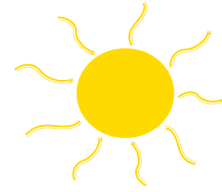


## JUNE NEWSLETTER



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

### School's Out...It's Time to Talk Trash!

June 18, 11 am - 12 pm



Join our upcoming [webinar](#) and discover how small changes in your school kitchen and cafeteria can have a big impact for your community and the environment!

Learn how to inspire students to take action against climate change by reducing waste at school. The [Zero Waste Schools](#) team at Seven Generations Ahead will share how conducting lunchroom waste audits and analyzing what's in the trash can lead to significantly less waste. We'll talk about:

- How to conduct a lunchroom waste audit
- Operating a share table
- Offer vs. Serve
- Minimizing plastic waste
- Available curriculum

You'll also hear strategies from members of the Waste Reduction Action Team of the

All school stakeholders are encouraged to attend - teachers, kitchen and lunchroom staff, school and district administrators, etc.

There will be plenty of time for Q&A at the end, so bring questions about how to incorporate waste reduction initiatives into your school routines.

Register [HERE](#).

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## Seeing is believing, as Broadview and Maywood schools go zero waste

Sometimes, seeing is believing. Beye Elementary School in Oak Park School District 97, has been implementing a zero waste program in the lunchroom for many years. As a school in the [Cross Community Climate Collaborative \(C4\)](#), it was the ideal place to bring other school districts in C4 communities to see a zero waste program first-hand. Broadview Mayor Katrina Thompson, District 92 Superintendent Dr. Janiece Jackson, District 89 Principal Dr. Algeanna Griffin, as well as other representatives from District 92 attended a recent tour of Beye's lunchroom.



The keys to Beye's zero waste success are a solid foundation in education and collaboration among staff, students, and parents. At the beginning of the year students learn about lunchroom procedures to ensure they all understand what gets recycled, composted, or put on the share table and what goes to the landfill. They also receive periodic education throughout the year.

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

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## Zero Waste catches on in three Chicago Public Schools



Three more schools in Chicago Public Schools are ending the academic year by going green! John M. Palmer Elementary, Alcott College Prep Elementary, and Louis B. Nettelhorst Elementary all launched zero waste programs in the month of April. With this latest expansion, the Zero Waste Schools (ZWS) team at Seven Generations Ahead has now launched zero waste programs at 25 CPS schools.

**John M. Palmer Elementary:** PreK teacher and [Pilot Light Education Fellow](#), Heidi Russell, championed the zero waste

launch at Palmer Elementary with strong support from the school principal.

**Alcott Elementary:** At Alcott Elementary, the zero waste program was a community effort with the school's principal, custodial staff, students, and parents working together to make it a success. One of the lead parent volunteers organized other parents to help in the

lunchroom during the first week of sorting, with a plan to train students on sorting procedures and transition to student monitors after the first week.

**Louis B. Nettelhorst Elementary:** In a first for SGA's Zero Waste Schools program, our team provided remote support and resources for a zero waste launch. CPS parent, Sarah Farrell, who was the point person for the zero waste launch at Hawthorne Scholastic Academy, was eager to expand the program and reached out to the ZWS team about launching Nettlehorst.

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

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## Climate Education Bill passes in Illinois!

On May 23rd, the Illinois Senate passed a climate education bill! [HB4895](#) is now headed to Governor Pritzker's desk for a signature where it is expected to be signed. This new bill provides that, beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, every public high school shall require a unit of instruction addressing climate change in either a required science class or a required social studies class. It also provides that instructional materials and professional development training for educators will be made available to school boards.



Seven Generations Ahead [It's Our Future](#) students, as part of the broader [Climate Education for Illinois](#) coalition, have been instrumental in getting the word out about this important legislation. This is a significant step in ensuring that all Illinois students receive equity focused climate education in a way that empowers them to take action, adapt, mitigate their environmental impact and prepare for 21st century jobs. They will continue to advocate for education that is age appropriate, actionable and equity-focused.

Click [HERE](#) for coverage of this amazing win.

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## Webinar recap: Go Green Illinois' Food Scrap Composting Options for your Community



Last month, [Seven Generations Ahead's](#) (SGA) Jen Nelson and Becky Brodsky, along with other composting experts, shared about the progress being made in Illinois around community, residential and school food scrap composting at [Go Green Illinois'](#) May meeting.

