



Student Testimonials

Our Future “Regional Leader”
interns across Oregon

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Amara Lowe, Ashland High School: Our Future Oregon has helped me learn the skills needed to advocate for a cause. At Our Future Oregon, I got to meet so many other teens who care about making a change, and I’m really grateful that I’ve had this opportunity.

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Alex Wang, Lake Oswego High School: I felt empowered with Our Future and understood that we are the one truly carrying out the projects and making the impact to our community. One part I enjoyed a lot is meeting new people across the state and working collaboratively towards a shared goal, with all the support and resources Our Future provides. For example, PSS staff created workshops to raise the public awareness and partnered up with other organizations like REAP and OECE. I project Our Future to build on top of the Cafeteria Waste Reduction and ECAP(climate action plan) projects and make a stronger impact on the community. This internship has helped me to plan for my future by most importantly giving me the learning experience and ideas to work with friends and carry out projects by ourselves. One single sentence to describe my Our Future experience: I felt empowered and started to really become lead projects with all the initiatives and hands-on actions.

Amelia Prins, South Salem High School: I like being an intern through Our Future because I feel like I am able to be a part of real change. The staff are eager to hear our ideas and work with us, and we have the opportunity to work with other students around the state. There are opportunities to really share your voice and opinions about climate change. Interns are also given leadership opportunities and are able to really take action themselves in a way that can be difficult to do without the support of an organization such as Our Future.

Amy Henrikson, Lincoln High School: Our Future has enabled students across the state to connect as we work toward the common goal of a livable future. In

addition to meeting people in my region, working with passionate people from other areas in Oregon is empowering and allows for our collective actions to be more impactful, particularly for statewide issues. I look forward to seeing what incredible things Our Future can accomplish in the coming years.

Avery Erdmann, West Salem High School: I've learned a lot of leadership skills that I normally wouldn't have had the chance to learn outside of this internship. I've gotten more comfortable contacting community leaders to ask for support, such as school board members and city council members. I've been able to connect Our Future projects with the environmental club at my school and have enjoyed seeing tangible results from our work, such as students supporting a bill and a compost system being implemented at our school.

Clare O'Dell, Rex Putnam High School: This program helped me to see that I have lot of peers around the state who are passionate about fighting for climate justice. Before I joined Our Future, I cared about the climate, but I had no direction. The staff at PSS offered many different project tasks which gave me the opportunity to help in areas that matter to me. Our Future is still very young, and I can see us growing into a network of schools rather than a network of students, helping schools find eco-friendly solutions that are specific to them.

Elena Hagen, Corvallis High School: From participating in Our Future, I have grown and learned a lot. I have grown by being encouraged in my striving to help the climate. I have also grown by gaining leadership skills. I have been pushed to take initiative at my school. I have also learned that students can be involved in climate issues at their schools and I have been presented with many opportunities for being involved.

Johanna Ritter, West Cleveland High School: This internship helps you gain the tools to enact change in your school to better our climate. Seeing real change in your community and having a network to share it with is a fulfilling experience.

Kiara Burnside, Corvallis High School: I really enjoyed this Our Future internship because I feel like I was able to make an impact in my school and help set up a path for future students. Especially after talking to the school board I feel like I have been able to use my voice and discuss what I think is important in my school. This internship has helped me gain experience for future career opportunities in climate

justice related areas and public speaking. I am glad I took this opportunity and look forward to seeing future success from Our Future.

Lottie Rohde, Churchill High School: Being a part of Our Future helped me feel like I was making a positive difference at the state level. So often as teens, we can feel limited in what we can do to impact our communities. Our Future helped me get beyond that thought and see my actions be played out at the state level. I got a sense of accomplishment from the program.

Maddie Joyce, Caldera High School: As an advocate for climate justice the Our Future internship has allowed me to work on important legislation and see it come to fruition firsthand. This internship will help build important working habits that will benefit you in whatever career path you choose. I've also gotten to know some really cool people who care about the environment so deeply and inspire me to continue advocating for climate justice.

Maggie O'Sullivan, Bend Senior High School: Our Future is an amazing group of students and mentors, all pushing for positive change, and I am so grateful to have had this learning opportunity! I received so much support from the PSS staff, as they helped me navigate the many logistics of making sustainability changes within my school. Our Future is a growing network, and with this growth we have been able to achieve so much, from implementing composting systems into schools, to creating environmental advisory boards for specific school districts! Through this internship I was exposed to the policy side of environmental studies, exposure which will definitely play a role in my plans for university. I highly recommend this internship to anyone who is inspired to make any change, no matter how big or small, within their community, because Our Future is the perfect network to start this change.

Matea Lafrenz, Caldera High School: I love being a part of Our Future, as it's given me opportunities to expand my leadership skills, get more involved in Oregon's legislative process, and implement more change in my school/community. I got to connect with people my age that are also passionate about climate initiatives all over the state, and work with them to help improve Oregon as a whole. PSS staff have given me resources to make change in my school possible, they guided me in creating change and having important conversations. They were also there ready whenever I had a question or needed guidance. Being a part of Our Future has opened many opportunities in my community and related career exploration, it's

helped me learn important communication and leadership skills. I see Our Future continuing to grow as a program and accomplish great things for climate Justice all over Oregon and am grateful I was a part of the process.

Nora Whalen, South Eugene High School: I have really enjoyed working alongside youth from all across Oregon advocating for climate solutions. Participating in Our Future, there's a sense of community that comes with working together over a common cause. I see Our Future tackling future legislation bills, and implementing real change at school board levels. This internship has allowed me to explore future career interests of mine, primarily in policy & environmental studies. I am excited to work with likeminded people, enacting change across Oregon.

Sam Hart, Early College High School: Participating in Our Future has been an amazing experience. The opportunity to attend workshops and conventions with them gave me many chances to improve my networking and public speaking skills, and I've discovered my love for educating about climate justice. The Salem-Keizer school district is taking big steps to become more eco-friendly thanks to Our Future, and being a part of the change like this is such a golden opportunity.

Zoe Brash, Lakeridge High School: My internship for Our Future has helped me understand the expectations and responsibilities of having a job. It has given me a job experience that I can add to my resume, but for me it's not just that. I feel like I am helping implement change in my community and helping the world with my actions.

We also have an video of students from past years, talking about the program:
<https://youtu.be/VdX3pcj2aDo>