



# 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.

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

[Sign up for ZWS news](#)

## CPS partners with SGA on zero waste goals



Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has taken another step towards its goal of diverting 80% of its waste from landfills by launching the CPS Commercial Composting and Recycling Program at [Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center](#) on the city's north side. Part of the CPS Zero Waste program, in collaboration with nonprofit [Seven Generations Ahead](#), the Von Steuben program officially started in February 2022.

It is the first of 10 zero waste lunchroom programs planned for this year. The school put equipment and processes in place to not only ensure more materials get recycled, but to also allow students to compost food waste. Diverting food waste from landfills is critical to both CPS and Chicago's overall sustainability and climate strategy. [According to the U.S. EPA](#), food waste is a key source of methane, one of the most potent greenhouse gases.

Read more [HERE](#).

## Food Waste Action Week

**March 7-13**

Join the [Waste and Resource Action Program](#) (WRAP) and [Love Food Hate Waste](#) in raising awareness about the environmental consequences of food waste during **Food Waste Action Week, March 7-13**. The aim of Food Waste Action Week is to create lasting change that helps deliver the UN Sustainable Development Goal of halving global food waste by 2030. Learn more about how you can get involved [HERE](#).

Looking for ways to help your school reduce food waste? The **Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for**

**Illinois Schools**, developed by SGA and partners in the Wasted Food Action Alliance, has got what you need!

The Toolkit is a comprehensive resource that identifies the main sources of wasted food and offers strategies for:

- food waste prevention
- food recovery and redistribution
- composting
- education and engagement
- celebrating success

The Toolkit's numerous case studies provide examples of these strategies in action.

Download a pdf of the Toolkit [HERE](#).



## One Earth Film Festival

**March 4-13, virtual and in-person**



Join [One Earth Collective](#) for the 11th annual [One Earth Film Festival](#) (OEFF). OEFF is the Midwest's premier environmental film festival creating opportunities for understanding climate change, sustainability, and the power of human involvement. Inspiring and thought-provoking environmental films are followed by interactive post-film discussions focused on solutions.

View the film schedule [HERE](#).

### Young Filmmakers Contest Winners

The winners of the [Young Filmmakers Contest](#) have been announced! This year endangered wildlife was a recurring theme among the 148 submissions from students ages 8 to 25. Many of the short films highlight the impact of weather extremes and plastic pollution and underscore a sense of urgency about the climate crisis. Winning films will be screened virtually in an awards event on **Saturday, March 12, at 3 pm**.

## Plant a Seed Day

Big Green is hosting [Plant a Seed Day](#) on the first day of spring, **March 20, 2022**. 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.



This year Big Green is offering ten grants of \$10,000 each to support nonprofits who are changing lives through gardening. When you [commit](#) to starting a garden, a couple of pots, or just a single seed in honor of Plant a Seed Day you will help unlock grants for incredible garden nonprofits around the country.

## EEAI Annual Conference: *Building Connections*

**April 8-9**

**Hoover Forest Preserve - Yorkville, IL**

Join environmental educators from all over Illinois for the [Environmental Education Association of Illinois 2022 Annual Conference](#) and enjoy two days of incredible learning, networking, and entertainment. The conference includes a

keynote presentation from Dr. Jean-Marie Kauth, Professor of English Language and Literature at St. Benedictine University, exhibits, concurrent sessions, hands-on workshops, and field experiences.



The conference theme, *Building Connections*, is organized in these four strands:

- **Building Awareness** - Information or investigative sessions to support environmental literacy and inquiry of the natural world.
- **Building Bridges** - Highlights of partnerships and projects that promote collaborations between organizations
- **Building Networks** - Sessions focused on careers in the environment and programs connecting early career professionals
- **Building Sustainability** - Special strand focused on Illinois Green Alliance and U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools 3 Pillars of Sustainability

SGA's Zero Waste Schools team will be presenting **Zero Waste Lunchrooms: The How and Why of Reducing Waste** on April 8. Hope to see you there!

Register [HERE](#).

---

## ReFed's Food Waste Policy Finder



ReFED has just updated and relaunched its [Food Waste Policy Finder](#), an online resource developed in partnership with the [Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic](#), which allows users to explore legislative and regulatory policy at the federal, state, and local levels.

The Policy Finder provides a state-by-state breakdown of policies that are helping to reduce food waste, as well as those that are adding to the problem. You can also learn about best practices that have been implemented across the country and serve as a model for other jurisdictions to follow. This can be a great tool to help schools reduce food waste in their cafeterias.

---

## Chicago Conservation Corps Sustainability Leadership Training Series

**Orientalions offered online March 14-16**

The Chicago Conservation Corps is now recruiting for its [Spring 2022 Sustainability Leadership Training Series](#). This program empowers Chicagoans to complete neighborhood sustainability and environmental projects that impact and engage communities across the city.



To participate in the training course, **you must be an adult Chicago resident**, attend an orientation, and submit an application. **Applications are due March 21**.

RSVP for an online or in-person orientation [HERE](#) to learn more.

---

## "Trailblazers for Whole School Sustainability: Case Studies of Educators in Action"

Green Schools National Network's (GSNN) recently released [Trailblazers for Whole School](#)

**Sustainability: Case Studies of Educators in Action**, an edited collection of stories from schools and school districts across the country that highlights best practices and lessons learned in pursuit of health, equity, and sustainability. The book is organized according to the four key impact systems in **GSNN's GreenPrint**: Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction, Culture and Climate, and Facilities and Operations. Each case study concludes with a section in which readers can find actionable tips, recommendations, and best practices for beginning their journey toward whole school sustainability.



**GREEN SCHOOLS  
NATIONAL NETWORK**

---

## Grants and other opportunities

**Garden For Nature Grant Program** This West Cook Wild Ones grant is for local nonprofits 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. 20.**

**Project Green Schools Outdoor Classroom Challenge** Pre-K-12 schools across the country are invited to develop and implement a meaningful outdoor classroom and learning space that awards one Grand Prize of \$10,000 to further enhance an existing space or build a new space. Schools will submit a formal write-up, proposed budget, and design of their outdoor learning classroom/space. **Deadline: Apr. 8.**

**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 **Chicago Public School (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.**

**Whole Kids Foundation Salad Bar Grant** Any district or independent school participating in the National School Lunch Program can apply. The 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.**

---

## Events

### Loyola University's 2022 Virtual Climate Change Conference

**Mar. 14-18**

Join Loyola University's School of Environmental Sustainability for their 2022 Virtual Climate Change Conference: *The Intersection of Climate Change, Human Health, and Justice* Hear from science experts, front-line advocates, and Illinois legislators who are addressing these pressing issues.

### School Composting: The Basics and What to Consider

**Mar. 24, 2-3:30 pm (CST)**

Join the New Hampshire Farm to School Network for this webinar on the basics of composting at your school and what to consider when building your site. Presenters will review case study examples to help spark inspiration when developing your school's composting program.

Seven Generations Ahead | [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.

