



JANUARY 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](#)

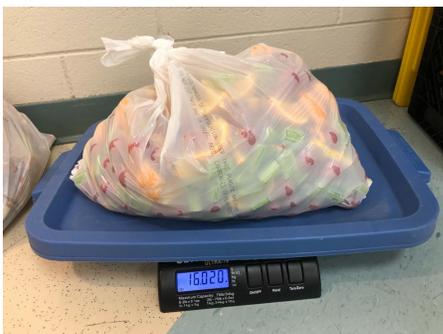
We're grateful for your engagement in 2022 and are excited for all of the possibilities that 2023 holds!



Please consider a [donation](#) to SGA to help us continue to expand our Zero Waste Schools initiatives throughout the Chicago metropolitan region. Your donation will help students address waste and its impacts on climate each and every day in their own schools.

We've got zero time to waste!

Updated! SGA's Lunchroom Waste Audit Guide



Interested in conducting a waste audit in your school lunchroom? Check out Seven Generation Ahead's recently updated [Lunchroom Waste Audit Guide!](#) This document contains step-by-step guidance on how to conduct a lunchroom waste audit, a printable data collection form, and an additional questionnaire for kitchen and custodial staff.

Conducting a waste audit is an important first step on the journey to zero waste, so we hope you find this guide useful.

[Holiday tree and lights recycling](#)

Holiday Tree Recycling:

- [Chicago's 2023 Tree Recycling Program](#) runs from **Jan. 7-22** at 26 parks across the city. Trees can be dropped off anytime during normal park hours. Six locations will also provide free mulch on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Outside of Chicago? Check with your local public works department to see if they have a curbside pick-up option for recycling trees.
- Several [compost subscription services](#) will collect your tree for a fee.



Holiday Lights Recycling:

- Check out [these Chicago locations](#) where you can drop off string lights and extension cords until **Jan. 31**.
- The City of West Chicago is offering drop-off bins for broken lights at [six locations](#) until **Jan. 20**.
- Visit [SCARCE's website](#) for DuPage County locations and collection dates.
- [Earth911's Recycling Search](#): Enter "string lights" and your zip code to find drop-off locations (this is also a great resource for many other hard-to-recycle items).
- Mail-in recycling is also a great option. Try sending in your broken lights to [Holiday LEDs](#) or [Christmas Lights Source](#).

SWANCC's Taking Care of Our Earth extended learning opportunities



[The Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County](#) (SWANCC) recently released

Taking Care of Our Earth extended learning opportunities that offer convenient, digital options for educators that can be implemented all year long.

Designed for students in PreK, Kindergarten, and grades 1-3, these sustainability-focused activities are divided into ELA, creative, math, science, and

general resources. Additional registration options include SWANCC's prerecorded Taking Care of Our Earth video, various Zoom sessions, and additional connectivity through a dynamic QR code.

To register for this opportunity, contact Theresa Greinig at Theresa@swancc.org.

Green Schools Conference

Feb. 27 - Mar. 1, 2023, New Orleans, LA

The Green Schools Conference (GSC) is the only event to bring together all stakeholders involved in making green schools a reality: people who lead, operate, build, and teach in schools. Designed to educate, connect, and inspire, attendees of this three-day in person conference will explore interdisciplinary content during general sessions, while also having dedicated time with peers to work through specific challenges, share best practices, and generate momentum to further green school actions across the country.



The 2023 program will address environmental impact, health and wellbeing, sustainability literacy, equity, and whole school sustainability. Attendees will learn from each other and will have the opportunity to connect with other green school champions.

GSC is presented by the [Center for Green Schools](#) at the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), in partnership with the [Green Schools National Network \(GSNN\)](#).

"Skip the Stuff" in your school cafeteria



Fifth grade students from a [Cafeteria Culture](#) (CafCu) partner school located in Manhattan's Lower East Side recently [testified](#) at the NYC Council "Skip the Stuff" hearing.

"Skip the Stuff" requires restaurants, food delivery services, and online delivery platforms to provide single-use utensils, condiments, and napkins by customer request only. This policy is a money saver for restaurants and reduces single-use plastic pollution that contaminates air, water, soil and bodies. The City of

Chicago recently passed a similar [ordinance](#).

