



# MAY 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](#)

## Going for Zero Waste at School - Webinar

**Tuesday, May 10, 4-5 pm CST**

Ready to do something about the waste at your K-12 school?

Join the [Zero Waste Schools](#) team at Seven Generations Ahead to find out how to get your K-12 school on a path to zero waste and engage students in the process.



Learn how to:

- Reduce lunchroom waste through prevention, recycling, composting, and food recovery
- Start recycling throughout the school
- Plan an end-of-year Green Locker Clean-Out
- Find the resources you need
- Join the Zero Waste Schools program

You'll also hear about waste reduction efforts in Lake County from Merleanne Rampale from the [Solid Waste Agency of Lake County](#).

This webinar is geared towards teachers, administrators, facilities and food service staff, and parents. The presentation will be followed by Q&A.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

## Green Locker Clean-Out Guide

The end of the school year is approaching and with it the opportunity for a great end-of-year project-- a Green Locker Clean-Out!



With just a little advanced planning, your school can keep mountains of materials out of landfills.

SGA's [Green Locker Clean-Out Guide](#) can help you get started. The guide will take you through all steps

of planning and implementation, providing best practices and tips along the way.

During a Green Locker Clean-Out, sorting stations get set up for students to sort their unwanted locker or desk contents into categories of Donate, Recycle, and Landfill. Donated items can be made available to other students and staff in the school or donated to organizations such as [CCRx](#), the [Waste Shed](#), and [SCARCE](#) or other local nonprofit.

A Green Locker Clean-Out can be a great student-led project.  
Get your Green Team on it!

---

## National Bike & Roll to School Day

Wednesday, May 4 (or any day in May)

It's time to strap on that helmet and pedal with passion! Participating in **National Bike & Roll to School Day** can help communities create safer and more friendly routes for biking and walking to school, build a sense of community or school spirit, and inspire families to walk and bike to school more often.



While May 4th was this year's official date, communities are welcome to celebrate National Bike & Roll to School Day **any day in May** that best fits their schedules. Check out [Walk, Bike & Roll to School's website](#) for resources like event ideas, planning tips, and downloadable materials.

Register [HERE](#) to join the movement!

---

## Plastic Free Lunch Day

Monday, May 16 (or any day in May)

Join Cafeteria Culture and schools around the country and host a [Plastic Free Lunch Day](#) at your school on May 16 or anytime in May.

### What is a Plastic Free Lunch Day?

It's a day to encourage the elimination of single-use plastics during lunch (or to use few as possible). This includes lunches served at school and lunches brought from home.

It's an opportunity to try new ways of doing things. Even if your school experiments with eliminating just one type of commonly used plastic, it can have a big impact if adopted long-term.



Watch Cafeteria Culture's inspiring new [video](#) to learn more.

Here are a few ideas for lunches served at school:

- Eliminate condiment packets; use refillable squeeze bottles or bulk dispensers.
- Offer sporks and napkins individually so students can take only the items they need.
- Make straws available on request, rather than as part of a spork packet.

- Replace single-use utensils with reusable utensils, if your school has a dishwasher. For lunches brought from home, check out SGA's [Turn a Wasteful Lunch into a Zero Waste Lunch](#) flyer.

For further motivation, Cafeteria Culture is offering a fee waiver to view their uplifting and award-winning movie [Microplastic Madness](#) throughout May for any public school that commits to leading a Plastic Free Lunch Day.

---

## Pilot Light Food Education Fellowship



The application for the [Pilot Light Food Education Fellowship](#) is now open. Pilot Light created the Food Education Fellowship to invest in PreK-12th grade teacher leaders who are committed to bringing food education

to their students. In addition to integrated food education lessons, Fellows will partner with an individual or organization in the food space to support student-led advocacy work within their classrooms.

