

# Activists, allies, and advocates

Being an **activist** means taking action for things you feel strongly about and want to see changed. It can involve campaigning to bring about political or social change. A young activist is a young person who campaigns and works with others to change things.

Being an **ally** means standing up for what is right and supporting someone if they're being treated unfairly. The best allies are willing to make mistakes and keep trying. They acknowledge when they're wrong or could do better. They resist getting defensive and insisting that they're already doing enough. They listen and learn.

Being an **advocate** means supporting another person to help them express their views and wishes and stand up for their rights.

Select one of the individuals on the following page (or choose someone else you are interested in) and do some research to find out more about them and their activism. You can capture things you find out in the template profile below. Why not use your research to write an article or presentation to share and spread the word about what your activist stands for?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of activist are they? \_\_\_\_\_

What do they believe in? \_\_\_\_\_

What have they done to stand up and speak out for their beliefs? \_\_\_\_\_

What have they achieved? \_\_\_\_\_

Why are their actions important? \_\_\_\_\_

What are they doing now? \_\_\_\_\_

Other interesting information: \_\_\_\_\_

 \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

# Young activists

## **MALALA YOUSAFZAI**

Malala is an activist for female education and human rights. When girls in the Swat Valley, Pakistan were banned from attending school, Malala spoke out publicly about girls and their right to learn, which made her a target. Even so, she was determined to continue until every girl could go to school. She established the Malala Fund – a charity aiming to give every girl the opportunity to achieve a future she chooses. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 and became the youngest ever Nobel laureate.

## **KEEDRON BRYANT**

Keedron is a singer, best known for his video of his protest song, *I Just Wanna Live*, which went viral online following the killing of George Floyd.

## **ASEAN JOHNSON**

Asean has been a tireless advocate for the children of Chicago, demanding well-funded neighbourhood schools and stopping school closures that devastate communities.

## **GRETA THUNBERG**

When Greta was 15, she sat outside Swedish parliament for three weeks with a sign reading 'Skolstrejk för klimatet' (School strike for climate). She believed her government wasn't doing enough to tackle climate change. It was the beginning of a global climate strike with thousands of children joining her and Fridays For Future. She has given a talk at the UN and been nominated for two Nobel Peace Prizes.

## **MARLEY DIAS**

Marley is an American activist and writer. When she was 11, she complained to her mother that the stories in her school reading books were all about white boys and dogs. She launched a campaign called #1000BlackGirlBooks aiming to collect 1,000 books to donate to other schools. In a few months, more than 9,000 books were collected. The campaign also called attention to the lack of diversity in children's literature.

## **NAOMI WADLER**

11-year-old Naomi led a walk-out at her school to bring attention to gun violence in American schools. She spoke at the 2018 March for Our Lives in Washington, using the platform to remember Black girls and women who have been affected by gun violence. It was watched by millions of people around the world. Naomi started her own series 'DiversiTEA with Naomi Wadler' on The Ellen Show.

## **BELLA LACK**

Bella loves wildlife and animals. At age 11, she was deeply shocked by a video about the palm oil industry and its effect on orangutans. She was quite shy but still talked about it in school assembly. She has almost 200K Twitter followers and talks to government about how to end ivory poaching.

## **AMARIYANNA 'MARI' COPENY**

Mari is from Flint, Michigan and is best known for raising awareness and fundraising to support underprivileged children in her community and across the USA. When Mari was 8, she wrote to President Obama to draw attention to the water crisis in her town. Her letter prompted a response and Obama visited to see first-hand the devastation to the lives of citizens as a result of their lead-poisoned water supply.

## **GENESIS BUTLER**

Genesis became vegan at 6 and is a passionate animal rights activist. When she was 10, (making her their youngest ever speaker) she delivered a powerful TEDx talk about the environmental impact of the meat and dairy industries.

## **AMIKA GEORGE**

Amika is an activist who campaigns against period poverty in the UK. At the age of 17 she started a petition to Westminster (gaining over 200,000 signatories). While still in secondary school, she founded the #FreePeriods organisation. Amika has been honoured on the Time Most Influential Teens of 2018 list, The Big Issue Top 100 Changemakers, and Teen Vogue 21 under 21. In 2018, Amika won a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Goalkeepers Campaign Award.