



Youth Take the Lead During Chicago's First-Ever Climate Week

Contact:

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Subject: Accelerate Climate Solutions (ACS), a Naperville nonprofit, is hosting the only youth-led event during Chicago's first-ever Climate Week.

New York has been hosting a climate week since 2009. San Francisco and Washington, D.C. started their own climate weeks in 2023 and 2025. Now, Chicago is hosting their very own [Climate Week](#) to advance climate action throughout Chicagoland.

With over forty events covering topics from agriculture, environmental justice, workforce development, and the circular economy, the ACS event is the only one centering youth voices.

"Climate is a cross-cutting issue that will increasingly disrupt every field and sector. It's essential that the next generation of doctors, investors, engineers, and policymakers develop strong climate literacy now, and have a real voice in the decisions that will shape the world they inherit. Creating space for young people to engage and lead in climate conversations is central to Chicago Climate Week's mission," said Jacob Moeller, Co-Chair of Chicago's Climate Week.

The interactive presentation, "Youth Voices: Busting Climate Myths in the Digital Age," will be led by [ACS](#) youth interns and will take place [on July 20](#) from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m at the Naperville Nichols Public Library in downtown Naperville. Featuring a trivia quiz and Q&A with student interns, ACS encourages everyone to attend in-person, but a virtual option is also available. Youth advocacy tables will be set up before and after the event, giving audience members the chance to learn about local and state climate legislation. To register, visit accelerateclimatesolutions.org.

Phoenix Collins, a Climate Communications Intern for ACS, believes representing youth in the Chicago-region is "an honor."

“Federal funding cuts for scientific research and communication leaves more space for misinformation online. We need as much correct information as possible to make progress in the fight against climate change,” she said.

ACS was founded in 2023 by Catherine Clarkin, an environmental scientist and informal science educator, to educate and empower the next generation of climate and environmental leaders. Clarkin noted, “This is the third summer our interns will be presenting to the community. We are excited that being part of Chicago Climate Week gives our students a larger platform to share their ideas. Young people have a lot to teach us about environmental justice, intergenerational harm, and how to work towards a better future for all.”

About Accelerate Climate Solutions’ Youth Programs:

At ACS, they believe that elevating youth voices is key to creating meaningful and long-lasting change. That’s why they created their youth program, [BLAST](#) – Building Leadership Around Sustainable Transformation. This program provides opportunities to both high school and college students via the BLAST Competition and BLAST Internships. When asked about youth leadership in the environmental movement, intern Jimena Argueta stated, “There are youth who are interested and their voices matter. They are the next generation of the world, and it's very important that their perspectives and their worries are taken into consideration.”

Andrew Sandoval, an incoming freshman at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, first heard about ACS at an environmental club hosted by his high school. “It was kind of something that piqued my interest because you are able to do your own project. ACS has given me a lot of exposure to different spaces and to different people,” Sandoval shared.

Owen Christy, a rising senior at North Central College and Lead Intern at ACS, supports four of the nine internship teams this summer. “It’s bridging the gap between what a lot of students are learning in school and what is going to take them to their next steps. Whether that’s college or finding a job or creating their own nonprofits. It’s giving them experience to find their own voice and take some ownership over how they want to lead in their own community,” he said.

Future ACS Event:

In partnership with the Naperville Environment and Sustainability Task Force (NEST), ACS is hosting “Remake The Future: A Repair & Upcycling Event Extravaganza” [on August 1](#) from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the First Congregational Church in Naperville at 25 E. Benton Avenue. At the event, ACS interns will lead workshops to teach the community how to repair and upcycle their old, broken, and unwanted items. The event will also feature free knife sharpening and repair stations for clothing, small electronics, furniture, and bicycles.