I’m finding lots of reasons for hope and optimism this season. Hundreds of youth are demonstrating what people power for climate action looks like through Youth Climate Strikes around the world and the youth-led MN Can’t Wait movement locally. We have seen 100% renewable energy announcements from utilities and businesses, and policymakers have pushed 100% commitments in several states across the U.S., including Minnesota. Climate change education is receiving significant attention as states consider adopting new science standards, which include the teaching of climate change. We’re proud to play a role in these efforts!

For the first time in a decade there is national conversation on climate change solutions — such as the visionary Green New Deal. In Minnesota, youth leaders with MN Can’t Wait have worked closely with policymakers to craft the first youth-led state-level Green New Deal legislation. Climate change is also receiving appropriate attention as it relates to the 2020 election.

Climate Generation is sparking climate conversations and action. We’ve coached storytellers at our Talk Climate Institute, Climate Conversations series, and through Youth Convening Minnesota, where participants share their personal climate stories with their communities, policymakers, and in the media. We have expanded the discussion among educators — from understanding the science of climate change and developing student’s STEM skills, to developing student’s empathy, hope, and resilience through the integration of literature via our new humanities resources and #TeachClimate network. We have also participated in the development of new state science standards in Minnesota, ensuring climate change is included.

The bottom-up actions of educators, youth activists, communities, states, and businesses are leading the way and inspiring all of us with what’s possible. The more conversations we have, the more actions we spark, and the more progress we make.

Sincerely,

Nicole Rom, Executive Director

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About the cover: This year, Minneapolis-based Vine Arts Center hosted World in Flux: Visions and Voices of a Changing Planet, a curated exhibition with Climate Generation. The cover art is from this show, titled “Wheel Of Fortune,” by Lawrence Nelson, a New Jersey artist, musician, and teacher currently living and working in Minneapolis, MN. His piece is a Fly Eye (mixed media artwork) depicting the rare scenes of Hurricane Sandy’s devastation on Mantoloking, NJ’s shores while the town was still under martial law.
TRUE LEADERSHIP — RICK DEMARCHIS

The Climate Generation team first met Rick DeMarchis, Energy and Sustainability Manager at 3M, when his high school-age daughter became involved in our youth programming. Rick became more inspired by our work after attending our MN Is Still In: Leadership on Climate Action business workshop and hearing the climate commitments of other Minnesota companies, both big and small. Rick has since joined our Advisory Board and was recently part of a team to push 3M to commit to 100% renewable power by 2050 and 50% by 2025 for its global operations, in partnership with Xcel Energy.

3M has recorded a 68% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions since 2002, while nearly doubling its revenue at the same time. At COP24 — the annual international U.N. climate change conference — 3M introduced its first formal requirement for all new products in 2019 to include a Sustainability Value Commitment; sourcing renewable electricity is another addition to the greening of 3M’s manufacturing process.

It goes to show that businesses can grow revenue and our clean energy economy at the same time — and it takes one passionate person to begin the conversation. We are inspired by your leadership, Rick!

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Brewing a Better Climate Trivia**

Spring 2019

Join us for climate change trivia and delicious beer at Minnesota breweries this spring. Test your wits, and drink for a cause. Free to play! Great prizes from local companies. Bring a team!

- **Excelsior Brewing, Excelsior** **April 25, 6:30–8:30 p.m.**
- **Bang Brewing, St. Paul** **May 23, 6–8 p.m.**

[go.climategen.org/triviaseries](go.climategen.org/triviaseries)

**Thanks a Brunch! Donor Appreciation Breakfast**

May 7, 2019
7:30-9:00 a.m.
Red Stag Supperclub, Minneapolis, MN

Join us for our annual Donor Appreciation Breakfast as we highlight the successes of our programming this year! Get to know our team, hear from Will Steger during his latest expedition, and connect with like-minded supporters. $20 includes a delicious organic breakfast of eggs, fruit, yogurt and granola, coffee and juice.

[RSVP at go.climategen.org/breakfast](go.climategen.org/breakfast)

**Save the Date! Fall Concert and Fundraiser**

November 16, 2019
O’Shaughnessy Auditorium, St. Paul, MN

Save the date! We are pleased to be working with Effect Partners to host a concert fundraiser and climate action campaign this fall. Effect Partners is a social change agency founded by CEO Michael Martin, who has pioneered sustainability for large-scale events, concerts, and social and environmental causes. Recently, they worked to sign more than 40 artists and musicians to the We Are Still In campaign, signalling continued commitment to our Paris Agreement pledge. We’re excited to collaborate on a meaningful, music and story-based event for climate change action.

Stay tuned for more details this summer!
Climate change education has historically been tied to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), yet climate change is an issue that impacts our politics, society, and economy and is inherently interdisciplinary. This year, our education program has focused on bringing climate change to humanities classrooms — mainly social studies and English Language Arts (ELA).

We’re excited to continue our partnership with Lowell School in Washington, D.C. by co-producing two new classroom modules for educators. We worked with Lowell School for three years to update their sixth-grade humanities curriculum to be climate change focused. Our new modules utilize nonfiction books about climate change, accompanied by literary worksheets, activities, and media. Bringing climate change into the humanities encourages students to broaden their view of the world and nurture the personal connection to climate change — both of which are needed as they grow in a world where their future is threatened.

