

Youth and Family Corner

When we see an issue in our community that needs to be solved, young people or families can connect with an organization that is already addressing that issue by serving as volunteers, raising donations, or using their voices to share more about the cause. What happens when you encounter a unique or complex problem that doesn't have a readily available solution that you can support? Social entrepreneurship might be the answer.

There are a few questions you should ask before embarking on social entrepreneurship:

Am I solving an immediate problem or a long-term, systemic issue? Social entrepreneurs, for example, think about reducing the use of single-use plastics rather than doing a local park clean-up.

Will this focus on helping the community or helping me earn some extra money? The idea should be focused on advancing the greater good and not only on financial return.

While the goal is not to gain a considerable profit, do I have a way for the project be sustainable? The project should be appropriately funded in order to make the most effective impact.

There's a lot of work that goes into social entrepreneurship and it may take a while to get a social enterprise going, but here are a few young people who have found a way to be changemakers:

Start small, grow big. In 2011, Ben, Mia, Cam, and Evan, students at the University of Maryland, College Park, noticed good dining hall food ended up in the trash at the end of the night. They founded the Food Recovery Network (FRN) to recover meals destined for the landfill. Nowadays, FRN is in 140 campuses in 46 states and the District of Columbia and recovered and donated over 4.9 million pounds – the equivalent of more than 4.1 million meals to individuals and families in need.⁴⁰

Persistence pays off. When Lily Born was 7, she noticed that her grandpa, who has Parkinson's Disease, was knocking over his cup a lot. She came up with the idea for the Kangaroo Cup: a three-legged cup that won't tip over. After prototyping for several years, she had a cup ready for production. Now a seasoned 16-year-old, she has sold tens of thousands of cups all over the world.⁴¹

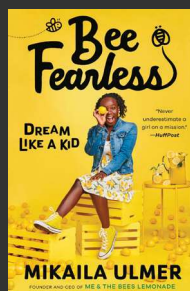
Change starts in your backyard. Sophie Bernstein decided to plant a small backyard garden and donate all of her harvest to a local food bank. It was only when she was making her donation, however, that Sophie discovered just how much it was needed. She learned about the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables at food pantries and about food deserts, areas without access to affordable nutritious food. She launched Grow Healthy, a nonprofit that has created 22 vegetable gardens at low-income child care centers and has grown and donated nearly 17,000 pounds of produce to local food banks and families in need.⁴²

Family Friendly Books & Resources

The following are resources for families to encourage listening and learning from others as well as information on finding other resources you can trust:



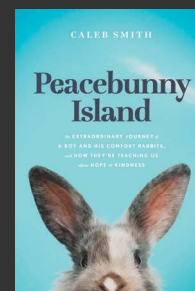
What is a Social Enterprise for Kids?
Ask Ultra



Bee Fearless
Mikaila Ulmer



Five Ways to Encourage Youth to Pursue Social Entrepreneurship



Peacebunny Island
Caleb Smith