



# Can you beat the heat?

Find out more about how climate change  
has been affecting youth summers!

Research presented by

The Food Literacy

Project Summer 2025

YCAP crew



## What is the Food Literacy Project?

Founded in 2006, the Food Literacy Project (FLP) was created out of desire to reconnect young people with the earth and the people who work to feed us. With our mission being "Youth transforming their communities through food, farming, and the land," FLP is rooted in a framework of equity and social justice. We incorporate policy, systems, and environmental change strategies, responding to the complex and interactive layers of influence that intersect to enable or restrict young people's overall wellbeing, long-term stability, and success.

FLP takes a holistic approach — promoting healthy behaviors by improving individual knowledge, attitudes, and skills through direct experience, while also addressing systems-level social, economic, and environmental factors to influence root causes and conditions and build youth and community capacity to advance health, justice, and equity. Leveraging food and sustainable agriculture, youth leadership, cross-sector partnerships, and neighborhood assets, FLP works toward a vision for a healthy and equitable community where people and places thrive.





# Meet the Crew!



**Zakaria "Zalzalak" age: 17**

This is my first summer at YCAP. I love helping the community in any way. I learned a lot at YCAP and gained some muscles. I love what YCAP stands for.

**Laurel "Lemon" age: 16**

This is my first year at YCAP. My hobbies are playing video games and playing violin. Why I applied for YCAP was, not gonna lie, for the pay, but since I got here I learned so much about vegetable and food miles and what the people at YCAP are trying to do so it was a really fun and a learning experience.



**Mari "Marigold"**

This is my 4<sup>th</sup> season with The Food Literacy Project. I keep returning because I love working outside and learning more about the plants we work with and the people are super nice and understanding. My hobbies are drawing and going on walks from time to time and looking up random plants that I see along the way.

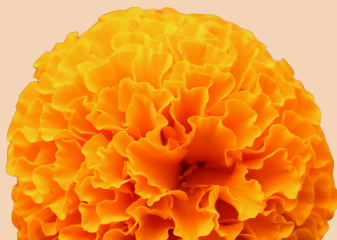
**Jeremy "Jalapeño"**

"This was my first summer at YCAP and I applied to this position because I thought it would be cool to learn more about food. Then I learned we get to try and help the community and other people which is the best part."



**Jericho "Juniper" age: 19**

"This is my 3<sup>rd</sup> farming season with FLP. I've been working here since spring of 2023 because I like being outside."





Hani "Habanero" age:18

"This is my first year at YCAP. What I like about YCAP is I get different opportunities to do some of the hobbies I like like cooking and also the work we do too. I really like farming; that's probably the best part about YCAP that I like."

Evan "Egghead". Age:18 '

"I'm a student at Central High Magnet Career Academy and a member of the marching band. I love working with others and am very good at teamwork. I'm in my schools STEM program, so I know the basics of coding (Python) and have basic computer literacy. I love learning new skills, such as coding, playing an instrument, math, etc."



Alexa "Avocado"

"I am a recent graduate of Bellarmine University, where I studied Environmental Science with a focus on public health and community engagement. I have experience working in medical interpretation, community health, and urban gardening, and I have always been passionate about supporting immigrant and underserved communities. I am excited to help lift youth voices and share stories from the farm as a Communications Specialist with the Food Literacy Project!"



Patrick "Pumpkin" Age:16

"This is my first year at YCAP and my favorite thing to do at the farm is to plant, go on field trips, and to just chill. My favorite fruit is apples and pineapple. To me, YCAP is a great community."



## What is YCAP?

The Youth Community Agriculture Program (YCAP) offers 16–21-year-olds employment opportunities to develop skills for healthy, productive lives while transforming their food systems and communities. Through farming, cooking, and community-building, participants learn collaboration, communication, and positive change. The program fosters a deeper environmental connection and enhances community relationships, impacting health, tastes, and potential success.



## Our research project.

This summer our crew participated in a Youth Participatory Action Research project where we identified an interest in climate justice, youth, and how summers have been impacted by rising temperatures. After a considerable amount of time and research we came up with the question "How is climate change impacting youth summers?". After copious amounts of research and practicing different research methods we've come up with our final project (this booklet) and an event we called "Beat the Heat".



# Our Vision.

Different youth summers are possible. Based on our own personal expertise and after talking to others, we envision youth summers where...

