

THE GREEN TEAM GUIDE

Organize & Inspire Your Students to Achieve Zero Waste



HOW TO START A GREEN TEAM

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

We applaud you for taking on the challenge of starting a Green Team! Assembling a core group of students dedicated to recycling and sustainability is one of the best ways to spark change and promote a culture of sustainability at your school. This guide will help you organize students to become leaders in your school's efforts to recycle more, waste less, and become environmental stewards in their school community.

This guide outlines ways to tackle waste and recycling issues at your school through mobilizing students, but many of the concepts and activities could be reframed to suit other student environmental projects.

Included in the guide are a series of series of additional resources, such as worksheets and guides, to use and copy as needed. When you see the term *Resource*, you'll know that the referenced handouts can be found in the back of the folder.

For recycling habits to take root, it is important that students, teachers and staff understand the repercussions of waste, such as the effects on our planet's ecosystems, climate change, and the health and wellness of communities near and far. An environmental club can be a great way to introduce or build on the STEAM concepts that your students are learning in the classroom and uplift a culture of service learning and environmentalism.

WHY START A GREEN TEAM?

Students

- Leadership skills
- Peer mentoring
- Awareness of social & environmental issues
- Sense of responsibility
- Hands-on learning
- Advocacy & organizing experience

School Community

- Pride & respect for the school
- Cleaner cafeteria and classrooms
- Commitment to service learning
- Culture of sustainability

Teachers

- Provide hands-on learning
- Improving rapport with students
- Building student self-esteem
- Working with passionate students
- Opportunity to build community

The Environment

- Cleaner & healthier community
- Reduced waste to landfill
- Helping achieve NYC's Zero Waste goals
- Healthier ecosystems

WHAT IS A GREEN TEAM?

A Green Team is an organized group of students who work together to make their school and/or local community more sustainable. They collaborate to find and implement solutions to reduce waste and increase recycling through advocacy and action.

PRE-PLANNING YOUR GREEN TEAM

Keep these tips in mind as you start to form your club. Extra planning in the beginning will help your Green Team continue to run smoothly as the year gets underway.

Consistency is Key. Establish a meeting time when you and your students can meet for 30 minutes to an hour uninterrupted. Find a room that you can use week after week. Can students gather in your classroom, a library, or even a school garden? Find a location and stick to it.

Advertise and Promote. Make sure the student body knows the Green Team exists and is looking for members:

- Post fliers throughout school
- Write an announcement or email for teachers to read
- Display a sign up sheet to recruit scholars
Resource Recycling Monitor Sign-Up Sheet
- Write an ad for the parent newsletter
- Announce the club during class time

Recruitment. Ask students to fill out an application to join the team. This makes the position feel more significant and helps you find students interested in taking on a leadership role. See *Resource: Green Team Member Application*.

MAKE IT OFFICIAL!

- Make sure all students have signed permission slips allowing them to meet at the designated time and place each week.
- Ask for signed photo release forms from each member. Parent or guardian permission is necessary to publicize your team's work and may be useful for future grant opportunities.
- Keeping a sign-in sheet shows students that their attendance is important.
Resource: Sign-In Sheet will get you started.
- If possible, pass out t-shirts, badges, or workbooks at the beginning of meetings to make your group feel part of a unified team.



Hunter Science High School, Manhattan

YOUR FIRST MEETING

Use the first one or two meetings as a time to lay the groundwork for the year to come. This is a critical step that shouldn't be rushed.

Record It. Use *Resource: Green Team Sign-in Sheet* at the beginning of each meeting. Recording the names of students that attend each meeting will make the Green Team feel more official, make members more accountable and encourage them to arrive on time.

Create a Mission Statement and Goals. What problems do students see in their school or community? What do students want to accomplish this year? How do they define sustainability? Establishing a mission and goals helps the team stay on track and allows students to reflect on



PS 372 The Children's School, Brooklyn

their accomplishments as the year progresses. Here's a sample mission statement from PS 58 the Carroll School in Brooklyn, to get you started:

We respect the environment. We work together to reduce the impact of our school on the world we share with other species and future generations. We recycle. We lead by example, educating ourselves and others about the good habits that benefit a healthy and sustainable environment.

