

Site Position & Fellowship Projects

City of San José Environmental Services Department (ESD)

Site Background / Role: There are many divisions & subdivisions in ESD; I work as an *Energy Conservation Fellow* for the *Energy & Green Building Team*, under the *Sustainability & Policy Subdivision* of the *Sustainability & Compliance Division!* As such, the bulk of my projects are oriented around increasing energy efficiency & conservation in buildings.

Climate Smart Youth Leaders (CSYL)

- Innovative pilot under the *Silicon Valley Energy Watch (SVEW)* implemented in four high schools in the *East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD)*; worked with 4 teachers & 20+ partners to engage 240+ high school students in efforts to reduce energy use on their campuses through the *SEI Energize Schools* competition and empowering students to create long-lasting policy changes

- Implementation took place from September - December, with the 3-week *Energize Schools* competition in November; leading up to the competition we joined the district *Director of Facilities & Operations Maintenance* to take students on tours around their campuses, showing them all the “energy pros and cons” of their schools to give them actionable ideas. Pictures →



- Further encouraged students to create lasting changes in their school's or district's energy policies (i.e. pool cover policy)

- Pilot produced 54 student-led projects & ended with a showcase in which projects were exhibited, district leadership recognized teachers, a councilmember moderated a student panel, & 200+ community members attended. Pictures →



- Furthermore, the analysis of pre- and post-pilot student survey results reveal possible additional benefits

Other Miscellaneous Projects

Induction Cooktop Checkout Program – city-run program where residents can check out a portable induction cooktop and cookware to try out for two weeks; I manage the day-to-day operations and database for the program

San José Climate Smart Challenge - platform through which San José residents can track their climate actions, find tools and resources, compare progress with their community's and compete against neighbors, and even earn points to receive special recognition and prizes. The City (partnered with BAAQMD) currently runs a program where in exchange for signing up, we give residents two free LED lightbulbs - I often participated in outreach for this and got to spread the gospel about the platform. Picture →

Reach Code Research – Helped make a more in-depth version of the *Building Decarbonization Coalition's (BDC) Local Government Active Efforts* table to be used as an attachment for a memo to city council regarding an expansion of our current codes



Student Pre & Post-Pilot Survey Results

Multiple Choice Results

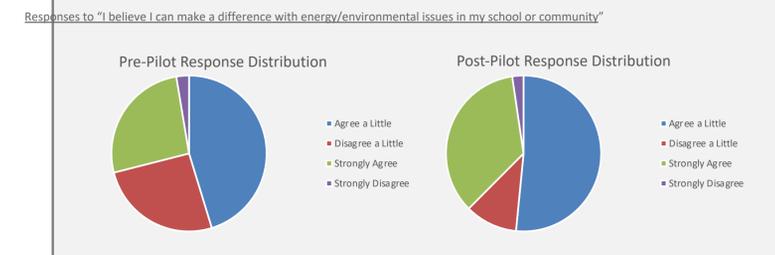
- Agreement to “*I am likely to advocate for energy/environmental issues*” rose 14%
- Agreement to “*I would consider attending environmental programs outside of school*” rose 17%
- James Lick High School's agreement rose by more than **17.5% on average** across all questions, including “*I believe I can make a difference in my community*” and “*I would consider environmental opportunities*”

Such increases reflect a significant level of field interest generation among students through the program

Open Response Results

- “*I don't know*” responses to “*My school is powered by...*” down from **42% to 5%** from pre to post
- Overall amount of “*I don't know*” responses down from **17% to 2%** from pre to post

Such decreases reflect a significant increase in topic familiarity & literacy among students through the program



Next Steps & Lessons Learned

Next Steps

Unfortunately, before another iteration of CSYL had the chance to bloom, funding for SVEW has been cut and so for the program as well-- but that doesn't mean there wasn't much to learn.



Lessons Learned

- Teachers and students gained valuable experience from city visits to provide further background & assist with project development
- Students are more empowered and interested in environmental work than ever - when given the chance to contribute, there were many who were genuinely excited at the opportunity and conveyed their passion in going above and beyond in their projects.

Harry Lowenthal, 2019-2020 Climate Corps Fellow

Passionate and motivated environmental professional with a B.S. in Natural Resource Conservation and experience working in local government, looking to gain further experience facilitating impactful sustainability programs.



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