



Seven  
Generations  
Ahead



# NOVEMBER 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](#)

## Webinar recap - Serving Up Sustainability from Restaurants to the Home Kitchen

Anthony Myint  
Executive Director,  
Zero Foodprint

Zak Dolezal  
Chef and Owner,  
Duke's Alehouse and  
Kitchen

Becky Brodsky  
Zero Waste Schools  
Program Manager  
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Kyleen Rockwell  
PE, AIA Senior Building  
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Damon Henrikson, moderating  
Director of Marketing & New  
Business Development  
Made To Measure

ILLINOIS GREEN ALLIANCE

Seven Generations Ahead's Zero Waste Schools (ZWS) Program Manager Becky Brodsky presented on the work of ZWS to reduce waste in schools at Illinois Green Alliance's October webinar, "[Serving Up Sustainability: from Restaurants to the Home Kitchen](#)." Brodsky presented alongside four other panelists

whose presentations also centered around the mission to increase sustainable practices in their respective industries. Over 200 individuals registered for this recorded webinar and 82 people from a variety of fields were in attendance. Although the Illinois Green Alliance is based in the state, webinar attendees were located across the country.

The first presenter was Anthony Myint, the executive director of [Zero Foodprint](#), a nonprofit that partners with restaurants to crowdfund grants for farmers to adopt regenerative farming practices. A celebrated chef, restaurateur, and climate activist, Myint had made sustainability a core priority in his restaurants, but after years in the industry he realized that he wanted to have a broader impact. He co-founded Zero Foodprint to help farmers adopt regenerative practices that restore soil health, an effective way to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change. Restaurants that participate in Zero Foodprint add a minimal fee of 1% to the diner's bill, which is distributed as grants to farmers to further their regenerative practices.

To read the full article, click [HERE](#).

## It's Our Future students at COP28

The United Nation's Climate Summit will be taking place Nov. 30 - Dec. 12 in Dubai. This year's summit, or COP28, is a critical turning point for global climate policy.



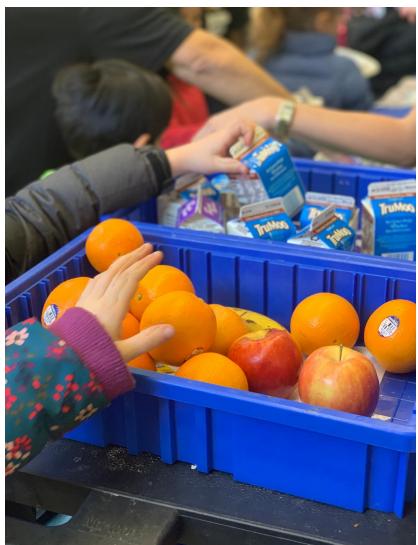
Six youth members of It's Our Future, a Seven Generations Ahead program aimed at promoting youth climate advocacy, will be attending the summit. They will have the opportunity to connect with youth and Indigenous leaders from across the globe and share their perspectives with elected officials and decision-makers. To learn more about these dynamic youth read their stories [HERE](#) and visit [@iofyouth](#) on Instagram.

It's Our Future  
COP28 Delegates



Interested in hearing from youth voices at COP28? Register [HERE](#) for Climate Generation's live stream event on Dec. 6 at 11 a.m. CST featuring It's Our Future students and two students from Climate Generation who will share their experiences from the summit.

## Don't throw away good food, share it



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that almost one-third of the world's food goes uneaten. Most of this food waste goes to landfills, helping to fuel climate change. While there are many industries that contribute to this large-scale problem, schools are a major player. The World Wildlife Fund estimates that, on average, each student produces approximately 39.2 pounds of food waste per year.

What can be done in schools to ensure that perfectly edible food does not end up in the landfill? Share tables, where students are able to return any unopened food they received in their school lunch so that it may be either donated, taken by another student, or used by the school at a later time, are becoming an important solution in K-12 schools. Share tables can simultaneously reduce food waste while also serving as

a method of food recovery to ensure that those in need of food are receiving it. Although the operating procedures for share tables may look different depending on the school, all share table programs feature a designated place for students to leave unopened and uneaten school-provided food.

To read the full article, click [HERE](#).

## Chicago begins municipal composting program

This Fall the City of Chicago, Mayor Brandon Johnson, and the Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) announced their Food Scrap Drop-Off program, the City's first-ever citywide composting initiative. Currently, all Chicago residents can drop off their food scraps at one of the program's 15 collection sites for free.

