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June 12, 13, 14

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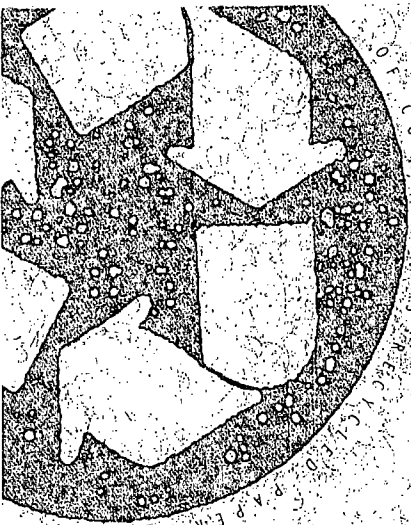
June 13th / Children's
Event.

AWARD FOR MELISSA POE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL WORK

Mr. President, I am pleased to inform my colleagues that a young Tennessean has been recognized for her work in helping to promote the importance of our environment. Melissa Poe of Nashville has been chosen to receive a "G.I. Joe Real American Hero" award. Melissa, who became interested in environmental concerns several years ago after watching an episode of "Highway to Heaven" about the effects of pollution on the environment, began a club for young people called Kids For A Clean Environment (Kids F.A.C.E.). The purpose of her organization is to encourage individuals to become more involved in the protection and preservation of our environment. Melissa has spoken to representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as the United Nations, about her club's goals and activities. In addition, her group plans to present next year to the U.N. Global Environmental Forum in Brazil a resolution addressing the issue of environmental destruction.

In the last few years, our society has become more concerned about the environmental problems that confront us. I am convinced that we face serious challenges, and for this reason, I introduced legislation which is designed to confront a host of environmental challenges and help prevent future damage

in this area. While this is an important initiative which calls upon the federal government to develop a plan to promote environmental protection, the individual efforts of people in neighborhoods around the country are important. I believe Melissa has contributed greatly to this effort and commend her for her work in helping protect the natural resources we now enjoy. If we do not wish to leave future generations wondering why we allowed the destruction of our global environment, then we must act now and encourage others to follow the fine example Melissa Poe has set.



2005-01-02

Junete Al Gore
393 Russell Smith
U.S. Senate
Washington D.C.

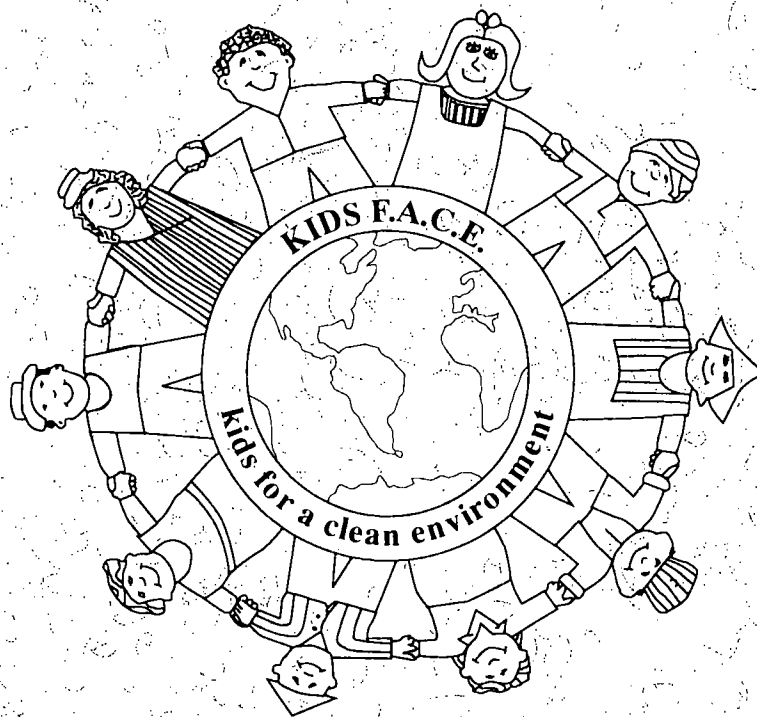


Kids FACE
PO Box 158254
Nashville, TN 37215

Dear Mr. President,
Please will you do something
about pollution. I want to live till
I am 100 years old.

Mr. President, if you ignore
this letter we will all die of pollution
and the ozone layer.

