

Diana Hernandez

The Earth Steward

My grandmother, Guadalupe, has always cared for the Earth and everything in it since she was a little girl. She had a strong religion and valued everything our Creator had made. Every single day in the summer of 2003, she would take care of me while my parents worked. There was never a boring day at "Wela's" house as she always planned fun activities for us. One of the activities we did that changed my life forever was planting. I remember watching her in total fascination as she removed a baby tree from a cup and asked me, "Where should we plant it, baby girl?" My stomach fluttered as I pointed towards a section of her backyard. With the help of some water, fertilizer, and a baby shovel, we brought it to life. Every summer I watched the little tree grow bigger and bigger and felt a large amount of satisfaction. I knew that the little tree was only the beginning of my long journey in helping our great planet. At only seven years old, I had an ambition and a love for this wonderful home we call Earth.

I am from a small town with about 1,300 people living in it, and a school that is very small. Although I was so quiet and shy, I set a goal for myself that would get everyone involved in helping our planet on Earth day. I wrote an essay about my love for our nature and how I wanted my school to contribute on this day. My principal gladly agreed and allowed our elementary students to organize a trash pickup. I smiled with joy as I saw everyone take the time to pick up old glass bottles and worn out grocery bags. I knew Iraan was a small west texas town, but in our own little way we helped our planet. After that year it became tradition that on this day we would do our pickup. I didn't stop there; I wanted to leave a bigger legacy and strived to have more trees planted on our campus.

Although I acted alone, my goal did not scare me. I raised awareness of how important having these trees planted were and convinced our school board to agree to let me do it. At this

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point, my friends saw my ambition and were determined to help with whatever I needed. We had bake sales, donations, car washes and raised enough money to buy the trees and supplies. On a warm April day, our fifth grade class planted seven trees around the campus and admired the art we had just created. Many adults shared their admiration towards my goals and determination and thanked me for starting something so amazing. It has now been seven years since we have planted them. It always gives me a warm feeling walking by and seeing what I had helped happen.

I do not only have a passion for our planet but being an educator in Art and Drama is the career path I am going to pursue. Our country does not have enough educators and I feel that I can be a successful help in bringing that back. I know that it will take hard work, determination, and a lot of self-sacrifice to become the person I dream of but all of those things will not be anything new to me. At only eighteen years old, I have tested myself in all of those areas and have been very successful. I will incorporate my commitment to Earth stewardship in my overall education and career plan by continuing to get the community involved in participating in activities to help our planet. This scholarship will help pay towards my education in pursuing my dreams in becoming a certified educator. I know that once I have achieved that dream, I will use my passion and wisdom to teach children and even my co-workers the importance of helping Earth in anyway that we can. I plan on enforcing the participation of Earth Day every single year and keeping a clean environment. I hope to touch lives and leave an impact on all of the people I meet in my life and feel that I was put on this Earth to do so. I owe it all to my beautiful grandmother who taught me how just one little person or act, can make such a difference. We are living in an era where all the things that need to be done are being ignored. I understand it is

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going to take a lot of time and determination to do so, but I know that I, Diana Hernandez, can make all the difference.