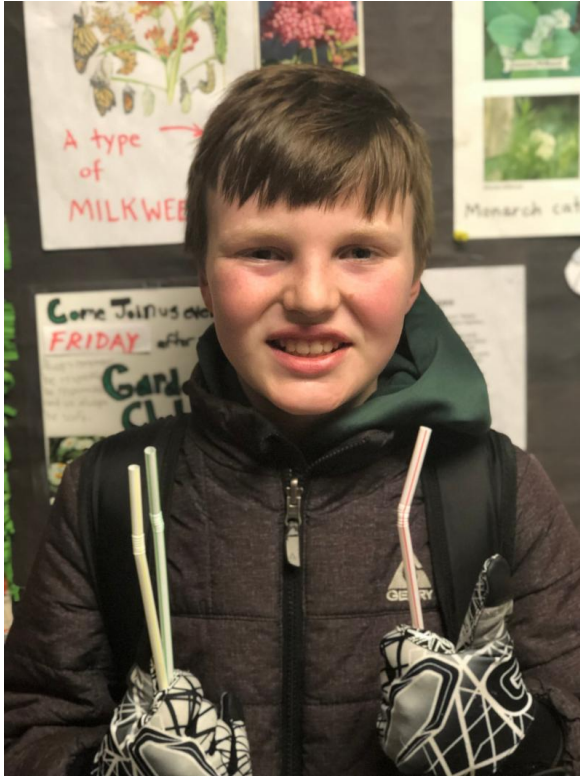




PlantGreen

OAK PARK-RIVER FOREST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



Ethan W., Irving School 4th grader, campaigned to eliminate plastic straws in his school lunchroom.

Small change leads to big waste reduction in OP District 97 schools

Single-use plastics comprise half of the roughly 300 million tons of plastics produced each year globally, according to the [UN Environment Program](#). Much of this plastic is either not recyclable or just not recycled and instead finds its way to all areas of the Earth. If current trends continue, our oceans could contain more plastic than fish by weight by 2050.

Oak Park School District 97 (D97) decided to take action —by taking on spork packets, those little plastic bags that typically come with a combo spoon-fork utensil, a straw, and a tiny folded napkin, all in one convenient packet.

In the fall of 2018, district administration, [Seven Generations Ahead](#), food service staff, Green Team parent leaders, and students concerned about plastics pollution collaborated to unbundle spork packets.

Instead of being provided a spork packet, students are now offered individual sporks and napkins that they can take or leave, and straws are only provided upon request or for students with special needs. This small change in the spork packet has resulted in a big reduction in plastic waste.



The Feb. 12 workshop offered ideas for how to reduce food waste at home.

IGN workshop aims to enlist local 'food waste warriors'

Close to 100 people came out on the evening of Feb. 12 for Interfaith Green Network's food waste workshop at the Oak Park Public Library's main branch. Speakers included **Jen Nelson**, senior program manager for Seven Generations Ahead, and **Adriana Riano**, program manager for the [Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry](#).

Nelson began her presentation by saying, "I'm an American and I waste food," to draw attention to the widespread and common problem of food waste. And why should you care? In Illinois alone, 2.8 million tons of food gets thrown away, said Nelson, using that and other facts to illustrate the scale of the problem.

Riano explained how the Food Pantry works to reduce food waste by rescuing uneaten meals from local institutions such as Rush Oak Park Hospital and Oak Park River Forest High Schools and distributing the food to Pantry clients through the Surplus Project.

Following the presentations, everyone had a chance to visit six stations that offered tips and information on reducing food waste. At one table, for instance, local food writer and cookbook author **Emily Paster** talked about how home food preservation—freezing, canning and fermenting— can prevent food waste.

Judy Klem, a member of the faith-based sustainability group IGN and Oak Park Temple's green team who helped organize the workshop, wanted workshop attendees to take away information that would help them become "food waste warriors."

"All In" for the One Earth Film Festival

The [One Earth Film Festival](#) is returning for its 8th year this March! One Earth Film Festival is



the Midwest's premier environmental film festival, creating opportunities for understanding climate change, sustainability and the power of human involvement. The fest showcases top-issue, thought-provoking environmental films and lead audiences in interactive post-film discussions focused on solutions.

The theme of this year's fest is "All In" because "given the stakes, it's time to go all in for the planet." The schedule includes 28 environmental films covering climate change, conservation, food waste, energy and more.

Screenings will take place **March 1-10** at more than 60 locations throughout Chicago and surrounding counties.

For the full schedule click [here](#).

PlanItGreen partners report on 2018 successes



During PlanItGreen's 7th annual Institutional Leaders Forum, D97 fifth grader Keagan Patrick Bonstell Carey reports on his school garden's success.

PlanItGreen held its seventh annual Institutional Leaders Forum Dec. 5 at the 19th Century Club. The Forum reports on progress toward achieving goals spelled out in the Environmental Sustainability Plan for Oak Park and River Forest.

Among those presenting were **Julie Moller**, River Forest Sustainability Commission member who talked about the pervasiveness of plastic pollution. D97 fifth grader **Keagan Patrick Bonstell Carey** reported on the district's flourishing school gardens. Solar consultant **Mark Burger** gave an update on efforts to bring 100 percent renewable energy to Oak Park and River Forest.

A dozen other organizations presented "snapshots" of their sustainability successes in 2018.

Upcoming PlanItGreen Events

West Cook Wild Ones Conference Feb. 16, 12-5 p.m.



Join West Cook Wild Ones at the Naturally Beautiful Garden Conference. Plant the garden of your dreams. Learn practical garden design strategies. Create habitat for beneficial wildlife. Enrich your community with native plants. Featuring visionary landscape architect Claudia West and award winning garden designer Ben Vogt.

More information [here](#).

Big Idea Pitch Party March 13, 5:30 p.m.

Support Seven Generations Ahead's pitch in the Big Idea contest. SGA's idea, *It's Our Future*, is a program that will educate, engage and empower the next generation of sustainability leaders. The Big Idea Pitch Party is powered by [Entrepreneur Leaders in Philanthropy](#) and the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation.



Register [here](#).

PlanItGreen is a project of the OPRF Community Foundation, facilitated by Seven Generations Ahead, which engages multiple community institutions, and is guided by the OPRF Community Foundation's Communityworks Advisory Board and the PlanItGreen Core Team.



Communityworks provides a coordinated, systems-based approach toward the achievement of community aspirations.

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