



Changemakers

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We interview Lea Rainey, founder and co-owner of [Roots Zero-Waste Market](#).

Every one of us can contribute to saving the rainforest every day, whether it's choosing one product over another at the grocery store, donating a few dollars to rehabilitation efforts, sending an email to an irresponsible company, or explaining to a friend why you can't, in fact, pick up a certain brand of cookies. But your impact can go far beyond this as well- you have the power to raise awareness, motivate others, and make saving the rainforest just that much easier for future changemakers. In this issue, we feature motivated individuals who have taken the next step, starting their own projects to make change within their communities.

Issue
2019.4

RAINFOREST CHALLENGE #4

Over the next three months, you can enjoy watching young orangutans learn how to survive in the wild via [Orangutan Jungle School](#), which details the daily drama and exploits of young orangutans at the Nyaru Menteng Orangutan Rescue Center in Central Kalimantan Borneo.

We challenge you to watch these youngsters learn to survive in the wild! You can find more details on how to watch on the [Orangutan Jungle School website](#).

ORANGUTAN GANG NEWS

Are you making plans for a holiday dinner? Make sure to check labels and scan barcodes to avoid using palm oil this holiday season. You can learn more about what aliases to check for in which products using our [holidays infographic](#), powered by Prezi.

In addition, Valentine's Day is coming up in several months. This dangerous holiday is responsible for over a billion dollars in candy sales! Unfortunately, finding sustainable Valentine's candy can be surprisingly difficult, and it's important to check every candy label if you're planning to go palm oil free. Look for and avoid Palm Oil, Vitamin A Palmitate, Glycerin, Propylene Glycol, and Mono and Diglycerides on chocolate and candy heart packages.

You can find information about the Orangutan Gang's planned events over on our [Upcoming Events page](#). Thank you for saving the rainforest today!



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Jack, Kid Conservationist

"I am 9 years old, and I spread awareness of what is happening to the 194 species affected by deforestation in the rainforest. I teach others about the issue by making videos on my [YouTube channel, Kid Conservationist](#), and presenting at zoos, museums, and schools. In August of 2019 I was named the Youth Ambassador for Orangutan Alliance.

"I first learned about the palm oil issue when I was at the Memphis Zoo at a baby orangutan's birthday party. I make videos about places where I present, such as Zoo Boise, where I first learned about Pangaea and the Orangutan Gang. Also, I interview experts in different fields who are working towards making the world a better. I have interviewed Shara Ticku and David Heller at C16 Biosciences, who are creating a palm oil alternative in their lab; Geoff Spanner, the award-winning film producer of Desert Wetlands; Sean Greenwood, Grand Poobah of Public Relations at Ben & Jerry's; and Zach Yunker, co-owner of Roots Zero Waste Market (*more information below!*) I have inspired friends and family alike to check labels and be smart consumers. My next steps are to continue raising awareness and to raise money for a Reforestation Campaign that I am working on with Orangutan Alliance that will take me to Borneo to help replant the rainforest. I hope you follow my journey and save the rainforest!"

If you are an Orangutan Gang member looking to be featured in an upcoming Member Spotlight, contact us at orangutangang.org@gmail.com and you could end up in our newsletter!



LEA RAINEY INTERVIEW

Lea Rainey is the Founder and Co-owner of [Roots Zero-Waste Market](#), a unique, sustainable grocery store in Garden City, Idaho. The first zero-waste grocery store and café in the Northwest, Roots provides a great opportunity for curious customers to learn more about environmental issues ranging from palm oil to the climate crisis. Here, Lea is interviewed by Pangaea Finn, Orangutan Gang Founder and Director.

PF: What originally motivated you to create Roots Zero-Waste Market?

LR: The climate crisis and the overwhelming amount of plastic and food waste directly contributing to it on a massive scale.

PF: When did you first learn about palm oil and its detrimental impact on rainforest, human rights, and global warming?

LR: Palm oil has always been a concern, as one of many over-exploited resources, but I really took a stand against it in 2014. At the time, I worked with Procter & Gamble, and I was at the headquarters the day [Greenpeace activists stormed the building](#) and hung two huge banners from the towers in protest of their use of palm oil. I decided that if they were willing to take such a bold and dangerous step to bring awareness to the issue, the least I could do was pay closer attention and refuse to use products with palm oil in them. Activism works!

PF: In the face of major problems like plastic pollution, food waste, and the palm oil issue, how do you stay motivated to run Roots?

LR: We take a lot of inspiration from the very customers who walk through our doors each day, even those who are new to the issues of climate change, pollution, and resource exploitation. The fact that they're coming in means that they are at least curious to do something. And there are so many people standing up for the planet that we know we're not alone and can always look to conservation groups to remind us- we're all working together!

PF: What are a couple palm oil free products that you love?

LR: I love our Shampoo Bars and Conditioners and our Dream Chocolates!



ROOTS
ZERO WASTE MARKET

All articles by Pangaea Finn unless otherwise stated

Credit cover image: Eliza F

Credit pg. 2 image: Jack & [getyourimage.club](#)

Credit pg. 3 images: Orangutan Jungle School & Our Planet Soap

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Newsletter design credit Microsoft Corporation

The Orangutan Gang

www.orangutangang.org

PF: How did you start Roots, and how have you advanced your vision since?

LR: We started by involving the community through social media, pop-ups, and public presentations to introduce our community to the concept. We did some community fundraising, which helped us refurbish our sign, but, really, we just kept working at the concept and asking for help with funding. It wasn't easy, but we never lost faith that we could make it a reality. Now, we're focused on bringing our mission to its full reality-to be a living example of what an impact this new kind of business model can make to help reduce plastic and food waste pollution, in our community and beyond.

PF: In the store, how do you approach motivating customers to take action on environmental issues?

LR: From a very basic perspective, our store is a teaching space. Everything we feature is a teaching opportunity to show everyday products and foods in a way that could help eliminate plastic and food waste. We also host store tours, provide classes, and educate our community on how to waste less.

PF: Is finding palm oil free products to sell in the store and café challenging given that palm oil is now an ingredient in more than 50% of packaged foods?

LR: It's not actually difficult but it does take awareness. Just like consumers, we have to ask questions of manufacturers and read every product label to ensure we are not taking on even products that say they are RSPO. If a maker is unable to switch away from palm oil, we look for an alternative that does, and then tell the manufacturer why we can't sell their product and to contact us if they ever change their recipe. We want them to know why we are passing them by, to influence them to change.

PF: What are a couple palm oil free products that you love?

LR: I love our Shampoo Bars and Conditioners and our Dream Chocolates!

Roots Zero-Waste Market also sells soap bars from Our Planet Soap, this issue's featured product.

Are you an activist who works to help save orangutans and the rainforest? Contact us at orangutangang.org@gmail.com and we could interview you for this newsletter!

To learn more, view merchandise, sign petitions, and take the pledge, please visit our website at www.orangutangang.org.