



Presenter

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Engaging Youth on Climate & Health to Cultivate Community Resilience

Cultivating climate literacy among youth positions them to develop solutions and advocate for actions that prepare communities to adapt to climate change, mitigate emissions and ultimately protect human health and well-being, with an eye towards protecting the most vulnerable populations. This presentation will describe an innovative partnership among three university environmental health programs—based at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Columbia University and Harvard University—and their community collaborators: the Alliance for Climate Education, Boston Children's Hospital Pediatric Environmental Health Center and WE ACT for Environmental Justice. This informal science enrichment program promoted climate literacy while also building the capacity of today's youth to promote community resilience. This partnership led to the development and implementation of two, long-duration extracurricular youth science enrichment programs in 2017, one in North Carolina (NC) and one in New York, with joint activities conducted virtually and in person to connect students with each other and with leading public health professionals and others working to promote community resilience and climate justice. Forty high school students, 20 from central NC and 20 from West Harlem in New York City, were enrolled in each program. In July 2017, students came together for a 3-day summer institute in NC. This session will feature the strategies, STEM-based activities and resources used in this project to engage students in the examination of their communities, identification and evaluation of climate adaptation and mitigation strategies and promotion of community resilience. Programming entailed having students interact with public health professionals, scientists and others to learn about climate impacts to public health and its infrastructure, vulnerable populations and planning for resilient communities. Ultimately, we sought to promote climate literacy among students by providing relevant and authentic learning opportunities using the lenses of human health and social justice. This session will include program evaluation data and lessons learned as students from two different regions of the country came together to explore community resilience.