



# 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](#)

## Carl Von Linné Elementary School is thrilled to relaunch its Zero Waste Schools program



Seven Generations Ahead's Zero Waste Schools (ZWS) program is celebrating another successful launch at a local school. The ZWS team oversaw what was actually a relaunch of the zero waste program at [Carl Von Linné Elementary School](#), a Chicago Public School (CPS) with 648 students. Von Linné has been a part of the program since 2015, when it was one of five pilot schools for the CPS Commercial Composting Program. However, due to Covid-19, the school had to pause the program for a few years. They were excited to finally get back into action with the dedicated work of parents, custodial and food service staff, and administrators.

Becky Brodsky, ZWS Program Manager, said their preparation really showed on launch day. The first day of sorting went smoothly because they reviewed the process in the weeks leading up to the relaunch.

"Everyone was very on board and wanted to make it work," said Brodsky. Brodsky was also impressed that they were dedicated to incorporating zero waste practices throughout the school, not just in the lunchroom. Three of Von Linné's pre-K rooms and their culinary classroom also had bins set up to compost in the classroom.

Read the full article [HERE](#).

## It's time to plan a Green Locker Clean-Out!

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

During a Green Locker Clean-Out, sorting stations are 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 [The WasteShed](#), and [SCARCE](#), or other local nonprofits.

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

**In addition, SCARCE suggests the following ideas:**

- Encourage students to take home supplies they can reuse next year.
- Encourage teachers to stock up.
- Save supplies for students in need at your school.



## ISBE's Local Food in Schools allotments have been announced



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.

**Wondering how much money you can receive through the Local Food in Schools grant application?** ISBE has posted a [list of allotments](#) for all NSLP/NSB programs in Illinois. The email invite to fill out the application will be delivered to your SFA's email box in mid-May.

## Oak Terrace Elementary's lunchroom is getting back to zero waste!



Oak Terrace Elementary School, a school of 426 students in [North Shore School District 112](#), re-launched its zero waste program in the lunchroom and kitchen at the end of last month. School staff, teachers, parents, and students were all eager to return to sorting, making for a smooth transition to their former routine.

Students jumped right back in by separating their liquids, recyclable materials, food scraps, and other organics. Oak Terrace students also used a "snack bin" where they placed unopened factory-sealed items and whole fruits from the school lunch to further promote the reduction of food waste. By sorting the different waste streams, the school diverted over 90% of materials from the landfill, which included over 60 pounds of food waste that will now be turned into a rich soil amendment instead of going to waste. The new routine generated only one bag of landfill waste instead of the nine bags produced on a usual day!

This is only the first step in Oak Terrace's zero waste plans. The school intends to look for other ways to minimize waste, including reducing the amount of milk that ends up in the liquids bucket by educating students about [Offer vs Serve](#). They also plan to promote zero waste lunches from home, reinitiate the use of utensil and napkin dispensers, and eliminate the use of straws. Way to go Oak Terrace!

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## Pilot Light 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 22. Apply [HERE](#).

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## U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Announced

The U.S. Department of Education has released its 2023 [Green Ribbon Schools](#) honorees! These schools and districts have employed practices and policies focused on sustainability in and out of the classroom. These initiatives include reducing environmental impact, utility costs, improving health



and wellness, and implementing appropriate environmentally focused education. Two-thirds of the honorees are schools and districts in underserved communities, proving that sustainability is possible anywhere.

The Zero Waste Schools team is working with Heineman Middle School in [Huntley School District 158](#), one of only two Illinois honorees. The District has the largest solar energy installation on school district property in the state of Illinois, and SGA is excited to be helping them add zero waste practices to their list of green accomplishments.

Read more about the program and all of the honorees [HERE](#).

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## SWANCC Waste Reduction Grant

The Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) is allotting funds to SWANCC member schools to assist in purchasing materials that promote the education and benefits



**Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County**

of waste prevention. Grant coordinators may request up to \$500 to expand their reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting initiatives. More details about the grant can be found [HERE](#).

The [application](#) deadline is November 10.

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## How schools and families can take climate action by learning about food systems



News about the climate crisis inundating our inboxes and TV screens alerts us to the urgent need for drastic global change. Given this, it's not surprising that one [study](#) surveying thousands of young people found most respondents were worried about climate change, with over 45 percent reporting that worries about climate change affected them daily.

The good news is that engaging with food systems presents a major opportunity to act on the climate crisis. Read more about how families and schools can take action [HERE](#).

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## 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.**

[Youth Outdoor Equity Leadership Fund](#) The Children & Nature Network invites young leaders between the ages of 16 and 30 to request up to \$500 to grow professionally as a leader in the movement or to implement projects that create change in equitable access to nature, community health and well being, and justice. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**

[MobilizeGreen 2023 Youth Conservation Program](#) Individuals between the ages of 15-18 are invited to apply to become a Youth Conservation Crew (YCC) Member. Participants will learn about forest preservation along with beautification, invasive species

removal, and trail building. Participants will also receive a weekly stipend of \$350. The first YCC session begins **June 11**.

## Events

### [Living Schoolyards Act lecture series](#)

**Mar 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.

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

**May 13, 9am-12pm at over 70 locations from Lake County to Calumet**

Join Friends of the Chicago River to help create a Litter Free Chicago River. You'll need to register for advanced registration.

### [Carbon Free Healthy Schools Webinar](#)

**May 16, 4pm**

Join [Carbon Free Healthy Schools](#) to learn how we can use Illinois' historic new climate law to decarbonize our public school buildings and save school districts millions in annual energy costs.

### [Planning for Long-Term Electric School Bus Success](#)

**May 18, 1pm cst**

Learn about planning for long-term electric school bus success with the Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE). CTE has partnered with World Resources Institute (WRI) to present a must-attend webinar for school district administrators, transportation managers, and anyone involved in the planning and implementation of ESBs and supporting infrastructure.

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

**May 27**

Celebrate Rachel Carson, writer, scientist, and ecologist, by checking out the complete [bibliography](#) of her inspiring works. For anyone that guides children (personally or professionally), [The 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](#).

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