As an "eviction tsunami" looms, youth houselessness is expected to rise again.

**NICOLE BERROA • age 13**

As the United States grapples with a global health pandemic, the crisis of youth houselessness steadily worsens. Most recent data on the rate of unhoused children from 2017 to 2018 found that youth houselessness was at its highest point in over a dozen years. The report released by the National Center for Homeless Education in late January, stated that more than 1.5 million public school students reported being unhoused during that year. Houselessness was a concern in the city prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, but now these numbers are likely to skyrocket with the pandemic. The impending "eviction tsunami" has not been canceled, this extension will likely just delay these inevitable evictions. However, given that rent requirements were not adequately accommodating social distancing, the pandemic is ongoing.

Adding to this tsunami, on March 27, the government enacted the CARES Act, which increased federal unemployment benefits. This benefit ended July 31, and there are no solid plans to extend federal unemployment despite the fact that the pandemic is ongoing.

Why is there a high number of unhoused youth? “Oftentimes there’s domestic violence or mental health issues in the family,” said Sr. Nancy Downing, executive director of the Covenant House in New York, in an interview with NBC New York. “For our LGBT youth, they get kicked out of the home because parents aren’t willing or able to deal with it at the moment.” Around 72.5% of youth leave home because of abusive relationships with parents. Other contributing factors include financial hardship, racial inequalities, mental health and substance abuse disorders. Many youths and children experience houselessness when whole families become unhoused. The cost of living has gone up while wages have not, making more young people and families at increased risk of houselessness, “The cost of living has gone up while wages have not, making more young people and families at increased risk of houselessness,” said Maley.

Moreover, the pandemic is not helping in the struggle to fight houselessness. Shelters have been closing as they do not have enough space to follow social distancing guidelines. The Northern Kentucky Convention Center was used as an emergency shelter for the unhoused but was closed for not adequately accommodating social distancing. Downing stated in May that the Covenant House in New York houses an estimated 300 youths per night. Before the coronavirus pandemic, they held 1,300 children a year.

The Covenant House managed to stay open and used their offices to quarantine youth suffering from COVID-19. They have a federally certified health center where medical staff attend to those quarantined in the shelter. Another organization fighting to help unhoused children is Youth Spirit Artworks, an interfaith job-training nonprofit committed to unhoused and low-income youth. They helped build 24 tiny homes in the East Bay, California. StandUp for Kids is on a mission to "end the cycle of youth homelessness," and is keeping unhoused kids safe and continuing to teach them. These organizations are doing all they can to brighten the paths of the unhoused children and youths during these tough times.

Experiencing houselessness as a child may hinder a young person’s capacity to reassimilate into society, dishearten their motivation, and prevent them from becoming self-sufficient, prosperous and contributing members of their families and society. Houselessness brings misery to youth in the form of mental health problems, substance abuse, victimization and criminal activity, and barriers to education and employment. The percentages of major depression, conduct disorder and post-traumatic stress syndrome were found to be three times as high among runaway youth as among the general youth population, according to a report by the National Coalition for Homeless Youths.

If these youths are not assisted, they’ll likely become an addition to the population of habitually unhoused adults. “It is essential to dismantle the view that homelessness and poverty are intergenerational,” said Diane Nilan, founder and executive director of HEAR US Inc., in an interview with the Progressive. “They don’t have to be. Homelessness is a product of social construction and it is particularly detrimental to children.”
**Portland Protests: Will Police Brutality End?**

**INAYA MAJID • age 10**

The protests started, they were very peaceful and nonviolent. But violence escalated after police began shooting at protesters with plastic bullets and tear-gassed innocent people. Tensions reached an apex when officers sent by the federal government physically forced protesters into unmarked vans. Gov. Kate Brown of Oregon has called it “a blatant abuse of power.” Because of these police tactics, the protests have grown in size and frequency.

Federal agents have since been pushed out of the city, but according to the co-founder of Black Unity PDX, Reese Monson, there is still work to be done. “This doesn’t go away tomorrow. This problem that we face as Black people, it’s every day,” Monson said. “We’re still going to be here. We’re still going to chant. We’re still going to let them know that Black lives matter.”

