



“A community partnership helping build GOOD PEOPLE who DO GOOD things.”

## ACTIVITIES & AWARENESS FOR YOUNG STEWARD IMPACT

This Solver6 framework is recommended for K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students. These activities can help bring impact when used in conjunction with the ©APYS Helpers ToolBox resources, activation pages & private mentors resources page. The ©AP Solver6 Framework: We Center. We're Inspired. We Express. We Solve. We Reflect. We Celebrate. was utilized to create this curriculum.

### We Center.

Often, when children & youth are introduced to real world challenges, as they seek to participate in solutions, they become overwhelmed with the magnitude of very real crisis, requiring coping & centering tools while they seek the helpers, who are always present, to participate in solutions with them. We offer our centering sequence for the *adult helpers* who support young stewards in their passion and recommend the 21<sup>st</sup> century tools: ©Mind Yeti (for grade K-5) & ©Headspace for (for grade 6-12). Offer these tools to your stewards to use anytime they feel frustrated, overwhelmed, sad, distracted or other, as a tool to help bring them back to center so they can make responsible choices as stewards for a better world. For educators, we highly recommend the Hawn Foundation's ©MindUp Curriculum.

**STOP.** When I am bored, frustrated, overwhelmed, angry or sad, I can STOP to refocus. Students stop what they are doing and sit or stand in a comfortable position.

**CENTER.** I can listen to my body, thoughts and feelings, without judgement or action, then calmly come back to CENTER. Facilitator demonstrates & prompts students to NOTICE how their body, thoughts & emotions feel in the moment. Ask students not to try to solve anything, just notice, and put their focus on their deep, in and out breathing.

**BREATHE.** I can breathe to calm my thoughts and feelings and make responsible choices. Facilitator guides students to focus on the up and down motion of their belly when they breathe in through their nose, then out through their mouth. Facilitator guides to carefully focus only on the breath's up and down belly motion, refocusing if the mind begins to drift to other thoughts. This sequence continues for 1-5 minutes.

### We're Inspired.

READ: Addyson's 5 Gyres/AP Young Steward Plastic Pollution Awareness Story

The 5 Gyres Institute empowers action against the global health crisis of plastic pollution through science, art, education and adventure because they hope to regenerate a world free of plastic pollution.

Plastic was first introduced in the 1950's as a convenient, cheap, lightweight product that could be thrown away after one use. At the time, no one realized the material **can be toxic AND NEVER REALLY BIODEGRADES** (define for young stewards). In fact, plastic remains in our environment **for hundreds of years**, and only a **VERY SMALL amount of all the plastic EVER MADE has been recycled**... all the rest has been incinerated (contributing to climate change) or is still on the planet. Because it doesn't biodegrade, the waste created by plastic, gets pushed around the world kind of like the game **HOT POTATO**. No one wants the hot potato in their hand for too long so they send it off to the next guy as quick as they can. This hot potato pass off is done **through waste systems**, eventually ending up in less fortunate countries without waste systems, for the people who live in these places to have to endure the pollution and trash the world is accumulating.

It's important to realize, when we put our plastic waste into the bin on the sidewalk and wave goodbye to the trashman who collects it, the waste isn't always recycled and certainly doesn't just go away. Instead, most of it is shipped somewhere else to do its nasty business of polluting, and this makes other people's beaches & communities **REALLY MESSY**.

People have made up stories about this waste, that it has created a "giant, floating plastic island that has been washed out to sea through ocean currents called Gyres". This information isn't completely accurate and has made us believe that we can just go find the big swirling trash pile, pick it up and our problem will be solved... While massive amounts of plastic **IS** sitting on some beaches & washing out to sea through many natural waterways, **IT IS NOT A MESS THAT CAN BE EASILY SWEEPED UP AND PROPERLY DISPOSED OF**. Instead, plastic breaks down into small pieces, more like an **ocean smog**, that spreads into the waters & onto the beaches. Many times, you can look out on the water and think you're looking at a clean ocean, but at closer inspection, the small particles will be found.

