They are everywhere: young people who refuse the narrow label of "student." Of course, they take care of schoolwork, but they also look outside of themselves and see a world full of need — and they want to help. Here are short profiles of adolescents — students, athletes, musicians, community activists, inventors, scientists, and all-around caring people — who have earned the label of "changementakers." This is just a small representation of the young changemakers in schools. We offer these 12 profiles in honor of all the young people engaged in their communities — and with the hope that more will take up the mantle.

Zoë Frank Catlin Gabel School (Oregon)

At the age of 12, on a visit to Cameroon with her OB-GYN father, Catlin Gabel senior Zoë Frank was shocked by the plight of women in Africa with devastating childbirth injuries. She couldn’t resist going on that first trip with him — but finding out she could change these women’s lives by helping repair their obstetric fistulae has kept her going back to Africa during her summers. "In the bush, if you have hands and a brain, you jump in and help," she says.

On her four trips to Cameroon, Zambia, the Republic of the Congo, and Chad, Zoë has worked directly in surgery with her father. She knows the surgical tools and hands them to her father, she sterilizes tools, she does sutures and removes them, and she changes dressings. The women they treat with obstetric fistulae are so small, due to youthful age or malnutrition, that their babies die after prolonged labor, and in the process the women's organs of elimination become torn or atrophied. Life becomes shameful and lonely for them if they are not treated — and not many of these women are treated, so they are shunned by their families. The surgery is not hard, but fixing the problem isn’t profitable, so Zoë and her father are among those who are indispensable in helping the women return, healed, to their homes and societies.

Zoë spent the past year raising money ($2,400) — by babysitting, selling possessions, and begging family members — to give to an obstetric fistula trust in Zambia. She’s
sure that she’ll follow her father’s path and become a doctor. “You just can’t just sit back and do nothing,” she says.

And, if this weren’t enough, Zoë is also in the Guinness Book of World Records — for the longest balancing board duration (two hours, six minutes, and six seconds).

To read more about Zoë, visit http://monsefistulatrust.com/.

April Cho, Marlborough School (California)

As a tenth grader at Marlborough School, April Cho went to tutor at the local Third Street Elementary School and saw that there was no arts program for the students after school. Considering that some of April’s best memories were formed during the time she spent creating strong friendships and growing in musical ability during choir productions, she decided to found a club called Arts on Third in hopes of bringing this sort of experience to the students at Third Street School.

Knowing many Marlborough students were passionate about the arts, April also recruited her classmates to mentor students at Third Street School in their respective arts disciplines. Last year, she provided free guitar and voice lessons to the students. Throughout the following summer, she taught seven students a song of their choice weekly and built the platform for a performance. With these students, April and a friend organized a benefit concert that raised $2,250 in donations. She in turn will use the donations to fund the set, costumes, and score for her production of The Jungle Book, which she will organize and direct at Third Street in the coming months.

Jackson Davis V
Lowell School (Washington, DC)

When his fifth grade social studies teacher at Lowell School asked the class to write research papers on the famous 19th-century expedition of Lewis and Clark, Jackson Davis chose to write about York, the enslaved African-American man who accompanied Lewis and Clark on their journey west and whose contributions included hunting, scouting, and field medicine.

Walking through the post office during the month of February and inspired by his study of York, Jackson decided to write the U.S. Postal Service to propose York as the subject of a Black Heritage stamp. Now, York is “under consideration” for the stamp, and Jackson has launched a nationwide campaign. Jackson’s goal? “I want people to know about York and his important contributions.”

With the help of his parents, Jackson set up a Facebook fan page (which now has more than 2,000 followers), a YouTube channel, a website, and a blog. He also contacted numerous politicians and leaders and garnered their support for his campaign, including President Barack Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, Congressman Chris Van Hollen, Senator Ben Cardin, National Urban League President Marc Morial, President Emeritus of the American Postal Workers Union William Burrus, and Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Harvard professor and board member of the Citizen’s Stamp Advisory Committee.

