



# The Festival's amazing "Sustainability Forum" for high school students

The Bethlehem Gadfly Climate Action Plan, Environment, Environmental Advisory Council, Serious Issues, Touchstone Theater October 15, 2019

 *The latest in a series of posts relating to the environment, Bethlehem's Climate Action Plan, and Bethlehem's Environmental Advisory Council* 

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Gadfly:

There were so many wonderful experiences to be had during [Festival UnBound](#). I wish I could have done them all. I wanted to highlight one event that was meaningful to me personally. Touchstone Theatre's Festival Unbound was about having a conversation about where Bethlehem is going as a community from this time forward. The festival included a [Sustainability Forum](#) for high schools students. Students attending Freedom, Liberty, Bethlehem Catholic, Charter Arts, and Moravian Academy had an opportunity to tell the City their opinion on how to make Bethlehem a more sustainable community. 178 students submitted essays, which outlined their individual opinions on the most important way for Bethlehem to be more sustainable.

All of the essays were read by Paul Pierpoint, then the students were invited to attend the Saturday afternoon Sustainability Forum at Zoellner Arts Center at Lehigh University. Community leaders involved in sustainability and environmental projects were asked to help by facilitating small groups of students, where each student presented his or her idea to their group. Their ideas were summarized on a white board, and the students in each group voted on the one idea their group would present to

everyone at the concluding session. The attending parents and interested citizens from Bethlehem were allowed to walk around and visit each group to hear the discussion.

*[Here's a [short video of Paul Pierpoint](#) commenting on the student essays at the panel discussion of "Prometheus / Redux."]*

It was an amazing experience for me to listen to the well thought-out, researched, and heartfelt opinions of these young people. Our future depends on us older citizens listening to them and using our decision-making abilities and positions of influence to make effective change to sustain our world for the future generations.

The 178 essays will be bound and given to Mayor Donchez and City Council for them to read, digest, and understand what our city's youth feel will make our community a better, more sustainable place.

It was an honor to participate as a facilitator at the Forum along with notable and passionately involved members of our community. The other facilitators were Willie Reynolds (City Councilman), Steve Samuelson (PA State Representative), Darlene Heller City Director of Planning), Don Miles (Sierra Club-Lehigh Valley Chapter and environmental attorney), Bruce Wilson (Lehigh Valley Green Builders), and Karen Beck Pooley (Board member of the Bethlehem Area School District). I was very happy to represent the Bethlehem Food Co-op and the Bethlehem Environmental Advisory Council.

Anne Hills and Reese, a young songwriter from Emmaus High School, started us out and ended our day with original music they composed and sang.

I apologize for not mentioning a couple of key people involved because I cannot remember everyone's names.

I am grateful every day for the good in Bethlehem.

And thank you Touchstone Theatre for everything you do for the community.

Kathy

*The Festival is over, but Gadfly will be posting for a while on the panels and other activities that were part of the Festival. Yes, thank you Touchstone Theatre for everything you do for the community.*