

Oakland Peace Center continues 'Youth Sustaining Peace' Program this month

New features include Mycelium Soil Expert & a Visit to Rock The Bike

CA, UNITED STATES, July 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- San Francisco Bay Area environmental leader and performance artist/educator Jessica Jane Robinson is collaborating with the Oakland Peace Center (OPC) for the second year on a summer workshop series called "Youth Sustaining Peace" (YSP) that started June 6th with regular sessions scheduled through July 18th (<https://www.rbrorg.com/what-if-your-teen-could-build-real-leadership>).

"I'm thrilled to be working with the OPC again on this program," says Robinson. "One of the most important goals I have with Resilience as an organization is the engage with young people and future community leaders to work toward more sustainable communities in the long run."

YSP is designed to empower middle and high school students in Alameda County through hands on education in zero waste practices, food systems, sustainable gardening and community outreach. OCP's community garden is a key part of the program because it creates a hands opportunity to learn about sustainable gardening, creating and maintaining healthy soil and other practical lessons.

The program includes a series of six workshops held on Saturdays all month at OPC, where participants will engage in interactive learning, real-world service projects, and leadership development. This year Robinson wanted to focus more on special programs such as expert



Students were amazed at being able to power blenders themselves using nothing more than bike pedal power during their visit to Rock The Bike.

guest speakers, field trips and other activities meant to engage the students in a very hands-on manner.

“I tried to distill what I’ve learned down to the things I felt would be the most interesting to a younger me,” says UC Davis PhD student Claire Beckstoffer, who led the June 13th session on Composting & Food Systems and how to turn waste into resources. “There are so many things about soil, especially soil organisms, that still baffle me and leave me amazed. I tried to channel this excitement into my presentation to help students understand that soil can be fascinating if you just take a closer look. I think they left with a better understanding of how important soil organisms are to making the soil function.”



The YSP program includes practical grass roots activities like neighborhood litter pick up (with analysis of the types of waste collected and its likely source) around the Oakland Peace Center neighborhood.

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Another new feature was the class fieldtrip to Rock The Bike (<https://rockthebike.com>) the next week on June 20th. Rock the Bike, which was formed in 2003, is an innovative Oakland-based organization that advocates for using bikes more for everything, especially as an everyday alternative energy source (they are best known for the Pedal Powered Stage they created for the Coachella music festival).

“Junior High and High Schoolers are our favorite age range because we don’t have to show them how to pedal,” says Rock the Bike founder Paul Freedman. “They’re ready to try anything, and they’re strong enough to power the blender and all of our activities.”

Freedman notes that visiting Rock The Bike is almost always the first time students are introduced to the idea of pedal power. “They’re often blown away by learning how much energy a cell phone charger uses, or how much power a loudspeaker or a blender uses,” he says.

Beckstoffer joined the students for their gardening day at OCP’s community garden after her talk.

“We were able to apply demonstrations from the talk to their time in the garden,” she explains.

"For example, determining which soil sample is the healthiest, or observing which soil sample is the healthiest, or observing compost at different stages of decomposition – all of this directly applied to their time in the garden. The garden is a great way to understand how taking care of your soil directly translates into the food and habitat it can help create."

Robinson, best known for the graphic novel character/environmental superhero she created and often plays in person named Resilience, has published several books, put out music videos and developed teaching tools such as her "Earth Warrior Carbon Calculator" which is part of many of her programs. She routinely runs programs in dozens of public and private schools, as well as a variety of other non-profit organizations in several states around the country.



The Oakland Peace Center's community garden was a perfect outdoor classroom for learning about soil composition and the mycelium network.

"I am incredibly proud of what we've accomplished with Youth Sustaining Peace this year," says Robinson. "We were able to take the youth on a much more significant learning journey by expanding to a six-day program. We explored the foundations of soil health, the mycelium network, and beneficial microbes, and then transitioned into clean energy alternatives."

Robinson says one highlight was visiting Rock the Bike, where the kids actively engaged in experiential learning by making their own human-powered sherbet. "Seeing them get so excited, dive into hands-on concepts, and truly apply themselves to these environmental solutions," she says, "has been a particularly rewarding experience for everyone involved."

For more information about the non-profit programs of Resilience Birthright go <https://www.rbrorg.com> . For more information about the Oakland Peace Center, go to <https://www.oaklandpeacecenter.org> .

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