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Prompt 1

There are many ways to address climate change in my own life, through personal choices and through educating others. In terms of personal choices, there are things I already do, and things that I could add to my daily life. One thing I do is that I don’t keep a car here at college. That means in order to get around, I either have to walk or take the bus or light rail. I have already taken the light rail multiple times; I took it to get to a Sounders game, and also went to Pike Place Market a few times by light rail. I also take the bus when I occasionally go home to Sammamish on the weekends. This reduces pollution in the air because one public transit can carry many people at once, and also energy is also being conserved. Another important way I address climate change is that I compost and recycle. This helps our environment because everything that’s thrown away simply goes into a landfill and creates waste. This waste can sometimes even find its way into our oceans, further polluting and dirtying our earth. Composting food is especially important because the compost in Seattle gets sent to Kent to be processed, whereas the recycling gets sent all the way to the middle of Oregon, which uses more gasoline, a fossil fuel. Another thing I have started doing is eating less meat. The meat industry uses a ton of water to clean the meat, and also pollutes water. I’ve started to limit the amount of meat I eat and also try to only eat meat that is not from a big meat production company, but instead from small local farms. I also encourage my family to use less air conditioning and heating to conserve energy.

The sorority I live in has a position called “Green Chair,” and the woman holding that position makes sure that everyone in the house is composting and recycling, as well as minimalizing waste. One thing she has told us to do is to use our personal towels to dry our hands instead of using paper towels in the bathroom, which is something I should start doing. She also encourages us to turn off lights after we are done using them.

I think educating others about climate change is just as important as making personal choices to reduce climate change, if not more important. Conventions like the one we all attended are very valuable, because talking about these issues is how we start to change them. It gets people to start thinking about the issues, and then small changes can be made within communities that can be expanded to larger scales. One way I plan to further educate myself beyond what I already know is by taking an environmental studies class or a few of them while I’m in college. In terms of making a change in my community, one idea that I have is to switch a lot of the lightbulbs in my sorority to LED light bulbs, which are more energy efficient. I do not hold the position of Green Chair in our house but I can give her ideas about making our house more “green.” However, I am unsure if this idea will be within the budget.

Unfortunately, I know that even by doing all these things, it won’t make a huge difference in the world. At the Global Challenges panel, they talked about how climate change is very much a government problem and that the government has to implement laws in order for large scale change to happen. Washington voted against the carbon tax with Initiative 732, which does not help. The country also voted for a president who is a huge skeptic of climate change. That being said, since there will probably not be any laws from the government any time soon, I hope that by making small changes and by encouraging others to do the same, it can have some positive affect on global climate change.