

PROFILE OF RESISTANCE

Amariyanna (Mari) “Little Miss Flint” Copeny

Activist, philanthropist, youth advocate for clean water

“My generation will fix this mess of a government. Watch us.”

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FIGURE 1 COURTESY OF POPSUGAR

Background Information

Born: July 6th, 2007

Mari Copeny is a youth activist born July 6, 2007, in Flint, Michigan.

Resistance

In the spring of 2014, residents of Flint, Michigan, noticed alarming changes in the water. Tests revealed high lead levels in the water they used for everyday drinking. With compromised water sources, community members faced life-altering challenges. The lack of freshwater alternatives also significantly impacted residents. After the city received state of emergency warnings from the governor of Michigan and the President of the United States, eight-year-old Mari acted. She could no longer even use the water to bathe in. Mari wrote a letter in 2016 to then-President Obama urging a meeting with him in Washington, D.C. The letter moved Mr. Obama to visit Flint, Michigan, to witness firsthand the effects of the water crisis. After the visit, the former President approved \$100 million in relief for Flint.ⁱ In 2018, the state of Michigan stopped providing free bottled water to Flint residents. As a youth advocate for clean water, Copeny again answered her community's call by raising over \$280,000 and distributing over a million bottles of water.ⁱⁱ Mari continues to keep issues of environmental racism and environmental justice at the forefront of her climate change advocacy.

Mari continually uses her social media platform to support the children in her hometown. She founded the Dear Flint Kids Project in 2016. She leads several yearly Flint Kids projects that have raised more than \$500,000. Donated funds provide children in Flint, Michigan, with school supplies, Christmas toys, and free cultural movie screenings.ⁱⁱⁱ

Achievements

Mari was the youngest Women's March youth ambassador, has served as a national youth ambassador for the Climate March and a youth ambassador for Equality for Her.^{iv}

Essential Questions

1. Why did Mari decide to act against water pollution in Flint, Michigan?
2. How did Mari resist against Michigan ending its free water bottle program?
3. Mari spreads awareness by utilizing her social media platforms.
 - a. How can social media be used as a tool for important causes?
4. ***“My generation will fix this mess of a government. Watch us.”***
 - a. What does the author mean in this quote?
 - b. Is there a governmental issue your generation would like to fix?
 - c. If so, what is it? How will your generation plan to fix it?

ⁱ <https://www.maricopeny.com/about>

ⁱⁱ <https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/directory/mari-copeny/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://nowthisnews.com/news/meet-mari-copeny-nowthis-next-2021-honoree>

^{iv} <https://awpc.cattcenter.iastate.edu/directory/mari-copeny/>