

Green Star Schools® Annual Report

2020-2021 School Year

"Thank you for an incredible presentation last week! The kids had a blast and learned a lot. One little guy told me at the end of the day, 'I learned something today! I learned that I need to add a compost bin to my playhouse at home!'. I really appreciated your classroom management, even from the computer. You asked kids to sit and be calm, and then you also got them up and moving and wiggling, which they really need. You were spot on."

- Amy Siemel, Crestview Elementary, Kindergarten teacher

"I am so excited that we got to have you join us virtually this year! I thought it was great! The kids were highly engaged and loved the content - thank you!"

- Kelly Bernhardt, Niwot Elementary, 1st Grade Teacher

Eco-Cycle's Green Star Schools program is the first comprehensive Zero Waste schools project in the nation. Eco-Cycle's project is unique because: (1) it targets the collection of compostables such as food waste and non-recyclable paper from entire school waste streams, including lunchrooms, kitchens, classrooms, offices and paper towels from restrooms, (2) it emphasizes waste reduction in addition to composting and recycling, (3) all students and staff are integrated into the program and (4) participating schools are provided with extensive and on-going support, feedback, incentives, rewards and special projects.

Currently, 55 Boulder County schools are enrolled, which represents 64% of the public schools in the County. The total number of participants in the program is 24,028 students and 3,027 staff.

Twenty-seven of the 55 Green Star Schools are located in Boulder, creating routing efficiencies for the compost collection system. As Eco-Cycle expanded its compost collection routes into new communities, we added schools in other areas. Participating schools in Nederland, Jamestown, Gold Hill, Lyons, Niwot and Hygiene represent expansion into those communities. Longmont Estates, Eagle Crest, Blue Mountain, Burlington, Central, Indian Peaks, Northridge and Mountain View Elementary Schools, and Sunset and Altona Middle Schools, are participating schools in the City of Longmont. Ryan, Lafayette, Pioneer and Sanchez Elementary Schools, and Centaurus High are located in Lafayette. Louisville, Fireside and Coal Creek Elementary Schools, Monarch PK-8 and Louisville Middle are located in Louisville. Red Hawk Elementary is located in Erie. Thirty-eight participating schools are elementary level, nine are middle level, two are PK-8 schools, one is a middle/senior and five are high schools.

We continue to integrate English Language Learners and lower-income students into the program as we expand into new schools. Pioneer, Lafayette, Ryan, University Hill, Columbine, Creekside, Crest View, Whittier, Eisenhower, Sanchez, Burlington, Central, Indian Peaks, Northridge and Mountain View Elementary Schools, Angevine, Casey, Manhattan, Centennial and Sunset Middle Schools, and Centaurus High School all serve these populations. Overall, Green Star Schools have an average of 25% of students qualifying for free/reduced price lunch, 13% of students are English-language learners and 33% of students identify as non-Caucasian.

Program Awards:

The fall of 2020 began with the Green Star Schools program receiving two significant awards. At the September *Recycle Colorado Summit*, Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts were jointly honored with an *Outstanding Outreach Award*. This award recognized BVSD and SVVSD for their leadership in being among the first school districts in the nation to successfully move towards Zero Waste as a result of their participation in Eco-Cycle's Green Star Schools program. The second award received was the Colorado Alliance For Environmental Education (CAEE) *Advancing Environmental Literacy Award*. This award recognized Eco-Cycle's innovation in creating unique and successful waste reduction projects, all of which have been popular in the schools for over a decade. The projects honored were the *Waste-Free Lunch Contest*, the *Children's Used Book Project* and *Locker Leftovers*.

Below is a link to the Daily Camera article about the *Recycle Colorado* award and a link to the 30-second acceptance video for the CAEE award:





Impact of COVID-19:

The impact of COVID on both the educational and operational aspects of the program for the 2020-2021 school year has been substantial. It was not possible to launch any new schools this school year and outside organizations were not allowed in school buildings for the entire year. Eco-Cycle was very successful at adapting all programming to virtual delivery. We created new publications, videos and projects for the Green Star Schools to keep waste reduction habits and practices in place. This was critical to ensure a smooth reinstatement of all aspects of the program when school is back in session full time with in-person learning, which is the expectation and hope for the fall of 2021. Our overarching goal for the year was to keep as much collection infrastructure in place in the schools as possible, keep school staff and

students practicing their Zero Waste routines, and to provide enough COVID-appropriate services to keep teachers, school administration and funders involved and loyal to the program.