- Parks are built with climate changes in mind.
  - Constructed with natural, local materials
  - Parks will not have metal slides
  - Parks will have shade coverage by trees and other natural resources
  - Smoke-free
  - Sunscreen stations
  - Snack stations with fresh fruits
- Outdoor spaces will also be used in the evening for movie showings and community and youth events.
  - Solar powered, warm lights that feel cozy will be used

**Youth will feel a freedom to be outside.**

**We will feel excited about summer.**

**Outside, we will feel grateful, happy,  
calm, loved and safe.**



## Our YPAR findings.

Based on in-person interviews, survey data, and research we found out climate change is impacting youth summers in multiple ways:

- Children and teens do not feel like going outside because it is too hot. This impacts youth wellbeing, both physically, emotionally, and socially.
- Difficult to predict weather. Also, weather is more dramatic—rain/flooding—poses a challenge to scheduling activities for the summer
- Sports activities cancelled more often due to hot weather
- Many people reported that their summer activities have changed over time due to changes in weather.
- It is affecting youth summers, but also all-ages. Many people reported feeling worried for their grandparents when spending time outside.
- Those most affected are most in-tune and should guide solutions. We need to solve and work through collectively.
- Climate change is impacting how people experience summers globally. It is an issue that connects us all.

## Our recommendations.

Based on our reasearch and vision, we've come up with the following recommendations to create a more safe, fun , and healthy environment in the face of climate change:

- Parks and local governments will involve children and youth in decision making about outdoor spaces.
- Children and youth will receive education on building with natural materials so they can have that knowledge and better help inform designs of parks and other outdoor spaces.
- Youth will be encouraged and supported by adults to petition, protest, and advocate for climate justice and better youth summers.
- Park leaders will connect with local growers and small farmers using agroecological methods to provide food at snack stands. They will also connect with sunscreen brands interested in supporting the effort to practice sun safety.
- We will keep changing and adapting these recommendations as needs evolve.





# What is climate change + climate justice?

Climate change refers to how the Earth is changing. Weather patterns are shifting, including increased rainfalls, rising temperatures, and more dramatic weather events. Global warming is a significant aspect of climate change and refers to the overall increased temperature of the planet.

"Climate justice" is a term and movement that acknowledges climate change can have disproportionately harmful social, economic, and public health impacts on disinvested populations.

## Who does climate change affect?

All of us. It is important to note climate change disproportionately affects poor, working class people, women, immigrant and refugee communities, black, brown, and indigenous communities. These are those that are most in-tune with the changes and must guide solutions.

Climate change also affects non-human beings, like animals and plants.

## How does climate change affect our health?

Climate change significantly impacts human health through various pathways. These include increased exposure to extreme weather events like heat waves, floods, and droughts, which can lead to injuries, illnesses, and even death. Air quality worsens due to increased ground-level ozone and particulate matter, exacerbating respiratory and cardiovascular issues.


Climate change also alters disease patterns, increasing the risk of diseases like Lyme disease and West Nile virus, and food/water-borne illnesses.

Mental health is also affected, with increased stress and anxiety related to climate-related disasters and displacement.



When it gets especially hot, doctors see more adolescents in emergency rooms with mental health crises or as victims of violence.

Infants and young children sweat less and are unable to regulate their core body temperature which makes them less capable of fighting off symptoms of heat stress.



## How is climate change affecting youth summers?

Climate change alters disease patterns which increases the risk of vector-borne diseases like Lyme disease and West Nile virus.

Football players are 11 times more likely to suffer from a heat illnesses than all other sports combined.

Children and teens do not feel like going outside because it is too hot. This impacts youth wellbeing, both physically, emotionally, and socially.

It becomes more difficult to predict weather. Also, weather — rain or flooding — is more dramatic and poses a challenge to scheduling activities in the summer.



# Climate Change Impacts All of Our Summers. It Connects All Ages, Everyone, All over the World

Laura "Longbean"

Age-range: Adult



What does your dream summer look like?

Lots of swimming, shade, popsicles. Spending time with people I love under a tree with sandwiches.

Have you ever felt concerned for your safety when outside in the heat?

Yes, and also with my grandmother.

What do you know about climate change?

A lot. I'm an environmental scientist. Climate change happens on so many scales—global and individual. For me, this summer, I've been experiencing heat exhaustion and all the rain. It's small, but I cannot mow my lawn.

What are your favorite summer activities? Have they changed over time?

I love swimming. There is now less opportunity for this because of the high water waters and more thunderstorms.

How do you feel when you go outside?

It is humid, I feel sad. I go outside because it is beautiful and then it is sticky.

What suggestions do you have to improve the situation?

Economic reparations, be informed by the past, acknowledge a legacy of those who have fought for climate and environmental justice.



Hunter "Hibiscus"

Age-range: Adult

Have you ever felt concerned for your safety when outside in the heat?

Yes, I have felt unsafe stepping outside. In the city especially, there is less tree coverage and green spaces.

What are your favorite summer activities? Have they changed over time?

I like to play soccer and go swimming. It's hotter and more humid for soccer. With swimming, there is less access to pools and low cost places to swim. It's prohibitive.

What do you know about climate change?

It is already here— it is more than global warming.

How does this summer compare to other summers, when it comes to the weather?

