



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](#)

Heineman Middle School's Roadmap to Zero Waste

What do you do when you want to reduce lunchroom waste at your school, but your waste hauler can't provide composting service? You make a roadmap! [Seven Generations Ahead's](#) (SGA) [Zero Waste Schools](#) (ZWS) program is excited to pursue a new project that guides schools through the process of waste reduction at the source - curbing waste before it even makes its way into the cafeteria. SGA was thrilled to work with [Heineman Middle School](#) to collect crucial data for the roadmap.



The ZWS team partnered with Richard Reed, Director of Food Services for [Huntley Community School District 158](#), who is keen on implementing waste reduction measures, including commercial composting. Since the district and SGA were not able to identify a hauler that could pick up food scraps from the schools, creating a Zero Waste Roadmap presented the opportunity to make strides toward waste reduction in other ways, which will also ultimately benefit other schools in the county. Read more [HERE](#).

New national report highlighting benefits of hiring K-12 sustainability & IAQ staff



The Center for Green Schools recently released a new report and toolkit that provide key resources to support advocates in making the case for hiring sustainability and indoor air quality (IAQ) staff in K-12 schools. [Managing Sustainability and Indoor Air Quality in School Districts: A Profile of Staff in the K-12 Sector](#) provides insights from a national survey on the financial costs and benefits of hiring PK-12 sustainability and environmental health staff to drive better working and learning conditions within schools.

[Making the Case for K-12 Sustainability Staff: A Toolkit for Success](#) is a resource for those advocating to hire sustainability staff at their organization. The toolkit's case making facts, staffing examples, job descriptions, and reporting structures will provide much needed guidance to districts interested in hiring sustainability staff.

GreenTown: The Future of Community

June 22

Triton College, River Grove, IL

[GreenTown: The Future of Community](#) will bring communities across the Chicago metropolitan area together to focus on climate & equity as they tackle climate change and work to achieve measurable sustainability outcomes. The conference agenda covers a broad range of topics, including energy, transportation, waste management, workforce development, water conservation, technology innovation, and equitable solutions to the climate crisis. By bringing together the public and private sectors from around the region, GreenTown cuts across boundaries and helps create more vibrant and sustainable communities.



SGA's own Jen Nelson and Becky Brodsky will be presenting alongside Mayor Katrina Thompson from the Village of Broadview about the [Cross Community Climate Collaborative \(C4\)](#), a project that is being funded by the USDA Composting and Waste Reduction Grant Program. C4 is a model that works with municipal governments to develop food scrap collection programs for residents and to implement the Zero Waste Schools program in environmental justice communities.

GreenTown is geared towards mayors and other elected officials, city managers, public works directors, parks and recreation directors, planners, developers, builders, architects, landscape architects, engineers, school leaders, teachers, healthcare professionals, environmental advocates, and others interested in sustainable community development.

Register [HERE](#).

Go Green Illinois' Sustainable Food Management meeting recap and recording

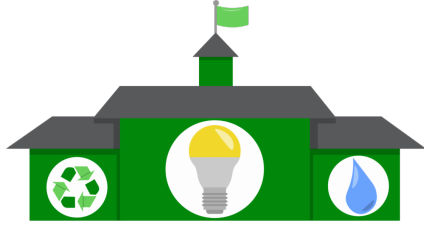
At last month's [Go Green Illinois](#) meeting, SGA's Jen Nelson and Becky Brodsky, along with other expert panelists, participated in an informative discussion about sustainable food management in our communities. Presenters addressed why reducing food waste is so important and how suburban communities are tackling this challenge through food composting in multi-unit residential buildings, curbside compost collections programs, school food sharing programs, and restaurant composting. To view the recording, click [HERE](#).



Illinois Green Schools Project celebration

Last month the [Illinois Green Alliance](#) celebrated schools across Illinois that have worked hard to implement sustainability projects for their schools and communities through the Illinois Green Schools Project.

Over 170 educators, 1,790 students, and 47



ILLINOIS GREEN SCHOOLS PROJECT

Half Day's story, click [HERE](#).

Illinois Green Schools Project for SY 2023-2024 kicks off in October 2023 and runs through the end of May 2024. [Registration](#) will be open from **Aug. 16 - Sept. 29, 2023**.

professional mentors participated in this project! This led to 16 schools taking on projects related to this year's optional theme of "Path to Net Zero", 12 schools focusing on waste reduction, and 7 schools working on habitat restoration. To see the full list of schools click [HERE](#).

Kudos to everyone at Half Day Elementary School, one of SGA's Zero Waste Schools, that was awarded the Path to Zero Waste Award. To read

ISBE's Local Food in Schools allotments have been announced

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

This grant will help schools in Illinois access and purchase domestic local foods for distribution in the lunchroom. This program will strengthen the food system for schools and help to build a resilient local food chain and expand local and regional markets with an emphasis on purchasing from historically underserved producers and processors.



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 a few ways to start going plastic-free.

- Take the [Plastic Free July Challenge](#).
- Start planning ways to transition your school from single-use plastics to reusable food ware 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 reusable.
- Get more ideas for reducing single-use plastic in every area of your life with the [Plastic Free Eco-Challenge](#).
- Read [case studies](#) about schools' efforts in reducing their plastic waste.
- Watch [inspiring videos](#) about plastic waste solutions.
- Get [involved with other nonprofits](#) involved in plastic reduction efforts.



SWANCC Waste Reduction Grant

The Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County (SWANCC) is allocating 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.

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. Click [HERE](#) to apply. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**

[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. Program prices vary. Partial scholarships are available in the case of financial hardship.

[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 nature 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 \$15.40/hour in this After School Matters internship program from June 27 - Aug. 4. **Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.**

Events

[Benchmarking Sustainability Metrics for Healthy & Resource Efficient Schools](#)

June 15, 2 - 3:30 p.m. cst

Join this interactive webinar from the Center for Green Schools to find innovative approaches for tracking school sustainability data. Hear from school district leaders and industry experts about innovative approaches to benchmark and manage energy, water, waste, and indoor air quality data. Attendees will have the opportunity to connect with peers on successes and overcoming challenges in managing big data to create healthier, more efficient schools in small breakout conversations.

[Virtual Greenhouse Gas Accounting Workshop](#)

June 20, July 19, August 24, 1 - 2:30 p.m. cst

The Center for Green Schools is hosting a three-part deep dive workshop for K-12 school and school district staff who are leading the climate or sustainability strategy for their organization and want to develop a greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions baseline to help set climate action goals and boundaries. Each workshop session will be held virtually and feature case studies, industry expert presentations, and opportunities for attendees to dive deeply into GHG program planning and data organization.

[Natural Solutions Tool - Basics Training](#)

June 27, 11 a.m.

Join the Trust for Public Land and Friends of the Chicago River for a live virtual demo/training of the Natural Solutions Tool. This online training will educate participants on how to use nature-based solutions for improving the health of bodies of water. To register, click [HERE](#).



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