Now a sixth grader, Jackson continues to spread the word about York. He has been interviewed by the Washington Post, CNN, and WUSA9. Last fall, he published an article in the newsletter of the Ebony Society of Philatelic Events and Reflections and attended the Annual Legislative Conference of the Congressional Black Caucus, where he spoke at a workshop about documenting African-American history.

This spring, he is scheduled to visit Lewis and Clark College and meet the institution’s president.

Akilah Sanders-Reed
Albuquerque Academy [New Mexico]

In just four years, Akilah Sanders-Reed, a senior at Albuquerque Academy has had a great impact on her community through projects aimed at improving the environment and raising the quality of life of people and animals. Inspired by Dr. Jane Goodall from a young age, Akilah says her commitment to helping her community was sparked by her involvement with Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots (rootsandshoots.org), the Jane Goodall Institute’s global environmental and humanitarian youth program.

Akilah began her efforts with Roots & Shoots in early 2007 when she joined the program’s Four Corners Youth Leadership Council. As a member of the council, she helped plan a regional youth leadership conference and the annual Roots & Shoots campaign. She also attended lunch with her “longtime hero,” Dr. Goodall. In addition to her work with the council, Akilah led a number of climate change action events and established East Mountain Roots & Shoots, a local group specifically for elementary and middle-school youth.

Akilah’s Roots & Shoots projects have included a Project 350 Festival in 2009 and a Cut Carbon Rally in 2010 — both with environmental organization 350.org (www.350.org) — and an iMatter March in Albuquerque (imattermarch.org) in May 2011. She has worked as a Sky Regional Coordinator for 350.org and as a Sierra Club intern. She also works directly with the founders of Kids vs. Global Warming to inspire youth to be positive changemakers in their communities.

In her free time, Akilah loves hiking, backpacking, skiing, and spending time outdoors in the mountains. She also loves to travel and spent three years fund-raising for a five-week cultural immersion trip in Tanzania that she took last summer.

Pavane Gorrepati
Rivermont Collegiate (Iowa)

Last summer, Pavane Gorrepati, a senior at Rivermont Collegiate, took part in a Borlaug-Ruan International Internship in Changsha, China, sponsored by the World Food Prize. For her internship, Pavane spent eight weeks conducting research at the China National Hybrid Rice Research and Development Center, assisting in research about ways to grow rice that is better suited to thrive in warmer climates and with less water than in traditional rice-growing regions.

Last October, as part of her internship, Pavane also gave a presentation on her work and cultural experiences at the Global Youth Institute’s International Symposium and Laureate Ceremony, where her audience included the 2011 World Food Prize Laureate H.E. John Kufuor, the former president of Ghana. Pavane was a Grand Champion at the 2010 Eastern Iowa Science and Engineering Fair for her project, “Warning about Warming: A Global Problem with a Fuel Cell Solution,” and presented projects at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in both 2009 and 2010.

Pavane is also the author of a Beezle Bee Tale, a children’s book about a bee and its efforts to help family and friends whose environment has been affected by climate change. Pavane, along with fellow Rivermont senior and the illustrator of the book, Ramya Prabhu, presented the book at the David R. Collins Children’s Literature Festival in October 2011. “I’ve been very active with the environment and inspiring kids to be a part of it, and I felt that the only way to make a difference in the future is to educate the youth,” she said.

Pavane is founder and president of the Rivermont Environmental Club and a local correspondent for the Mother Nature Network website. She says she intends to devote her life to the study of alternative energy. “We can dramatically see the changes that are occurring,” she says. “We know that something is wrong, and we know that something needs to be changed.”
Linh Nguyen
Menlo School [California]

Linh Nguyen, a junior at Menlo School, has been using her passion for music to make positive changes in the world. She has devoted more than 500 hours of service since her eighth grade year.

With her brother, Linh co-founded the Center for a New Generation music program at the James Flood Magnet School in 2007. There, she teaches ukulele and songs to kindergarteners and first graders. They hold concerts on a regular basis. In 2009, they performed for former U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

In addition, Linh is part of the DolceCello cello choir, which rehearses and performs concerts for The Beautiful Mind — a dynamic ensemble of accomplished San Francisco Bay Area musicians who perform concerts for children with special needs and also coach and mentor the Harmony of Hearts Ensemble. This unique ensemble of musicians is made up entirely of children who have physical or mental disabilities. As part of the DolceCello Cello Choir, Linh performed a fund-raising concert that raised thousands of dollars for The Beautiful Mind.

