

## THE EARTH STEWARD

Growing up as a child in northern Canada, I was blessed with a pristine environment and a society that lived in harmony with nature. Although I'd never heard of the word organic, we lived off of the huge garden in our backyard that was full of rich soil and the scrumpcious, nutritious vegetables that grew there. The bucket under the sink was for all perishable waste that was recycled to the chickens. My grandfather won yard of the year every year and I will always remember him tending to the weeds one by one every morning and sending me home with the most beautiful bouquets of flowers. My love of botanicals grew out of these fond memories. As a teenager, we moved to the beautiful sandy beaches of the Gulf of Mexico in Florida. As I was strolling down the beach one day, I noticed some splashing in the shallow waters off the coast. As a typical curious teenager, I rushed over only to find a dolphin with a 6-pack plastic holder wrapped around his rostrum, struggling to stay alive. He was undoubtedly close to his last breath. I reached down and untangled the poor creature from the debris that he so innocently picked up in his home water. He looked up at me with a sigh a relief and what seemed like a big smile and swam off. The look in his eyes and the feeling of his presence was of pure gratitude for saving his life. It was certainly a moment in time that I will never forget and a life changing experience that started me on my path as an Earth Steward! From that day forward, I joined a group called The Dolphin Defenders to help educate tourists and the locals as well on the dangers and hazards of things that were so seemingly simple and harmless and their potentially devastating effects. We held beach clean ups and awareness groups and I got to be part of a larger community that was involved in preserving the planet.

A few years ago, I was chosen to lead a group to Africa to volunteer with the medical community in rural Kenya. While I was there, I had the opportunity to learn from the indigenous healers

in the rainforest and see firsthand, not only the beauty, but the importance of these lands for their medicinal properties. Not only do the rainforests give us the necessary oxygen for us to sustain our planet, but they harbor many yet undiscovered cures for disease and are most certainly high on importance for preservation.

In the last few years, I have moved to a small town in northeastern New Mexico that had no recycling facilities anywhere within 100 miles of it. I am currently in the process of facilitating the school children there to start a recycling center for the town and surrounding area. These days, the attitudes are changing. We have become aware that we must reduce our impact on the environment or face increasing problems in the future. Simple things like setting an example for the neighborhood helps make a meaningful, long-lasting impact on the environmental changes that we are facing today. Hopefully, the children will learn and see the impact through the creation of the recycle center and be able to enjoy a greener, cleaner environment as will their grandchildren.

More recently, I have had the opportunity to attend my first year at wind school with the prospect of an exciting career and future in renewable energy. Since renewable wind energy is naturally replenished by the sun, doesn't produce air and water pollution and is abundant every place in the world, it seems only natural to harness these awesome powers and help to save this beautiful planet we all reside on. This area in particular, with high winds and a major drought, renewable wind as a source of power seems like the responsible thing to do. Not only will it decrease our dependence on foreign oil and traditional generating resources, but it will help to preserve the planet's fragile ecosystem and environment. While there is a lot of good research to rely on, there is a huge need to continue to develop and support clean, competitive reliable, renewable energy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I hope to continue my studies and further the research in the field of wind energy.

Coming full circle, from childhood till now, it seems only natural that my passion lies in being a great Earth Steward for our planet. Utilizing eco-friendly sources of energy, we can solve local, national and even global problems. Our children's future depends on technological advances of these energy resources. By spreading the word, thinking globally, acting locally and changing personally, together we can make a difference. I look forward to contributing to the field of wind energy and it's meaningful, long-lasting impact it will have on the environmental challenges that we are facing today. While there is a lot of success to build on, there is a lot of opportunity for growth. It is an honor to get to live my passion through a rewarding career at such a critical time. As stewards of the planet, it is our responsibility to find sustainable ways to provide power for our society while preserving and protecting the fragile environment and everything that lives in it!

---

---