

Youth Imagine the Future Festival Planning Toolkit

[Introduction](#)

[Why Youth Imagine the Future?](#)

[The Vision](#)

[Build a Team](#)

[Recruiting volunteers](#)

[Planning Calendar and Checklists](#)

[Budget](#)

[Grant Opportunities](#)

[Festival Sponsors](#)

[Festival Lead Sponsor](#)

[Festival Prize Sponsors](#)

[Public Arts Space](#)

[Insurance](#)

[Publicize the Festival](#)

[Website](#)

[Media Toolkit - include postering](#)

[Local Schools](#)

[Festival Instructions and Guidelines for Participants](#)

[Submission Requirements](#)

[Copyright Acknowledgement](#)

[\(How to\) Receive Festival Entries](#)

[Additional Considerations](#)

[Workshops for Youth](#)

[Recruit Jury Members](#)

[Judge Festival Entries](#)

[Festival Gala](#)

[Invitations](#)

[Master of Ceremonies](#)

[Awards Presenters](#)

[Scripts for the Gala](#)

[Public Reading](#)

[Festival Wrap-Up](#)

[Evaluate Your Festival](#)

[Appendices](#)

[Letter of Introduction \(for potential co-presenters, e.g. Faculty of Education, public arts space\)](#)

[Letter of Introduction \(for prize sponsors\)](#)
[Letter of Introduction \(for principals\)](#)
[Letter of Introduction \(for student groups\)](#)
[Letter of Introduction \(for teachers\)](#)
[Letter of Introduction \(for parents\)](#)
[Solar Punk Resource Sheet](#)
[Festival Submission Form](#)
[Media Release Publicising Festival and Soliciting Entries](#)
[Letter of Introduction for Jury Members](#)
[Instructions for Jury Members](#)
[Writing Rubric for Jury](#)
[Visual Arts Rubric for Jury](#)
[Letter of Invitation \(gala presenters\)](#)
[Media Release Publicising Festival Gala](#)
[Invitation \(festival winners\)](#)
[Invitation \(teachers and principals\)](#)
[Invitation \(community and partner organizations\)](#)
[Letter of Congratulations to Festival Winners](#)
[Media Release Publicising Festival Gala and Winners](#)
[Thank you \(gala presenters, participating teachers, and prize sponsors\)](#)

Introduction

Why a Youth Imagine the Future Festival?

Climate change is impacting our daily lives in multiple ways, one of which is an increase in climate or eco-anxiety. Eco-anxiety has lots of definitions but in general it is the feeling of worry or fear associated with the climate crisis and its impacts today and in the future. Youth are no exception to experiencing eco-anxiety. A 2023 survey of Canadian youth found that 40% of participants reported that feelings about climate change negatively affected their daily life. While jarring, that statistic also shows us the importance of finding ways to support youth. The Canadian survey participants noted that having conversations about climate change, informal learning about climate information and possible solutions, and beginning to shift perceptions through positive thinking can all help address eco-anxiety. The *Youth Imagine the Future Festival* aims to mitigate some of the negative impacts of eco-anxiety by creating a space for youth to engage with climate change through a hopeful but realistic lens.

This toolkit will help you organise your own festival and in turn help youth connect to climate change in a new way, to build resilience and grow community to help support the mental health challenges associated with eco-anxiety.

Intended Audience for Toolkit

This toolkit has been designed with no expectation of prior experience on the part of the festival organiser. We hope it is accessible and includes an appropriate level of detail to be helpful to a novice event planner. No doubt there are gaps in our document and we welcome any feedback and will implement changes on a rolling basis. If you use the toolkit, please complete the [evaluation form](#) and help us improve.

The Vision

Give youth in your community a chance to engage with climate change in a hopeful way. The festival invites youth to write fiction or produce visual art in the solarpunk style. Solarpunk is an environmental art movement that seeks to combine optimism and realism for a vision of the future. It explores how green technologies can reduce reliance on fossil fuels, how natural solutions can restore ecological balance, and how these things can be implemented in a socially just way.

The inaugural Youth Imagine the Future Festival, held in Kingston, Ontario in 2022, focussed on connecting with as many youth as possible. To achieve this, the first festival director provided workshops to middle and high school classes, educating them on new technologies to reduce society's reliance on fossil fuels and asking them probing questions to get them to consider what the future might look like. If your festival has the capacity to connect with students and offer workshops through schools, we see this as one of the most effective ways to engage with a significant number of youth. Additional routes for providing workshops to interested youth are partnerships with community groups and libraries, or by providing online, on-demand resources (e.g. Youtube video).

Youth enter their solarpunk creations to the festival and all works are reviewed by a jury and evaluated against criteria outlined in the festival guidelines. Ideally, all entries are displayed at a community venue, and a festival gala is held to celebrate the participants and award prizes.

Of course, these are all suggestions, as is the entire toolkit. You can decide how to implement any of the recommendations included in this guide and make the festival work for you and your community. The most important thing to remember is that by encouraging youth to engage in hopeful visions of the future we provide them with agency and energy to create change moving forward, mitigating some of the negative mental health effects of eco-anxiety.

Readiness Assessment Guide

Consider your access to the following to decide if you are ready to launch a festival of your own. You don't need to have everything in place before you begin, but it can help to brainstorm your potential connections from the beginning.

