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Taking Climate Action

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TAKING CLIMATE ACTION

It's safe to say that Lindsay Mouw's ('17) semester in New Zealand changed her life.

Mouw, who studied abroad through the Creation Care Studies Program (CCSP) in the fall of 2015, says the environmental science-focused program changed the way she thought about everything.

"That is when I first encountered the idea of creation care and sustainability and began considering them a part of my faith," says Mouw. CCSP got Mouw interested in—and eventually passionate about—caring for the earth and its resources, and she applied these ideas to her other classes when she returned to campus.

"I remember the moment I decided within myself that creation care was something I needed to do something about," says Mouw. "For the first half of my semester in New Zealand, it was all pretty new to me, so I was pushing back against the majority of what I was learning. One day in Marine Biology, I remember being presented with the horrors of what we had done to our oceans—the ocean acidification and the death and damage that's being caused by the plastic that we put into our oceans. I realized that I played a part in contributing to that, and that shocked me and broke my heart."

After returning to the United States, Mouw became active in stewardship efforts on Dordt's campus. She began the EcoDefenders club to help educate students about environmental stewardship, and she took on a leadership position on the Dordt Sustainability Committee, which works with the administration to improve stewardship of campus resources. These groups helped Dordt adopt a more rigorous recycling program, increasing recycling by an estimated 50 percent.

"It's great the administration understands that, as a Christian college, this is something we *should* be doing," she says.

Mouw also became a member of Young

Evangelicals for Climate Action (YECA) and now serves as a YECA fellow. In April, that role prompted her to take part in the 200,000-person People's Climate March.

"In the context of the march, climate action meant advocating for our politicians to enact policies that would better our environment and reduce the impact humans are having on climate change," says Mouw. "For me as a Christian and for YECA as an organization, we act on climate change *because* of our faith. We believe our Christian faith mandates that we act on these issues. It is a justice issue—we're fighting for the 'least of these.'"

The march also served as a capstone for Mouw's Public and Environmental Policy independent study. YECA, along with the Social Justice Office of the CRC and Climate Caretakers, arranged for its participants to receive lobbying training and spend a day meeting with politicians in their offices, discussing the importance of climate action.

"Climate change is something that affects everybody, no matter where you are and no matter who you are. It is an issue that everyone should care about," Mouw says. "A lot of people think 'climate action' means caring more about the

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— Lindsay Mouw, recent environmental studies graduate

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Mouw intends to work for a year or



While in D.C., Lindsay Mouw (left) was interviewed for a documentary. The episode featuring her interview will air at the end of the summer on Hulu. "It was cool to see so many news outlets taking notice of Christian groups who are vocal about creation care," she says.

two before attending grad school for sustainable community development or research.

LYDIA MARCUS ('17)