



Seven
Generations
Ahead



DECEMBER 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](#)

Oak Terrace students achieve ninety percent waste diversion



"Our impact on the environment is a top concern of students at Oak Terrace School. Our students are truly in tune with what is going on in the world around them and want to take an active role in making a difference," remarked associate principal Shalagh O'Neill.

Last year the students successfully urged the school to eliminate straws. This year they are having an even greater impact by helping their school divert roughly 90% of lunchroom materials from landfills (about 200 pounds-worth) each and every day. Read more [HERE](#).

Tips for reducing waste this holiday season

December is a month of giving. This year, challenge yourself to make your holiday season zero waste. Check out these earth-friendly tips:

Planning your feast:

- Eliminate single-use items when setting the table.
- Compost food scraps. Learn how [HERE](#).
- Be ready with reusable containers for all those delicious leftovers from your table.
- When dining out, bring reusable containers to take home leftovers. Tips for success: Former take-out containers (the kind made of sturdier plastic with clear lids) work well. Label the lids with a marker so you remember to put them back in your car or by your front door after each use (and not in back your kitchen drawer).
- Read *How to reduce food waste this holiday season* [HERE](#).



Gift wrap doesn't have to be wasteful:

- Use cloth napkins, scarves, or reusable cloth bags to wrap gifts.

- Try old maps, newspaper, or easy-to decorate brown paper bags for some added character that can be easily recycled.

Gift ideas:

- Give a Zero Waste Eating Out Kit, complete with a metal straw, reusable utensils, a cloth napkin, a reusable container for leftovers, an insulated coffee mug, a reusable water bottle, and a nice cloth bag to hold it all.
- Compost collection service subscription. Find options at the [Illinois Food Scrap Coalition](#) website.
- Gift [personal carbon offsets](#) to offset a month, 6 months, or even a year of your loved one's greenhouse gas emissions.
- Give the gift of experiences rather than materials. Some fun ideas include museum passes, "lunch on me" coupons, and art or exercise classes.

Holiday cards: If you mail cards, look for options that are both recyclable and printed on recycled paper (glossy photo paper isn't recyclable).

Lights: Recycle broken or unwanted holiday lights at drop-off locations [HERE](#).

Holiday tree recycling: For Chicago drop-off locations click [HERE](#), or check with your local public works department to see if they have a curbside pick up option.

Green Apple Day of Service

What are you doing?

Join us.
GREEN APPLE
DAY OF SERVICE
greenapple.org

The [Green Apple Day of Service](#), a program of the Center for Green Schools, is an opportunity to develop a project that has a sustainable impact. Choose one of their [project ideas](#) or create your own. Participation is open all year round, but to become eligible for the 2020 Green Apple Awards, register and complete your project by Dec. 31.

One Earth Young Filmmakers Contest & Workshops

Enter the [Young Filmmakers Contest](#) by creating a well-researched 3-8 minute film about one of 6 sustainability topics: energy, food, transportation, waste, water, or open space and ecosystems. Winners will be awarded cash prizes/scholarships ranging from \$100-\$1,000 and have their film premiered at the One Earth Film Festival in March.



Who can participate: Students ages 8-25.

Contest deadline: Jan. 5.

The following workshops are available to help get you started. Learn more and register [HERE](#).

- Sunday, Dec. 8: Live Action Filmmaking Workshop for Grades 3-5
- Wednesdays: Filmmaking Help for High Schoolers (FREE)

Get recognized with Green Ribbons Schools

Showcase your school's environmental achievements and let your community know how much you have accomplished to green your school. This program recognizes PreK-12 schools that have active programs and actions to promote and educate students on sustainability. Deadline Jan. 13.



Illinois EPA recycling guidelines



The Illinois EPA has updated posters to address contamination issues with recycling. Find them [HERE](#).

Grant & scholarship opportunities

President's Environmental Youth Award: Students can submit an award-winning project and make a difference. Applicants from all 50 states and U.S. territories are eligible to compete for a regional certificate of special recognition and a national Presidential award. Deadline **Jan. 15**.

Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators: For K-12 teachers who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the environment as a context for teaching their students. Up to two teachers from each of EPA's 10 regions, from different states, will be selected to receive this award. Deadline **Jan. 15**.

USDA 1890 National Scholars Program: For high school students who want to study agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, and related disciplines at a 1890 Land-Grant University. Full tuition, room/board included. Deadline **Jan. 31**.

USDA Equipment Assistance Grants: A way for schools participating in the National School Lunch Program to fund equipment (such as dishwashers, reusable trays and cutlery, bulk milk dispensers, salad bars) that can improve food service and cut waste.

Support Zero Waste Schools

Do you value the work of Seven Generations Ahead and our Zero Waste Schools Program?

Please [support our work](#) by donating today.

THANK YOU!



Events



Climate Strike

Dec. 6

Chicago: Join the youth movement from 11 am – 1 pm by meeting at Crown Fountain in downtown Chicago and then marching to Federal Plaza.

Evanston: Join the [Evanston](#) Rally and Chalk Out at 3:20 pm at Fountain Square in Memorial Park

Call for Presenters at EEIA Annual Conference

Now through Dec. 6

Submit an application to present at the 2020 Environmental Education Association of Illinois Annual Conference which will take place in Makanda, IL April 2-4.



Green Schools Conference and Expo 2020

Register by Dec. 20 for early bird rates.

Don't Miss Out! Mar. 2-4, Portland, Oregon

Go Green Illinois Schools

Jan. 29



Learn about Ravinia Elementary School's amazing greenhouse and the Green Growers student club. Meeting will start at 11:50am in the greenhouse, students will join in at 12:15, and the post discussion will end at 1:00pm.

Seven Generations Ahead
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