Impact of COVID on the Collection of Materials:

The scheduling and routing of collection services was complex. As schools switched back and forth between in-person learning, 100% remote learning and different hybrid models, we had to adjust the collection program repeatedly to accommodate changes.

Recycling collections continued in all schools when students and staff were in the buildings. BVSD and SVVSD had different approaches to compost collections. SVVSD halted compost collections temporarily so that custodians could focus on the enormous effort of adequately sanitizing the schools. Five SVVSD schools (Red Hawk Elementary in Erie, Lyons Elementary in Lyons, and Central Elementary, Eagle Crest Elementary and Longmont Estates Elementary Schools in Longmont) requested and were granted an exemption to this decision and were able to continue their compost collections. The remaining 10 SVVSD Green Star Schools will resume composting when their school building is fully back in session next fall. During this time, we worked closely with the SVVSD Energy and Sustainability Manager to put in place a new *Green Star Schools Roles and Responsibilities Agreement* that clarifies the roles of all participants and ensures that the program does not unduly affect the custodial workload. It has always been part of the program design for there to be minimal impact on custodial staff. Meetings to ratify this agreement with Eco-Cycle staff, district operations staff and SVVSD Green Star Schools principals were conducted. The meetings covered the agreement expectations, the changes needed at a few of the schools and Eco-Cycle's role in expanded training and education for all participating schools.

When students were occupying BVSD buildings, recycling and compost collections continued as normal, with the exception that no food was allowed in the classroom compost this school year. This facilitated less frequent emptying, which was helpful to teachers. In addition, BVSD food services has temporarily switched from bulk water and milk to bottled water and milk in cartons to decrease the potential exposure of students and staff to pathogens. As a result, the volume of drink containers being recycled in BVSD schools increased substantially. We worked closely with the BVSD Sustainability Coordinator to develop signage and to educate and notify staff of these changes, which effected both the classroom and cafeteria waste streams. The new signage was distributed to all schools (see attached).

Redesigning Curricular Offerings to Virtual Formats:

Even during this most unusual and trying of times, it was important that our programming stay relevant in the schools to create consistency for teachers, students and the curriculum. To accomplish this, we redesigned our educational offerings to include offerings that are compatible with remote and hybrid learning formats. Not only did we have to completely restructure our curriculum delivery, but our methods of promoting offerings, registering teachers, keeping records and reporting all had to be redesigned.

All 25 presentations and the three field trips that we offer were adapted to virtual formats. Teachers chose between live-virtual and prerecorded-virtual versions. The live-virtual presentations feature a live presenter who can interface

with students, answer questions and lead a discussion in real time. These presentations were delivered equally well to students that were learning remotely from home and/or were in-person in the classroom. In addition, a live-virtual Q&A/Discussion was available as a follow-up to any class viewing a recorded lesson. New digital follow-up activities for students were created for all presentations and were distributed to all teachers that registered for either format.

All Green Star Schools participate in these multitopic presentation opportunities. In addition, preschool classes annually participate in the *Ready, Set, Recycle* presentation and kindergarten classes annually participate in the *Secret Life of Soil: Critters Creating Compost* presentation. Click on the links below to view the materials developed for these programs.

Ready, Set, Recycle! video and activities-

Full video: [Ready, Set, Recycle!](#)

- [Recycling Sorting Follow-up PDF \(Seesaw/Schoology\)](#) - English
- [Recycling Sorting Follow-up Jamboard](#) - English
- [Recycling Sorting Follow-up PDF \(Seesaw/Schoology\)](#) - Spanish
- [Recycling Sorting Follow-up Jamboard](#) - Spanish
- [Answer key](#) - English
- [Answer key](#) - Spanish

Secret Life of Soil: Critters Creating Compost videos and activities-

Full video: [Full version](#)

