



The Little Hawk

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From Paris to Iowa City: The Climate Crunch

The international community agreed on steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in this year's UN Climate Change Conference. The same discussion is playing out around the globe as local communities attempt to fight climate change on a smaller scale.

By Riley Lewers &
Olivia Parrott

The United Nations Climate Change Conference closed on December 12th, but the global fight against climate change is only beginning. Although the conference resulted in a landmark agreement in which 195 countries agreed to lower their greenhouse gas emissions, this effort alone will not be enough to prevent the catastrophic increase in global temperatures climate scientists have predicted will occur if we fail to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels. The success of the UN initiative hinges on whether smaller

communities and individuals can expand on the global progress made at the Conference.

"I think [the UN Conference] will make a difference because it at least provides momentum, and it can set an example for other countries to improve their environmental regulations," Liza Casella '16 said.

Casella, along with other City High students, has been volunteering with NextGen Climate, a nationwide organization that works to identify "climaction voters," -- voters who promise to make climate change a priority issue when considering which candidates to support.

The organization's hope is that by collecting and distributing information on the importance voters attach to addressing climate change, they will be able to convince candidates that this issue deserves their attention.

"I've also been involved with the Bernie campaign, and I thought it would be interesting to get involved with a specific issue and just try something new," Laura Cornell '16, who also volunteers for NextGen, said. "I think it's really important, and I've learned a lot."

NextGen is a nonpartisan organization, meaning it aims to pressure candidates on both sides to address the

issue. Cornell is part of the organization's effort to reach voters through high school volunteers who make calls to voters on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings.

The organization's main goal is for the United States to be powered with 50% clean energy by 2030.

"At this point, we really need to try to fix our environment," Casella said. "Global warming is very real, and in this coming presidential election more than half of the potential candidates don't even believe it exists, which makes it very imperative that we spread awareness."

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Teaching the Teachers

By Madeline Denninger

For new teachers, teaching their own class for the first time can be intimidating. The Iowa City Community School district is attempting to help these teachers by giving them a "veteran teacher" as a mentor for their first two years of their teaching.

"If we're not doing our job effectively, they are not going to be an effective colleague," Alicia Brock, a coordinator for the program, said in a meeting with district mentors. "[The new teachers] are in our profession. They are going to stay, or at least that's the hope that we have. Trying to look at the big picture, we want to create someone we know we can work with."

According to Brock, one of the program's main goals is to encourage the mentors to meet with their teachers once a week to encourage a better level of communication. University of Iowa graduate and City High alum Danielle Smith Oakes is in her first year of teaching Kindergarten at Lucas Elementary School. Oakes is also taking part of the mentor program this year, with Katie Holland her as her mentor being Katie Holland. Holland is a , a third grade teacher at Twain Elementary.

"Katie helps me work through challenges with specific students, and gives me advice on strategies to use for classroom management," Smith Oakes said. "We celebrate successes, and figure out what went well when I tell her I had a 'good day' so I can ideally repeat what works well for my students."

For Smith Oakes, having an experienced teacher has been beneficial as a first time teacher.

