Six schoolchildren win nationwide competition to be the lead voices in a new animated series about cleaning up our planet.

Wednesday 6 May, 2020

Organisers of a nationwide competition to find the voices for the lead characters of a new animated series have today announced the six winners who will narrate Clean Our Planet: Energy of Change.

The environmentally minded winners were selected after a six-month process that searched across 40,000 families from around the country. The competition was run by Clean Planet Energy, partnered by Scallywags, the UK's leading child talent agency. Participants were asked to create a short video about how they are helping protect the planet.

The winners are **Harry Walton**, 10, from Ashford, Kent; **Kyas Ako-Parker**, 11, from Liverpool; **Ese Abhulimhen**, 13, from Sidcup; **Theia Pearce**, 5, from Essex; **Stephanie Gallagher,** 12, from Hemel Hempstead; and **Halima Omari-Hakim**, 8, from East London.

"We asked 40,000 families to show us how they were taking steps to make incremental changes to their life that would ultimately help protect the environment around us. Our winners presented us with the most extraordinary and brilliant presentations. From videos taking us on a tour around their local community to show how they were helping, national activism, eco-art, and using non-recyclable plastic as building materials for everyday items, our winners had it all," said Bertie Stephens, CEO of Clean Planet Energy.

"The purpose of the new animated series is to inform and engage people of all ages about the impact of our lifestyles upon nature. We must take a step back and realise that the current imbalance between nature and society is untenable. Importantly, we must also have the courage to make incremental changes, so that we can live the life we want but in harmony with the nature around us," continued Stephens.

Still only 10 years old, **Harry Walton** has already been working on solutions to the problem for a number of years. "I learned how to make ecoBricks about two years ago when we found a local shop who were collecting them. Our family has been making ecoBricks ever since to try to keep plastic from entering our landfills and oceans. I have also watched several documentaries and learned more about the issue," said Harry.

Ese Abhulimhen's passion for making a difference began when she was just eight years old. "When I was in Year 4 at primary school, we went on a school trip to the park. During the trip, I saw a bird chewing on plastic and noticed how much plastic and litter there was on the ground. Since then, I have been picking up as much litter and plastic as I can to help stop plastic pollution."

Kyas Ako-Parker also decided to make changes when he saw the devastation pollution was having on nature. "I first found out about pollution in the news. It was very upsetting to see lots of animals getting hurt because of our own selfish human deeds. The world definitely needs to change. Humans are not the only ones living on this beautiful planet."

The youngest winner, **Theia Pearce**, aged 5, believes that animation can make all the difference to those around her, but also sees the funny side of her voice being on a nationwide production. "I am excited that I will help people stop hurting the animals. I love the animals, and they help us too. I think it's going to be funny hearing my voice on a cartoon. I hope I'm good enough!" "She absolutely will be!" quickly responded Stephens.

The animation will deliver a narrative that takes the audience through the ages, on an arc of discovery. Mixing key messages with entertainment is challenging, but the six winners were picked as they have an edge that makes people of all ages sit up and listen. "If we're going to change the world, achieve the seemingly impossible, we'll have to achieve it with those whose future it impacts most. For people and businesses alike, we're entering an era of the Clean Planet Economy," Stephens concluded.

Stephanie Gallagher believes the animation can continue to raise the consciousness of the problems we face as a society. "I'm ever so excited to try and help the planet any way I can," said the 12-year-old. "I think this project can really elevate awareness of climate change and plastic pollution. I think some children (and adults!) don't know enough about the consequences, so I'd love it if people knew more

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about it to help to clean our planet."

The final winner, **Halima Omari-Hakim**, is excited about sharing the important messages with the wider world. "Wow! I feel so excited to be involved in this new cartoon and to be able to help and share, so that more of us can do more to save our planet. I can show my friends and family the animated series, and they can share it with others, so that lots of people see and learn and help. I feel proud that I can be a helper to Mother Earth. It's so exciting."

The animated series will go into voice-over production this summer with a release scheduled for Q4 this year. The primary target audience will be schoolchildren, but, like all good animations, the purpose is to bring together the entire family.

From the initial entries that reached 40,000 families, 15 finalists were shortlisted by a team of five judges. All finalists will receive a certificate, and the winners, in addition to winning the voice-over prize, have also been awarded a cash prize of £125. Each family also receives a set of Clean Planet t-shirts.











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