



Beyond Basecamp

The Newsletter of Montana Yellowstone Expeditions

www.myeconnect.org

Well another Summer has come and gone and I still can't quite believe we are on the brink of Fall. To say the season was a run-away success would not be an exaggeration. We had a fantastic staff who knew how to mix hard work with fun and laughter. They were skilled, experienced and open to learning from each other and from their students.

Our students were a treat. They were individuals who were here to make the most of their opportunities, maximize their experiences and to share this with their team-mates. The bonds within each group were bound tightly and team members supported and helped each other in the tough times and at the same time remembered it was also supposed to be fun.

The success of the season was thanks to the effort of many individuals and organizations. We would like to thank them for their interest and commitment to our students and our program. So here goes:

Thanks to Jason and his Crew at River Source for the good time they gave our students on the river, and to Montana Alpine Guides, with Coop and company for the inspiration they provided on the rock. Thanks also to Greg Smith (aka Jim Deakens) for his entertainment and insights, and Chet for his sense of rhythm, his unfailing patience, and good humor while he helped MYE students and staff find their own beat.



From Basecamp

We are always grateful to Vern and Laurie for the 'cultural' experience they give our students. Every year horses is a hit, one of the most popular of our program components, and that is a result of the way Vern and Laurie relate to our students as much as the horses themselves.

Thanks to Dan Tompkins, who helped us hold the place together and also put a lot of time and energy into making our student's MYE service meaningful and engaging.

Last but not least thanks to Natalie and Paul for their vision, inspiration and belief in MYE and it's mission.

For support in our service component thank you, thank you

- ▶ Julie Hancock at Links
- ▶ Beth Thorsen at Big Brothers and Sisters
- ▶ USFS - Gardiner - Jolynn and Patrick
- ▶ USFS - Livingston - Wendy Urie
- ▶ USFS - Big Timber - Sally Orr and Sherrie
- ▶ Farms For Families - Mark Rehder and Lori

We'll be back in a month, meanwhile I hope to see some of you at the MYE reunion in Santa Barbara in the weekend.

Cheers

Ellen

MYE Program Director

September Reunion

The September 27th MYE CA reunion is approaching quickly.

There is no space limit on the day but we need to know if you are going to be there to get the numbers right for our catered lunch and to make sure we have enough space and equipment. So please let Jerry Lawrie know if you are coming.

The location of the reunion is at Shoreline Park in Santa Barbara. Those of you attending please carpool to Santa Barbara - Jerry can put you in contact with other MYE alumni who live in your area. The food, games, and discussions are going to be magnificent. You will have the opportunity to try paddle boarding, surfing, and kayaking, and catch up with the Montana basecamp staff who are coming out to join us. You don't want to miss this!

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2008 The Summer That Was - What MYE is About

The summer of '08 was a hit. We had motivated, skilled and fun loving staff, students who knew why they were here and were a joy to work with, great support systems and Montana. Staff and students alike made the most of their learning and each other, and we ran a high quality experiential adventure education program that enabled us to successfully fulfill MYE's mission.

We hit the ground running at the start of the season with a dynamic staff training. During staff training Natalie hosted a dinner at GCR for the MYE staff and other community members. During dinner she addressed the MYE staff and summed up a lot of what MYE is about. In her words:



The times I have spent both as a child and with my children in nature are among my most meaningful memories. It is a time when, as my husband says - we let our souls catch up to our bodies.

