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FEATURES

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Fighting Climate Change With Hope

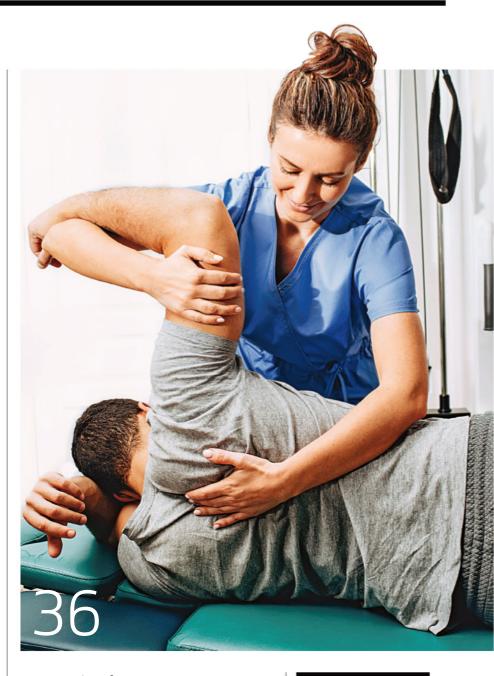
As young people sink into despair over extreme weather, scientists and activists try a new message. *by* DAN HURLEY

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America's Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers 2023

Newsweek and global data firm Statista find the 280 leading inpatient facilities in the U.S. HANDS ON Every year millions of people are treated in more than 1,000 U.S. inpatient rehab centers.

COVER Photo-illustration by Vizerskaya/Getty

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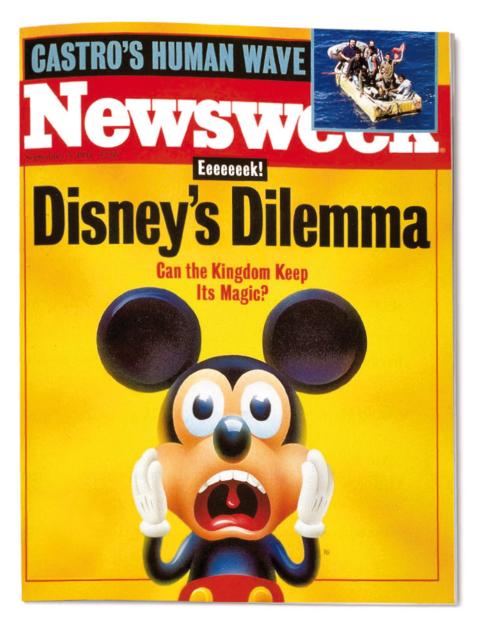


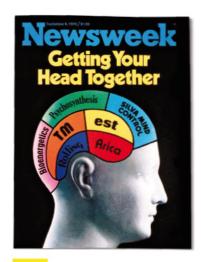
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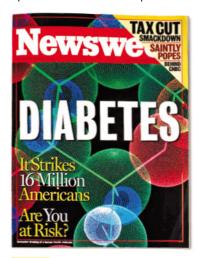
"What is the Walt Disney Co. but a dream machine, a teller and seller of fairy tales? And at the heart of every Disney saga are some of life's most basic themes: friendship, family and the struggle for independence," said *Newsweek*. Disney's magical reign in Orlando has hit some road bumps as Florida Governor Ron DeSantis limited much of Walt Disney World's authority over the land on which it sits. In July, the new board eliminated diversity, equity and inclusion programs in an ongoing effort on behalf of the Republican governor to eradicate all DEI initiatives in the state.





1976

"At their most respectable, the consciousness cults merge Western psychotherapy with Eastern religion; at their most tawdry, they combine high-pressure salesmanship with outright charlatanism," said Newsweek. Debates now over benefits of marijuana and psychadelics also span wide differences of opinion.

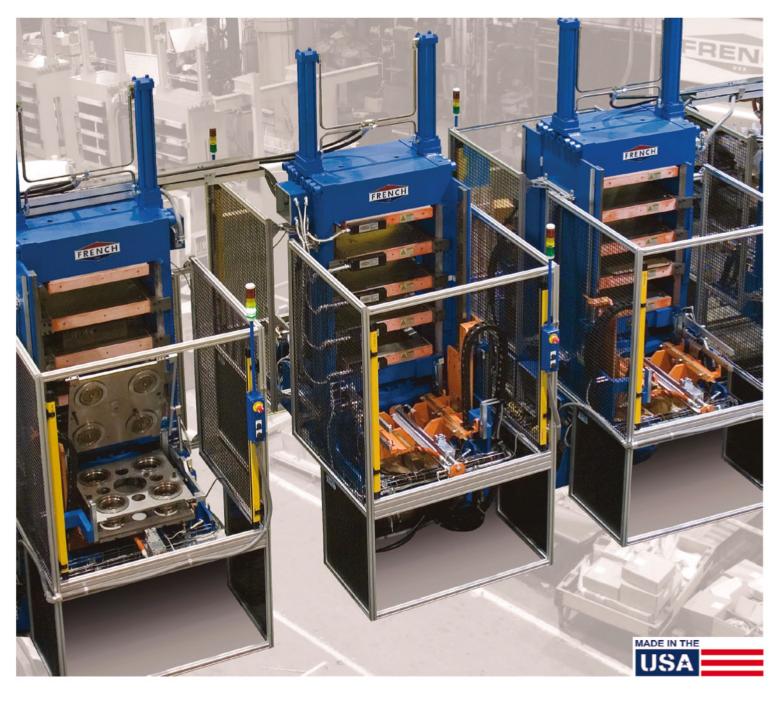


2000

"With conscientious monitoring of their blood sugar, regular exercise and the right attitude, many [type 2] diabetics can now allow themselves an occasional sweet," said Newsweek. The disease still afflicts more than 37 million Americans, including millions still undiagnosed and millions more on the brink, according to data from the CDC.

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InFocus





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NIAMEY, NIGER

Toppled Democracy

A supporter of Niger's National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland on August 11 holds a Niger flag at a demonstration supporting the July 26 coup. The CNSP leads the junta that overthrew the democratically elected, West-supported leader, President Mohamed Bazoum. He has been under house arrest since then; initial hopes that he will be restored to power are dwindling.





BROOKS FALLS, ALASKA

Fish Feast

A brown bear snags a salmon midair on August 12. Between July and September, the bears eat their fill as millions of salmon swim upstream to spawn within Katmai National Park and Preserve, one of 16 in the state that boasts the most national parks and wilderness land in the United States. Multiple real-time webcams at the park capture the bears—as well as underwater cameras to observe the salmon.

△ JOHN MOORE



SYDNEY

Spanish Triumph

Spanish forward Mariona Caldentey, with her La Roja teammates, celebrates winning the 2023 Women's World Cup final over England on August 20. In their first women's title—and 13 years after the men's team took the crown—Spain won 1-0. Following their victory, confetti rained down on the champions, fireworks exploded behind them and fans back home celebrated in the streets.

DAVID GRAY





WEATHER AND IMPENDING CATASTROPHE, SCIENTISTS AND ACTIVISTS TRY A NEW MESSAGE

HOPE













OSH SPECTOR GOT THE MESSAGE ABOUT climate change early on. At age six, he was already passionate about the need to meet humanity's existential challenge. In college, he majored in geographic data analysis at the University of Oregon and interned at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Upon graduating in 2020, he joined Planet Labs, a maker of tiny Earth-imaging satellites.

But as the pandemic dragged on, and heatwaves and wildfires ravaged the western United States, his life began to unravel. Disillusioned with the values of his company's corporate clients, he quit his job, moved back to his parent's home in Portland and volunteered for a non-profit.

"I was hyper-focused on the climate crises that were happening all around me," he says. "Many days I would wake up, go on Twitter and see the suffering from acute events around the world. Sometimes

EXTREME SUMMER

Clockwise from top left: In July, the hottest month on record, Montpelier, Vermont, flooded; temperatures soared in Phoenix, Arizona; a heat wave sickened tourists in Rome; flood damage in Highland Falls, New York. Right: Katharine Hayhoe. that would cripple me for hours with feelings of immense depression, anxiety, sadness and helplessness."

Similar feelings are now afflicting many people during this summer of climate hell. Apocalyptic forest fires in Canada sent a pall of smokey haze over much of the Northeast and Midwest, and a blaze swept Maui, killing more than 100 people. Heatwaves have broken temperature records across California, Arizona and much of the south. Ocean waters around southern Florida have nearly reached hot-tub temperatures, exceeding 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Torrential rainstorms powered by heat have destroyed roads, flooded homes and left at least six dead in Philadelphia and New York state.

Europe and Asia are reeling from record-breaking temperatures. In mid-July, Italy placed 23 of its cities on red alert as the mercury there reached 114 degrees F. In Greece, forest fires raged near Athens. Beijing had temperatures over 95 degrees F

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for 28 days in a row, setting a record. Most shocking of all: the 15 hottest days for the entire planet, on average, all occurred in the first 18 days of July.

It only makes sense, then, that millions of people are worried that humanity may be facing the end of civilization, if not our species. In a 2021 survey of 10,000 children and young adults from 10 countries (including the U.S.), 59 percent said they were very or extremely worried about climate change. More than half said they felt sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless or guilty. Three-quarters said they think the future is "frightening." Another survey, of people in 31 countries, found 40 percent did not want to have children because of the effects of climate change.

Welcome to the age of eco-anxiety—what the American Psychological Association defines as "the chronic fear of environmental catastrophe that comes from the seemingly irrevocable impact of climate change and the associated concern for one's future and that of next generations."

But what if we're not actually headed to climate Armageddon? What if the long-term outlook for the future has lately become far less dire?

That's the question posed by a new breed of climate activists—eco-realists, they call themselves—who point to the surprisingly positive steps that governments, industry and ordinary people have taken in just the past few years far outstripping

recent projections. More progress is needed, of course, but greater gains, they say, will depend on millions of people trading their despair for positive action.

"If there were nothing we could do about climate change, being depressed or giving up would be a logical response," says Katharine Hayhoe, chief scientist at the Nature Conservancy and one of the new climate messagers. "But if we realize that the future is in our hands, that means we can make a difference. That is what our hope is based on."

