



## U.S Senator Whitehouse's Energy, Environmental and Ocean Leaders Day October 4, 2019

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute was honored to attend **U.S Senator Whitehouse's 10th Annual Energy, Environmental and Ocean Leaders Day**. This event brings together national and local leaders to provide updates on progress with environmental legislation, emerging trends and need for action on environmental issues. Keynote speakers were: former Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Commissioner Cheryl LaFleur, Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr. CEO, Hip Hop Caucus and Matthew Eby, First Street Foundation.



**US Senator Whitehouse with youth leaders: Maria Rodriguez, Evelin Perez, Izzy Perez**

Welcome remarks from Senator Whitehouse emphasized the importance of climate action and increasing pressure from consumers to corporations and banking industry to reduce fossil fuel investments. Whitehouse is hopeful that a "spring thaw" will come with progress on bipartisan legislation: **Sea Fuel Bill, Carbon Capture Bill, Coastal Resiliency Fund, Clean Industrial Technology Act** and **Save Our Seas** (version 2). Having survived Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, Maria was fascinated by Matthew Eby's presentation on the importance of comprehensive flood risk data.



Our youth delegates were very inspired by **Reverend Lennox Yearwood Jr.** who acknowledged youth leader Greta Thunberg for inspiring the Global Climate Strike. Rev. Yearwood called for a **multi-cultural, multi-issue, grassroots-based, people of color-led climate movement**. His four step action plan emphasized the importance of voting. His charisma and fascinating stories inspired our youth to more actively engage others in their community. 18 year old **Maria Rodriguez** was inspired to register to vote so her voice is heard.





**Evelin, Elena Kissel, Izzy, Maria. Lola Herrera**

The afternoon sessions featured leaders in 3 areas. **Izzy Perez** chose **Pathway to Net-Zero Emissions** session. She was eager to learn about local change and what the state was doing to reduce carbon emissions and learn new information that she could use in her schoolwork.

*This was an amazing experience!. Listening to the keynote speakers helped me learn new things like the sea-level rise is now increasing 3-6 inches each year. I appreciated hearing Senator Whitehouse talk about our Government. I learned that Congress doesn't care enough about Climate Change. And that the US Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers are receiving trillions of dollars and not interested in Climate Change. I enjoyed the opportunity to meet the important people that are in the Government like Seth Magaziner and our Senator representing Rhode Island in the U.S. Senate. I'm more aware of the changes in the oceans and the effect of climate change on sea level rise. I'd like to help society to understand what is happening to our Earth with climate change and make others aware of these negative changes and what we can do about them.* **Izzy Perez**

**Evelin Perez** chose **It's What's For Dinner: Climate Change and U.S Food Supply**.

*This was a very new experience for me. I was very happy to meet Senator Whitehouse and important people. I learned it is very important to vote. We can have a tremendous impact on climate change. Under President Obama's administration we fought for the climate. We are not alone fighting, there are many people, businesses and organizations who also want to stop climate change. We have to act now!! NOT later. I appreciate Rev. Lennox for acknowledging that young people are very powerful, we matter and we will be making climate changes. Young people are powerful - just like how Greta united millions of people for the same cause Global Climate Strike. In the breakout session: Climate Change And US Food Supply, I learned the importance*

*of buying local. It's important to buy from small farms that harvest their own goods, instead of buying in big grocery shops because they import everything from far places that adds air pollution and negative environmental impacts from transporting it. This event was amazing because it made me more aware. We need to understand that we ALL need to contribute to make a sustainable world and that we have to care about our Earth and must be more conscious. If we don't act and make the right decisions now our generation will be affected by a really negative effects of Climate Change.* **Evelin Perez**

**Maria Rodriguez** looks for ways to reduce her carbon footprint and the impact she has on the environment. To become more aware of her food choices she chose **It's What's For Dinner: Climate Change and U.S Food Supply**.

*After The Institute's Youth Leadership Summit, my thinking has changed a lot. I want to be more involved in helping the planet. At this conference, I learned there are lots of resources we can use to help fight against climate change. This experience helped me to think about my future and my actions. **We are more powerful than what we think.** Everything we do, even the smallest things, has consequences. It all depends on each one of us, whether our actions are good or not. I really liked the breakout session on food and how consumer demand links to deforestation. I was fascinated to learn how animal farming and how we grow our food affects climate change. Nobody is really talking about this. I am trying to go vegan. It was really helpful. What an amazing experience!* **Maria Rodriguez**

*It was an honor to be at Senator Whitehouse's conference. It was also an honor to join the Stone Soup Leadership Institute's group with the Newport youth. Izzy, Maria, and Evelin were so impressed with the keynote speaker. They learned more about the state of our ocean and how Climate Change is changing our Earth. They were the only youth at the conference. I was so proud of these young girls who want to be part of improving our world. It was very inspiring to see them with Rev. Yearwood Jr whose words resonated with them about the importance of young people.*

**Lola Herrera**

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