



## APRIL 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](#)

This month we aim to provide our readers with helpful resources for these challenging times, while also sharing ways to move forward in our collective work to preserve and celebrate our beautiful planet.

### Earth Day 2020



The 50th anniversary of Earth Day is April 22.

Stay engaged and take action by participating in [EARTHRISE](#) through the Earth Day Network on April 22.

"Over the 24 hours of Earth Day, EARTHRISE will fill the digital landscape with global conversations, calls to action, performances, video teach-ins, and more."

Learn about the history of Earth Day [HERE](#).

### The Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for Illinois Schools is here!

While there is uncertainty about when schools will open again, now may be a good time to plan how your school can reduce food waste to benefit your students, your community, and the planet.

**What's the problem with food waste in schools?**  
Over 7 billion school meals are served each year in the United States. Much of this food, however, is currently feeding landfills instead of nourishing students. This is while one in six children is food insecure. K-12 schools have a unique role in teaching students to value food instead of wasting it.

The Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for Illinois Schools can help.



The Toolkit is a comprehensive resource that provides all schools, no matter their size or location, the tools to tackle the issue of wasted food. It identifies the main sources of wasted food and offers strategies for food waste prevention, recovery and redistribution, composting, education and engagement, and celebrating success.

To learn more and download a pdf of the Toolkit, click [HERE](#).

The Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for Illinois Schools is a project of the [Wasted Food Action Alliance](#) and was developed by SGA in collaboration with partners from the Wasted Food Action Alliance.

---

## Resources for school nutrition providers

SGA extends our deep gratitude to all the school nutrition staff who continue to provide emergency meals to students during this time of increased need.

Here are some resources you may find helpful:

- [National Farm to School COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [No Kid Hungry Emerging Strategies & Tactics for Meal Service During School Closures Related to the Coronavirus](#)
- [Chef Ann Foundation COVID19 resources](#)
- [School Nutrition Association Resources COVID19](#)

If any school or district is experiencing a surplus of school meals or inventory that they are unable to store for later distribution, please consider donating them to a food pantry. Schools in Cook County with food to donate can contact the Greater Chicago Food Depository at [foodresources@gcfd.org](mailto:foodresources@gcfd.org).

---

## DIY litter clean-up



Organized litter clean-ups are being postponed, but don't let that stop you from doing your own clean-up.

Picking up litter is an easy and gratifying way to help the planet while keeping physically distant and enjoying the outdoors.



Here are some tips:

- Wear gloves and wash hands afterward.
- Consider dedicating a pair of old kitchen tongs for the task. Tongs allow you to avoid touching trash altogether, make it easier to grab hard-to-reach trash, and save your back.
- Inspire others by posting before and after photos of the areas you clean up.

---

## Earth Week Virtual Mini Film Festival

The One Earth Film Festival, in partnership with the City of Chicago, invites you to participate in their Earth Week Virtual Mini Film Festival, happening April 20–26.

**ONE EARTH  
FILM FESTIVAL**

Click [HERE](#) to see the schedule and to register for one or more FREE screenings, watch a film in community online, then discuss with experts via live chat on Zoom.

Don't miss the 2020 winners of the Young Filmmakers Contest. To view the winning films from each age category at anytime, click [HERE](#).

---

## Spring time is a great time for birding

Birding is a wonderful way for all ages to learn about nature. It's also an activity you can do from your window or while walking through your neighborhood.



Here are some great resources for beginning birders:

[Easy Ways to Get Kids Birding](#) – In this news post, Audubon experts offer tips and games for getting started.

[Cornell Lab of Ornithology's All About Birds](#) – A bird identification website that allows you to search for birds by name.

[Merlin Bird ID App](#) – Free app from the Cornell Lab. Merlin offers quick identification help for all levels of bird watchers.

Set up a backyard bird feeder or [build your own using recycled materials](#).

---

## More ways to teach kids about the environment at home



### [The Field Museum](#)

Explore natural history with online resources and activities for all ages– lesson plans, field guides, videos, games, and more. Don't miss [The Brain Scoop](#) videos created by the Field's Chief Curiosity Correspondent Emily Graslie.

### [H.O.M.E.School](#) (Alliance for the Great Lakes)

A new series of eight online lessons about the Great Lakes for kids in grades K–8.

### [Wild Classroom Educational Resources](#) (Wild Wildlife Fund)

Great resources for teachers and parents alike. Check out their [Wild Classroom Daily Activity Plans](#), [Conservation in the Classroom](#), and [Wild Classroom Toolkits](#).