**Even Trump Disputes Trump**

**INDYKIDS STAFF**

President Trump and Vice President Mike Pence.

A taped interview with journalist Bob Woodward revealed that Trump acknowledged the dangers of COVID-19 and his tactic to downplay its severity to the American people. “This is deadly stuff,” Trump stated on the interview on February 6. “It’s also more deadly than even your regular flu that we have.”

At a White House news conference, Trump reassured the country that “we’re going to be here. We’re still going to be here.”

This calculated misleading of the country is now Trump’s logistical challenge is that there is no Trump administration, according to The Independent, claiming that Trump’s order will damage their representation in Congress, since their states have an “above-average” number of undocumented immigrants. In late July, 21 states, along with multiple cities and counties, also filed a lawsuit against Trump.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act Turns 30**

**JET WATLING • age 11**

His year marks the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). There are 61 million people with disabilities in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), many of whom have benefited from this act.

The ADA, enacted in 1990, is a law that doesn’t allow prejudice against disabled people. There are five titles in the ADA, and each one covers a different area of life. The fourth title on employment, which enables people with disabilities to fair employment so they have the same possibilities of getting a job as a person without disabilities.

The second title focuses on public activities and the government, and forbids discrimination against people with disabilities. The third, fourth and fifth titles focus on public accommodations, communications and the ADA’s relationship with other laws.

In 2008, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) came into law, and it made various changes that broadened and clarified the definition of “disability,” which expanded the number of people protected by the ADA.

However, some people with disabilities in the United States think that many improvements could still be made, including Robby Karran, a video producer at Democracy Now! who lost the use of his legs due to a disease.

Democrats who lost the use of his legs due to a disease.

In an interview with IndyKids, Karran pointed out that many places still don’t comply with the ADA stipulations. “In the New York subway system, only 118 out of 472 stops are accessible,” said Karran. “That is 25%.”

The digital world has benefited many disabled people, and voice command tools such as Alexa or Siri make the internet more accessible. However, JavaScript, which is used in websites, is not compatible with certain screen readers that help people with poor eyesight navigate websites. Neither the ADA, ADAAA or other laws require non-government-owned websites to be accessible.

Clearly the fight for equal rights for people with disabilities in the United States is not over yet. “I see [the fight] being over when we are living in a world where we don’t have to worry about going anywhere, and without worrying about getting around when we get there,” explained Karran.
COVID-19 & the Environment: The Plastic Pandemic

AMY BLOCK • age 9 and INDYKIDS STAFF

Plastic gloves and masks are now commonplace on beaches and in streets.

Brian Turpin on unsplash

In recent years countries began banning single-use plastics because they often end up in landfills or, worse, in our oceans. According to the Smithsonian magazine, many states were forced to lift bans on plastic bags because people are using more single-use plastic to avoid contaminated surfaces and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Increased plastic waste will affect how animals, especially those that live in the ocean, thrive. According to ABC News, 9 million metric tons of plastic enter the ocean every year, and it is expected that more than 330 billion vinyl gloves will be used this year. “Unless we change the way we use plastic within the decade, for every three pounds of fish in the ocean, there will be one pound of plastic,” said Judith Enck, a former EPA official, in an interview with ABC News.

As the demand for single-use plastics grows and the cost of oil goes down, Enck worries that the amount of factories producing plastics will rise. According to the World Economic Forum, in the next five years the rate of plastic production is projected to rise by one-third, and by 2050, it may triple.

But the coronavirus pandemic has shown that the use of plastics can be essential to prevent the spread of diseases. Organizations, such as TerraCycle, Rothy’s and Waste Management, are now exploring ways to transform plastics and start exploring used plastics as a resource rather than waste. TerraCycle, based in New Jersey, has designed a system for businesses to safely recycle their used PPE (personal protective equipment) to try and reduce the amount of waste that ends up on streets and, ultimately, in the ocean.

