



## **YOUTHS, GET INVOLVED IN NATURE!**

Over the years young people have had a vested interest in environmental protection. Them being extremely vulnerable to the ecological changes taking place in the world, young people are the new vulnerable group for of three main reasons. They are the ones expected to live longer with environmental decisions made by elders. Moreover, they make up a large part of the world's population. They are also highly at risk to environmental changes associated with hygiene and health since their bodies have not quite met maturity.

Environmental wellbeing and environmental stresses are not equally distributed across the globe. Moreover, environmental stress is becoming a topical issue because of the increased evidence of its occurrence. The daily declining state of nature is seen through the increasing levels of carbon dioxide emissions, loss of bio diversity, decreasing population of fishes and other marine life, deforestation and poor solid waste management.

With the growing environmental stress, youths in Guyana and around the world are increasingly becoming involved in activities to adapt to changes. Against this, it is important that youths practice environmentally safe actions when dealing with a changed and changing environment. Making up the highest proportion of the current population, youths can and do have great impact and influence. But an important question is: "How do youths become connected with nature?"

Multiple studies have shown that when youths interact with nature there are many benefits to be derived. Research shows that children who are allowed to play outdoors are socially and emotionally happier and healthier than those who are kept enclosed and indoors don't. Outdoor interactions are also touted as one of the most direct ways to combat childhood obesity.

Youths, especially young children who have positive interactions with nature are more likely to become better informed adult consumers and savers who are environmentally

alert. Given the present COVID-19 pandemic youths have found a profound value for nature and its importance to our world. As future leaders, youths are always encouraged to build a sense of caring the Earth.

As a whole, youths when connected with nature, it guarantees longevity and continuity of the environment and all its associated processes and components. It is time that youths take their rightful place and protect the environment so that future generations of youths can reap the benefits of this generation of youths.

In order to foster the creation for a positive relationship between youths and nature, it is essential to build a new generation of environmental stewards. Some activities that can help to connect nature and youth include:

- Camping
- Trips to nature resorts
- Nature walks
- Bird watching
- Clean up activities such as the International Coastal Clean-up (September 2021)
- Trips to natural creeks, springs, etc.
- Recycling
- Maintaining a flower or vegetable garden
- Getting involved in environmental club

We can all take simple steps by becoming “environmental super heroes”. We can do our part by encouraging our young people to connect with nature.

***You can share your ideas and questions by sending letters to: “Our Earth, Our Environment”, C/O ECEA Programme, Environmental Protection Agency, Ganges Street, Sophia, GEORGETOWN, or email us at: [eit.epaguyana@gmail.com](mailto:eit.epaguyana@gmail.com). Follow us on Facebook and Instagram and subscribe to our YouTube channel.***

