

MiSustainable Holland

About this series

The MiSustainable Holland column is a collection of community voices sharing updates about local sustainability initiatives.

This Week's Sustainability Framework Theme:

Community Knowledge: The collective knowledge and energy of the community is an incredible resource that must be channeled to where it is needed.

Hope celebrates women transforming the world through sustainability

By Carly Ervin and Lily Shergill
Hope Advocates for Sustainability

Marking National Women's History Month in March, Hope Advocates for Sustainability is taking time to celebrate a few women who have contributed to the work of environmental activism across the globe, including Wangari Maathai, Rachel Carson, Vandana Shiva, and Autumn Peltier.

For the rest of us, whether in high school, retired or anywhere in between, these women are examples of the difference that action and commitment at the grassroots level can make.

Wangari Maathai, of Kenya, who died in 2011, founded an organization that focuses on planting trees. The Green Belt Movement is responsible for reforestation and biodiversity protection, as well as for collaborating with other organizations, such as Ecosia, which has planted over 4 million trees in Kenya to date.

The vastness of Maathai's contribution to environmental activism can be seen through her achievement in 2004 of being the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Taking a different approach to activism was Rachel Carson, an American marine biologist and author who, before her death in 1964, dedicated her time to advancing marine biology in a sustainable way.

Through numerous books, including "Silent Spring" and "The Sea Around Us," she informed and invited humanity to understand the world and what people can do to be better stewards of the earth. The Environmental Defense Fund was founded as a result of her accomplishments.

Vandana Shiva, an Indian scholar, focuses on the importance of food sovereignty, which is about farmers and food producers having the ability to save, grow, and sell their own products. Based in Delhi, she has written more than 20 books and is associated with the anti-GMO (genetically modified organisms) movement.

Autumn Peltier is an Anishinaabe Indigenous-rights advocate who was named the chief water commissioner for the Anishinabek Nation in 2019 at the young age of 14 years old. She was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize four years in a row for her work to provide everyone with safe, clean drinking water.

These pivotal women are being featured on Hope Advocates for Sustainability's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter/X](#) each week from March 6 through March 27 in a series called "Sustainable Women Wednesdays." More information about each of them and their work is also available online through a variety of websites.

- *Carly Ervin, a sophomore business major at Hope College, is marketing and communications intern for Hope Advocates for Sustainability. Lily Shergill, a senior religion major at Hope College, is environmental justice intern for Hope Advocates for Sustainability.*