



OCTOBER 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](#)

Green your Halloween

Check out SGA's [Green Your Halloween Guide](#) for helpful tips on how you can make your Halloween low or even zero waste.

From costumes and trick-or-treating to parties and pumpkins, our guide has creative ideas about how to celebrate sustainably, have fun, and save money.

Small actions can make all the difference in creating a more sustainable celebration. Try buying your pumpkins locally and composting them at the end of the season. For costumes, visit a thrift store or organize a costume swap with people in your neighborhood.

Looking for more guidance? Plan your zero waste Halloween event with the help of SGA's [Zero Waste Schools Event Guide](#). The guide features general advice on eliminating waste no matter the event. For example, get volunteers to help with sorting stations, consider foods that do not require utensils, and find decorations that can be reused and repurposed.

Remember, zero waste is a path, and even small steps can make a difference!



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

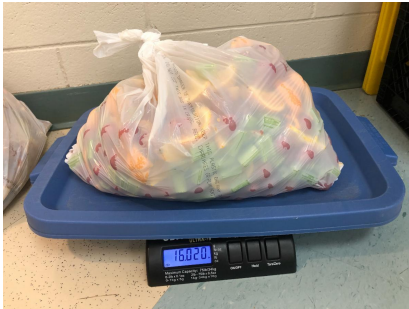
environmental or service clubs and community groups.

Composting pumpkins has many benefits:

- Avoids landfill greenhouse gas emissions from decomposing organics
- Produces a useful, nutrient-dense soil amendment
- Pumpkins are 90% water which is great for our soil, but not our landfills



Food Waste Resources from the Institute of Humane Education



Currently, the U.S. school system has no infrastructure or comprehensive strategy in place to reduce the quantity of food waste generated from school lunches. This leads to enormous amounts of food going to the landfill and the consequent generation of greenhouse gases. Organizations like the [Institute for Humane Education](#) have compiled [resources](#) for educators to address this issue with their students.

Included in the list of resources is Vox's video, [Food Waste is the World's Dumbest Problem](#), which helps students understand why food is wasted and explores possible solutions to this massive problem. There are also lesson plans and guides to help educators start the conversation around this topic. [Food Waste: An Educator's Guide](#) supplies questions geared toward different grade levels.

Illinois Green Ribbon Schools

The [Illinois Green Ribbon Schools Application](#) is currently accepting submissions! This program acknowledges schools with active initiatives and unwavering dedication to fostering sustainability awareness and education. In collaboration with the [Illinois Board of Higher Education](#), Illinois Green Alliance invites applications from schools across the state. Participating in this program provides an excellent opportunity to highlight your school's green initiatives. Schools that achieve top scores will have the chance to be nominated for the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools program at the national level.



Contact IL Green Alliance with questions: info@illinoisgreenalliance.org or (312) 245-8300. **Submit applications to greenribbon@isbe.net by Dec. 22.**

Serving up Sustainability: From Restaurants to the Home Kitchen

Oct. 18, 3 - 4:30 pm

Serving Up Sustainability

From Restaurants to the Home Kitchen

Webinar | October 18 | 3 PM



Join the [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 will provide solutions to this problem. Attend to 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](#).



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

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!**

To learn more about the event, 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.

Webinar Recap: Making the Case for Reuse & Waste Prevention

Interested in how to move reuse forward in your school and/or community? Last month, Busch Systems held an informative webinar featuring panelists from three leading NGOs working to advance reuse and waste prevention. The discussion centered around making reusables more accessible and on the possibility of widespread adoption of waste prevention systems in local communities.



Click [HERE](#) to view a recording of the webinar.

Grants and other opportunities

Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom offers two grants

- 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.**

EPA Environmental Education (EE) Grants EE grants support various agencies in creating environmental education projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship and help provide people with the skills to take responsible actions to protect the environment. This grant program provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques. Eligibility requirements are listed [here](#). **Applications are due Nov. 8.**

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.**

USDA Farm to School USDA is now accepting applications for the next round of USDA Farm to School Grants, which support local child nutrition programs in serving more fresh and local foods. **Deadline: Jan. 12, 2024.**

Events

Reuse-a-Palooza - Halloween Edition!

Oct. 15, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

This semi-annual event is an opportunity to dispose of unwanted clothing and household items in a sustainable way. In honor of Halloween, the October event will feature a costume swap. For a list of acceptable items, click [HERE!](#)

Busch Systems Presents Implementing Centralized Waste Collections

Oct. 17, noon CST

Learn about the potential of centralized waste collection which shifts responsibility for handling personal waste from custodians to individuals. The webinar will feature case studies from both the private and public sectors.

SCARCE Teacher Open House

Oct. 24, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m.

SCARCE Open House helps teachers plan for educational training days, discover new materials, learn about field trips to their Environmental Education Center, and fun ideas for creative reuse projects! All teachers are welcome - PreK -12th grade, both public and private schools.

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



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