



TM

PHOTOS SPEAK M1



Photos positively representing the Wijsens



RESPECT CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

IMAGINE

... you are meeting a friend at the beach, but there is so much plastic trash that the beach has closed for a garbage emergency. Now, imagine that you could do something to change that? Sisters Melati Wijsen, age 12, and Isabel Wijsen, age 10 saw a problem with plastics. This was long before the garbage emergency was declared on the beaches of Bali, the country where they live. They had great respect for their land and the Earth. This led them to create Bye Bye Plastic Bags as a way to help Bali become plastic free.

The sisters realized the plastic bags were a great concern for the ocean and marine life. "Living so close to nature, we really established a bond with Mother Earth from a very young age," Isabel said. Every 10 seconds around the world, 240,000 plastic bags are used, like the ones you get at the grocery store. This leads to 280 million tons of plastic waste a year. The girls learned that if the world doesn't change the way it gets rid of waste, there will be more plastics than fish in the oceans by 2050. In school, Melati learned about leaders like Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi. Her respect for those leaders and her respect for the environment made her ask the question, "What can we do as kids living on the island of Bali?"

Their organization uses volunteer students to do beach cleanups and build river booms. River booms stop trash from flowing into the sea. They also teach schools, families and local businesses about how they can reduce their plastic waste. In one "pilot village," they are working with 800 families and local shops to use alternatives to plastic bags. The village is over 60% to being plastic free. They have also created a business for women to make bags of recycled materials instead of plastics. The Governor of Bali also supports them and has agreed to make Bali a plastic-bag free country.

Bye Bye Plastic Bags has 22 chapters in 18 different

countries. The girls donate half of their profits back into their community. It is really important to them that other kids see what they're doing and feel like they can make a difference. "Our message is saying no to plastic bags, but we show that kids can do things," explains Melati. Their hope is that their respect of the environment will guide others to have the same respect and courage to get involved. The girls love it when young people reach out to them and say, "Hey, I want to bring Bye Bye Plastic Bags back to my country." Melati and Isabel recognize and respect each person's ability to make change, regardless of age. Melati says, "Our generation is the first generation to really prove the power [of youth] and use it to create social change." How can you show your respect for something you believe in to help write your own best TrueSuccess lifestyle?

QUESTIONS LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING M2/5

1. What evidence did Melati and Isabel find that showed many people do not respect the environment?

2. What actions did Melati and Isabel take to show their respect for the environment?

3. What can you learn from the Wijsen sisters' lifestyle? What can you do to show that you respect others or a cause?

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