February 23, 2015

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Mansfield, MA

**White House Hosts Green Schools and National Green Schools Society Students
for Climate Education and Literacy Student Round Table**

Mansfield, MA – On Monday, February 9th, 2015 at 3:15 PM, the White House hosted eight students from Green Schools, National Green Schools Society, and associated organizations for a student round table discussion on Climate Education and Literacy. The student round table coincided with the [Champions of Change](http://www.whitehouse.gov/champions) event that is celebrating eight Americans who are doing extraordinary work to enhance climate education and literacy in classrooms and communities across the country.

The eight students invited to attend are student leaders, environmental stewards, and change agents in their respective schools. This group of students represent middle school, high school and undergraduate college students. These award-winning students are leading the charge for youth-driven change bringing the youth voice to the issues of climate change, climate education and awareness, environmental protection, transition to renewable energy, and reduction of carbon pollution.

**Sam Koufman** is a senior at Manchester Essex Regional High School in Manchester, MA. He is co-president of Green Schools and National Green Schools Society, and co-chair of the Massachusetts Green Student Leadership Council. As a Green Scholar in his school, Sam works towards implementing composting and recycling into businesses and restaurants in his local community. He works with elementary and middle school Green Teams to promote green living habits at school and at home. Sam currently serves as the president of his school’s Green Team and on the Curbside Compost Committee in his community. He has received the EPA’s Presidential Environmental Youth Award certificate and several Green Student Ambassador awards from Green Schools. He was a student liaison for the Massachusetts Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP). Sam is dedicating his future to bettering the Earth, and developing new student practices and education curriculum that will inform students about climate change. He plans to pursue environmental law.

**Jillian Rizzitano** is co-president of Green Schools and National Green Schools and co-chair of the Massachusetts Green Student Leadership Council. She is a senior at [Algonquin Regional High School](http://web.nsboro.k12.ma.us/algonquin/organizations/EcoClub/) in southeastern MA. Jillian was inspired by the environmental movement in 4th grade and joined Green Schools in 7th grade. She heads up projects such as single stream recycling, polystyrene recycling, expansion of the school’s organic garden, use of the greenhouse, and coordinates with students from around the nation on environmental projects. She loves speaking about ecology—especially sustainable agriculture – and wants to pursue a career in environmental science and policy. Jillian has received the following awards: National Green Difference Student Award Winner, EPA Presidential Environmental Youth Award certificate, President's Volunteer Service Award Gold, Massachusetts House of Representatives citation, Like A Drop of Water Essay Contest winner, Nature's Voices story content Finalist.

**Haley Organ** is 12 and a Junior Officer of Green Schools and National Green Schools Society. She was Green Schools’ first Junior Ambassador. Since the age of 7, Haley has been writing environmental songs, creating environmental art, performing inspiring songs and writing and reading poems at state-wide events; speaking out, leading discussions, planting seeds, trees, and so much more. Haley was invited to speak and network at events organized by US Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, Former MA Governor [Deval Patrick](https://www.facebook.com/GovernorPatrick), State Representative Jay Barrows, and Senator Brian Joyce. She has participated on several youth panels focused on environmental community service and the role of the student, including high profile events at EPA Region 1 and the MA State House. Haley speak out on climate and environmental issues often as is not shy about her beliefs and possible solutions.

**Jamison Wrinn**, 12, is currently a Junior Officer for Green Schools and National Green Schools Society. In 2014, Jamison was recognized by Green Schools for his environmental art project, The Earth Loom, which came about through collaboration and a community effort. He received a Green Schools Student Ambassador award and an EPA Presidential Environmental Youth Award certificate for his environmental stewardship. In September 2014, Jamison marched in the People's Climate March in New York City, calling for climate justice and the end to the fossil fuel era. Jamison's environmental advocacy work continues to evolve. This year he has kick started his school's Environmental Club and will work with two fellow middle school students on an idling awareness campaign. Jamison believes that one of the most important things that students need to do is understand the facts of carbon pollution and why and how fossil fuels are warming the planet. Jamison says that it is up to students to be leaders in making this transition to renewable energy and that wind and solar are our best options.