The World May Not End

TO BE CLEAR, HAYHOE AND LIKE-MINDED SCIENTISTS and activists are not saying climate change isn't real. They concede it's hard to peddle hope when so much news is downright apocalyptic. In March, for instance, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) announced the planet's average temperature is likely to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees F) over pre-industrial levels within the first half of the 2030s, crossing a threshold once considered disastrous. "There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all," the report stated.

But hold on, eco-realists say: another trend has emerged in the past five years. As recently as 2019, many climate scientists were predicting by the end of this century, the planet's average temperature



"If we realize that THE FUTURE is in our hands, that means WE CAN make a difference. That is what our HOPE IS BASED ON."



would rise by nearly 5 degrees C (9 degrees F) over preindustrial levels, turning large swaths of the planet into uninhabitable hellscapes. Now, however, thanks to a dramatic and previously unimaginable increase in the use of green energy, temperatures are expected to rise by more like 2.5 to 3 degrees C—still bad, but not nearly as catastrophic.

The case for improving climate forecasts is made most powerfully in a new book by Hannah Ritchie, lead researcher at Our World in Data and a researcher at the Oxford Martin Program on Global Development at the University of Oxford titled *Not the End of the World* (Little Brown Spark, January 2024)

"In a season of record temperatures, fires and floods, there's a glimmer of hope that averting the worst of climate change might still be possible," Ritchie wrote in a recent editorial in *The Washington Post*. "China, the world's top carbon emitter and greatest user of coal, is rolling out renewables at breakneck speed."

China, she says, is likely to add more solar power this year than the U. S. has ever put in place. One of every three cars sold in China last year, she notes, was electric—compared to just one in 15 in 2020.

Worldwide forecasts from five years ago failed to account for the speed at which green energy sources would be adopted or their prices would fall. According to the International Energy Agency, the average cost of industrial-scale solar energy plummeted by 88 percent between 2010 and 2021, while the cost of onshore wind projects fell by 68 percent and the cost of offshore projects fell by 60 percent.

The remarkable drop in prices goes a long way toward explaining why this March, the U.S. Energy Information Administration announced that, for the first time renewable energy sources generated more electric power in the U.S. than did coal. As recently as 2014, coal generated 42 percent of the electricity from U.S. power plants. By 2021, that figure had fallen by more than half, to just 19 percent. Global coal use, meanwhile, is believed to have peaked in 2013. Previous projections had assumed ever-rising use of coal through the end of the century.

Another development virtually unimaginable five years ago: skyrocketing sales of electric vehicles around the globe. Since 2020, the total number of E.V.s on the road has tripled, from 10 million to 30 million. Last year, sales of E.V.s jumped 60 percent. And that's just the beginning of the E.V. revolution: On April 12, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed rules requiring two-thirds of all new passenger vehicles sold in the U.S. to be electric by 2032. Compare that to last year, when a mere 5.8 percent of new cars sold in the U.S. were electric.

By limiting the expected rise in global temperatures, the shift toward green energy is projected to have a profound real-world impact. For instance, sea levels would be expected to rise by nearly three feet at 5 degrees C warming over pre-industrial levels, but less than one foot at 2 degrees C warming. The probability that the Arctic Ocean will be free of ice in any one year is 63 percent at 3 degrees C warming but only 16 percent at 2 degrees C warming. The average







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length of a drought anywhere on the planet would increase by two months if temperatures rise by 1.5 degrees C, climate scientists estimate, compared to ten months if temperatures rise by 3 degrees C.

The lower projected increases in global temperatures are also expected to be substantially friendlier to plants and animals. If warming is kept to just 2°C above preindustrial levels, 8 percent of mammals are projected to lose more than half of the range they currently inhabit on Earth. If warming reaches 4.5°C, however, 42 percent of mammals will lose more than half their range. Plants would lose 16 percent of their range at 2 degrees C, compared to 68 percent at 4.5 degrees C. Birds would lose 6 percent at 2 degrees C versus 40 percent at 4.5 degrees C. And butterflies and moths would lose 10 percent of their range at 2 degrees C versus 58 percent at 4.5 degrees C.

"There's increasingly broad recognition that the worst-case scenarios are implausible," says Matthew G. Burgess, assistant professor of environmental studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder. "Yet people seem to have a hard time wrapping their heads around the idea that climate change can be real and serious, which it is, but that it might not be the greatest threat to humanity we've ever known."

The public, says Hayhoe, needs to hear about the improving outlook. "Ten years ago, we were heading toward a world that would be 4 to 5 degrees Celsius warmer than today," she says. "Now we're heading to a world that will be only 3 degrees warmer."

Appealing to Our Better Angels

CLIMATE SCIENTISTS, WHO FOR DECADES HAVE TRIED to grab public attention with worst-case scenarios, are beginning to wonder if that was



"If your HOUSE IS ON FIRE, what do you do? You try to put it out. The best ANTIDOTE for despair is action."

counterproductive. With so many people scared out of their wits, the worry is that they are paralyzed—unable to act just when action is needed urgently.

Climate leaders from the early fire-and-brimstone days of the movement are beginning to emphasize the need to instill hope in the next generation. For instance, back in 1988, James E. Hansen, then director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, made headlines when he testified before Congress that global warming was real and getting worse. Recognized as one of the world's foremost climate scientists, he went on to write a book in 2009 with an ominous title: Storms of my Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and our Last Chance to Save Humanity (Bloomsbury USA).

Now consider his latest book, *Sophie's Planet* (Bloomsbury Publishing), scheduled for publication in 2024. According to his publisher, "Hansen remains an optimist. *Sophie's Planet* turns toward solutions, asking: How can we connect the dots from climate observations to necessary policies? What can be done to preserve our planet for the young people who will follow us?"

In an email to *Newsweek*, Hansen says, "Young people should not be discouraged. They have a challenge, but it's an exciting one and less dangerous than many earlier ones, like World War II and the Vietnam War."

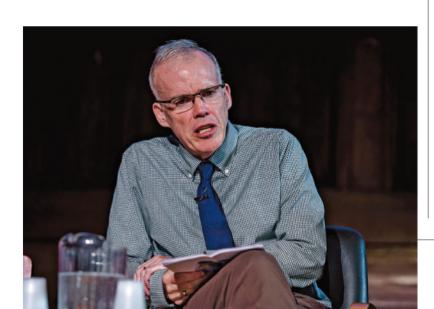
Bill McKibben is another lion of the movement to forestall calamitous climate change. His 1989 book *The End of Nature* (Random House) was one of the first to ring the alarm for a general audience. His latest, however, mixes in a note of hope to his otherwise bleak views. "I think we're uniquely ill prepared to cope with the emerging challenges," he writes in *Falter* (Henry Holt, 2019). "Still, there is one sense in which I am less grim than in my younger days. This book ends with the conviction that resistance to these dangers is at least possible."

On the phone, McKibben explains what gives him hope: "People always come up to me at my talks



his bleak views with

a modicum of hope.







to say, 'How do I make things better?' That strikes me as a very psychologically healthy response to the situation we're in. It's in some respects like any other emergency. If your house is on fire, what do you do? You try to put it out.

"The best antidote for despair," he says, "is action." Even climate activist Peter Kalmus, who chained himself to the front door of the JP Morgan Chase building in Los Angeles to protest the bank's investments in fossil fuels, says despair is not the answer.

"Too many people are feeling anxiety and despair about climate change and don't know what to do," he says. "We have to start connecting and building communities. Join a group. Talk about it. And know that you're not alone. It's a lot easier to deal with this if you're with friends and working together on something that can make a difference."

Perhaps the most surprising entrant to the eco-realism movement is a group calling itself "Bros for Decarbonization"—so surprising that the

EVERY BIT HELPS
Top: A German farmer
put solar panels in
his apple orchard.
Above: Teslas at a
green tech expo in
Washington, D.C., in July.

very title of their X (formerly Twitter) page states that it is "not parody."

Initially, the Bros struggled to be taken seriously. But their message went viral after an April article in *The New York Times* described them as thinking "the best way to combat climate change is to ditch the gloom of earlier environmentalism and focus on what new technology can do."

And then there are the two women who, on May 23, protested climate change in their own way. In front of the Italian Senate in Rome, they dumped buckets of mud over their bare-chested bodies. Positive action, it seems, comes in all shapes and sizes.

Getting Better

TO PULL HIMSELF OUT OF HIS CLIMATE DESPAIR, Josh Spector sought help from Thomas Doherty, a psychologist in Portland who specializes in what he calls "eco-therapy." Doherty began devoting his practice to climate anxiety more than 10 years ago, but now he has company: the Climate Psychology Alliance of North America lists 14 therapists around the country who are "climate aware."

One of his jobs, Doherty says, is to reassure clients that their worries are legitimate. "A lot of people just need reassurance that it's normal to have these feelings," he says. "And they often feel isolated, like they're the only ones who feel the way they do. I encourage them to reach out to others who share their concerns." Spector, now 25, began seeing Doherty in the spring of 2022.

"He helped immensely," Spector says. "I was trapped in this urgent mindset. He helped me shift into realizing this is a decades-long process. He talked about thinking of the movement as a line. I felt I always needed to be at the front of the line. He was saying that to be sustainable, you need to recognize that where you are on the line can change over time. You can move forward, you can move back. I had been guilting myself."

Doherty also encouraged Spector to pull away from spending hours online reading about climate catastrophes. Instead, he encouraged Spector to see friends—including even old friends who have jobs with corporations that might not be eco-friendly.

"I'm definitely feeling better," he says. "I guess I realized I couldn't just live my life being this depressed, sad activist."

Climate change is bad enough, it would seem, without being incapacitated by grief and despair over it.

INSPIRING-HOPE FOR

MEET EIGHT INNOVATORS WHO ARE COMING UP WITH CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE CLIMATE

ABETTER PLANET



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18





HIS SUMMER, THE HOTTEST ON RECORD, may go down in the history books as the turning point when climate change became truly personal. Extreme weather has become our new normal, affecting a majority of Americans and many millions more around the world: deadly heat waves across the U.S., Mexico, southern Europe and China; torrential rain and flash flooding in Chicago and the Hudson Valley; intense wildfires, first in Canada, blanketing cities a thousand miles away with smoke, then in Hawaii, which quickly became the deadliest such blaze in a century.