School cafeterias everywhere can also "Skip the Stuff" by changing the default from handing out single-use items to "upon request only." Giving students a choice can keep thousands of unnecessary and unwanted single-use plastic utensils and condiments out of the landfill every day. A "Skip the Stuff" culture not only reduces plastic waste, but also encourages students to bring reusable utensils and other items from home.

Start a "Skip the Stuff" action in your cafeteria with Cafeteria Culture's [free resources](#).

Beyond Plastic Pollution online course

Take a deep dive into the problem of plastic pollution by enrolling in Bennington College's [Beyond Plastic Pollution](#) online course this spring. Taught by Judith Enck - founder and president of [Beyond Plastics](#) - this environmental policy class is **open to people of all ages, including high school and college students**. This class is for those who want to tackle the issue of plastic in their own community, state, and nation.



Wednesdays, 7-9 pm EST, April 19 - May 31
Cost: \$100 to audit or \$400 to receive college credit

Learn more and register [HERE](#). Email capa@bennington.edu for more information.

One Earth Collective Young Filmmakers Contest 2023



The One Earth Film Festival, the Midwest's largest environmental film festival, invites students from 3rd grade up through age 25 to submit their short environmental films to the [Young Filmmakers Contest](#) by **June 25, 2023**.

Winning films will be screened at the Gene Siskel Film Center (Chicago, Illinois) in September 2023 and/or at the One Earth Film Festival in March 2024. Scholarship awards, prizes, and matching grants (from \$100 to \$1000) are available for 3- to 8-minute films or 45+ second animations.

One Earth Collective has also developed an interactive [online curriculum tool](#) for students in grades 3-8 interested in learning the basics of filmmaking. Only cell phones or tablets with editing software are required to participate. **Available for individual (\$35) or classroom (\$99) enrollment.**

NEW! What is composting? poster

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance's new poster: [What is composting?](#) explains the basics of composting and is now available for download. The poster covers key ingredients of compost, the importance of microbes and microorganisms to the composting process, and schematics of different composting systems.



This poster is available for use (with attribution to the Institute for Local Self-Reliance) free of charge, along with a version in Spanish.

Illinois Green Ribbon Schools

The [Illinois Green Ribbon Schools Application](#) deadline has been extended! This 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.

Contact IL Green Alliance with questions: info@illinoisgreenalliance.org or (312) 245-8300. **New application deadline: Jan. 18, 2023 at 5 pm.**

Grants and other opportunities

[USDA 1890 National Scholars Program](#) For high school students who want to study agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, and related disciplines at an 1890 Land-Grant University (see list of qualifying universities at the link above). Full tuition and room/board included. **Deadline: Jan. 31, 2023.**

[2023 Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad Program](#) Provides K-16 teachers and school administrators in the arts, social sciences, and humanities with opportunities to participate in short-term seminars abroad to improve their understanding and knowledge of the peoples and cultures of other countries. 2023 summer seminars will be offered in Jordan, Mexico, and a joint seminar in Argentina/Brazil. **Deadline: Feb. 9, 2023.**

[School Nutrition Foundation Equipment Grants](#) Eligible applicants have the opportunity to win equipment grants, each worth between \$20,000 to \$100,000 of equipment. The recipients will be notified in May of 2023. Applications and photos must be submitted by a school nutrition director. **Deadline: March 31, 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

[Carbon-Free Healthy-Schools Teach-in](#)

Jan. 19, 5 pm

Learn how your school district can take advantage of clean energy benefits made possible by recently passed state and federal bills, including the Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act. From solar to electric school buses, there are many opportunities for Illinois public schools to improve air quality, save money, and reduce their climate impact.

18th Annual Chicago Food Justice Summit

Feb. 8-10, virtually and in person at the Student Center East, UIC750 S. Halsted St., Chicago

The Chicago Food Policy Action Council (CFPAC), in partnership with the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events (DCASE), is hosting this year's 18th Annual Chicago Food Justice Summit, "Future Proofing the Food System."

Attainable Sustainables Institute Day Class 2023

Mar. 3, in-person at SCARCE Education Center, 800 S. Rohlwing Rd (Route 53), Unit D, Addison, IL

Join SCARCE for this fast-paced class packed with resources, hands-on activities, and ideas for the classroom. This class also includes a guided tour at the DuPage County Water Commission and offers 5 PDs. Registration open to teachers from DuPage County schools only. **\$25 non-refundable transportation fee required.**

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.