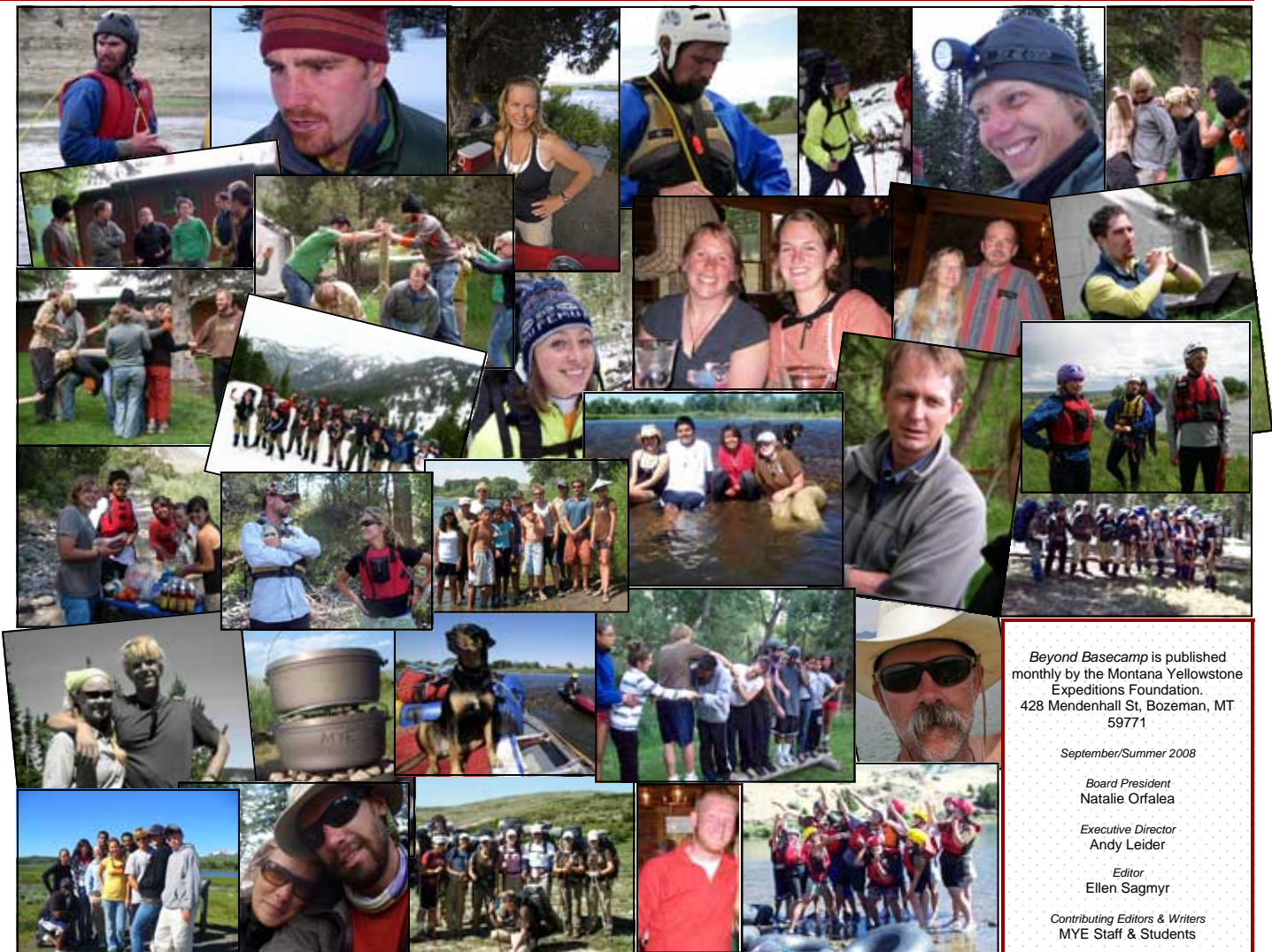
Direct exposure to nature is essential for childhood and adult development - physical, emotional and spiritual. With environment based education you will be developing (in our students) problem solving, critical thinking, decision making, communication, teamwork and also having fun.

We should not underestimate the power of the work, you do much to shape the next generation and to shape the relationship of the next generation to their environment.

Thank you for your sense of purpose in this cause and the dedication of your careers to it.

Natalie Orfalea

Grizzly Creek Ranch, June 2008



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▶ Student Perspectives — 2008



▶ Ascending 'Devil's Dagger' - By Jeremy Gonzalez MYE 19

It was an awkward morning, after a cold night in a sleeping bag and a tent filled with unfamiliar faces.

We filed into the big white van with our nifty new gear and it was a quiet drive, with girls in the front and guys in the back, to our first big event – rock-climbing.

Our instructors, Andy and Irene, were surprised by the quiet in a van filled with teenagers, but wisely said it would be short lived – and it was! Anyways we arrived, met the rock climbing guides, got our gear and learned the basics.

Everyone tried some climbs and then I saw it, the hardest climb, the one the instructor dude called “Devil’s Dagger”. It looked intimidating but I still wanted to try it. I eventually worked my way over to the base of the climb, tied in, and with a double check on my figure 8 knot and belayer, started to climb. I gotta admit it was difficult and, although I used all the moves they taught me, I was still having trouble.