These small pieces release toxins that make small creatures, including tiny organisms called, phytoplankton sick. This is a big deal for us, since these little guys produce **most of the oxygen** we breathe AND vacuum the atmosphere of toxins called carbon from our atmosphere. (Phytoplankton sequester 40% of carbon and produce 70% of the world's oxygen). **Over 600 other species of animals** think the plastic pieces are food, so they swallow it into their bellies, tricking them into thinking they are full, which eventually makes them starve. This plastic also gets stuck in medium sized animal's noses & larger animals like, seals and whales get entangled in larger pieces of it.

**So, how much plastic is in the ocean?** Well, a group of 5 Gyres scientists did a study around the world and found out that in 2012, **there was enough plastic in the oceans to stretch all the way to the moon AND BACK... TWICE**. (Use a visual for young stewards to understand how far this is.)

When we learn what plastic is doing to the animals, we not only must have compassion for their life experiences, we also have to realize that we are part of the **FOOD CHAIN** of these animals. When ocean animals eat plastic, it makes them sick with the toxins in the plastic, then we catch the fish and eat the toxins, **making us sick too**.

**Plastic pollution is making a huge impact on the whole world**. Animals are being impacted, our food system is being polluted, social justice is impeded for the people having to live in the waste, and our planet's climate is changing. Our waste management and reliance on plastic is contributing to all these problems.

Plastic Pollution is a problem we can't recycle our way out of. **BUT**, there are **MANY** things **WE CAN** do to help.

## WE CAN:

- **REFUSE** single use plastic like straws, plastic bags, water bottles, to-go containers, cups & lids.
- **REDUCE** the plastic we buy and use.

- REUSE the plastic that is already here & in circulation.
- RECYCLE properly by LEARNING MORE about our waste management systems.
- PARTICIPATE in corporate responsibility programs.
- ACTIVATE sustainable solutions in our own schools, families & communities, like the TOOLS & HELPERS you'll find on Addyson's APYS activation page!
- BE VOCAL with local and state policies that phase out single use plastics & packaging.
- TELL OTHERS about the crisis of plastic pollution so they will go #PlasticFree too!

## VIEW the 5 Gyres film trailer: Smog of the Sea

(found on Addyson's AP Young Steward, Activation Page, initiative #2)

## DISCUSS Awareness Story, trailer & 5 R's

As you discuss this Awareness Story with Young Stewards, prompt them to explore how it makes them FEEL: ex. *How does it make you feel to hear that plastic pollution is such a big problem? How does it make you feel that our trash is affecting animals, people and the overall health of our planet? What seems to be the main problem? How do you think the animals being impacted likely feel? How do you think the people living in all the waste likely feel?*

Review how students can apply the 5 R's to the global crisis of plastic pollution (for 5 R's description see AP Young Steward Helpers ToolBox docs.). RECYCLING, while an important practice, in order to handle all the plastic already in circulation, is no longer a viable *sustainable solution* for plastic pollution. This global crisis, which is polluting our ocean ecosystems, people and planet, has grown to be so overburdening & problematic, we cannot "recycle our way out of it". Only 9% of all plastic ever made has actually been recycled or incinerated (contributing to carbon emissions). This makes the exploration of **other solutions**, that utilize...

**REFUSE** (the top 5 sources of single use plastic: plastic bags, water bottles, to-go containers, takeaway cups and straws)

**REDUCE** (plastic use related to consumer lifestyle & commerce practice, packaging & manufacturing),

**REUSE** (of what is already here), &

**REGENERATION** (of natural resources through steps that work toward a world free of plastic pollution.)

These solutions can only be successful with partnered *participation of communities, commerce & consumers* and through waste systems that *effectively* sort and dispose manageable amounts of *biodegradable* plastic alternatives instead of relying on a false solution of recycling. These solutions will require policy mandates for corporate responsibility, consumer participation in lifestyle, & responsible corporate programs that account for the lifecycle of plastic material & its waste management, moving toward a plastic free consumer offering. Continued clean-up efforts for all that is already here is an essential component to restore and regenerate what has been lost.