Please Help,
Melissa Poe, Age 9

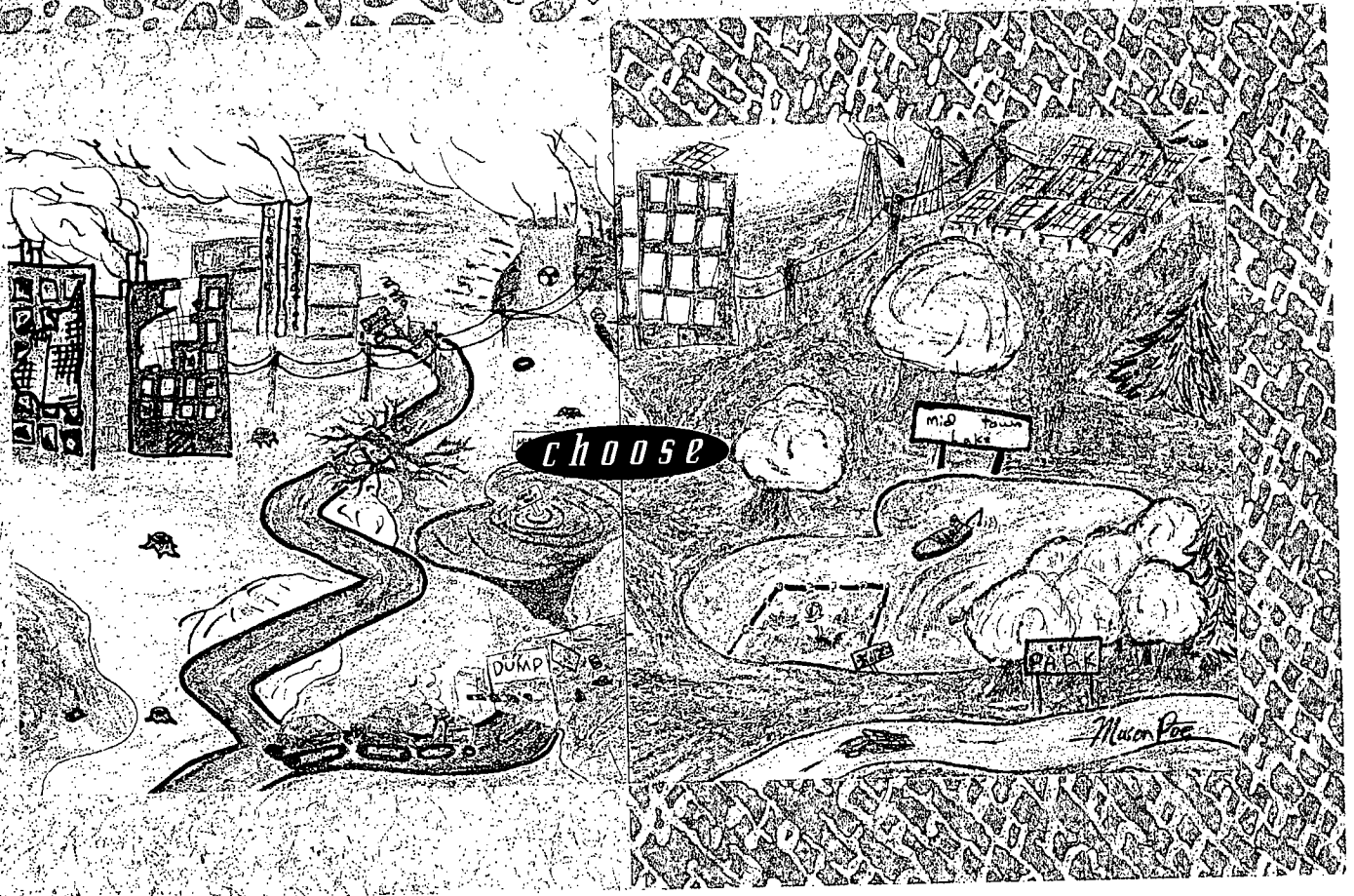


Write to: Kids F.A.C.E.
P.O. Box 158254
Nashville, TN 37215

Kids F.A.C.E. members don't pay any dues to be part of the club. Kids F.A.C.E. will accept donations from corporations or individuals to defray costs.

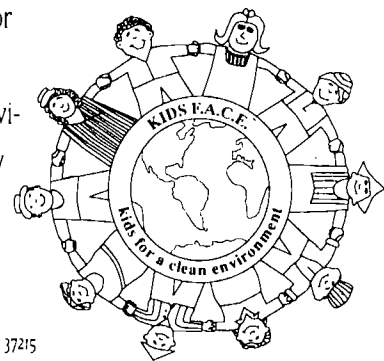


Here's a girl in Tennessee named Melissa Poe. And even though she is just a kid, she is already very **smart**. One day she was watching an episode of "Highway to Heaven" that showed how pollution and garbage are ruining the environment. Melissa knew she wanted to live on a healthy planet and she decided that she and other kids could help save the earth. So she started a club just for kids called Kids For A Clean Environment (Kids F.A.C.E.). Kids F.A.C.E. members care about the environment. They help teach other kids (and grown-ups) ways to reduce **pollution** so their towns can be beautiful and clean. Because Melissa and all Kids F.A.C.E. members know that if everybody protects the environment at home, all the communities in the **World** have a better chance of becoming free of pollution. Then everyone, everywhere can live on a healthy planet. Pretty smart, isn't it? The best part is that you can help too. There's probably a Kids F.A.C.E. Club in your town, and if there isn't, you can start your own chapter. It's fun. And it's good for the earth.

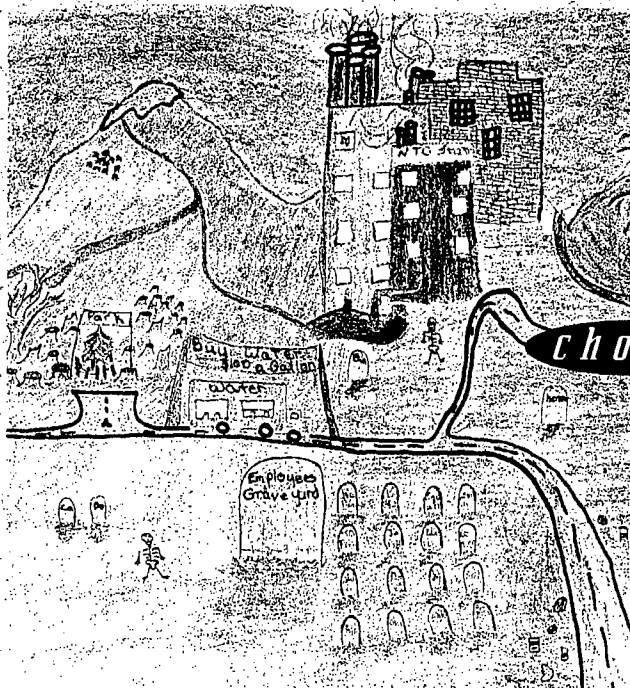


There are a lot of fun ways Kids F.A.C.E. helps clean up the environment. Like setting up recycling programs for their classrooms. Planting trees and collecting water in a rainbarrel in their schoolyards. Getting their classes to adopt an acre of rainforest. Keeping track of the energy they use in an "energy log." Making birdhouses from old milk cartons. Growing avocados from seeds or pineapples from tops. Creating newsletters about the environment for their friends. Or writing plays or commercials or songs about the environment.

