

Human Rights Activist Spotlight: Greta Thunberg



(Photo Credit: Twitter/@GretaThunberg)

Human rights activists are people who work in many different ways to defend people's rights. These rights can range from freedom of speech to the right of happiness, and much more. Human rights activists can be any age and have careers such as journalists, politicians, or teachers. One of the most well-known human rights activists in the world right now is Greta Thunberg. She is only seventeen years old and working tirelessly to fight climate change.

Background

Greta Thunberg was born and raised in Stockholm, Sweden. At the young age of eleven years old, she was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome along with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. She has stated that these two conditions cause her to focus on her passion for climate change at times to an extreme. She began focusing on environmental causes at home, ensuring her family worked to lower their carbon footprint. She recycled and no longer flew on planes. She is a vegan, eating no animals and using no animal products.

Activism

"School Strike for the Climate!" Greta began to lead strikes and protests starting in August 2018. She was able to bring students together to skip school and demand the Swedish government to make changes to slow down climate change. Her strikes and protests have been noticed and taken seriously around the world. She has met with presidents of multiple countries, spoke at the United Nations, and even met the Pope. Her hope is that, as a world, we will collaborate to come up with ways to better take care of our environment. She believes that having a clean and safe environment is a basic human right. Greta Thunberg also won Time Magazine's Person of the Year. She continues to make documentaries, give speeches, and has garnered a large following on social media. She hopes that through more widespread understanding and knowledge, we can make drastic changes to help save the environment for the future.

Article Sources*:

- 1) Atler, Charlotte. "Greta Thunberg: TIME's Person of the Year 2019." *Time*, 2019, time.com/person-of-the-year-2019-greta-thunberg/
- 2) "Greta Thunberg." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 12 Nov. 2020, britannica.com/biography/Greta-Thunberg

Quick Check for Understanding — Answer all of these with evidence from the text:

1. What is a human rights activist?
2. How did being diagnosed with Asperberger's syndrome and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder help Greta with her activism?
3. Provide the sentence that explains what being vegan means?

Essay Questions — Pick one to answer in a complete short-response paragraph:

1. Before Greta began leading strikes and protests, how did she start making changes in her own life regarding climate change? How did this contribute to her global activism?
2. How does Greta Thunberg's story prove that anyone can be a human rights activist?
3. Read Dr. Temple Grandin's bio here: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Temple-Grandin>. What similar characteristics do Temple and Greta share? What differences do they have?

Reflection — Please write a 3-paragraph essay about the following topic: What are some issues going on in your community that you would address or protest as a human or global rights activist? Why?