



"We increased the number of students who were able to directly participate in the recycling program, as well as increased the amount of material collected."

- Elizabeth McCartney, Kingston Elementary School, Kingston

Hello GREEN TEAM Teachers!

Thanks to everyone who submitted a Teacher Response Form sharing their GREEN TEAM activities this school year! We've heard from 71 schools, and will be including your stories, quotes, and photos in the newsletter and the [GREEN TEAM Spotlight](#) on the website. We've also posted the photos we have received so far to the [GREEN TEAM Photo Gallery](#). Prizes and Certificates of Recognition will be shipped this month!

State of Recycling: What is the Real Story?

You might have heard on the news lately that recycling is "down in the dumps." Many news outlets have recently featured stories on the wake-up call the recycling industry experienced when China closed its doors to our mixed paper and unsorted plastics. Over the last ten years, our recycling habits became sloppy (wishful recycling, anyone?) but China kept gobbling up everything we sent, sorted out the bad stuff, and made new packaging and products from the good stuff – until they said, "enough."

What the headlines aren't telling us is this: there are still markets for our paper and plastic, just not in China.

- Other countries including India, Korea, Indonesia, and Vietnam are buying the **mixed paper** China no longer wants, and that's where much of what's collected from Massachusetts is recycled into new products.
- **Cardboard** is mostly sold to paper mills in the U.S. or Canada, and multiple U.S. mills are expanding or re-opening to start taking scrap paper and cardboard.
- The U.S. **plastics** recycling industry is healthy and wants our soda bottles, milk jugs, yogurt cups, and margarine tubs. Companies like EFS Plastics , KW Plastics, Buckeye Plastics, and Trigon Plastics use recycled plastics to make consumer products, automotive parts, construction materials, and even 100% recycled Adirondack chairs.

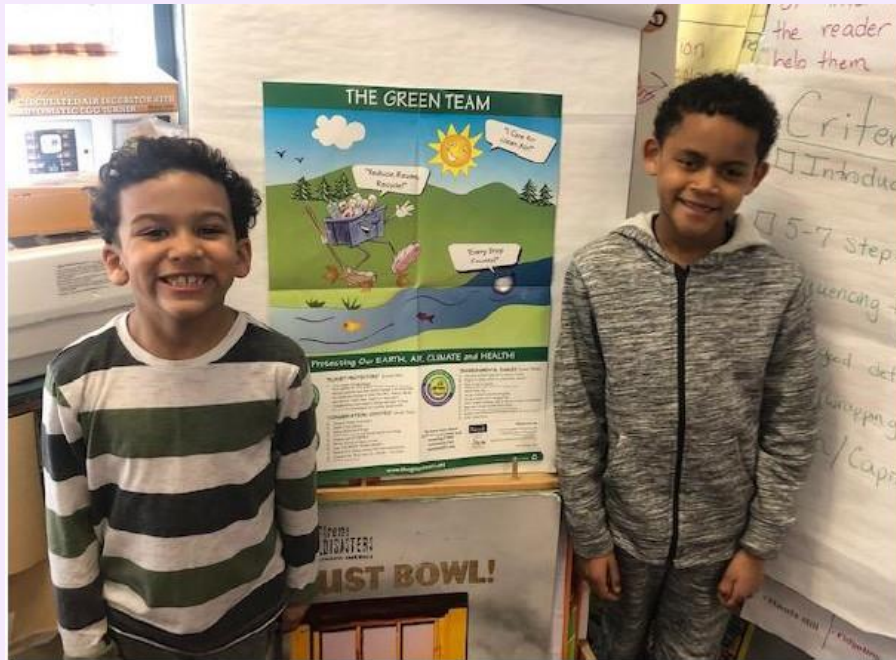
Together, we can reframe the narrative! Teachers, administrators, parent volunteers, and every participant of the GREEN TEAM – we all play a role in educating our students, colleagues, and communities about what [smart recycling](#) means and why it's important. Recycling is about saving resources, conserving energy, and reducing our dependence on landfills and incinerators. As the impact of climate change escalates, it's critical to embrace the circular economy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and lower our carbon footprint. Recycling does all of that, and creates jobs too!

