

A passion for the environment

Local student cleans up Hodge's Branch

By Kate Thurston Rushville Republican Apr 14, 2017



submitted photo Mya Worthen walks along Hodges Branch collecting trash and other items.

Her passion for the environment has already made an impact on the community and her commitment to helping only continues to grow.

Mya Worthen is 10 years old and attends RES West and is also an ISF Youth Volunteer.

ISF, The Ian Somerhalder Foundation, works to empower, educate and collaborate with people and projects to positively impact the planet and its creatures.

ISF delivers unique programs and services and provides public outreach, education, and grants in support of Creatures, Environment, Youth, and Grassroots initiatives. ISF empowers human action through programs and collaborations that promote education, innovation and build skills in empathy and effective leadership. ISF engages and supports youth – one of our most powerful, yet often disregarded groups. Through programs, partnerships, grants, media initiatives and campaigns, ISF provides support for organizational and grassroots efforts that protect and restore our planet.

Candi Fair, Mya's aunt, is the Executive Assistant to Youth Director for ISF.

"My job is to help design projects and engage the youth in our foundation to explore and execute their passions whether it be environmental or creature. I am the assistant of ISF Youth Director Jules Trace, together we work with other adult volunteers and design projects and platforms for our ISF Youth Volunteers that will help give them the tools and resources to help our environment and our animals," Fair said. *"We have been involved in lots of projects including community clean ups, veggie gardens and animal shelter food drives."*

Mya's project for April consisted of a "community clean it up."

"This is where we ask the kids to scout areas in their communities that need some TLC, cleaning, sprucing up and so that's what Mya did. She noticed that Hodge's Branch was full of litter and debris and decided especially because it was a waterway that it needed special attention," Fair said. *"Sunday, we drove over and spent two hours walking the branch and retrieving empty bottles and all kinds of trash and rubbish from the water, which may I say was no easy feat. We collected two big full bags of trash from the branch that was properly disposed of afterwards,"* Fair said. *"We took lots of pictures and video of the process and Mya was very proud of her hard work in the end, but very sad at the fact that people would chose just to throw their litter on the ground rather than in the numerous (mostly empty) garbage receptacles located around the park. She was sad yes, but motivated to do more. She promised to come back weekly through the summer months and collect any trash that may be in the branch."*

"I'm gonna come back and keep this home clean for all the frogs we saw," Worthen said. *"It makes me mad to think that people just don't care enough to throw away their trash the right way and toss it in an animals' home. That's rude!"*

The pair will be back during the summer to keep the branch tidy and continue to help the environment including Mya's new frog friends.

Mya is the daughter of Tonya Brown and Omar Aranda.

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