(Offer young stewards the ©AP Centering Practice Sequence as a TOOL.)

## We Express.

### HOT POTATO Activity for Young Steward Impact (Grade Level: K-5)

Reference the awareness story to play a game of HOT POTATO, relating to waste management that is *pushing plastic waste around the globe*. The waste is the hot potato that no one really wants for too long.

If working with older students, you can build on the social justice impact of plastic pollution which 5 Gyres provides briefly, a snapshot: *With oil markets down and without profitable market in which to sell recycled plastic, it's not cost effective for many recycling companies to process it-so many sell it to other countries at a loss. In 2011, China imported nearly half of all of America's plastic waste. But in 2016, China banned that practice. Instead, we're exporting our trash to places like India, where people, including children, sort through rivers of plastic trash to find pieces to sell and polluted waterways transport the remainder straight to sea.*

Sit with stewards in a circle, reflect & discuss what you've learned about waste management pushing trash around the globe and USE A REAL HOT POTATO to play and talk more about this situation. *The potato represents all the plastic waste that is being pushed around the earth, because there is so much, it can't all be recycled away.*

**TEACHER/MENTOR TALK POINTS while young stewards play:** *the potato getting passed around quickly, shows us how more fortunate countries, like the one we live in, can hurry up and get rid of their trash, by selling it to other less fortunate countries to deal with the mess.*

*Unfortunately, these less fortunate countries don't have waste systems that can get rid of the plastic either... and there really isn't anywhere safe for it to go anyway. So, they either burn it, and contribute to climate change by putting chemicals & carbon into the atmosphere or throw it into communities where it pollutes the land, water and food sources of less fortunate people, also making its way through waterways streaming right out to sea.*

*Just like the HOT POTATO, no one really wants to have to deal with all the trash for too long, and it all ends up creating a problem for everyone!*

## Plastic Pollution ART ACTIVITY for K-8 students

**\*Adapt to student age.** Use the above awareness information to create *visual & tactile* understanding and expression through art, science & technology, applying plastic pollution to your student's *real life!* Give students the group collaboration opportunity to discuss what *their favorite items are based on the following age bracket. Students will decide on one favorite item within the category to learn more about ONE USE PLASTIC's impact:*

**K-5:** toys

**6-8:** Snack foods/video games

**9-12:** Mentor other grades or follow 6-8 plan

**All grades** will use technology, (or a "homework store visit" or class excursion opportunity) that explores the *packaging* of these favorite items. Students will use a form of measurement to tally how much plastic is used to package their favorite item. **Mentor or educator should prepare a means for tally.** Students will work in groups or as a class to discuss the sequence of events, of purchasing a favorite product, bringing it home, unwrapping the product and the amount of waste generated when the packaging goes into the waste bin.

Stewards will explore in groups or as a class: How much single use plastic is produced from ONE of their favorite products? How many units of this item does the company sell each year? How much consumer waste would that create? \*Remind students that RECYCLING isn't a sustainable solution, making one use packaging a real contributor to the plastic pollution crisis. Students may need to contact the manufacturer for this information. \*After the activity, we suggest K-8 grade level utilizing (& edit, if needed) the AP Young Steward Plastic Pollution "*Change it Up*" Letter tool found on Young Steward Addyson's Activation page, to contact the company, introducing them to Plastic Pollution Solutions!

\*The Kind Foundation's ©EMPATICO tool is a great opportunity to connect with other students around the world to discuss how waste from one use plastic packaging impacts their lives.

