

## February 2017 Newsletter

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*"7th grade taught and monitored separation of lunch waste by 4th - 6th graders.  
In the first three weeks, MSA's cafeteria and kitchen composted 215.5 lbs. food and paper waste and  
only 33.5 lbs trash: that's 86% compost!"*

- Laurie Boosahda, Greenfield Math and Science Academy, Greenfield

Hello GREEN TEAM Teachers!

More than 50,000 students from 257 schools across Massachusetts are participating in THE GREEN TEAM so far this school year! See the [Participating Schools](#) list if you'd like to network with other teachers in your area.

We look forward to hearing about what your students have been doing when you send in your Teacher Response Form (TRF). **Submit your TRF [online](#) or mail in the [printable version](#) by March 31** so your students can receive prizes to recognize their work.

### **Save the Food!**

Are you interested in making sure that wasted food from your school cafeteria does not end up in the trash? THE GREEN TEAM has resources to help your school start a program to collect food scraps and other wasted food. Food scraps can be composted (either at your school or at a commercial composting facility), sent to feed animals, or turned into energy through anaerobic digestion. Uneaten packaged food and whole fruits can be donated.

The following resources can help you get started with anything from a small pilot project to compost food scraps in the classroom to a school-wide food waste diversion program.

- [THE GREEN TEAM Food Waste Diversion Guide](#) offers detailed guidance on starting a program to divert wasted food from disposal. THE GREEN TEAM also offers [free compost bins and vouchers for red wiggler worms](#) to compost at school, videos on [how to assemble](#) a compost bin and [how to compost at school](#), and a [Composting Lesson Plan](#). Schools that have registered for THE GREEN TEAM can also ask for help by emailing [recycle@thegreenteam.org](mailto:recycle@thegreenteam.org).
- The USDA offers tips for school staff, parents, and students in the [What You Can Do to Help Prevent Wasted Food](#) booklet. The USDA also offers information on [Sharing Tables](#), which provide an opportunity for children to take additional helpings of items that other children choose not to eat. The State of Vermont also has a [tip sheet](#) on this topic.
- The [#SaveTheFood](#) Campaign, sponsored by the National Resource Defense Council, and the AdCouncil, has a number of free [videos and posters](#) that your school can use spread the word about reducing wasted food at school or at home.



If your school takes on reducing wasted food, consider signing up for the EPA [Food Recovery Challenge](#) so your school can receive regional or national recognition.

### **GREEN TEAM in the Spotlight**

In the spring of 2016, Wellesley's **Katharine Lee Bates Elementary School** decided to examine the generation and management of waste in its cafeteria. Bates became the first K-12 school in New

England to join the EPA's [Food Recovery Challenge](#), and also participated in the US EPA's [WasteWise](#) program. As part of these programs, Bates embarked on a three phase process to 1. Assess cafeteria waste, 2. Implement a program to reduce and divert a certain percentage of this waste, and 3. Evaluate the measures implemented. Their [Cafeteria Waste Assessment Report](#) found that 93% of the waste generated during their assessment could be donated for hunger relief, fed to animals, composted, or recycled. The report also outlines strategies for diverting this waste.



*Photo from Cafeteria Waste Assessment Report of students from Katherine Lee Bates Elementary School in Wellesley lined up to sort their tray waste at the end of their lunch period.*

In December, **Newton Elementary School** in Greenfield started their program to compost food and paper waste from both their cafeteria and kitchen. Like other schools in Greenfield, the compostable materials are sent to Martin's Farm for composting. In the first five days of this program, the school collected 386 pounds of compostable materials and only 97 pounds of trash. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders help monitor the separation of these materials at lunch and help weigh each bag.

#### **GREEN TEAM in the Media**

The [Greenfield Recorder](#) reports that five schools in Greenfield, (**The Discovery School at Four**

**Corners, Federal Street School, Newton School, Greenfield Math and Science Academy, and Greenfield High School,**) are now diverting wasted food for composting. The five schools have reduced waste from their cafeterias and kitchens by 79 percent. Each school has a team of students that help monitor the sorting station in their cafeteria. This program was supported by a grant from the [MassDEP Sustainable Materials Recovery Program](#).

### **School Programs, Events, Competitions, and Professional Development**

Mark your calendars with these grant opportunities, workshops, conferences and more!

**Feb 3** – Registration deadline for [BioenergizeME Infographic Challenge](#). Encourages high school student teams to research cross-curricular bioenergy topics and design infographics to share what they have learned through various social media channels.

**Feb 15** – Early-bird registration deadline for the for [Massachusetts Environmental Education Society \(MEES\) Conference](#): Looking to the Past to Inform our Future.

**Feb 16** - Registration deadline for [Mass Envirothon 2017](#), located at Drumlin Farm in Lincoln.

**Feb 16** – [MITS Professional Development Seminar Series: An Unexpected Path to the Antarctic, and Communicating About Climate Change: An Interdisciplinary Challenge](#). Second of four full-day sessions.

**Feb 20 OR Feb 23** – New England Aquarium [Climate Science for Educators Workshop](#) in Boston. Two sessions are being offered for this workshop, which will examine the use and distribution of natural resources, effect humans have on the climate, current and future natural disasters, and the ways humans are developing solutions to climate change.

**Feb 23** – Submission deadline for [World of 7 Billion Student Video Contest](#). Students must create a short video about human population growth that highlights a global challenge.

**Feb 23** - Massachusetts Horticulture Society [School Garden Conference: Beyond Education](#). The third annual school garden conference will feature workshops that explore regional best practices for planning and running a garden.

**Mar 1** – Application deadline for the [President's Environmental Youth Award](#). The award recognizes outstanding environmental projects by K-12 students, as well as promoting awareness of the nation's

natural resources and encouraging community involvement.

