



MARCH 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](#)

Zero Time to Waste, SGA's new classroom presentations

Just in time for Earth Day, SGA is offering *Zero Time to Waste*, our remote classroom presentations for **grades 4-12** that will educate and engage your students with actions they can take to make a difference.

We are currently offering remote presentations on the topics of:

- Plastics pollution
- Reducing waste with the 3 Rs
- Food waste (available for grades K-12)
- Composting



These FREE presentations are currently available only to schools in **Lake County, McHenry County, and Chicago Public Schools**.

Contact Susan Casey, susan@sevengenerationsahead.org, to learn more and to schedule a presentation.

School cafeterias reimaged: The case for reusable foodware

NEW DATE! Tuesday, Mar. 16, 3:00-4:15 p.m. CST

Want to create a better dining experience, protect student health, and cut costs, all while reducing waste and its impact on our environment?

Join SGA for this webinar to learn how your K-12 school district can reap the benefits of transitioning to reusable foodware. School nutrition professionals from two urban districts



will share how they've prioritized reusables and what motivated this change. You'll hear about the impacts on staffing, waste levels, and costs as they make the transition to using dishwashers, bulk milk dispensers, and durable trays, dishes, and utensils.

You'll also learn about the health and environmental impacts associated with toxins commonly found in single-use foodware, as well as the safety of reusables during COVID-19 and ways to minimize disposable packaging for

classroom meals and curbside meal distribution.

Speakers:

- **Sue Chiang**, Pollution Prevention Director, Center for Environmental Health
- **Diane Grodek**, Executive Chef, Austin Independent School District
- **Eliza Pessereau**, Minnesota GreenCorps Waste Reduction Member, Minneapolis Public Schools, Culinary & Wellness Services

A Q&A session will follow the presentation. This webinar is for school nutrition staff, as well as district administrators, procurement, sustainability, facilities, and operations staff. Teachers, parents, and students are also welcome.

Click [HERE](#) to register.

Microplastic Madness at One Earth Film Festival

SGA is thrilled to have had over 90 people attend our screening of *Microplastic Madness* on February 25.

The inspiring film and lively conversation sparked creative ideas on how we can all take action on plastic pollution in our schools, homes, and communities.

In case you missed it, you'll have another chance to view the film at the [One Earth Film Festival](#) on **March 14**. See the full festival line-up below.



One Earth Film Festival



Celebrate 10 years of the [One Earth Film Festival](#) from **March 5-14**. This year's festival theme is "10 Years of Inspiring Change."

Choose from more than 25 outstanding short and feature-length films that shine a light on the most important issues of our time. Learn about solutions and actions to address climate, environmental justice, conservation, waste, and more. Watch online from the comfort of your own home, and participate in filmmaker and expert Q&As.

You can view the winning films from the **Young Filmmakers Contest** when they premiere on **Saturday, March 13, at 3 p.m.** at the Young Filmmakers Awards Celebration.

[Register](#) for free tickets.

Applications are now open for the [Exelon STEM Leadership Academy](#). This **free**, week-long program held at the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) campus is for young women currently in 10th or 11th grade. While connecting with like-minded peers, participants will learn from women working in the fields of STEM and business, visit energy facilities, and learn about different topics including energy efficiency, renewable energy, and climate change.



Successful applicants will spend the week housed at ITT attending educational sessions, improving leadership and professional skills, and tackling a week-long group challenge.

Note: The 2021 Academy is being planned as an in-person, on-campus event but may be converted to a virtual event based on local health recommendations and requirements.

Session dates: Sun., July 11 - Fri., July 16

Application deadline: April 25

Freedom Seekers curriculum



"Freedom Seekers were environmentalists who learned to navigate the land as they escaped slavery. Songs like 'Wade in the Water' and 'Follow the Drinking Gourd' remind us that history has always been connected to the land we occupy.

The lessons featured in this free curriculum, [Freedom Seekers: The Underground Railroad, Great Lakes, and Science Literacy Activities](#), acknowledge the enslaved Africans who had to rely on environmental science principles in their quest for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. These lessons provide educators with cross-curricular teaching opportunities for middle and high school students."

Earth Day is around the corner!

Earth Day is coming up on April 22. Here are some ideas and resources to start planning your celebrations and activities:

- [Cafeteria Culture's Data + Action Litter Clean-Up](#)
- [Sign up for a beach clean up or plan your own](#)
- Sign up to participate in an Earth Day [event](#)
- Start planning your [school](#) or [home garden](#)



Beyond Plastic Pollution online course



Registration is now open for [Beyond Plastic Pollution](#), Bennington College's public policy class taught by the founder and president of Beyond Plastics, Judith Enck. This course focuses on the systemic reasons why millions of tons of plastics enter the ocean each year and how plastic pollution is a climate change issue.

