



PHOTO BY ROBIN LOZNAK

EXCLAIMING ENVIRONMENTAL EXCITEMENT

PLAINTIFFS OF A LANDMARK ENVIRONMENTAL LAWSUIT WILL TAKE THE STAGE FOR A SPOKEN WORD PERFORMANCE AT OCF

BY MEERAH POWELL

Although it takes place near Veneta, Oregon Country Fair is inherently a very Eugene thing: weird, wacky, peaceful and creative — all descriptors Eugene, and its residents, hold dear. Also, like Eugene, it's environmentally conscious. This year Fair again combines its artistic endeavors with its environmental ones in a spoken word performance by Our Children's Trust.

OCT is a local nonprofit focused on uplifting young voices speaking out about climate change. Most notably, it's providing legal counsel, support and guidance for the upcoming *Juliana v. U.S.* court case — also known as "Youth v. Gov" — where 21 young people are suing the federal government over the impacts of climate change on younger generations. That trial begins Oct. 29 in Eugene.

UO student Kelsey Juliana is the main plaintiff in the case; she will be apart of the spoken word performance at Oregon Country Fair.

Juliana says the group is excited to be speaking at Fair. The youth plaintiffs that make up the federal court case consist of children, teens and young adults from Eugene, and the wider Oregon area, as well as from across the country. Juliana says some of the plaintiffs are coming to town for Fair from as far as Louisiana.

"We'll have about six plaintiffs there," Juliana says, "as well as one staff member from OCT to talk about what we're doing."

Spanning three days, Fair's spoken word lineup is jam-packed and covers a range of sub-genres — from poetry slams to lectures. Juliana says OCT's speakers will offer a mixture of styles.

"It will be more of a personalized storytelling approach,"

Juliana says. "We will be focusing a little bit less on the legality of the case, and more on telling the personal stories of why we're here."

Along with just speaking on the experiences that have inspired them to fight against climate change, she says, "at least two of the plaintiffs will also give musical presentations."

Though the trial itself does not start until October, plaintiffs are in the midst of preparing for their oral arguments — a hearing in which both the plaintiffs and defendants present their arguments. She says those oral arguments are taking place at the Wayne L. Morse Federal Courthouse at 2 pm on July 18, just a few days after the spoken word act at Fair, and the public is invited to come and offer support. There will be a rally 1 pm before the oral arguments, outside of the courthouse, and a press conference 3 pm after.

"The main point of this is we want to give an inside look as who we are as individual plaintiffs and also psych people up for our oral arguments," Juliana says.

OCT wants people to get interested in their case and hope they not only join them at the rally but also when the trial begins in October, she adds.

As for Juliana, who is from Eugene, she says she's been going to Fair since she was a baby. "I go every year," she says. "Next year my dad will actually be an elder of the Fair."

Juliana also says her family is a part of the Green Earth booth, an informational booth about local environmental nonprofits — another good spot to check out for those looking to further pursue any environmental curiosity that may have been sparked at the Fair.

Catch Our Children's Trust's spoken word performance 2:30 pm Sunday, July 15, at The Front Porch.

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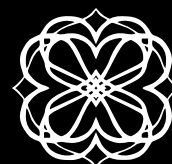
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