

We Care Act

TEEA 2018 Winner: Youth



Environmental Work Knows No Age Limit

We Care Act, a youth founded non-profit organization, engages young people to help victims of natural disasters while promoting recycling efforts and reducing waste. Although the organization's main project is in the Houston area, We Care Act aims to help victims of natural disasters around the world.

The organization was founded in 2008, when three siblings Grace, Sharon, and Eric Li (then 12-, 10-, and 7-years-old), met with young victims from the earthquake that struck Sichuan, China. Since then, We Care Act has provided relief to victims of 19 natural disasters worldwide.

The program began with only a few classmates, friends, teachers, and parents. However, it quickly expanded through partnerships with larger organizations, such as the Greater Houston Chapter of Red Cross and Youth Service America.

Eric, now We Care Act president, and his team strive to educate youth on the importance of recycling. The organization wants to inspire youth to be stewards of the environment through volunteering and service. For example, the group learned that only 15 percent of usable textiles are recycled. To address this problem, they started collecting gently used clothing and other textiles to send to people when they need them the most—after a disaster.

After Hurricane Harvey struck Texas in August 2017, We Care Act formed a partnership with two Houston ISD schools to collect and donate items to young victims in the area who were affected by the hurricane.

In addition to their disaster relief efforts, We Care Act conducts educational seminars about electronics recycling, refurbishing and recycling programs, and instructive surveys to increase environmental awareness.

The organization also reduces waste by refurbishing and recycling computers to give to disaster victims. This project provides opportunities for youth to help the environment, disaster victims, and children in need by collecting used items and electronics and reducing the amount of waste that ends up in landfills.

Today, youth supporting We Care Act projects have collected more than 40,000 items that were redistributed to disaster victims, recycled 8,000 pounds of electronics, helped 50,000 people, and engaged about 36,000 youth and adults around the world. By converting things previously destined for the landfill into useful items for disaster victims, the organization is also reducing disaster recovery costs.

By raising environmental awareness and encouraging stewardship, We Care Act is building a strong group of environmental leaders for today and for the future.