



SEPTEMBER 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](#)

Serving up Sustainability: From Restaurants to the Home Kitchen

Oct. 18, 3 - 4:30 pm



Join [Illinois Green Alliance](#) for a webinar on sustainability and waste reduction in food service. This webinar will discuss the detrimental effects of waste in the food industry and provide solutions to this problem. According to a 2021 study from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the food industry accounts for more than one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions. Industry experts, including

SGA's own Becky Brodsky, will share methods that restaurants, school cafeterias, and homeowners can utilize to reduce waste and increase sustainability. Attendees will learn ways the food service industry can conserve energy, water, and other resources through waste prevention and improving waste management practices.

Speakers include:

- **Anthony Myint**, Executive Director at Zero Foodprint
- **Zak Dolezal**, Chef and owner at Duke's Alehouse and Kitchen
- **Becky Brodsky**, Zero Waste Schools Program Manager at Seven Generations Ahead
- **Kyleen Rockwell**, PE, AIA Senior Building Performance Analyst at Interface Engineering

To register for the event, click [HERE](#).

[World Wildlife Fund's food waste resources](#)

for the classroom

As the school year begins, so does the accumulation of food waste in school cafeterias and kitchens. Luckily, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) provides engaging resources that can help schools tackle this problem.

The WWF Food Waste Warriors [K-12 activity guides and lessons](#) provide students with information to help them think critically about their food waste and analyze their actions to minimize their ecological footprint.



In addition to these guides and lessons, the WWF has created a **NEW** educational video, [Why Does Food Waste Matter?](#) to show students how food is grown and why wasting food has a negative impact on the environment. Be sure to share this educational and engaging video with your students!

Farm to School local procurement day

Sept. 28, 2 – 4 pm, Janie's Mill, Ashkum, IL



Join [Illinois Farm to School Network](#) for a mill tour and a farm-to-school procurement conversation. The event will take place at Janie's Mill in Ashkum, IL and will provide information about locally milled wholesale grains that can be delivered directly to schools in Illinois, how to develop secondary processing for schools unequipped to bake on site, and will share grain-based recipes adapted for food service.

This tour will also include a current Janie's Mill customer, Connie Crawley of Lincoln SD27, who will share her method to procure local grains and how to utilize them in school lunches. **Register for the tour [HERE](#).**

Plastic Free Lunch Day

Join Cafeteria Culture and schools around the country by hosting a [Plastic-Free Lunch Day](#) at your school on **Wednesday, November 8**.

Plastic Free Lunch Day is a day for schools to start eliminating single-use plastics during lunch (or use as few as possible) in both lunches served at school and lunches brought from home. It's an opportunity to try new ways of doing things. Even if your school experiments with eliminating just one type of commonly used plastic, it can have a big impact if adopted long-term.



Cafeteria Culture's Plastic Free Lunch Day [resource page](#) is filled with information to support your event, including flyers, plastic surveys, and letter templates.

Hosting a screening of their award-winning film [Microplastic Madness](#) is a great way to kick off efforts. **All K-12 schools can view the film for free Oct. - Nov. 2023!**

Here are a few ideas to reduce plastic waste in lunches served at school:

- Replace condiment packets with refillable squeeze bottles or bulk dispensers.
- Offer sporks and napkins individually so students can take only the items they need.
- Eliminate the use of straws.
- If your school has a dishwasher, replace single-use utensils with reusable utensils.

To learn more about the program, click [HERE](#).

International Compost Awareness Week 2024 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, 2023. All entries should highlight the theme of ICAW 2023: **COMPOST... Nature's Climate Champion!** ICAW is May 5-11, 2024.

Poster contest: Anyone around the world age 14 or older may enter. The winning poster will be reproduced and distributed to thousands nationwide to promote ICAW and will be featured on the Compost Research & Education Foundation website and the US Composting Council website. 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.

Pumpkin Smash 2023

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 Pumpkin Smash will take place on **Saturday, Nov. 4**. It's a great project for school environmental or service clubs and community groups.

Interested in hosting a Pumpkin Smash at your school or in your neighborhood? Since city approvals must be submitted to your county recycling coordinator at least 30 days in advance of the event, now is the time to start planning! Refer to SCARCE's [How to Host a Pumpkin Collection](#) guide for more information and register your site [HERE](#).



Registration is now open for the 2023 Illinois Crunch!

[The Great Apple Crunch](#) is an annual celebration of fresh, local apples that takes place on the **second Thursday of October**, during National Farm to School Month.



The Illinois Crunch is part of the Midwest Apple Crunch, which is also celebrated in the neighboring states of Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. 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.

The Illinois Great Apple Crunch is an excellent way to get into local food procurement and provides a way to celebrate purchasing local food. Your Crunch can take

on any form that will work best for your site. Connect your local orchard to the Crunch and you've got a match made only in Illinois!

To register, click [HERE](#).

Registration is now open for the Illinois Green Schools Project!

The Illinois Green Alliance's [2023-24 Illinois Green Schools Project registration](#) is now open! This year-long project encourages collaboration between students, teachers, and staff in K-12 schools to devise and implement creative no- to low-cost energy, water, and waste reduction initiatives and sustainable practices within their school.

Participating schools receive support throughout the year from a volunteer sustainability professional who assists with project design and implementation, free subscriptions to a sustainability curriculum database, and a green classroom certificate program for staff or faculty. **Schools may also apply for a mini-grant of up to \$500 to fund their initiatives.**



The Illinois Green Schools Project will offer a [Q&A session](#) on **Tuesday, September 12th at 3:30 pm** and another [Q&A session](#) on **September 19 at 12:00 pm**. These sessions are for interested educators, school staff, parents, and mentors who want to learn more about the program. You can also view this [video](#) for an overview of the program.

School registration ends Sept. 29.

Grants and other opportunities

CHS Foundation Classroom Grant CHS Foundation provides \$500 grants each year to PreK-12 teachers who have classroom projects that use agricultural concepts to teach reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and more. **Deadline: Sept. 15.**

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom is offering two grants for Illinois teachers.

- **Teacher Project Grants** provide up to \$300 to PreK-12th grade teachers for projects that promote agricultural literacy in the classroom. **Deadline: Oct. 20.**
- **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. 20.**

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 of waste prevention. Grant coordinators may [apply and request](#) up to \$500 to expand their reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting initiatives. **Applications are due Nov. 10.**

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 on other public property. **Deadline: Nov. 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.**

Events

September Adopt-a-Beach: A Great Lakes Day of Action

Sept. 23

Join thousands of Adopt-a-Beach volunteers to clean and celebrate Great Lakes shorelines.

Faith in Place's 2023 Green Team Summit

Oct. 8-11

Join Faith in Place to experience diverse faith and spiritual practices and learn how they interweave with environmental care. The free summit will feature four sessions, diverse speakers, and plenty of opportunities for networking. There are options for in-person and online events. Register [HERE](#).

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



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