### [Keeping Our Kids Curious and Engaged at Home](#) (Sierra Club)

Lots of educational content and fun, safe activities to engage in at home.

### [Learning Lab](#) (US Green Building Council)

These lessons and activities are well-suited for distance learning and are academically rigorous while fostering sustainability literacy.

### [Youth Education Resources](#) (The Nature Conservancy)

Interactive nature-based lesson plans for middle school age students.

[Environmental Education at Home](#) and [Educator Toolkits](#) (National Environmental Education Foundation)

---

## SGA helps OPRFHS take big step toward zero waste



Oak Park River Forest High School took a major step to reduce landfill waste on Feb. 24. On that day, the school, with help from SGA, launched its zero waste program, marking a new way of doing things in its two cafeterias.

This means that students now use sorting station bins for recycling and composting all food scraps and food-soiled paper. Read more [HERE](#).

## EPA presentation and resources for schools

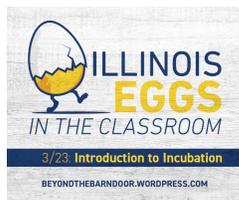
Earlier this month, Zero Waste Schools Consultant Becky Brodsky attended [Go Green Illinois Schools'](#) quarterly meeting where representatives from the USEPA shared information about their many great resources for K-12 schools.



Kara Belle (School Assistance Center Coordinator) and Megan Gavin (Environmental Education Coordinator) discussed the EPA's energy efficiency, environmental health, citizen science, air monitoring, and water sampling resources, as well as their speakers bureau.

Click [HERE](#) for the pdf of their slideshow presentation.

### Eggs in the Classroom goes online



Students, teachers and parents seeking a daily educational video will find information and a touch of humor at Egg in the Classroom, Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom's (IAITC) new e-learning activity.

Chris Wyant, IAITC education manager, and his 6-year-old son, Lincoln, are incubating eggs on their McLean County farm and sharing their experiences. Find their egg-cellent daily video posts, as well as other learning resources, [HERE](#).

### Opportunities

[Action for Healthy Kids School Grants](#): These grants provide schools the resources for students to eat better, stay physically active, and be better prepared to learn. Due to COVID-19, the deadline has been extended to **May 1**.

[West Cook Wild Ones Native Plant Sale](#) Order online through **May 23**. Choose from 90 species of native flowering plants, ferns, grasses, and sedges. Plant pick-up is June 6, 10 am-2 pm, from two locations.

### Events

#### [Lunch & Learn with the IL Environmental Council](#)

Every Mon-Fri, Mar. 18 - Apr. 10, 12-1 pm

Online educational sessions about the issues facing our environment, food systems, infrastructure, and good governance every day during lunch! Registration required. To hear recordings of past webinars, click [HERE](#).



#### [Green Teacher Webinar: The Joy of Garden-Based Education](#)

Wed, Apr. 8, 6:30 pm CST

Presenter: Cathy Law. Learn the fascinating science behind the social, psychological, and physiological benefits of using gardens to teach.

#### [Curated Virtual Resources for You and Your Students](#)

Wed, Apr. 15, 3-4 pm CST

For preK-12 educators, this interactive webinar highlights "best of the best" resources and curriculum curated by GSNN and its collaborators.



#### [Green Teacher Webinar: Earth Partnership's Indigenous Arts and Sciences: Connecting STEM to Indigenous Science](#)

Wed, Apr. 29, 6:30-7:30 pm CST

Presenters: Michelle Cloud & Cheryl Bauer-Armstrong



A collaborative approach between tribal, university, and K-12 partners has the potential to invigorate Indigenous youths in science endeavors and make STEM more relevant to them.

## SGA is participating in the Target Circle Program

You can vote for us and help direct Target's giving to benefit **Seven Generations Ahead** and **Zero Waste Schools**.

Vote by June 30. Every vote counts.  
For full program details and restrictions, click [HERE](#).



**Do you have feedback for Zero Waste Schools?**  
Contact us with feedback, recommendations, stories to include, and more at [zerowaste@sevendgenerationsahead.org](mailto:zerowaste@sevendgenerationsahead.org).

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



This newsletter was created by Seven Generations Ahead.  
Funding for Zero Waste Schools is provided by Peoples Gas, North Shore Gas, and Food:Land:Opportunity, a collaboration between Kinship Foundation and The Chicago Community Trust and funded through the Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust.

**PEOPLES GAS**<sup>®</sup>  
*Community Fund*



**Food:Land:Opportunity**  
Localizing the Chicago Foodshed

**NORTH SHORE GAS**<sup>®</sup>  
*Community Fund*