

While I have always been intrigued by the environment and its relentless efforts to recover from the battering we humans inflict on it, I never felt truly connected to it. As environmental health has declined rapidly over the past few years, I have felt the negative effects on my own health. Relocating to Cape Cod from Western Massachusetts amidst forests where wildlife ranging from black bears to wild cats, deer and wild turkey roamed freely caused setbacks in my personal health. For I was perfectly healthy before the move, and once exposed to the mold, mildew, and new plant species, a whirlwind of asthma, severe allergies, migraines, and unknown conditions consumed me. As years went by I watched family members who had dedicated their lives to healthy living and eating lifestyles fall ill only to discover they had various forms of cancer or other life threatening conditions. The negative pattern is alarming and exists in many of our lives, not just mine, yet so many refuse to think deeper and consider what is causing this domino effect. After research and AP classes, I became set on the idea that our food system has been corrupted by chemicals that are added to ordinary foods where we would least expect them, and many items advertised to the youth are over processed. Our food system connects to our environment and ultimately to the Earth as a whole. As we take a toll on the environment by manipulating her gifts of pure food and water, we are destructive to humanity and the health of the future. My epiphany occurred when I was consumed by literary pieces during the Transcendentalism unit in AP Language and Composition. From Henry Thoreau and Rachel Carson to the analysis of government regulations regarding Monsanto Company and their alarming operations, I was outraged for all those who remain oblivious to the reality that lines the grocery store shelves and flies under the FDA radar.

Living on Cape Cod has given me a newfound appreciation for businesses that make efforts to be sustainable and ecologically friendly when handling high volumes of customers regularly. The Cape has a fragile ecosystem where one day beaches and dunes are collapsing, and other days politicians are supporting shark traps to console frightened tourists. Regardless of the controversial topic of climate change and global warming, I stand behind a now or never motto. I have seen humans and nature at their worst and if there is no action to protect, conserve and support our planet, then when and who will be the engine of change?

I have been called overly ambitious, eager, and a dreamer. Every name in the book, in fact, this simply motivates me to succeed while pursuing a field that is not only emotionally rewarding and rigorous, but will allow me to leave a lasting positive impact on society and the planet. The world owes me nothing, but I feel I owe it everything and am obligated to make it a better and healthier place, especially during a time where the the planet is constantly neglected and abused.

I have a dream of starting my own business that utilizes anaerobic digestion technology, specifically the Ecovim machine, to convert masses of commercial food waste into biofuel. The peak of the summer season where tourists populate every establishment and eatery would allow me to create a cycle of life where scraps and leftovers from people's plates are converted into a valuable byproduct rather than decomposing in a landfill. The nutrient rich soil amendment can replace synthetic nitrogen fertilizers or other chemical substance spreads that damage the watershed and ecosphere. The versatility of the fertile amendment allows for its multiple purposes including fish or animal feed, as a fertilizer or as a nutrient supplement for traditional compost or vermicompost! This spring and summer I will be working with the Barnstable

Agricultural Commission as a research assistant to conduct experiments using our samples of the byproduct. I am thrilled to venture into the next phase of my project: marketing and selling as the scale of the project expands to include additional schools and special education departments Cape Wide.

*Missioncapecod.org* is the platform I use to communicate with the public while providing information on all of my past, present, and ongoing projects. My passion and desire is to work tirelessly until more people consume consciously and are aware of their actions and their ecological footprints. The composting initiative at my high school and within the local area have led me to take the path less traveled. The words of Dr. Seuss's Lorax once said, "Unless someone like you cares a whole lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." have motivated and inspired me to take action when many remain uninformed and unaware.

One of my goals to accomplish before I graduate is to recruit younger students and show them the ropes. On Friday April 13th, 2018, I am hosting an in school field trip to promote environmental literacy and awareness within the student body, I am still in the process of organizing the event, but I have twelve plus local businesses and organizations that will be in attendance to provide educational materials and hands on activities. The Barnstable Clean Water Coalition, Blue Institute, Center for Coastal Studies, NOAA, and MIT EHS are several of the organizations that will be contributing to the academic advancement opportunity by sending staff to run demos and enlighten the students with their work and research, much of which pertains to Cape Cod. The goal is for students to be engaged and immersed in interactive experiences, to potentially discover new interests relating to the environment and science such as conversation, marine biology, or the seemingly infinite possibilities! I am eager and thrilled as the event

approaches, for I will be able to share my passion for the planet and sustainable practices while recruiting young students to take over environmental club and the National Green Schools chapter after I graduate.