It's not exactly surprising then that nearly half of Americans now feel that climate change poses a serious threat *in their lifetimes*, according to a recent Gallup poll—including about 60 percent of people ages 18 to 34. With the most at stake over the coming decades, it's also not surprising that young people are the ones leading the way to find solutions to our global environmental challenges, many of them rejecting prevailing climate gloom-and-doomism to focus on ways to sustain hope for the future of the planet.

On the following pages, you will meet eight of these young climate pioneers, the first in a series of profiles of "Planet Heroes" on *Newsweek*'s new content hub Better Planet (newsweek.com/better-planet). This new section highlights the innovators and innovations leading the way to a healthier, safer world, and the actions we can take to help the environment. Because the first step in making a difference is recognizing that we can.



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Gaurab Chakrabarti & Sean Hunt_

FOUNDERS, SOLUGEN

MAKING INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS WITHOUT THE CARBON EMISSIONS

A BIG, BUBBLING CAULDRON OF CORN SYRup sounds like an unlikely weapon against global warming. But Gaurab Chakrabarti and Sean Hunt think it holds the key to a new carbon-neutral way of making everyday chemicals for households and industries.

Greening the chemicals industry would go a long way to reducing global greenhouse-gas emissions. Chemical manufacturing accounts for a third of the carbon released into the atmosphere each year—mostly petroleum processing, which emits 1.5 billion metric tons of carbon per year.

Chakrabarti had an epiphany in 2015 while he was doing research on novel treatments for cancer at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (he holds an M.D. and a Ph.D). He was studying enzymes—chemicals produced by all living creatures to speed up chemical reactions in their bodies—when he started thinking about how enzymes could be engineered to speed up chemical reactions in industrial processes. He wondered, in particular, if enzymes could make chemicals without troublesome byproducts such as carbon dioxide.

A year later he teamed up with Sean Hunt, then a chemical engineering graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to develop a way to make industrial chemicals with environmentally friendly ingredients like corn syrup, instead of the

by

DAVID H.

FREEDMAN

often environmentally harsh and climate-disrupting ingredients in the manufacturing processes currently used to make those chemicals. Together, they founded Solugen.

"We use systems that have been in nature for millions of years," says Chakrabar-

ti, the company's CEO. "We just needed to create an environment where it could happen more efficiently." With a combination of conventional chemical engineering and bioengineering knowhow and a heavy reliance on artificial intelligence to design new biomolecules, Chakrabarti and Hunt came up with the "bioforge"—a 60-foot-tall tank that houses harmless ingredients like sugars, subjects them to biochemical reactions, and aerates them with a dense stream of microbubbles.

Today the bioforge can, in principle, produce a vast range of industrial chemicals and some new ones that work as well or better at certain tasks than those now commonly in use. For example, phosphates, currently widely used around the world in water-treatment systems to reduce corrosion, also cause aquatic-life-killing algae blooms. Solugen's biomolecule alternative, which the company is manufacturing in industrial quantities, is equally effective against corrosion but breaks down afterwards into harmless constituents. Other chemicals that the company is already manufacturing can be used in

GREEN PLANT: With its bioforge, Solugen's factory (right) can, in principle, produce a vast range of industrial chemicals and some new ones that work as well at certain tasks than those now commonly in use.

concrete production, cleaning and agriculture. And the company is planning to start manufacturing polymers and other chemicals that are widely used throughout the clothing and automotive industries.

Not only are the bioforges emissions-free, but the plants run on renewable energy, making Solugen's operations carbon-negative—that is, they actually remove more carbon from the environment than they put into it. Equally important, says Chakrabarti, the 10,000-gallon bioforge can produce the chemicals at enormous volumes, and do so profitably. Two 500,000 square-foot factories in Houston are churning out well over 10,000 tons per year of chemicals, and a third one is scheduled to go live this year in the Midwest. To pay for this expansion, Solugen has raised more than half a billion dollars from private investors.

"We're creating a chance for the complete decarbonization and defossilization of the chemicals industry," says Chakrabarti.

Chakrabarti envisions bioforges becoming available in a wide variety of sizes and functions, perhaps





 \triangleright

"We're CREATING a chance for the complete DECARBO

by manufacturing them, or licensing the technology to others. These forges would run automatically, so that everyone in the industry from chemical giants to tiny shops will operate them. The biggest challenge right now, he says, is simply educating chemical buyers about the need to switch from their tried-and-true but carbon-intensive chemicals to greener, bioforged alternatives. "There aren't enough incentives in place at the moment," he explains. "But the regulatory environment is changing, we expect to see those incentives coming in."

The company's goals over the next seven years are to reduce the carbon emissions released by industry into the environment by an amount equivalent to eliminating 2 million cars, and to make enough bioplastic to get rid of 5 billion non-degradable plastic bottles. It's just a matter of keeping the corn syrup flowing.





NIZATION and DEFOSSILIZATION of the chemicals industry."





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Alaina Wood

SUSTAINABILITY SCIENTIST, #THEGARBAGEQUEEN

LEADING THE CHARGE AGAINST CLIMATE DOOMISM

by

MEGHAN

GUNN

ANYONE WHO HAS LISTENED TO A WEATHER REPORT lately, read the headlines, seen the dire warnings on social media or even just stepped outside knows the news on climate change is bad, often apocalyptic-level bad. Sustainability scientist Alaina Wood knows that too—and she also knows such messaging can make people feel hopeless and demoralized, so much so that they're discouraged from taking action to help save the planet. So, Wood is on a mission to change the narrative, debunking "climate"

nihilism and misinformation" and inspiring hope with positive news about environmental wins, one viral TikTok video at a time.

Under the moniker #TheGarbageQueen, Wood takes a no-frills approach, typically talking straight to the camera, peppering her viewers—some 365,000 of them and growing—with details of promising new studies and advances in the fight against climate change and explaining the science behind them in plain language. A weekly segment called "Good Climate News" highlights five positive developments from the past seven days in a minute or less—say, Egypt's plans to build the largest wind farm in Africa, capable of powering 1 million homes once completed; or a new law in Europe that aims to restore 30 percent of the continent's damaged lands and water by 2050 or the invention of an ultra-white paint that deflects most sunlight and might help cool temperatures in overheated cities.

Though she's focused on environmental solutions, Wood doesn't sugarcoat the severity of the climate problems the world faces. Instead she tells viewers to think of the challenge as a war in which you lose some battles and win others but have no chance of

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overall victory if you give up. Like a general rallying the troops, she tells her audience: "Don't let anyone convince you it's too late."

Wood is as concerned about easing her audience's anxiety around climate change as she is about educating them, freely sharing her own fears and anger. She encourages viewers to "feel their feelings" and take breaks from climate news and social media periodically to recharge—a form of self-care that she practices herself. "Don't let those feelings overwhelm you to the point of giving up," she said in a recent video. "Seriously, don't give up."

Wood's empathetic approach reflects how deeply personal the fight against climate change is for her. Descended from a long line of Appalachian coal miners in East Tennessee, she had a front row seat growing up to the devastating impact of ecological disaster on a community, when in 2008 a dike ruptured at the Tennessee Valley Authority's Kingston Fossil Plant, spilling 5.4 million cubic yards of coal ash into the environment. Several homes in her area were destroyed, rivers were contaminated and workers involved in the \$1 billion clean-up effort subsequently developed cancers.

In college, where she studied sustainability science and geography, she took her own environmentalism to an extreme. "I would turn down invitations to hang out with friends because, oh my gosh, what if I produced trash?" she says. She went vegan; allowed herself to generate only enough trash every week to fit in a single mason jar; biked everywhere, even during thunderstorms, so her friends wouldn't judge her for driving a car and developed a full-blown case of eco-anxiety, a condition recognized by the American Psychology Association as a "chronic fear of environmental doom."

When the pandemic hit and Wood was spending more time scrolling on TikTok, she saw an epidemic of eco-anxiety like her own. Her feed was increasingly filled with bleak videos of mass environmental destruction, and young people sharing their experiences of panic attacks and suicidal thoughts related to the climate crisis. Wood, who since college has seen a counselor for her own eco-anxiety, knew how debilitating those feelings are—not only for individual health but for the movement too. She also noticed a lot of the fear-inducing videos were contradictory to what the science was saying. So in 2021, she made a video to refute the



"Don't let FEELINGS [about climate change] overwhelm you to the point of giving up. Seriously, DON'T GIVE UP."

doomsayers, pointing to experts saying it's not too late to counter the worst effects of climate change if the global community puts in the effort. Cynical commenters said, prove it, so she made a second video citing a landmark 2022 United Nations report finding that it's still possible to mitigate extreme climate change. That video went viral, with the comments reflecting a hunger for more positive, solutions-based posts—and so #TheGarbageQueen platform took off.

To the remaining critics who sometimes still accuse her of spreading irrational optimism or "hopium," she responds simply: "Everything I say is based in science."

These days Wood is focused on taking her message to new platforms. She has been engaging more on Instagram and is looking to expand on YouTube and Threads as well. She's also co-founded EcoTok, a collective of fellow climate educators with a shared goal: to save the planet. "No matter what happens or how I feel, I remind myself that I'm not the only one fighting for change," she says. "I can't give up.".

RISING FROM ASHES
Wood grew up in
eastern Tennessee
near South Holston
Lake, an area that was
devastated by a coal ash
spill disaster in 2008.





Kristy Drutman

____ FOUNDER, GREEN JOBS BOARD

FIGHTING FOR GREEN EQUITY, ONE POST AND JOB AT A TIME

KRISTY DRUTMAN WAS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT in New Jersey in 2013 when she heard the news about Super Typhoon Haiyan's devastating impact on the Philippines, her mother's home country. The typhoon, one of the worst the world has ever seen, killed more than 6,300 people. "It was my wake-up moment," recalls Drutman.

She awoke to the havoc that a changing climate is starting to have on the world, and the ways it hits some people harder than others. That realization started her on a journey that has made Drutman, now 27, a social-media influencer advocating for diversity and equity in environmentalism—and an entrepreneur whose much-watched business, Green Jobs Board, provides an important tool for that cause.

