

My name is Pablo Calix. I am a sophomore in the College of Lake County (CLC) studying to get my masters in environmental science. I grew up always undecided on what I was going to be when I was growing up. When I started my freshman year of high school I realized I loved science and more specifically environmental science. I knew that I wanted to create a lasting change to what I personally believe is a dying planet.

I was a leader in Warren Township high school's environmental club called Mother Earth's Concerned Students (MECS). During this time, we were able to achieve many things like participating in several cleanups with different environmental groups in our area, appeared in National Geographic while protesting Waukegan's coal plant, and even collect over \$2,000 to buy land in amazons to protect the whittling population of jaguars. MECS was able to now have a voice within the high school's student body and could explain the damage of our communities over use of plastic bottles and also explain what to do to combat it. There were so many more things I wanted to do but just not enough time so I knew college was my opportunity to do more.

The ball could not stop rolling, so as soon as I got into environmental club in CLC I suggested several different ideas to create a greater awareness not only for environmental club but also the local communities' environment. During this time, I had the opportunity to speak to the Board of Food Administration about my project: Project Save the Straw. This began a movement to cut down on the use of plastic straws by replacing all of them with paper straws which was eagerly accepted the idea. The same semester, CLC's environmental club was now providing the paper straws for Cafe Willow. Through that same project environmental club was awarded the CLC's Sustainability Award which we gladly accepted.

This was not the only award that I would receive that year, I would follow up CLC's Sustainability Award with CLC's Certificate of Excellence, and after Silver Circle of Achievement. These awards motivated me to push even further and reach for a greater position within environmental club, so I decided to run for the presidential position and I got it. I am proud to say that I will keep on moving forward in my journey to helping the environment and bringing awareness to people of their very impactful actions.

My goal is to never stop this journey and to successfully get my associates in Science by the fall of 2020, and not stopping until I get my master's in environmental science. This will also mean that I will strive to give more empowerment to the Latino community and positive change with my own success.