In your mission statement, address your group's cause (who? what? where?), your actions (what you do), and the impact you want to make. Think of your mission statement as guide for your group as well as a statement to the rest of the school about why your work matters. Showcase your statement on a bulletin board.

Think of a Name. Are you the Trash Troopers? The Green Team? The Student Sustainability Coalition? Come up with a name that reflects the projects you want to undertake and communicates to the rest of the school what your group is all about.

Establish Leadership Roles. Brainstorm different roles needed to run your club smoothly. How will you choose who does what? How long should roles be held?

Set Guidelines and Expectations. Take time for students to brainstorm rules for the team. Letting them take on the responsibility of defining rules creates buy-in and helps avoid possible issues in the future.

Here are some rules to present at the start of your Green Team meetings.

- Actively participate.
- Arrive to meetings on time.
- Be respectful of other member's ideas and keep an open mind.
- Listen when others are talking.

Keep a Calendar. Post a calendar somewhere visible for the team to see. Fill it in with project timelines or meeting agendas to keep projects moving. Mark down important dates (like Earth Day or school graduation) that might be pertinent to your club's plans.

Finalize the Meeting. Spend a few minutes at the end of each meeting to discuss an agenda for the following meeting. This will help the group to plan ahead and have something to look forward to.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability means living in a way in which our society respects and maintains the essential ecosystems of planet earth so that present and future generations can thrive and meet their needs. How does this definition relate to the work of your Green Team? How might you expand it?

MOVING FORWARD

Now that you've begun to add structure to your club, evaluate what students already know. Why is waste an issue? How does it affect the environment, their communities, and their school? Open the discussion to the group and see where it takes you. To help steer this process, find sample educational presentations at grownyc.org/zerowasteschools.

Remember, your Green Team will likely have questions about how to recycle. Spend some time going over how to properly recycle, making sure to review how to sort things commonly found in schools and tricky items. This may take a few meetings. Keep it fun with some sorting activities from *Resource: Recycling Games*.

Continue to remind your group that recycling is a habit that we have to cultivate and helping each other is the best way to learn. Once everyone is up to speed on what goes where, they can use that knowledge at school, at home and throughout the rest of New York City.

Don't forget that recycling must be a united effort. Your Principal, Custodian Engineer, and cafeteria staff all have important roles to play. Keep them updated on your team's progress. Use weekly professional development time to check in with the rest of the faculty to offer encouragement and tips.

Congratulations, you're on your way!



GREEN TEAM IN ACTION

GREEN TEAM IN ACTION

Remember, there is no right or wrong way to run a Green Team! Teams can take on a wide range of activities and projects based on what their school needs and what students are most interested in accomplishing. Engaging students in recycling monitoring and creating awareness campaigns are two effective way to improve recycling rates. Allow your team to pick the ideas that work best for them. Maybe they'll come up with something completely new!

RECYCLING ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

Green Teams can take on many projects to promote sustainability at school. One of the most practical starting points for getting students on board is to give them the responsibility of monitoring recycling stations throughout the school. When students routinely steward spaces like cafeterias, classrooms, offices and hallways it becomes a way for them to gain more ownership and pride for their school community.

LEARNING TO IDENTIFY A CORRECT RECYCLING SET-UP

Not all the students will know what a correct recycling setup should look like. Spend some time reviewing pictures of correct setups and why it matters how they are arranged.

Reviewing Recycling Rules and Setups

Time: 1 meeting

Materials Needed:

- Recycling bins
- Recycling posters or labels
- *Resource: Classroom Bin Survey Sheet*



As the green team leader, spend one meeting reviewing what a correct recycling set-up looks like in a classroom and in the cafeteria.

In the second half of the meeting, take a tour through your own school! Walk through a few classrooms with the Green Team to identify rooms with correct setups and those that are incorrect. During this tour, have a discussion about why it's important that all recycling stations are consistently arranged and labeled.

Take the lesson one step further and check out the cafeteria recycling stations. Once you are in the cafeteria, review what a correct set-up should look like and have the team evaluate the differences. What bins are the same? What bins are different? Why might that be?