Split version: [Part 1](#)
[Part 2](#)

- [Composting Scavenger Hunt PDF \(Seesaw/Schoology\)](#) - English
- [Composting Scavenger Hunt Jamboard](#) - English
- [Choose Your Favorite Decomposer PDF \(Seesaw/Schoology\)](#) - English
- [Choose Your Favorite Decomposer Jamboard](#) - English
- [Composting Scavenger Hunt PDF \(Seesaw/Schoology\)](#) - Spanish
- [Composting Scavenger Hunt Jamboard](#) - Spanish
- [Choose Your Favorite Decomposer PDF \(Seesaw/Schoology\)](#) - Spanish
- [Choose Your Favorite Decomposer Jamboard](#) - Spanish

[Click here to view all other virtual lessons, including videos and activities, that are available to Green Star Schools teachers.](#)

Special Projects to Promote Zero Waste in All Green Star Schools:

The following projects, publications and activities have been effective this school year in keeping the program integral in participating schools.

1. **Collection System Upgrades:** Eco-Cycle is always available to support custodial staff in adjusting their waste collection. Specific assistance this year included site visits with the head custodians at Boulder High and Centaurus High. Waste stations were relocated, and additional signage and stickers were delivered to these schools. Monarch PK-8's head custodian requested assistance in adjusting and increasing the number of cafeteria waste stations to speed the sorting of waste and reduce crowding. Eco-Cycle also delivered additional compost and recycle container labels to that school.
2. **Centaurus High School Engineering and Circular Design:**

Centaurus High Engineering teacher, Ann Root, reached out to Eco-Cycle for support in developing a unit on circular design for her sophomore-level engineering class. Eco-Cycle provided Ann with multiple resources



including publications, videos, websites and design project ideas. In addition, Eco-Cycle introduced Ann to Dr. Michael Readey, Professor of Engineering Practice at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Dr. Readey was developing a similar unit of study for his college students and provided additional valuable resources.

3. **Freshman Seminar Video:** Each Green Star School high school is expected to introduce and educate incoming freshman on the Green Star Schools program. Eco-Cycle developed and recorded a 13-minute video, *Green Star Schools Explained*. This video educates students on the issues related to landfilling, the benefits of recycling and composting, how to recycle and compost properly and the importance of reducing waste by reusing. Each Green Star high school received a video specific to their school, featuring their school photo and logos. Videos were distributed to school principals, office managers, Zero Waste contacts and Freshman Seminar lead teachers to be viewed with their freshman students. *Green Star Schools Explained* will continue to be used as the introduction and education for freshman to the Green Star Schools program in upcoming school years.

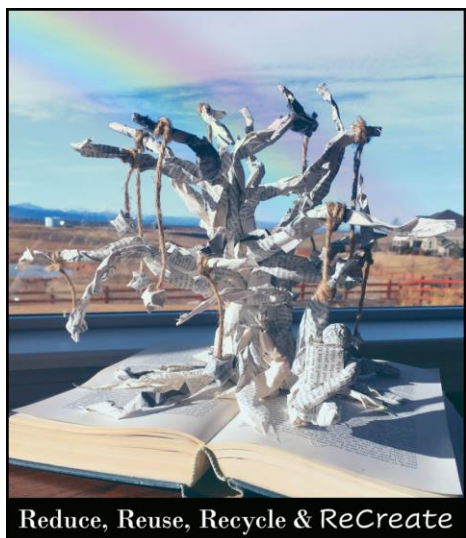
[Click here to view Green Star Schools Explained customized for Fairview High.](#)

4. **BVSD/CHaRM Partnership for Outdoor Learning:** The Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials (CHaRM) partnered with BVSD to collect materials for outdoor learning at BVSD schools during COVID. The collaboration included an announcement to the public regarding the partnership and the designation of space at CHaRM for the collection. Materials requested include white boards, dry erase markers, wagons, tarps, yoga mats and clipboards. (See the attached flier.)
5. **ReCreate, Art from Used Books:** With the goal of reducing paper waste, reducing the need for buying new materials to create art and finding a fun way to promote reuse, *ReCreate* (a project to make art from used books) was born.