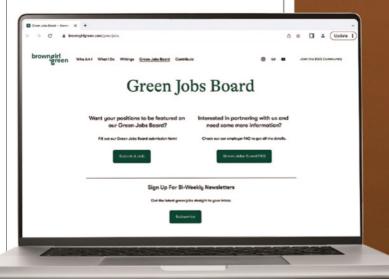
Drutman studied environmental policy at the University of California in Berkeley but felt something was missing from the program, as well from much of the climate-change movement. "I didn't see people who looked like me, and I didn't see myself reflected in the people we were talking about," she says. "And I felt like a fish out of water in the environmental activist spaces."

To address the problem, Drutman took to Instagram as BrownGirl_Green to make her case. "As someone coming from a Jewish and Filipino background, I wanted to bring a multiracial, multicultural voice to environmentalism," she says. Her posts and her Brown Girl Green podcast call out activists who unfairly blame environmental woes on poorer Asian countries, highlight Tonga's fight against deep sea mining, support indigenous women joining the

climate fight and rail against "environmental racism."

To her surprise, her following kept growing. It hit nearly 75,000 followers by the time she had graduated. That success put her on the environmental speaking and consulting circuit—a good thing, because she was having trouble finding a job in line with her environmental activism interests. "Within two years of graduating college, I was a full-time entrepreneur," she says. But that got her wondering: Why was it so hard for young people, and especially those of color, to get a job in the environmental field?

She started searching out job opportunities in the field, posting them on her Instagram feed. "Engagement with those posts was the highest I had



PHIL BARKER/FUTURE PUBLISHING/GETTY AND BROWN GIRL GREEN; COURTESY OF KRISTY DRUTMAN



ever seen," she says. "And people were starting to get hired because of them." When environmentally aligned organizations looking to improve their own diversity hiring started contacting her about getting in on the posts, Drutman decided to team up with a friend to spin the effort off as its own business.

The Green Jobs Board attracted thousands of visitors in its first week. Soon organizations, both profit and non-profit, were lining up to pay for the privilege of posting jobs there. "Environmental organizations haven't always been able to reach diverse talent," she says. "We're reaching those people, and they trust us."

Green Jobs Board gives extra attention to attracting and highlighting environmental businesses owned by individuals who are Black, Indigenous or people of color, notes Drutman. But she says she'll

"There's so much CLIMATE ANXIETY and despair out there, and I don't want to CONTRIBUTE to that. It's important to have humor and HUMANITY in there as well."

work with any type of organization that wants to support environmentalism and diversity—including companies that may face criticism from environmentalists. "As long as they're committed to learning and doing better, it's better to engage them in the conversation rather than just 'X'ing them out," she says.

Drutman emphasizes that the year-old, six-employee company is just getting started. She's exploring options to bring in investors who would help her expand, and possibly spin off other ventures. But she insists that any venture she leads will remain laser-focused on her core mission of promoting diversity in environmentalism. "I always see this field through the lens of equity issues," she says. That lens is especially apparent in her recently revamped podcasts, which feature diverse environmental leaders from around the world.

Another guiding principle of her budding media micro-empire: Inject some lightness into the mix. "There's so much climate anxiety and despair out there, and I don't want to contribute to that," she says. "It's important to have humor and humanity in there as well. That's why I often show myself being silly and having fun in my posts." So far, it's been a winning mix. —DF





Robert Kabera ______ FOUNDER, SYNC ENERGY AI

PROTECTING THE POWER GRID WITH AI



IN 1998 A TEN-YEAR-OLD ROBERT KABERA WAS TRYing to study a high-school science textbook by the light of a kerosene lamp in the Kalahari Desert in Botswana. But the strong desert winds kept blowing it out as soon as he lit it. "I didn't know much about electricity back then," he recalls. "I just knew that after living with darkness for six years, I had become obsessed with light."

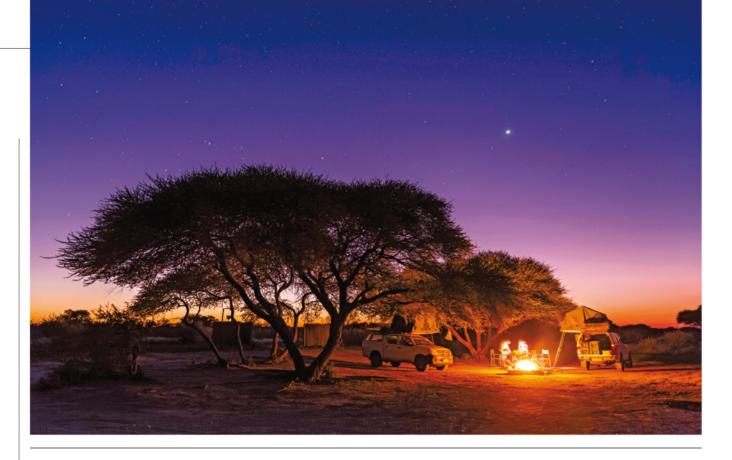
The darkness Kabera is referring to isn't just literal. A refugee from the Rwandan genocide, his family of six, along with 17 neighbors, had hid for weeks at a time crammed together in a tiny tunnel dug beneath his home until they could escape the country. His family eventually made their way to a refugee camp in the Kalahari.

Kabera says that lampless night in the desert set the path of his career: turning the lights on for those who lack power, and keeping them on in the face of growing climate threats to the power grid such as storms that bring down power lines and flood transformers. "We need to use technology to protect and restore nature in order to bring resilience to the grid," he says. "If we can do that well, we'll be able to manage the risks of climate change."

Kabera and his family eventually moved to Atlanta, Georgia. After graduating from Stanford University in 2011 with a degree in engineering, he started a credit-scoring agency focused on connecting small farmers in Africa to loans for desperately needed fertilizer and irrigation equipment. In partnership with the Obama administration, he worked on a project on improving electricity grids with the goal of bringing energy to rural communities in Africa, where power is often unreliable and sometimes non-existent. By the time that project ended in 2016, Kabera knew he wanted to focus on ways of keeping electricity flowing despite extreme weather events—such as flooding, heat, wildfires and drought—which are becoming more and more frequent as global temperatures rise, due to emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide.

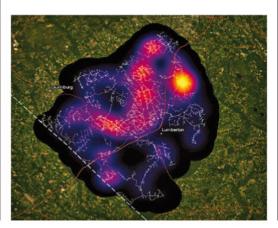
Grid failures are usually an information problem. Although power companies often have the crew, tools and know-how to prevent damage to wires and other equipment from hurricanes, storms and floods, or to reroute power and quickly effect repairs when damage strikes, they often lack knowledge of when and where the damage is likely to hit so they can take action ahead of time.

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"We need to use technology to protect and RESTORE NATURE in order to BRING RESILIENCE to the grid. If we can do that well, we'll be able to manage the risks of CLIMATE CHANGE."

Kabera was convinced that advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning could help. In 2020, he co-founded a "gridtech" company, Sync Energy AI, to develop AI programs that synthesize weather measurement data, government databases that detail the location of trees in and around cities and details of local power grid wires and customer usage patterns. The software cruches all that information and then spits out





Above: Botswana's Central Kalahari Game Reserve. Left: A heat map of threat zones, from medium to extreme, to the

predictions of which lines will be at highest risk during a given weather event and which customers will likely be most affected. Armed with those predictions, it's possible to take actions to avert a crisis brefore it happens—such as cutting back branches and trees around those wires, reinforcing the wires, rerouting electrical power around the most vulnerable spots, and positioning repair crews at those locations before the damage occurs.

Sync, which has 20 employees, has already deployed its AI software to monitor the tree risks to the power grid in Charlotte, N.C., and is in discussion with other municipalities. It is also developing partnerships with the insurance companies that usually foot the bill for power grid losses from a storm. Kabera says he hopes to employ Sync's approach to other climate risks over time. In addition to trying to halt and even reverse climate change, society should deploy tools like AI to ensure we can roll with the coming punches. He says: "I call it sustainability AI."

It's one step toward bringing light to those who risk losing it. -DF

WATCHING THE GRID:





Sophia Kianni _____ FOUNDER, CLIMATE CARDINALS

SPREADING THE WORD ON CLIMATE CHANGE, 100 WAYS

AT 21, SOPHIA KIANNI HAS ALREADY PACKED IN MORE experiences than many people have in a lifetime, all with a singular goal: to help educate people around the world about climate change.

The heart of her work is Climate Cardinals, a nonprofit she founded when she was 17 that aims to make information and research about climate change more accessible to people who don't speak English. That work led directly to her appointment in 2020 as a United Nations advisor on climate change—the youngest UN advisor in U.S. history—and this year to her selection for the steering committee of UNESCO's youth-led climate group, YoU-CAN. She's marched alongside Jane Fonda at a climate event she organized in Washington, D.C., given a TED talk (2.3 million views so far) and spoken about climate change at universities from Harvard to Cambridge. Somehow, she also manages to be a college student herself: She's about to start her senior year at Stanford University, in the Science, Technology, and Society program.

Kianni was galvanized to take action against climate change during summers spent in Iran, her parents' native country. In the Middle East, she learned, people were being hospitalized daily because of toxic air pollution, and temperatures were rising more than twice the global average. During one trip to Tehran, she realized she could no longer see the stars because heavy smog from pollution was blocking them.





When she spoke to her Iranian relatives about what was happening, though, she found that climate change wasn't part of their conversation. "There weren't really any climate resources available in Farsi, their native language," she says. That led to a lack of understanding about the causes and dangers of global warming. One study she read showed that only 5 percent of Iranian students understood the greenhouse gas effect. And the problem went far beyond the region: While 75 percent of the world doesn't speak English, 80 percent of all climate change articles are written in English.

The net effect, Kianni says, is that even as a global movement was building to address climate change, "We were leaving people like my relatives behind."