Example school setups can be found in DSNY's Clean and Green Schools Guide bit.ly/dsnyguide

CONDUCTING A RECYCLING BIN INVENTORY

Prepare your team to conduct a school-wide recycling inventory so the team learns how many and what kinds of recycling and waste bins exist at your school. This is a practical way for the team to understand what is needed to build a successful recycling program.

The amount of time the team will need to perform the assessment depends on the number of classrooms, size of your school, as well the

age and number of members on your team. Student-led assessments can teach students how to collect and present data to the school community, and might reveal certain habits or misconceptions of recycling in the school.

Let's get started!



TIPS FOR PERFECT SORTING

- Place bins together as part of a sorting station.
- Equip all classroom and office sorting stations with a blue, green, and black bin.
- Place setups near the door for easy custodial collection.
- Label all bins clearly.

Host a Bin Labeling Party

Time: 1 meeting

Materials Needed:

- DSNY recycling stickers
- Recycling bins



Make sure all bins are labeled with the correct stickers to clarify exactly what goes in each bin. The more visible the labels, the better! Make sure to have bins and labels ready to distribute ahead of time so your students can get to work right away. NYC's Department of Sanitation provides free recycling and trash decals for your entire school. Place an order at bit.ly/dsnyorder and expect 1-2 weeks for delivery.

BEGINNING CLASSROOM MONITORING

Once your school's classrooms and offices are equipped with labeled bins make sure your team is confident about what items belong in each bin. When they know how to recycle, you can start monitoring how well the rest of the school community is recycling in classrooms, cafeterias, offices and hallways.

Before putting your Green Team to work monitoring and rating school recycling, you may want to alert staff and students about your team's new task so they know what to expect.



PS 169, Brooklyn

How to Start Classroom Monitoring

Time: 1-2 meetings

Materials Needed:

- *Resource: Recycling Monitor Sign-Up Sheet*
- *Resource: Recycling Chart (What Goes Where)*
- *Resource: Recycling Inspection Rating Chart*
- *Resource: Recycling Inspection Rating Cards*
- Double-sided velcro cut into pieces
- Scissors to cut velcro

Before the Green Team heads out to monitor, provide a refresher:

- What should a recycling setup look like?
- What can be recycled?
- What can't be recycled?
- What is recycling contamination?
- How should the team decipher the different levels of contamination?
- Assign different roles: photographer, grader, recorder, etc.



Use the *Recycling Monitor Sign-Up* to have students sign up to be monitors or choose students you think would be a good fit. As recycling monitors, students have an opportunity to help their peers and the adults in their building. Students get to be the experts!

Agree on a system for tracking classroom recycling grades and on a schedule for how often the team will monitor recycling in classrooms. One a week, twice a week, once every two weeks? Decide on a schedule, have students sign up for their shifts and introduce them to the monitoring log that they should sign once they complete their shift. Use resources listed above to evaluate classrooms and affix ratings on classroom doors or above bins.

As your team becomes more acquainted with the task of monitoring, consider rewarding the best or most improved sorters. Make your own trophy or plaque, and put it on display in the rooms that are excelling.

Create an announcement for your school's newsletter or post results on your Green Team's bulletin board so the school is up to date on which classes are most committed.

We can SORT IT OUT in the cafeteria!

CAFETERIA MONITORING

While classroom monitoring will most likely be conducted periodically (i.e. weekly, biweekly or monthly etc.), cafeteria monitoring is most beneficial when conducted daily. Frequent cafeteria monitoring is crucial to driving positive behavioral shifts around recycling.

Cafeterias typically have a higher student to adult ratio and are spaces where students tend to play and socialize. Without reminders, recycling properly can quickly be forgotten in this busy space. Daily monitoring sets the expectation for recycling and solidifies the habit as part of the school culture.



