



EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE PLANET.

Dear Supporter:

I know that you share my deep concerns about climate change and the stresses that future extreme weather events will be placing on our youth. It is an existential threat for them. They are the ones that will disproportionately bear the burden of the forthcoming challenges and the efforts to develop innovative solutions and behavioral change.

That's why I want to tell you about an exciting education program that our Rio Grande Chapter has adopted, aimed specifically at equipping kids with the science-based information they will need and giving them the confidence to use their voices to make meaningful changes right now

– **The Global Warming Express (GWE).**

GWE has been delivering their education program to elementary school kids, ages 8-12, in New Mexico for the last five years. The program is designed to teach science and climate science to these kids for the first half of the school year and then as a group decide upon a real-world project they can execute upon themselves.

**This past April, the Sierra Club Rio Grande Chapter has formally adopted the GWE program to carry forward its work and expand its reach.**

You might be surprised to know just how much positive impact kids can have upon creating meaningful changes in their community. Just a very few examples include:

- Developing support, funding and approval, to **solarize Acequia Madre Elementary School** in Santa Fe, and winning a prestigious Santa Fe 2016 Heritage Preservation Award for inspiration and action toward their Compatible New Construction;
- Building community and city support to implement a **city-wide plastic bag ban for Santa Fe, and in the following year, a 10¢ paper bag fee;**
- Following the bag ban and tax, one GWE group initiated a program to make reusable cloth bags to be given free-of charge to families in Santa Fe;
- GWE kids from programs in Albuquerque and Santa Fe have written and delivered their own speeches alongside Congressman Ben-Ray Lujan, Senator Tom Udall and other elected officials at events such as Earth Day, Renewable Energy Day and the Science March;
- When the **NM state Public Education Department proposed watering-down science education standards**, omitting terms like “global warming” and “evolution” from the Next Generation Science Standards, GWE kids addressed the PED in a public hearing to oppose the changes. **Two days later the PED decided to adopt the standards without change.**

**The results of this program are undeniable. GWE kids develop a sense of responsibility and empowerment that lasts.** They deserve this head-start to help them deal with the inevitable hardships that the changing climate will bring.



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But while GWE has been doing such good work with these kids, there is an ugly assault on the truth of climate change brewing.

I don't need to tell you about the appalling environmental regulatory rollbacks that are being implemented by the Trump administration.

What you may not know is that recently, **fossil-fuel and climate-change-denial groups** and foundations like the Koch brothers, The Heartland Institute, The Oklahoma Energy Resources Board and the Texas National Gas Foundation, **armed with tens of millions of dollars in funding, are targeting the same kids that GWE is trying to reach** with fossil-fuel-friendly "Energyducation" programs.

With slick classroom materials based upon fake science they are trying to instill in grade school kids disbelief and skepticism that human behavior is the cause of climate change, while training them to believe that alternate, green, energy sources are either impractical or don't work at all.

**Already, these fossil-fuel interest groups claim successes of reaching a million kids with their "education" and to have influenced over 200,000 educators to adopt their way of thinking.**

The only way we are going to address the urgency and importance of climate science education and to counteract the cynical efforts of fossil-fuel interests is to reach as many kids as possible, as quickly as possible, before oil, coal and gas industries get to them.

**I want you to know that I fully endorse the GWE program that the Rio Grande Chapter has taken on.** The GWE program speaks directly to the values of the Sierra Club and adds a new way for us to bring those values and important science facts to a young audience.

We must scale this program, and quickly, thereby reaching as many or more kids than the fossil-fuel industry can. I urge you to give as much financial support to this program as you are able.

**Your gifts are essential to expanding this program.** If you are also able to volunteer some of your talents, the Global Warming Express program can likely use your help.

Thanks for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Michael Brune