Participation is easy! Interested residents can sign up for a nearby drop-off location [HERE](#), collect their food scraps in a sealed container, and then bring the collected materials to their selected drop-off site. After drop off these materials are brought to a composting facility to be processed.

Drop-off locations are open from 7 am to 7 pm daily. For more information on sites, as well as acceptable materials, click [HERE](#).

To watch a short video on the program, click [HERE](#).

Photo credit: Bubbly Dynamics LLC / The Plant



## Show your gratitude with a zero waste feast

Instead of filling up the landfill this Thanksgiving, try some of these ideas for a zero waste celebration:

### Setting the table

Use reusable dishes and avoid single-use items like paper/plastic plates, utensils, cups, and napkins.



### Decorations

Natural items like gourds, pinecones, and colorful fall leaves make beautiful decorations. Use found items from your backyard or purchase from local farms at the farmers market. You can also get crafty with household items or thrift store finds to create your own decorations.

### Cook from scratch using local ingredients

Cooking from scratch generally involves less plastic packaging. Opt for glass or paper packaging over plastic, when possible. Local produce tends to come with less packaging and also travels fewer miles to get to your plate.

### Reusable containers

Thanksgiving is known for the plentiful amount of leftovers – for many people this is the best part! Provide guests reusable containers instead of disposables for those delicious leftovers.

### Composting

Return nutrients to the soil by composting your Thanksgiving food scraps. Learn how to backyard compost or vermicompost from the [Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#). Many [communities](#) across Illinois offer curbside composting service. If this is not available in your community, a subscription-based compost bucket exchange service might be an option for you. Learn more at the [Illinois Food Scrap & Composting Coalition](#).

**Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Compost to see how close to zero waste you can get this Thanksgiving!**

## EPA releases new food waste reports

Over one-third of all food produced in America gets wasted. Most of this wasted food ends up in landfills and contributes to



## Wasted Food Scale

How to reduce the environmental impacts of wasted food



October 2023

waste.

methane emissions, a direct contributor to global warming. The EPA estimates that wasted food causes 58% of methane emissions from municipal solid waste landfills.

Last month, the EPA released [new reports](#) on wasted food with updated recommendations on how to manage it. Their newly created [Wasted Food Scale](#) pictured on the left is designed to help decision-makers understand their options when it comes to managing wasted food. The new design reflects recent advancements in food waste management technology with the intention of more effectively preventing food from going to

## 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.



Submit applications to [greenribbon@isbe.net](mailto:greenribbon@isbe.net) by Dec. 22.

Questions?

Contact IL Green Alliance: [info@illinoisgreenalliance.org](mailto:info@illinoisgreenalliance.org) or (312) 245-8300.

## Grants and other opportunities

[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.**

[Partnerships for Local Agriculture & Nutrition Transformation in Schools \(PLANTS\) Grant](#) This USDA grant will fund eight projects led by groups of local partners that seek to strengthen relationships among community-based food system stakeholders and school districts as well as aim to build more nourishing school meal programs. Grant awards will be between \$500,000 and \$600,000. **Applications open Nov. 27 and close Jan. 22, 2024.**

# Events

## Reducing Food Waste and Methane Emissions: Insights from the U.S. EPA's Latest Reports

**Nov. 14, noon CST**

Join Dana Gunders from ReFED as she talks with Claudia Fabiano and her team at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency about their recent reports, including the new Wasted Food Scale and the first-ever modeled estimates of methane emissions from landfilled food waste.

## America Recycles Day

**Nov. 15**

The [National Recycling Coalition](#) and [Keep America Beautiful](#) have joined together to celebrate the benefits of recycling. Recycling is a great way to reuse valuable items and reduce our footprint on earth. Currently, there are over 3,000 events happening nationally!

## 'Common Ground' movie screening

**Nov. 18, 6:30 pm, Music Box Theatre, Chicago**

The Music Box Theater will be hosting the Chicago premiere of the film 'Common Ground' which investigates the power of regenerative farming and the healthy soil it creates as the keys to growing more nutrient dense food for more people.

## Young Filmmakers Contest In Person Workshops for Grades 3 to 8

**Dec. 3 & 10, 1 pm**

Join One Earth Film Festival and learn the basics of filmmaking from professional filmmakers.

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



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