applications to include novel engineering concepts adapted for various needs and regions.

The youth also demonstrated three organic insecticides and showed the microbial benefits of no-till farming (with olives in a blender).



Chris and Z with organic insecticides



Savannah learns about low-till farming



Stomping out tall plants, throwing manure, and calling out "Moo" has a purpose. Renee Wade, from Bluebird Farm, engaged the students' assistance in preparing a patch of land through mob grazing techniques. Human interventions substituted for lack of ungulates on the farm



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They featured the keyhole garden they made and offered visitors directions for building one at home, to share the wisdom of peers in the Gambia.



Gambia - Keyhole farming



Keyhole farming

Their exhibit also compared the migration of human communities in search of food with migrating climate refugees in the form of bird populations (with art prompted by an Audubon presentation and by their night of owling and the varying results they have experienced in birding from year to year).





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Systems-based thinking extended beyond the theoretical at camp. After discussing the significant role of food waste in contributing to both hunger and to higher carbon emissions, these advocates then set personal and group goals for reducing their own food waste. They made pie charts, hoping to encourage others to use portion control, clean their plates, compost the extra, and to be “grateful for a plate full.”

Solutions Arise, Around the Circle and Around the Globe

Advocates do more than “speak out”; they “speak with” others, based on the examples of these Climate Change Agents. They role played methods for working together to mitigate hunger across mythical regions with diverse climatological upsets. They demonstrated resolutions to conflicts over resources among climate refugees and host cities, based on *New York Times* articles. They also considered the regenerative agriculture community as a model for local collaboration.

The wisdom sent abroad by the camp included local insights on pest management, permaculture, and various regenerative farming practices. Just as the Change Agents felt gratitude to students from the Gambia for know-how on keyhole gardening, the Nevada County youth are informing other regions about regenerative practices.

For example, mob grazing and keyhole gardens will benefit students working to save lives in Chad, where drought and infertile soil create hunger. Simultaneously, ideas about crop rotation, organic pesticides, hedge rows and lady bugs could enhance the research of Cameroonian students, who vowed to reduce malnutrition by using their biology and chemistry lessons to help farmers harness new pest management solutions.

The pancake breakfast and information about the IFM model may inspire Mexican-American summer school students in Ventura County, who will honor food distribution providers in their farm community.

To say thank you for a great idea, the “Gratitude” song will also go to the Gambian students, whose keyhole gardens feed whole neighborhoods despite drought and space limitations.

Under the Talking Tree, the Climate Change Agents of Nevada County estimated that their wisdom exchanges will benefit thousands of members of their human family



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around the world. One advocate also reminded the group the importance of serving the person next to them, as they had practiced in camp.

Change Agents in 2018 included Malina Mitchell, Nikayla Mitchell, Tanner Delgado, Lucy Carson, Jessica Rivenes, Savannah Delgado, Sophia Konrad, Isabelle Konrad, and Zdeneck McCrea.

For more information about the NC-CCC, visit ncclimatechangecoalition.org. For more information about Full-Circle Learning and its capacity-building programs or global wisdom exchange schools, visit www.fullcirclelearning.org.

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