



Be the Change

Chris Aring, MV Youth Leadership Initiative
Martha's Vineyard

☀ Call to Action

Learn about how Chris's idea is changing lives: check out the Institute's SustainabilityisFun.com

☀ Values

- Creative
- Generous
- Leadership
- Environmentalist

☀ Lessons Learned

Innovation and technology can help better lives not only by providing high-paying careers, but as tools for positive social change.

Challenge those in your community to use their skills to help you change the world: they may surprise you!

When you're looking for a great idea, often the best thing to do is what comes naturally. *Overthinking sometimes kills creativity.*

When it comes to the need for change, time is of the essence: the sooner you act, the more lives you will be able to impact in a positive way.

Chris Aring had always known that he wanted to find a way to use technology to serve humanity.

When he heard that Gandhi's grandson, Arun, was going to speak at a Youth Leadership Summit on Martha's Vineyard, he was inspired: and when Arun Gandhi asked the Stone Soup Leadership Institute to find a way to share their innovative educational tools with students in India, Chris knew he wanted to be involved. That was the first step in his journey toward working with others to create digital tools that could be used to not only teach students about the importance of sustainability, but also to create ways to use technology to help youth get jobs in this emerging field.

☀ Language Arts

What is leadership? What are the traits of an effective leader?

Write a personal essay in which you explore the meaning of the word and what it means to you in your own life. How can you become a leader and inspire those around you to work to better the world?

Imagine you had the opportunity to create a website to educate people on sustainability and climate change issues.

What would you call it? What type of content would you put in it? Choose a topic related to sustainability or climate change that interests you, and create the content for an imaginary website. You must include the following: an "About Us" page, a "FAQs" page (for this one, focus on questions about the issue you have chosen), a "How to Get Involved" page, and a "News" page, in which you will post real updates on the cause you are interested in.

Chris was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's words to his grandson: "Be the change you want to see in the world." Create a 3-5-minute video in which you explain how you plan to "be the

change.” Finish your video with a call to action to inspire others to become the change they think the world needs.

STEM Activities

As an extension of the second Language Arts activity above, use the content you created to build a real website. You can use website builders such as [Wix.com](#)¹, [Squarespace.com](#)², or build it from scratch using [HTML and CSS](#)³.

Chris aspires to use technology to help humanity. What is one problem facing the world today that technology can help solve? Research and design a type of technology (app, device, technological process, etc.) that can be used to help solve this problem. Present your ideas to the class. You can also set up a way to pitch your idea to potential funders.

Chris began his innovative processes by participating in Hack-a-thons that were focused strictly on design. Could your classroom benefit from participating in a Hack-a-thon? This [article](#)⁴ details the steps necessary to host a Hack-a-thon, and offers tips for how to make the event a success.

Sustainability Innovations

Technological innovations in sustainability have gained increasing attention with the climate crisis. This 2019 [article](#)⁵ highlights sustainability innovations that could become important in our future. Which of these innovations has advanced the most since 2021, and is best positioned to help us build a sustainable future?

Chris began thinking about the intersection of technology and sustainability as a youth at his first Sustainability Summit. This intersection is at the forefront of sustainable innovations and conferences. The two main forums for such innovation are tech trade shows like [CES](#)⁶, or sustainable tech conferences such as [The International Conference on Sustainable Technology and Development](#)⁷. Identify a successful sustainable innovation from each of these events, and explain how each of them can contribute to a more sustainable future.

Sustainability Career Pathways

Environmental Engineer. As an engineering student, Chris can choose from one of many paths for helping make the world more sustainable. One is as an environmental engineer, which is an engineer that uses his or her training to help ensure that industrial activities do not cause pollution, and to help find solutions to environmental problems. If this sounds like a path for you, [this introduction](#)⁸ to environmental engineering is very informative.

Website Designer and Manager. The internet is now a primary educational tool and means of communication. At the heart of every organization or movement there is a website. Website designers and managers find ways to make them easy to navigate and engaging for visitors. This is a field that offers boundless employment opportunities. Interested in designing or maintaining websites? Read more about the specifics [here](#)⁹, and a day in the life of a web manager [here](#)¹⁰.

App Designer. Increasingly, people aren't just exploring the world through the internet, but also through numerous smartphone apps. This is another potential way to use technology to help educate and encourage more sustainable living, [from designing anything from a carbon calculator to apps that help you borrow or buy used instead of buying new stuff](#)¹¹. Want to get into App Design? Here's a good [starting point](#).¹²

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- 1 <https://www.wix.com/>
 - 2 <https://www.squarespace.com/>
 - 3 <https://www.khanacademy.org/computing/computer-programming/html-css>
 - 4 <https://medium.com/innovation-machine/hacking-the-hackathon-40c109c1a6ea>
 - 5 <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/sustainability/our-insights/sustainability-blog/these-9-technological-innovations-will-shape-the-sustainability-agenda-in-2019>
 - 6 <https://www.ces.tech/Topics/5G-and-Internet-of-Things-IoT/Sustainability.aspx>
 - 7 <https://www.elsevier.com/events/conferences/international-conference-on-sustainable-technology-and-development>
 - 8 <https://www.livescience.com/48390-environmental-engineering.html>
 - 9 <https://www.zippia.com/web-manager-jobs/>
 - 10 <https://www.careerprofiles.com/blog/one-day-in-the-life-of-a-web-content-manager/>
 - 11 <https://www.cnet.com/news/10-apps-that-help-you-be-more-sustainable-in-every-area-of-life/>
 - 12 <https://learnappmaking.com/how-to-make-an-app/>