New Security Law Erodes Hong Kong’s Autonomy

SAM GELBER • age 12

New York Bans Facial Recognition Technology in Schools Until 2022

MAUDE STEVENS • age 12

China imposed a new security law on Hong Kong on June 30. It is designed to erode Hong Kong’s autonomy and criminalizes acts of subversion, secession, terrorism and collusion.

Hong Kong was responsible for setting up its own security law, but did not succeed due to its unpopularity. Last year in Hong Kong, protests over an extradition bill became violent and turned into a larger anti-China pro-democracy movement.

China wants to prevent further anti-China protests and rhetoric, and the new law will ensure this. “It is clear that the law will have a severe impact on freedom of expression, if not personal security, on the people of Hong Kong,” professor Johannes Chan at the University of Hong Kong said in an interview with the BBC before the passage of the law.

Last year, citizens of Hong Kong protested an extradition bill which they believed would threaten their democracy. Hong Kong, a former British colony, was given back to China in 1997. To make this transition easier, Hong Kong was labeled a “special administrative region,” giving them more rights to freedom of speech, assembly and press. The 2019 extradition bill limited these special rights, and now the new security law is further limiting those rights.

Under these new laws, teachers and educators can call the police if someone insults the Chinese national anthem on school grounds. Children will be taught about the new national security law, which gives the authorities power to stop opposition to Beijing by using long prison sentences. According to The New York Times, China is attempting to raise a generation of radical pro-Beijing Hong Kongers.

Reuters interviewed a student protester known only as Ernest, age 16, in December 2019. He emphasized the importance of students speaking out to protect their freedom of speech. “If we don’t stand out front today, we won’t have any chance to speak anymore,” said Ernest during the protests last year. “We will become real China and will not have any chance to protest.” With this new security law, the fears of the protesters are now being realized.

Autonomy: Being self-governing or independent 
Subversion: The undermining of the power and authority of an established system or institution
Secession: The action of withdrawing formally from membership of a federation or body, especially a political state
Collusion: Secret or illegal cooperation or conspiracy, especially in order to cheat or deceive others
Extradition: To hand over (a person accused or convicted of a crime) to the jurisdiction of the foreign state in which the crime was committed

NewsBrief

Has Time Expired for TikTok in the United States?

AIDEN ZEHR • age 10

President Trump issued an executive order in August to ban TikTok in the United States. The app, popular with celebrities and teens around the world to share goofy content, was created by ByteDance, a Chinese company, and has over 315 million downloads worldwide. President Trump issued the ban because he believes ByteDance may be stealing people’s personal information. According to reports, the Chinese Communist Party is able to track the records of 145 million users’ personal information. TikTok has tried to strengthen their privacy settings by creating a content moderation center.

As TikTok is becoming increasingly popular to spread political views, some government entities, such as the State Department, Department of Homeland Security and Transportation Security Administration, had already banned their employees from using TikTok on government-issued devices, citing data security concerns. TikTok plans to sue the Trump administration, claiming the ban is unconstitutional.

New York Bans Facial Recognition Technology in Schools Until 2022

MAUDE STEVENS • age 12

Thousands of people gathered to march on July 1 in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

This summer, New York state lawmakers voted to ban the use of facial recognition technology in schools until 2022, citing student data protection and concerns that the technology might be biased against Latinx and Black students.

The New York State Education Department approved the technology in 2019, made by Clearview AI, to alert staff and security if a threatening person entered the building. One school district in Lockport, NY began using it in January 2020. But not everyone agrees with using the technology. “The district turned our kids into lab rats in a high-tech experiment in privacy invasion,” Jim Shultz, a concerned parent, said to the New York Times.

Earlier this year, the technology led to the false arrest of a Black man in Michigan because the system is not properly programmed to read faces of non-white people. “This is not an example of one bad algorithm,” says Joy Buolamwini, founder of the Algorithmic Justice League. “Just like instances of police brutality, it is a glimpse of how systemic racism can be embedded into AI systems like those that power facial recognition technologies.”
A Brief History of Policing in the United States

AMAN MEHROTA • age 10 and IndyKids Staff

The United States police forces are a pretty modern invention. Early police forces were privately funded systems governed by the rich white elite to protect property. Some say that systemic racism has always been the foundation of policing in the United States and slave patrols of the past are not at all different from today’s policing system.