ReCreate started as a pilot project in the fall of 2020. The used books came from the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials, which accepts books from the community for recycling. Every year, Eco-Cycle's *Children's Used Book Project* sorts and redistributes 15,000-20,000 gently-used books to local students, teachers, schools and charities. The remaining books are recycled. A portion of these books were salvaged from recycling and reused to create art. These used books supported art teachers and students with a cost-free art material and allowed the Green Star Schools program to engage with high school art communities.



First, we reached out to high school and middle school art teachers throughout Boulder County to offer the



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & ReCreate

opportunity. Participating teachers then completed a questionnaire to indicate the type of books they wanted: hard or soft cover, text or illustration, or any desired mix. Eco-Cycle schools staff sorted and delivered the requested books as needed throughout the year. Next, Eco-Cycle produced an educational video, *The Story of Paper: Project ReCreate*, that briefly covers the history of paper, its relation to art history, and how to properly recycle and compost paper. The video concludes by introducing *ReCreate*, leaving each teacher the flexibility to adapt the assignment for their students. Students watched *The Story of Paper: Project ReCreate* prior to beginning their *ReCreate* project. In October, the first art was completed, and Boulder High students shared their creations in an online slideshow. As the 2020-2021 school year progressed, Broomfield High, Manhattan Middle School and Monarch PK-8 joined the project.

The *ReCreate Virtual Art Exhibit* opened in celebration of Earth Day on April 20, 2021. The exhibit begins with welcoming statements from

Boulder County Commissioners Matt Jones, Claire Levy and Marta Loachamin. It also includes short video segments to explain *ReCreate* to guests and how to navigate the virtual exhibit. Guests navigate the exhibit by choosing *ReCreations* from specific schools. At the conclusion, guests have the option to view the *The Story of Paper: Project ReCreate* video or to learn more about Green Star Schools by visiting Eco-Cycle's website. The entire *ReCreate Virtual Art Exhibit* is available in Spanish.

The exhibit was featured in Eco-Cycle's social media, Boulder Valley School District's social media and in two emails from Eco-Cycle to Boulder County community members during Earth Day week. Each participating school also received an announcement and link to the exhibit to share with their school community. In addition, participating schools each received copies of the slideshow segment that featured their student's art to be shown on cafeteria, hallway or library screens in their school.

After opening the exhibit, the Casey Middle School art teacher requested access to *The Story of Paper: Project ReCreate* video. An art class at Casey viewed the video and began their *ReCreations* in May.

Eco-Cycle's Green Star Schools program looks forward to the continuation and expansion of *ReCreate*. Pilot-year teachers have expressed interest in participating again during the 2021-2022 school year. To expand participation, Eco-Cycle will contact BVSD and SVVSD art teachers and administrative staff in the fall of 2021 with information on *ReCreate*, including links to the virtual exhibit and an invitation to register. Participation statistics for this school year are below.

School	Grade Levels	# of Classes	# of Students	# of Books
Boulder High	9th-12th	4	55	80
Broomfield High	9 th -12th	2	75	80
Manhattan Middle	7th, 8th	3	40	50
Monarch PK-8	7th	3	80	120
	Total	12	250	330

[Click here to view the *ReCreate Virtual Art Exhibit*.](#)

[Click here to view the *Story of Paper: Project ReCreate* video.](#)

The following are quotes from participating art teachers:

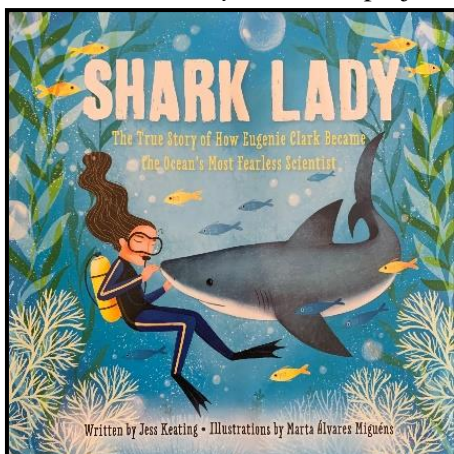
"The video was such a great kick-off for this project. It really brought home a broader scope of why we were doing this. Many of my students said this was their favorite assignment!"

