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Titusville and Toms River Teens Among 2023 International Young Eco-Hero Award Winners

Local Students Receive Top Honor for Contributions to Solving Environmental Problems

San Francisco – Two New Jersey teens are among seventeen young environmental activists from across the globe to receive a 2023 International Young Eco-Hero Award, announced Action For Nature today. This award honors eco-conscious youth ages 8 to 16 who are taking crucial steps to solve tough environmental problems.

Winners of the International Young Eco-Hero Award are selected by a panel of independent judges, including experts in environmental science, biology, and education. For the past 20 years, Action For Nature has recognized more than 339 Eco-Heroes from over 27 countries and 32 U.S. states.

Charlotte Michaluk, a 16 year-old from Titusville, New Jersey won First Place in this year's competition. As a young sailor, Charlotte noticed changes to her beloved marshes over the years, including loss of species and native plants. Normally, wetlands absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, but due to climate change, wetlands might start releasing more carbon dioxide instead of absorbing it. Charlotte designed a special coating for ship hulls, inspired by shark skin, which makes ships more efficient by reducing resistance and the growth of harmful organisms on the ship's surface. She also developed a concept for a cargo ship that uses both wind and fossil fuels for power. If these ideas are adopted and applied to the global cargo shipping fleet, it could have a very significant positive impact on the environment, on par to taking 7.5 million cars off the road.

"I think it's really important to recognize the interconnectivity between economic factors and more direct environmental factors and how those combined can impact communities," said Charlotte Michaluk.

To learn more about Charlotte's work, visit
<https://charlottemichaluk.wixsite.com/website>.

Kaitlyn Culbert, a 16 year-old from Toms River, New Jersey won Second Place in this year's competition. Kaitlyn started Honey Bee & Pollinator Health: Scientific Innovation and Outreach to combat the Varroa mite, a major threat to honey bees, by using a cost-effective and environmentally friendly solution involving continuous-release

mist diffusion of thymol-based essential oils. Her research findings have been published and presented at various conferences, raising awareness about the importance of honeybees in the ecosystem. Additionally, Kaitlyn actively engages her community through establishing pollinator gardens, documenting her beekeeping journey on YouTube, and educating the public about the critical role of bees in our environment and society.

“My hope is to make people feel more comfortable around bees and to help people recognize the critical role bees play in our ecosystem and our society,” said Kaitlyn Culbert.

To learn more about Kaitlyn’s work, visit
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090439571043>.

"Charlotte, Kaitlyn, and all of this year's young climate champions are proving one thing loud and clear: the next generation of leaders has arrived, and they're unleashing their power on a global scale to tackle the climate crisis head-on," said Beryl Kay, president of Action for Nature. "The incredible accomplishments of Charlotte, Kaitlyn, and our other winners are more than just isolated projects – they're changing lives and transforming communities for the better."

For high-resolution photos and to learn more about all of this year’s International Young Eco-Hero Award winners, visit
<https://actionfornature.org/eco-hero-awards/2023-winners>.

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Action For Nature (AFN) is an international non-profit organization based in San Francisco, California, that encourages young people to nurture a love and respect for Earth’s natural resources and to take personal action to protect the environment.