Pour liquids in bucket



Recycle metal, hard plastic and cartons in the blue bin



Place all soft plastics in trash only bin



Recycle all food waste, food-soiled paper and compostable utensils in the Brown Bin

Cafeteria Waste Sorting Station

POSTERS



DECALS

How to Start Cafeteria Monitoring

Time: 1 meeting

Material Needed:



- *Resource: Cafeteria Monitoring Training Guide*
- *Resource: Cafeteria Monitor Sign-Up and Timesheet*
- *Resource: Cafeteria PreSort Meal Guides*
- Optional: T-shirts or badges

Helpful Tips for Cafeteria Monitoring:

- Review cafeteria sorting with students and have them role-play standing at stations guiding others to sort properly.
- Make sure students know not to take plates to sort for other students or rummage through bins to correct sorting.
- Encourage your team to remind their peers where things go when they approach the station.
- Introduce your cafeteria monitors to the other key lunchroom stakeholders, such as the Office of Food and Nutrition Services (OFNS) staff, the Custodian Engineer and cleaning crew, school aides, deans, assistant principals, or security guards.
- To sustain team camaraderie, make sure other students know who to ask for help by providing your team with matching shirts or badges they can wear during their shift.
- Check that the schedule has fair rotation so monitors get to enjoy time off.
- Use the *Resource: Cafeteria Monitor Timesheet* to track the time your students are contributing and reward them with community service hour or another incentive.



PS 161 Pedro Albizu, Manhattan

GREEN TEAM AS ADVOCATES

BEING AN ADVOCATE: INSPIRING ACTIVISM

Promoting a recycling campaign exposes the Green Team to advocacy and organizing experience while teaching students how to be effective communicators, problem solvers and leaders.

RAISING AWARENESS

Start by introducing the Green Team to the word “advocacy” and go over what it means. A solid understanding of the team’s role as advocates is a good basis for starting to brainstorm different ways they can raise awareness about recycling and sustainability at school.

You can increase awareness and motivate students to make change by working with the team to better understand how waste effects our planet and communities at both a local and global level. You can delve even deeper by taking a look at how waste affects us at an individual and school-wide level.

Consider guiding the students through activities to promote individual learning before moving on to developing an awareness campaign for the entire school.

CRAFTING A SCHOOL-WIDE AWARENESS PLAN

Now that the Green Team is more knowledgeable about waste issues, they are probably excited to start spreading the word to promote recycling at school. In the following meetings, spend time designing a school-wide awareness campaign that they can use to educate their peers and teachers.

What Does it Mean to Be an Advocate?

Time: 1 meeting

Materials Needed:

- Markers
- Poster Board



A good starting point in developing an advocacy campaign is to have a meeting to go over the term advocacy. Ask the team to define the term and how they see themselves as advocates. What do they think makes a good advocate? Why?

Design a poster around the word advocate and have each student contribute a word or a picture to this poster. Bring the poster to each meeting to recall their purpose and what it means to be an advocate.

SPREAD THE MESSAGE TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Show the rest of the school that recycling is easy to do, good for the planet, and fun!

Newsletters. Did you know that up to 90% of the waste thrown away at school is recyclable or compostable? Does everyone at school (teachers included!) know what items go in the organics bin in the cafeteria? Students can find and use all kinds of interesting waste facts to share with their peers and teachers, by creating a Green Team newsletter. It can even be an e-newsletter to save paper!

Cafeteria Event. Need some energy to get cafeteria recycling off the ground? Consider setting up a table with games and posters in the cafeteria during lunch periods. Giveaways, contests, and announcements remind the student body that sorting their waste after lunch is important to do each and every day.