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In middle school, she began translating articles

into Farsi herself, so her family could read them. By high school, she decided to launch a formal organization to translate climate research into other languages: Climate Cardinals, named for the state bird of her home state Virginia and to symbolize information flying around the world. Recruiting young volunteers initially via TikTok and later across other social media platforms, the nonprofit quickly took off; at last count, some 10,000 teenage volunteers from more than 70 countries are involved, who have collectively translated climate change materials into 100 languages. A partnership this year with Google gave Climate Cardinals access to an AI-driven translation tool, which has enabled the organization to add another 40 languages to its roster, including Hausa (spoken mainly in West Africa), Latvian and Maithili (spoken in parts of India and Nepal). The group has also partnered with Translators without Borders to review the translations to ensure accuracy.

"I believe in the power of climate education." Kianni says. "How can you help stop a crisis that you don't even know is happening?"

Despite the many accolades that have come her way, Kianni also has faced criticism for personal choices; on Instagram, some critics point fingers at her frequent air travel and new clothes. To Kianni, assigning





How can you help STOP A CRISIS that you don't even know is happening?"

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individual blame for climate change and the subsequent guilt people feel is one of biggest impediments to taking action. "People reach out to me and say, I don't feel like I can talk about climate change, because I'm not vegan, or whatever," Kianni says. But she points out, it won't take one person going vegan or even a community taking on a recycling initiative to effect change; it will take a movement of regular people holding the world's biggest polluters to accountability.

Though the urgency of the climate movement takes up the better part of Kianni's days, she also makes time to spend with friends and be a college student. It just takes prioritizing and setting hard stop times with work. She loves rap music and going to concerts (her favorite was Drake's Aubrey & the Three Migos

MAKING AN IMPACT

kianni's environmental awareness was sparked by the heavy smog she observed visiting Iran (top: the view in Tehran). Part of her work now is advising the U.N. on climate change (bottom: the U.N. General Assembly).

show, where she and her sister sneaked into the mosh pit). "I'm only going to be 21 once in my life," she says.

Next up for her is the 776 Fellowship, a program started by Reddit founder Alexis Ohanian that gives \$100,000 grants to young people focused on solving climate change and will give her the resources to double down on environmental projects. Even with her new ventures, it's the Climate Cardinals community that keeps her going. In their most recent call for executive team members, more than 5,000 people showed interest in applying; the application post went viral, reaching over a million people. "And these were all students," Kianni says. "They just want to be part of something. They want to be working towards a better world." —MG

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Conner Ives

DESIGNER

LUXURIOUS KITSCH

recycling takes four times the labor of a traditional cut and sew business, because the fabric must be repaired and refashioned, but it's central to Ives' brand.

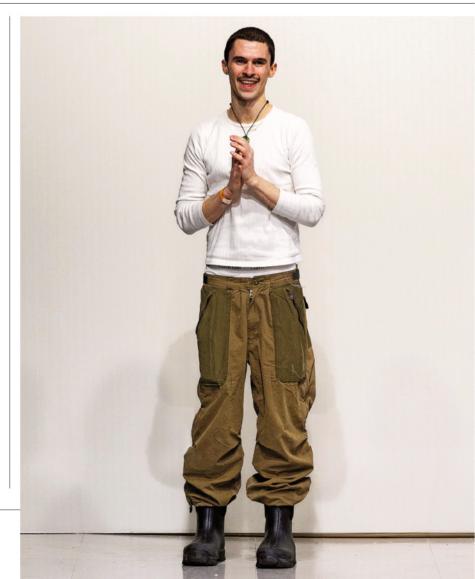
Sustainability has been a priority with Ives ever since he was a 16-year-old intern in New York's garment district, when he saw factories with dumpsters full of discarded fabric. "I started to realize the massive problem our industry has with waste," he says. "It was quite disheartening, especially at a point in my life where everything was so magical, exciting and new."

The clothes in his 2021 collection, "The American Dream," tell stories about female archetypes he saw growing up. For instance, "The LA Crystal Girl" look, which features a beaded, glittery halter-neck dress, embodies the revival of New Age practices in the 21st century. And the "The 9-5 Working Girl" ensemble, a polychrome knit set, exemplifies a

CONNER IVES HAS BEEN INTERESTED IN FASHION since he could speak. "I was always hanging out in my mom's closet, or commenting on what people were wearing," he says. Fame came in 2017, at the age of 21, when supermodel Adwoa Aboah went to the Met Gala wearing a custom dress he had designed—a swanlike ivory gown made of upcycled vintage pieces. Now his work is featured in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute's permanent collection. "As a kid, I would go to the fashion exhibit every summer," he says. "To know I have pieces I made myself in one of the greatest fashion archives in the world? No words."

Ives, now 27, is a leader in the slow fashion movement—a response to the current era of disposable clothes, which often feel made to be worn once for TikTok and then discarded. Although his clothes have an element of American kitsch—Budweiser t-shirts, Florida Gators sweatshirts and dresses patchworked with different patterned fabrics—they are made without the mass production that's become ubiquitous in American fashion. Instead, he designs his clothes to be produced in small batches at high quality and with a luxurious feel—and that are intended to last.

Rather than pushing out several collections throughout the year, Ives's eponymous label issues just one annually. He ensures that 75 percent of his brand's products are made from vintage clothing, fabrics, recycled material and dead-stock fabric. This







SLOW FASHION:

Conner Ives designs clothes to be made in small batches and that are intended to last. Left: Ives' designs at London's Old Selfridges Hotel in February. Below: recent Ives outfits.

matriarchal breadwinner, middle-aged, "probably in therapy." In 2022, Ives took inspiration from another female archetype, designing a Cruella de Vil style dress that Dua Lipa wore for her cover story in *Vogue* magazine. His latest collection draws from influences like Kate Moss and *The Parent Trap* character Elizabeth James, in a continuation of Ives' preoccupation with American pop culture. "Maybe that is a kind of patriotism, but I see it as a new patriotism that champions everybody."

Ives is painfully aware of the fashion industry's flaws: the destination shows, the constant production circuit, the relentless need for newer, cooler clothes. "As an active participant in it, I often feel jaded," he says. The pressure the industry puts on creators churning out 3-to-4 collections a year, which encourage speed and novelty over his style of thought-out, high-quality pieces, can sometimes feel insulting to his craft. He believes real luxury doesn't come from swapping out clothes every few months but valuing fewer, timeless pieces. He'd hoped that after the disruption of the pandemic, the fashion world would slow its pace. "Yet here we all are again, doing the same thing we were doing before all of this," he says. Still, he is hopeful that people will eventually come to appreciate the value of their clothing and see the beauty in mending, re-wearing and recycling.

What sustains Ives through the troubles of the fashion industry and a world of rising temperatures





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"There is something so MAGICAL about making an idea a reality."

is the inspiration he draws from the process of creating. "I truly would go mad without it," he says. "There is something so magical about making an idea a reality." (His latest ideas will be on display in September, when he shows his Spring/Summer 2024 collection for the first time.) He always tries to keep uppermost in mind the memory of his 10-year-old self, flipping through glossy magazines and dreaming about a life making clothes. —MG

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LAST YEAR HANNAH ROTHSTEIN WAS SITTING IN A lobby when she noticed a wall decorated with '60s psychedelic rock posters. Naturally, the display immediately brought climate change to mind.

It's not as big a leap as it might seem. Rothstein is an artist who in recent years has focused on climate-change-themed visual art. Those rock posters ended up serving as a muse for her latest project, a series of posters that use the groovy, swirly vibe of the iconic images that once graced the covers of Jefferson Airplane or Cream LPs to glamorize solutions to the climate conundrum.

Rothstein has riffed on pop themes before—she's done coloring books and illustrations of food that have gone viral. In 2017 she decided to turn her method to attracting attention to climate change. "Any big change in how people think needs art, whether it's theater, music or visual," she says. "I wanted to use visuals to drive the climate-change movement forward."

She took a cue for her first project from another iconic set of posters: those illustrating the U.S. National Parks, created in the 1930s under the federal government's Works Progress Administration, or WPA. Rothstein's versions recreated the original ones, with a major twist: she depicted the parks as having

"When you describe THE SCIENCE people's eyes

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Hannah Rothstein

ARTIST

PSYCHEDELIC VIEW OF CLIMATE CHANGE

been devastated by three decades of extreme weather. Her series, "National Parks 2050," include posters of a fizzled-out version of Yellowstone's Old Faithful, a lakeless Crater Lake, a Great Smoky Mountains consumed by fire, a lifeless Everglades and more.

The goal was to force people to confront a disaster in the making that, to many people, has so far been too easy to ignore. "Humans tend to not worry about even big problems until they're right in front of them," says Rothstein. "To change that you have make something that's distant and abstract feel more concrete and immediate. It's about bringing the future to the now."

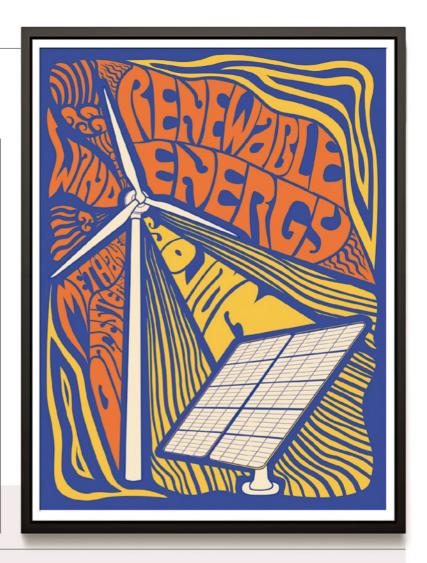
The posters are intended to do that by delivering climate-change messages to a different part of the brain, she says. "When you describe the science behind climate change with words and numbers,

people's eyes tend to glaze over," she says. "By making it visual, you can grab immediate attention."

Rothstein followed the Parks project up with "50 States of Change," a series of prints that depict post-cards resembling the classic tourist cards of each of the U.S. states—except standard scenes are replaced by climate-change ravaged versions. Alaska's card shows a house sinking into mud, the Arizona desert is a burned-out wasteland, Texas is underwater and so forth.

Both projects went viral and have become almost as iconic as the originals. Having done a superb job of hitting viewers with disturbing images of a terrible future to come, Rothstein recently took a different tack with a rock-poster-themed project. "I had started by focusing on what's in store for us if we don't fix things," she says. "Now I wanted to focus on positive change that can combat climate change."