The meeting had 75 registrants from nearly 30 communities across Chicagoland and beyond. Nelson, Director of SGA's [Food Waste Reduction and Composting](#)

[program](#), began by presenting the connection between composting and climate action. Food waste is the single largest material sent to landfills, where it produces methane as it breaks down. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas which makes food waste a big contributor to the climate crisis. Therefore, reducing food waste is one of the most important steps an individual can take to reduce their climate impact. Nelson pointed out that municipal climate policies need to include composting programs to create accountability for mitigating this source of emissions.

Click [HERE](#) to read the full article.

## 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](#).
- Find [events](#) near your to engage with your community in your efforts to reduce plastic use.
- Read [case studies](#) about schools' efforts in reducing their plastic waste.
- Watch inspiring [videos](#) about plastic waste solutions.



Below are some ideas to reduce your daily plastic use:

- Use glass or stainless steel containers for storing food and bring your own containers for leftovers when you eat out.
- Bring reusable bags with you wherever you go to avoid plastic bags and extra fees.
- Start using food wrap items that can be reused such as beeswax wraps or food-grade silicone covers.

## One Earth Collective Young Filmmakers Contest 2024



The One Earth Film Festival, the Midwest's largest environmental film festival, invites students from 3rd grade through age 25 to submit their short environmental films to the [Young Filmmakers Contest](#) by **June 25**.

Winning films will be screened at the Gene Siskel Film Center (Chicago, Illinois) on September 22, 2024, and some will be selected for the One Earth Film Festival in March, 2025. Scholarship awards, prizes, and matching grants (from \$200 to \$2000) are available for

3- to 8-minute films or 45+ second animations.

One Earth Collective has also developed an interactive [online curriculum tool](#) for students in grades 3-8 interested in learning the basics of filmmaking. Only cell phones or tablets with editing software are required to participate. Available for individual (\$35) or classroom (\$99) enrollment.

Coming in September!

Chicago Cub's Education Day:

# The Great Apple Crunch with Stade's Farm!

Sept. 18

Calling all Chicagoland K-5 teachers! Start off the 2024-25 school year with a class trip to Wrigley Field Wednesday, September 18. Celebrate the start up of Illinois orchard season with fun and educational programming before the Cubs take on the Oakland Athletics.



During the pregame programming, students will listen in as local orchard grower, Vern Stade, shares education about how apples grow at his McHenry, IL orchard. Students will also have the opportunity to compost apple cores and make this a zero waste event. Join us to Crunch! into local apples and discover how tasty a fresh, local apple can be.

Register [HERE](#).

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## Grants and other opportunities

**[Plastic Free Restaurants](#)** Plastic Free Restaurants is dedicated to eliminating single-use petroleum-based products in everyday foodware. Plastic products are not only harmful to the environment but also human health. Their subsidy program is available to schools, non-profits, restaurants, and other for-profit entities to purchase safe reusable foodware products. Apply for a subsidy [HERE](#).

**[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.**

**[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.

**[Bulk Milk](#)** equipment granting program is a project that supports school districts with the transition from conventional milk served in individual bottles/cartons to bulk milk dispensers with reusable tumblers. **Applications due June 27.**

**[Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant](#)** Earn up to \$2000 for the development of wildlife habitat at your school! Projects must emphasize student/youth involvement with planning, development and maintenance and increase the educational and wildlife habitat values of the site. **Applications due Nov. 30.**

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## Events

### **[Examining the Intersection of Race, Sustainability, and Environmental Justice](#)**

**June 13, 12 pm**

This webinar will explore the intersection of climate change, sustainability, and public health. Specifically, this webinar will examine how environmental factors impact individuals' health and well-being.

## [Institute for Local Self-Resilience: Scaling Up Local Circular Composting](#)

**June 26, 2:30 - 4 pm**

Learn how three community composting businesses scaled up their operations, while maintaining a local, circular model that maximizes composting's benefits.

## [From Waste to Plate: Strategies for Reducing Food Waste in School Food Programs](#)

**Jul. 8, 12 pm**

Join Chef Ann Foundation, Harvard Law School, Food Law & Policy Clinic, and the World Wildlife Fund as they explore innovative strategies and best practices for minimizing food waste in school food programs, from procurement to meal service and beyond.

## [School Resiliency Summit](#)

**Sept. 10 - 11, Austin, TX**

Join the Center for Green Schools for the School Resiliency Summit in Austin, Texas. As the climate crisis brings new challenges, this summit will offers ways for educators and staff to learn how to adapt and create new strategies.

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