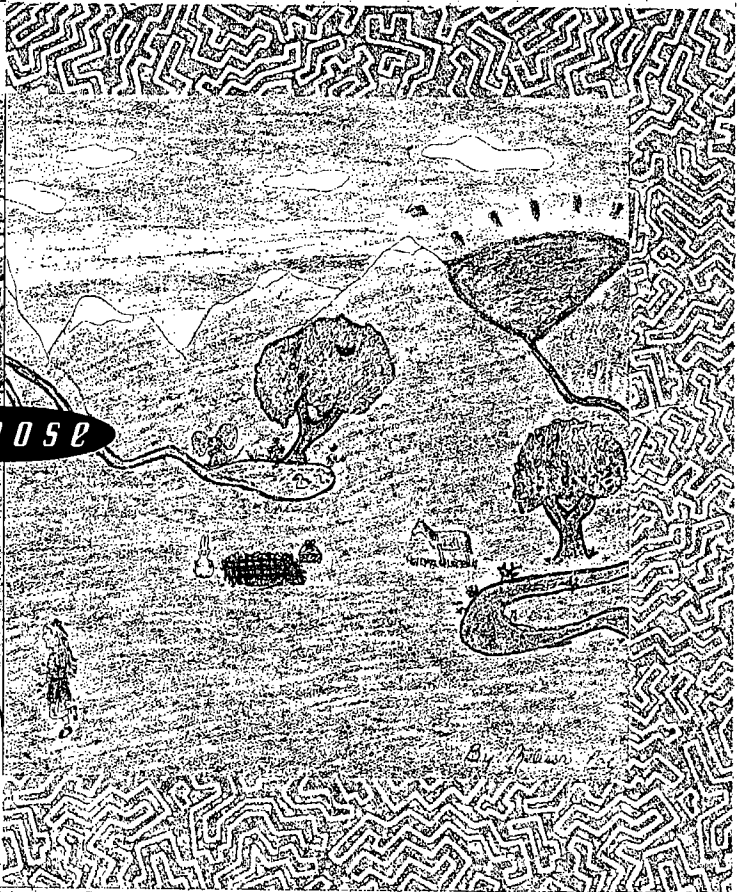
And Kids F.A.C.E. members can create their own programs for the environment and share them with other kids across the country. Because every Kids F.A.C.E. kid can help to make the world a cleaner place to live.



To learn more about Kids F.A.C.E. or to start your own chapter, write to: Kids F.A.C.E., P.O. Box 158254, Nashville, TN 37215



choose



Larry Rockefeller
moving to
the 9th
Number
Reyes
2166
Fax 2166
6157

Hotel
Chino

205
7272

245
1660

Hostel Annie
Buddy
Collegio, Santa
Theresa

5521-222-

3932

252-5931

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4202

June 3, 1992

Ms. Annie Brody
Project Director
Children's Earth Fund

Dear Ms. Brody:

On behalf of Senator Gore, I would like to thank you for the invitation and am pleased to confirm his participation in the Global Children's Hearing in Rio on June 12. However, we need more information. Could you please tell us who else has confirmed? We also need to know the exact location and what will be expected of Senator Gore. How much time will be allotted him for speaking? Also, how many children will be present?

Due to the fact that the Senator will be leaving for Rio tomorrow, a prompt reply would be appreciated. Please call either Kandy Parson at 202-224-6459 or myself at 224-4283. A fax with this information would also be acceptable. Again, thank you for the invitation and we look forward to participating.

Sincerely,



Katie McGinty
Legislative Assistant

Looking forward to seeing you!

children's earth fund

May 21, 1992

Katie

Ms. Marla Romash
Press Secretary
Office of Senator Al Gore
393 Senate Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Marla,

On behalf of Kristin Eskelund, Coordinator for VOICE OF THE CHILDREN, I am pleased to invite Senator Gore to participate in the Global Children's Hearing in Rio on June 12.

As we discussed, details and background information is enclosed, along with a videotape of the NICKELODEON spots and some recent press clippings about Chris DiNero and John Hegrstand.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Horn - 1:00
3-5

Best wishes,

Annie Brody
Annie Brody
Project Director

Via Federal Express

*Pls. see me
re: this*

*confirm
for 12th
who else has
confirmed
expert witness
how long
ever since
Sen will do
how many
kids*

40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011
Tel. 212.727.4493 • Fax. 212.727.1773

'I'm angry that the treaties that they're going to be signing are so weak.'

Christopher DiNero, 11-year-old Long Branch resident before his speech at the United Nations



Hoping cooler heads prevail

■ A Long Branch boy wants more help in reducing the gas that is warming our planet.

By TODD B. BATES
PRESS ENVIRONMENTAL WRITER

NEW YORK — He's given speech to lots of influential adults, including ambassadors, U.S. senators and Washington journalists.

But yesterday, 11-year-old Christopher DiNero of Long Branch got chance to deliver his message to members of his increasingly green generation on the eve of the Earth Summit.

Striding up to the microphone in a huge General Assembly hall of the United Nations, Chris told a Global Youth Forum on the environment that the "CO2 Challenge Kids Coalition" has won pledges to curb 400,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Like Chris, a fifth-grader at We End School, 400,000 children have pledged to slash carbon dioxide emissions by a ton a year apiece in an effort to combat global warming. Carbon dioxide is the leading greenhouse gas, and energy conservation helps reduce emissions of it.

"We think it really helps," said

KFVIN P. COUGHLIN/Asbury Park Press

U.N. speech yesterday, Christopher DiNero, Long Branch, urged a cut in carbon dioxide emissions.