Another new resource, *Climate Fiction and Other Important Readings to Support Climate Change Education*, is a reading guide for educators to bring books about climate change into their ELA class curriculum and beyond. Many of the books in this guide were discussed during our #TeachClimate Network monthly meetings that connect educators across the country with each other. Download these resources for free at www.climategen.org/humanities.

We’re looking forward to continuing our humanities focus with our Summer Institute for Climate Change Education in Washington, D.C., August 5-7. Scholarships are available, and teachers are invited to register today: www.climategen.org/summer-institute.

YOUTH ORGANIZE CLIMATE CONVENINGS IN THREE MINNESOTA COMMUNITIES

This school year marked the second round of our Youth Convening Minnesota (YCM) program. Over the past seven months, our team has mentored high school youth in Fond du Lac, Forest Lake, and Red Wing as they plan a community-wide event about climate change science, stories, and solutions.

Young people are inheriting the consequences of climate change, and they are powerfully positioned to lead solutions in their communities. Throughout the year, youth teams learn about climate change causes and impacts in their own community, develop their climate stories, and connect with partners in their cities who are taking action.

We are pleased to receive an honorable mention for Youth Convening Minnesota for the 2019 Environmental Initiative Awards in the Rural Vitality category.

Join us at one of these upcoming events near you! Learn more at go.climategen.org/ycm.

I think that YCM [has been] especially appealing because we are focused on motivation and getting people to understand [climate change] in their own way...bringing in a more personal connection.

— Forest Lake High School student, YCM Leader
DEVELOP POWERFUL CLIMATE ADVOCATES

Share your motivation to act on climate change.

TALK CLIMATE INSTITUTE FOSTERS STORYTELLING AS A TOOL FOR ACTION

Polls on climate change show that 70% of Americans understand that climate change is happening and that it will cause harm to future generations, yet two-thirds of Americans say they never talk about it. We know that there is a disconnect between people feeling concerned, but lacking confidence.

The Talk Climate Institute meets this urgent need to inspire conversations. Over 40 people from across the Midwest came together in Duluth, MN at our second annual Talk Climate Institute, March 25 and 26. Participants developed skills to unpack dynamics on beliefs and behavior to find common ground and learned practical strategies to engage with people on the issue of climate change.

We held the Talk Climate Institute at the American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO). AICHO helped to reflect the beautiful place that Duluth is, along with the people whose stories are connected to this place.

With an intentional effort to elevate Indigenous voices that are often not included in mainstream conversations on climate change, we were honored to have Indigenous perspectives and Traditional Ecological Knowledge shared with participants through powerful speakers including: Karen Diver, Melonee Montano, and Robert Blake. An opening welcome with a traditional pipe ceremony was graciously provided by Ricky DeFoe and Landon Manitowabi, honoring the local perspective by setting the tone.

We culminated the Institute with a field trip to visit with Mayor Emily Larson at Duluth City Hall. Participants shared their newly crafted stories to facilitate the conversation and heard practical advice for talking to elected officials to promote deeper action on climate change.

Our attendees discovered that one of the most important things we can do to address climate change is to talk about it. 100% of participants reported a significant increase in confidence in their ability to explain, mobilize, and communicate about climate change. Many attendees plan to tell their climate story to a friend, colleague, or family member, as well as communicate with an elected official about this issue.

Thanks to the McKnight Foundation, Loll Designs, and Drawn Well LLC for supporting this program. Read more about the Institute at www.climategen.org/talk-climate-institute.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS: EYEWITNESS

There has never been a more important time in our history to share our climate stories. Add your personal narrative to the chorus of voices to inspire action on climate change.

EYEWITNESS is a collection of short stories, poems and sketches that speak to the diverse range of backgrounds, perspectives, and histories of Minnesotans and their experiences of climate change. This publication will be circulated in the MN Legislature, accompanied by testimony, on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day in April 2020.

Send your submissions by October 20, 2019. To submit your work and learn more, visit www.climateeyewitness.org.
ELEVATE LEADERSHIP

Spark conversation, action, and change in your community.

MINNESOTA CAN’T WAIT PLATFORM CALLS FOR INTERSECTIONAL CLIMATE ACTION

The youth-led Minnesota Can’t Wait movement has generated incredible momentum over the past year, alongside international youth strikes and demands for climate action. Climate Generation is proud to be a part of a coalition of organizations supporting these leaders who are telling our elected officials that climate change requires bold and urgent action now. Hundreds of youth met with MN Governor Tim Walz on his third day in office, and he responded with a plan for 100% clean electricity on day 55. The MN Can’t Wait platform calls for a Minnesota Green New Deal and support for green jobs, greenhouse gas regulation, and an end to fossil fuel infrastructure.

Our staff help coach these middle and high school students on leadership, climate change, media communications, organizing, and policy development as they navigate government processes. Our Youth Environmental Activists of Minnesota (YEA! MN) program also provides space for MN Can’t Wait leaders to learn about climate change and support team projects.