- Do you have a passionate and dedicated core group with the energy to run a festival?
 - A lot can be accomplished by a dedicated team of 3-5 people!
- Do you have additional volunteers (or ways to recruit them) to help implement the festival (e.g., provide workshops, act as judges)?
- Do you have any connections with a faculty of education in your region or another organisation that could serve as a lead sponsor?
 - If you aim to provide workshops in local schools, getting the support of a faculty of education can help open doors and build relationships to schedule workshops.
- Do you have any existing connections with local schools?
 - Do you know a retired teacher or principal who might be able to help you connect with school boards or teachers?
- Do you have access to initial funding?
 - While you might apply for grants, you will likely need some initial money to help fund preliminary steps (e.g. create a website, produce any hardcopy materials like posters)

Set your Festival Goals

Begin your efforts by clearly defining your goals. You may be an individual or a team, but clearly defining what you are aiming to do will help you remain focussed and limit the scope of your efforts. Creating goals will also help you define if you've achieved them. Remember, you can always build more in future years, so start with something manageable for your circumstances and build on your success.

You may choose to eventually formalise your goals in a constitution or mission statement, but that is not necessarily required to begin your festival.

Some things to consider in planning your festival:

- Who do you want to reach with your festival?
 - What will be the allowable age range of participating youth?
 - Will you have a defined geographic range for the youth (e.g., a specific municipality, school district or organisation)?
 - How many youth do you hope to reach?
- What impact do you want to have beyond the youth participants?
 - How important is showing entries to other community members?
 - What is your goal in terms of exposure within the community?
- Beyond this toolkit, what existing resources do you have to support this effort?
 - Do you have a community of volunteers/partner organisations that you can work with?

Build a Team

Having an effective team of volunteers will make your festival easier to manage. Consider the following roles to assist with the management of the festival:

Volunteer Role	Main responsibilities
Festival Director	Lead and coordinate efforts of other volunteers, plan meetings, oversee execution of all festival activities.
Media and Communications Coordinator	Write and distribute media materials, communicate with schools and other organisations, manage website, etc.
Workshop Presenters	Plan and provide workshops to youth.
Gallery Coordinator	Arrange for the gallery space, procure insurance as required, coordinate display of art, and organise staffing shifts as needed.
Jury Coordinator	Recruit jury members, facilitate the receipt of all festival entries, administer the jury process.
School/Community Liaison (could combine with Workshop Presenter)	If you plan to offer workshops to school or community groups, coordinates the scheduling and delivery of these workshops.
Student Ambassador	If you can recruit a motivated high school, college or university student to participate in festival planning, they may be able to foster relationships with different youth groups, student government, environment clubs, etc. They may also be effective at assisting the media and communications coordinator in reaching new participants on social media platforms.

Board of Directors

If you have the capacity, and aim to formalise your festival and give it increased longevity, you can consider recruiting a board of directors. This group can serve as advisors and provide feedback on festival planning. Additionally, some of them may take on additional volunteer roles.

You may find it useful to have a board of directors and some documentation outlining your mission (e.g., a constitution) if you plan to apply for any grant funding.

Recruiting volunteers

The festival takes lots of work to coordinate and execute. A strong team will help you meet your goals. To recruit additional volunteers for the festival consider the following advice:

- Build on your existing networks to connect with potential volunteers
- Reach out to organisations with an environmental or youth focus to see if they can share information with their communities. This could include:
 - Climate change awareness groups
 - Environmental stewardship groups
 - Conservation authorities
 - Youth groups
 - Community centres
 - Education centres
 - Libraries
 - Scouting/similar groups
 - Religious groups
- Connect with school leadership groups
 - Student environment clubs
 - Student councils
 - Parent councils
 - School district environmental group (if exists)

Planning Calendar and Checklists

Please see the workback calendar for a suggestion of tasks to complete and approximate timelines.

Link to workback calendar: [📅 Youth Imagine the Future Workback Calendar](#)

Budget

There are costs associated with running a festival. Consider the following costs in your planning process:

- Website domain
- Posters/pulp-based promotional materials
- Gallery space (ideally secured at no/low cost)
- Insurance for works/use of gallery space

Grant Opportunities

Applying for local grants can be a great way to offset the costs of your festival and could even allow you to hire administrative support on a short-term contract. Explore the following to identify grant opportunities:

- Rotary Club or similar local service organisations
- Credit unions (green initiative fund)
- Local environmental groups
- Local art groups
- Universities and Colleges
- Municipal funding (e.g. a green initiatives fund, arts fund, youth fund, or similar that awards grants)
- Local non-governmental organisations that sponsor events/groups through grants

Festival Sponsors

Engaging with other organisations in your community can give your festival legitimacy and expand the network of individuals involved.

Lead Sponsor

If possible, try to build a relationship with a recognizable group in your community who can sponsor your festival. This can help your new festival with branding and name recognition as well as help you make inroads when advertising to potential participants (e.g., classroom teachers and school groups). If you aim to provide workshops to students it is extremely valuable to have your local faculty of education act as a festival sponsor. Having an endorsement from a faculty of education will open doors to meet with principals, teachers, etc. and give you more opportunity to get into classrooms.

The responsibilities of the lead sponsor can be as limited or as extensive as fits the organisation. For example, they may sponsor by providing space in their building, promoting the festival on social media, providing presenters for the awards gala, etc.

Potential sponsors include:

- Faculty of Education at closest university
- A department or unit (e.g. Environmental Studies, Fine Arts, etc.) at a local university or college
- Local school board
- Local environmental group
- Local social justice group
- Local arts group

To initiate discussion with a potential lead sponsor, provide a brief summary of your festival mandate, explain current festival status (e.g., volunteers recruited, prizes collected, etc.) and make clear what the potential responsibilities of the lead sponsor might be. The less demanding the ask, the easier it is to convince an organisation to partner with you.

Use the Letter of Introduction (for potential lead sponsor) template to help you initiate contact. A phone call or visit to the organisation can also help you build a relationship and secure a commitment to participate.

Prize Sponsors

Collecting donations to provide prizes as part of your festival can add motivation and encourage participation by students.