Please see **Cooler**, page A5

Cooler

From page A1

Chris, looking very businesslike in a dark suit. "We're all hoping that you are going to participate in the CO2 Challenge, and we'd really like you to do so."

Chris, who wants to be an inventor, author, illustrator and "thinker," also outlined his next project: a solar food cooker.

His brief speech was warmly received, especially when he announced he's from New Jersey.

Small wonder. Hundreds of students from New Jersey, including large contingents from Ocean and Monmouth counties, attended the 8th annual forum.

All told, about 2,000 students up to 25 years old and from more than 40 countries participated in workshops, listened to music and speeches and watched videos.

About 25 students gave presentations focusing on ecological destruction and their efforts to save the Earth. Ziggy Marley and The Melody Makers were to give a concert near the end of yesterday's program.

As a group, the students intend to send a deadly serious "declaration" to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — the Earth Summit — in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 3-12.

"It is well-known that the ongoing destruction of our environment has affected children and youth more than any other group," the declaration says.

"Politicians and leaders have begun to tell us that the task of saving the environment, of protecting the future, is on our shoulders, that we are the ones who will have to make a difference.

"Not only is this a delaying tactic on your part, it is also a frightening burden that we must carry. . . . As long as you control the reins of power, our

efforts cannot possibly save the planet. As hard as we try, you cannot expect us to do it alone."

Jana Thompson, 17, a junior at Lacey Township High School, attended the forum, sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme, with about 25 others from the school's biology club.

Asked what she thinks is the biggest environmental problem, Jana said: "Just people being aware of the problems. A lot of people I don't think realize that they do make a difference."

"It's good to have such a young crowd," she said. "A lot of kids are getting information about what they can do, and we're teaching our parents."

Noel J. Brown, director of the U.N. Environment Programme's North American Regional Office, said of the upcoming summit: "There has never been an agenda like this one, but there has never been a time like this one."

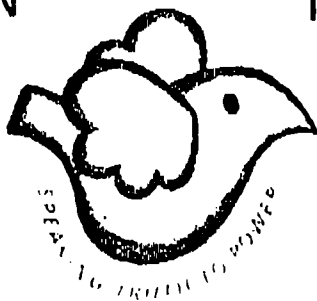
"I don't think governments can plead ignorance for an excuse for inaction," he said. "We have a moral responsibility to act on what we know."

"We cannot succeed until we design an Earth-smart society, and that is within our capacity. People capable of building smart bombs are also capable of building . . . an eco-smart society."

"Earth-smart kids can produce an Earth-smart society. You are the first generation of Earth-smart kids," said Brown, drawing applause. "Carry on, my young friends, the future is on your side."

In an interview before his speech, Chris DiNero said he had mixed feelings about what will be accomplished at the Earth Summit, considering President Bush has orchestrated a draft treaty setting no limits on greenhouse gas emissions.

"I think they have to do something more than what's been announced so far," he said. "I'm glad everybody is going and people are meeting. I'm angry that the treaties that they're going to be signing are so weak. We are . . . wasting that opportunity. I don't understand that."



May 5, 92

His Excellency Dalai Lama

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE AT THE GLOBAL CHILDREN'S HEARING
IN RIO DE JANEIRO 12 JUNE 1992

Your Excellency, Mr. Dalai Lama

During the Regional Follow-up Conference on Environment and Development OUR COMMON FUTURE in Bergen, Norway 1990, a children's public hearing was held. Norwegian top political leaders were challenged by ten children (aged 12 to 15) about the state of the world and the children's worries for the future. The hearing was a great success, and as a result the International Campaign VOICE OF THE CHILDREN was launched.

This campaign is now active in more than 40 countries, its main objective being to give children all over the world the opportunity to meet their own political leaders, speaking their minds, taking part in the democratic process. It is first and foremost an educational and awareness raising campaign, but our aim is also to make sure that the children's voices will be heard during the Earth Summit. Children all over the world know a lot about the ills of the world, they are worried about the future. Through this campaign children are given the chance to raise their concerns with people in power, to present their visions and ideas but also their criticism and demands.

VOICE OF THE CHILDREN is a joint venture, run by FUNAM, an environmental NGO based in Argentina, and the Norwegian Campaign for Environment and Development in Norway.

As a culmination point the International Committee has decided to invite 20 children who are now active in the campaign in their own countries to come to Rio in June to participate in the Global Children's Hearing during UNCED 92. The children who have been invited are coming from: New Zealand, Australia, the Philippines, India, Nigeria, Rwanda, the Middle East, Uganda, Malta, France, Norway, Latvia, Ukraine, Canada, USA, Guatemala, Columbia, Chile, Argentina and Brazil.

Their task will be to present children's own concerns to some of the most influential people in the world.

We are hereby inviting you to take part in this Global Children's Hearing in Rio the 12 June 92.

We have invited Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, Prime Minister John Major of the UK, President George Bush of the USA, President Menem of Argentina, President Museveni of Uganda, Prime Minister Mulroney of Canada, Prime Minister Rao of India, President Havel of Czechoslovakia, Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany and the Mayor of Sao Paulo, Luiz Erondina.

President Museveni has already accepted the invitation and so has the President of Argentina Mr. Menem. Gro Harlem Brundtland says she would like to participate if her schedule will allow her. General Secretary of UNCED Mr. Maurice Strong has given his support to this campaign and to the Children's Hearing in Rio. He says he wants to attend the event.

Your acceptance of this invitation to be present at the Global Children's Hearing would demonstrate a significant acknowledgment of the importance of children and children's feelings. It would help highlighting what the Earth Summit is all about, the Future.

