

**KIDS AND NATURE**

## National Wildlife Federation and the Atlanta Woman's Club Host Youth Conservation Leadership Summit

from Wildlife Promise

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Students from Tallulah Falls School

"You are unique. You are important..." The "Power of One" was the theme of the day for the inaugural Youth Conservation Leadership Summit hosted by NWF and the [Atlanta Woman's Club \(AWC\)](#) on October 8<sup>th</sup> at the historic Wimbrush House in Atlanta, Georgia. Twenty-one youth conservationists from four high schools and NWF [Earth Tomorrow](#) clubs around metro Atlanta were invited to be inspired, motivated, and encouraged to do something bold and courageous. Maybe something as simple as making a phone call or researching a topic that could spark a thought; a thought that could reveal a purpose; a purpose that could be translated into a vision for transformational conservation action.

The "Power of One" Youth Conservation Leadership Summit created a space for student leaders to unite with their vision for making the world a better place for future generations to enjoy. Student participants heard from and dialogued with nine conservation leaders who recognize, promote and support youth leadership. The esteemed group of panelists participated in a group discussion and breakout sessions with the students where they shared their personal leadership journeys and encouraged the student to take action to reach their conservation goals.

The panel consisted of: Latriecia Brown, Greening Youth Foundation; Suzanne Burnes, formerly with Sustainable Atlanta/Sustainability Consultant; Lessa Carter, Captain Planet Foundation; Hasib Muhammad, Greening Forward; Seandra Pope, Rooted, LLC; Denise Quarles, Mayor's Office of Sustainability; Lauren Sandoval, Trees Atlanta; Stephanie Wilcox, Chattahoochee Nature Center and Jessica Sterling, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper.

Panelist Hasib Muhammed, Vice President of Engagement for youth-led Greening Forward and high school student himself, reminded participants that age is just a number but maturity is what makes a difference in your ability to lead a campaign successfully. He discussed the way that boredom and an eye-opening trip that made him aware of horrid overpopulation conditions in Bangladesh influenced him to make a phone call that connected him to Greening Forward and a plethora of other opportunities, including speaking at the United Nations, before becoming an adult.

The keynote speaker, Rashid Nuri, President and CEO of Truly Living Well Center for Natural Urban Agriculture, expressed the importance of making a difference by doing "something" (yes, just something) and he challenged the students to consider what their contribution to conservation will be.



Summit panelist get together for a photo opportunity



Students take a selfie with panelist

The day also included lunch, opportunities to share best practices with students from different campuses, inspirational videos, and even a little time to take selfies with panelists. The feedback received from student evaluations confirmed the overall success and participant satisfaction with the summit.

The AWC-NWF partnership was sparked through the interest of Penny Blackford and Karen Johnson, Co-Chairs of the AWC Conservation Community Service Program after they generously supported the Atlanta NWF Hike and Seek event last year and subsequently invited NWF's own Na'Taki Osborne Jelks to speak at a monthly AWC meeting. Plans are in the works to join forces with AWC to host this event again next year!

For more information about this summit and other youth conservation leadership initiatives, please contact Na'Taki Osborne Jelks at [osborne@nwf.org](mailto:osborne@nwf.org).

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