



2023 Impact Report

In the heart of rural Maine, a transformative movement is taking root — one that springs from the passion, resilience, and unwavering commitment of its youth. As we embark on the reflective exercise that is our 2023 Impact Report, we find ourselves at the intersection of hope and change, guided by the voices of a generation that refuses to be overlooked. Often characterized by its boldness and quiet strength, **the landscape of rural Maine is a focal point for advocacy**, particularly around issues of climate, environment, and economic opportunities.

2023 was a dynamic year for JMJU! From **facilitating and participating in more community-based programs and collaborative workshops** than ever before, to hiring **our first full-time Director**, to expanding our scope from **three to five rural target counties** – we've worked to grow with impact and inclusivity remaining as our core values. This summer, we hired 10 Rural Youth Organizers (our largest cohort ever!) to lead our work across what is now known as Franklin, Hancock, Kennebec, Penobscot, and Washington counties

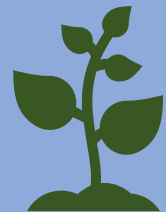
From grassroots organizing to strategic advocacy, JMJU has been at the forefront of driving positive change. Through targeted programs and initiatives, we empower young people to be active participants in the decisions that impact their lives, fostering a sense of agency and ownership in the communities they call home. In the following pages, we invite you to delve into the tangible impact and transformative initiatives undertaken by JMJU over the past year. **Rooted in the belief that every young person has a vital role to play in shaping the future of their communities**, we have purposefully fostered a culture of inclusivity and collaboration.



As we move into 2024, we look forward to building onto this momentum. The seeds we've planted have taken root, and the flourishing impact is a testament to the dedication of our team, the resilience of the communities we live and work in, and the unwavering belief that **positive change begins with the collective efforts of empowered youth in rural Maine.**

Thank you for reflecting with us!

Laura Bither, Director



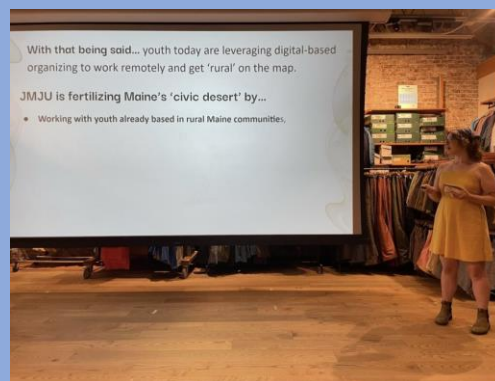


2023: The Highlights

In 2023, we:

- Filed for **501c3 status!**
- Engaged **440 youth** through JMJU workshops, conversations, and trainings.
- Led **38 projects**, including workshops, community conversations, trainings, recurring community meetings, and interview series.
- Compensated **48 youth** across Maine for participating in JMJU activities.
- Engaged **250 youth** through JMJU Organizer professional development opportunities, including panel speakers' slots and climate strike speaker opportunities.
- Presented at **4 conferences**, including the North American Association for Environmental Education's (NAAEE) annual conference which was sponsored by REI, NOAA, the Pisces Foundation, HHMI Tangled Bank Studios, the Indianapolis Zoo, ee360+, and the Acorn Naturalists.
- Actively participated in community events, such as tabling at **Old Town's River Fest, Patagonia's Community Grant Celebration, and Maine Conservation Voters' and Maine Conservation Alliance's annual Evening for the Environment.**
- **Published an op-ed** about the concept of a 'civic desert' and its significance in the State of Maine in the Island Institute's Working Waterfront publication.

Together, these accomplishments reflect our dedication to **empowering rural youth**, **fostering environmental stewardship**, and creating lasting impacts in the communities in which we live in and serve.



2023 Programming Impacts: Franklin County



We believe a just and equitable world is possible.

Together we build the world we want to see.

2023 Programming Impacts: Hancock County

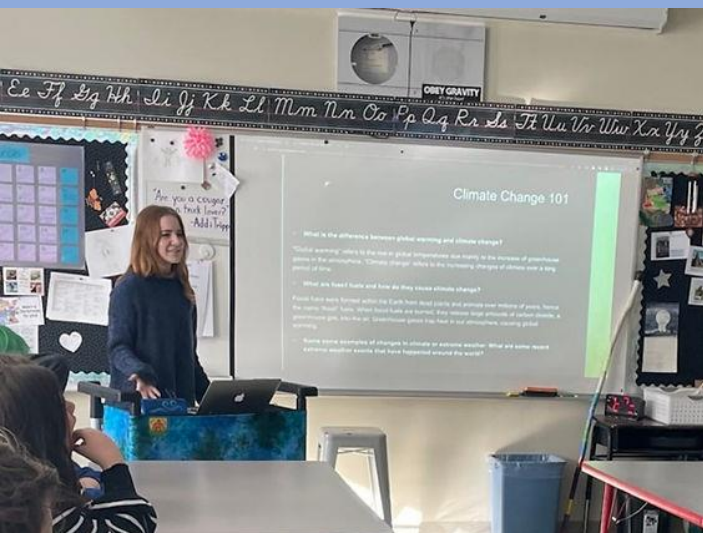


In 2023, two transformative **Community Resilience Envisioning Events** empowered the communities of Hancock County. Bar Harbor hosted 50 attendees, while Blue Hill drew a crowd of 70 people. These events seamlessly blended local environmental organizations into captivating panel discussions, fostering a generative exchange of ideas around rural resilience. Attendees indulged in delightful culinary experiences, vibrant dance, and engaged in collective reflections on pressing community needs. Together, these gatherings epitomized the spirit of unity and proactive collaboration, leaving an indelible mark on the communities involved.