Suggestions for where to seek donations:

- Local credit unions and banks (e.g., a GIC to mature upon student's graduation)
- Local retailers (especially those with a tie to environmental causes)
- Local community organisations (they may be able to make a cash donation you can use to purchase a gift certificate or other)

Visiting stores and offices is often the best way to initiate contact. Use the Letter of Introduction (for prize sponsors) template to contact managers after your initial visit.

It takes persistence to secure commitment from prize sponsors so prepare to engage and re-engage to successfully collect multiple donations.

Gallery Sponsor

In order to show off the festival entries and host a festival gala, you'll want to secure a public space to host your show.

When looking for a location, consider:

- Cost
- Accessibility
- Security requirements (i.e., do you need someone to sit with the art at all times)
- Availability (dates, time of day, duration of show)
- Size of space (especially available wall space or other to display art)
- Useability of space for hanging art (i.e., are there already hanging rails or another way to mount art, will you be able to tape, pin, or nail things to the wall)

Potential places to investigate include:

- Municipal space (e.g. a room in a city building, a municipal gallery, an area at a public library)
- Not-for-profit art galleries

- The office space of an organisation that supports environmental causes
- Retail or restaurant space that also displays art

Insurance

It is advisable to buy insurance, sometimes called special event liability insurance, in the amount of \$2 - 3 million. This can be purchased through various insurance companies (e.g., PALCanada). Depending on the gallery space you are using, they may or may not be able to include your event in their existing insurance plans. Most insurance companies can provide this at an estimated cost of between \$300 and \$500. Factors impacting the cost will include the use of the space, whether there will be food, alcohol, or live entertainment, and the estimated daily number of participants.

Festival Guidelines for Participants

A key step to a successful festival is making sure participants know what is expected of them. Modify the following suggestions to suit the needs of your festival.

Submission Requirements

Consider the following submission requirements and adapt them as necessary for your festival.

General Requirements

- Minimum and maximum age of participants (e.g., 12-18 years old)
- Geographic requirement, if any (e.g., resident of a specific municipality, or resident of area included with a school district)
- Organisational affiliation (e.g., student at this university or college)
- Work should be created entirely by the participant, not using assistance from any artificial intelligence tools like Chat GPT
- Work should be original and the creation of the participant; no plagiarism
- Work should be appropriate to be shared with a broad community. For example, if your festival targets middle and high school students, you might set a guideline of no graphic violence or depictions of sex.

Fiction

- Length (e.g., between 500 and 2000 words)
- Format (e.g., Microsoft Word document or PDF)
- Language requirement, if any (e.g., English submissions only)

Visual Art

- Format for initial submissions (e.g., a specific number of photographs of the art accompanied by a description)
- Required format for created pieces (e.g., drawing, painting, sculpture)
 - If you decide to accept video or multimedia art, consider if you have the capacity to display it later
- Size restrictions (if any) for all art submissions

Publicise the Festival

There are multiple audiences to publicise the festival to at different times. If you are offering workshops for youth, you'll want to connect with school boards, teachers, libraries, and other community groups to coordinate providing workshops.

Once the festival is ready to launch, you'll want to promote it as widely as possible to promote participation.

Website

Having a website for your festival will give participants, teachers, parents, jury members, and the public a central place to access all resources for the festival.

Depending on your budget, you may have more or less flexibility when it comes to a website. There are tools that are free to use, although you may have to display ads to use them. If you have some budget, you can purchase a service that offers you a unique domain name (consider using your festival name in the url if possible, e.g., citynameyouthclimatefestival.com).

Possible sections to include in your website:

- Festival overview
- Contact information
- Submission guidelines for participants
- Link to submission form
- Criteria/rubrics used by jury
- Solarpunk resources
- Links to environmental technologies and other inspiration for stories
- Information for teachers/organisations requesting workshops
- Sponsor information
- Prize information
- Gala information
- Photos/Samples of past festival entries
- Previous award winners

Media

Print/local media

- Provide media releases to local newspapers, radio stations, and online media sites

Social media

- If you have the capacity, create an online presence (e.g. TikTok, Instagram, Facebook) for your festival and publish festival details there

Posters

- Produce a poster and hang it at stores with a connection to the arts or environmental causes, in libraries, community centres and schools

Partnering with other Organisations

In addition to the lead sponsor, developing relationships with other organisations to help publicise your festival is advisable. This can help you reach a wider audience and promote broader engagement. You could request that other organisations post something to their website and social media accounts or include a link to the festival website in any communications they have with their members around the time of the festival.

Sample organisations you could approach include:

- Environmental Organisations
- Arts Organisations
- Youth Organizations
- Local Schools
 - Request to be included in announcements
 - Request to be included in school newsletter
 - Request to be included in school social media
 - Hang posters at schools
 - Speak directly to teachers when possible

Provide Solarpunk Workshops and Resources for Youth

To increase participation from local youth, it can be helpful to facilitate workshops with potential participants. Some ways to achieve this are to:

- Partner with local teachers and provide workshops to classes
- Partner with local libraries to provide workshops to patrons
- Partner with other environmental or arts organisations or youth-oriented groups to provide workshops

Solarpunk author, former college writing instructor, and retired elementary school teacher Jerri Jerreat is available to provide virtual workshops, **for free**, to youth (language of instruction is English). Please email youthimaginefuture@gmail.com to discuss the possibility of a workshop.

To assist in providing workshops, included with this tool kit are a slideshow and resource list (see Solarpunk Resources to Share with Classes). The slideshow can be adapted to fit the needs of your festival and audience. It can be the basis for volunteers who might provide workshops to classes or offered to teachers as a starting point for their own instruction. When possible, linking your local curriculum standards to the slideshow content and writing/arts activities can encourage adoption.