The first forms of policing in the United States were slave patrols and Indian constables. In the early 1870s, New England and Midwestern regions appointed Indian constables to police Native Americans, whom they viewed as primitive and untamed. Slave patrollers were created in the South to enslave and control Black people. This could be seen as the first form of policing, and it was inherently racially charged.

By 1838, the city of Boston had created the first publicly funded police force in the United States. Being a large shipping center, the police force was hired primarily to protect property and police new immigrants, according to Gary Potter, a crime historian at Eastern Kentucky University, in an interview with Time magazine. By the 1880s, all major U.S. cities had police forces.

Jim Crow laws were enacted in the 1870s and, for the following 80 years, dictated where Black people could live, work and eat. Enforcing these laws became part of a police officer’s job. According to Connie Hassett-Walker, assistant professor of justice studies and sociology at Norwich University, Black people who broke these laws or violated social norms were subject to police brutality.

In an interview with NPR, Khalil Gibran Muhammad, a professor at Harvard University, said that police officers have been “policing the racial norms of white supremacy from the very beginning.” Black skin was equated with criminality, and the police system in the United States today has not fundamentally changed from these roots.

The Black community began to challenge the police brutality inflicted upon them by the 1960s, something that the Black Lives Matter movement of today is still attempting to do. Gibran Muhammad says that highlighting the problem is not enough, as “police officers and police agencies are incapable of fixing themselves.” Many protesters have now been calling for demands to reform or defund the police entirely.

Inherently: Something that is built-in or a part of the makeup of a person or thing
White supremacy: A belief that white people are better than other races

How George Floyd’s Death Sparked New Momentum for the BLM Movement

SABRINA MAZUMDER • age 12 and IndyKids Staff

George Floyd’s death at the hands of cops has reignited the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement globally. On May 25, Floyd, a Black man, was killed after a white police officer pressed his knee on Floyd’s neck for almost nine minutes, even after Floyd told the officer, “I can’t breathe.” The video of Floyd’s death went viral, highlighting the systemic racism experienced by Black people at the hands of law enforcement officials.

The BLM movement began as a hashtag in 2013 following the acquittal of George Zimmerman, who shot and killed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin in 2012. The movement began taking to the streets to protest police violence against the Black community in 2014 following the deaths of Eric Garner in New York and Michael Brown in Missouri. George Floyd joined the scores of Black people killed by police, including 26-year-old Breonna Taylor, 12-year-old Tamir Rice, 28-year-old Atatiana Jefferson and 40-year-old Aura Rosser.

Protesters are calling for the officers to be fired and prosecuted in all of these cases—something that rarely occurs. According to a Washington Post investigation, of the "L881 U.S. police officers who were fired for misconduct between 2006 and 2017, 45% of them won their jobs back after an appeal.”

Most people have been peacefully protesting these recent killings. However, news reports across the country have found police officers using weapons, such as batons, rubber bullets and tear gas, to attack peaceful protesters. Two white police officers from Buffalo, New York, for example, were charged for shoving a 75-year-old protester, rubber bullets and tear gas, to attack peaceful protesters. Two white police officers from Buffalo, New York, for example, were charged for shoving a 75-year-old protester, causing him injuries when the man hit his head on the pavement.

The protests have started to spark change. The Minneapolis City Council, the city where Floyd was killed, voted unanimously in June to defund its police department and recreate a public health-oriented and restorative justice approach to safety. They hope to use the police to keep people safe, not kill them.

Restorative justice: A theory of justice that focuses on mediation and agreement rather than punishment. Offenders must accept responsibility for harm and make restitution with victims.
Do You Really Know What Reform & Defund Means?
MELINA CANTAGALLO • age 12

While the Black Lives Matter movement was established seven years ago, the death of George Floyd in May, among other Black lives at the hands of police, has raised the question: “Are the police really keeping us safe?” According to a Gallup poll from late July, 94% of Americans believe a change has to be made to policing, 58% of them want a major change to be made, and 36% want a minor change.