The result was "Goodstock"—a play on Woodstock, in keeping with the '60s rock theme. The distorted, swooping typography espouses various slogans that exhort climate-friendly behaviors, including "Protect our forests," "Eliminate food waste," and "Invest in public transit." While Rothstein is not under the illusion that reading her advisory phrases will move everyone who sees them into action, she thinks the



behind climate change with words and numbers, tend to GLAZE OVER. By making it visual, you can grab IMMEDIATE ATTENTION."



POP CLIMATE: Hannah Rothstein's "50 States of Change, California" (above) and "Goodstock, Renewable Energy" (top).

simplicity of the messages is a virtue. "There's a lot of information out there about how to solve the problem, and it can feel overwhelming," she says. "I think it's better to distill them down into manageable packets that people can understand at a glance."

Rothstein is already thinking about her next project, which might engage viewers with unusual aspects of living creatures. Two possibilities she's playing with for characters: the nudibranch, a bizarrely colorful sea-slug, and the Redwood tree. "The Redwood actually has salmon DNA in it," she says. "I'd like to show how amazing these sorts of details from nature are."

While the means of engaging viewers changes through the different projects, the goal remains sparking interest in climate change. "I'm trying to make art that helps," she says. —DF

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AMERICA'S BEST

PHYSICAL REHABILITATION

EACH YEAR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS ARE PREscribed physical therapy while recovering from surgery, treating chronic conditions or healing from illnesses or injuries. Inpatient physical rehabilitation facilities are often used for patients recuperating from the most severe illnesses or injuries. These centers provide intensive therapy with multidisciplinary teams of medical professionals. Research shows that physical therapy following surgery reduces recovery time. Additionally, patients treated with physical therapy reduced pain and improved mobility, which results in better function.

There are more than 1,000 inpatient physical rehabilitation centers in the United States, giving us more choices than ever before. *Newsweek* and the global market research and consumer data firm Statista are proud to announce our ranking of America's Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers for the fourth year.

This award recognizes 280 leading inpatient rehabilitation facilities in the U.S. based on a survey of experts, quality metrics and accreditation data. Survey participants were also given an opportunity to specify standout programs in areas like rehabilitation for amputation, brain injury, cancer, spinal cord injury or stroke. We hope this ranking is useful in your search for the best care options available. • Nancy Cooper, Global Editor in Chief

CENTERS

2023





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ranking awards the leading inpatient physical rehabilitation facilities in the U.S. The centers were identified according to the definition of inpatient rehabilitation facilities (IRFs) by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). IRFs are freestanding rehabilitation hospitals and rehabilitation units in acute care hospitals. Centers which offer outpatient physical rehabilitation services only were excluded. A few facilities which provide inpatient rehabilitation services but are not included in the CMS IRF data were also considered.

Physical rehabilitation centers from the 25 states with the highest number of centers were included in the survey: AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MI, MO, NC, NY, OH, OK, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, WI All remaining states were divided into four regions for the survey: NortheastCT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, RI, VT Midwest... .. IA, MN, ND, NE, SD West AK, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WYDC, DE, MD, MS, WV South...

Ranking

1. National online survey: From April to May 2023, an online survey among experts with knowledge of physical rehabilitation centers (physicians, physiotherapists, doctors, clinic managers and other health care professionals) was conducted in cooperation with Newsweek.

Participants were asked to recommend the top 10 physical rehabilitation centers from their respective states. Recommendations for their own employers were not allowed.

For each recommended physical rehabilitation facility, participants also were asked to assess the quality of care (treatments/therapies, consultation with doctor/therapist). service (meals, leisure activities), follow-up care (outpatient therapies) and accommodations and amenities (size of room, quality of furnishing).

Participants were also able to specify a standout program (amputation, brain injury, cancer rehabilitation, spinal cord injury, stroke) for the recommended physical rehabilitation center. Rehabilitation centers that received several recommendations for one of the standout programs receive this additional designation.

2. Quality metrics data for IRFs published by CMS.

3. Accreditation data on physical rehabilitation centers provided by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC)

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Scoring

A total score was calculated for each physical rehabilitation center. The total score was composed of

THE LUCAL SCO	re was composed or.
45%	Reputation Score
45%	Quality Metrics Score
5%	Accreditation Score
5%	Model Systems Score

REPUTATION SCORE (45%)

80 percent of the reputation score is based on expert recommendations in the survey. Recommendations that stated a facility was the best in a state received a 33 percent higher weight than recommendations for the fifth best. Additionally, the professional experience of the participant was taken into account. A score was assigned to each facility based on the number of weighted recommendations.

The quality score is based on assessments given by the medical experts in the survey and constitutes 20 percent of the reputation score.

For each recommended physical rehabilitation facility, participants were asked to assess the quality of:

- Care (e.g., treatments/ therapies, consultation with doctor/therapist)
- Service (e.g., meals, leisure activities)
- Follow-up care (e.g., outpatient therapies)
- Accommodations & amenities (e.g., size of rooms, quality of furnishings)

QUALITY METRICS SCORE (45%)

Quality metrics data is published by CMS. These quality metrics are risk-standardized quality measures, allowing for a comparison of facilities regarding quality of treatment and medical conditions, even if the patient groups are varying. For each of the 16 quality metrics reported by CMS, a sub-score was calculated.

The facility which achieved

the best result in one individual measure (e.g., lowest infection rate or highest influenza vaccination coverage among health care personnel) received 100 percent for the respective sub-score.

The weighted sub-scores were used to calculate the total quality metrics score.

ACCREDITATIONS SCORE (5%)

CARF International is a nonprofit organization assigning voluntary accreditation for U.S. IRFs. To receive accreditation, facilities must commit to quality improvement, focus on the unique needs of each person the provider serves and monitor service outcomes.

The following specialty programs were included in the scoring model: amputation, brain injury, cancer rehabilitation, spinal cord injury and stroke. Facilities receive a 2.5 percent bonus to their score if they have CARF accreditation and 0.5 percent for each specialty program (maximum 2.5 percent).

MODEL SYSTEMS SCORE (5%)

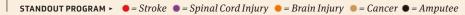
Model Systems are funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). These specialized programs of care are available in the areas of spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI) and burn injury.

research and patient care to improve the health and overall quality of life of people with TBI, SCI and burn injuries. Facilities receive a 5 percent bonus if they have one or more model system designations awarded by NIDILRR.

The rankings are comprised exclusively of physical rehabilitation centers that are eligible regarding the scope described here. A mention in the ranking is a positive recognition based on peer recommendations. The ranking is the result of an elaborate process which, due to the interval of data collection and analysis, reflects the last 12 months only. Furthermore, any events preceding and following the period June 15, 2022 - June 15, 2023, and/or pertaining to individual persons affiliated/associated to the facilities were not considered in the metrics. As such, the results of this ranking should not be used as the sole source of information for future deliberations.

The information provided in this ranking should be considered in conjunction with other available information about physical rehabilitation centers or, if possible, accompanied by a visit to the facility. The quality of physical rehabilitation centers that are not included in the rankings is not disputed.

The aim is to provide high quality





		ALABAMA	
1	82.12	Encompass Health - Lakeshore Rehabilitation Hospital BIRMINGHAM	
2	77.37	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of North Alabama HUNTSVILLE	
3	76.76	Springhill Medical Center MOBILE	
4	76.58	Northport Medical Center NORTHPORT	
5	76.06	Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital Gadsden GADSDEN	
		ARIZONA	
1	78.39	Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Scottsdale SCOTTSDALE	
2	76.44	Dignity Health East Valley Rehabilitation Hospital CHANDLER	

3	76.35	Banner Health - Baywood Medical Center MESA
4	76.32	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Northwest Tucson TUCSON
5	75.79	Banner Rehabilitation Hospital West PEORIA
		ARKANSAS
1	78.19	Baptist Health - Rehabilitation Institute Little Rock LITTLE ROCK
2	76.76	Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas ROGERS
3	76.06	Baptist Health - Rehabilitation Institute North Little Rock NORTH LITTLE ROCK
4	75.67	Mercy Rehabilitation Hospital FORT SMITH
5	75.37	Encompass Health - CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs Rehabilitation Hospital HOT SPRINGS
6	75,05	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Smith FORT SMITH
		CALIFORNIA
1	93.03	Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center LOS ANGELES
2	82.99	Sutter Health - California Pacific Regional Rehabilitation Center SAN FRANCISCO
3	82.85	California Rehabilitation Institute LOS ANGELES

4	81.81	PIH Health Good Samaritan Hospital LOS ANGELES			
5	81.45	Loma Linda University Medical Center LOMA LINDA			
6	81.24	Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center DOWNEY			
7	81.23	Keck Hospital of USC LOS ANGELES			
8	80.32	Kaiser Foundation Rehabilitation Center VALLEJO			
9	80.08	Sutter Health - Alta Bates Summit Medical Center OAKLAND			
10	79.66	UCI Medical Center ORANGE			
11	79.38	El Camino Health - El Camino Hospital of Los Gatos LOS GATOS			
12	79.26	Alhambra Hospital Medical Center ALHAMBRA			
13	77.89	UC Davis Medical Center SACRAMENTO			
14	77.63	Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital SANTA BARBARA			
15	77.56	Sutter Health - Roseville Medical Center ROSEVILLE			
16	76.82	The Rehabilitation Center at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center SAN JOSE			
17	76.65	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Murrieta MURRIETA			
18	76.38	Casa Colina Hospital for Rehab Medicine POMONA			

19	75.39	Sharp Memorial Rehabilitation Center SAN DIEGO	
20	75.24	Adventist Health Glendale GLENDALE	
		COLORADO	
1	80.33	Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital AURORA	
2	79.66	UCHealth - University of Colorado Hospital AURORA	
3	79.24	Reunion Rehabilitation Hospital Denver DENVER	
4	78.56	UCHealth Memorial Hospital Central COLORADO SPRINGS	
5	78.11	Swedish Medical Center - General Rehabilitation ENGLEWOOD	
6	77.92	Centura Health - St. Anthony Hospital LAKEWOOD	
7	77.77	Craig Hospital ENGLEWOOD	
3	76.81	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Littleton LITTLETON	
		FLORIDA	
1	80.18	Jackson Memorial Hospital - Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center MIAMI	
2	79.14	Brooks Rehabilitation Hospital JACKSONVILLE	
3	78.74	Advent Health - Daytona Beach DAYTONA BEACH	