In addition to workshop materials, you'll also find a list of sample works for classes to engage with. These include solarpunk art, stories, and podcasts. Please remember to review the materials for age appropriateness before you make them available to any specific audience.

If providing workshops is not feasible for your festival, providing great solarpunk resources on your festival website is critical. Many youth will not know much about solarpunk and providing them with examples to learn from will assist them. See the Solarpunk Resources appendix for more information you can share with festival participants.

Receive Festival Entries

To receive festival entries you'll need:

- An email address to receive entries (unless you allow for submissions directly from your website)
- A place to store and distribute entries for judges to view (e.g., an account with document storage, or a shared drive judges can access remotely)
- A form to be completed for each entry that includes:
 - Youth information
 - Name, age, school
 - Artist's Bio
 - Artist's Statement (visual art only)
 - Guardian information
 - Media release
 - Copyright Information

As festival entries are received, it is useful to keep a running list of all entries and track completion of all required information.

Recruit Jury Members

You will need jury members to review festival entries. Consider recruiting jury members from a range of ages and with varied experiences. Possible recruits include:

- Local artists
- Local authors
- Local librarians
- Local environmental activists
- Teachers, college instructors or university professors

The number of jurors needed will depend on how many entries you have and how much time jury members are willing to commit. At a minimum you might consider recruiting 5 jury members per focus area (type of submission, age range).

Use the Letter of Introduction (jury) to help recruit jurors.

After recruiting jury members, send them a confirmation email outlining the dates they can expect to receive entries, approximately how much time they will need to protect to do the judging, and any technical requirements.

Judge Festival Entries

Once the deadline for submissions has passed, it is time to coordinate the work of the jury.

It is recommended that you provide a fillable PDF or an online form for jury members to use. If you have created a gmail account for your festival you can use Google Forms for this purpose, but other tools also exist. Using an online form to collect jury members' feedback will easily let you view all relevant information in a spreadsheet and tabulate results as needed.

Reduce the work for jurors as much as possible. For example, pre-populate forms with the names of all entries, allow scores to be automatically calculated if possible, and make sure it is easy to access all entries.

Recommendations:

- Provide online access to all entries a juror is expected to review (e.g. provide a shared folder with all entries clearly named)
- Have at least two jurors look at each entry (increase this minimum as the number of entries and jurors allows)
- After receiving all entries, assign entries to each juror (track the assignments on a spreadsheet).
- Send each juror clear instructions including

- How to access entries
- How to access the judging rubric
- Deadline for reviewing entries
- Who to contact if they are unable to fulfil their obligation or need assistance
- Consider using a first and second round of jurors as your volunteer numbers allow (i.e. first round jurors give a quick pass to all received entries and top scorers are passed to a second round of jurors who look at each entry in more detail)

Festival Gala

Hosting a festival gala can be a great way to celebrate the work of participating youth, award festival prizes and continue the conversations and hopeful thinking that can mitigate eco-anxiety.

Ideally at a gala you can host participants and their friends, families, and teachers, award prizes, and encourage ongoing climate action.

Invitations

To promote attendance at the gala, you can send targeted invitations to people. Consider inviting:

- All youth who submitted entries
- Youth who will be winning an award (let them know to bring their families as able)
- Teachers and principals of youth winning an award
 - It may increase attendance if you share which youth will be recognized
- Representatives from the lead sponsor
- Any groups you have partnered with (e.g., those who donated prizes, those who shared your social media, etc.)
- Local politicians (municipal, provincial and federal)

Amplification

Depending on the size and structure of your venue, you may want to consider whether a microphone and speaker are required. These might already be available to the venue and if there is a sound system you can optionally play music while attendees view the art. (You can also provide music using a phone and bluetooth speaker if you have one available.)

Master of Ceremonies

You will need a host for the gala to introduce speakers, make announcements, etc. You may have a festival volunteer who is comfortable in this role, otherwise you can invite someone from the community.

Some potential hosts include:

- Local radio or television personality
- Local politician
- Local environmental activist
- Local artist

Awards Presenters

Recruit members of the community to present awards at the festival gala.

Suggestions:

- Local politicians (municipal, provincial and federal)
- Municipal poet laureate or ambassador to the arts
- Local authors
- Local artists
- Representatives from the lead sponsor or any prize sponsor

Scripts for the Gala

If you successfully invite multiple presenters and an MC you will need to provide them with scripted comments.

For the MC, consider providing:

- Land acknowledgement (or invite a community member to provide this)
- Festival overview
 - Number of entries
 - Number of participants
 - Number workshops provided (if applicable)
- Thank yous to sponsors
- Logistical information for venue (washrooms, exits, length of gala)

Per presenter:

- Introductory biographical detail
- Highlight connection to sponsors and prize donors as needed

Per award:

- Briefly describe the story/artwork (less necessary if you can showcase the art during the presentation)
- Include a comment from a jury member
- Participant name and age
- Prize

Festival Extensions

Extended Community Art Display

After the festival exhibition and gala are complete, you can optionally continue to display individual pieces of art at other community locations (e.g., cafe, retail space, offices, etc.) These short-term temporary displays can help facilitate ongoing discussion and build momentum for your next festival. How many places you continue displaying art will depend on your volunteer capacity both to identify possible locations and to deliver art.

Remember to provide the artist bio and statement with the art and consider adding an additional information panel with brief information about the festival (e.g., its goals, website address, dates for the next year if available).

Public Reading

An optional addition to the festival is to host a public reading featuring winners from the festival. This could be organised in conjunction with a local book store or a public library.

Considerations:

- When could this occur
- Can you provide printed copies of the stories for youth to sign and distribute
- Panel discussion - allow for authors to be interviewed about their inspiration
- Promoting event for others to attend

Festival Wrap-Up

End your festival on a high note by acknowledging the efforts of all your participants and volunteers and celebrating youth's hard work.