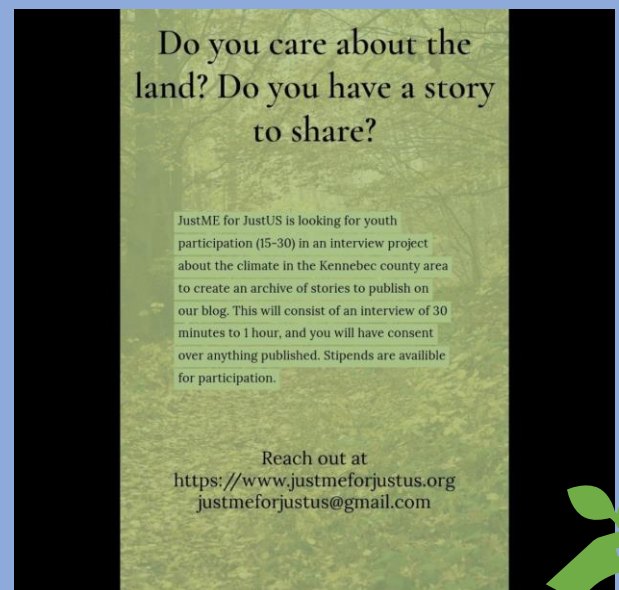
Additionally, JMJU gave captivating presentations on **climate justice delivered to elementary and middle school students** and hosted collaborations with **Blue Hill**

Heritage Trust. Both events worked to explore the intricate connections between climate and various societal issues. These endeavors not only empowered young minds with knowledge but also laid the foundation for a holistic perspective on environmental challenges. Together, these efforts exemplify our commitment to cultivating a generation of informed and engaged rural youth, and following their lead on how to best contribute to sustainable solutions for their communities.



2023 Programming Impacts: Kennebec County

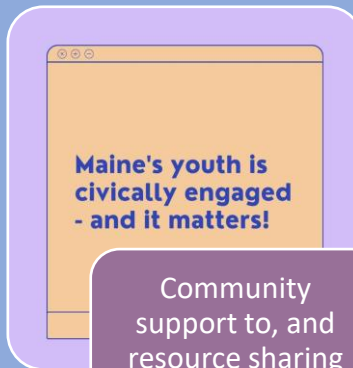
In the past year, JMJU has achieved remarkable milestones with regard to rural youth engagement and environmental advocacy in one of our more recent target counties: **Kennebec County**. Our Rural Youth Organizers (RYO's), based within a conservative municipality, have successfully empowered youth to collaborate with the town's select board, including cementing the foundation for an **equitable composting program**. Our innovative approach extended to an engaging interview series, **exploring diverse perspectives on relationships with land and the environment**. Complementing this, our blog posts provided a platform for **rural youth to voice their unique perspectives on pressing climate issues**. On the ground, a workshop at the local arboretum brought community members together to spread an impressive **60,000 native milkweed seeds**, contributing to vital ecological conservation efforts. Additionally, our organization's recognition soared as we were selected to present workshops at both the **Youth Voting Summit and the Maine Youth Action Network Conference**, solidifying our impact and influence on a broader scale. Together, these accomplishments embody our dedication to fostering environmental awareness, youth empowerment, and sustainable community initiatives.



2023 Programming Impacts: Penobscot County



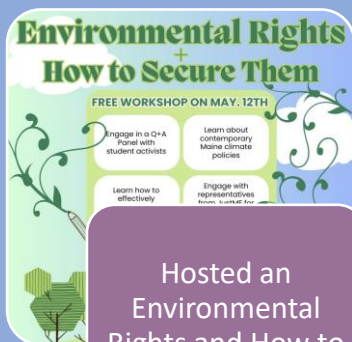
Community conversations about local environmental issues



Community support to, and resource sharing with, local high school environmental groups



A Summer Art Collaborative seeking art submissions from rural youth around prompts of equity, sustainability, and climate



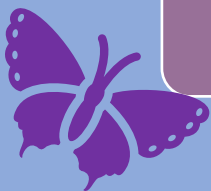
Hosted an Environmental Rights and How to Secure Them workshop



Tabling at Riverfest



Researched Wabanaki representation in Maine's climate plan, "Maine Won't Wait", with interviews and outreach



2023 Programming Impacts: Washington County



Hosted regular Zoom meetings for youth to discuss impactful community issues they care about



Facilitated a virtual teach-in on agroecology



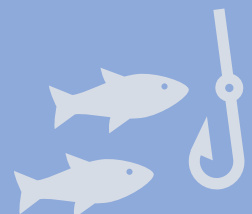
Worked to promote youth involvement in securing Community Resilience Partnership Grant funding



Led a beach clean-up in collaboration with a community chapel



Unified youth for Maine Coast Heritage Trust meeting on Mason Bay Preserve



Thank You to Our Funders

We're so proud to recognize our funders whose unwavering commitment to our mission has been instrumental to our success. The initiatives, programs, and advocacy efforts that resonate across rural Maine were made possible by generous investments by foundations, organizations, and individuals. Whether it was expanding our reach to new counties, launching impactful community-based programs, or hiring our largest cohort of Rural Youth Organizers yet, your support has been instrumental at every turn.

Thank you!



Our Team | 2023



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