



OCTOBER 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.

Share the newsletter with friends, colleagues, and students interested in zero waste.

[Sign up for ZWS news](#)

SGA selected as an Observer Organization at COP26 UN Climate Summit

SGA **was recently selected to be an observer organization** at the **COP 26 UN Climate Summit** in Glasgow, Scotland this November. SGA's It's Our Future program will be **sending 6 students** from Chicago Public Schools, Oak Park River Forest High School and Evanston Township High School along with 3 teachers.



The cohort will be admitted to the main "Blue Zone" negotiations venue and will send back video interviews, reports, photos and live zoom feedback on their experience of the proceedings. Additionally, they will attend workshops and exhibits and meet other young climate activists from around the world!

Follow them on social media in order to stay in the loop. On Instagram, follow @iofyouth for the youth perspective and follow @sevengensahead for more detailed policy information. On Facebook, it's @SevenGenerationsAhead and @itsourfutureyouth.

Know a high schooler in Oak Park, River Forest, Evanston, or Chicago Public Schools? Let them know about It's Our Future!

It's Our Future is a project of SGA that equips young leaders to advocate for climate change solutions that benefit all members of the community. Students will have the opportunity to connect with other youth climate activists and become experts on climate justice solutions, fight for change at all levels of government, and much more. To learn more, email Rachel at iof@sevengenerationsahead.org and check them out @iofyouth.

Pumpkin Smash 2021

Saturday, November 6, times vary

The **Pumpkin Smash** is an annual effort by



communities to divert pumpkins from landfills by providing locations for residents to drop-off jack-o-lanterns to be composted. Facilitated by **SCARCE**, events are held each year the Saturday after Halloween.

Find all events throughout the Chicago metro region [HERE](#) (scroll down for map).

This year, the [University of Illinois Extension](#) is partnering with the following 5 Chicago locations to host Pumpkin Smash events, including 4 high schools! **Drop off at these locations is between 10 am-2 pm.**

- Plant Chicago, 4459 S Marshfield Ave, Chicago
- Gary Comer Youth Center/High School, 7200 S Ingleside Ave, Chicago
- Chicago Vocational Academy High School, 2100 E 87th St, Chicago
- Lake View High School, 4015 N Ashland Ave, Chicago
- Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences, 3857 W 111th St, Chicago

GreenTown Rockford

November 12, Embassy Suites, Downtown Rockford

The [GreenTown Rockford](#) conference will address how climate solutions and equity go hand-in-hand to create a healthy and sustainable community. GreenTown brings together mayors, elected officials, and a wide array of community stakeholders, including city administrators, school leaders, teachers, healthcare professionals, and environmental advocates.



The conference features sessions on a variety of topics ranging from water, to economic development, to the outdoors. The following sessions address **K-12 schools**:

- *Strategies to Reduce Food Waste and Greenhouse Emissions* with SGA's Susan Casey and Jen Nelson
- *Urban Agriculture and Gardens* with SGA's Diane Chapeta
- *Solar Energy: The Future is Here for Energy and Employment* with Sandrine Schultz, Director of Energy and Sustainability, Chicago Public Schools

See the full agenda [HERE](#). Register [HERE](#).

Cost to attend: for-profit \$55; government & non-profit \$35; students \$15

The Food Waste Reduction Toolkit at ILCSWMA 2021



Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for Illinois Schools



The Illinois Counties Solid Waste Management Association (ILCSWMA) will be holding its 29th [Annual Conference](#) on **Oct. 21 & 22**. The conference, which will be virtual again this year, is **free and open to anyone** interested in reducing waste in their community.

SGA's Becky Brodsky will be presenting an overview of the *Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for Illinois Schools*. The Toolkit is a comprehensive resource identifies the main sources of wasted food and offers strategies for food waste prevention, food recovery and redistribution, composting, education and engagement, and celebrating success. You can download a copy of the Toolkit [HERE](#).

Teachers, lead a household food waste challenge!

Calling all teachers! Are you interested in leading a seriously fun COVID-safe project-based learning opportunity that students and their households can do together; one that will save them money, encourage healthy eating habits, and contribute to the #1 solution to global climate change? If so, then [register](#) to lead your class as a team in the 4-week “**Make the Most of Food Challenge**” for schools taking place in February 2022.



For a limited time only, request sponsorship for the \$150 registration fee by using the coupon code “WAITLIST2022”. Learn more [HERE](#).

International Compost Awareness Week poster & video contests



Know any creative students who'd like to help spread the word about composting? Encourage them to enter this year's International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) poster and video contests!

The contests are open now through Nov. 1, 2021.

All entries should highlight the theme of ICAW 2022: *Recipe for Regeneration: Compost*. ICAW is May 1-7, 2022.

Poster contest: Anyone in 9th grade (age 14) or older may enter. The winning poster will be reproduced and distributed to thousands nationwide to promote ICAW and will be featured on the Compost Research & Education Foundation website and the US Composting Council website. The winner will receive a \$500 prize.

Video contest: Anyone in grades 4–8 or ages 10–13 may enter. Videos must be 30 seconds or less. All video entries will be shown on the ICAW YouTube channel. The winning video will be highlighted on the ICAW website. The winner will receive a tablet.

