

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 18, 2020

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## Beyond Plastics to Host Virtual Act-Athon for Kids

**Bennington, VT:** [Beyond Plastics](#), a nationwide project based at Bennington College that empowers students and community leaders around the country to reduce plastic pollution, and [Green Ivy Schools](#) invite kids ages 7-13 to participate in a [Virtual Act-Athon](#) on **June 25 at 2:00 pm ET**. To participate, students can [register online](#).

This community effort welcomes kids to use their creativity to tell the biggest producers of plastic pollution to fix the problem they've created. During the Virtual Act-Athon, hosted via Zoom, kids will break into smaller break-out groups led by an experienced and passionate youth mentor.

These sessions will utilize their interests in various mediums—including video, writing, social media, drawing, and sculpting—to create a mini-campaign targeting one of the major corporations contributing to the plastic pollution crisis.

“Young people are very interested in reducing plastic pollution. They understand the severity of the problem and what is at stake for their future,” said [Judith Enck](#), President of Beyond Plastics and visiting faculty at Bennington College.

The workshop will be facilitated by [Jennifer Congdon](#), development director of Beyond Plastics, [Dr. Jennifer Jones](#), founder of Green Ivy Schools, and Bennington student Olivia Chiossone '23.

### Virtual Act-Athon Youth Mentors

[Fionn Ferriera](#) made [big news](#) in 2019 when he was awarded \$50,000 as a winner in the [Google Science Fair](#) for his innovative method of removing microplastics from water. Fionn curates a planetarium, is a chemistry student at the University of Groningen, Netherlands and engages in meetings with industry leaders and policy makers to discuss and combat the issues of plastic pollution.

[Joanna Argudo](#) has worked as a volunteer with the [New York Aquarium](#), educating the public on marine ecology and supporting a petition to protect the [Hudson Canyon Marine Sanctuary](#). She is a certified diver and currently works with the [Billion Oyster Project](#) in restoring the NYC Harbor by using oyster reefs, which filter the water and protect NYC from storm damage, floods, and shoreline erosion.

[Leela Sotsky](#) has long been an activist, starting in her teens as an intern for [Engineers for a Sustainable World](#) and then as a youth advisory council member for [The Climate Museum](#). She also worked as an Explainer at the [New York Hall of Science](#). Currently, she works in the [Department of Ecology & Evolution at Stony Brook University](#).

[Mary Lempres](#) is an artist, researcher, and educator interested in the use of sustainable materials in art and design. Mary currently works and studies at [Pratt Institute](#), where she

studies Art & Design Education and manages Pratt's Math and Science Department's teaching and research laboratories while adapting lessons to bridge the fields of art and science.

**Maya Faulstich** is a seventh grader living in Maine. Over the course of the year, she wrote an essay about Extended Producer Responsibility, which argues that companies and manufacturers must take responsibility for their waste. She created an awareness comic about how much plastic people use in a day, which is published on [her website](#).

**Nyah Alexis** started her activism as a high school intern at the [New York Botanical Garden](#) teaching children plant and animal science while conducting research on endangered plant species that lived in the garden, including the impact of climate change. Most recently, Nyah has become a [Citizen Science Teaching Fellow Bard College](#), where she will guide first year students through a 2-week long Citizen Science experience.

**Olivia Chiossone '23** began working in plastic pollution and environmental education as a Volunteer at the [New York Aquarium](#). She was a founding member of the Youth Advisory Council for [The Climate Museum](#) and the Co-President of her high school's environmental club. She continues to work with the New York Aquarium in education on marine life and conservation. She is now an environmental studies student at [Bennington College](#).

**Srichchha Pradhan '22** is a student in the [Environmental Studies](#) and Entrepreneurship program at [Bennington College](#). As an international student from Nepal, Srichchha holds nature and wildlife close to her heart and is willing to stand up for environmental rights wherever she goes. Currently, she works as an Intern in the area of Continuous Energy Improvement at Bennington College while also continuing to learn about climate change.

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### **About Beyond Plastics**

Launched in January 2019, Beyond Plastics is a nationwide project [based at Bennington College](#) in Bennington, Vermont, that pairs the wisdom and experience of environmental policy experts with the energy and creativity of community leaders and students to build a vibrant and effective anti-plastics movement.

Our mission is to end plastic pollution by being a catalyst for change at every level of our society. We use our deep policy and advocacy expertise to build a well-informed, effective movement seeking to achieve the institutional, economic, and societal changes needed to save our planet, and ourselves, from the plastic pollution crisis. [Sign up](#) to receive periodic information about Beyond Plastics.

### **About Bennington College**

Bennington College is a liberal arts college in southwestern Vermont that has distinguished itself as a vanguard institution within American higher education. It was the first to include the visual and performing arts in a liberal arts education. It is the only college to require that its students spend a term—every year—at work in the world. Bennington students work intensively with faculty to forge individual educational paths around their driving questions and interests.

Rooted in an abiding faith in the talent, imagination, and responsibility of the individual, Bennington invites students to pursue and shape their own intellectual inquiries, and in doing so to discover the profound interconnection of things. Learn more at [bennington.edu](https://bennington.edu).

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