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**T**his year it's not just Earth Day, it's Earth Week, and local enviro group Beyond Toxics seeks to educate Eugeneans about environmental justice through events starting April 16. Earth Day itself is April 22.

"We wanted this to be a collaborative effort,"



Krystal Abrams, the social media and pollinator projects manager for Beyond Toxics, says. “Part

of environmental justice is getting representatives from different communities to the decision-making table.”

As a result, the Eugene-based nonprofit, which itself focuses on environmental justice issues, is partnering with other organizations throughout the community, including the Eugene chapter of the NAACP, the Native American Law Student Association and the Northwest Youth Corps. The 2018 Earth Week lineup includes art showcases, films and nature walks.

Beyond Toxics held its first Earth Week celebration last year, oriented around science. “At that particular time, everyone was very charged about the blatant disregard for science in our communities,” Abrams says. “We wanted to elevate Earth Week to think more in terms of environmental justice than we were doing last year.”

Through this year's Earth Week events, Beyond Toxics and its partner organizations aim to help community members answer the question of: “What is environmental justice?”

Ana Molina, Beyond Toxics' environmental justice campaign liaison, says low-income communities and communities of color are often disproportionately impacted by climate change. Efforts toward environmental justice center on helping these impacted communities, uplifting their voices when they usually wouldn't be heard.

Earth Week events will focus on exposing people to these environmental discrepancies, showing them the places that are most affected. In Eugene, lower-income communities have fewer trees, which reduces canopy coverage and results in higher temperatures. This, Abrams says, is a “perfect demonstration of how these low-income communities are impacted disproportionately by climate change.”

So this year there will be a tree walk through Trainsong Park, a park in Eugene’s Bethel neighborhood, which Abrams says is a low-income neighborhood lacking canopy coverage.

Other events during Earth Week include a showing of *Black Snake Killaz*, a film about Native American resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline, and an Earth Day potluck. The featured event of the week, however, is the “Breath of Fresh Air” showcase 6 pm on Friday, April 20, in Kesey Square downtown.

The artists in the showcase are all from frontline communities or communities of color, and they include poet Yolanda Gomez, who has a personal relationship with environmental justice — according to Beyond Toxics, Gomez’s father died after continuous pesticide exposure. Chiefed, a band whose members are mainly from the Siletz Tribe, will also be performing.

Through this event, Beyond Toxics staff say they hope to highlight the voices of people who are largely left out of environmental conversations, but who are most impacted by decisions made, and to expose community members to the idea.

People who come from or identify with these frontline communities or communities of color are encouraged to

contribute visual or performance art to the showcase — submissions are open on the Beyond Toxics website until midnight on April 14.

All of the events are free of charge and family-friendly, and some will provide food. “Part of supporting an environmental justice community to me is providing food and a safe space for people and their families,” Abrams says.

*The 2018 Earth Week events will begin April 16 in Eugene. More details are available at [beyondtoxics.org/earth-week-2018](http://beyondtoxics.org/earth-week-2018). All events are free.*