In collaboration with the Second Congregational Church in North Attleboro, Massachusetts, Linh prepared, publicized, and performed a benefit concert to raise money for the Food & Friends organization run by the Attleboro Area Council. It provides meals, groceries, nutrition counseling, and a safe space for people who do not have the means to buy healthy foods and sustain a healthy lifestyle. It also focuses on aiding children who don't have access to meals during the summer because they cannot benefit from free lunch programs at school. The event was well received, raising several thousand dollars for the Food & Friends organization.

Matthew Shimura
Punahou School [Hawai'i]

Ninth grader Matt Shimura is focused on telling stories that have an impact. Introduced to filmmaking in a fourth grade class at Punahou School, Matt found his creative voice while directing and producing his first documentary, A Promise of Justice. The piece, which he describes as “a kid’s perspective on justice and how we should all be represented in court,” won first place in the 2008 Hawaii State Bar Association's Access to Justice video competition.

Matt's next project landed him an invitation to the White House. His eight-minute film, Childhood Obesity: A Challenge Facing America, garnered the top prize for middle school students in C-SPAN's national StudentCam contest. It also caught the eye of First Lady Michelle Obama, who invited Matt to an April 7, 2010, student town-hall meeting at the White House, where his film kicked off her “Let’s Move!” campaign promoting a healthy diet and exercise. Broadcast live on C-SPAN, the event encouraged call-in questions from students across the country.

Matt continues to make films with a point of view. Last school year, he completed a public service announcement to promote water as the healthy alternative to soft drinks and released a documentary on the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. He is currently working on a project about the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Asked what advice he would share with other student filmmakers, Matt said he would encourage them to "represent topics that are important to you so that it starts a movement of ideas.”
Daniel Young
Gulf Stream School (Florida) and Saint Andrew’s School (Florida)

Last spring, a local newspaper recently called Daniel Young, then an eighth grader at Gulf Stream School, “one of the most philanthropic 14-year-olds you’re ever likely to meet.” It’s no exaggeration.

A few years back, Daniel began to combine his love of music with his interest in helping others by volunteering to play his violin to children with autism spectrum disorders at the Renaissance Learning Center in West Palm Beach. He has also taken it upon himself to raise money for the center through various musical performances.

It all started when he watched a telethon about raising awareness for autism and decided he needed to help out. In addition to volunteering his time to play music for the students at the center, he began hiring himself out at his school to perform Valentine’s Day serenades and enlisted the help of other musicians to form an ensemble to perform at fund-raisers.

This year, Daniel is a freshman at Saint Andrew’s School. On most school holidays, he still brings his violin to the Renaissance Center and works with the musical therapist, going from classroom to classroom giving performances for the students — everything from “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” to Vivaldi. “It’s amazing how we can communicate through music,” he told the Coastal Star newspaper. “The music can calm them right down.”

Daniel’s newest project is collecting older iPods, other MP3 players, and laptops, and he donates them to the center, where these digital devices are put to good use.

Renaissance Center Principal Debra Johnson told The Boca Raton Observer that Daniel’s idea is right on the money since many autistic children find ways to communicate through electronic devises. “This is really the wave of the future for autism,” she explains.
Matthew Masarik, Devin Reed, Robert Rouhani, Zayd Simjee, and Michael Yorita
Sage Hill School (California)

During the 2010–11 school year, five juniors at Sage Hill School used their technology skills for good by creating an Android gaming app to benefit the Youth for Technology Foundation.

The students, Matthew Masarik, Devin Reed, Robert Rouhani, Zayd Simjee, and Michael Yorita, came together as part of Sage Hill’s service-learning program and spent most of the year designing, coding, and troubleshooting a puzzle game, Circuit Crawler, which became available for purchase in April 2011.