By trusting my judgment and listening to some advice I made it to the top, even though I wanted to quit more than once on the way up. It felt great accomplishing something I thought I couldn’t do and hope that everyone in MYE 19 had the same wonderful opportunity – to enjoy the satisfaction that comes with this kind of accomplishment.



▶ Learning, Growing and Changing - by Zach Brown MYE 20

Our time here brought 12 different people together, from completely different backgrounds, with completely different stories, and it brought us together as a family. Overall we were like a married couple, we met, checked each other out, fell in love and had fun. As our relationship progressed, we became more loose with our communication. We went through rough spots.....but in the end, we have come to appreciate each other and the common goal that brought us together.

I have come to believe in human potential a little more this summer, a subject on which I am usually cynical. I have come to believe that most people - and especially you people (MYE 20) - are inherently good, and given the right opportunities, and knowledge, possess the will to critically analyze the world around them, and ultimately use their superior will to change it.....

Coming here with open minds and learning and growing and changing - you represent what is good in the world.



▶ Letters of Thanks -

It’s been over a week since I left MYE and now can truly say that it has definitely changed my life.....MYE has changed my view of things and to be aware of what is around me, and to be more thankful for the things I have. I would definitely recommend this trip to anyone who is looking for an adventure and willing to work as a team. I miss Montana and would go back next year.....if I can.

Angel Torres MYE 19

Laura Benard MYE 22

Thank you for giving me the wonderful opportunity to attend the Montana Yellowstone Expeditions program.

My month-long stay in Montana was truly incredible and one of the most memorable experiences in my life. The view from the top of the mountain after a hard 2,000-foot climb, tipping over on the canoe trip, drumming on our last night, and most importantly the friends I made - all these are things that I will not forget.

Thank you for giving me the chance to attend MYE and for helping me with the application process. I look forward to seeing you at the reunion in September!





Student Perspectives — My MYE Journey - Rachel Rohrbach

Rachel's MYE Journey



In the summer of 2004 I had just come out of the 8th grade and was about to embark on some new adventures - I just didn't know it yet. I had no plans and wasn't looking forward to the summer. I had applied to MYE, a camp in Montana, and wasn't accepted - I had just made alternate.

Sitting in my mom's living room in Washington, where I had spent the early summer, I got the phone call that changed my life. My dad had told me that a girl had dropped out of MYE - and I was going after all.

I hadn't intended for my life to be changed at MYE - but it was. I came back from the experience a whole new person. I had been introduced to the outdoors and had fallen in love. MYE was tough but I came home with new skills and great friendships, and I loved every minute of it.



Okay that is a lie; there were some things I cringed at - like doing dishes. In reality though doing dishes wasn't that bad. It was one of the best summers of my life and I wished that I could go back. In 2006 that wish came true when I returned to Montana and MYE as a participant on the 2006 MYE Leadership Lab, based at Grizzly Creek Ranch.



I had no idea what to expect. I had such fond memories of my first MYE experience and was scared the Leadership Lab may not be as good. I shouldn't have worried, the experience proved equally as amazing as my first MYE course. The Leadership Lab was a smaller group and with everyone having had previous experience, we were much more in charge. We were also challenged more and pushed harder. It was similar to being the upper classmen at school, you know more and are pushed harder and are examples to the underclassmen.

The Leadership Lab showed me that I was capable of much more than I thought, I learned how to be self sufficient as well as a team worker and leader. I also learned I was a "quiet leader" and to be ok with that. It was great summer and again I came back with new friends and desperate for more of the outdoors.



In 2007 Andy Leider emailed me and asked if I would like to participate in a new leadership summit run by a different organization but sponsored by MYE. Of course I jumped at the chance and although it was only a week, it was an incredible experience. I was given the opportunity to let out things I had bottled up inside. When I did that everything changed, I became fully aware of my potential as a leader and came back with a new attitude towards the world.



What did I do with all this leadership training? In early 2008 I became a counselor for the Outdoor Science School (ODS), a week long program for the 6th grade students run out of the Cispus Learning Center in Washington. The main objective of the program is to teach kids about the outdoors and science and the counselors are in charge of making sure participants are where they need to be, and are kept safe.