- **Kate Villarreal, Boulder High Art Teacher**

"Thank you for putting it all together. The students had fun, and I feel that the results were outstanding."

- **Alaina McQueen Manhattan Middle School Art Teacher**

6. ***Earth Friends Story Time virtual sessions:*** Our newest Green Star Schools project for primary level students, *Earth Friends Story Time*, is a project that works well for remote learning because it is delivered virtually. It



engages students after school for an hour per week, which gives their parents/guardians a much-needed break. During story time, an Eco-Cycle educator meets virtually with students to read a book aloud. Students see the book illustrations as a slideshow. Afterwards, the Eco-Cycle educator and students engage in what has proven to be a lively discussion about the story. Students discuss their thoughts, feelings and what they have learned. Featured Books include: *Stellaluna* by Janell Cannon, *Shark Lady* (about Eugenie Clark) by Jess Keating, *Over and Under the Pond* by Kate Messner, and *The Watcher* (about Jane Goodall) by Jeanette Winter. (See the attached book list for the entire Curriculum.)

The program was piloted at Sanchez Elementary in the fall. Three-week sessions were conducted in both November and December. For the spring semester, we expanded the project to include students from Uni-Hill,

Columbine and Pioneer Elementary Schools. We had hoped to expand into St. Vrain Valley schools, but District staff were too overloaded to participate. Next school year, we will expand the program into St. Vrain Valley Schools and adapt the project to work with in-person after-school programs in both Districts.

The following are quotes from parents whose children attended the sessions:

"William LOVED his time with you and said he hopes he can do it again next school year. Thank you for everything! It was a joy!"

"Even after a long school day, my wiggly second-grader is so excited to attend Earth Friends Story Time. He shouts 'yes!' when I tell him it's time. He loves the instructor and really enjoys seeing the other kids. He's more animated and inquisitive than usual while listening to the books, and he shares interesting animal stories afterward. I'm an enthusiastic supporter of this Eco-Cycle program!"

7. **Colorado Recycles Week Publication and Activities:** On November 16, 2020, Governor Jared Polis declared the third week of November to be *Colorado Recycles Week*. The Governor's office requested that we nominate a Green Star School to be part of the ceremony. We nominated Red Hawk Elementary in Erie for the honor. Principal Timothy Garcia participated in the virtual signing ceremony along with several Red Hawk students.

To celebrate this weeklong event with all Green Star Schools, Eco-Cycle developed a special one-page publication with information about how to recycle throughout Boulder County (see attached). Links were provided to City, County and Eco-Cycle web pages. The publication was distributed to all Green Star School Elementary Schools to be shared with families. A link to an interactive *Colorado Recycles Week* slideshow for elementary students was a central feature of the document. The slideshow includes helpful videos on how to sort recycling and compost in Boulder County, information about recycling hard-to-recycle materials at the *Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder Center for Hard-to-Recycle Materials* and proper disposal of household hazardous materials at Boulder County's *Hazardous Materials Management Facility*. After reviewing this information and having fun with a Jeff and Paige disco brain break (also produced by Eco-Cycle), students are invited to test their Zero Waste IQ by playing Eco-Cycle's online sorting game. Green Star Schools were encouraged to share the slideshow with all teachers for use as a classroom resource.



[Click here to view the Colorado Recycles Week slideshow.](#)

8. **Eco-Cycle Holiday Guide and Supplemental Student Activity Publications:** The *Eco-Cycle Holiday Guide* is distributed to all Green Star School families each year. This year we added supplemental student activities. The *Create Your Own Wrapping Paper with an Eco-Elf* activity was fun for elementary-age students. The *Wise With Winter Waste* publication had three fun videos and reduce, reuse, recycle activity ideas for middle and high school youth. Please see the attached publications. Click on the links below to view the following videos which were embedded in the *Wise With Winter Waste* publication:

[Wise with Winter Waste Part I: Recycling is CHaRMing](#)

[Wise with Winter Waste Part II: Reduce the Wrap](#)

[Wise with Winter Waste Part III: Regift to Reuse](#)



9. **Green Star Schools Fall Newsletter:** The fall 2020 edition of *Green Star Schools News* focused on school staff, particularly custodial staff. We wanted to honor the custodians because they are so critical to keeping the schools safe during COVID. (The newsletter is attached.)

