

NRCM Award Speech

I want to thank everyone at NRCM for this award. I appreciate the honor even more because the NRCM has recognized a young person this year. The fact that kids are getting recognition for their efforts is great! After all, we're the ones inheriting this planet after you.

I also want to thank the NRCM for all their support with the "Green Team", and giving me the opportunity to come to Citizen Action Day and lobby for different bills in the state legislature. Everyone has been very welcoming every time I come and I want to thank them for that.

Besides the NRCM, there are a few others I'd like to thank. I'm extremely appreciative of all the members of the Green Team who came to the first meeting, and kept on joining. I only did a small fraction of the work. The real effort was made by all the kids who took time out of their schedules to come to the weekly meetings. The other person I want to thank is my mom. She comes to almost every meeting, and is always putting in time and effort to make the Green Team, and many more things, possible. I could have never done this without my mom's help. I've learned so much from her about everything I do. She also has let me come with her to different environmental conferences. Of all the people who have helped me to receive this award, I want to thank her the most.

For those of you who don't know me too well, I'm a seventh grader at Reeds Brook Middle School up in Hampden, Maine. In 2006, when I was in 5th grade, I started an environmental club called the Green Team. Then, when I went to middle school, I started another Green Team. Both teams have done many different projects, like touring the landfill and recycling center, hosting two Earth festivals, and doing litter and energy patrols.

The story of the Green Team starts when I was in 3rd grade. In the library of the school, my friend pointed to a magazine with a picture of the Earth in flames on the cover, and made some remark about "global warming". I became interested in global warming, and that led me to learn about other environmental issues. I became concerned about our planet, and tried to start an environmental club in 4th grade, but succeeded in only making the student council pick up litter around the school yard one day after school. In 5th grade I tried again, and this time the Green Team actually formed. That same year, the Green Team got a

\$500 grant from the Maine Community Foundation to create toolkits to distribute around the state to schools who want to start their own Green Teams. This was the start of the Green Team Maine Initiative, a project to start Green Teams around the state.

I've learned a lot from being involved in environmental activism. The Green Team has taught me tons about not just the environment, but leading people my own age, even on a Friday afternoon (which is quite a challenge). I've learned a lot from the members of the Green Team. I think it's more challenging for a kid leading kids since kids are much more likely to listen to an adult than another kid their own age. Over all though, the Green Team itself has taught me a lot about our planet and also leading others to make a difference. Other things, like Citizen Action Day and climate change summits, have taught me about environmental topics like global warming and solar power. At Citizen Action Day, I didn't just get to talk to my legislators about bills, I got to actually see how Congress worked. In the end, I'm very grateful for what environmental activism has taught me.

Finally, I want to ask something of everyone here. If you know any young people, I want you to get them involved. Tell them how important environmental activism is, especially for them. It's important for them to understand environmental issues. After all, we young people are the ones who are going to be responsible for the planet in the next decade or two. Kids need to be educated about the situation they are facing in the near future. The more you prepare them and get them involved now, the better off everyone will be in the future. So please, whether they're your neighbor, your child, your grandchild, a student, a young relative, or a friend, get them involved and show them they can make a difference. Once Again, Thank You!