Last summer felt more humid and hotter. This summer its mild

What suggestions do you have to improve the situation?

Urgency around climate needs to change.

## Resources to Beat the Heat

Act!

–Join the youth-led Sunrise Movement in KY fighting climate change!

–Stay up to date with REACT (Rubbertown Emergency Action) a grassroots organization of residents living near or at the fence lines of a cluster of 11 chemical plants in Louisville commonly referred to as Rubbertown.

Stay safe + have fun!

–Check out your local library for activities or events going on near you!

–Join Planet Fitness's Annual Summer Pass Program for a free 3-month membership!

–Connect with your local community center.





As youth who grow food for the community, we were also interested in how climate change is affecting agriculture.

Climate change significantly impacts agriculture through various direct and indirect effects, including changes in temperature, rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events, which can lead to reduced crop yields, and disruptions in food production.

"Agriculture can't stop climate change, but it can help mitigate— when we use practices that work with the land."

—Kelsey "Kabocha"


The Food Literacy Project's Farm and Facilities Manager

"Iron rod and other native plants are starting to bloom sooner. Last October was a bad drought, Everyone had to use irrigation for their crops to survive. There have been more floods in Kentucky during Spring. It is all another aspect to adapt to."





# Youth voices.



What's your dream  
summer look like?

"Sitting on the porch, although doing  
this less because of the stagnant air  
and mosquitos."

"Sleeping and relaxing."

"Ride bikes with friends more."

"Less exoensive ice cream truck options!"

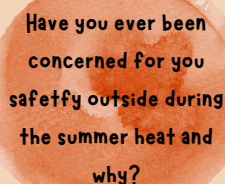
"Taking walks, but its so hot out now."

"Yes, worried about my daughter getting too hot in the car."


"Yes, temperature regulation with anti-depressant  
medication is different."

"Power outages with A/C running so much can be dangerous."

"Dog paws can burn! Long hair dogs are especially at risk for  
heat stroke."



Have you ever been  
concerned for you  
safetfy outside during  
the summer heat and  
why?



Does climate  
change affect  
your summers?

"Feeling more tired and so drained in the summer these days."

"Sports practices getting cancelled because of heat index."

"When I was younger, I lived outside in the summer but  
now it kind of sucks out there."

"Have more outdoor activity opportunities for youth."

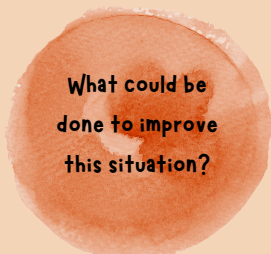
"Recycling."

"Plant more trees."

"Wear natural fabrics and avoid fast fashion."

"Minimizing AI use."

"Less consumerism."



What could be  
done to improve  
this situation?

"Talk with people, share knowledge and raise  
awareness."

"Public transportation systems improved."

# Climate change youth activists.



**Greta Thunberg age :22**

**A Swedish climate and political activist initially known for challenging world leader to take immediate action.**



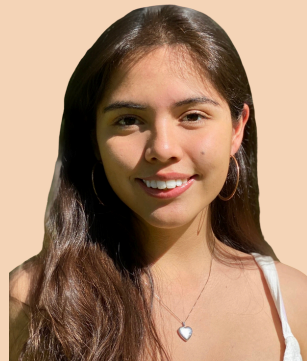
**Leah Namugerwa age:21**

**A youth climate activists in Uganda . She is known for leading tree planting campaigns and for starting a petition to enforce the plastic bag ban in Uganda.**



**Isra Hirsi age: 16**

**An American environmental activist. She co- founded and served as the co- executive director of the U.S. youth climate strike.**



**Xiye Bastida age:17**

**A Mexican climate activist and member of the indigenous Otomi community. She is one of the major organizers of Fridays for Future: New York City and has been a leading voice for indigenous and immigrant visibility in climate activism.**

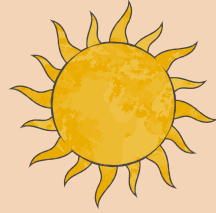


**THE YOUTH MOVEMENT  
HAS DEFINITELY BECOME  
A HOME FOR THE PAST  
YEAR. AND IN HOMES,  
SOMETIMES PEOPLE  
ARGUE AND DISAGREE.  
BUT THAT DOESN'T  
MEAN THAT WE AREN'T  
TOGETHER UNDER THE  
SAME ROOF.**





# Natural Sunburn Remedies.



## Cold Compresses

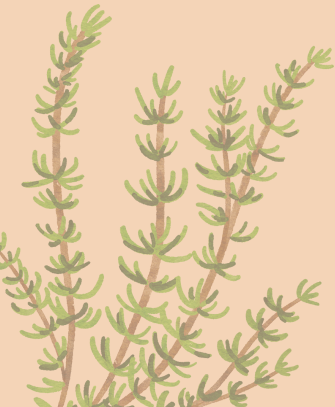
Apply a clean, cold towel or washcloth on area several times for 10–15 minutes. A cold compress can help relieve blisters, and take the sting out of the sunburn. You can also take a cold shower or bath for relief.