The counselors were the participants parents for the week and created a new name for themselves and their kids. My assumed name was Rose Lilly and my group were the Wildflowers. My wildflowers were a great bunch of girls. Although the week was at times stressful, I learned lots and wouldn't trade the experience for anything. The most important thing I learned that week was I am capable of being an effective leader.

I think MYE fully prepared me for my counseling experience and so much more. Through MYE I have had many adventures, and now I am graduating and beginning the scariest adventure of all - Life.

I know I can make it. It will be a long journey with many turns in the road, but hey that's life - an ongoing adventure. Part of this will include one - or maybe two - more adventures with MYE including my current internship which started at Basecamp in June and is now continuing in Santa Barbara until April.



Thanks MYE for helping me be the best I can be.



▶ 2008 CA Life Skills Retreats

▶▶ MYE Outdoor Retreat Commitments

MYE hosts an outdoor retreat on the last weekend of each month. Information for each of these retreats will come out on the first of each month and is sent via email - so please check your email regularly.



In the emails you will find a flyer containing dates, times, places, and directions for the retreat. Please remember if you sign up for a retreat you must follow through with the commitment. Many of the retreats fill up and have waiting list, and if you cancel on the day of or the day before we are not able to fill the space. Then someone who wanted to be there will miss out. If we have late cancellations or 'no-shows' we also waste a lot of the food which is bought in the last few days before the retreat.

So, please do not sign up for a retreat unless you are 100% sure that you will be able make it

If you have to cancel after you commit, please do this at least one week prior to the event unless there is some unforeseen family emergency or you are ill. From our point of view there is no excuse for not calling and informing us that you are not going to be there.

Once you have signed up for a retreat, you will receive reminder calls and emails from Jerry, so there is no excuse for not remembering. But remember you are ultimately responsible for being there and sleeping in is not a good reason for not turning up.

We look forward to seeing you on the retreats so keep an eye out on the first for the retreat in October

▶▶ Fall Courses

The Fall Courses are filling up quick. If you haven't done so yet please let Jerry Lawrie know if you would like to participate in any of them. They are scheduled as follows:

The first Fall course:

What: The Princeton Review SAT course

When: Starting Wednesday, October 8th and continuing every Wednesday until December 3rd.

Where: The Princeton Review center in Goleta, CA from 4:00pm-6:30pm.

The second Fall course:

What: A college application and personal statement course

When: October 23rd, November 6th, and November 20th.

Where: Orfalea Family Foundation from 4:00pm – 6:30pm.

The third Fall course is two days of college campus visits

When: October 11th and November 8th.

Again the courses are filling up quickly so contact Jerry Lawrie quickly if you want to attend.

Contact information is 805-698-6450 and jerry@myeconnect.org.

For more information please look at the Fall course flyer. Participation on each of the courses requires a full commitment.



▶ 2008 CA Summer Retreat Dairies



▶ CA May Retreat - Overnight to Santa Cruz Island- - by Jerry Lawrie

12 MYE Alumni and two staff (Jerry and Ally) met early on May 31st to spend two days and a night at Santa Cruz Island. It was our first overnight retreat and we were spending it with the Nature Conservancy at their main ranch on the Island. We met at the Foundation in the small hours, 5.45 am - to make sure we made Island Packers in Ventura to catch the 7am boat to the Island. By the time we got into the Santa Barbara Channel it was windy and the surf was up. Hardy individuals who stood up front we destined to get wet, and wet they got, looking like they had been swimming in their clothes and loving it.

As we headed across the Channel we came across - what for many in the group was a first - a humpback whale breaching fully out of the water. And not just once, the whale was definitely playing or showing off doing it one, two, three plus times, and we couldn't get enough of it. On each breach the whale would finish with a high back arch, show its back fin and do a deep dive. Five minutes later it would surface, torpedoing head first out of the water and at full extension, would slam back into the water creating a huge splash and smack. After doing that five times it would turn on its side to show us its pectoral fins. It was quite a show.



We reached the Island in an hour and our stop 20mins later. After loading our gear into Nature Conservancy trucks, we jumped in and headed out to the main ranch, which was located in the Island's Central Valley. With the gear unloaded, and after a quick orientation and lunch, we launched right into our habitat restoration projects. Splitting into two groups we tackled two equally challenging tasks, cutting down Eucalyptus trees and cutting out poison ivy. Stories, jokes and laughter helped us through two days of demanding and rewarding work. We were lucky to have unseasonably warm and sunny weather (with a slight sea breeze) instead of the foggy, damp weather typical of that time of year.