- include information about the next festival if possible
- Thank your sponsors
- Thank your jury members
- Thank your volunteers
- Thank teachers or other organisations that hosted workshops
- Update website with announcement of festival winners
- Update website with photos of the gallery display and gala
- Update website with sample submissions (written and visual art)

Evaluate Your Festival

Create a feedback form to provide to festival participants. This could potentially include:

- Youth participants
- Teachers who hosted solarpunk workshops
- Jury members

For Youth

- Were instructions clear?
- Was the judging criteria clear?
- Were solarpunk resources used?
- Encourage you to think about climate change in a new way?
- Would you participate again?
- Any additional feedback?

For Teachers

- Where did you hear about the festival and the opportunity to receive a workshop?
- Were instructions clear?
- Was the judging criteria clear?
- What would improve the experience?
 - For teachers
 - For participants
- Would you have your class participate again?
- Any additional feedback?

For Jury Members

- Were instructions clear?
- Was the judging criteria clear?
- Approximately how much time did you spend on judging?
- What would improve the experience?
 - Increase participation
- Would you participate again?
- Any additional feedback?

Additional Resources

Event Planning Resources for Organizers

What's included in this toolkit is just a suggestion for how you might organise a festival. Many additional resources for planning are available from community groups. Check if your

municipality has a guide for planning events in your city; it may include helpful local details to consider.

An additional resource is the [Community Tool Box](#) from the [Center for Community Health and Development](#) at the [University of Kansas](#). The Toolkits section includes detailed modules on things like social media campaigns, applying for grants, etc. As your volunteer capacity allows and requires, these additional tools can help you continue to grow and develop your festival.

Eco-Anxiety Resources for Organizers

Want to better understand climate or eco-anxiety? Check out the following resources to learn more or to share with festival volunteers.

Many young Canadians think humanity is doomed

An infographic representing key details from research out of Lakehead University and published in The Journal of Climate Change and Health, winter 2023

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/news-and-events/news/archive/2023/node/75487>

Climate Anxiety

An article on climate anxiety and youth mental health from Harvard Medicine, Spring 2023

<https://magazine.hms.harvard.edu/articles/climate-anxiety>

Eco distress for children and young people

A resource page from the Royal College of Psychiatrists (UK), August 2022

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people/young-people/eco-distress-for-young-people>

Climate change is hurting our mental health. These researchers want to help

A CBC Science article summarising some Canadian research on climate anxiety, August 2022

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/climate-anxiety-research-1.6547101>

6 Ways to Build Resilience and Hope into young people's learning about climate change

An article from The Conversation, April 19, 2022

<https://theconversation.com/6-ways-to-build-resilience-and-hope-into-young-peoples-learning-about-climate-change-177718>

Not Too Late: Changing the Climate Story from Despair to Possibility

This website and book offer reminders of hope and how we can change the climate crises, book published April 2023

<https://www.nottoolateclimate.com/>

Solarpunk Resources for Organizers

New to solarpunk but think it sounds interesting? Check out these resources for more information on the solarpunk movement.

Explainer: ‘solarpunk’, or how to be an optimistic radical, from The Conversation, July 2017

<https://theconversation.com/explainer-solarpunk-or-how-to-be-an-optimistic-radical-80275>

A bit older but a short read and an overview of solarpunk culture

What is solarpunk and can it help save the planet?, from BBC News, August 2021

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-57761297>

An exploration of solarpunk in the business world

What is Solarpunk? A Guide to the Environmental Art Movement, from BuiltIn (online community for tech professionals), January 2023

<https://builtin.com/greentech/solarpunk>

Solarpunk is the Future We Should Strive For, earth.org, June 2022

<https://earth.org/solarpunk/>

Solarpunk, Green Technology and Nature-Based Solution Resources to Share with Classes

Solarpunk Explained

Solarpunk and How We Escape Dystopia

Interview with Carlton Williams (Assistant Clinical Professor of Law, Cornell Law School) and Andrew Sage. Pop Culture Detective, 2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhNLkKw7CIM>

How We Can Build a Solarpunk Future Right Now

Youtube video, Andrew Sage, 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=Rz51PkJy2c0>

Solarpunk Samples

Imagine 2200 Climate Fiction for Future Ancestors

An anthology of 12 international solarpunk stories published online by Grist, an award-winning environmental science and news journal from Seattle, USA

<https://grist.org/fix/series/imagine-2200-climate-fiction/>

2022 Winners: <https://grist.org/fix/imagine-2200-climate-fiction-2022/>

- “A Holdout in the Northern California Designated Wildcraft Zone” is recommended.

“**Benni and Shiya are Leaving**” in Grist.org “Imagine 2200” collection from 2022.

“Water Marriage” in Every Day Fiction by J Jerreat

<https://everydayfiction.com/water-marriage-by-jerri-jerreat/>

“Lightning in 35” in Alluvian Magazine “Weird Weather Issue” by J Jerreat

<https://alluvian.space/jerri-jerreat-lightning-in-35>

Glass and Gardens: Solarpunk Winters, editor, World Weaver Press, USA

An anthology of international short solarpunk stories

“Rules for a Civilization,” is especially recommended for middle-school readers.

It is a short story set in a school in Toronto, with pre-high school students, bullying, and a tornado.

Glass and Gardens: Solarpunk Summers, editor, World Weaver Press, USA

An anthology of international short solarpunk stories

Fix the World: 12 Sci Fi Writers Save the Future (Other Worlds Inc. USA). 2021

An anthology of short fiction

Green Technology Resources

The Earthshot Prize

<https://earthshotprize.org/>

Climate Kids, NASA Green Technologies page

<https://climatekids.nasa.gov/technology-gallery/>

“How to Build a Heat-Resilient City”

Online article depicting a model metropolis for an era of high temperatures (non-fiction). Grist magazine.