4	78.55	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Miami MIAMI
5	78.03	AdventHealth - Orlando ORLANDO
6	77.91	Memorial Regional Hospital South HOLLYWOOD
7	77.43	Mount Sinai Medical Center MIAMI BEACH
8	77.37	Bayfront Health St. Petersburg ST. PETERSBURG
9	76.41	UF Health Rehab Hospital GAINESVILLE
10	76.24	Kindred Hospital Bay Area - Tampa TAMPA
11	76.18	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Largo LARGO

12	75.98	Rehabilitation Hospital at Lee Memorial Hospital FORT MYERS
13	75.97	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Spring Hill BROOKSVILLE
14	75.94	Orlando Health Advanced Rehabilitation Institute ORLANDO
15	75.92	Kindred Hospital South Florida - Ft. Lauderdale FORT LAUDERDALE
16	75.69	HCA Florida Lake Monroe Hospital SANFORD
17	75.56	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Sarasota SARASOTA
18	75.54	Holy Cross Hospital FORT LAUDERDALE





		GEORGIA
1	78.39	Emory Healthcare - Rehabilitation Hospital ATLANTA
2	76.80	Piedmont Macon Rehabilitation MACON
3	75.50	Shepherd Center ATLANTA
4	74.79	Emory Healthcare - Decatur Hospital DECATUR
5	74.52	St. Mary's Center for Rehabilitative Medicine ATHENS
6	74.10	Encompass Health Rehab Hospital of Savannah SAVANNAH
7	73.82	Doctors Hospital of Augusta AUGUSTA
		ILLINOIS
1	85.70	Shirley Ryan Abilitylab CHICAGO
2	78.88	Ascension Alexian Brothers ELK GROVE VILLAGE
3	78.27	Rush Copley's Inpatient Rehabilitation Center
		AURORA
4	78.12	
5	78.12	Northwest Community Hospital
		Northwest Community Hospital ARLINGTON HEIGHTS Advocate Health - Illinois Masonic Medical Center

8	76.99	Advocate Health - Christ Medical Center OAK LAWN		
9	76.22	Sinai Health System - Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital CHICAGO		
10	75.78	Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital WHEATON		
		INDIANA		
1	82.11	Community Health Network - Community Rehabilitation Hospital North INDIANAPOLIS		
2	78.67	Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center CROWN POINT		
3	78.51	Indianapolis Rehabilitation Hospital at Carmel CARMEL		
4	77.39	Community Health Network - Community Rehabilitation Hospital South GREENWOOD		
5	77.22	Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana INDIANAPOLIS		
6	76.70	Encompass Health Deaconess Rehabilitation Hospital NEWBURGH		
7	75.30	Francisan Health Indianapolis		
		KANSAS		
1	81.94	Menorah Medical Center OVERLAND PARK		
2	79.56	Kansas Rehabilitation Hospital TOPEKA		
3	79.55	University of Kansas Hospital KANSAS CITY		

4		
	76.14	Saint Luke's South Hospital OVERLAND PARK
5	75.57	Post Acute Medical - Rehabilitation Hospital Of Overland Park OVERLAND PARK
		KENTUCKY
1	80.81	Encompass Health - Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital LEXINGTON
2	76.92	Uoff. Health - Frazier Rehabilitation Institute LOUISVILLE
3	76.49	Owensboro Health Regional Hospital OWENSBORO
4	76.48	Gateway Rehabilitation Hospital FLORENCE
5	76.05	Baptist Health Louisville LOUISVILLE
		LOUISIANA
1	78.75	Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital BATON ROUGE
1	78.75 78.66	Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital
<u> </u>		Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital BATON ROUGE Ochsner Rehabilitation Hospital
2	78.66	Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital BATON ROUGE Ochsner Rehabilitation Hospital JEFFERSON Tulane Medical Center
2	78.66 78.57	Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital BATON ROUGE Ochsner Rehabilitation Hospital JEFFERSON Tulane Medical Center NEW ORLEANS LCMC Health - Touro Rehabilitation Center
3	78.66 78.57 78.30	Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital BATON ROUGE Ochsner Rehabilitation Hospital JEFFERSON Tulane Medical Center NEW ORLEANS LCMC Health - Touro Rehabilitation Center NEW ORLEANS Rehabilitation Center at Our Lady of the Lake

8	74.21	Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center LAFAYETTE	7	76.05	Ascension Providence Rochester Hospital ROCHESTER	4	79.78	Ma Sai
9	74.05	PAM Health - Specialty and Rehabilitation Hospital NEW ORLEANS	8	75.71	Ascension Macomb-Oakland Hospital, Warren Campus WARREN	5	78.42	Bry We
		MICHIGAN	9	75.69	Henry Ford Health System - Wyandotte Hospital WYANDOTTE	6	78.09	Ma Ho
1	80.99	Beaumont Hospital ROYAL OAK	10	75.55	McLaren Northern Michigan PETOSKEY	7	77.99	Ab l
!	80.82	Michigan Medicine - Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation ANN ARBOR	11	75.45	Beaumont Hospital - Farmington Hills FARMINGTON HILLS	8	77.21	Im Rei
3	80.19	Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital GRAND RAPIDS		M	DWEST REGION	9	77.08	CH San KE
,	79.03	Henry Ford Health System - Macomb Hospital CLINTON TOWNSHIP	1	81.02	Regions Hospital Rehabilitation - Hospital Campus SAINT PAUL, MN	10	76.61	Sai SIO
5	77.84	DMC Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan	2	80.76	Fairview Health - Acute Rehabilitation Center			M
5	77.31	Spectrum Health - Rehabilitation Center	3	80.73	University of Iowa Health Network	1	80.35	Me Ho
		at Blodgett Hospital GRAND RAPIDS			Rehabilitation Hospital CORALVILLE, IA	2	79.51	Ca: Me
						3	78.65	Me Ho



4	79.78	Mayo Clinic Hospital, Saint Marys Campus ROCHESTER, MN		
5	78.42	Bryan Medical Center - West Campus LINCOLN, NE		
6	78.09	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals - Omaha Campus OMAHA, NE		
7	77.99	Abbott Northwestern Hospital MINNEAPOLIS		
8	77.21	Immanuel Rehabilitation Institute OMAHA, NE		
9	77.08	CHI Health Good Samaritan KEARNEY, NE		
10	76.61	Sanford USD Medical Center SIOUX FALLS, SD		
		MISSOURI		
1	80.35	Mercy - Rehabilitation Hospital St. Louis CHESTERFIELD		
2	79.51	Cameron Regional Medical Center CAMERON		
3	78.65	Mercy - Rehabilitation Hospital Springfield SPRINGFIELD		
4	78.57	RUSK Rehabilitation Hospital COLUMBIA		
5	78.53	Encompass Health - The Rehabilitation Institute of St. Louis ST. LOUIS		
6	75.21	Missouri Baptist Medical Center ST. LOUIS		
		Boone Hospital Center COLUMBIA		

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		NEW YORK		
1	85.15	NYU Langone Health - Rusk Rehabilitation NEW YORK CITY		
2	80.32	Mount Sinai - Rehabilitation Center NEW YORK CITY		
3	77.75	NewYork-Presbyterian - William Randolph Hearst Inpatient Rehabilitation NEW YORK CITY		
4	76.41	NYC Health + Hospitals - Bellevue Hospital Center NEW YORK CITY		
5	75.62	Mount Sinai - Morningside Rehabilitation Center NEW YORK CITY		
6	75.58	NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital BROOKLYN		
7	75.48	Northwell Health - Glen Cove Hospital GLEN COVE		
8	74.99	Montefiore Medical Center BRONX		
9	74.87	Mercy Hospital of Buffalo - Medical Rehabilitation Unit BUFFALO		
10	73.99	University of Rochester Medical Center ROCHESTER		
11	73.09	Albany Medical Center ALBANY		
NORTH CAROLINA				
1	80.20	Encompass Health - Novant Health Rehabilitation Hospital WINSTON-SALEM		
2	79.42	WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital RALEIGH		



3	79.05	Atrium Health - Carolinas Rehabilitation CHARLOTTE
4	77.49	Mission Health - CarePartners Rehabilitation Hospital ASHEVILLE
5	77.18	Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center WINSTON-SALEM
6	75.78	CarolinaEast Rehabilitation Hospital NEW BERN
7	75.18	NHRMC Rehabilitation Hospital WILMINGTON
8	74.79	UNC Hospitals Inpatient Rehab
	NOI	RTHEAST REGION
1	80.14	Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation - West Orange WEST ORANGE, NJ

2	76.01	Atlantic Rehabilitatio Institute MADISON, NJ
3	75.61	New England Rehabilitation Hospit PORTLAND, ME
4	75.47	Bridgeport Hospital Milford Campus MILFORD, CT
5	75.27	Danbury Hospital DANBURY, CT
6	75.26	Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospit BOSTON
7	75.23	Princeton Medical Center PLAINSBORO, NJ
8	74.90	Berkshire Medical Center PITTSFIELD, MA
9	74.89	Hartford Hospital HARTFORD, CT

Newsweek

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	оніо			
1	84.17	Ohio State University - Dodd Rehabilitation Hospital COLUMBUS		
2	83.25	Cleveland Clinic Rehabilitation Hospital AVON		
3	80.58	MetroHealth Rehabilitation Institute CLEVELAND		
4	79.92	University Hospitals - Avon Rehabilitation Hospital AVON		
5	79.25	University Hospitals - Rehabilitation Hospital BEACHWOOD		
6	79.22	Rehabilitation Hospital of Northwest Ohio TOLEDO		
7	78.14	Summa Health - Summa Rehab Hospital AKRON		
8	78.10	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Cincinnati CINCINNATI		
9	76.67	The Rehabilitation Institute of Ohio DAYTON		
10	76.39	OhioHealth - Rehabilitation Hospital COLUMBUS		
11	76.06	Kettering Health Main Campus KETTERING		
		OKLAHOMA		
1	79.57	Hillcrest Medical Center - Kaiser Rehabilitation Center TULSA		

