



Less Is More: Zero Waste Updates

Master Composter Guides Oak Park Schools

Seven Generations Ahead and Oak Park's District 97 elementary schools have begun a partnership with the U of I Extension School Master Composters. Taking the lead at each of five Oak Park zero waste schools is a parent who serves as **Green Team Leader** -- purchasing, and in some cases installing, the compost bins, setting up a system for collecting food scraps, educating students and staff, monitoring the compost bins, and much more.

To help guide the efforts of the Green Team Leaders, SGA solicited the volunteer help of Master Composter Jackie Paine, who has been busy visiting each school and sharing ideas. Jackie plans to collaborate with the Leaders to create a school composting guide plus conduct follow-up visits to monitor the bins and further educate students and staff. Through this exciting new program, the students, teachers, and community have seen a big change in waste flow and learned a lot about our environment.



Join the Conversation!

The Zero Waste Schools Yahoo Group is now online to share ideas and resources for reducing the amount of waste schools send to landfills. Zero Waste partners of all experience levels are **sharing best practices**, asking and answering questions, and leveraging their collective experiences to start, improve, and fine-tune their programs. This collaborative group includes teachers, parents, administrators, students, and members of affiliated non-profits and businesses working with schools. Join us today by emailing shari@sevendgenerationsahead.org.

Get Ahead – Green Tip of the Day

Want to improve your company's bottom line by reducing energy waste? The Delta Institute offers **free energy efficiency assistance** to eligible commercial buildings and industrial sites in Cook County. By identifying and implementing the best energy efficiency strategies for your business, Delta can help you save on operational and maintenance costs. For application forms and eligibility details [CLICK HERE](#).

You Can Make a Difference

Seven Generations Ahead has raised 80% of its \$50,000 target for the Match Funding Campaign, due to end in June 2011. **This funding is critical** to support SGA's ongoing programming and operations. To help us meet our goal [CLICK HERE](#) to make a donation. Thank you for your support!

Counting Our Blessings

PlantGreen is two months into its six-month plan review and revision process, and is gathering valuable feedback from various community groups. On February 16th, the Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest was evaluated by 65 leaders of 17 faith-based congregations as part of the **Interfaith Green Network**. Organizers Sally Stovall and Dorie Blessoff gathered the leaders, who committed their congregations to achieving critical goals to help implement the plan. SGA Executive Director Gary Cuneen and Delta Institute Executive Director Donna Ducharme provided the attendees with an overview of the PlantGreen community engagement process and the core strategies and goals that have been identified. To review the plan [CLICK HERE](#).



Fresh From The Farm Planting New Ideas

Echoing Hillary Rodham Clinton's "It Takes a Village," Seven Generations Ahead (SGA) and its strong network of affiliates and partners are working to create ecologically sustainable, healthy communities for future generations.

SGA is in collaboration with the Healthy Schools Campaign (HSC), to promote the healthy lifestyles of Chicago school children. This year's HSC's **Chef in the Classroom Day** will be held on April 5, 2011, building

on the success of last October's event. Last year's Chef in the Classroom brought 67 chefs to elementary schools throughout the city to conduct cooking demonstrations, vegetable tastings, and healthy eating lessons. This program was created in response to the Chefs Move to Schools initiative launched in June, as part of the First Lady's Let's Move initiative to reverse childhood obesity.

This year's SGA Chef in the Classroom program will offer Fresh From The Farm (FFF) curriculum for participating chefs who may not have experience teaching elementary students. Using a fun, hands-on approach to learning, **FFF reconnects children with their food sources** by teaching them basic nutrition and vocabulary about a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. SGA will help prepare chefs for their classroom visits through webinar training sponsored by HSC.



Details and registration for Chef in the Classroom will be posted soon at HSC's website. [CLICK HERE](#)

Food for Thought

Ames Middle School is in its seventh week of their Healthy Cooking class, which has already covered food preparation, safety, and culture. The program has introduced the 'right brain' method of interpreting food flavor, color, and texture, and walked students up the food pyramid.

Students brought in their own family recipes to share, comparing ingredients from different cultures and different methods of creating a healthy meal. They also took to the table, each creating their own party snack by developing a recipe, tools list, and grocery list for their item, keeping to a budget, and utilizing at least one of the food groups. **"Awesome Fruits on a Stick!"** was voted the students' favorite recipe. By teaming up to make "raw marmalade," "refrigerator pickles," and butter, the kids enjoyed a hands-on introduction to food preservation. Students were also visited by local Beekeeper and Urban Farmer extraordinaire, Shawnece Schneider, for a demonstration on bees and honey.

Don't Miss the FamilyFarmed EXPO

Seven Generations Ahead is preparing to organize and present farm-to-school workshops at the FamilyFarmed EXPO on March 18th. This thought-provoking day of programming will focus on moving school food procurement towards **more healthful, regionally-sourced, and sustainably-produced options**. FamilyFarmed EXPO is a three-day conference, trade show, and food festival for farmers, businesses, individuals, and families, and will be held at UIC. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

A Catalyst for Change

On February 15, 2011, the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) project of the Cook County Department of Public Health held its inaugural **Change Institute** in Rosemont, Illinois. As the CPPW's technical assistance provider, SGA presented and led discussions on farm-to-school programming, healthy food access, and school gardens. Change Institute CPPW grant recipients and their respective partners learned concepts and strategies vital to policy, systems, and environmental change in their own model communities' programs. These model communities will spend the next year exploring ways to make healthy options available, accessible, and convenient for all of their residents.

Collaboration Corner

Pioneering Healthy Communities

The West Cook YMCA, under the leadership of Executive Director Jan Pate, was awarded a **Pioneering Healthy Communities grant** for Oak Park, IL. The project is designed to engage community leaders in developing and implementing plans that promote healthy eating and physical activity policies, systems changes, and environmental changes within their communities and institutions. Seven Generations Ahead executive director Gary Cuneen joined community leaders in Washington, DC this past week to learn from national experts, meet with congressional and city leaders, and begin strategic planning on community engagement processes that will foster good health and well-being in our communities.

Sustainable Chicagoland

Urban Habitat Chicago is working with city residents and businesses to **advocate deconstruction instead of demolition**. Deconstruction salvages components for reuse, diverting a large amount of waste from landfills, while demolition results in thousands of tons of material sent to landfills. For more information [CLICK HERE](#).