



December 2019 Newsletter

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"Our partnership with the local food pantry has heightened our students' awareness of both waste and stewardship of resources. We have also learned which foods are consistently rescued, and that has informed the kitchen staff and helped in the decision-making process of what is purchased and served to our students."

- Bruce McBrien, Amesbury Elementary School, Amesbury

Season's Greetings, GREEN TEAM Teachers!

We are excited to have more than 320 teachers registered for THE GREEN TEAM so far this year! We hope that you will also [register for THE GREEN TEAM](#) and join our network of educators working hard to teach students to respect and protect the environment!

See the [Participating Schools](#) list if you'd like to network with other teachers in your area.

Consider Starting or Expanding a Food Donation Program

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 implement a program to donate uneaten prepared or packaged food. The following information can help you start or expand a food donation program:

- Most categories of food can be donated. Massachusetts law provides protection from liability for the donation of food that is 'apparently wholesome' without visible quality issues, as well as

for food that is past date, so long as that food was handled in accordance with state food safety regulations. For more information about Liability Protection, see the [Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic fact sheet](#).

- There are many organizations in Massachusetts that accept and distribute food for donation. Schools can work with local food rescue organization such as [Food For Free](#), [Fair Foods](#), or [Rescuing Leftover Cuisine](#). Another option is to start a direct relationship with [a local food pantry or food bank](#). If you are having trouble locating organizations in your area, contact THE GREEN TEAM at recycle@thegreenteam.org for assistance.
- Involving students in your food donation program is a great way to educate them about food security issues and the importance of reducing wasted food. Form food recovery teams made up of students that help educate their peers on which food items can be donated and which can be composted. These student teams can also help with donation collection and drop-off.
- Share tables are a great way to reduce the amount of wasted food and encourage the consumption of food served in the cafeteria. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education describes [how to implement a share table program](#) to safely share uneaten packaged food and whole fruits in the cafeteria. The State of Vermont also has a [tip sheet](#) on this topic.
- For more information on establishing a food donation program, visit the RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts [Food Donation Guidance](#) page. Additionally, THE GREEN TEAM [Food Waste Reduction page](#) offers detailed guidance on starting a program to divert wasted food from disposal.

STEM Week Challenge Recap

MassDEP partnered with [Mass STEM Hub](#) on the STEM Week Challenge, for which an estimated 60,000 students and 1,600 educators from over 400 schools across Massachusetts tackled real-world zero waste problems for 2019 Mass STEM Week. Using activities, problems, and projects developed by [Project Lead The Way](#), in partnership with MassDEP and other industry partners, students designed prototypes to address critical sustainability issues: food waste, energy waste, plastics waste, and e-waste. At the [STEM Week Showcase](#), nearly 500 students presented their zero waste solutions to over 100 industry professionals at the Reggie Lewis Center in Boston on October 25. Congratulations to the [teams](#) who were recognized for their outstanding work!



Students from **Collins Middle School** in Salem showing off their “extractinator” concept to remove micro-plastics from water at the Mass STEM Week Showcase.

GREEN TEAM Spotlight

Green Team students from **Lawrence Public Schools' Arlington Middle School, Parthum Middle School, UP Academy Leonard, Wetherbee School, and Oliver Partnership School** visited the [Waste Management Boston CORE](#) facility and the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District's Anaerobic Digester. The students learned how the CORE facility converts food waste material into a slurry that is used for co-digestion in the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District's Anaerobic Digester (AD). The AD technology is able to generate renewable green energy by processing the organic slurry product.

If your school is interested in setting up a tour of these facilities, contact the Waste Management – Boston CORE office at (617) 483-5990 and Greater Lawrence Sanitary District at (978) 685-1612.



*Students from **Lawrence Public Schools** toured the Boston CORe facility, experiencing first-hand how the facility processes over 50 tons of food waste per day into an organic slurry fit for co-digestion.*

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

yourArlington.com [reported on a series of student climate rallies](#) organized by Arlington Public School's Green Team. The students led climate action chants and made short speeches.

Wicked Local featured a story on [Boston Green Academy](#), who received the U.S. Department of Education's 2019 Green Ribbon School Award at a recent ceremony in Washington, D.C. Boston Green Academy is one of 35 schools nationwide to receive the award, which honors schools that reduce environmental impacts and costs, improve the health and wellness of students and staff, and provide effective environmental sustainability education.

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!

December 5 – U.S. Green Building Council webinar, [Getting to Zero Waste: Reducing and Recovering Surplus Food in Cafeterias](#).

December 7 – Massachusetts Association of Science Teachers (MAST) and the Massachusetts Science Education Leadership Association (MSELA) will host a [Safety Under OSHA workshop](#) at the Best Western Royal Plaza in Marlborough. The workshop will focus on strategies to support educators and administrators with the new lab safety requirements. Register for the event [here](#).

December 13 – Application deadline for the USDA's [Farm to School Grant Program](#). Schools and school districts can apply for planning or implementation grants to start or expand a farm to school program.

December 13-14 – Join the Wade Institute for Science Education and Mass Audubon for a two-day workshop: [Lighting the Way with Wind and Solar: Pathways to a Sustainable Energy Future](#). The workshop is designed to help middle and high school educators incorporate lessons about renewable energy technologies to help students understand how these technologies can be used to produce sustainable electricity and reduce human impacts on the climate.

December 16 – Application deadline for the [2020 Youth Garden Grant](#). Any nonprofit organization, public or private school, or youth program planning a new garden program or expanding an established one that serves at least 15 youths between the ages of 3 and 18 is eligible to apply. A total of 25 programs will be awarded a variety of gardening tools and supplies, as well as cash awards up to \$1000. Awards will be distributed in February 2020.

December 18 – Join Massachusetts Farm to School, RecyclingWorks in Massachusetts, Holly Hill Farm, and Berkshire Zero-Waste Initiative for a webinar on School-Wide Composting and Curricular Tie-ins. The webinar will discuss on-site and off-site composting options for schools, and how to model important classroom lessons through composting. A link to register for the webinar will be available on THE GREEN TEAM [events](#) page shortly.

December 31 – Register and complete your school's [Green Apple Day of Service](#) project to be eligible for the 2020 Green Apple Awards. Green Apple Day of Service is an opportunity to join schools across the world in celebrating the central role they play in preparing the next generation of leaders in sustainability.

January 6 – Application Deadline for the EPA's [Environmental Education Grants](#). This program supports environmental education projects that promote environmental awareness and stewardship. This grant program provides financial support for projects that design, demonstrate, and/or disseminate environmental education practices, methods, or techniques.

January 15 – Application Deadline for the EPA's 2020 [President's Environmental Youth Award](#) (PEYA) program and the [Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators](#) (PIAEE). The PEYA program recognizes outstanding environmental stewardship projects by K-12 youth, promoting awareness of our nation's natural resources and encouraging positive community involvement. The PIAEE recognizes outstanding kindergarten through grade 12 teachers who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the environment as a context for learning with their students.

January 29 – [Register](#) for a free informational webinar about THE GREEN TEAM program from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Learn more about how your school and classroom can benefit from THE GREEN TEAM resources, including free curricula, lesson plans & activities, composting & idling reduction equipment, and recognition & prizes for your students!

Other Resources

[Jason Learning](#) has a variety of STEM videos and activities to help students and educators understand the importance of recycling and the recycling industry.

We hope THE GREEN TEAM's resources will help empower your students to recycle, compost, and become great environmental stewards!

Megan Denardo
GREEN TEAM Program Administrator