10. **New Middle and High School Prize Drawings:** During a typical school year, Green Star Schools visit sixth grade classes for an in-person training. We also provide ninth grade teachers and students with slideshows to be shared in Freshman Seminar. These presentations cover the environmental impacts of trash, how to recycle and compost properly, and the benefits of waste reduction through reuse.



Because in-person presentations were not an option during this year, Green Star Schools created a video version of each of these presentations. *Greener Things: Adventures in Waste Reduction* is a 23-minute video with an accompanying follow-up activity for middle school students. *Green Star Schools Explained* is a 13-minute video with a follow-up activity for high school students. *Green Star Schools Explained* (also discussed in 3. above) is individualized for each school, featuring photographs of their school, mascot and colors.

In January, all Green Star middle and high schools were offered the opportunity to register to participate in a new promotion that included a prize drawing. Participating middle schools and their registered grade-levels watched *Greener Things: Adventures in Waste Reduction* before completing a follow-up fun-fact quiz activity by April 26th. Participating high schools and their registered grade-levels watched *Green Star Schools Explained* before also completing a similar follow-up activity by April 26th. After completing the follow-up activity, students had the option to provide their name and grade level to be entered into a prize drawing. One student winner was randomly selected from each school to win a \$25 gift card to a reuse retailer of their choice. The choices were all businesses that promote waste reduction through the resale of clothing, books, sporting goods, music and video games. Schools earned one prize entry for each participating grade-level at their school. One middle school and one high school were randomly selected from all participants to win \$250. This promotion design allowed schools the flexibility to decide the best fit for participation. It also accommodated students learning from home and in person.

Four middle schools participated, with almost 900 students participating and almost 800 students completing the optional follow-up activity. Centennial Middle School was randomly selected as the *Greener Things: Adventures in Waste Reduction* middle school prize winner. Centaurus High School was randomly selected as the *Green Star Schools Explained* high school prize winner. Three high schools participated with nearly 1,000 students reached and almost 900 students completing the optional follow-up activity. Due to overwhelming participation at Boulder High School, with 600 student participants and over 500 completing the activity, a student winner was selected at each of the grade-levels, freshman through senior. One student winner was selected at the remaining three high schools and from the middle schools. Each school received notification of their student winner(s) and text to announce the conclusion of the promotion and the winners in the prize drawings.



Looking to the future, Green Star Schools can utilize the videos and follow-up activities with incoming sixth and ninth grade classes. Recorded video presentations with a follow-up activity will be useful tools to reach large numbers of students with varying schedules at middle and high schools when in-person presentations are not an option.

Greener Things: Adventures in Waste Reduction

School Name	6 th Grade Students	7 th Grade Students	8 th Grade Students	Total Students Participating in Prize Drawing	Total Students Participating in project Overall
Altona Middle	180	0	0	180	180
Centennial Middle	87	4	2	93	93
Louisville Middle	169	88	55	312	369
Monarch PK-8	93	35	78	206	221
Total	529	127	135	791	863

Green Star Schools Explained

School Name	9 th Grade Students	10 th Grade Students	11 th Grade Students	12 th Grade Students	Total Students Participating in Prize Drawing	Total Students Participating in project overall
Boulder High	172	159	148	56	535	601
Centaurus High	147	51	52	31	281	306
Fairview High	22	9	13	19	63	68
Total	341	219	213	106	879	975

The following are quotes from project participants:

“The video you made was awesome! Super helpful and engaging. You should know that all students watched this video in their advisory classes.”

- Kristen McDermott, 7th grade, Centaurus High School

“My oldest daughter came home after school yesterday super excited to tell us about her Green Star trash sorting video and questions she answered to enter into the raffle. I would like to bring that sort of excitement to other programs as well!”

- Parent, Altona Middle School

The following are links to the Middle School materials. Click on each one to view.