Understanding the Issues

Time: 2-3 meetings

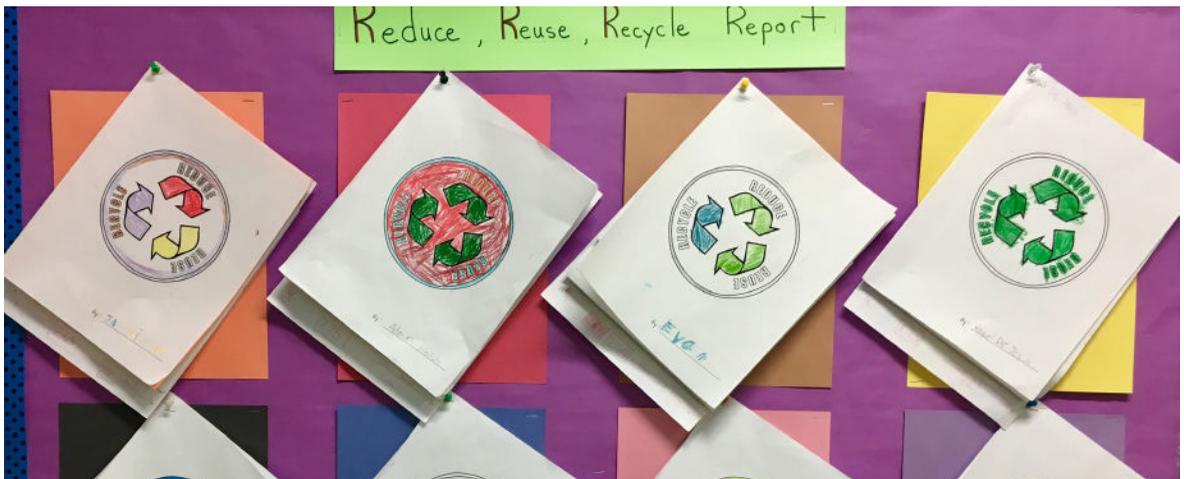
Materials Needed:

- SmartBoard or computers
- *Resource: Video List
NYC Waste Journeys*
- Journals for recording waste habits (try making one from scrap paper!)



Before raising awareness school-wide, make sure the team is knowledgeable about the issues associated with waste. Use these activities to start:

- Watch a few short videos to learn where trash goes in NYC or learn how materials are collected and recycle in NYC Research new facts about waste and recycling in the NYC and have members share out something they learned.
- Ask students to create their own personal waste journal to better understand how much they throw away on a daily basis.



Student Presentations. Peer-to-peer presentations are another great way for the Green Team to spread their message. These can be short, 5-minute long classroom presentations or at a school event, such as a family night or school town hall. Get creative and use posters, PowerPoints or maybe even a video.

Bulletin Boards and Posters. Making a bulletin board or a poster display is a creative and highly visible method for raising awareness about correct recycling practices and developing a stronger culture of sustainability at school.

Announcements. Recycling facts make for great morning announcements. The Green Team can introduce themselves and tell the rest of the student body about their activities and upcoming events. Making an announcement is an easy and efficient way to spread the word about recycling at school. Check out *Resource: Recycling Morning Announcements* for ideas.

Surveys. Gathering more information about students' recycling and waste disposal habits can help guide the team's work. Knowing more details about the issues can help the Green Team shape and target their awareness campaign towards actual student behaviors.

School-Wide Awareness Campaign

Time: 1 meeting

Materials Needed:

- SmartBoard or large poster paper
- Markers



Think about how to educate the school on recycling and waste. Use a SmartBoard or large piece of paper to record ideas.

These questions get the discussion going:

- How will the Green Team get the other students to understand the problems associated with waste?
- What are ways they can spread the message?
- Who do they want to reach and how will each approach differ (such as teachers versus students)?
- How long do they want to spend on an awareness campaign?
- What makes an effective campaign? How will they know when their message has been heard and understood?

BE SMART!

Keep these points in mind when you develop goals for your project. Pause from time to time throughout the year to revisit them:

SPECIFIC

What, specifically, do you want to achieve? Keep your focus clear!

MEASURABLE

How will you know when you have met your goal?

ACHIEVABLE

Is your goal doable given time or resource constraints?

RELEVANT

How does your goal relate to the problem you want to overcome?

TIME-BOUND

What is your timeline for achieving your goal and the steps along the way?





MS Charles O. Dewey, Brooklyn

Many types of surveying methods exist, including I-Dot, peer-to-peer interviews, as well as interviews with teachers and the administration. See [Resource: I-Dot Survey](#) for further instructions.

Waste Audits. The Green Team might be curious about how much trash and recycling their school produces. A waste audit is a process used to quantify the amount and types of waste being generated by your school. It can be an eye-opening way of getting the Green Team to understand and convey the importance of recycling in school. It can also be a fun activity to generate awareness about waste and consumption. [Resources: Food Waste Audit Guide](#) and [Plastic Waste Audit Guide](#) will help guide your Green team through this data driven PBL activity. After the waste audit is completed, have scholars report their findings or create a school community waste awareness campaign!

