



Alexis Ringwald

Sometimes youthful enthusiasm gets recognized, especially when it puts older, more “experienced experts” to shame. So it has been for recent college graduate Alexis Ringwald and her cohort, Caroline Howe.

No less than esteemed New York Times columnist and bestselling author Thomas Friedman has this to say when he met the pair in 2009 in New Delhi, India. “I met Howe and Ringwald after a tiring day, but I have to admit that as soon as they started telling me their story it really made me smile.

After a year of watching adults engage in devastating recklessness in the financial markets and depressing fecklessness in the global climate talks, it’s refreshing to know that the world keeps minting idealistic young people who are not waiting for government to act, but are starting their own projects and driving innovation.

“Why did this tour happen,” asked Ringwald. “Why this mad, insane plan to travel across India in a caravan of solar electric cars and jatropha trucks with solar music, art, dance and a potent message for climate solutions?” “Well,” Friedman said, “the world needs crazy ideas to change things, because the conventional way of thinking is not working anymore.”

Now, Ringwald is a co-founder of Valence Energy, a smart microgrid start-up, and has worked in both the India and California offices. Prior to starting the company, Alexis was a Fulbright Scholar to India researching renewable energy finance and climate change at The Energy Resource Institute (TERI) and published "India Renewable Energy Trends," a book for investors and businesses on the most exciting developments in clean energy. In addition, Alexis co-organized the Climate Solutions Road Tour to travel 2,400 miles across India in three solar electric cars to "create, communicate and celebrate" the best solutions to climate change.

Before moving to India, Alexis worked at the German Parliament with the Environment Committee and at the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris. Alexis holds a dual B.A. and Master of Environmental Management from Yale University. She speaks French, German, Spanish and conversational Hindi and enjoys tango dancing and traveling sustainably.

Alexis lectures with vivid power point visuals about climate entrepreneurship in exotic places from as far as India to as close as our own backyard. Using Google Earth, she takes audience members on the Climate Solutions Road Tour during the presentation. She concludes with the tale of how she co-founded Valence Energy and inspires each member of the audience to realize the artist within to create the reality around us.

More about the India Climate Solutions Road Tour

In January 2009, a group of 15 friends from the Indian Youth Climate Network over 2,400 miles across India in solar electric vehicles on a journey of a lifetime to highlight India's local climate solutions and empower youth to take action. The Climate Solutions Road Tour began in Chennai and, over five weeks, stopped in 15 major cities, including Ahmadabad, Bangalore, Delhi, Goa, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Mumbai, Pune and Udaipur, as well as in numerous towns and villages. The group traveled in three solar-integrated Reva electric cars, a CleanStar sustainable biofuel truck, a van powered by used cooking oil and a solar-roofed minivan along with

a solar powered music band called Solar Punch, a group of Bollywood dancers, and a painting art mural project. Along the way, they found biogas plants powering homes that reduce carbon emissions and indoor air pollution; organic farms eliminating chemical fertilizers; green buildings; smart microgrids; water harvesting systems; new forms of environmental education; solar cookers; and clean-tech entrepreneur networks. This inspired group was powered by a passion for its future, and the belief that, as Mahatma Gandhi said, "a set of determined spirits with an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history."

Major newspapers in every town, village, and city along the way lauded the Road Tour. Climate Solutions is 'big news' and publications the magnitude of The Times of India and Hindustan covered the story as well as local newspaper that highlighted the lectures in ecology and performance of the solar powered rock band, Solar Punch that performed on the tour. The 'can do' attitude of this charming road tour team attracted the attention best selling author Thomas Friedman who wrote an Op-Ed about the road tour for the NY Times. The motto 'Be the Change' originally conceived by India's famed leader Mahatma Gandhi continues to encourage all of us now as we confront major climate change and work together to preserve the beauty and environmental sanctity of our planetary eco-system.

Alexis' inspiring message encourages everyone in the audience to 'Be the Change' the motto of valor on the Climate Solutions Road Tour from our daily activates, on a personal scale recycling grocery store bags to larger scale action to develop innovative new energy saving concepts and starting entrepreneurial new green businesses.

More about Valence Energy

Valence Energy develops and deploys "smart microgrid" energy solutions. A "smart microgrid" uses a software to integrate distributed energy generation (ex. solar, wind, biomass, plug-in electric cars, etc) with the building energy consumption to both monitor and control energy supply and demand for a community (e.g. set of city buildings, corporate campus, university campus, cities, housing township, etc). Our solutions help developers, commercial entities, utilities, neighbourhood associations, and campuses increase assurance of power, maximize renewable energy use, lower electric bills, and reduce environmental footprints. Valence was founded in 2008 and has 20 employees and consultants, including the 3rd place university winning engineering team from the 2007 US DOE sponsored Solar Decathlon.