



APRIL 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

Lincoln Park High School Launches Zero Waste Lunchroom Program



Lincoln Park High School (LPHS) in Chicago Public Schools, a school of 2,060 students, officially launched its zero waste program in the lunchroom and kitchen last month. According to Gary Cuneen, Seven Generations Ahead's (SGA) Founder and Executive Director, "This launch is part of SGA's work to support CPS in establishing food scrap diversion pilots toward the long-term goal of meeting waste diversion goals and expanding composting to more schools across the district."

Launch day at LPHS was truly a community effort, engaging school staff, teachers, and students. SGA's **Zero Waste Schools** (ZWS) Program Manager, Becky Brodsky, and ZWS Program Associate, Rebecca Koshi, were also onsite to assist and assess the impact. The high school is now sorting out liquids and recycling and commercially composting all food scraps, paper napkins, and lunch trays, as well as placing unopened packaged items and whole fruits from the school lunch on a share table for other students to take. LPHS typically filled twenty bags of landfill garbage per day during their five lunch periods. On launch day, they took that number down to just two!

Read the entire article [HERE](#).

Food Waste Prevention Week 2023

Food Waste Prevention Week (FWPW) is a national campaign focused on raising awareness and inspiring action to reduce food waste. In 2022, over 180 partners throughout the food system amplified messaging focused on food waste reduction's ability to save us money, reduce hunger, and protect the environment.



Here are some ways you can get involved this year:

- Encourage your students to submit an entry to the [K-12 Student Art Contest](#). This year's theme is "How Does Reducing Our Food Waste Protect Our Planet?" Prizes will be awarded to both winning students and sponsoring teachers. **Entries accepted through April 22.**
- Check out these awesome [in-class teaching resources](#) for more creative, impactful ways to get your students involved in Food Waste Prevention Week.
- Register to attend a variety of [webinars](#) focused on food waste. There are still a few webinars left to attend before FWPW ends!

At its foundation, Food Waste Prevention Week is a social media campaign. Don't forget to follow [@FoodWastePreventionWeek](#) on Facebook and Instagram, and [@savethefoodweek](#) on Twitter!

Celebrate Earth Day!

Earth Day is April 22! Honor our beautiful planet by trying some of these activities that are all about reducing waste:

- Clean up your schoolyard or neighborhood with Cafeteria Culture's [Data+Action Litter Clean-Up Activity](#).
- Learn more about the problem of plastic pollution by hosting a screening of the film [Microplastic Madness](#).
- Watch Kiss the Ground's [Compost Story](#) (6:46 min) to learn about the benefits of composting and why keeping food scraps out of the landfill is so important.
- Pack a waste-free lunch from home with SGA's [Turn a Wasteful Lunch into a Zero Waste Lunch](#) poster.
- Use SGA's [Green Locker Cleanout Guide](#) to start planning for less wasteful end to the school year.
- Find out why food waste matters, how it impacts biodiversity, and what you can do to reduce it with the World Wildlife Fund's [Food Waste Warrior Toolkit](#).
- Discover how your school can reduce food waste with the [Food Waste Reduction Toolkit for Illinois Schools](#).
- Students can learn about food's impact on nature and then test their knowledge with World Wildlife Fund's [Food & Our Planet](#) course on Kahoot! Academy.



Farm to School collaboration funding coming soon for Illinois schools

New funding will become available in Illinois for school food collaboratives building infrastructure and relationships to move healthy, local foods into schools. The [Lake Michigan School Food](#)



Systems Innovation Hub Grant administered by the [Illinois Public Health Institute](#) will strengthen the K-12 school food supply chain, improving access to nutritious, locally grown, and culturally relevant foods for children in the Lake Michigan region. Seven Generations Ahead is thrilled to be a state partner in this innovative new program!

Starting in late 2023, interested groups of schools, food producers, suppliers, distributors, and their community partners in Illinois should begin to develop their plan and build partnerships to strengthen the K-12 supply chain and marketplace.

The Illinois State Board of Education has released four Farm to School surveys to gauge interest and past experience in farm to school focusing on school procurement of local foods for K-12 schools, IL farmers, processors, and distributors. Be sure to fill out a survey to receive further information about the upcoming Local Food for Schools grant program. You can locate all four surveys on the newly updated Farm to School page on ISBE's website [HERE](#).

Earth Day events around town

Community Compost Collection

April 15, 10 am – 3 pm, Plant Chicago, 4459 S. Marshfield Ave, Chicago

Residents can drop off kitchen waste to be composted and pick up a bucket of finished compost.

Forest Preserves of Cook County - April Events

There are so many opportunities to get out and explore the natural beauty of Cook County. Check out the April calendar to find out about nature walks, birding adventures, scavenger hunts, and more.



Alliance for the Great Lakes Adopt-a-Beach Cleanup Spring Kickoff

Join other volunteers to keep our Great Lakes beaches and shorelines clean. Plan your own cleanup or sign up for an existing one.

Reuse-a-Palooza

April 16, 11 am – 3 pm, The Plant, 1400 W. 46th Street, Chicago

Opportunities to repair clothing and household items, safely dispose of tricky-to-recycle items, donate books, bicycles, and more, and highlight strategies to reduce waste. There will also be a free film screening in partnership with [One Earth Film Festival](#).