MAKING CHANGE! ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Once the team has begun to raise awareness throughout the school, it's time for the Green Team to charge ahead and craft a plan for how they want to facilitate behavior change. How can they get more of their peers and teachers to start putting their recycling in the right place? How will they be assured that all of their campaigning really made a difference? Take a look at the strategies below to guide this next phase.

Pledges. Post a large piece of paper in your cafeteria (a hallway, classroom, or other central location) with the words, "My zero waste pledge is..." written at the top. Supply students with markers and have them write their "pledge" one action they will take to help their school become stronger recyclers and more environmentally conscious.

Competitions and Contests. Some healthy competition can jump-start or revive proper recycling at your school and can be done on a scale that works best for you. Deploy your club to rate classroom sorting. Depending on the size of your student group, you can rate a sample group, a hallway, a floor or the entire school. How about the cafeteria? Use clickers to count the number of students who are actively recycling, or rate the percent of contamination at the end of a lunch period.

Reward the winning group! Providing extra credit, a field trip, a homemade trophy or a special announcement can make students feel proud of their dedication to recycling.

Zero Waste Lunch Challenge. Whether this is part of Earth Day or a stand alone event, Green Team members can challenge their school community to pack a zero waste lunch where nothing gets thrown in the trash and everything they bring gets eaten, recycled, composted or shared. Plan ahead and help prepare parents to pack a lunch that contains only reusable packaging. *Resource: How to Pack a Zero Waste* lunch will get you started.

Reuse Art Projects. Dedicate a closet or table for materials that can be used for school art projects. Students bring in items from home (think bottle caps, fabric scraps, or magazines) that can be used instead of buying new art supplies from a store. Check out Materials for the Arts at mfta.org for inspiration!

At Home Activities. Giving your students activities that they can do with their families is one way to encourage families to become advocates for recycling and sustainability. Grow an herb garden at home and use the plants to cook!

Reuse milk jugs, yogurt cups, or cartons as planters. Or check out *Resource: Activity Take Home Reuse Projects* for a fun craft.

Recycling Fair. Involve the entire community by hosting an event where your Green Team sets up tables with educational materials, trivia, fun games and prizes during lunch or at an after school event. This type of event can spur interest in recycling, get the message out and involve the entire school community.



MS Charles O. Dewey, Brooklyn

TAKING THE GREEN TEAM FURTHER

If you are looking to go above and beyond with your recyclers, here are some ideas to connect students with their peers and the larger community. Remember, many of the same recycling rules apply to residents, so encourage students to teach others what they know about waste and recycling in their city.

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS

Many schools require students to complete a designated number of community service hours each year. If you can, offer community service compensation to students recycling stations in the cafeteria or who take on other school recycling initiatives, and encourage other teachers to do the same!

SERVICE LEARNING

Service learning is a teaching and learning strategy that combines meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to improve students' learning experience, teach civic responsibility and strengthen local communities. It encourages students to build on their in-school learning through hands-on activities that investigate the underlying issues and current needs of their communities.

Think about how the concept of service learning applies to the work you and your students are doing. How can your Green Team use their energy to do service projects in their community? What



are the underlying issues and needs of the community and how do they relate to sustainability? How can the Green Team best work to meet those needs?

To further your work, consider partnering with New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) Service in Schools program, which "strives to expand the number of NYC students engaged in transformative community service and service-learning experiences that enable them



PS 169, Brooklyn

to use their voice, skills, and critical thinking to affect positive change in their communities and the world.” For more information, visit their website at Bit.ly/NYCDOESustainability

EARTH DAY CELEBRATIONS

Earth Day is a widely recognized holiday, so it is a great time to strengthen your team’s commitment to the environment, engage the rest of the school, and connect with your school’s larger community. Planning an event takes time! Use the tips below to guide your preparation.

Set a Time and Place. Will you host your celebration over a series of days or as one event? An outdoor area where students can play active sorting games is ideal, but keep in mind that weather can put a damper on things. Think about hosting in the cafeteria, the auditorium,

or organizing smaller actions in classrooms if an outdoor space isn’t available.