Included in this letter you will find more information on the International campaign VOICE OF THE CHILDREN, names of the people on the International Committee and the Honorary Board. You will also find letters of recommendation from

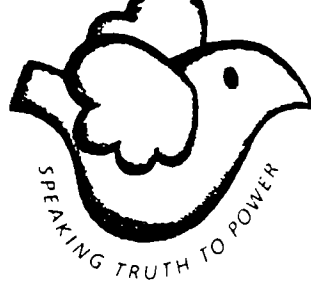
Gro Harlem Brundtland, Norway
Maurice Strong, UNCED
James P. Grant, UNICEF
Federico Mayor, UNESCO
Mostafa Toba, UNEP
Matz Sandman, Norway
Herbert de Souza, IBASE, Brasil

A positive reply would please us very much!
Please contact me if you would like more information.

On behalf of the VOICE OF THE CHILDREN
Sincerely yours



Kristin Eskeland
Coordinator



Dear new friends.

We are very excited about our trip to Rio and we are looking forward to meeting you all. We think we are going to have a wonderful and exciting time together. Lots of people call to invite you as a group to participate in interesting things. I have tried to include as many of the events as possible in the program which is enclosed. But there may still be changes.

The Global Children's Hearing itself will take place on the 12.June from 1100 to 1300. The detailed program is not finished because we feel that you as the main persons should be involved in the planning process. We shall spend time together in Rio working it out.

You should come with clear ideas as to what issues you would like to raise in Rio. Bring the information you need. It will, however, be up to the group which issues you will decide on and who will be the spokesperson, most likely we shall not be able to talk about all the things you would like to raise with the heads of states.

We now know that the Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland and the President of Uganda Mr. Museveni and the President of Argentina will be present. The General Secretary of UNCED Mr. Maurice Strong will also participate, and we have reason to believe that the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Rao as well as the Mayor of Sao Paulo, Ms. Luiza Erondina will accept our invitation.

We have also invited President Bush, Prime Minister Mulroney (Canada), Chancellor Helmut Kohl, (Germany), Prime Minister Major (UK), the President of Chile, Mostafa Tolba (UNEP) and Dalai Lama.

There will be a lot of television people and press so you will have to get used to the idea of being interviewed. But we shall try to cut it down so that it doesn't get to be too much for you.

Here is some information as to what to bring and to be prepared for:

Arriving in Rio.

Someone will be meeting each of you at the airport. You should look for a person holding a Voice of the Children sign. If something happens and you don't find anybody there, look for a desk in the airport saying SPECIAL TAXI. You will pay for a special taxi at the counter and get a receipt. (the price was \$28.00 US in February '92).

THE ADDRESS OF OUR HOSTEL IN RIO DE JANEIRO:

COLEGIO ASSUNCAO

RUA ALMIRANTE ALEXANDRINO 2023

SANTA TERESA

20.241 RIO DE JANEIRO, RJ

BRASIL

TELEPHONE: 55-21-222.3932
55-21-252.5931

TENTATIVE DRAFT PLAN FOR RIO.

- 28-31. May: The group arrives.
Transportation to Santa Teresa. (Maria Thereza Moura)
- 29.5-1.6: Getting to know each other, seeing some sights in Rio.
29.5 : 900 Learning Portuguese. Going to the beach.
Afternoon: Rocinha favela
- 30.5. : Colegio Santo Inacio.
900-12 Meeting the students. 12-21. Visiting students' homes. (or the 3. June for the visit, see below)
- 31.5. : 1500-1800: Meeting with the Street Children Project at Centro Joao. XXIII
1. June : Morning: Reception: Ferngully the Last Tropical Forest.
- 2.6: Morning: Visit to the beach, lunch at Cruzada do menor
1600: Gaia arrives Flamengo park.
1700: Official opening Global Forum, Fluminense Stadium.
- 3.6. : 10.00: Official opening of the Earth Summit
1200: the children visit students at their homes
- 4.6. : 1300: Opening of the Children's Exhibit at Museu de Astronomia.
Meeting with French Television.
- 5.6 : 1200: Future Forum, round table debates, workshops, creative work, preparing for the Global Hearing
1600-18: Open House with VIPs, Environmental Ministers
- 6.6. : Afternoon Future Forum: workshops. = French boat
Evening: Children's debate, Future
- 7.6. : Excursion "Terra de Educar"
- 8.6. --- " " -----
- 9.6. : 1200: Building a solar cooker
- 10.6. : Visit to Petropolis, lunch Community center
- 11.6 : 900-1200: Children's round-up workshops (org. by Centre for International Cooperation)
- 12.6. : 1100-1300: Global Children's Hearing
13. or 14.6. : Departure.

Moura

Global Children's Hearing in Rio

20 children from 20 countries have been invited to go. Unfortunately we could not invite all the countries who are involved. We had to make a selection to make sure that all the regions of the world were represented. These countries were chosen:

Australia, New Zealand, India, Uganda, Rwanda, Nigeria, Latvia, Ukraina, Malta, Germany, Norway, France, Canada, USA, Guatemala, Columbia, Chile, Argentina and Brazil.

We have kept two spaces open, one for the Middle East and one for South East Asia.

If your country is not on the list please remember that the important part of the campaign is not what happens in Rio, but what each of us does at home.

The 20 children will arrive in Rio at the end of May. They will be staying together at a pleasant hostel at Santa Teresa, they will meet with many other groups of children and youngsters, street children, school children, slum children as well as rich children. They will be meeting with other international groups of children who are in Rio for the Earth Summit.

The group will have fun together, visit Rio, go to the beaches. But the main aim is of course to take part in the Children's Hearing.

All the children will bring their own ideas and concerns, they are representing the children in their own countries and their regions. We want to give them plenty of time to talk to each other, to get to know each other and learn something about life in other parts of the world.

In order to have a genuine CHILDREN'S hearing, they will need time to think through the questions they want to raise and how they want to do it. The adults will be there as facilitators, interpreters and allies, not as leaders.