**Mar 8** – [Massachusetts Environmental Education Society \(MEES\) Conference](#) in Worcester. As MEES celebrates its 40th anniversary, take a look back at how the field of environmental education (EE) has transformed over the past century.

**Mar 10** – Registration deadline for the [Eversource Challenge](#), a program for K-12 students living in Eversource electric communities. The Challenge invites students to showcase their knowledge on saving energy, energy-efficient technologies, and sustainability through various assignments.

**Mar 16** – [MITS Professional Development Seminar Series: Alien Solar Eclipses: The Importance of Modeling in the Search for Exoplanets](#), and [Sunny With a Chance of Simulations](#). Third of four full-day sessions.

**Mar 21** – [Sea to School Culinary Workshop](#) in Wareham. This series of three seafood culinary workshops will give hands-on experience working with locally-caught, sustainable species. Learn from colleagues at the forefront of the “sea to school” movement, and hear directly from fishermen about their practices and how you can help support local fishing communities.

**Mar 21-22** – [Green Schools Conference & Expo in Atlanta, Georgia](#). This event connects green school champions nationwide for two days of learning and collaboration to support a shared mission of equitable, healthy and high-performing schools, where students can learn how to sustain and improve the world around them

**Mar 27** – [MassRecycle's R3 Recycling & Organics Conference & Trade Show](#). The R3 Conference is the biggest annual recycling and organics conference in Massachusetts, and one of the biggest state conferences in the nation. The conference includes a track for K-12 schools.

**Mar 28** – Application deadline for the [2017 Excellence in Energy and Environmental Education Awards](#). This annual award program recognizes schools and teachers (K-12) across the Commonwealth for their outstanding efforts in furthering energy and environmental education initiatives at their schools.

**Mar 29** – [Sea to School Culinary Workshop](#) in Salem. This series of three seafood culinary workshops will give hands-on experience working with locally-caught, sustainable species. Learn from colleagues at the forefront of the “sea to school” movement, and hear directly from fishermen about their practices and how you can help support local fishing communities.

**Mar 31** – Submission deadline for GREEN TEAM [Teacher Response Forms!](#)

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**Mar 31** – Jane Goodall's [Roots and Shoots Mini Grant](#) deadline. These grants support the work that you and your "young Jane Goodalls" are doing in your community. Educators are invited to apply for a mini-grant to start, support, or celebrate their service campaigns.

**April 1** – Submission deadline for the National Energy Technology Laboratory's [Earth Day Poster Contest](#). Students in kindergarten through fifth grade can design a poster about their favorite way to keep the Earth a sparkling place to live. Everyone will receive a certificate for participating, and winners will have their names and entries posted on NETL's website.

**April 2** – [2017 Girls STEM Summit](#) in Weston, a one-day statewide summit for young women in grades 8-12 who love STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering & Math, and would like to learn more about emerging careers in these fields.

**April 4** – [National Healthy Schools Day](#). Whether you are at the beginning stages of investigating school environments or have an established Indoor Air/Environmental Quality program, use this day to host a local activity that educates others and celebrates your school's successes!

**April 7** – Nomination deadline for [2017 Green Difference Awards](#). These awards, given by Project Green Schools, honor and recognize outstanding national environmental education & STEM education efforts in schools & communities.

**April 12** – [MITS Professional Development Seminar Series: Imitating Mother Nature to Improve Chemical Reactions](#), and **"I'd Like to Have an Argument": Making Meaning Through Conversation**. Final of four full-day sessions.

**April 12** – Entry deadline for Evergreen Packaging and KidsGardening.org's 2017 [Carton 2 Garden](#) contest. Contest winners will be selected based on their implementation of an innovative garden creation featuring creative and sustainable uses of repurposed milk and juice cartons

**April 12** – [Sea to School Culinary Workshop](#) in Northampton. This series of three seafood culinary workshops will give hands-on experience working with locally-caught, sustainable species. Learn from colleagues at the forefront of the "sea to school" movement, and hear directly from fishermen about their practices and how you can help support local fishing communities.

**April 14 – 23** – [Cambridge Science Festival](#). An annual 10-day celebration of science, technology, engineering, arts, and math in Cambridge and New England and the global impact of those endeavors. The Festival makes science accessible, engaging and fun for everyone through

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multifaceted, multicultural events.

**April 22** – [Earth Day](#). In 1970, the first year of Earth Day, the movement gave voice to an emerging consciousness, channeling human energy toward environmental issues. Forty-six years later, we continue to lead with groundbreaking ideas and by the power of our example.

**May 18** – [Massachusetts Envirothon 2017](#) at Drumlin Farm in Lincoln. High school students show how much they know about Massachusetts' soils, forests, water, and wildlife, as well as this year's current issue, agricultural soil and water conservation, at this outdoor field competition. Teams rotate through four "ecostations" where they answer written questions and engage in hands-on activities.

### **Other Resources**

If your school is tackling reducing wasted food, consider signing up for the [EPA Food Recovery Challenge](#) (FRC). Participants in the FRC prevent and divert wasted food, follow the EPA Food Recovery Hierarchy, and promote sustainable management of food. Be sure to check out this inspirational video from last years' [National FRC Award winner, Lanikai School](#).

The [Keep Massachusetts Beautiful Litter Cleanup](#) takes place in communities across the state during April and May each year. Keep Massachusetts Beautiful is seeking cleanup coordinators to organize cleanups in communities across the state. Help give your community a thorough spring cleaning by participating.

THE GREEN TEAM hopes you have fun composting this spring!

**Emily Fabel**

**Green Team Program Administrator**



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