



JUNE 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](#)

Food Waste Warriors in Huntley 158

"I wish we could do this food separating everyday – it was easy," remarked a student as they stood in front of a long row of 5-gallon buckets filled to the brim with uneaten food from lunch. While the students' can-do spirit made the task look easy, they were hard at work collecting valuable data for a lunchroom food waste audit at their school.



Student teams at Conley Elementary School and Martin Elementary School in [Huntley Community School District 158](#) (Huntley 158) each dedicated a part of a school day in May 2022 to conduct

the audits, which were part of a collaboration between Seven Generations Ahead's [Zero Waste Schools](#) team and the district's Food Service Director, Richard Reed.

"We are always looking for ways to incorporate sustainable practices that meet the needs of our students, community, and environment," Reed shared. Since food waste audits are an effective way for schools to identify the most impactful food waste reduction strategies, Reed thought they would be a great next step for the district. The audits were conducted as part of World Wildlife Fund's [Food Waste Warriors Project](#), a program for K-12 schools that provides grants and educational resources to help schools take action on the issue of food waste. The data collected from Huntley 158 will be added to WWF's national database for food waste in schools.

Read the full story [HERE](#), including the results of the food waste audits and next steps.

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!

City of Chicago releases Climate Action Plan

The City of Chicago released its highly-anticipated [2022 Climate Action Plan](#) in early May, setting an ambitious goal to reduce the city's carbon emissions 62% by 2040. The 2022 CAP details five pillars that support the high-level goals of the plan, with Pillar 2 focused on waste reduction.

The Chicago Public Schools Commercial Composting Program, which Seven Generations Ahead helps to implement, is highlighted on page 64: "In 2014, commercial composting and recycling pilots launched at five public schools and today are found in 14 schools. As of 2021, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) intends to expand the program to support 24 schools. The program aims to divert 80% of all cafeteria and kitchen waste from landfills, while also educating staff and students on the impacts of waste reduction and composting."



The CPS Commercial Composting Program will help the City meet its goal to divert 90% of commercial, industrial, and institutional waste by 2030.

The Zero Waste Schools team at Seven Generations Ahead is excited to continue our work in supporting CPS' zero waste efforts as they aim to scale up commercial composting and recycling across the district in alignment with the City's climate strategies.

'It Has to Be a Priority': Why Schools Can't Ignore the Climate Crisis



The recent Education Week article, ['It Has to Be a Priority': Why Schools Can't Ignore the Climate Crisis](#) shares some startling statistics about the major role that K-12 schools play in contributing to climate change.

"School districts are some of the largest landholders in most communities," said Anisa Heming, director of the

U.S. Green Building Council's Center for Green Schools. 'It's kind of baffling' that schools aren't more central to discussions of mitigating climate change, she said."

Not only can schools make changes to building operations and consumption habits in order to significantly reduce their emissions, but they can also play a unique role in

helping shape attitudes about climate and the environment for the 50 million K-12 students in those buildings. Dig in to learn about the successes and challenges of school districts around the country in their efforts to tackle the climate crisis.

Going for Zero Waste at School/webinar recap

Did you miss Seven Generation Ahead's recent webinar, **Going for Zero Waste at School**? No worries! You can view the [recording](#) on our YouTube channel.

The webinar focused on ways to get your K-12 school on a path to zero waste and engage students in the process. It was presented by SGA's Zero Waste Schools team with guest speaker Merleanne Rampale from the Solid Waste agency of Lake County. Read a recap of the webinar [HERE](#).



Plastic Free Lunch Day in NYC was a great success



On May 16, Cafeteria Culture, in partnership with New York City (NYC) Department of Education Office of Food and Nutrition Services & Office of Sustainability and students, led the first NYC-wide Plastic Free Lunch Day. School lunches were prepared without plastic in over 700 NYC elementary

schools!

The goal of Plastic Free Lunch Day is to shift the culture of school food service away from single-use plastics and plastic packaging. Watch this [Bronx News 12 story](#) about the historic day.

Visit [Cafeteria Culture's Plastic Free Lunch Day](#) website to learn how they did it and to find ideas and resources to host a Plastic Free Lunch Day at your school.

Plastic Free July

[Plastic Free July](#) is the global movement that helps millions of people be part of the solution to plastic pollution. Here are just a few ways you can started on a plastic free life:



- Take the [Plastic Free July Challenge](#).
- Start planning ways to transition from single-use plastics to reusable foodware with the Center for Environmental Health's [Ditching Disposables: A Toolkit for Healthier Foodware in K-12 Schools](#).
- Connect with [Plastic Free Restaurants](#) to learn more about their cash subsidy to help schools switch from single-use plastics to reusables.
- Join Beyond Plastic Pollution in hosting a [Plastic Take-Back event](#) at your local supermarket on July 23.
- Get more ideas for reducing single-use plastic in every area of your life with the [Plastic Free Eco-Challenge](#).

Summer volunteer opportunities

Get outside and make a difference with these summer volunteer opportunities!



Join the [Alliance for the Great Lakes Adopt-a-Beach](#) for a beach cleanup.

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

Volunteer for a [Shedd Aquarium Action Day](#) to restore and protect nearby beaches, waterways, and forest preserves.

Grants and other opportunities

[Teenagers Exploring and Explaining Nature and Science \(TEENS\)](#): Applications are now open for the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum's TEENS summer program! Participants "conduct urban ecology and environmental science investigations, and study the nature found in our city's parks, neighborhoods, and forest preserves". This program is for **Chicago high school students ages 16 and older** (including graduating seniors). Teens **earn \$15/hour** in this After School Matters internship program that runs July 5 - Aug. 12. **Application are due by June 18, 2022.**

[Summer Adventures with the Lake County Forest Preserves](#)

- **Hands-on nature and history education programs for children and teenagers ages 4–16.** Programs range from consecutive 3-day and 5-day options to programs you can experience with your child. In-person and virtual offerings are available. Program prices vary. Partial scholarships are available in the case of financial hardship.
- [Teacher Institute Week](#) offers middle and high school teachers the chance to earn CPDU's while learning through immersive onsite experiences led by history and environmental education staff. Teachers can register for a single day or multiple days of the week-long course that runs **Aug. 1-5.**

[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

[Edible Schoolyard Summer Training](#)

June 21-24

Join the Edible Schoolyard Project at their upcoming training session to learn and share core principles and practical tools for engaging students in academics, sensory learning, and culturally responsive lessons in the kitchen, garden, and cafeteria. This year's training will be a virtual event with sessions that explore the fundamentals of edible education. **Registration is free and there is no cap on enrollment.**

[Opportunities to Reduce Food Waste in the 2023 Farm Bill](#)

June 22, noon CST

Attend this webinar to hear from experts about specific recommendations for Congress to include in the 2023 Farm Bill across four key areas of food waste reduction – food waste prevention, surplus food recovery, food waste recycling, and food waste reduction coordination.

[Strategies for Implementing a Green Revolving Fund](#)

June 23, 2-3pm CST

Join the Center for Green Schools for this webinar to learn how to finance sustainability programs with a revolving fund. Presenters will explore the virtuous cycle of the revolving fund, highlight tools used by districts to manage their funds, and showcase stories from k-12 schools who are using the model to support sustainability, including successes and challenges.

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