One major change would be to defund the police entirely, something that many protesters have been calling for. To defund the police would entail reallocating funding which is currently given to police departments to government agencies like social workers and task forces which are trained in deescalation tactics.

Defunding the police is in line with the abolitionist movement, which seeks to eradicate police and prison systems and address harm by investing that money in local community organizations instead. “These activists demand an entirely new public safety system based on social and economic equity, bolstered by a network of nonviolent emergency responders,” said political activist and prominent abolitionist Angela Davis. “They are offering more than a different vision for public safety — they are offering a different vision for the composition, and fundamental assumptions, of society,” Davis goes on to explain that those who wish to defund and abolish the police have a different view of what causes crime in the first place. Abolitionists want to focus resources on boosting education and healthcare and to remove police departments entirely.

Police reform means to change the guidelines on certain aspects of an organization to improve it. Those seeking reform for police departments don’t necessarily want to disrupt funding, but do want new policies, training and practices. Reform often means to invest more funding. One way to reform the police is to enforce monthly racial bias training, limiting officers’ use of force and increasing accountability. Presidential candidate Joe Biden pledged to allocate $300 million toward community policing, according to NBC News. Community policing would involve assigning officers to specific communities to become familiar with residents. The Action Center on Race and the Economy published a study on how some of the biggest cities in the United States spend tax dollars toward the police department. According to the last valid assessment in 2017, U.S. taxpayers spend $15 billion on police departments each year. Perhaps if that money was spent on reform or reallocation to other services instead, we would see an end to the problems of police brutality currently plaguing the country.

Real-World Examples of Police Defunding and Reform
VARICK MAZUMDER • age 12 & INDYKIDS STAFF

While, according to White House spokeswoman Kayleigh McEnany, President Trump is “appalled” by the current BLM movement, some states have already started taking steps toward reexamining their police systems, and some countries provide ideal examples of how this can be achieved. The Republic of Georgia, for example, used to be “one of the most corrupt places on Earth,” with a dishonest police force, according to The Atlantic. When a new government was established in 2004, Georgian leaders abolished the police force and eliminated 30,000 police officers. From there, Georgia rebuilt a smaller and better-trained police force.

Other countries have also taken a different approach to policing. A Washington Post analysis found that 25% of those shot and killed by police in the United States within a six-month period in 2015 were in mental health crisis. A new approach in Sweden sends out mental health professionals to crisis situations without police assistance. This change resulted in less violence in Sweden’s policing. The United States can learn from this by sending out specialists to different emergencies.

The U.S. police system could benefit from better education programs for would-be cops. Norway, for example, views policing as an “elite occupation,” according to Time magazine, and only hires the most advanced candidates who apply for positions. “I think that the United States must learn that it takes time to educate people,” said Rune Glomseth, a professor at Norwegian Police University College, in an interview with Time. Only 14% of candidates who applied were accepted to the Dutch police schools in 2015. Their officers are required to undergo a three-year degree, compared to the U.S. programs, which only require 21 weeks’ worth of training.

Ultimately, the United States could learn from these alternative models, but implementing them will be difficult on a national level. Changes could happen more easily on a local level if cities and state governments are willing to reexamine these alternatives, according to Lawrence Sherman, director of Cambridge University’s Centre for Evidence-Based Policing, in an interview with The Atlantic.
Global Methane Emissions at Record High

LINNEA QUAMMEN • age 10 and INDYKIDS Staff

Livestock are responsible for 18% of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming.

Methane emissions across the world are at a record high, according to the most recent data findings from 2017. The latest study by scientists with the Global Carbon Project in July says that nearly 600 million tons of methane had been released into the atmosphere.

Methane is one of the main ingredients of natural gas. The main source of methane in our environment comes from fossil fuels used for transportation and meat production. When methane mixes with oxygen in the Earth’s lower atmosphere, it gets trapped in the ozone, creating smog, which causes health problems.

Scientists have warned that if no major changes are made and greenhouse gas emissions continue on their current trajectory, they could warm the Earth’s atmosphere by three to four degrees Celsius by the end of this century.