Vinegar can restore your sunburned skin's pH balance and promote healing. Try adding one cup of vinegar to a cool bath.

Essential oils can help cool your skin and reduce inflammation with peppermint, lavender, chamomile, or tea tree oil but don't put them directly on your sunburn make sure to dilute the essential oils with a "carrier oil such as almond oil or add the essential oils to a moisturizer such as aloe Vera.

Oatmeal is a natural anti-inflammatory. Make a paste of oatmeal and cold milk and apply it to your skin or add oatmeal to a cool bath and soak in it.

Coconut oil can moisturize your sunburned skin. Apply coconut oil, which is rich in natural fats like Linoleic and Lauric acids that have antimicrobial properties. It's best used later in the healing process to keep skin hydrated



# Tips for Summer Safety.

## Stay hydrated!

Staying hydrated is extremely important as the temperatures rise. Send a water bottle with your kids when they go to camp or play outside.

## Use sunscreen!

Always wear sunscreen and reapply. Children are more vulnerable to sun damage – wear sunscreen and reapply as needed, find shade when you can and cover up ...

## Stay Cool!

Seek the shade to avoid overheating and take breaks during the hottest part of the day – usually between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.





# Recipes to stay cool.

## Potato and Pea Sambusa

### Ingredients

- Oil for frying
- Sambusa Paper

### Filling:

- 1 Tbsp butter or ghee
- 1 tsp ginger, minced
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1/2 tsp curry powder
- 1/4 tsp garam masala
- 2 large potatoes, peeled and diced
- 3 Tbsp water
- 1/4 cup frozen peas
- 1/2 cup cilantro
- 2 green onions

### Method

1. Heat the butter in a large frying pan; add ginger, cumin seeds, curry powder, and garam masala. Fry lightly for 1 minute or until very fragrant.
2. Add the potato and 2 Tbsp of water and cook over low heat for 12-20 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.
3. Add peas, cilantro, and green onion and stir through. Set filling aside to cool.
4. Fill each uncooked sambusa wrapper with a spoonful of filling.
5. Close top using a flour paste made by mixing water and flour.
6. Fry until golden brown and remove from oil and drain on a paper towel.



## Honey Lemonade

### Ingredients

- 1 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 cup honey
- 5 cups cold water
- ice



### Method

1. In a pitcher or bowl, mix lemon juice and honey together until all the honey has dissolved.
2. Add water and taste lemonade and adjust to your preferred taste, adding lemon juice or honey if needed.
3. Add ice to chill and serve! We also recommend garnishing or infusing with mint, lemon balm, or any other herbs you like!



## Agua Fresca de Pepino

### Ingredients:

- 3-4 medium to large cucumbers
- 3-4 fresh limes
- 1/2 cup of cane sugar
- 3 cups of ice
- 8 cups of water
- 1-2 sprigs of fresh mint

### Instructions:

1. Wash and peel half of the skin off the cucumbers. (Leaving some peel gives a vibrant green to the agua!)
2. Cut the cucumbers into 2 inch pieces and add to the blender.
3. Add sugar, the lime juice, mint, and 2 cups of ice to the blender.
4. Add enough water to fill the blender and cover the cucumbers.
5. Blend until smooth.
6. Add to a glass over ice and garnish with a slice of lime and a fresh mint leaf.

### Enjoy!



## Corn and Radish Salsa

### Ingredients

- 1 can of corn or 15 oz of fresh corn
- 2-3 radishes
- green onions or cilantro
- lime juice
- tortilla chips
- pinch of salt, paprika, and black pepper
- optional: cheese like queso fresco, mozzarella, or feta

### Method

1. Chop radishes and green onions or cilantro
2. Add corn, radishes, green onions/cilantro, lime juice, seasonings and cheese in a bowl. Mix and combine ingredients well.
3. Serve with tortilla chips and enjoy!



# Thank You!

We want to thank everyone who helped us make  
this summer possible!

Summer YCAP Crew, YCAP Alumni, FLP Staff,  
Laura "Longbean," Koda, Wiltshire Bakery,  
Hunter "Hibiscus," Kurt "Dirt," Ruth Muñoz,  
Eneitra, Neighborhood House,  
Thomas and Chango Gardens, LeTicia,  
SummerWorks and Windy, Carol "Cauliflower,"  
Dohn Family, Denisha Vaughn, Chef E. West  
Louisville Women's Collective & Mariel Gardner,  
Ridgewood Church, Nikki "Nutrition", Common  
Earth Gardens, Southwest Library, Gabriella  
"Greenbean", Valley Spirit Farm.