**Grade K-5:** Have students use art to express all they've learned as a class or in groups. Present students with the opportunity to **visualize & discuss the following sequence of events:** if each student in your school, bought their favorite toy, unwrapped it and threw the waste into the recycling bin, where would it end up? Have students explore possibilities of the trash truck taking it to be recycled or shipped to another country. Maybe pieces fly away before getting there and end up in waterways or neighborhoods? Maybe they are incinerated, contributing to bigger problems. Then ask students to imagine arriving at their favorite beach to find that it has become a dumping ground for all the waste produced by their favorite toy company. Ask students how this would make them feel. Prompt students to visualize what the beach would look like. Would the waste stay on the sand or wash out to sea? Would the trash stay on the surface or would it sink? How would the waste make all the animals who lived there feel? How would the waste make the people who wanted to swim and play there, including them, feel?

Allow young students to discuss while they are offered art mediums and paper to create a drawing or painting of a tri-split sheet (fold paper in three sections): in one section, students draw the polluted beach with a visual of their feelings (ie: sad stick man), in the center section, students draw what they would do to clean up the problem, and on the final section of the sheet, students draw a beautiful beach and the activities that would take place there, with a visual of how it would make all the people feel.

**Grade 6-8:** Use technology to **research & explore some of the newest plastic ALTERNATIVE Solutions in plastic packaging.** Then have students reach out to some of the companies that sell these alternatives, with a request for samples that your students can explore, observe & manipulate. Students will want to explore the different alternatives to see if they are viable solutions that can replace their favorite snack food/video game packaging (selected through directive and discussion above). Create age appropriate discussion & research of the supply chain/cost of these alternatives for the company, if they were going to replace their packaging for their favorite product. Then use the information to *re-design* the packaging and present the sustainable solution concept to the class. Then help students send their redesign concepts to the company using an edited version of the AP Young Steward, Addyson's "Send It Back" Letter! \*Be sure to contact experts, so your students aren't "greenwashed" with false solution opportunities.

### Additional Resources

5 Gyres Institute also offers free Next Generation Standard meeting curriculum to educators from the link:

<https://www.5gyres.org/education>

## We Solve.

VISIT the AddyPresLifeSTYLE AP Young Steward Activation Page for Addyson, age 8

Activate one or more of Addyson's initiatives, utilizing the TOOLS & HELPERS offered on her activation page, making your contribution to a sustainable solution!

*FOR EDUCATORS:* AddyPres offers a Problem-Solving Sequence within the ©Solver6 Framework, which assists educators who participate in our ©Create a Solver6 Program to develop high level K-12 stewardship opportunities, connecting with 1% For The Planet Organizations with support from AP, like the initiatives found on Young Steward Addyson's page. Please learn more by contacting AddyPres or participating in the KIND IDEAS Give Program!.

## We Reflect.

From the AP Young Steward's HELPERS TOOLBOX & ©AP Solver6: *After participating* in the awareness sequence and activating one of the ©AP Young Steward initiatives, Adult Helpers should offer the opportunity for **reflection** of the project or participation; from start to impact. Adult Helpers should prompt stewards to recall the challenge, the research they participated in, the decision to participate in sustainable solutions, the management of tasks, the final impact that was achieved (whether effective or needing improved measure) and the valuable participation of the (each) steward's contribution. Be sure to discuss and explore the challenges or hurdles that were presented as the steward(s) participated, if they were overcome or folded a concept, what was learned and what could be improved.

## We Celebrate.

After activating a project with one of the ©AP Young Stewards on a personal, school, campus, community, state or national level, adult HELPERS should offer the opportunity to **celebrate** the impact that was achieved. Mentors should assist facilitation of this important step with recognition, **we offer the use of our Young Steward Participation Certificate of Awards, which can be downloaded and distributed from the ©AP Young Stewards main page, Helpers ToolBox section.**

### DON'T FORGET TO SHARE YOUR STEWARDSHIP EXPERIENCES

Outreach is key for sustainable solutions! When you activate stewardship using AP Young Steward Addyson's TOOLS & HELPERS, SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE and **be sure you TAG @AddyPresLFstyle #AddyPresInspires!**