



January 2019 Newsletter

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"We are proud to be a GREEN TEAM member. We spend much of our time maintaining our programs that have been initiated to stay green."

- Elizabeth McCartney, Kingston Elementary School, Kingston

Happy New Year, GREEN TEAM Teachers!

*Have your students been working on environmental projects this school year? Don't forget to [register for THE GREEN TEAM](#) so they can be recognized for their efforts! Teachers who have registered for THE GREEN TEAM should submit the form [online](#) or mail in the [printable version](#) by **March 31** to report their students' waste reduction, energy conservation, and pollution prevention activities. Participants can receive prizes – such as a garden center gift certificate or a school-wide performance by an Edutainer – to recognize their work!*

The New Year is a great time to encourage your students to take [THE GREEN TEAM PLEDGE](#). This activity encourages students to take action at home or at school help protect the environment. During the 2017-2018 school year, more than 2,500 students took the pledge.

Tips for Composting in the Winter

Whether you're dealing with frozen compost or wading through hip-deep snow to your bin, winter can be a challenging time to compost. Many teachers feel discouraged to keep up with composting year-round. But fear not, the following tips will help you maintain your compost bin through the New England winter.

- *Make sure your compost bin is easily accessible during winter. Place the bin close to your building and coordinate shoveling a path to reach it. You can also set up a second container, such as a garbage bin, containing dry browns that can be easily applied to the compost.*
- *During the winter, when there are fewer leaves available, you may need to get creative to find some brown compostable material to put into the bin to ensure a healthy amount of carbon content. The easiest replacement for leaves are newspaper, straw, or other paper waste, such as paper towels, napkins, and paper bags. It helps to tear the paper into strips before adding it to the pile. The [Composting is Easy](#) handout has more information about what can and cannot go into a compost bin.*
- *An effective way to stop your compost from freezing is to make the pile as large as possible, which will better insulate the center from cold temperatures. The New Age Compost Bin, available [upon request](#) for all Green Team participants, holds 24 cubic feet of material, which should be large enough to maintain a warm center even in the coldest temperatures. Your compost bin should be filled to the top, and at least 75% of the contents should be damp leaves. It is also recommended to refrain from turning the pile during the winter, as this will disrupt the insulation.*
- *Don't be deterred if your compost does freeze, because the freezing and thawing process accelerates the breakdown of fibers. It is perfectly acceptable to add new materials to the top of a frozen pile and covering it with paper or straw. After the spring thaw, stir the pile and add water as you normally would.*

Update on American Paper Retriever Program

If your school has an American Paper Retriever bin (formerly Abitibi Paper Retriever), we have

learned that the company is unable to continue servicing these containers. They have partnered with E.O.M.S. Recycling to remove the collection bins from your property by request at no cost. E.O.M.S. Recycling, as well as other recycling companies, offer similar recycling services for container collection of paper and cardboard to help keep these materials out of the trash. Unlike the Paper Retriever program, most paper recycling services are not free, although costs are typically less expensive than disposal. Contact E.O.M.S. directly for further information at amarhoffer@eomsrecycling.com. For a complete list of recycling service providers in your area, please refer to the [RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts Find-A-Recycler Tool](#).

GREEN TEAM Spotlight

Green Schools Andover, a group of local advocates that work with **Andover Public Schools** to educate students on school lunch waste and food recovery, was honored with an [EPA Food Recovery Challenge National Award](#). The group introduced share tables to school cafeterias, which encourages students to share wholesome food that would otherwise be thrown away. The group also began diverting food waste to composting. In 2017, ten Andover Public schools diverted to compost 217 tons of food waste and donated 9 tons of food to local non-profits.



*Green Schools Andover volunteers separating compostable
and recyclable materials in the school cafeteria*

*Students at the **Hawlemont Regional Elementary School** in Charlemont have been busy making the planet less polluted with a number of environmental activities, including hands-on projects, educational field trips, events, and fundraisers. The school implemented their waste diversion program four years ago and intentionally engages students in all aspects of its recycling and composting efforts. Each classroom weighs their trash weekly, and tracks progress towards waste reduction goals by graphing the data over time. Through these activities, students are able to apply the math concepts they are learning in the classroom to real world data. At the end of the year, classrooms that reduce their trash by the greatest amount win a special award.*

Additionally, students in the 5th and 6th grade oversee the composting program at the school, helping younger students source separate recycling and food waste in their cafeteria. The food scraps are composted on-site and fertilize a large school garden. Student volunteers also work closely with the custodial staff to collect all of the school's recycling, break down cardboard boxes to fit in their recycling dumpster, and clean milk cartons for reuse in creative art projects. These are just a handful of the efforts Hawlemont students are doing to reduce, reuse, recycle, and upcycle!



*A student at Hawlemont Regional Elementary School
helping to recycle paper and cardboard*

Throughout the school year, send us photos and stories about the great work you are doing to share in [THE GREEN TEAM Photo Gallery](#) and [THE GREEN TEAM Spotlight!](#) Be sure to check out these links to view all of the great activities THE GREEN TEAM schools completed last year.

