



Partner Spotlight

Delta Institute Offers Deconstruction Job Training

Through two weeks of hands-on training, licensed contractors and renovation/demolition business owners learn basic deconstruction techniques that can help expand their career/business opportunities in this emerging field. Trainees also earn a stipend of approximately \$1,500 for their time. The next sessions begin on **April 11, May 23, and June 20**. For details and application procedures [CLICK HERE](#).

Focus On...

The Residents of River Forest

Never underestimate the power a small group of people can have to change the world! Groups of 12-15 **residents and community leaders** have been meeting in River Forest homes to review the PlanItGreen draft plan and examine specific implementation strategies. Two groups met in March – one to discuss strategies for educating the community about composting and the other to discuss business recycling and a residential food scrap collection pilot. These **thought-provoking** coffee talks have led to other ideas as well, including establishing a community communications network to promote all things green. To review the plan and connect to upcoming events [CLICK HERE](#).

Chicago's First Farm on Wheels

Green Sugar Press and Seven Generations Ahead are partnering to roll out Chicago's very first Truck Farm! Truck Farm Chicago is a biodiesel pickup truck with a mini-farm planted in its truck bed. This **traveling, edible exhibit** brings a unique, rural experience to urban students through educational programming, farming and cooking demonstrations, and partnerships with like-minded organizations.



Truck Farm Chicago will engage communities in exploring where healthy food comes from, empower young people to lead active and healthy lifestyles, and show that good food can be grown anywhere there's sun, space, and creativity. Truck Farm's spring/summer tour will **kick off on Earth Day**, April 22. This farm on wheels will make 100 appearances at schools, farmers markets, festivals, and concerts, prioritizing food deserts and Chicago's underserved communities. [CLICK HERE](#) to get updates, learn how to get involved, and schedule an appearance!

Community Engages Around PlanItGreen

The Environmental Sustainability Plan continues to benefit from the great feedback and implementation commitments received from **recent community forums**. Forums and executive sessions with the Interfaith Green Network, the Building Owners and Managers Association, the Community Business Managers Association, River Forest residents, the Park District of Oak Park, and others have helped to add valuable finer points to the plan.



Upcoming engagement opportunities will include sessions with the Oak Park River Forest Chamber of Commerce, Dominican University, the staffs of the Villages of Oak Park and River Forest, the South East Oak Park Community Organization, a large Community-wide Forum, and River Forest Coffees. To review and give feedback on the plan and participate in forums [CLICK HERE](#).

Tips and Resources

Efficiency Tax Credits – Maximize Your Return!

The April 15th deadline is approaching to claim your **Federal Energy Efficient Tax Credit**. If you have made recent energy efficient home improvements, you should apply for the credit in the 2010 tax year, when the lifetime limit was set at \$1,500. In 2011, the maximum lifetime tax credit will drop to \$500.

To maximize the \$1,500 credit, submit proof of spending \$5,000 on qualifying purchases that were installed in 2009 or 2010. **Qualifying improvements include:** roofing, windows/skylights/doors, HVAC: furnace/CAC/boiler, insulation, water heaters, or biomass stoves. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

Composting Grant Deadline Approaching...

April 15th is also the application deadline for the **Illinois DCEO Food Scrap Composting Grants Program**. The program supports projects that will use composting to divert food scraps and other organic material (excluding yard waste) from Illinois landfills. The Department anticipates that by increasing the quantity of materials composted, these projects will provide new jobs and other economic and environmental benefits to the State of Illinois, advancing the state's composting infrastructure.

The Department encourages the submission of applications from **joint projects** that address regional or multi-jurisdictional composting approaches from any combination of two or more governmental, for-profit, or not-for-profit organizations. For more information [CLICK HERE](#).

CNT Energy Savers

Check out a great way to learn more about energy efficiency for your building. The Energy Savers program, a project of CNT Energy and the Community Investment Corporation (CIC), is one of the most effective energy efficiency programs in the country. The program offers a **one-stop shop** that helps building owners navigate the complexities of investing in energy efficiency. [CLICK HERE](#)

Volunteer Opps

Spring into action with SGA – we have some exciting volunteer opportunities where you can really help us make a difference. To learn more [CLICK HERE](#).