Keeping the bad stuff out of our recycling bins means the good stuff gets recycled. The [Recycle Smart MA](#) statewide education initiative focuses on reducing recycling contamination. As part of this initiative, Massachusetts now has [standardized recycling guidelines](#) so you can be confident that you are recycling smart - regardless of where you live, work, learn, or play! The [Recyclopedia](#) tool enables users to search for instructions on how to properly recycle or dispose of hundreds of common materials.

Let's rebuild the public trust in recycling together, by sharing this newsletter and spreading the Recycle Smart message. It's hard work, but the pay-off is real for our communities and for the environment.

GREEN TEAM Spotlight

GREEN TEAM students at the **Elizabeth Carter Brooks School** in New Bedford acted upon the recycling lessons they learned in class by writing letters to their Mayor. The students shared their support for recycling and described why littering is harmful for the environment. Great work in spreading the message about the importance of recycling!



Elizabeth Carter Brooks School students wrote letters to their Mayor promoting recycling.

Congratulations to **Ipswich Middle-High School** for winning the prestigious US EPA's Region 1 President's Environmental Youth Award! Ipswich's Green Team created a shared public fruit and vegetable garden with a special focus: to bridge generations and lifestyles. By encouraging Ipswich citizens to work together on the challenges and rewards of a common garden, the Ipswich Green Team is growing vital relationships between human beings and nature, helping all of us to be better stewards of our magical, but fragile, natural world. Hope in action, and action in hope!



*Ipswich Middle-High School students working together
with community elders on the 'Generation Growers' public garden.*

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!](#)

GREEN TEAM in the Media

The Daily News reported on the **Newbury Elementary School** [food recovery program](#). The school partners with [Nourishing the North Shore](#), a group that provides access to healthy, local food, to collect excess cafeteria food each week and deliver it to the Newbury Food Pantry.

The Hampshire Gazette reported on **Maple Elementary School's** [Anti-Idling Campaign](#). Students conducted a study to determine how much pollution idling cars were emitting while parked in front of the building, and created posters to raise awareness about the importance of not idling.

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

School Programs, Events, Competitions, and Professional Development

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

May 4 – Save the date for **Boston Latin School's [YouthCAN's 13th Annual Youth Summit on Climate Change](#)**. This year, the summit focuses on the theme of "Facing Waste", with the goal of bringing together as many young people as possible to learn about climate change and how they can help combat its effects.

May 5-11 – [International Compost Awareness Week](#) (ICAW). Across the United States and around the world, composting advocates will be encouraging everyone to compost. The theme for 2019 is Cool the Climate - Compost! Share your plans for ICAW [here](#).

May 7 – [Application](#) deadline for the Elaine Adams Professional Development Grant. All current members of the [Massachusetts Association of Science Teachers](#) (MAST) are eligible to apply. One \$500 award will be presented to an applicant who proposes pursuing a professional development venture that has the potential to be of use/value for their students and science education.

May 7 – Deadline to submit a grant proposal for the Massachusetts Association of Science Teacher's (MAST) [Grants for Empowering Teachers](#) (GET) award. Five \$200 awards will be presented to applicants who demonstrate the use/value of a particular item for their students and science education.

May 16 – [The Massachusetts Clean Community Awards Gala](#) recognizes volunteers, nonprofit leaders, government leaders, businesses, and educators for exceptional environmental protection and community improvement efforts. [Order your tickets here](#) for the gala on May 16 from 7-10 pm at the NonProfit Center in Boston.

May 17 – [Massachusetts Envirothon 2019](#). Massachusetts Envirothon High School Competition, at Sholan Farms in Leominster. The 2019 Current Issue is "[Abundant, Affordable, Healthy Food](#)".