<https://grist.org/project/cities/extreme-heat-resilient-city-design-urban-planning-climate/>

Nature-Based Climate Solution Resources

Government of Canada Nature-Based Climate Solutions

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/our-environment/nature-based-climate-solutions.html>

Nature Canada’s Nature-Based solutions information page with multiple links to other resources and samples of nature-based solutions

<https://naturecanada.ca/defend-nature/how-you-help-us-take-action/nature-based-climate-solutions/toolkit/>

Appendices

Workshop Planning Suggestions

- Warm-ups/Grabber
 - Multimedia - video of some new green technology or restorative environmental project
 - Discussion Prompts:
 - What do you think the video is trying to show?
 - Could other things like this exist in the future?
 - Interactive group brainstorm (use online collaborative tool like padlet as able/needed) or Think/Pair/Share prompts
 - What do you think about when you hear the words climate change?
 - How have you or someone you know experienced climate change?
 - What have you heard about people doing to try to reduce climate change?
- Introduction/Objectives
 - Introduce festival
 - Help students learn about new technologies that are helping reduce the need for fossil fuels
 - Help students learn about environmental restoration and how it mitigates the effects of climate change
 - Help students learn more about how they can write/create something for the festival
- Green Technology and Restoration Slideshow
 - Provide overview of the many, many creative and technologically advanced efforts globally to move away from using fossil fuels
 - Provide prompts throughout that might help youth brainstorm for their stories/art
 - Provide a graphic organiser or similar for students to record their favourite ideas during the slideshow
- Solarpunk Art and Writing
 - Have students look at examples (including work by other students from previous festivals), students can examine what they like or find interesting about a piece, apply the festival criteria to it, etc.
 - Provide suggestions for how to come up with story or art ideas
- Festival details
 - Submission requirements
 - Submission dates
 - Gala and prize reminder
 - Website

Festival and Solarpunk Slideshow

If you are offering workshops to youth to explain the festival, explore elements of solarpunk or provide an introduction to green technologies and nature-based solutions, the slidedeck may serve as a starting point.

Youth Imagine the Future Workshop Seeds

Solarpunk How-to Resource Sheet

What is Solarpunk writing and art?

Solarpunk thinks about what the future might be like if we really change the way we live, reduce our use of fossil fuels and think about restoring parts of nature.

Some key ideas are that solarpunk:

- explores how technology and new inventions can help us without damaging the environment
- includes nature-based solutions to climate change
- is set on earth and we are still humans
- can be in the near or distant future
- is set in a real place and understands the issues of that place (for example, what the climate is like, what the existing society is like)

What is it NOT?

Solarpunk is NOT a dystopia where everyone is suffering. But not everything is perfect either. Humans will still be humans and there will be conflict, struggle, and mistakes.

How can I come up with ideas for my story/art?

Think about where you want to set your story and what life there is like now. How could it change in the future?

Ask yourself questions to brainstorm ideas:

- How will we make electricity without fossil fuels?
- What might cities/towns look like? Will there be more green space? More natural areas? New types of buildings?
- How might cities, towns and buildings look different to fit more people in the same space? Will we live with people in different arrangements than we do now?
- How might buildings be heated and cooled? What will they be built out of?
- How will people move around their cities or towns? How will stuff move around?
- How could food be different? Will we grow it in different ways? Will we eat differently?

Look up green technologies and nature-based ways to help reduce climate change. Check out these as a starting place:

- *(insert appropriate resources based on your audience)*

Festival Submission Form

Youth Name:

Age as of [festival start date]:

Youth Email:

School:

Grade:

Title of Story/Art:

About the Author/Artist: (3 sentences max., For example, name, age, one thing you like to do, one environmental thing you care about)

For VISUAL ART,

Size of Art:

Artist Statement: (what are you trying to show in your art? 5 sentences max.)

Youth Declaration

I, (the Youth, above), did not use any artificial intelligence tools or large language models like Chat GPT or others to generate ideas, write, edit or partially create my entry. I give permission for my artwork or short story, name and image to be displayed in a local gallery and published online.

Signature:

Date:

Guardian Name:

Guardian Email:

Guardian Declaration

I, [print Guardian name], as guardian of [print youth name], give permission for this Youth to enter their artwork or short story to this festival. I also give permission for the Youth's artwork or short story, name and image to be displayed in a local gallery and published online.

Signature:

Date:

Jury Criteria for Writing Entries

Create this as a Google doc or similar so your jury can easily access it to complete online and you can easily tally the results.

Potential criteria:

- References/describes the environmental challenges of a real place on Earth
- Clear evidence of research reflected through a new technology/innovation included in story
- Attention to how technology and the environment interact
- Explores how the natural world and biodiversity might be restored
- Shows a more equitable, diverse, and accepting future
- Plot is original/creative/imaginative
- Setting, characters and plot have continuity
- Characters and their details (including speech) are believable
- Story has a clear beginning, middle, and end

Possible Rating Scale:

1 = limited demonstration of this criteria

2 = good demonstration of this criteria

3 = outstanding demonstration of this criteria

Jury Criteria for Visual Art Entries

Create this as a Google doc or similar so your jury can easily access it to complete online and you can easily tally the results.