When we weren't working there was plenty to do between socializing, ping pong in the Tack Room (aka Eagle House) and some local hikes. One of these trails lead to a impressive 15ft waterfall cascading into a deep pool below. The cold water didn't stop the more adventuresome of us jumping off rocks into the deep pool. That evening we went on safari - searching for the endangered island fox. We didn't see the fox on the safari, (it is smaller than a mainland fox but the biggest predator on the Island) but we did some star gazing, enjoying a clear view of constellations, shooting stars, the milky way and the inevitable satellites.

After a morning's work, and lunch the next day, we did a tour of the ranch (which used to be one of the largest wineries in CA) finishing in style with a well deserved swim in the ranch's pool.

We were lucky to see more whales on our return journey to Ventura and after a shared dinner of pizza headed home. The weekend stimulated numerous stories on the van ride home, with many of the group, including myself, expressing a desire to go back. The Nature Conservancy put together a fun and exciting worked-filled weekend for MYE alumni and we responded by working hard and laying good groundwork for some of their future projects. They have already asked us back.....

Thank you to all those who participated in the weekend and I hope to see you on a future retreat.



▶ 2008 CA Summer Retreat Dairies



▶ CA June Retreat - Kayaking the Santa Barbara Coast - by Jerry Lawrie

On the morning of June 28th a group of MYE alumni, friends and associates had an early rendezvous at the Santa Barbara Harbor intending to take a trip from there to Carpinteria. This was however no ordinary journey. We weren't driving cars, buses or vans. We were not taking trains, boats or airplanes. Rather we were planning to paddle the 9 miles to Carpinteria in sea kayaks. We were lucky as there were exceptional conditions for kayaking - the weather was sunny, there was no breeze, and the surf was non-existent.

At 9:00am we hit the water and in the shelter of the Santa Barbara harbor touched up on our kayaking skills and learned how to paddle in a straight line. We were in tandem kayaks, so developing effective team-work with our paddling partners was an integral part of the learning. Discussions on who controlled the boat - the front (bow) and back (stern) person - were extensive. I think some people are still debating that point but from my experience and understanding I believe it is the stern paddler controls the boat and the bow motors it.



As we exited the harbor we learned that the rocks protecting the harbor came from the Channel Islands - most of them from Santa Cruz Island. We spent some time under the Santa Barbara Pier looking at the myriad of sea life (sea stars and mussels) hanging on to the pillars. Once we were well clear of the harbor we encountered sea lions. They swam around and under our boats, trying to entice us to come swim with them. We however, knew better than that and, wanting to leave with all of our toes and fingers intact, stayed in our boats.

Accompanying us on our adventure were 7 Quasar youth from the Santa Barbara Natural History Museum, 3 Naturalists, 2 students whose parents work at the Orfalea Family Foundation, one parent, and 3 guides from Paddle Sports. It must have been an amazing sight - 23 paddlers making our way down the coast.

Many MYE alumni are sure to remember the riddles and jokes shared during your back-country hiking experiences in Montana. The ones told in the six mile paddle from the harbor to our lunch spot in Summerland Beach were something like that. It was a challenging paddle and the jokes told at mile 5 shifted the focus from our sore muscles. The lunch waiting for us made it all worthwhile, with everything from pasta salad, tuna sandwiches, PB &J, Ham and cheese, to brownies and chips. It was a delicious meal and gave us the energy we needed to complete the last 3 miles of paddling.

The afternoon went by fast. The weather warmed up which fueled water fights, swimming, and general piracy with the taking over of boats. It was great fun. We arrived on the Carpinteria beach near Paddle Sports at 2:00pm and landed under the watchful eyes of the sunbathing masses. There was a 2 foot swell which some paddlers managed to catch to shore. Others ended up upside down in the water and some boats ended up sideways on the beach. Quite amusing if you ask me!

The day was amazing and I want to thank all the participants - see you at the next one!