77.91

Mercy - Rehabilitation Hospital Oklahoma City OKLAHOMA CITY

3	76.48	Integris Jim Thorpe Rehabilitation OKLAHOMA CITY
4	76.02	Saint Francis Hospital TULSA
5	74.97	St. Anthony Rehabilitation Center OKLAHOMA CITY
	P	PENNSYLVANIA
1	83.10	Penn Medicine - Lancaster Rehabilitation Hospital LANCASTER
2	81.73	University of Pennsylvania - Penn Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine PHILADELPHIA
3	81.22	UPMC Rehabilitation Institute PITTSBURGH
4	81.03	MossRehab ELKINS PARK
5	80.31	Jefferson Health - Magee Rehabilitation Hospital PHILADELPHIA
6	80.05	Jefferson Abington Hospital ABINGTON
7	80.03	Main Line Health - Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital MALVERN
8	78.97	Allied Services - Scranton Rehab Hospital SCRANTON
9	78.95	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Reading READING
10	78.79	Lehigh Valley Hospital - Cedar Crest ALLENTOWN
11	78.52	PennState Health - Rehabilitation Hospital HUMMELSTOWN



12	78.32	Lehigh Valley Hospital - Pocono EAST STROUDSBURG
13	78.12	Commonwealth Health - Center for Advanced Rehabilitation WILKES-BARRE
14	78.11	Allied Services Wilkes- Barre Rehab Hospital WILKES-BARRE TOWNSHIP
15	78.09	UPMC Rehabilitation Institute PITTSBURGH
16	78.04	Good Shepherd Rehabilitation ALLENTOWN
17	78.01	UPMC Rehabilitation Institute NEW CASTLE
18	77.97	Geisinger Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital DANVILLE
19	77.94	UPMC - St. Margaret Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility PITTSBURGH

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Siskin Hospital for



	SOUTH CAROLINA		
1	80.20	Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Columbia COLUMBIA	
2	77.96	Roper Rehabilitation Hospital CHARLESTON	
3	76.88	East Cooper Medical Center MOUNT PLEASANT	
4	76.55	MUSC Health Rehabilitation Hospital NORTH CHARLESTON	
5	76.41	AnMed Health Rehabilitation Hospital ANDERSON	
6	76.27	Trident Medical Center CHARLESTON	
7	76.18	Roger C. Peace Rehabilitation - Prisma Health GREENVILLE	

	S	SOUTH REGION		75.75	Physical Rehabilitation CHATTANOOGA
1	81.91	The Johns Hopkins Hospital BALTIMORE	7	73.62	TriStar Skyline Medical Center NASHVILLE
2	81.13	The George Washington University Hospital WASHINGTON, D.C.			TEXAS
3	80.71	Adventist HealthCare Rehabilitation ROCKVILLE, MD	1	88.43	Baylor Scott & ••• White Institute for Rehabilitation - Dallas
4	80.52	MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital WASHINGTON, D.C.	2	82.91	Methodist Rehabilitation Hospital DALLAS
5	76.41	ChristianaCare Center for Rehabilitation at Wilmington Hospital WILMINGTON, DE	3	81.34	Houston Methodist Rehabilitation Center HOUSTON
6	75.59	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Middletown	4	81.27	TIRR Memorial Hermann HOUSTON
		TENNESSEE	5	80.74	Baylor Scott & White Institute for Rehabilitation - Irving Rehabilitation Unit IRVING
1	76.51	Baptist Memorial Rehabilitation Hospital GERMANTOWN	6	80.57	UT Southwestern - Zale OPENIE
2	74.36	Encompass Health - Vanderbilt Stallworth Rehabilitation Hospital NASHVILLE	7	80.47	St. David's HealthCare - St. David's Medical Center AUSTIN
3	74.35	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital Of Franklin FRANKLIN	8	79.99	Central Texas Rehabilitation Hospital AUSTIN
4	74.16	Quillen Rehabilitation Hospital JOHNSON CITY	9	79.66	St. David's North Austin Medical Center AUSTIN
5	73.81	Ascension Saint Thomas Hospital West NASHVILLE	10	79.34	Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Sugar Land SUGAR LAND
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PLANO

27 76.94 Memorial Hermann Rehabilitation Hospital Katy

Accel Rehab Hospital of Plano

28 76.93 Warm Springs Rehabilitation
Hospital of San Antonio
SAN ANTONIO

29 76.91 Ernest Health - Trustpoint Rehab Hospital Of Lubbock LUBBOCK

76.89 Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Austin

31 76.88 Kindred Hospital Sugar Land SUGAR LAND

VIRGINIA

1	80.88	UVA Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital CHARLOTTESVILLE
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79.04 Inova Rehabilitation Center - Mount Vernon ALEXANDRIA

3 77.53 Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital
of Richmond
RICHMOND

4 77.44 HCA Virginia - Johnston-Willis Hospital RICHMOND

5 77.37 Inova Fairfax Medical Campus FAIRFAX

6 76.98 Encompass Health
Rehabilitation Hospital
of Northern Virginia
ALDIE

75.88 Sentara - Rehabilitation
Virginia Beach General
VIRGINIA BEACH

7

statista

11	78.50	Texas Health - Presbyterian Hospital DALLAS
12	78.40	Kindred Hospital Houston Medical Center HOUSTON
13	78.32	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Plano PLANO
14	78.30	Medical City Dallas DALLAS
15	78.21	Methodist Hospital Stone Oak Rehabilitation Center SAN ANTONIO
16	78.20	Texas Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Worth FORT WORTH

Baptist Inpatient Rehabilitation

Center - St. Luke's

SAN ANTONIO

78.17

18	78.16	Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Dallas DALLAS
19	78.14	Baylor Scott & White Institute for Rehabilitation - Fort Worth FORT WORTH
20	78.03	Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital HOUSTON
21	77.69	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Pearland PEARLAND
22	77.32	Cornerstone Specialty Hospitals Austin AUSTIN
23	77.30	St. Luke's Health - The Woodlands Hospital THE WOODLANDS
24	77.27	Baylor Scott & White - Institute for Rehabilitation GRAPEVINE

AMERICA'S BEST

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	WASHINGTON				
1	78.69	CHI Franciscan Rehabilitation Hospital TACOMA			
2	78.23	UW Medical Center – Montlake SEATTLE			
3	76.82	Swedish Cherry Hill Campus SEATTLE			
4	75.49	EvergreenHealth Rehabilitation Medicine Clinic KIRKLAND			
5	74.89	PeaceHealth Medical Group - United General Medical Center SEDRO-WOOLLEY			
6	74.84	Providence St. Luke's Rehabilitation Medical Center SPOKANE			
	WEST REGION				
1	78.45	Elkhorn Valley - Rehabilitation Hospital CASPER, WY			
2	76.98	Northern Utah Rehabilitation Hospital SOUTH OGDEN, UT			
3	76.27	Rehabilitation Hospital of Southern New Mexico LAS CRUCES, NM			
4	75.65	Craig H. Neilsen Rehabilitation Hospital SALT LAKE CITY			
5	75.16	Oregon Rehabilitation Center EUGENE, OR			
6	75.15	The Rehabilitation Hospital of Montana BILLINGS, MT			
7	75.03	REHAB Hospital of the Pacific HONOLULU			
8	74.61	Intermountain - Neuro Specialty Rehabilitation Center MURRAY, UT			

9	74.42	Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Utah SANDY, UT
10	73.99	MountainView Hospital LAS VEGAS
11	73.97	Alaska Regional Hospital ANCHORAGE, AK
12	73.92	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Las Vegas LAS VEGAS
13	73.86	Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center PORTLAND, OR
14	73.69	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Desert Canyon LAS VEGAS

WISCONSIN				
1	77.78	Aurora Medical Center SUMMIT		
2	77.00	Rehabilitation Hospital of Wisconsin WAUKESHA		
3	76.78	UW Health Rehabilitation Hospital MADISON		
4	76.03	Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center MILWAUKEE		
5	75.80	Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital MEQUON		
6	75.32	Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital WAUWATOSA		



PARTING SHOT

The PARTING SHOT YOUR WEEKLY DOSE OF POP CULTURE EVERY WEDNESDAY EVERY WEDNESDAY

Xolo Maridueña

COBRA KAI'S XOLO MARIDUEÑA IS GOING FROM KICKING BUTT ON EARTH to doing so in the multiverse in the latest DC Comics film *Blue Beetle* (August 18). "I'm so excited about people meeting this character for the first time." The film is not only the young actor's big screen debut, but also the first DC Comics movie to focus solely on a Latin superhero. "I really feel like it's taken all 22 years of my life so far to be ready for this moment." Despite the movie's groundbreaking progress and diversity, Maridueña wants people to see it for more than just that. "I hope people, with this movie, can start to marinate on the fact that this is a movie, that Latino is not the genre, that superhero was the genre, and the characters happened to be Latino." He also wants *Blue Beetle* to open doors for other superhero stories we've yet to see. "I hope that in success, it offers the opportunity for others to tell their most authentic stories. It may be the first time that a Latino is hitting the big screen in a lead [superhero] role, but it can't be the last."



Is it exciting to be the Blue Beetle?

It's indescribable. I think as an actor, being a superhero is something unfathomable, so I'm grateful and so appreciative. It was a really big step for me, career wise. I'd never worked on a movie before.

A superhero franchise is a big jump forward. Do you feel prepared?

Honestly, I do. The thing that I'm most excited about is not for myself to become the biggest star, it's really for people to feel represented. I'm so excited for all the kids who are going to see someone who looks like them kicking butt. That's what I'm excited about.

What was it like preparing to play this character?

Cobra Kai really helped prepare me. But I gotta be honest, a lot of the stunts in this movie are ones that I wasn't familiar with on Cobra Kai. [There] we are on the ground most of the time, but with Blue Beetle there is an otherworldly aspect to them and that was so exciting.

Family is at the core of this story. Why is that so important?

I truly feel like no superhero movie to date has really been able to capture, at the level that we have, this intimate family experience. Jamie is getting his powers for the first time in front of his family. I think that that keeps the story so honest and so grounded from day one because there is no hiding from mom and dad that I'm Blue Beetle. —H. Alan Scott

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