

## Jack Galloway, Del Oro High School

I grew up in Loomis California, just a short drive up 1-80 from the American River Watershed. Over the years, the American River has made a real and impactful mark on my childhood. When hiking with my dad near Robie Point, I noticed the scar left by the abandoned dam project. And when paddle boarding on Lake Clementine, we could see the bath tub ring on the shore from damming the north fork. I enjoyed white water rafting down the south fork of the American River with my friends in my dad's old raft where I noticed the residual effects of placer mining. My time in the American River canyons inspired me to take action during my high school years, trying to preserve and protect our natural wonders here and across the nation. One concern I have regarding the American river canyon is the lack of education of today's youth of its value. During the last few years I have chosen to address this concern through educating youth about climate change.

Through a nationwide environmental non-profit I founded (check us out at [ycacyouth.org](http://ycacyouth.org)), I was able to galvanize youth to take action to combat climate change around the world. My sophomore year of high school, my friends and I realized the impacts we made with our high school environmental club could be expanded. At Del Oro High School, we implemented a school-wide composting program, as well as a water usage reduction project. As other youth began asking how they could replicate our work, we decided an organization would be the next step. Through YCAC, we have engaged over 1 million youth, with an enthusiastic network of activists that numbers around five thousand. Our members continue to implement a number of high impact projects in their communities to promote sustainability and combat climate change.

Additionally, through YCAC, we organized a climate action event at our high school, with climate speaker Wei Tei Kwok from the climate reality project (founded by former VP Al Gore). We had around 100 attendees from Loomis, Auburn, and other local towns come out to learn about ways to make an impact for building a more sustainable future.

As I look forward to college and beyond, I plan to major in environmental studies and pursue a career in conservation. These lessons that I have learned about educating youth could be used to bring focus to the protection of the American River Canyon so that other youth can have the same opportunities to enjoy the canyon that I did. YCAC has the ability to inspire youth in Placer County to take action to preserve the American River Canyons for future generations. It would be a testament to my work and impact in my community if a local organization like PARC would honor me with this scholarship as I continue to help educate today's youth about the dangers of climate change and the values of our local wonders.