Work Together. Collaborate! Connect with other clubs, classes, teachers and PTA in your school. What activities can they help organize? Music, art and dance are great outlets for celebrating the environment, so be creative!

Host School-Wide Activities. Engaging the entire school can be powerful! Have each student sign a recycling pledge during their lunch period, engage in a school-wide competition, or watch the same video during homeroom.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Involve your Green Team in organizing an event to bring the community together while shedding light on their cause.

SCIENCE FAIRS

If your school hosts a science fair, recycling and waste are perfect ideas around which to create a project. Students can delve into subjects such as decomposition, effects of landfills, technology of recycling and sorting, or the effect of waste on ecosystems, amongst many others!

MOVIE NIGHT

Organizing special events helps keep the momentum up! Host a movie night at your school that supports your cause. There are many great movies out there that focus on the environment. Consider adding a preview about NYC recycling or a video made by your team! See *Resource: Video List Recycling and Sustainability* for a full list of educational videos.

REUSE EVENTS

Start a reuse event! GrowNYC's Stop N' Swap program is always looking for spaces to host reuse events. Visit grownyc.org/swap for more information. Terracycle is an organization that

recycles or re-purposes materials that are difficult to recycle. Learn more about their programs from terracycle.com.

TAKE A TRIP

New York City offers unique opportunities for students to learn about waste and sustainability outside of their classrooms. The city is home to many environmental landmarks that invite students on tours. There are numerous benefits to going on field trips:

- Field trips are fun, engaging and interactive!
- Student are encouraged to think from a different perspective in an unstructured space.
- During a trip, students have the chance to gravitate to what most interests them.
- Trips widen students' perspective about their community, city and state.
- Students get the opportunity to hear from professionals and educators.

Reference *Resource: Field Trips NYC Waste Landmarks* to learn about trip opportunities for your students.



PS 84, Manhattan



PS 334 The Anderson School, Manhattan

FIELD TRIPS

SIMS Municipal Recycling Facility in Sunset Park offers an incredible view of what happens to the recyclables in your blue bins.

Freshkills Park on Staten Island, a former landfill-turned-park, gives tours that will help students understand the social, economic and environmental costs of waste.

Materials for the Arts, Long Island City boasts a warehouse full of items waiting to be re-purposed, and encourages students to think more broadly about waste by delving into the world of creative reuse.

GrowNYC's Greenmarkets hosts interactive school tours to help children gain an understanding of farming in our region and how their food choices impact their bodies, their communities and their environment.

Governor's Island features over 20 vegetable beds, a 1/2 acre small-scale farm, an outdoor kitchen, a large solar oven, a high tunnel greenhouse, fruit trees, several rainwater harvesting systems, a rain garden, and much more.

ENDING THE YEAR

You and your team members have worked hard all year making your school more sustainable. Any progress you all have made is a significant accomplishment and should be celebrated. It is important to wrap up the year with celebrations, reflection and plans for next year so the Green Team understands that moving towards a more sustainable world is an ongoing process. Here are some recommendations for how to close out the year:

PRESENTING MONITORING DATA

The team has collected data throughout the year about recycling habits and the end of the year is a great time for the team to cull through what they have collected, analyze the data and make sense of it.

- What interesting things can they share about waste or recycling habits with other students, teachers and administration?
- Create a poster depicting the data they collected. What have they learned by their ongoing monitoring efforts?
- What can the school do to continue to improve?

SHOWCASE YOUR WORK!

Encourage school staff and students to exhibit how they are advancing recycling and waste reduction in their school! Create a bulletin boardpost who has been school waste reduction champions! Consider using the school community platforms like the school website, ClassDojo, etc. to share your zero waste journey.

PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR

Invite your members to reflect on the work they did during the year. Encourage them to evaluate their work and what they learned throughout the year. You can even save responses to show returning students next year. Use the following questions to guide your discussion:

- What do you feel most proud of while on Green Team this year?
- Why did that particular accomplishment make you feel so proud?
- Did you accomplish all you wanted to?
- What would you like to try next year?
- What are you excited to work on next year?

END OF YEAR CLEANING

The end of the year is a time when schools throw out so much that it's a perfect opportunity for your Green Team to have a positive impact on how its school handles waste. Empower them by involving them in the process.