Going Ape for Social Distancing?

OZZY BROWN • age 11

A lone chimpanzee.

Humans may think they are the only species that practice social distancing, but other animals also do it. For example, chimpanzees are known to isolate and wear masks. It’s only natural.

These animals are doing what is right for their community, and humans can take a lesson from them. Humans may not seem like animals, but we can isolate and wear masks. It’s only natural.

Washington NFL Team Drops Its Racist Mascot, But Fight Continues

CLAIRE DAVIS • age 12

Washington, D.C.’s NFL football team decided to drop their team name because it was offensive, containing a racial slur, to the Native American community it portrayed. They aren’t the only sports team with this problem.

A study of Native American high schoolers found exposure to Native American mascots decreased students’ sense of self-worth, as reported by Politico. The portrayal of their community as sports mascots proved extremely harmful, as Professor Stephanie Fryberg of the University of Michigan, who is a member of the Tulalip Tribes, explains in an interview with the Washingtonian. Team names like the Atlanta Braves, Chicago Blackhawks and Cleveland Indians have the same negative impact on Indigenous communities.

Many people in the United States are fighting to change this trend for good. In February, Illinois lawmakers introduced a new bill intended to limit the use of Native mascots in schools. The bill prohibits schools in the state from using Native American logos, names, teams or mascots unless they have been granted permission from a Native American tribe within 500 miles of the school, according to CNN. Illinois schools who choose to use these harmful symbols would also need to begin a schoolwide program on Native American culture and write a yearly report for the state on these programs.

Many people, Native American or otherwise, believe that Native mascots should be prohibited. A UC Berkeley study found that half of over 1,000 Native Americans surveyed were offended by Native mascots in general. Some argue that using Native American symbolism is meant to portray a positive connection to Indigenous cultures. But Professor Fryberg also stated that Native American mascots affect self-esteem "more than negative stereotypes.”

Ariane Eason, an assistant professor of psychology at UC Berkeley, noted, "The debate over the continued use of Native mascots should be more closely attuned to Native American voices, particularly the voices of those who are most highly identified.” Eason collaborated with Fryberg in their study on Native American teens. But, according to Politico, team names and mascots are just one part of a much larger conversation about respect and inclusion toward different cultures in America.

Indigenous Peoples’ Day

LAUREN CLAGGETT • age 12

Most U.S. citizens have heard of Columbus Day, which is observed every year on the second Monday of October. The holiday was named after Christopher Columbus, who claimed to have found the "new world." Although this holiday is very well known, it isn’t based on facts. Christopher Columbus was not the first person to set foot in North America. Indigenous peoples lived on the continent of North America long before Columbus' arrival, yet they got little credit for it—until now. As of 2019, at least eight states and more than 130 cities nationwide now celebrate Indigenous Peoples’ Day instead of Columbus Day, according to USA Today, in what is a growing trend to honor those who really founded North America.

Advocates for the name change say that Columbus Day whitewashes American history because it is covering up the true history of this country.

Some people disagree with the move to rename the holiday, one reason being that they have been celebrating Columbus Day for so long and don’t want to ruin tradition. Many schools teach kids that Christopher Columbus was the person who discovered North America, so kids often believe it as a fact. Children often don’t learn the truth about Indigenous history in school.

Jackie Menjivar writes on DoSomething.org that Indigenous Peoples' Day "recognizes the legacy and impact of colonialism on Native communities. It also celebrates Native traditions, contributions, and resilience of contemporary Native peoples." Jackie Menjivar’s insight plays a very important role in why U.S. citizens should respect and honor Indigenous peoples and their fight to protect their land. The United States shouldn’t celebrate a holiday that covers up the truth of an important part of American and Native American history.

Advocates: A person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy

Whitewash: Anything used to cover up wrongdoings, faults, or errors, or absolve a wrongdoer from blame

350.org via Flickr

March to the White House for Indigenous rights.
Homophobic hate crimes continue to haunt the United States.