GREEN TEAM in the Media

The Daily Hampshire Gazette highlighted the [Western Massachusetts Youth Climate Summit](#) hosted by the Hitchcock Center for the Environment and Mass Audubon's Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary. About 60 students, from local high schools, participated in the event that included presentations and workshops. Students received grants of \$500 to implement a climate action plan for their own schools.

If your school is covered in the local media, let us know and we'll add it to [THE GREEN TEAM in](#)

[the Media page!](#)

School Programs, Events, Competitions, and Professional Development

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

January 15 – Application deadline for the [Captain Planet Foundation's ecoSolution](#) Grants. Grants of up to \$2,500 are available to help support environment-focused, project-based activities performed by young people.

January 31 – The Museum Institute for Teaching Science (MITS) will be offering a [Professional Development Seminar Series](#) designed for education staff, volunteers, and other professionals from science, environmental, natural history, technology, art, history, and other cultural institutions in New England. The first full day seminar, **Making Connections with Science**, is on January 31 and will feature sessions on **Carbon, Climate, and Consensus** as well as **Setting up Seasonal Nature Journals**.

January 31 – Request for Proposals deadline for the [2019 Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program](#). The program funds projects focused on ecological improvements along with targeted community outreach, education and stewardship. Grants should span 12 to 18 months in length with a start date in July 2019. Awards range from \$20,000 to \$50,000 and 40-50 grants awarded per year.

February 1 – Application deadline for the [EPA's President's Environmental Youth Award](#). The award recognizes outstanding environmental projects by K-12 youth completed in 2018. Projects must include an environmental stewardship component. Applicants from all 50 states and U.S. territories are eligible to compete for a regional certificate of special recognition and a national Presidential award.

February 21 – The [Massachusetts Horticultural Society's School Garden Conference](#) in Wellesley will feature workshops that explore regional best practices for planning and running a school garden. Attending educators will develop practical gardening skills, including techniques for managing worm composting. Free worms provided, courtesy of THE GREEN TEAM!

February 22 – 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.

February 28 – The [Museum Institute for Teaching Science Professional Development Seminar Series](#) second full day seminar, **Learning From our Cities**, will feature sessions on **Exploring the Ecology of Our Cities and Towns** and **Enhancing Your Audience Engagement with Local Biodiversity**.

March 6 – [Massachusetts Environmental Education Society \(MEES\) 2018 Conference](#). The MEES conference brings together environmental educators from across the state to network and learn new skills. THE GREEN TEAM will be in the exhibit area, so come by to say hello and check out what's new!

March 15 – [Register a school sustainability project](#) with the Green Apple Day of Service by March 15 to be eligible for a mini-grant and Green Apple Award. Projects should bring school community service and environmental sustainability together in one day of action.

March 21 – The [Museum Institute for Teaching Science Professional Development Seminar Series](#) third full day seminar, **Science Story Tellers**, will feature sessions on **New England: the Origins of American Environmentalism** and **Integrating STEM and the Humanities: A Role Playing Game**.

March 25 – [MassRecycle R3 Conference](#). The R3 Conference is the biggest annual recycling and organics conference in Massachusetts, and one of the biggest state conferences in the nation. At R3, MassRecycle fosters discussion on issues that affect recycling, reuse, and waste reduction, and provides a venue to convene individuals from all sectors.

March 29 – Deadline to submit THE GREEN TEAM [recycling equipment application](#) for the April 4 distribution day to be held in Boston. (Equipment requests for the Amherst and Pittsfield equipment locations may be submitted at any time).

March 31 – Deadline to submit THE GREEN TEAM [Teacher Response Form](#) to report your students' activities and receive a Certificate of Recognition and student prizes to recognize their work.

April 4 – [Distribution day](#) for GREEN TEAM recycling equipment for schools in the Boston area. Register for [THE GREEN TEAM](#) and submit a [recycling equipment application](#) by March 29 for this distribution.

April 25 – The [Museum Institute for Teaching Science Professional Development Seminar Series](#) fourth full day seminar, **Science on the Brain**, will feature a full day session entitled **Mind on Brains: Making the Connection**.

April 26 – Submission deadline for the Massachusetts Marine Educators [2019 Marine Art Contest](#). Students in grades K-12 are invited to submit a piece of original artwork focusing on this year's theme, "Revealing the Biodiversity of Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary."

Other Resources

The [Green Schoolyards Resource Hub](#) offers tools for municipal leaders, administrators, school staff, parents, and community members to advocate for, implement, and steward green schoolyard programs.

The Smith College Museum of Art in Northampton will be holding an exhibit from February 8 – July 28 entitled [Plastic Entanglements: Ecology, Aesthetics, Materials](#). The exhibit will tell the story of our on-going engagement with plastics and its effects on our planet. The museum offers [guided visits for PreK-12 students](#).

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) released [Wasting Less Food In K-12 Settings: Best Practices For Success](#), a briefing paper that highlights best practices for preventing food waste, ensuring that food surpluses reach people in need, and recycling food scraps.

The GREEN TEAM wishes your school a happy and healthy start to 2019!

Megan Denardo
GREEN TEAM Program Administrator