Follow SGA on Facebook and Twitter – spread the word by joining us on our Facebook and Twitter links and by forwarding this newsletter – thanks for your support!

Donate

Help with SGA's **\$50,000 match initiative** by donating to support our work... [CLICK HERE](#) to contribute now. Thank you!



Growing New Ideas

Left: Children on a field trip to St. Ann's farm learn how to plant, hands-on.

Right: Waters Elementary's garden provides children with fresh vegetables and fruits plus the opportunity to beautify their school and neighborhood!

Cook County CPPW Planning for a Healthier Future

Momentum is building with seven (and soon to be ten) Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grant recipients throughout Cook County for which SGA is providing technical assistance. Work plans, to be executed by February 2012, include the following policy, environmental, and systems changes:

- **Chicago Ridge SD127.5:** Development of School Improvement Plan and School Wellness Policy related to curriculum, gardens, and school food; inclusion of gardening in PE/Health curriculum; school garden, composting, and wellness education development plus after-school clubs/activities focusing on nutrition and healthy cooking.
- **Village of Forest Park:** School lunch program reform to include healthy, local food and farmer linkages; design and implementation of a school rooftop garden and curriculum.
- **SD 63 Education Foundation/TLC:** Design and implementation of a community vegetable garden at Apollo School, inclusion of nutrition education, and integration of garden output into youth-led school meal programs.
- **Thornton Fractional High School:** Design and implementation of the school vegetable garden, inclusion of nutrition policy and education, and use of school garden by Culinary Arts students for school lunch program.
- **Oak Lawn Community High School:** Design and implementation of their school vegetable garden and development of sustainable food and composting curricula for Culinary Arts students.
- **Prevention Partnership:** Development of local food sourcing for community corner stores, and design and implementation of two school gardens, curricula, and youth entrepreneur program.
- **AME Fourth Episcopal Church:** Design and implementation of community gardens.

SGA Wins \$25,000 in Whole Foods Chicago Green Giveaway!

The five Whole Foods Market Chicago stores gave their customers a chance to vote for one of five environmental organizations during the WFM Chicago Green Giveaway, held March 9-23. Of the **1,300 votes cast by Whole Foods customers**, SGA earned the most votes and will receive \$25,000, to be generated by a Chicago WFM 5% Day on April 20. The Active Transportation Alliance won the 2nd place prize of \$10,000 and the Chicago Conservation Corps won the third place prize of \$3,000. Congrats to all of the organizations that participated, and thanks to the Whole Foods Chicago marketing staff and regional managers for supporting SGA and our environmental organization colleagues and friends.

Events and Conferences

See You at GreenTown Elgin - April 28, 2011

Registration is now open for GreenTown Elgin, a **one-day conference** packed with useful sustainable strategies and best practices for municipal, private, and community sector leaders. [CLICK HERE](#) for agenda details and sponsor and registration information. The conference will feature:



- Mayor Ed Shock discussing the Future of a Sustainable Elgin
- MPC's Josh Ellis and Openlands' Lenore Beyer-Clow discussing local implementation of regional water conservation plans
- Author Randell Arendt on Integrating Design to Create Walkable, Bikeable, and Green Communities
- Business leaders discussing Wind, Solar, and the New Green Economy
- An overview of the Highland Park Community Sustainability Plan by Mayor Michael Belsky

Third Annual Sustainable Schools Symposium Wrap-up

The 3rd Annual Sustainable Schools Symposium, hosted by the Illinois Green Governments Coordinating Council, Chicago Public Schools Environmental Affairs, and the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences in Chicago was held on April 1st. This symposium was an **inspiring opportunity to exchange ideas** with participants including school and district administrators, regional superintendents, school board members, facilities managers and custodial staff, teachers, school health practitioners, facility planners and architects, school-related non-profits and agencies, and high school student environmental leaders. Speakers and workshops covered topics such as sustainable school facility planning and siting, green facilities management, sustainable renovation and construction, energy efficiency and conservation, environmental education and service learning, water conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable school transportation. This wide-ranging collaboration made for an information-rich day, providing new inspiration for groups throughout the region.