Homophobic hate crimes against my uncle, Arjay Baker, and his husband started three-and-a-half years ago, when a neighbor began to use homophobic and racist slurs against them. The hate reached a tipping point after a high-power pellet gun was fired at their window in June, for which the neighbor is now facing multiple criminal charges. Most of the people in their town in New York state recognize the neighbor as homophobic and appreciate that Arjay and his husband continue to stand up for social justice. This is just one example of hate crimes faced by the LGBTQ+ community in the United States. According to the FBI’s 2019 Hate Crime Statistics report, 15% of all hate crimes in the United States were against LGBTQ+ people. Over the past few years, anti-LGBTQ+ hate groups in the United States have increased by 43%, and according to USA Today, some advocates suggest that the Trump administration’s policies and rhetoric may explain this increase in violence toward certain groups.

The Trump administration has said that the laws prohibiting discrimination based on sex don’t apply to the LGBTQ+ community, which the Supreme Court recently ruled against. According to USA Today, since Trump’s inauguration, there have been 201 incidents of election-related harassment, including incidents that target the LGBTQ+ community and people of color, although the true number is thought to be considerably higher. Trump has also attempted to ban same-sex couples from adopting.

Despite all the negative events happening to the LGBTQ+ community, the Supreme Court passed a decision in June that prevents people from being fired based on their sexuality or gender identity. There are changes we can make that will help lower hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people. One important change is adding information about the LGBTQ+ community to students’ curriculum so they learn inclusivity from a young age. Those voted into power should also use their platform to spread inclusivity instead of preaching hate.

Homophobia: Showing hate toward someone or bullying them because they are gay
Hate crimes: Crimes, like hurting someone or damaging their property, motivated by hostility to the victim because they are a certain sexuality, race, gender, etc.
Slur: An insulting remark
Inclusivity: All people being respected and appreciated as valuable members of their communities regardless of their sexuality, race, gender, etc.

Meet IndyKids Reporter: Nicolle Berroa

Meet Nicolle Berroa, a 13-year-old eighth grader from South Florida. Nicolle has been writing for the newspaper for a while now after being introduced to the program by her aunt, who works with IndyKids. She wrote her first cover story for this Fall Issue.

What social justice topics interest you most?
Some social justice topics that interest me the most include social inequalities in racism, sexism and homophobia, gun violence and income gaps. I feel very strongly about inter-social treatment.

What do you think makes for good journalism?
I think that the truth is what makes good journalism.

Why do you think journalism, and in particular youth journalism, is important?
I think journalism is important because it’s a news source. It’s important to be and stay informed, and journalists are the ones to inform the public. Youth journalism is especially important because it gives us a space to learn how to speak about the problems in our world.

Who inspired you to start writing?
My sisters all wrote before me. They all inspired me to write.

What are your hopes for your future?
In the future, I hope to become an anesthesiologist in neuro, pediatric, and cardiac anesthesia. I plan to go to Johns Hopkins University to achieve this.

Someday you could be an educator and politician like Jamaal Bowman, the Democratic nominee for New York’s 16th Congressional District in the 2020 election

How has COVID-19 changed your approach to policy and campaigning?
The crisis highlighted the urgent need for change and for care, especially toward people of color, who are now disproportionately dying from this crisis. Our approach to policy did not change, as the pandemic made clear that the transformative positions we were running on were absolutely necessary. The pandemic has obliterated any arguments against Medicare for All and made clear we absolutely need a Green New Deal, to not only combat the climate crisis but to create millions of good new jobs.

What do you say to people who can’t imagine a progressive future with a Biden presidency?
When it comes to the general election, there is one rule that we must all remember: The more seats that progressives win in Congress, the more we’ll be able to push forward a progressive agenda. Currently, we have a president in the White House that has shown nothing but carelessness and malice toward Black and Brown communities. This November, we have to vote for Joe Biden. Biden has already shown a willingness to adopt progressive ideas. For example, he has worked with the Sanders campaign to unify Democrats and produce a comprehensive, 110-page policy recommendation. It includes a commitment to eliminating carbon pollution from power plants by 2035, increasing funding for universal pre-K, expanding Social Security, raising the national minimum wage, and eliminating cash bail.

