



# 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](#)

## D103 launches composting district-wide!



“We’re finally doing this!” was a sentiment shared by students and staff at all three schools in [Lincolnshire-Prairie View School District 103](#) last month when the district launched commercial composting and recycling in their kitchens and lunchrooms. With logistical and educational support from SGA’s [Zero Waste Schools](#) team, a zero waste lunchroom program started at Half Day School, which serves Grades 3-5, on Sept. 7, followed by Daniel Wright Jr. High School on Sept. 12, and Laura B. Sprague School, which serves Grades PreK-2, on Sept. 16.

The initiative, spearheaded by D103 parent and [Go Green Vernon Hills-Lincolnshire](#) co-founder Seema Keshav, began before the pandemic, but efforts were stalled due to COVID safety protocols. “I wanted to start this program in our schools because reducing food waste and composting is one of the most effective ways to make a difference to climate change. Composting is a great way of getting our children involved in climate action and our hope is that this will sow the seed for other ways in which we can be more sustainable,” said Keshav. District leadership decided they were ready to roll out the Zero Waste Schools program at the beginning of this school year. Additional project partners include [Quest Food Management Services](#), the [Solid Waste Agency of Lake County](#), and [Collective Resource Compost](#).

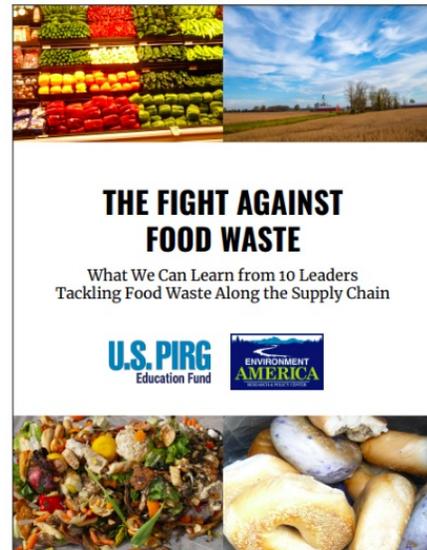
Click [HERE](#) to read the full story.

## SGA and LaSalle Language Academy featured in new national report

SGA is proud to be featured for our work with [LaSalle Language Academy](#) in U.S. PIRG's recently released report, [The Fight Against Food Waste: What We Can Learn from 10 Leaders Tackling Food Waste Along the Supply Chain](#).

The report highlights the efforts of LaSalle, a Chicago Public School (CPS), to reduce food waste, which include a share table and composting. LaSalle is one of 18 schools in the [CPS Commercial Composting Program](#).

And in recognition of the [International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste](#) on Sept. 29, U.S. PIRG, LaSalle, and SGA teamed up to host a **Food Waste Fair** at the school. The event provided an opportunity for media to observe LaSalle's food waste reduction efforts in action and for all of the school's K-8th grade students to learn more about the issue of food waste and their impact through interactive exhibit tables.



## Plastic Free Lunch Day - Nov 2!



[Plastic Free Lunch Day \(PFLD\) USA](#) is hosted by Cafeteria Culture in partnership with the [Urban School Food Alliance](#), which represents 18 of the nation's largest school districts, including Chicago. All schools in the U.S. are invited to participate in this fun and exciting student-led action to reduce single-use plastics in school cafeterias.

Cafeteria Culture's award-winning student-led movie ***Microplastic Madness*** will screen **free now through Nov. 23, 2022**. Get your free movie screening link [HERE](#) and get your K-12 packet of how-to materials [HERE](#). They have everything you need to hold a successful event. Start planning now to get food service director buy-in and to allow ample time to choose a menu that will facilitate going plastic-free.

**Why?** U.S. schools serve 7.35 billion meals annually. Those meals are packed with single-use plastics and make a significant contribution to the U.S. plastic waste stream. PFLD is a great way to start eliminating unnecessary single-use plastics.

## Illinois law requires School Unused Food Sharing Plan



Illinois has taken a big step in combating food waste in schools by enacting [Public Act 102-0359](#), the *School Unused Food Sharing Plan*. The act requires Illinois school districts to incorporate a food share plan into their local wellness policy with a focus on students in need.

The IL State Board of Education (ISBE) has integrated the law into their [Local School Wellness Policy information](#), including this

[checklist](#) and their Local Wellness Policy Template for Schools (see page 8 of the Template, under the "Template and Tools" dropdown menu).

The [Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for IL Schools](#), a project of the [Wasted Food Action Alliance](#) and SGA, is listed as a resource in ISBE's Local Wellness Policy Template. The Toolkit provides guidance that can help you design a food share plan along with lots of other ideas for reducing school food waste.

## It's not too late to Crunch!



The Illinois Great Apple Crunch is an annual celebration of fresh, local apples that takes place during National Farm to School Month on the second Thursday of October. This year's Crunch will take place on **Thursday, October 13 (or anytime in October!)**.