**Lynnea Shuck, 17** spearheaded the creation and implementation of the Junior Refuge Ranger Program at the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge in order to connect urban youth to nature and propel childhood curiosity into lasting environmental stewardship. The program educates youth about the critical role of the refuge system and instills environmental awareness and activism through a series of hands-on, engaging activities, labs, habitat hikes, and wildlife expeditions. The participants come away with an appreciation of nature and the essential role they play in protecting it. The program has successfully taught environmental concepts in a wide array of settings: school groups, scout troops, special events, a seven-week summer camp, stand-alone programs, as well as the classic self-guided activity. National Wildlife Refuges in California, Nevada, New Mexico, and Colorado are currently working to implement the Junior Refuge Ranger program. Lynnea’s vision is to expand the program to all 560 National Wildlife Refuges. Lynnea is a Certified Interpretive Guide, and a frequent speaker at environmental conferences, wildlife festivals, community educational events, and radio programs. She is a [Brower Youth Award Winner](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lz64Zzz7cPg) and has received honors from Earth Island Institute, 2014 Volunteer of the Year, and San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex, 2014.

**Avalon Theisen** is now 14, but when she was 9 years old she realized that she needed to use her connection with the natural word to help make it a better place for frogs and the environment. She wanted to help people by empowering them to reconnect with nature. Avalon has turned her efforts into a non-profit organization called [Conserve It Forward](http://www.conserveitforward.org/), which offers environmental programs and activities, with the goal of raising awareness and inspiring action that will benefit both the natural world and people. Avalon connects with her audience through positive media, including journalism, hosting *Nature Tracks with Avalon* on The Autism Channel, and as the voice of Abbey Toad on Pacha's Pajamas musical CD, *We Are ALL Connected*.

**Charles Orgbon III:** After noticing his school's littering problem in 2008 as a 12-year-old, Charles Orgbon III began leading school-based community beautification projects. He quickly realized that the environment movement was not adequately supporting young environmental change makers; therefore, he created [Greening Forward](http://greeningforward.org/). Today, the youth-driven, youth-imagined organization has grown into the largest movement of its kind. In all, Greening Forward has distributed over $60,000 in funding to youth environmental projects that have also planted over 300 trees, built over 80 compost bins, installed over 200 rain barrels, monitored 11 streams, recycled 120 tons of waste, planned three International Young Environmentalists Youth Summits, and advocated for a number of other environmental issues. Charles is profiled in numerous books on social entrepreneurship, and is currently one of 48 “People of Character” featured in school agenda books. Charles is a first-year student studying Environmental Economics and Management at the University of Georgia.

**Colter Adams**, 13, started as an environmentalist at an early age. He founded the first environmental club at his middle school. Colter realized that the only way to get his peers fired up about the environment was to get them together and inspire them to protect the environment. Colter has received the Craig Tufts scholarship for the [Family Nature Summit](http://www.familynaturesummits.org/), completed six years of his school’s district-wide Operation Earth Watch program, and has written several articles about the environment. He plans to attend the Green Schools National Network Conference Student Summit this year as well as other student focused gatherings such as ecoAmerica’s Path to Positive MomentUs Leadership Summit.

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) launched the [Climate Education and Literacy Initiative](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/climateed-dec-3-2014.pdf) in December 2014, focusing on connecting Americans of all ages with the best-available, science-based information about climate change.

[Green Schools](http://www.projectgreenschools.org) was founded in 2007 to engage students in greening their schools. It now focuses on developing the next generation of environmental leaders by providing students with opportunities in youth civic engagement, green innovation, green careers, and eSTEM.

[National Green Schools Society](http://www.ngss.org) is a chapter-based student recognition organization that engages students (grades 2-12) in environmental service projects, environmental education, project-based learning, and internships.

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