Youth developed a MN Green New Deal bill to spark state government into action toward a just transition off of fossil fuels and into an equitable green economy. Youth worked with Rep. Hornstein (61A) to file the bill, which builds on the national Green New Deal platform. This first youth-led, state-level bill calls for net zero carbon emissions by 2030, workforce development, a moratorium on fossil fuel infrastructure, and would establish a statewide Climate Change Advisory Council.

Get involved and stay connected at www.mncantwait.org.

CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS SERIES WINS ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE AWARD

We are honored to have Three Rivers Park District’s Climate Conversations series receive the 2019 Environmental Innovation Award, in partnership with Climate Generation. This award is given annually by Environmental Initiative for partnerships fostering environmental breakthroughs in Minnesota.

Held in five park locations across the district, Climate Conversations is a two-year series highlighting how parks and natural resources are impacted by climate change. Each Conversation is tailored to the host park’s theme: Gale Woods Farm featured agriculture as a victim, culprit, and solution to climate change, while Silverwood Park brought climate data to life through art. Each Conversation features the latest climate science presented alongside stories of how climate change affects people’s lives and solutions workshops led by resource experts.

“I believe that the series of forward-thinking Climate Conversations has [not only] inspired the [public, but also] Three Rivers Park District leadership to continue to keep our district-wide sustainability and conservation efforts in the front of mind. In short, the Climate Conversations program series has inspired climate conversations among leaders at Three Rivers.” — Wendy Weirich, Director of Outdoor Education and Recreation, Three Rivers Park District

Our next Conversation will be at Hyland Hills Ski Area on Nov. 7, 2019, focusing on the love and loss of winter. Learn more at climategen.org/climateconversations.

I often feel that my individual choices or voice may not be impactful enough for real change, but seeing all of these individuals come together as a community to be the voice of change and advocacy feels like real change.

— Heidi Matheson Wolter, Interpretive Naturalist, Three Rivers Park District
FEATURES

OUR EQUITY JOURNEY

At Climate Generation, we understand that we must find just and equitable solutions if we are to create a future we all want to live in. We are committed to addressing the intersection of climate change and economic, social, and racial disparities, and working closely with partners and funders who understand this intersection.

This year, we have gone through a rigorous process of assessment and recently completed our Equity Strategic Action Plan (ESAP) with Culture Brokers, LLC, to help us measure and improve our engagement with culturally diverse youth, educators, donors, volunteers, communities, and other key stakeholders.

We have identified two high-impact areas where our organization can make measurable improvements over the next year: financial capital and cultural capital. We are now entering the data-gathering phase, assessing our audiences and programs for these two focus areas.

We understand that as a predominately white organization, diversifying our staff and Board of Directors is not enough. We need to truly be partners in this work — listening deeply, developing programming, and raising funding that takes into consideration all voices, especially those that have been historically silenced.

Growing out of this equity work, we recently developed a set of guidelines for our fundraising that will commit Climate Generation to follow rigorous standards in raising revenue to support our mission; this means being able to foster relationships with donors and meeting budgetary goals without compromising the values of our organization, the broader climate justice NGO sector, and affected communities.

We look forward to sharing our progress and welcome your comments and ideas. Learn more at www.climategen.org/equity.

MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION’S NEW FRAMEWORK ADDRESSES URGENCY OF CLIMATE ACTION

“At McKnight, we recognize that climate change affects virtually everything we care about,” said Kate Wolford, President of the McKnight Foundation. “Beyond the environment, it’s also about the vitality of our state’s economy and the people and communities on the frontlines of climate impacts. When I think about transforming our entire economy for a zero carbon future, one of the things I’m most excited about is the growing momentum toward a just transition. It gives me hope as we move forward.”

When foundations shift their mission and framework, the organizations they support are able to catalyze greater impact in the communities they serve. The McKnight Foundation, which has supported Climate Generation’s programs for the past several years, recently updated its strategic framework and mission to better reflect the work they do and the values they embody.

Their new mission is to advance a more just, creative, and abundant future where people and planet thrive.

This shift came from a recognition of the challenges and opportunities in our world today; one of those challenges being climate change and the consequences we’re increasingly experiencing in Minnesota and around the world. An abundant mindset leads to more creative solutions. Bringing the abundance of knowledge from many different sources and ideas can help solve our world’s most critical challenges in ways that result in a just, creative, and abundant future for people on the planet. The Midwest plays a critical role in the effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to meet national targets under the Paris Agreement.

“We see a deep need for collaborative problem solving across civic, public, and private sectors in our work—on climate change and other issues,” said Wolford. “I think many people feel a sense of urgency at this moment on climate change, on racial equity, on civic participation.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are honored to welcome Rebecca Noble, Development Coordinator, to our staff.

We welcomed Raj Rajan to our Board of Directors, transitioning from our Advisory Board in January! We also welcomed Craig Neal, Frank Niepold, and Dana Slade to our Advisory Board.
Climate Generation: A Will Steger Legacy empowers individuals and their communities to engage in solutions to climate change

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for a Resilient Future
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