



JUNE NEWSLETTER

The Zero Waste Schools newsletter will help you get your school on a path toward generating zero waste through waste prevention, recycling, composting, and food recovery. You'll also find resources that connect zero waste to healthy eating, school gardens, and environmental education and action.

Feel free to share the newsletter with friends, colleagues, and students who are interested in zero waste!

[Sign up for ZWS news](#)

COMPOSTING & RECYCLING

Southside Occupational Academy Honored as a Green Ribbon School



In May, the U.S. Department of Education honored 58 schools across the country as [Green Ribbon Schools](#). The award recognizes schools, districts, and institutions of higher education that reduce environmental impact and costs; improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; and provide environmental education. This year [Southside Occupational Academy High School \(SOA\)](#), a Chicago Public Schools (CPS) vocational school of 270 special needs students between the ages of 16–22 in the West Englewood community, received the award.

[Seven Generations Ahead \(SGA\)](#) congratulates SOA, knowing first-hand how committed SOA is to empowering students to make a positive environmental impact and improve their overall health and wellness.

Read more [HERE](#).

Green Locker Clean-Out Guide

As the school year comes to a close, it's time to clear out paper, notebooks, school supplies, and other materials that have accumulated in students' lockers throughout the year. Much of this material gets thrown away and sent to landfill when it could be reused or recycled. A Green Locker Clean-Out teaches students and staff how to manage materials more sustainably. This Green Locker Clean-Out Guide will take you through all the steps of planning and implementing, providing best practices and tips along the way. Check out SGA's Green Locker Clean-Out Guide [HERE](#).



If your school participates in a Green Locker Clean-Out this year, please send your photos and success stories to zerowaste@sevendgenerationsahead.org.

The WasteShed



If you are left with gently used or unused school supplies, consider donating them to [The WasteShed](#) in Chicago. "The WasteShed provides Chicago with an organized, affordable, and reliable resource for repurposed art, craft, and school materials, and with a dynamic center for activities related to sustainability, art, craft, education, and material culture."

Check out their [calendar](#) for available times to donate or visit.

FOOD RECOVERY

CPS FoodShare Program



[Chicago Public Schools](#) (CPS) has made it a goal to reduce food waste in the over 600 schools in the district. The [CPS FoodShare Program](#) is one of the initiatives that the district has started to reduce the amount of uneaten food that goes to waste, while also giving back to the local communities.

Through the FoodShare Program:

- School representatives select and coordinate with a community organization (food pantry, shelter, church, etc) to schedule pick-ups or drop-offs.
- Students put items that they had taken as part of a school reimbursable meal, but did not consume, in the FoodShare bins at the end of their lunch

period.

- Donations are limited to whole fresh produce and sealed non-perishable food items.
- For each donation to a community organization, school representatives complete a FoodShare Google form to document the number of food items donated.

During the 2014–2015 school year, more than 9,000 pounds of produce were donated to local food pantries. Combining the CPS FoodShare program with SGA's [Zero Waste Schools](#) composting and recycling initiatives has a significant impact on reducing food waste. This also helps achieve the [USDA and US EPA's goal](#) of reducing food waste by 50 percent by 2030.

If you are interested in starting the FoodShare Program at your school, please contact studentwellness@cps.edu.

Mindful Waste

Mindful Waste, an organization based in Barrington, IL, has a mission to eliminate food waste through education, prevention and recovery. It aims to divert as much organic waste as possible from entering landfills through work in local schools. Through food recovery, composting programs and zero waste events, Mindful Waste has worked to bridge gaps by getting good food into the hands that need it and turning food scraps into compost to replenish our soils. To learn more about this great organization and the projects it is working on, click [HERE](#).



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Using Apps to Teach Environmental Education



Technology continues to become increasingly prevalent in schools and education, and many students use tablets at school or other electronic devices with apps.

[Project Learning Tree](#) pulled together two lists of great apps for teaching students environmental science in a fun and effective way. You can view apps for [elementary school students](#), and more advanced ones for [middle and high school students](#). Topics cover areas like climate change, trees, conservation, and weather.

HEALTHY LOCAL FOOD

Chicago is Leading the Way Toward a Good Food Future

Chicago has recently been recognized for leading the way in the Good Food movement. Chicago Public Schools signed on to the Good Food Purchasing Program to provide local, healthy food to the district that consists of nearly 400,000 students. This program will improve food quality and nutrition standards while also hopefully reducing food waste in the district.



Read more about the innovative work surrounding the Good Food movement happening in Chicago [HERE](#).