Learn more [HERE](#).

ReFED helps schools address food waste

ReFED, the national nonprofit that works to end food loss and waste across the U.S. food system, estimates that uneaten food in K-12 schools—whether from plate waste or overproduction—contributed to the equivalent of 2.89 million metric tons of CO₂ in the atmosphere in 2019. Fortunately, there are many school districts around the country committed to addressing this problem.



This recent [article](#) from *Inside Climate News* describes how Baltimore City Public Schools plans to divert 90 percent of their food waste and recyclable waste from the city's incinerator and landfill by 2040 through innovative solutions such as temperature and humidity sensors for refrigerators and freezers, a robust farm-to-school program, and promoting healthy eating habits.

These strategies are among the many shared through ReFED's comprehensive [Solutions Database](#), which helps school districts and other organizations determine which food waste reduction solutions are the most relevant and impactful for meeting their specific goals. Their [Solution Provider Directory](#) also offers K-12 school districts a database of potential organizations that they can partner with on food waste reduction efforts.

Green your Halloween



Check out SGA's [Green Your Halloween Guide](#) to learn how you can have a low waste, or even zero waste, Halloween.

From costumes and trick-or-treating to parties and donating leftover candy, our guide has lots of great ideas about how to celebrate sustainably while having fun and saving money.

Photo by [Hello I'm Nik](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Illinois Green Ribbon Schools application is now open

The [Illinois Green Ribbon Schools Application](#) is now open! The program recognizes schools that have active programs, actions, and dedication to promote and educate about sustainability. Working in partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Green Alliance accepts applications from schools across Illinois. Showcase your school's achievements and let your community know what steps you've taken to green your school!



Top scoring schools from Illinois will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools program for consideration at the national level.

Contact Liz Wimmer with questions: lwimmer@illinoisgreenalliance.org.

Application deadline: Jan. 10, 2022

Grants and other opportunities

[Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom offers two grants:](#)

- Teacher Project Grants provide up to \$300 to PreK-12th grade teachers for projects that promote agricultural literacy in the classroom. **Application deadline is Oct. 15.**
- Teacher Book Grants provide up to \$250 in books from a pre-selected list of titles to help teachers integrate agriculture into a variety of curriculum areas. **Application deadline: Oct. 15.**

[Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County Waste Reduction Grants:](#) PreK-12th grade public or private schools in SWANCC-member communities are eligible. Grant funds may be used to start or expand programs and projects focused on preventing waste – reusing items and recycling materials or composting food waste on-site or through a commercial service provider. **Application deadline: Oct. 22.**

[Environmental Education Association of Illinois announces a Call for Proposals](#) for the 2022 Conference being held April 8-9 in Yorkville, IL. Sessions should be designed around the theme "Building Connections" with four strands: Building Awareness, Building Bridges, Building Networks, Building Sustainability. **Deadline: Nov. 1.**

[Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant:](#) Applicants must use native Illinois plants in their wildlife habitat area and be prepared to maintain and commit resources to the project for at least five years. Projects need to be implemented on school grounds or another public place. **Preliminary application deadline: Oct. 31. Deadline: Nov. 30.**

[Whole Kids Foundation Salad Bar Grant:](#) Any district or independent school participating in the National School Lunch Program can apply. The Salad Bars to Schools grant program donates salad bars to U.S. schools to give kids daily access to fresh fruits and vegetables. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**

One Earth Film Festival's Young Filmmakers Contest seeks short, 3- to 8-minute environmental films from youth in third grade through age 25. Animated films of 45-seconds minimum are also accepted. There are four \$1,000 top prizes for live action, animation, creativity, and post grad categories. **Submission deadline: Jan. 5, 2022.**

Events

Great Apple Crunch

Oct. 14, noon (or anytime in Oct.)

Join the celebration of fresh, local apples at your school, early childhood site, boarding facility, at home, local farm, community program, or business. While Oct. 14 is the official Crunch date, you can participate in the Crunch anytime in October. No event is too small to register!

The Story of Plastic

Now through Nov.

Watch the Story of Stuff's first feature-length documentary for free on the Discovery youtube channel. *The Story of Plastic* reveals the ugly truth behind plastic pollution, the false solution of plastic recycling, and how the oil and gas industry has successfully manipulated the narrative around it.

The Story of Plastic Panel Discussion

Nov. 9, 7-8 pm

Watch [The Story of Plastic](#) and then join a panel of experts for an informative panel discussion focusing on the impact plastics have on human health, the link between plastics and climate change, the local environmental issues from plastic pollution, and possible solutions to the crisis.

One Earth Film Festival Filmmaking Workshops

Dec. 5, 1-4:30 pm (Grades 6-8) and Dec. 12, 1-4:30 pm (Grades 3-5)

Students will learn the basics of how to make a film from a professional filmmaker. Instruction will cover story, framing, lighting, audio, editing, and production. **Cost is \$40 for River Forest residents and \$45 for non-residents.**

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



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Localizing the Chicago Foodshed

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