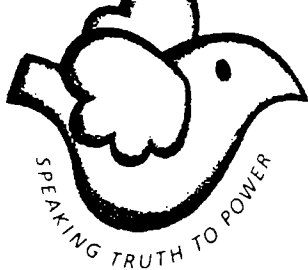
I would now like to talk about a sport that is destroying the Maltese countryside thanks to a few egotists on their jeeps. I am speaking about the Camel Rally in Malta. These people do not care less about their country. They run over and destroy Malta's typical rubble walls, trees, flowers and reptiles. The natural environment belongs to everyone so this rally must be prohibited. We have the right to have our countryside and these few adults must not be allowed to take it from us and destroy it forever.

Mario Aquilina, Malta



*When the last leaf falls
When the last drop of water dries out
When the ozon layer is already destroyed
is it already too late to understand
that money is not going to save us?*

Tove, Sweden



Background

The International Campaign VOICE OF THE CHILDREN, Speaking truth to power.

It is hard to believe that as the result of one event, the "Children's Hearing" in Bergen, Norway 1990, comes a whole string of similar events all over the world: Children are given the chance to speak their minds and to be heard by people in power. For that is the idea behind VOICE OF THE CHILDREN, behind the Children's Hearing in Malta, the impressive Kindergipfel in Frankfurt and the series of Melas in India as well as all the other hearings that are part of the international campaign: To open a channel of communication between children and decisionmakers.

Children know a lot about the ills of the world. Many are deeply worried about the future. It is time people in power get a chance to hear their voices, their visions and their ideas, but also their criticism and their demands.

150 nations have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Heads of States from all parts of the world have promised to listen to children and to take them seriously. VOICE OF THE CHILDREN is one way of implementing all the fine words and promises.

The first CHILDREN'S HEARING took place during the Regional Conference "Our Common Future" in Bergen in May 1990.

The plan for the event was simple:

All children between 7 and 15 were invited through the schoolsystem to write us letters with their ideas, hopes, questions or demands concerning the environment in the broadest sense. In the course of two months we received about 6000 cards with drawings, poems, statements and questions about development and environment issues. Out of this material we put together a CHILDREN'S APPEAL TO WORLD LEADERS, using the children's own words.

We then invited children's organisations in Norway to choose some of their most active members between 12 and 15 years of age to come to Bergen to participate in the Norwegian Children's Hearing. Ten children from different parts of the country arrived in Bergen in order to challenge six of Norway's top leaders. We all met in a big concert hall: 10 children, 6 leaders, a chairperson, two judges and an audience of 1400 children and adults. The Norwegian "ombudsman" for children acted as the chairperson, to make sure the children wouldn't be patronized or overpowered by the more experienced adults.

The children had in advance chosen which issue they would like to raise, according to their own interests as well as to the list of concerns having been raised in the children's letters.

The Children's Hearing was a great success. The children were wonderfully frank and direct, they were able to tell the adults exactly how they felt and what they wanted the decisionmakers to do.

The audience was active as well, booing whenever they didn't understand or were displeased with an answer, clapping when they were happy with it. The culmination point was when the Children's Appeal was handed over to the international delegates.

The International Campaign VOICE OF THE CHILDREN was launched to give children all over the world the same opportunity to speak their minds to decisionmakers in their own countries.

The aim of the campaign is to organise Children's Hearings or Forums in as many countries as possible. At these Forums the children will have the opportunity to raise their concerns about their future and the future of the earth. Our experience so far shows that children all over the world are concerned about these issues, the environment, poverty, war and peace. Whether they are worried about their own poverty, hunger and lack of clean drinking water or concerned about depletion of the ozone layer, acid rain or questions on war and peace they should have the chance to speak their minds directly to the people who make the decisions.

The first goal of the campaign is The Earth Summit in Brazil 1992. We intend to invite a few children from each continent to go to the Conference on Environment and Development to present their concerns to world leaders.

There are now more than 30 countries involved in the campaign, which means that thousands of children in all kinds of societies are active telling decisionmakers in their own countries how they see the world and the future. The children's visions, ideas and demands will be collected and edited into one document, The Children's Appeal to World Leaders, which will be handed over to the delegates at the Global Children's Hearing in Brazil.

But the long term aim is more important than the Conference in Brazil. The real impact of the campaign will come when this has been turned into a continuous process. The goal is to have children's hearings in all local communities once a year. It could be a part of the school curriculum or a part of the program of voluntary organisations. When children know that they will have the chance to talk with politicians and other decisionmakers in their own community regularly, they can really plan for it. It would encourage them to pay attention to what is taking place between the hearings and it would give them a chance to follow up on the promises made the year before.

There are many ways of doing this, what is important is to choose a method which seems right for the children in your culture in your society.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Collect the children's own concerns.
 - Invite the children to write short letters or make drawings
 - Sit down and listen to the children
 - Invite groups of children to get together to present their visions, questions, demands.

Make sure that whatever method you use, the children must not feel coaxed, patronized or manipulated.

2. Edit the concerns into a document using the children's own words. This work could be based on cooperation between children and adults.
3. Invite children (between 10/12 and 15 years of age) to take part in a public meeting where they are allowed to present their ideas and views to people in power.

Do not select very special children. The idea is to present ordinary children's viewpoints, not elite children who are able to act as little adults.

4. Make sure the adults' answers and promises are properly recorded and publicised. Invite journalists and other media people to be present.
5. Follow up on the promises the following year: Have the adult leaders kept their word? What has happened since the last Children's Forum?
6. Encourage the children to think of ways in which they themselves can and will contribute to a better future.

What exactly is a Children's Hearing?

A Children's Hearing or Forum can be organised in different ways. The main thing is to give children the opportunity to meet powerful people in their own society to tell them how they feel. The children's views may be presented through for instance short plays, songs, poems, exhibitions of children's artwork, photoes etc.