Celebrate Earth Day by cleaning up and beautifying a Chicago park

April 22

Join the Chicago Park District and Friends of the Parks for citywide parks and preserves clean up. Community groups, Park Advisory Councils, families, and residents are encouraged to come out to their local parks and do their part in the celebration of Earth Day.

International Compost Awareness Week

International Compost Awareness Week (ICAW) is coming **May 7-13**. ICAW's goal is to increase the diversion of organics from the waste stream through awareness of and participation in composting.

Here are just a few highlights from this year's ICAW:

- [Vermont Organics Recycling Summit's \(VORS\)](#)

Keynote: Brenda Platt from Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) on **May 1**

- Garden and compost bin tour at Maxwell Street Community Garden on **May 7**
- International Café on Zoom on **May 11**
- Make compost in a bag with Sustain Rockford on **May 12**

View the complete list of events [HERE](#).

The [Illinois Food Scrap & Composting Coalition](#) (IFSCC) is also inviting public and institutional libraries across Illinois to join them in celebrating. Read IFSCC's full press release and learn more ways libraries can get involved [HERE](#).



Plastic Free Lunch Day!

April 19



Join New York City, San Diego, Dallas, Chicago, Portland OR, and schools and districts across the country for [Plastic Free Lunch Day USA](#). Everyone is invited - schools, government agencies, and other organizations. Challenge your community to reduce as much single-use plastic as possible on one day to get started reducing plastic every day.

Why host a Plastic Free Lunch Day? 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. Join millions of public school students across the US for this special Earth Month climate action right in their cafeteria! Be sure to [share](#) your

school's efforts with Cafeteria Culture. Whether through stories, photos, or data, you can help lead the plastics reduction effort in schools.

Cafeteria Culture's award-winning student-led movie [Microplastic Madness](#) will screen FREE for all K-12 schools that lead a plastic-free action before April 30. Register for a screening [HERE](#) and get your K-12 packet of how-to materials, which includes everything you need to hold a successful event [HERE](#).

One Earth Collective

Students from 3rd grade through age 25 are invited to submit their short environmental films to the [Young Filmmakers Contest](#) by **June 25, 2023**.



One Earth Collective also invites you to join them for the [Earth Day Mini Film Fest](#) from **April 19-23** in continuing partnership with the [City of Chicago's Office of Climate and Environmental Equity](#).

City Nature Challenge

It's almost time for the [City Nature Challenge](#)! Hosted by Chicago Wilderness, this challenge encourages you to share your observations of wild plants and animals throughout the



Chicago metro region from **April 28- May 1** to see how many species you can find and show the world how diverse our region is.

Take a picture to document what you find, then share your observations through the [iNaturalist app](#) and they'll automatically be included in the

project. Your nature sightings become data that help scientists better understand and protect nature for all of us.

All observations in these counties count for the challenge:

- Illinois: Cook, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, Will
- Indiana: Jasper, Lake, Newton, Porter
- Wisconsin: Kenosha

Grants and other opportunities

[Science First & College First Programs for Chicago Public School students](#) 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. **Deadline April 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.**

[MobilizeGreen 2023 Youth Conservation Program](#) Applications for the 2023 Youth Conservation Program have officially opened. Individuals between the ages of 15-18 are invited to apply for this amazing opportunity. Participants will learn about forest preservation along with beautification, invasive species removal, and trail building. Participants will also receive a weekly stipend of \$350. To apply, click [HERE](#).

Events

[Living Schoolyards Act lecture series](#)

March 8 - May 25 (five-part series)

Join Green Schoolyards America for their webinar series to learn more about the Living Schoolyards Act. Each webinar in this series will highlight the benefits of living schoolyards and their impact on children and the community.

[EEAI 2023 Conference EE In Action](#)

April 14 - 15, Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center, Moline, IL

This year's conference will focus on promoting the development of active and responsible citizens through sessions and workshops that promote hands-on learning and out-of-the-classroom experiences that bring students into the community. These experiences will help students expand their roles as learners and become active stewards of the environment. Registration options can be found [HERE](#).

[Healthy Kids, Not Healthy Trash Cans](#)

April 26, 1 pm - 2 pm CST

The Louisiana Department of Education Division of Nutrition Support and Louisiana Fit Kids is hosting this webinar that will focus on K-12 schools' role in reducing, recovering, and recycling food waste. Guest speakers Melissa Pflugh Prescott from Case Western Reserve University and Stephen Sturdivant from the EPA will lead this insightful conversation.

[Identifying and Addressing Emerging Indoor Air Pollutants](#)

April 27, 3 pm EST

The Center for Green Schools invites you to join their upcoming webinar focusing on opportunities for school health and facilities staff to collaborate in creating healthy learning spaces.

Composting Adventures in Avondale

May 7, 1 pm – 3 pm, Carl Von Linne Elementary School, 3221 N Sacramento Ave., Chicago

A celebration of composting education and demonstration in the Linne Elementary School playground, including English and Spanish language resources. The event will feature snacks made from produce cultivated or rescued in our local community. Community partners include Friends of Carl Von Linne School (FCVL) and Avondale Gardening Alliance.

30th Annual Chicago River Day

May 13, 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 required.

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



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