

kids becoming more healthy and having more freedom,” he says. “That’s the core piece of why I do this work.” — *Amy Schneider*

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND COMMUNITIES

**Joel Iboa** was born in Eugene and raised in the Whiteaker neighborhood. He went to Sheldon High School, and his Mexican-born parents made sure he grew up knowing how to read and write in Spanish.

“I spent a lot of my summers with my cousins in Trainsong,” he says. Over the years the people of the Trainsong neighborhood of Eugene have had their lives affected by the diesel smoke of idling trains and air and groundwater contamination from the old Union Pacific railyard.

After graduating high school, Iboa stayed in Eugene. He took a class at the University of Oregon on corporate crime, examining incidents such as the Bhopal gas disaster and the BP oil spill. “It’s one thing for violence to occur from one person to another, but what happens when a state or corporation, who you can’t touch, hurts people?” he asks.

In his last two years at the UO, he was part of the Coalition Against Environmental Racism and began to delve into climate change and how it’s “not just about protecting wildlife, humans are part of the environment, too, and live in the capitalist society that produces products and waste.” There’s going to be bad stuff produced, he says, so where is it going to go?

After graduating in June of 2014, he applied for a job with Beyond Toxics and less than two years later was

speaking before a crowd of 400 people at the capitol in Salem about social justice and climate change.

“Climate change is important to the environmental justice community,” Iboa says. “Low income, rural communities, communities of color — disadvantaged communities are the first to feel the brunt of climate change.” He points to how low-income communities feel the changes of global warming first in natural disasters throughout the world, such as Hurricane Katrina.

He says currently Beyond Toxics is working on a questionnaire on what youth in Eugene think about climate change and how it will impact them. He expects the survey to finish up in the next two weeks.

From Eugene’s urban growth boundary and how that will affect homes in industrial areas to chemicals in the work place, Iboa and Beyond Toxics work to safeguard communities from chemicals and climate change. “People rely on these places for work,” he says of polluting industries, “and deserve to be protected from these chemicals.” — *Camilla Mortensen*

## LOCAL FOOD AND CLIMATE ACTIVISM

It’s important for kids to understand where their food comes from, says **Megan Kemple** of the Willamette Farm and Food Coalition. Kemple has helped Lane County kids learn more about local food for almost a decade through the coalition’s Farm to School Program.

The program provides access to healthy, local food for low-income students in five school districts: Eugene 4J,

Bethel, Springfield, South Lane and Junction City.

The Farm to School Program allows students to participate in activities that include field trips to farms, taste-testing local foods during lunch and cooking with food the students have harvested.

“I also do the work because I believe that as a result of climate change we may be facing a very different kind of food system in the future, one in which our food isn’t easily transported up and down I-5 and where infrastructure might be disrupted,” Kemple says.

In order to overcome such disruption, Kemple explains that all community members of all social classes need to have access to locally sourced foods.

Outside of Kemple’s work hours, she has dedicated her time as a volunteer with 350 Eugene’s work group “Cap the Gas,” which tried to pass the Healthy Climate Act in the Oregon Legislature short session.

“I do all of this climate work out of passion and concern, and a feeling of urgency,” Kemple says.

The Healthy Climate Act would have put a limit on and reduced Oregon greenhouse gas emissions, Kemple says.

The 350 Eugene work group held regular meetings every two weeks, where members planned meetings with legislators and discussed updates to the bill.

“I do this work because I am very concerned about climate change, and I think Oregon needs to do its part,” Kemple says. — *Claire Rischiotto*

## RETIRED NAVAL OFFICER, OFF THE GRID, AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE

Retired naval officer **Patty Hine** co-founded 350 Eugene with her partner, Deb McGee. 350 Eugene is a chapter of 350 Oregon, a grassroots climate activist organization. The 350 movement is a global grassroots network that seeks to keep carbon in the ground, build a new, more equitable low-carbon economy and pressure governments into limiting emissions.

When Hine retired and moved to the Pacific Northwest, she got a job at Lane Community College teaching computer applications. “I never taught anything about environmentalism, but I embodied the low carbon footprint lifestyle,” she says.

Hine tells *EW* that when gaming and simulation began to take over the computer information and technology department at LCC, the school focused on how to attract students who were interested in creating virtual worlds. She says we’ve become so distracted by technology and materialism that we’ve lost sight of what’s real.

“I was just so not interested in that,” Hine says. “How can a virtual world hold a candle to what I’m doing? They wanted to bring in candy and soda machines, so I said, ‘I quit,’ and moved to another faculty position.”

Hine says she lives with her partner and their two children in a log house, off the grid. They run an organic farm, compost their waste and will soon have a solar water system. By farming her own food, producing compost and utilizing renewable energy, Hine is embodying the low carbon lifestyle.

“We’re kind of old hippies, but I’m a retired military officer,” she says.

She’s not very concerned with technology, Hine says. She and her partner share a cell phone, and they don’t have a TV, but they were early adopters of electric cars. She adds that her dedication to the Earth is a product of her faith and the belief that she’s responsible for the world’s well-being. “It’s shocking how many people don’t take their faith seriously,” Hine says.

She says she wants to live her life as an example for how to marry faith and environmentalism.

“We have a fierce commitment to a love- and joy-filled world. I think that comes from my personal upbringing. Christianity at its root is a pacifistic religion, and we’ve so screwed that up,” Hine says. “I’m bound and determined to make that right as an example of my life.” — *Mohammed Alkhadher*



## CLIMATE AND THE CITY

**Matt McRae** is the climate and energy analyst for the city of Eugene. He says, “I spent most of my 20s working for the National Park Service in Yellowstone doing backcountry trail work.” He got a degree from Utah State in natural resources management and started off in Eugene in 2002 working in Parks and Open Space as a volunteer coordinator.

When the climate and energy position was created, originally as a temporary position, in 2008, “I jumped at it,” he says.

In 2009 and 2010, McRae managed the effort to create Eugene’s first community Climate and Energy Action Plan. Currently his duties include managing an internal operations greenhouse gas inventory as well a community-wide inventory. This includes more obvious greenhouse emitters like transportation fuels as well as things many Eugeneans don’t think about, such as landfill emissions, as he tries to gauge a total emissions footprint.

McRae was also heavily involved in Eugene’s climate and hazards vulnerability assessment. “We didn’t have a full understanding of impacts to community systems from climate change,” he says. We knew about warming and lower river flows, “but not implications for public safety or water systems.”

The work on climate change was merged with assessing the city’s vulnerability to natural hazards. “It took almost two years,” McRae says. “The largest impacts we expect to see are related to natural resources: fish, regional forests, river flows and river temperature.” The good news is that when it comes to things like urban infrastructure, drinking water and housing, Eugene faces “less impact from climate change overall as compared to other cities with rising sea levels, hurricanes and heat waves.”

That’s for better or for worse, McRae says, because that can make climate change less of a concern for people.

Looking ahead, McRae says that he’s been examining the impacts of climate change on urban forests. Urban forests can help capture carbon, and their shade can make pavement last longer and reduce the use of air conditioning.

Ironically, the best street trees are hard to get, McRae says. Some of the native Oregon white oak and native California black oak that are more resistant to climate change are not readily available in local nurseries. — *Camilla Mortensen*