The Forum will probably have most impact if such elements are combined with a more formal hearing:

A group of children are chosen to be spokespeople. But the children in the audience should also be encouraged to take part in the discussion.

It may be a good idea to have some experts present to act as judges in case difficult questions arise.

The chairperson should be a person who is able to act as the children's ally without dominating, to make sure the questions are properly adressed without evasion or patronising.

The children on the panel should decide in advance how to divide the tasks between them. In order to be prepared they need to know their own role.

To prevent this from being a show where elite children may dominate, the chairperson needs to have an eye open for the children in the audience, they too should have the opportunity to present their ideas.

A practical way of organising the event is to have the children sitting at one table facing the adults being challenged.

The chairperson should be placed where she/he can see both the panels and the audience, where she can facilitate without dominating.

Interspersed with the questions raised the audience may illustrate the children's concerns with songs, poems, dances, plays etc.

VOICE OF THE CHILDREN

The children's own tool

At this point nobody knows what questions the children will raise in Brazil, that is entirely up to the children themselves. It is their own voices, their own opinions that will be heard. My greatest fear has been that adults will use this campaign in their own interest. It is vital to remember that the role of the organisers of Children's Hearings is to facilitate, to acquire the children's own views without adult coaxing or pressure. No matter how well organised a Children's Hearing may seem, it is a failure if it may be said that it was a show staged to please the adults, or that the children were only saying what their grown up leaders wanted them to say.

Will the campaign have an effect? Will politicians and other decisionmakers listen to children? Will it make a difference on the decisions made in Brazil 92?

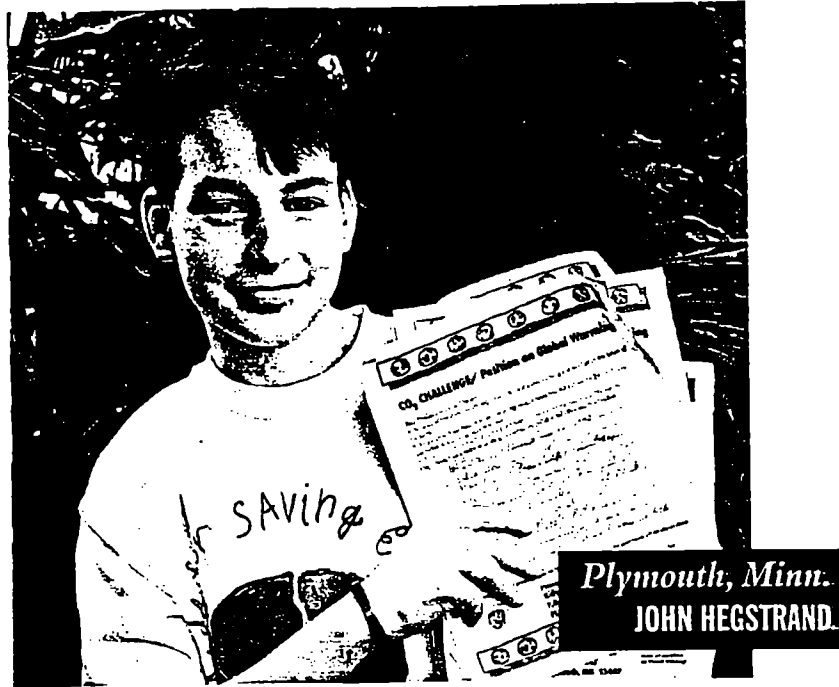
Although I am not over optimistic about the effect it will have in the short term, children's voices should be heard because it is their future we are talking about. And children can be very powerful because they are direct and honest. They are not always right, but they need to be taken seriously and they need allies. VOICE OF THE CHILDREN is an awareness raising campaign, it should be seen as a tool for children to set words to their own fears for the future, to help them feel that they have a role to play in the democratic process both now as children and later as adults.



Kristin Eskeland

Turf wars

*Four activists dig in for a fight
to save their own piece of the planet*



Teen battles global warming

AT 5 FEET AND almost 1 inch tall, John Hegstrand is shorter than many of the girls in his eighth-grade class. He collects trolls and Captain America comic books, listens to oldies and pins pictures of his Uncle Mike, a pro wrestler known as "Hawk of the Legion of Doom," on his wall.

But the 14-year-old from Plymouth, Minn., is not just a typical *Wonder Years* teen. He also has talked his parents into carpooling and stuffing the empty Trix cereal boxes with garbage to save landfill space. He's lobbying his school, Maple Grove Junior High, to dedicate a day's worth of classes to the planet. "In math we could add up totals of garbage put into landfills. In English we could write letters to politicians." And, as a representative for the environmental group Kids for Saving Earth (KSE), Hegstrand is collecting thousands of signatures on a petition (above) to urge President Bush to take a more active role in fighting global warming.

KSE, an international group of children's ecology clubs with 500,000 members, is dedicated to getting schoolkids

involved in projects such as recycling, adopting endangered species and battling global warming. The group was the dream of Hegstrand's classmate Clinton Hill, who died in 1989 at age 11 of a brain tumor. Hill's parents, Tessa and William, founded KSE in his memory with funding from corporate sponsors.

Hegstrand allows that he joined KSE because "it was the cool thing to do." But soon he emerged as a group leader with a talent for speechmaking. His public speaking gigs have included a KSE-sponsored trip to the United Nations in May 1990 and a visit this past January to Capitol Hill, where ABC News captured him telling senators Al Gore (D-Tenn.) and John Chafee (R-R.I.) that he hoped "to influence government leaders to ... make the right decisions to save our planet."

"I was impressed not only with his precociousness, but with the strength of his commitment at such a young age," Gore says.