▶ 2008 CA Summer Retreat Dairies



▶ CA August Retreat - Hiking the Romero Canyon Trail - by Jerry Lawrie

On August 30th a group of MYE alumni headed out for hike on the steep Romero Canyon Loop trail. The trail is a 4 mile round trip with an unrelenting uphill section and follows a small creek through a steep, picturesque canyon.

At the top of the uphill section many of us were out of breath, and remembering why we need to continue to exercise and stay fit. The good news was we had amazing views toward the ocean and we could see Summerland Beach – our intended destination

In Santa Barbara if you are going to hike you also have to jump into the ocean. Summerland Beach is a perfect beach to do just that. When we reached the beach we spent 3 hours on the beach throwing the Frisbee and football, playing smash-ball, swimming, and body surfing.

We also had the opportunity to talk about MYE and the upcoming Fall programs. The day was a lot of fun.



Hi Everyone

I just wanted to tell you all about the August 30 retreat. It was a great day with some fun in the sun.

We started the day by hiking the Romero Canyon loop. It was four miles on a moderate trail, with a hill section that gave us all a good challenge. I must say it was nice start to the day.

It was a small group of about 8 alumni, Jerry and 2008 instructors Doug & Ally and we got to catch up with one another and have a few good laughs.

After working up a sweat in the morning we headed down to Summerland beach where we had a refreshing lunch and a cooling dip in the water. Then we got down to business talking about the upcoming year and what it means for the life skills program. We ended the day being guinea pigs for a new, unreleased board game and then headed back to the foundation.

The day was great and it felt awesome to catch up with old friends and meet a few people I didn't know. I hope to see many of you at the September 27 reunion.

From

Rachel Rohrhach

2008 MYE Intern

Food For Thought

“By writing out your desires and goals on a piece of paper, you send a red flag to your subconscious mind that these thoughts are far more important than the remaining 59,999 other ones. Your mind will then start to seek out all opportunities to realize your destiny like a guided missile. It is really a very scientific process. Most of us are simply not aware of it.”

Robin S. Sharma

The outdoor retreats occur on the last weekend of every month. Stay tuned for what's happening in October. More information will be out at the beginning of the month.



At MYE I learned a lot about people, the environment and most importantly about myself.

I was able to watch a reenactment by none other then Greg 'Grizzly' Smith, dressed in character as 'Jim Deakens' a 19th century Montana mountain man. Jim is a character Greg had made up while working at Glacier National Park and through him Greg brought the history of Montana alive for me, and his insights gave me some perspective on contemporary events.

According to Jim, back in 1879 hundreds of buffalo were killed in the name of taking hides and a very proud Indian nation was destroyed. It seems the US Government had sentenced a giant animal species to extinction, while destroying an entire culture.

After his presentation Greg sat down with us and said something I will NEVER forget. He said: "Change is inevitable, but you all sitting here right in front of me right now gives me hope that the change will be a great thing. Your generation is the one that will change the world for the best."

Greg Smith



That was the first time in a very long time that someone has let me know that.



Greg's story had brought to our attention that the world is changing and while nothing can be done about that, it is how it changes that is up to us.



Whether it is be the students at MYE that spearhead the idea or the entire human race, change can be a beautiful thing.

It doesn't have to be a doom filled apocalypse, but could be a step towards the next chapter of life on this earth.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has".

Margaret Mead

US anthropologist (1901 - 1978)

Green Website - Check it out!

The David Suzuki Foundation - researched by Ellen Sagmyr



Canadian David Suzuki is a world renowned environmental activist, writer and speaker. His website covers topics from the sustainable economy, to global and ocean conservation, protecting people's health, growing a green garden, and green living made easy. It is also full of links to scientific information, blogs, and podcasts. You can sign up for a monthly newsletter full of green ideas and information (I signed up and got my first one which was focused on green business) or download free books like 'The Green Guide', a handbook on how you can, and why you should, make more sustainable life choices.

You can also take his 'Nature Challenge' and find out about some easy to make green choices in how you eat, get around, use energy and ideas for how you can get involved and keep informed about pertinent environmental issues.

Many of the science and case studies he cites to back up his ideas are Canadian but the ideas and information are universal. This is a worthwhile website to visit if you want to be inspired and gather ideas of how you can have a positive influence on the inevitable changes we face in our environment and our society.

Visit The Suzuki Foundation website at: www.DavidSuzuki.org/naturechallenge