



Seven  
Generations  
Ahead



# JULY 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

## Microplastic Madness – July 18 screening hosted by SGA



In honor of Plastic Free July, Seven Generations Ahead is excited to host a free screening of Cafeteria Culture’s award-winning movie, **Microplastic Madness**.

**Microplastic Madness** is an optimistic take on the local and global plastic pollution crisis as told through a refreshing urban youth point of view with an inspiring take action message.

Fifth graders from PS 15 in Red Hook, Brooklyn – a community on the frontline of climate change – spent 2 years investigating plastic pollution. Taking on the roles of citizen scientists and community leaders, they collect data, lead community outreach, and inform policy, testifying and rallying at City Hall. They organize a Plastic Free Lunch Day at their school. Over the course of the film, the students dive deep into the root causes of plastic pollution, bridging the connection between plastic, climate change, and environmental justice.

With stop-motion animation, heartfelt kid commentary, and interviews with experts and renowned scientists, this alarming, yet uplifting narrative conveys an urgent message in user-friendly terms to spark scalable, youth-led plastic free action in schools everywhere.

The film has been accepted by 24 film festivals, won 5 awards, and has been screened in over 45 cities across the U.S. and 6 cities abroad.

This virtual screening will be followed by a Q&A facilitated by **Susan Casey** and **Becky Brodsky** from SGA's Zero Waste Schools Program. Joining the Q&A to share their plastic initiatives and ideas about what you can do locally to reduce plastic pollution are:

- **Atsuko Quirk** and **Debby Lee Cohen**, the film's co-directors
- **Andrea Densham**, Director of Conservation Policy at the Shedd Aquarium

Click [HERE](#) to watch the trailer.

Click [HERE](#) to register for the event.

- Registrants can start watching the 76-minute film anytime on July 18 between 10 am-4 pm.
- The Q&A will take place from 5:30-6:15 pm on Zoom.

This event is sponsored by Peoples Gas and North Shore Gas.

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## Plastic Free July is here



[Plastic Free July](#) is a global movement that challenges us all to take action to reduce plastic pollution. While COVID-19 has made avoiding single-use plastics more challenging, there are still many things we can all do to make an impact.

Here are just a few ways to learn more and take action:

- Sign up for the [Plastic Free Challenge](#) for loads of [ideas](#) on how to curb your plastic use. No need to aim for perfection here. Instead, think of it as a time to form new habits by trying to eliminate some of the single-use plastics you routinely use, starting with the easy or most commonly used items.
- Plan a [Plastic Free Lunch Day](#) for your school
- Advocate for federal, state, and local legislation on plastic pollution
- Do a litter clean-up at a beach, park, river, or in your neighborhood (tongs and gloves make it easier and safer)
- Conduct a [home waste audit](#) to better understand your plastic waste
- Watch PBS Frontline's documentary [Plastic Wars](#), and [The Story of Plastic](#)

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## Maintaining School Recycling Programs in a COVID-19 World

In case you missed it...The [Center for Green Schools'](#) recent webinar, **Maintaining School Recycling Programs in a COVID-19 World**, is now available to view [HERE](#).

Speakers:

- Michele Wagner, The Carton Council
- Debbi Dodson, The Carton Council (on behalf of the San Diego Unified School District)
- Nikki Miller, Columbine School, St. Vrain Valley
- Evadne Gianni, Hospitality Green



Speakers shared ideas and resources for running effective classroom recycling programs that can be adapted to the new situations schools may encounter when

they reopen this fall.

## Carton recycling grants – Apply now



The [Carton Council](#) is currently offering recycling grants of up to \$5,000 to help school districts start or expand their milk carton recycling programs. Funds can be used for equipment, education, and implementation support services. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

Recycling cartons can save schools money on disposal costs, reduces cafeteria waste, and helps students develop life-long recycling habits.