### Fellows receive:

- 26 hours of professional development featuring industry experts
- Regular collaboration with a partner in the food space
- Continuing professional development units in IL
- One-on-one support and coaching
- \$2,000 stipend for participation and evaluation + \$250 for classroom materials

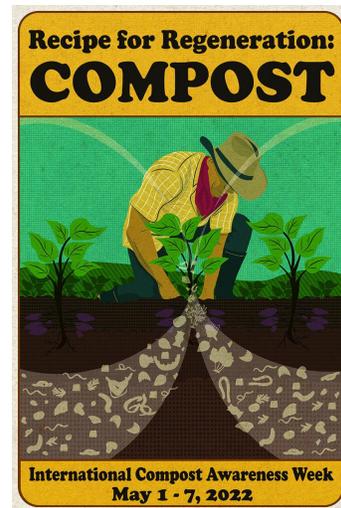
Application deadline is May 23. Apply [HERE](#).

---

## International Compost Awareness Week

[International Compost Awareness Week](#) (ICAW), May 1-7, is the largest education initiative of the compost industry and is celebrated nationwide with a poster contest, tours of compost facilities, school gardening programs, compost workshops, and more. ICAW's goal is to work together to raise public awareness on why we should all be recycling our organics and using compost.

This year's theme, Recipe for Regeneration: Compost, highlights the importance of regenerative agriculture and how compost and organics recycling fit into this system. Employing regenerative agricultural practices, which includes using compost on crops, leads to healthier, more nutrient-rich food and, ultimately, less carbon in the atmosphere through increased carbon sequestration.



Purchase the 2022 ICAW poster, as well as posters from past years, [HERE](#).

---

## Green Ribbon Schools awardees announced



The U.S. Department of Education recently announced the 2022 Green Ribbon Schools, District Sustainability Awardees, and Postsecondary Sustainability Awardees.

Across the country, 27 schools, five districts, and four postsecondary institutions are being honored for their innovative efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, improve health and wellness, and ensure effective sustainability education.

Congratulations to Illinois' awardees!

- [Urban Prairie Waldorf School in Chicago](#) - U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School
- [Community High School District 99 in Downers Grove](#) - District Sustainability Awardee
- [Northwestern University in Evanston](#) - Postsecondary Sustainability Awardee

Learn more about the awardees and the selection process [HERE](#).

---

## Spring & summer volunteer opportunities



Get outside and make a difference with these spring and summer volunteer opportunities:

Join the [Alliance for the Great Lakes Adopt-a-Beach](#) for a beach cleanup. Come together with members of your community and thousands of Great Lakes lovers to help keep our beaches beautiful. Sign up for a cleanup near you.

The [Chicagoland Environmental Network](#) provides a long list of volunteer opportunities for families and teens to get outside and make a difference throughout Chicagoland.

Volunteer for a [Shedd Aquarium Action Day](#) to restore and protect nearby beaches, waterways, and forest preserves by participating in litter clean-ups, coastal and woodland habitat restoration, and river planting.

---

## Grants and other opportunities

[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

### [30th Annual Chicago River Day](#)

**May 14, at over 70 locations from Lake County to Calumet**

Join Friends of the Chicago River to help create a Litter Free Chicago River. Advanced registration is requested. Volunteers who register before May 6 will receive a commemorative thank you T-Shirt.

### [Students Act on Climate webinar](#)

**May 17, 2-3 pm (CST)**

Join the U.S. Green Building Council for a webinar featuring examples of student climate leadership and action. Staff and students from three school districts will share about their district-wide student summit, climate ambassador training program, and climate policy that were driven by and for students.

### [Celebrate Rachel Carson's birthday](#)

**May 27**

Celebrate Rachel Carson, writer, scientist, and ecologist, by checking out the [full bibliography](#) of her inspiring works. For anyone that guides children (personally or professionally), *A Sense of Wonder*, which introduces children to the marvels of nature, is an essential read. For younger children, try *Rachel Carson and Her Book that Changed the World*, or *A Clean Sea: The Rachel Carson Story*.

---

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.