The Illinois Crunch is part of the Great Lakes Great Apple Crunch, which is also celebrated in the neighboring states of Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, and new this year, Iowa! Beginning in 2015 with just 45,000 kids and growing to a whopping 605,000 participants in 2019, the Illinois Great Apple Crunch has engaged kids all across Illinois.

All K-12 schools, early childhood sites, boarding facilities, community programs, businesses, and organizations across Illinois are invited to celebrate the 2022 Crunch. Participants are encouraged to include educational enrichment activities to promote healthy eating habits and share knowledge about where food comes from.

Share your Crunch on social media by tagging [@GreatAppleCrunch](#). Click [HERE](#) and join the celebration!

## 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, have fun, and save money.



## Get recycling bins for your school at SCARCE

[SCARCE](#) (School & Community Assistance for Recycling and Composting Education) currently has **hundreds of bins available at a cost of \$1 per bin!** SCARCE provides innovative and hands-on education programs for schools and organizations, as well as a Reuse Center that offers books and school supplies to public school teachers and non-profit organizations here and around the world.



Drop by any time during their regular business hours to get this great deal on bins and a whole lot more:  
Monday-Friday: 9:00am – 4:30pm; Saturdays: 9:00am – 12:00pm

## Pumpkin Smash 2022



Don't trash it, Smash it! Facilitated by our friends at SCARCE, [Pumpkin Smash](#) is an annual effort to divert pumpkins from landfills by providing locations for residents to drop off jack-o-lanterns to be composted.

This year's events will take place **Saturday, Nov. 5, throughout Chicagoland**. It's a great project for school environmental or service clubs and community

groups. Learn more and find a registered site [HERE](#).

## ICAW poster & video contests

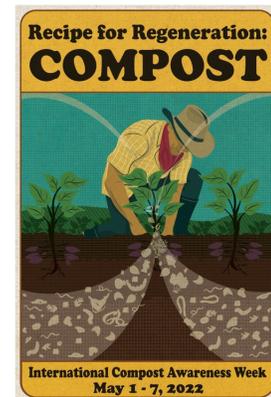
Know any creative students who'd like to help spread the word about the benefits of composting? Encourage them to enter this year's [International Compost Awareness Week \(ICAW\) poster and video contests](#).

**The contests are open now through Nov. 1, 2022.**

All entries should highlight the theme of ICAW 2022: *For Healthier Soil, Healthier Food...Compost!* ICAW is May 7-13, 2023.

**Poster contest:** Anyone age 14 or older may enter. The winning poster will be reproduced and distributed nationwide to promote ICAW. 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 \$100.



## Illinois Green Ribbon Schools

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 across Illinois. Showcase your school's achievements! Top scoring schools will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools program for consideration at the national level.



Learn more at an informational webinar on **Oct. 13 @ 3:30 pm**. Register [HERE](#).

Contact IL Green Alliance with questions: [info@illinoisgreenalliance.org](mailto:info@illinoisgreenalliance.org) or (312) 245-8300. **Application deadline: Jan. 9, 2022 at 5 pm.**

## In case you missed it...

### [Addressing the Plastic Crisis in Your Community - Webinar recording](#)

Last month's meeting of [Go Green Illinois](#), an affiliation of community-based environmental groups, featured an important discussion about plastic pollution and recycling, and how some of our community groups are working to effectively reduce the use of plastic. Find out how you can make an impact in your own town.

### [Center for Green Schools webinar recording](#)

#### *Closing the Loop: The Circular Economy in Schools*

Learn more about the concept of circular economy, how your school system can get on the path to zero waste, what to look out for and where the biggest impacts can be made.

## 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. **Deadline: Oct. 14.**
- Teacher Book Grants provide up to \$250 in books from a pre-selected list of titles to help teachers integrate agriculture into their curricula. **Deadline: Oct. 14.**

**SWANCC Waste Reduction Grant Program** 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. 21.**

**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. **Deadline: Nov. 30.**

**Farm to School Grant for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023** Each grant helps implement farm to school programs that increase access to local food in eligible schools, connect children with agriculture for better health, and inspire youth to consider careers in agriculture. **Deadline: Jan. 6, 2023.**

**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

### Plastic Threats to Human Health

**Oct. 18, 6:30 pm cst**

Learn from Dr. Jenny Davies of Cafeteria Culture how, why, and how much plastics are affecting our health and well-being and what we can do to decrease their prevalence.

### Trends in School Solar

**Oct. 24, 3 - 4 pm cst**

Join the Center for Green Schools and Generation180 for a special webinar highlighting findings from Gen180's recent Brighter Future Report, and then hear from three school district teams about their unique application of solar on their campuses, from agrivoltaics to community solar to electrification.

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



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