

For immediate release:  
August 15, 2023 at 6:00 am ET

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## **Milpitas and Palo Alto Teens Among 2023 International Young Eco-Hero Award Winners**

### *Local Students Receive Top Honor for Contributions to Solving Environmental Problems*

San Francisco – Two teens from Palo Alto and Milpitas are among the 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 339 Eco-Heroes from 27 countries and 32 U.S. states.

**Colin Chu, a 15 year-old from Palo Alto, California tied for Third Place in this year's competition.** Colin discovered that his own school discards more than 100 safe, nutritious extra meals each day, while just 12 miles away in San Francisco 1 in 4 people are food insecure. Colin's project, Homeless Heroes, tackles both environmental justice and social justice issues by addressing food waste in schools and food insecurity among the unhoused. Homeless Heroes delivers thousands of meals that would have otherwise gone to waste to homeless shelters, providing high-quality, nutritious food to those in need. Additionally, Colin educates the community about homelessness by sharing interviews and life stories of homeless individuals, bringing attention to their experiences and challenges.

"My goal is to see what I can do something to address the vast issue of food waste – starting with my own community," said Colin Chu.

To learn more about Colin's work, visit  
<https://infohomelessheroes.editorx.io/homelessheroes>.

**Satvika Iyer, a 15 year-old from Milpitas, California tied for Third Place in this year's competition.** Satvika's project aims to create a healthy and sustainable food system in schools by advocating for more plant-based nutrition and better waste management. She successfully worked with various organizations and her school district to introduce a permanent plant-based menu with meat-free alternatives and

salad bars. Additionally, she lobbied Congress to include provisions promoting plant-based meals in the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act. Satvika's efforts have made a significant impact on school nutrition – her high school has already served more than 5,000 plant-based meals – and she plans to continue her work by helping other school districts implement sustainable food systems.

“School is where we learn, and school food systems are where most Americans first experience their government's policy failure,” said Satvika Iyer. “Knowing how these meals could impact my fellow students, I resolved to make the school cafeteria service for all.”

"Colin, Satvika, 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 Colin, Satvika, 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.*