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New York City Student Among 2021 International Young Eco-Hero Award Winners

Local Student Receives Top Honor for Contributions to Solving Environmental Problems

San Francisco – Avni Garg, a 16 year-old from New York City, is one of 25 young environmental activists from across the globe honored by Action For Nature (AFN) as a 2021 International Young Eco-Hero, an award that recognizes 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. Since 2003, Action For Nature has recognized more than 300 Eco-Heroes from over 30 countries and 25 U.S. states.

Avni received an Honorable Mention in the 15-16 year-old category for her project, Change Will Happen: The Battery Project.

After Avni Garg learned that the staff at her doctor's office were throwing away batteries after one use, she decided to start The Battery Project, which focuses on taking partially used batteries and repackaging and repurposing them to reduce waste. So far, Avni has repurposed more than 28,000 batteries, including 3,000 that were distributed to hospital and other front line workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Avni is also raising awareness about the importance of reusing, recycling, and responsibly disposing of batteries and has presented on the topic to Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and to Freshkills Park staff.

"Kids like Avni have shown that the next generation of leaders is here, and they are refusing to wait to solve the world's most pressing environmental challenges," said Beryl Kay, president of Action For Nature, an international non-profit organization that encourages young people to nurture a love and respect for the Earth and to take personal action to improve the environment. "The projects that these young people created will not only have real, positive impacts on their communities, they will also help solve global climate challenges and inspire others – no matter what age – to consider what they can do to help."

"Batteries make up 20% of the household hazardous materials in American landfills, and as the battery casing corrodes, chemicals leach into the soil and make their way into our water supply. Eventually these chemicals reach the ocean, harm our marine wildlife, and adversely affect our entire ecosystem," said Avni Garg. "Using our resources judiciously, reusing products, and recycling will help keep our planet green."

To read more about Avni's work, check out the project website at changewillhappen.org/battery-project.

To learn more about this year's International Young Eco-Hero Award winners, visit actionfornature.org/eco-hero-awards/2021-awards.

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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 better their environments.