What do you plan to advocate for when you get to Congress?
I will be a champion in fighting against racial and economic inequality. America needs a reckoning, plain and simple. We need to rework our history, and with the impact the legacy of slavery and racism still has today on every American institution, especially our education and criminal legal system. As a country, the United States was built on racism, so naturally race and class are at the core of everything we do. Earlier this year, our campaign released a Reconstruction Agenda that addressed racism and the economic issues that continue to oppress Black and Latino people today. It asks for a deep investment in public schools, free college, and the cancellation of student debt. It calls for our federal government to tax the rich and require them to pay their fair share, like the rest of us. When it comes to our role in the world, I believe our country is ready for a progressive foreign policy vision. We need to strengthen our global partnerships and alliances through robust diplomacy; apply our shared values of freedom and dignity to our international relations, [and] prioritize diplomacy over war.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity. You can read the full interview in our up and coming IndyTeens issue.
Getting Wild With...
Melting Habitats Imperil the Polar Bear

SENeca Oehrle • age 12

A study published in July on Nature.com found that almost all polar bear subpopulations are facing major habitat loss. Human contribution to global warming has led to declining levels of summer sea ice. This forces polar bears, who depend on the ice, onto land and further away from their food sources.

There are roughly 40,000 polar bears left in the world. They live in the Arctic Circle and North Pole, but can also be found in Canada, Alaska, Russia and Greenland. The big snowy bears are different from most other animals. They are able to swim up to 100 miles in search of food and land. Underneath their iconic reflective fur, their skin is actually black to help them absorb heat, keeping their bodies at 98 degrees Fahrenheit.

Polar bears usually store fat and conserve energy for long periods of time. However, because of their melting habitats, they are forced away from their food sources for even longer, according to National Geographic. With starvation, polar bears have less energy, making it hard for them to hunt, and even harder for mothers to raise their cubs. Recent data shows only one subpopulation is calculated to still be safe if nothing changes by 2100.

Global warming is a worldwide problem, but we can each do a little to help out. The best way to make a difference is to try to use less energy and create less waste each day. Presidential candidate Joe Biden announced that if he was elected, he would support a plan that would decarbonize the United States power grid by 2035, according to The Hill. This, along with the creation of a climate change agency, could ultimately save these amazing creatures from extinction.

Subpopulation: A specific portion or part of a larger population

Polar bears are under threat.

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**Who am I?**

**VeronIca uss • age 10**

1. I was born in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, in 1945
2. I was relocated to San Francisco through a federal program that sought to assimilate Native peoples to urban areas off-reservation.
3. I was introduced to political activism in San Francisco, where I faced poverty, discrimination and hatred.
4. I continued my activism as a member of the American Indian Party.
5. I protested with other Native Americans to get back the land that was occupied by Alcatraz Island. "Throughout the Alcatraz experience and afterward, I met so many people from other tribes who had a major and enduring effect on me. They changed how I perceived myself as a woman and as a Cherokee. I said in my autobiography, A Chief and Her People.
6. After having a car accident, I was put in a wheelchair for over a year and after that had many surgeries. I continued to have injuries and was diagnosed with lymphoma, a neuromuscular disorder, and kidney failure.
7. In 1995, I was the first woman chief of the Cherokee Nation and served for three terms.
8. I was named one of Time magazine’s 100 women of the year in 1995.
9. During my tenure, I worked to enact policies that centered around healthcare, education and social programs.
10. I doubled the tribe enrollment, created new health centers and increased housing. I resigned as principal chief because of poor health in 1999.
11. For my efforts, I received a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998.
12. I had a huge impact on the Cherokee Nation and Indian affairs in the United States, and my work is appreciated among Native Americans.

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Melting Habitats Imperil the Polar Bear

**SENeca OEHRLE • age 12**

A study published in July on Nature.com found that almost all polar bear subpopulations are facing major habitat loss. Human contribution to global warming has led to declining levels of summer sea ice. This forces polar bears, who depend on the ice, onto land and further away from their food sources.

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