Now Hegstrand is joining in an effort by a coalition of kids' environmental

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groups to ask President Bush to do more about the Greenhouse Effect. He's canvassing cafeterias at area schools, getting children to pledge that they will cut back on energy use at home and help cut the carbon dioxide emissions blamed for global warming. The coalition plans to send 1 million signatures to Bush to coax him into signing an international pact on global warming at the Earth Summit in June in Rio de Janeiro.

On a recent trip to Washington, Hegstrand and other junior environmentalists tried to get through the White House gate and deliver the first 100,000 petitions to Bush. "The

**'This isn't something that
one day I'll do and the next
day I won't. This is something
that I will carry with me
for the rest of my life.'**

guards told us to go to the White House mailroom." Instead, the kids gave the petitions to Gore, who promised to pass them on to Bush.

Hegstrand also visited his congressman, House Democrat Gerry Sikorski. "He talked about the CO₂ fight," Sikorski says. "He struck me as someone who is so enthused about what he's doing that he's contagious."

Back at home, Hegstrand has been speaking to school and church groups, stuffing envelopes at KSE headquarters and making plans for Earth Day. He and sister Tracy, 16, recently met with a U.S. delegate to the Earth Summit. The family recycles aluminum, glass and paper, and Hegstrand urges all to save electricity. He'd like his dad, Tom, to trade in his 1979 Cadillac Coupe de Ville for more fuel-efficient wheels. "He's gotten us to do things like not run the water so much when we're rinsing dishes, or use the low-energy cycle on the dishwasher," Dad says. "He's the quickest one in and out of the shower."

Hegstrand plans to be an actor and make public service announcements for the environment. "You can't even walk down a street or through a park without seeing litter all over. You walk by the river, and it's filled with junk. People need to wake up and notice that our Earth is in danger." ■

To learn more, write: Kids for Saving Earth, P.O. Box 47247, Plymouth, Minn. 55447-0247

By Mary Ellin Barrett

'I'm angry that the treaties that they're going to be signing are so weak.'

Christopher DiNero, 11-year-old Long Branch resident before his speech at the United Nations



Hoping cooler heads prevail

■ A Long Branch boy wants more help in reducing the gas that is warming our planet.

By **TODD B. BATES**
PRESS ENVIRONMENTAL WRITER

NEW YORK — He's given speeches to lots of influential adults, including ambassadors, U.S. senators and Washington journalists.

But yesterday, 11-year-old Christopher DiNero of Long Branch got the chance to deliver his message to members of his increasingly green generation on the eve of the Earth Summit.

Striding up to the microphone in the huge General Assembly hall of the United Nations, Chris told a Global Youth Forum on the environment that the "CO2 Challenge Kids Coalition" has won pledges to curb 400,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Like Chris, a fifth-grader at West End School, 400,000 children have pledged to slash carbon dioxide emissions by a ton a year apiece in an effort to combat global warming. Carbon dioxide is the leading greenhouse gas, and energy conservation helps reduce emissions of it.

"We think it really helps," said

his U.N. speech yesterday, Christopher DiNero, Long Branch, urged a cut in carbon dioxide emissions.

KEVIN P. COUGHLIN/Asbury Park Press

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Cooler

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Chris, looking very businesslike in a dark suit. "We're all hoping that you are going to participate in the CO2 Challenge, and we'd really like you to do so."

Chris, who wants to be an inventor, author, illustrator and "thinker," also outlined his next project: a solar food cooker.

His brief speech was warmly received, especially when he announced he's from New Jersey.

Small wonder. Hundreds of students from New Jersey, including large contingents from Ocean and Monmouth counties, attended the 8th annual forum.

All told, about 2,000 students up to 25 years old and from more than 40 countries participated in workshops, listened to music and speeches and watched videos.

About 25 students gave presentations focusing on ecological destruction and their efforts to save the Earth. Ziggy Marley and The Melody Makers were to give a concert near the end of yesterday's program.

As a group, the students intend to send a deadly serious "declaration" to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — the Earth Summit — in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 3-12.

"It is well-known that the ongoing destruction of our environment has affected children and youth more than any other group," the declaration says.

"Politicians and leaders have begun to tell us that the task of saving the environment, of protecting the future, is on our shoulders, that we are the ones who will have to make a difference.

"Not only is this a delaying tactic on your part, it is also a frightening burden that we must carry. . . . As long as you control the reins of power, our

efforts cannot possibly save the planet. As hard as we try, you cannot expect us to do it alone."

Jana Thompson, 17, a junior at Lacey Township High School, attended the forum, sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme, with about 25 others from the school's biology club.

Asked what she thinks is the biggest environmental problem, Jana said: "Just people being aware of the problems. A lot of people I don't think realize that they do make a difference."

"It's good to have such a young crowd," she said. "A lot of kids are getting information about what they can do, and we're teaching our parents."

Noel J. Brown, director of the U.N. Environment Programme's North American Regional Office, said of the upcoming summit: "There has never been an agenda like this one, but there has never been a time like this one."

"I don't think governments can plead ignorance for an excuse for inaction," he said. "We have a moral responsibility to act on what we know."

"We cannot succeed until we design an Earth-smart society, and that is within our capacity. People capable of building smart bombs are also capable of building . . . an eco-smart society."

"Earth-smart kids can produce an Earth-smart society. You are the first generation of Earth-smart kids," said Brown, drawing applause. "Carry on, my young friends, the future is on your side."

In an interview before his speech, Chris DiNero said he had mixed feelings about what will be accomplished at the Earth Summit, considering President Bush has orchestrated a draft treaty setting no limits on greenhouse gas emissions.

"I think they have to do something more than what's been announced so far," he said. "I'm glad everybody is going and people are meeting. I'm angry that the treaties that they're going to be signing are so weak. We are . . . wasting that opportunity. I don't understand that."