Harvest of the Month

Celebrate local, healthy food every month with the Harvest of the Month program. It helps schools buy and serve more local food, while teaching students about healthy eating, nutrition, and agriculture. Each month, schools can feature a different local item on their cafeteria menus. This brings more money to local farmers and puts more nutritious food on student's plates. Additionally, the Harvest of the Month program comes with activities and resources for ways to increase education around that food. It's fun, easy, and proven to reduce food waste in the lunchroom. In fact, [waste audits](#) conducted by the Kokua Hawai'i Foundation at local schools, have shown that students throw away 9–21 percent less food on days that serve farm to school meals.



Harvest of the Month is a program of the [Illinois Farm to School Network](#), which is managed by Seven Generations Ahead.

Registration for the 2018–19 school year opened June 1. Learn more about the program and register your school [HERE](#).

The Illinois Great Apple Crunch



The [Illinois Great Apple Crunch](#) is a fun way for schools to celebrate local agriculture and eat delicious, fresh apples. Part of the larger Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch, it is a regional event that takes place across Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. The program is run by the [Illinois](#)

[Farm to School Network](#), which is managed by SGA. Schools will celebrate locally grown apples by "crunching" into apples all at the same time, in addition to educating students on our local food system with fun activities. Last year, 463,981 students and 2,555 adults crunched at 919 sites. Help Illinois reach half a million this year by crunching with us on Thursday, October 11!

Registration for the 2018 Crunch is now open. Learn more about the Crunch and register your school [HERE](#).

SCHOOL GARDENS

Students Create Monarch Garden at Morton Freshman Center

School gardens can provide a place for interdisciplinary education and hands-on learning. Students at [Morton High School](#)'s Freshman Center in Cicero, IL got to learn this first hand with the building of a 5,000-square-foot monarch



habitat and native garden. Kevin O'Toole, the science teacher who spearheaded the project, believes "shifting the education from discrete facts to teaching engineering design and how scientists create solutions to real-world problems" is an important aspect of teaching science.

Read more about the creation of the monarch garden at the Morton Freshman Center [HERE](#).

OPPORTUNITIES

Teenagers Exploring and Explaining Nature and Science (TEENS), A Summer Program for Students in Grades 9-12



In this paid summer program, teens explore nature and learn about college and career paths in environmental science, ecology, and conservation by conducting hands-on scientific investigations in our city's parks, neighborhoods, and natural areas. Teens develop their own research questions and learn to use mobile devices to collect data in the field and to create and share dynamic online maps of project data,

culminating in websites developed to highlight their projects.

Learn more [HERE](#).

Connect with Nature this Summer

Nothing inspires the desire to protect the environment like time spent in nature. Here's a list of opportunities highlighting our amazing region:

- [Forest Preserves of Cook County](#)
- [Forest Preserve District of DuPage County](#)
- [Forest Preserve District of Will County](#)
- [Forest Preserve District of Kane County](#)
- [McHenry County Conservation District](#)
- [Lake County Forest Preserves](#)
- [Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore](#)
- [Illinois State Parks](#)



EVENTS



CCR is a nonprofit organization committed to the creative reuse and redistribution of surplus materials for arts, non-profit, education in the Chicago-area.

[Teacher2Teacher Donation Daze](#)

June 13-16

Teachers: Donate your surplus to help another teacher. Make a reservation by selecting a 30 minute time slot when you can make your donation. Share with your colleagues and donate together. Donations will be organized and distributed throughout the summer at the next Swap Circle for Teachers on August 24-25. All donations are tax-deductible.

[Dig in to Urban Food Systems](#)

June 19, 5:30-7:30 pm

Illinois Green's upcoming program will provide first hand discussion from individuals who work in various fields related to the urban food chain. We'll dig into the life cycle of urban agriculture and how it's impacting our communities. The conversation will be moderated by Molly Meyer of Omni Ecosystems.

**ILLINOIS
GREEN**



A USGBC COMMUNITY

[Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Nature Tour and Bird Walk](#)

June 30, 8 am - 1 pm

Journey west to Will County for a tour of a birding hotspot. There will be frequent roadside stops to look for birds, bugs, bison, and other wildlife in the high-quality prairies, meadows, hedgerows, and old munitions works of the former Joliet Arsenal. This trip is designed especially for beginning bird and nature watchers.



Do you have feedback for Zero Waste Schools?

Contact us with feedback, recommendations, stories to include, and more at zerowaste@sevengenerationsahead.org

Seven Generations Ahead | 708.660.9909 | [Email](#) | [Website](#)

STAY CONNECTED



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