



Seven Generations Ahead

In every deliberation we must consider the impact on the seventh generation.
- Great Law of the Iroquois

December 2011

Then and Now

Though our mission has remained consistent and our work rewarding, this is a great time to take stock in an enriching evolution of SGA's people and programming.

LOCAL FOOD

We started in the local food arena linking struggling small family farmers to markets, and now our work is to build the next generation of leaders through farm to school food access and educational programming.

THEN - 18 CSA Hubs, Meet Your Farmer Events, Linking Farmers to Markets, Connecting Low-Income Families with Local Farm Food, Faith-based Local Food Initiatives, and Education.

NOW - Fresh from the Farm Program, Curriculum Implementation, Teacher Training, School Gardens, Local Farm Expeditions, Truck Farm, and Farm to School Consulting.



SGA's initial education efforts on the importance of sustainable living included family tours of local farms

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY PLANNING

Community-wide sustainability planning and implementation were the founding drivers behind the conception of Seven Generations Ahead, with a strong belief that people support what they help to create.

THEN - LEED Building Policy and Development, Advocacy for Success Indicators and Metrics, Educational Forums on Planning Models, Residential Energy Efficiency and Resource Conservation.

NOW - Oak Park and River Forest "PlanItGreen" Community-wide Planning and Implementation, Highland Park Sustainability Plan Implementation, Community-wide Sustainability Planning Workshops, and new 2012 emerging initiatives in the Chicago metro area and Midwest.

ZERO WASTE

We are working with school children and their adult mentors to make "zero waste" the norm. This zero waste work, we're happy to say, is filtering into their communities as well.

THEN - Workshops on Residential and Commercial Curbside Food Scrap Collection Programs, Pilot Zero Waste Schools Program at Holmes Elementary, and Zero Waste Event Implementation.

NOW - Food Scrap Collection Pilot Program Development linked to Community-wide Planning and Implementation, Cohorts of Zero Waste Schools Across the Metro Area and Chicago, Zero Waste Schools Training, Zero Waste Events Training and Implementation.

EDUCATION

Our educational forums and conferences, most recently through GreenTown, are providing an avenue for community leaders to learn about best practices related to energy, food, transportation, water, waste, economic development, ecosystems, green building, and healthy communities, while connecting learning to on-the-ground planning and implementation.

THEN - Household Energy Efficiency and Resource Conservation Gatherings, Green Home Tours, Healthy School Lunch Conferences and Workshops, Community "Meet Your Farmer" Gatherings, and Renewable Energy Tours.

NOW - GreenTown Conferences in three states, Sustainable Community Planning Workshops, Zero Waste Training, Fresh from the Farm Training, and Sustainability Topic Area Learning Forums.



SGA's initial education efforts on the importance of sustainable living included alternative energy facilities such as this wind farm.

SGA Celebrates Ten Years!

Ten years ago, the use of the word "sustainability" was being debated, global warming was still disputed, and a common response to local food initiatives was a "what the heck are you talking about" quizzical look. Eighteen years ago, the idea for the creation of Seven Generations Ahead was germinated and ten years ago, in November of 2001, we officially began our work as a **catalyst for the development of sustainable communities.**

A lot has happened over the past ten years for SGA, and we are more pleased and committed than ever to be playing a role in realizing the sustainable future that we'd all like to share. The original models for our work came from a few comprehensive sustainable community planning initiatives and educational forum models that we're happy to say reflect a large part of what we do today. Community engagement, metrics, education, and planning and implementation have become the cornerstones of our work, and we're excited to partner with communities and other leading organizations to incorporate core organizing and project development principles into our sustainable communities initiatives.



SGA Executive Director, Gary Cuneen, joins Oak Park Village officials at the groundbreaking of the new, LEED certified Public Works building in 2005.

As we look forward to SGA's next decade, we want to pause and simply say **thank you to our partners and to all of you who in some way have supported SGA**, inspired us, and contributed to our capacity to play a role in this exciting arena. Here's to the next decade!

Gary Cuneen
Founding Executive Director, Seven Generations Ahead

Fresh from the Farm's Recent Recognition

Just Announced! The Mother Nature Network put out a ranking of the most impressive Farm to School programs **across the country**, and Seven Generations Ahead's Fresh from the Farm was listed as number seven!

To read more... [Click Here.](#)

SGA by the Numbers

500...estimated number of teachers trained by SGA's Fresh from the Farm program over the past three years.

2,876...total number of youth and adults served by Truck Farm visits in its inaugural year as a "garden on wheels" visiting food desert communities.

3,600...pounds of compostable foodscrap diverted from the landfill in a year by ONE school working through SGA's Zero Waste Schools effort. Note that the combined number of schools SGA is either currently working with or will be working with in the near future is about 45.

10,000+...cumulative number of attendees at events where SGA provided Zero Waste services.

10...number of GreenTown Conferences held to date, affecting an estimated 200 municipalities in their efforts to become more sustainable.

10,000+...names on the SGA listserv, as compared to "zero" 10 years ago.



The first GreenTown conference was held at Unity Temple in Oak Park in 2007. The 9th GreenTown conference returned to Unity Temple in 2011.

Thank YOU!

SGA's accomplishments over the past 10 years could not have been possible without:

- Our generous **funders** and **donors** who have supported us and kept our revenues growing each year even through difficult economic times.
- Our invaluable **partners** who have walked with us through the years supplementing our efforts, collaborating on projects, providing pro-bono services and networking on our behalf.
- Our dedicated **volunteers** who donated time big and small -- to help with office work no matter how trivial, dig through garbage to support our zero waste efforts, set up tents, tables and chairs at our events, or serve on our board of directors or other committees -- all of it so appreciated.
- Our fabulous **interns** who have come from a wide variety of schools and programs...their dedication to the cause and hunger for knowledge continues to impress us all.
- Our top notch **staff** who work day in and day out implementing our programs and supporting our mission with such commitment and enthusiasm.



Guests attending SGA's first Annual Benefit Dinner in 2003 included Sandy Noel (second from left), Sheila Carter, Principal of Hatch Elementary School (second from right) and Vicki Westerhoff of Genesis Growers (far right).

Donate

To donate in honor of SGA's 10th Anniversary, [Click Here.](#)

act@sevendgenerationsahead.org | www.sevendgenerationsahead.org | (708) 660-9909

Seven Generations Ahead is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization whose mission is to promote ecologically sustainable and healthy communities. SGA advocates for pro-active community solutions to global environmental issues, and works with municipal, business, and community decision-makers to promote green community development, clean, renewable energy, eco-effective products, zero waste strategies, green building design, and fresh, local, and sustainable food raised using healthy practices.

Join us in making 2011 the year of sustainability in the Midwest. Support SGA's work building healthy, sustainable communities by making a donation. [Click Here.](#)