Contact your regional coordinator to request an application:

- Barbara Heineken (IL, MI, OH, IN, eastern U.S.): [bheineken@recycle.com](mailto:bheineken@recycle.com)
- Debra Dodson (MN, WI, western U.S.): [ddodson1@mac.com](mailto:ddodson1@mac.com)
- Michele Wagner (Rocky Mountain region, central southern U.S.): [micheleawagner@gmail.com](mailto:micheleawagner@gmail.com)

## The safety of reuse during the pandemic

Concerned about the move away from reusables during the time of COVID-19 and what it means for the future of the reuse movement?

[UPSTREAM](#) is building a movement to "make throw-away go away." They work on developing solutions that can put people back to work, save money, protect public health, and stop plastic pollution at the same time.

Check out UPSTREAM's [Reuse Resources for COVID-19](#).



## Recycle right this summer



It's more important now than ever to recycle properly. Learn about your town's specific recycling guidelines:

- [SWANCC](#) (Cook County)
- [SWALCO](#) (Lake County)
- [SCARCE](#) (DuPage County)
- [Recycle By City](#) (Chicago and other cities)

**Recycling best practices:**

- Materials should be loose in the recycling cart (no bags)
- Empty and rinse containers to remove food or beverage residue
- Plastic lids should go back on the containers
- Flatten boxes
- NO plastics bags, dirty tissue, PPE, or food-soiled pizza boxes

## Bahamas Plastic Movement

The Bahamas is well on its way to being plastic free thanks to the [Bahamas Plastic Movement](#) (BPM). BPM is an environmental nonprofit focused on creating a healthy marine and terrestrial environment without plastic pollution through research, education, art activism, and citizen science.



By participating, youth are leading the way in changing mindsets and shifting the

Bahamas to a plastic free culture. Their efforts have led to a countrywide ban on straws, single-use plastic bags, Styrofoam containers, and plastic utensils which went into effect on July 1. View a video about their amazing Plastic Education Camp [HERE](#).

## It's Our Future

Chicago-area high school youth:  
Interested in working and learning with other young environmental leaders this summer to advocate for climate change solutions?

SGA's [It's Our Future](#) program works to educate, engage and empower the next generation of leaders. Contact Amy, [amy@sevengenerationsahead.org](mailto:amy@sevengenerationsahead.org), to learn more.



It's Our Future helps young leaders advocate for climate change solutions and their future

**Raise your voice by:**

- Producing podcasts
- Writing op-eds
- Participating in forums
- Presenting to local officials
- Planning film screenings

to learn more, contact:

[amy@sevengenerationsahead.org](mailto:amy@sevengenerationsahead.org)

[@itsourfutureyouth](https://www.facebook.com/itsourfutureyouth)



[@IOFYouth](https://www.instagram.com/IOFYouth)



## Events



### [Tackling Plastic Pollution in Lake Michigan](#)

July 8, 7-8 pm

Join Go Green Northbrook for this online meeting to find out where your plastic waste is going and how to prevent it from entering Lake Michigan from a Shedd Aquarium educator.



### [Addressing Environmental Justice for a Sustainable Future](#)

July 15-17, 11 am-3 pm CST

This workshop for high school teachers explores the implications of environmental pollution on our communities.

Cost: \$25 for Catalyst Network members / \$75 for non-members



### [Microplastic Madness film screening](#)

July 18

Join SGA as we host a free screening of this award-winning film. It's an optimistic take on the plastic pollution crisis as told through an urban youth point of view. It will be followed by a live Q&A. Don't miss it!



### [Society For Nutrition Education and Behavior](#)

July 20-24

Join this conference online for sessions on building equity, nutrition education, healthy children and youth, planetary health, and more. CEUs are available.



### [School Nutrition Programs Back to School Conference](#)

July 20-22

Join this annual conference of the Illinois State Board of Education for live webinars, recorded trainings, fact sheets, and exhibitor resources.



### [USGBC Summer Camp](#)

July 27-31

Students entering 7th-12th grades are invited to explore sustainable city planning with the USGBC. Deadline to apply is July 19.





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