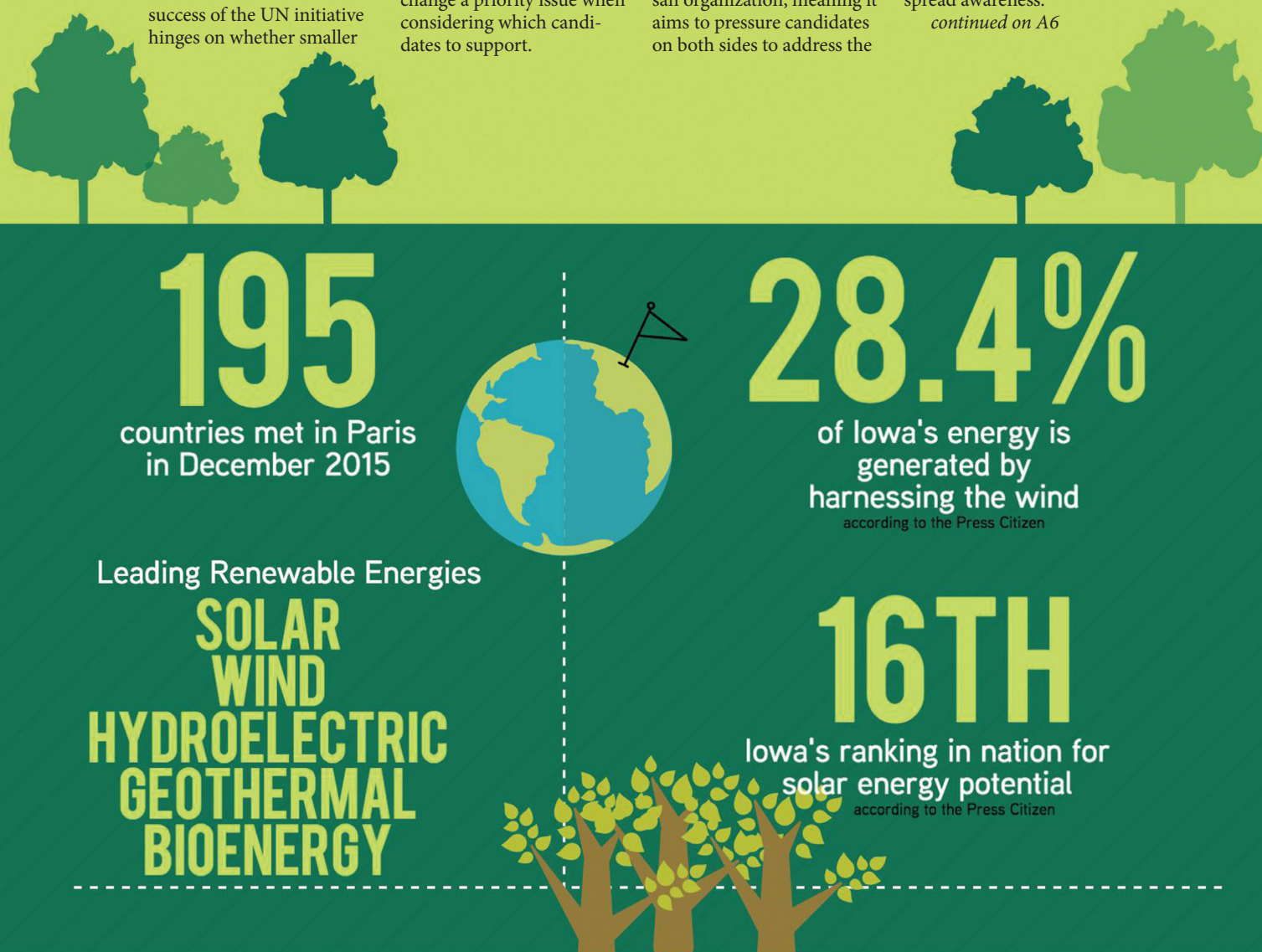
"[Holland] offers creative suggestions and solutions to problems that I never would have thought of since she has so many years of teaching under her belt," she said.

City High English teacher Beth Fettweis was mentored by with Daphne Foreman when she first arrived at City High.

"What Mrs. Foreman helped me do was learn how to help high school students more, and how to understand high school students better," Fettweis said. "That chance to talk to her, and even to go through some of the basic frustrations and concerns of being a first year teacher at a high school, gave me a lot more comfort and confidence as a teacher."

According to Fettweis, her mentor experience also went beyond helping her adjust to the high school environment.

"I think that as a rolemodel [Foreman] is someone that's so warm and kind to her students that it was impossible not to learn about human relationships from her too," she said.



Sources:

<http://www.nrdc.org/thisgreenlife/0802.asp>