The game is based on a circuit theme and the objective is to make it through different puzzle levels, each with increasing difficulty. All of the proceeds from the sale of Circuit Crawler go to the Youth for Technology Foundation (YTF) to help children in Africa and the poorest parts of America gain access to the technology that most high school students take for granted. The students explained that, “as a group of technologically privileged high school students, we feel it is our duty to give back and help other, similarly motivated, but not as privileged, children and young adults achieve their dreams. We found that YTF is the perfect organization to help us accomplish this goal, because of their focus on making technology accessible to youth.”

As seniors this year, the students are continuing to expand the game and hope to pass the project on to future generations of Sage Hill School students who share a similar passion for not only creating technology, but also making it accessible to others. The students kept a record of their work on a blog: http://lightningdevelopment.wordpress.com/. The app is available for purchase at https://market.android.com/details?id=com.lds.game.

Yara Sifri
Phillips Academy, Andover (Massachusetts)

Yara Sifri, a senior at Andover has been actively engaged in community service and human rights work since the age of 12. Last summer, she took that work to a whole new level when she founded a two-week science camp to help disadvantaged girls in Jordan prepare themselves for a university education.

The SciGirls camp enrolled 44 girls and proved so successful that it caught the attention of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Yara is now working with that organization to set up 10 camps for next summer in some of the poorest communities around Jordan.

“Growing up, I was able to see firsthand how girls, especially in the poorer communities, simply didn’t have access to the same educational opportunities as boys,” she says. “So it’s very important to me to help them get those opportunities. I want to help them feel empowered, and help one community at a time more fully appreciate the potential of their daughters.”

A Palestinian Canadian, Yara has traveled to Jordan often to visit her grandparents and other members of her extended family. Moved by what she experienced there, she wound up volunteering as a young teen to teach English and run workshops in refugee camps in Palestine, Beirut, and Jordan through a group called Youth Welfare Organization. She has also done social enterprise work in Guatemala and Uganda.

Her own interest in science eventually led her three years ago to apply to Motorola for a sponsorship of a competitive robotics team comprising 12 teenage girls. She even managed to secure a commitment from the American University of Science and Technology in Beirut to provide full scholarships for any of those girls who stayed with the team for three years and maintained a grade point average of 95 or above.

The success of that effort, says Yara, captured the attention of the local community and helped them get more comfortable with the idea of permitting girls to pursue a science education. That, in turn, sparked Yara’s own idea for the SciGirls camp. “I’d love for it to just keep on growing and get as big as it can,” Yara says.

David Joseph-Goteiner
Lick-Wilmerding High School (California)

Imagine living near a metal refinery that sends particles in the air that burn your eyes and leave a bitter taste on your tongue. CASS metal, in West Oakland, California, is situated in the midst of a residential neighborhood within three blocks of McClymonds High School and a playground. The sky above its scrapyard is often thick with a cloud of metal particles that form a concoction that leads to health prob-
lems for nearby residents. Although David Joseph-Goteiner, as a student at Lick-Wilmerding High School, wasn’t directly affected, he could not forget the chilling stories he heard at the first community meeting he attended about air pollution in West Oakland. He started to appreciate the air around his neighborhood and that he didn’t have asthma, which affects every family he’d spoken to in West Oakland.

David, a true networker, knew then that this was something the larger Bay Area community could change. He joined the fight for clean air in West Oakland by organizing a fund-raiser art auction, which included finding nationwide artists who were willing to donate their pieces. He did all the publicity, sent out invitations, and worked with the caterers and venue operators to produce an impressive and unique jamboree event that raised several thousand dollars. His actions had huge reverberations as his link with McClymonds High School inspired an end-of-year project for some of Lick-Wilmerding’s students to repair and paint the inner-city school’s media room and sent another Lick student into the area with his cameras to produce a documentary film on air quality in Oakland. For his efforts, David won a Princeton Prize in Race Relations.

“Your independent school isn’t an island,” David says. “It is embedded in a larger political and societal framework. Grassroots action, like local politics, is the best avenue to empower students and communities.”

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