Possible criteria:

- Shows the environmental challenges of a real place on Earth
- Clear evidence of research reflected through a new technology/innovation included in artwork
- Attention to how technology and the environment interact
- Explores how the natural world and biodiversity might be restored
- Shows a more equitable, diverse, and accepting future
- The work is compelling and unique
- The work effectively shows the artist's vision

Possible Rating Scale:

1 = limited demonstration of this criteria

2 = good demonstration of this criteria

3 = outstanding demonstration of this criteria

Letter of Introduction (for lead sponsor, e.g.. Faculty of Education, public arts space)

Dear [insert name],

The impacts of climate change are being felt on a daily basis around the world, and youth are no exception to this universal experience. A 2023 survey of Canadian youth found that 40% of

participants reported that feelings about climate change negatively affect their daily life and 73% think the future is frightening. While jarring, these statistics show us the importance of finding ways to support youth. Survey participants noted that having conversations about climate change, informal learning about climate information and possible solutions, and beginning to shift perceptions through positive thinking can all help address eco-anxiety.

To help give youth a way to engage with climate change in a positive, constructive way, we are launching a solarpunk arts festival here in [city]. Solarpunk is an environmental arts movement that explores how new technologies can interact with the environment to shape a future that is more ecologically friendly. Solarpunk is optimistic and realistic, the technologies should be feasible, even if they don't fully exist yet. Our festival invites youth to write short stories or create visual art representing their vision for the future.

We are seeking a lead sponsor to help present our festival to our community. Your partnership does not necessarily require any additional staff hours or resources, we simply ask that you lend your name to the festival to help bolster its presence in our community. We will prominently include your organisation on our website and mention it during our festival gala. If you additionally wish to provide social media support, participate in the festival jury or present awards at the gala, we would be pleased to work with you to facilitate that.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I will follow up with you next week to see if we can partner to make [festival name] a success.

Sincerely,

[name]

[role]

Letter of Introduction (for prize sponsors)

Dear [insert name],

The impacts of climate change are being felt on a daily basis around the world, and youth are no exception to this universal experience. A 2023 survey of Canadian youth found that 40% of participants reported that feelings about climate change negatively affect their daily life and 73% think the future is frightening. While jarring, these statistics show us the importance of finding ways to support youth. Survey participants noted that having conversations about climate change, informal learning about climate information and possible solutions, and beginning to shift perceptions through positive thinking can all help address eco-anxiety.

To help give youth a way to engage with climate change in a positive, constructive way, we are hosting a climate-focussed arts festival here in [city]. Presented in partnership with [lead sponsor], we provide art and writing workshops to youth asking them to create a vision for the future. We present information about new technologies to reduce use of fossil fuels and ask

youth to consider how we can build a future that is more ecologically friendly. We receive submissions, have a volunteer jury and display entries at [gallery space] before our awards gala on [date].

We are looking for donations to provide as prizes for the [festival name]. Would you donate a gift certificate/item to include with our prizes? [Last year we awarded X number of prizes to Y number of participants.] We will include your company name of our list of sponsors on our website and include it on a sign at our festival gala.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I will follow up with you next week to see if you can help to make [festival name] a success.

Sincerely,

[name]

[role]

Letter of Introduction (for principals, teachers, student groups)

Dear [insert name],

The impacts of climate change are being felt on a daily basis around the world, and youth are no exception to this universal experience. A 2023 survey of Canadian youth found that 40% of participants reported that feelings about climate change negatively affect their daily life and 73% think the future is frightening. While jarring, these statistics show us the importance of finding ways to support youth. The same survey participants noted that having conversations about climate change, informal learning about climate information and possible solutions, and beginning to shift perceptions through positive thinking can all help address the mental health impacts of eco-anxiety.

To help give youth a way to engage with climate change in a positive, constructive way, we are launching a solarpunk arts festival here in [city]. Solarpunk is an environmental arts movement that explores how new technologies and nature-based solutions can reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and reduce the effects of climate change. Solarpunk is optimistic and realistic, the solutions included should be feasible, even if they don't fully exist yet. Our festival invites youth aged 12-18 in the Kingston region [replace with festival specifics re: age, geography, etc.] to write short stories or create visual art representing their hopeful vision for the future. [Last year we had entries from X students, representing X schools, and awarded over X in prizes.]

As part of the festival we are offering FREE workshops for any interested class or student group. Our festival volunteers can provide a workshop exploring unique and exciting green projects around the planet, helping students brainstorm elements to include in their own writing or art projects. These workshops are great for English and Art classes but we're please to collaborate with any interested teachers. Workshops are available [relevant dates], and can

be booked by emailing [relevant contact]. We are happy to work with schools or individual teachers to coordinate the best possible schedule for delivery.

Please let me know if you have any questions and share this information with your colleagues. I will follow up with you next week to see if we can work together to bring hope to youth facing the ongoing impacts of climate change.

Sincerely,

[name]

[role]

Media Release Publicising Festival and Soliciting Entries

Youth Imagine the Future Arts Festival

From [start date] to [end date], youth aged [minimum age] - [maximum age] in [city/school board] will have the opportunity to get creative while imagining a future free of reliance on fossil fuels.

The [festival name] is being presented in conjunction with [festival presenters] and invites youth to write short stories or create pieces of visual art in the solarpunk style. Solarpunk is an environmental arts movement that explores how new technologies can interact with the environment to shape a future that is more ecologically friendly.

The motivation for the festival comes from [quote from festival director] and the hope is that youth are able to engage in the

Local authors and artists will be included in the juries that judge entries to the festivals. Thanks to generous community sponsors there are a variety of prizes to be won, including:
[list prizes]

Youth interested in participating can find more information here: [provide website]

Teachers who see value in incorporating this into their classrooms can contact [festival director] to arrange for a solarpunk workshop to be offered to their students.