May 21 – The Northeast Resource Recovery Association [School Recycling Conference](#) in Manchester, NH. Register [here](#).

May 23 – Visit [The Great Exchange](#), 33 Andrews Parkway, Devens, 8:30am-4:30pm, to gain classroom, craft, janitorial, office, and safety supplies at very low prices.

May 24 – Deadline to submit your proposal for The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) [Ace the Waste!](#) student competition. Students may submit 1-2 page proposals or 1-2 minute videos on creative solutions to reduce food loss and waste in the United States. Proposals will be judged on impact potential, originality and creativity, clarity of expression, and adherence/appropriateness to theme. The winner of the challenge will be honored with recognition on the USDA's social media accounts and website, receive a certificate of appreciation, and have the opportunity to discuss their proposals with

USDA leadership.

May 30 – Visit [The Great Exchange](#), 100 Sherman Avenue, Devens, 8:30am-4:30pm, for classroom fixtures, office furniture, and janitorial items at very low prices.

June 17 – Deadline for Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Program's [Student Contest](#). Students ages 11-18 are invited to submit visual art, poetry, prose, film, and music that explores the impact of climate change on the ocean. Students may earn scholarships of up to \$1,500, including *The Hometown Award*, which recognizes Boston Area students who may not have equal access to quality arts programs.

June 17 – Deadline for Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Program's [Marine Debris Creative Advocacy Competition](#). This international competition challenges middle and high school student groups to design and lead a project that creatively educates others about plastic pollution and inspires action to reduce or prevent marine debris. It's a perfect opportunity for green teams, marine science or art clubs, or any environmentally-minded teens. Students can earn awards of up to \$5,000! The deadline is June 17, but interested students or classes should register their project ideas early.

July 8-12 – The Wade Institute for Science Education's [Berkshire Region Summer Professional Development Institute](#) will feature a professional learning experience for grades 3-8 educators entitled **Thinkers and Tinkerers: Using Biomimicry to Teach Engineering and Life Sciences**. Register online using this [form](#).

July 15-19 – The Wade Institute for Science Education's [Cape Cod Region Summer Professional Development Institute](#) will feature a professional learning experience for middle and high school educators entitled **Go Under the Sea With STEM: Investigating Marine Life from Open Ocean to Coastal Shores**. Register online using this [form](#).

July 15-19 – The Wade Institute for Science Education's [North Central Region Summer Professional Development Institute](#) will feature a professional learning experience for middle and high school educators entitled **Exploring Innovative Solutions to Environmental Challenges Through Green Chemistry, Biomimicry, and Real World Technologies**. Register online using this [form](#).

July 15-19 – The Wade Institute for Science Education's [Southeast Region Summer Professional Development Institute](#) will feature a professional learning experience for grades 3-8 educators entitled **Inquiry and Innovation: How Science Informs Engineering Solutions**. Register online using this [form](#).

Other Resources

The EPA National Service Center for Environmental Publications is offering a 'clearance give-away' of all educational materials. You can view, download, print, and/or order publications [online](#) or by phone at 800-490-9198. The EPA has many different technical, scientific, and educational materials that you can get in print for free.

Biocycle and the US Green Building Council's Center for Green Schools recently released [Sharing the Table: A Roadmap to Reducing and Recovering Surplus Food in Schools](#). This interactive toolkit shares a simple approach for creating and implementing food waste reduction programs in K-12 schools.

The U.S. Department of Education's [Green Strides Webinar Series](#) features topics relevant to environmental education. A sampling of the upcoming webinars includes:

- May 8, 2–3pm [Fuel for Active Bodies: Increasing Access to Healthy Foods](#) (America Walks)
- May 8, 5–6pm [Solar System Exploration: Teaching Project Based Learning](#) (NASA)
- May 21, 6–7pm [Estimating Coral Feeding Habits from Space](#) (National Marine Sanctuaries)

We hope you are enjoying the warmer weather and spending plenty of time outdoors on your green projects!

Megan Denardo
Green Team Program Administrator