Beyond Plastic Pollution is open to anyone (including high school students) who wants to learn more about plastic pollution and what they can do to address this problem in their own communities.

Course schedule: Wednesdays, 6-7:50 p.m. CST. April 7, 14, 28 & May 5, 12, 26

Course fee: \$100 to audit the class, or \$400 to receive credit and a transcript

Plant a Seed Day



Big Green is hosting [Plant a Seed Day](#) on the first day of spring, March 20. A massive day of action, Plant a Seed Day is meant to inspire people to start growing their own food by taking a simple step: planting a seed. Over the last two years, nearly half a million people have planted 1.6 million seeds in their homes, schools, and communities.

Kiss the Ground documentary for schools

The educational version of the award-winning documentary [Kiss the Ground: For Schools](#) has just been released. Now millions of children and teachers across the world can view this inspiring film for free and learn about drawdown and regeneration.

The educational version contains new scenes not included in the feature film and is available as a digital download or DVD with subtitles in 18 languages.



Take the City Nature Challenge 2021: Chicago Metro

From April 30 through May 3, hundreds of cities worldwide will compete to see who can make the most observations of urban flora and fauna, find the most species, and get the most people participating.



The City Nature Challenge engages city residents and visitors in learning about local nature which will help all of us better understand urban biodiversity.

Anyone can take part on their own, assist others with identification, or even organize a bioblitz at a nearby park. Join [HERE](#).

Grant and other opportunities

[COVID-19 Emergency School Meal Delivery Fund](#): GENYOUth is providing grants of up to **\$3,000 per school** to supply much-needed resources for meal distribution and delivery efforts to get food to students during COVID-19. Applications will be reviewed and approved on a rolling basis.

[Garden For Nature Grant Program](#): This West Cook Wild Ones grant is for local non-profits and organizations who would like to improve the environment and engage the public through a native plant garden. Applicants must be located in West Cook County. **Deadline Mar. 15.**

[Whole Kids Foundation Garden Grant](#): This grant provides \$3,000 to support a new or existing edible educational garden located at either a K-12 school or at a nonprofit organization that serves children in grades K-12. **Deadline Mar. 31.**

[Science First & College First Programs for Chicago Public School students](#)

The Chicago Botanic Garden's Science First and College First program applications are now open. Science First is a free summer science program for CPS students in grades 6-9 that strives to increase students' knowledge and appreciation of the environment and how scientists study the environment. College First, for current CPS sophomores and juniors, offers a paid internship consisting of career mentorship, field ecology and conservation science, and college prep and assistance. **Deadline Apr. 30.**

Events



Going Green Matters Webinar Series

Now through April

Hosted by Go Green Wilmette, these locally-relevant webinars focus on a variety of topics ranging from soil health to gardening to demystifying recycling. Presentations by local experts will be followed by a discussion of how the issues impact us and how we can take action.



Environmental Educators Association of Illinois Annual Conference

Mar. 11-13

This conference is virtual with opportunities for regional field experiences. Sessions cover water-related education, community engagement, programming for a digital world, support for educators during COVID, and non-formal and formal education partnerships.



Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

Loyola Climate Change Conference- Accompanying Youth to a Hope-filled Future

Mar. 15-18

This free virtual conference will focus on how to amplify the voices of young activists. Each evening will have programming around a variety of topics.



Evanston Environmental Association's Wild & Scenic Film Festival

Mar. 19 and Mar. 26, 7-9 p.m.

This film festival offers a line-up of the best in environmental and adventure short films that inspire environmental activism and a love of nature.



CCGA 8TH ANNUAL VIRTUAL CONFERENCE
CONNECTIONS THROUGH GARDENING
PLANTS, PEOPLE & THE ENVIRONMENT
SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2021

Chicago Community Gardeners Association Annual Conference

Mar. 20

This year's theme, "Connections through Gardening: Plants, People and the Environment," explores and celebrates the interconnectedness of shared garden work. Attend to be a part of and support best practices for sustainable living and growing in Chicago. Adults: \$25, Students: \$15

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



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PEOPLES GAS
Community Fund



Food:Land:Opportunity
Localizing the Chicago Foodshed

NORTH SHORE GAS
Community Fund