Letter of Introduction for Jury Members

Dear [name],

The [festival name] is being presented in [city] from [dates]. The festival mandate is XXX and grew out of the ongoing research that shows us youth mental health is increasingly impacted by climate change. A 2023 survey of Canadian youth found that 40% of participants reported that feelings about climate change negatively affect their daily life and 73% think the future is frightening. While jarring, these statistics show us the importance of finding ways to support youth. The same survey participants noted that having conversations about climate change, informal learning about climate information and possible solutions, and beginning to shift perceptions through positive thinking can all help address the mental health impacts of eco-anxiety. Through the [festival name], youth from the region are invited to write short stories and create visual art in the solarpunk style. Solarpunk is an environmental arts movement that explores how new technologies can interact with the environment to shape a future that is more ecologically friendly and socially just. We expect some inspiring projects from students across [region] who have completed solarpunk workshops in school and have dedicated time and energy to their projects.

We are currently recruiting jury members for the festival. Would you be interested in participating?

The commitment includes reading short works of fiction (500 - 2000 words) or viewing photos of visual art submissions and completing a rubric for each submission (all online). Depending on the total number of submissions, this could include up to [10] works per juror. We require jury members to be available between [date] and [date] to complete their judging, and you are also invited to our gala event on [date] to view all entries and celebrate with our young artists and authors.

Please let me know if you have any questions and I hope you'll consider contributing to the success of the [festival name]. If you are willing to participate as a jury member, please let me know by responding to this email.

Sincerely,

[name]

[role]

Instructions for Jury Members

Dear [name],

Thank you for agreeing to participate as a juror in [festival name]. We are excited to have received many excellent submissions from local youth examining how we might live in a greener future.

Below are links to the works you are asked to review and a link to the rubric. For each work, please complete one copy of the judging rubric and submit it when complete. You can go to the

rubric link as many times as needed and fill in new information each time. Pay special attention to completing the title and participant name as that allows us to collate the data.

Please complete your review of all works by [deadline].

If you have any questions or require assistance to access the works or use the rubric, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

We sincerely appreciate your help in making the [festival name] a success and offering hope to youth across our region.

Sincerely,

[name]

[role]

[link to online rubric]

[links to works for jury member to evaluate]

Letter of Invitation (gala presenters)

Dear [name],

On [gala date], members of our community, including multiple youth, will gather to celebrate the [festival name]. Presented in partnership with [festival co-presenter], [festival name] celebrates our youth's vision of a greener future through short stories and visual art. [Last year we had over X submissions to the festival, and awarded X prizes to our participants.]

We are currently seeking awards presenters for the [year] gala. Can you help us?

The required commitment is to attend the festival gala [date] from [time] - [time], where a prepared statement will be provided to you identifying a prize, its sponsor, and the winning youth. At the appropriate time you'll be called upon to present the award.

Please let me know if you have any questions and confirm if you're able to participate. I will follow up next week to see if you can help make [festival name] a success.

Sincerely,

[name]

[role]

Media Release Publicising Festival Gala

[festival name] will award over [prize value] to local youth at the festival gala [date] at [location]. The [festival name] invites youth to imagine a greener future in the format of a short story or visual art. Students across [region] participated in workshops through their schools before submitting their creations to the festival. Over [X] entries were received from [X] participating schools. Works were evaluated against the festival criteria by a volunteer jury that included [any local jury members of note, e.g., local author, local politician].

Invitation to Gala (festival winners)

Dear [name],

Thank you for your submission to the [festival name]. I am thrilled to congratulate you on winning one of our festival prizes. We hope you, your family and some friends can join us on [date] at [time] for the festival gala. The gala will be held at [venue, address].

Please let me know if you can attend by responding to this email.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

[name]

[role]

Invitation to Gala (teachers and principals)

Dear [name],

I'm writing to let you know that the following student(s) from your [class/school] have been selected as prize winners in the [festival name].

- [list specific winners]

Please join us at the festival gala [insert time, date, location] to celebrate.

Sincerely,

[name]

[role]

Invitation to Gala (community and partner organisations)

Dear [name],

Thank you for your support of the [festival name]. After [*number] workshops, [*number] entries, and the participation of our volunteer jurors, we are gathering to celebrate the hard work of our participants and award the festival prizes.

Please join us at the festival gala [insert time, date, location] to celebrate.

Sincerely,

[name]

[role]

Media Release Publicising Festival Gala and Winners

Local youth, their families, friends and teachers gathered [date] to celebrate the prize winners in this year's [festival name]. The [festival name] invites youth to imagine a greener future in the format of a short story or visual art. Students across [region] participated in workshops through their schools before submitting their creations to the festival. Over [X] entries were received from [X] participating schools. Works were evaluated against the festival criteria by a volunteer jury that included [any local jury members of note, e.g., local author, local politician].

X, Y, and Z [notable award presenters] were on hand at [gala location] to help award prizes to participants. Congratulations to [winner name], who won first prize for their work titled [insert title]. [include summary of story and one comment from a jury member if possible].

Additional winners included X, Y, Z with entries that included [provide specific technologies or nature-based solutions to climate change].

[festival name] received generous support from [major prize sponsors] and was able to award over [prize value] to [number of award winners].

You can view photos of the gala, this year's art and even read some of the winning stories by visiting [festival website].

Thank you (gala presenters, prize sponsors, and participating teachers)

Dear [name],

Thank you so much for your support of [festival name]. This year we had [*number] entries from [*number] participants and celebrated with a festival gala on [date]. It was inspiring to see the visions of the future imagined by youth in our community. In the face of climate change, and the

resulting eco-anxiety increasingly prevalent in society, these youth are highlighting the ways we can move forward together towards a more just and sustainable future.

We appreciate the support of [festival lead sponsor] and key prize donors [donor 1] and [donor 2].

I hope we can count on your continued participation when we launch [festival name] in [subsequent year]!

Sincerely,

[name]

[role]