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## **Coral Springs Student Among 2021 International Young Eco-Hero Award Winners**

### ***Local Student Receives Top Honor for Contributions to Solving Environmental Problems***

San Francisco – Karina Samuel, a 16 year-old from Coral Springs, Florida, is one of 25 young environmental activists from across the globe honored by Action For Nature (AFN) as a 2021 International Young Eco-Hero, an award that recognizes eco-conscious youth ages 8 to 16 who are taking crucial steps to solve tough environmental problems.

Winners of the International Young Eco-Hero Award are selected by a panel of independent judges, including experts in environmental science, biology, and education. Since 2003, Action For Nature has recognized more than 300 Eco-Heroes from over 30 countries and 25 U.S. states.

Karina won 3rd Place in the 15-16 year-old category for her project, Bye Bye Plastic Bags Florida.

Karina Samuel is the CEO and founder of the Florida chapter of Bye Bye Plastic Bags (BBPBF), a nonprofit working to pass pro-environment reform, ban plastic bags, clean-up pollution, and raise awareness about climate change. BBPBF has hosted 30 drive-through voter registration campaigns, organized 10 strikes in Miami, and held 12 virtual conferences with pro-environment political candidates across the state of Florida. Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, BBPBF hosted clean-ups that attracted more than 1,000 volunteers over the past two years.

“Kids like Karina have shown that the next generation of leaders is here, and they are refusing to wait to solve the world’s most pressing environmental challenges,” said Beryl Kay, president of Action For Nature, an international non-profit organization that encourages young people to nurture a love and respect for the Earth and to take personal action to improve the environment. “The projects that these young people created will not only have real, positive impacts on their communities, they will also help solve global climate challenges and inspire others – no matter what age – to consider what they can do to help.”

“We recognize that people of color are disproportionately likely to live near toxic facilities and in areas that are the first to be affected by rising sea levels,” said Karina Samuel. “I choose to advocate for groups that are most affected by environmental issues, because these are often the same communities that lack representation and voice when it comes to creating change. I know that I am in a position of privilege, and while all of humanity can be to blame for climate change and pollution, I believe that those who have the ability and power to fight for change have the responsibility to do so.”

To read more about Karina’s work, visit [instagram.com/byebyeplasticbagsflorida](https://www.instagram.com/byebyeplasticbagsflorida).

To learn more about this year’s International Young Eco-Hero Award winners, visit [actionfornature.org/eco-hero-awards/2021-awards](https://actionfornature.org/eco-hero-awards/2021-awards).

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*Action For Nature (AFN) is an international non-profit organization based in San Francisco, California, that encourages young people to nurture a love and respect for Earth’s natural resources and to take personal action to better their environments.*