Start a free table or a swap table with items otherwise headed to landfill, round up all of the unwanted loose leaf paper and binders and set them aside for students next year, or maybe collect clothing to donate to a good cause.

See [Resource: Year End Green Cleaning](#) for a comprehensive list of projects and ideas on how your members can help their school.

CELEBRATE!

Host a final party for your Green Team. Bring snacks, give out prizes and certificates, and recognize the team for all of their efforts.

A photo montage or scrapbook of the team's work showcases the team's accomplishments throughout the year.



PS 971 School of Math, Science and Healthy Living, Brooklyn



GREEN TEAM SUCCESS STORIES

Green Teams across the city are taking leadership to make recycling a priority in their school. Check out some of New York City's Super Recyclers:

School: IS 286 Urban Assembly Academy for Future Leaders
Grade: 6–8 **Meets:** 1X/week
Highlights: Monitors classroom recycling by giving inspection grades. Recognized by the administration for running sorting games, building recycled planters and painting the play yard as part of the NFL's Play 60 initiative. Meets regularly with school administration to discuss potential projects to promote zero waste culture.



School: PS 138
Grade: 1–5 **Meets:** 2X/month
Highlights: Participates in daily cafeteria monitoring as part of their “breakfast work” (community job) wearing vests and badges to help with sorting.



School: PS 516 Sunset Park Avenues Elementary School
Grade: 3–5 **Meets:** 2X/month
Highlights: Monitors classroom sorting. Recognized by the PTA for organizing sorting games, building recycled planters and running a book swap table at the school's first Earth Day fair. Created Zero Waste flyers and pledge for the school.

School: MS 540 A. Phillip Randolph
Grade: 9–12 **Meets:** 1X/week
Highlights: Created plan (yarn made from plastic bags) bracelets for Green Team fundraiser. Research and write a sustainability newsletter, create posters to build zero waste awareness, and work in the school greenhouse!



School: PS 971 School of Math, Science and Healthy Living
Grade: 4–5 **Meets:** 2X/month
Highlights: During the day and after school, students monitor classroom sorting, create upcycled craft projects, and work in the school garden with recycled planters. Organized a beach cleanup, made a sustainability video for the school, and conducted several food and plastic waste audits!

WASTE AUDIT RESOURCES

How can measuring food and plastic waste help students reduce sending these items to landfills? Scholars get firsthand experience of how to collect and use data to help measure the amount of food and plastic waste their schools produce. Both PBL activities are easily adaptable. Students analyze realworld issues, and use their findings to create informed solutions and advocacy projects.

FOOD WASTE AUDITS & ADVOCACY (K – 12)

bit.ly/zwsfoodaudit



CS 134 George F. Bristow, The Bronx



PLASTIC WASTE AUDITS & ADVOCACY (K – 12)

bit.ly/zwsplasticaudit



PS 971 School of Math, Science and Healthy Living, Brooklyn



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The additional resources referenced throughout this guide and listed below, are available to download at bit.ly/gtgresources, or grownyc.org/zerowasteschools

Green Team Member Application.....	page 2
Green Team Sign-In Sheet	page 2, page 3
Recycling Monitor Sign-Up Sheet	page 2
Recycling Games	page 4
Classroom	
Bin Survey Sheet	page 5
Recycling Monitor Sign-Up Sheet	page 8
Recycling Inspection Rating Cards & Chart	page 8
Recycling Chart: What Goes Where	page 8, page 10
Cafeteria	
Monitor Training Guide	page 10
Monitor Sign-Up Sheet	page 10
Monitor Sign-In Sheet	page 10
PreSort Meal Guides	page 10
Video List NYC Waste Journeys	page 13, page 19
Recycling Monitor Announcements	page 14
Activity: I-Dot Survey	page 15
Waste Audit Guides: Food and Plastic Waste	page 15, page 25
How to Pack a Zero Waste Lunch	page 16
Activity: Take Home Reuse Projects	page 16
Field Trips: NYC Waste Landmarks	page 19
Year End Green Cleaning	page 22

For more resources and materials check out
the Zero Waste Schools website
grownyc.org/ZWS



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