[Greener Things: Adventures in Waste Reduction Trailer](#)

[Greener Things: Adventures in Waste Reduction Video](#)

[Greener Things: Adventures in Waste Reduction Follow-Up Activity](#)

The following are links to the High School materials. Click on each one to view.

[Green Star Schools Explained Trailer](#)

[Green Star Schools Explained Video \(Boulder High\)](#)

[Green Star Schools Explained Follow-Up Activity \(Boulder High\)](#)

- Boulder High School Environmental Club:** The Green Star Schools Program Manager attended two meetings of Boulder High School’s Environmental Club in the spring. With the return to onsite learning, students wanted help to promote composting at their school. Promotion ideas included signage, announcements, volunteering as waste goalies, and promoting the *Green Star Schools Explained* prize drawing. We advised students as well as provided materials for signs.



12. **Lyons Elementary, Eagle Crest Elementary and Central Elementary Faculty Meetings:** Lyons Elementary, Eagle Crest Elementary and Central Elementary (both in Longmont) each received a staff presentation during a faculty meeting to support their compost collections. The 20-minute presentation covered how the Green Star Schools program functions within the school, as well as how to sort recyclable and compostable materials.

13. **Eagle Crest Elementary Composting:** In February, the Green Star Schools Program Manager attended a virtual meeting of the Eco Eagles Club at Eagle Crest Elementary to provide support while the school was



preparing to resume composting collections. Students wished to better understand the benefits of composting to help them prepare videos and signage to share with classmates. Later that week, Eco-Cycle staff presented at the school's virtual faculty meeting. Eco-Cycle also conducted two virtual school assemblies to further the education of staff and students. Each featured a new, age-appropriate slideshow to increase student awareness and improve waste sorting skills. The assembly for students in K-2nd grade concluded with a student waste sort featuring fun movement. The assembly for students in 3rd-5th grade concluded with a quiz game hosted on Kahoot. Students competed as classroom groups to test their waste-reduction knowledge.

14. **Eisenhower Elementary Winning Posters:** Green Star Schools was invited as a guest speaker to the Eisenhower EcoEagles student meeting in March. Students were preparing to participate in *Recycle Colorado*'s annual poster contest. This year's theme was "What happens to the things I recycle?" The presentation covered how items are properly recycled and processed at the Boulder County Recycling Center. Students also learned what the materials become and where they travel to be recycled. The EcoEagles won 5 of the 10 awards in the *Recycle Colorado Poster Contest*. [Winning posters can be viewed here.](#)
15. **Centennial Middle Live-Stream:** Eco-Cycle staff conducted our first *Google Live Stream Meet* with the entire sixth grade class at Centennial Middle School in Boulder. This 30-minute presentation featured a new slide show to help students understand the negative impacts of trash, how to reduce waste by recycling and composting, and the benefits of waste reduction. Following the presentation, sixth-grade students completed the follow-up activity from *Greener Things: Adventures in Waste Reduction*. Participating students were entered into the project drawing for a chance to win a \$25 gift card. The school was entered into the \$250-level prize drawing as described in 10. above.
16. **Supporting Waste Reduction at Monarch PK-8:** COVID adaptations in schools extended to the food being served, increased food packaging for sanitation and changes in the location of where students eat. Students at Monarch PK-8 in Louisville were eating breakfast in their classroom daily. Kristin McLaurin, 7th grade teacher, worked diligently with students to reduce waste through proper sorting. After realizing they were struggling with the disposal of packaging new to them, Kristin requested support. Eco-Cycle created a new presentation that was given in-person to 7th grade classes. The presentation included a knowledge pre-assessment on Kahoot, a slideshow about materials that students were struggling with and an active relay sort.
17. **Fireside Virtual Earth Day Assembly:** Fireside Elementary in Louisville requested Eco-Cycle Green Star Schools as the special guest for their virtual schoolwide assembly for Earth Day. The purpose of the assembly was to promote their school theme of PRIDE, where the R stands for Responsibility. Green Star Schools developed a 20-minute presentation including a slideshow individualized to Fireside's theme of Responsibility, featuring containers at their school and connecting to their Crazy-Sock Spirit Day. The presentation concluded with a specialized fun Kahoot quiz.

"I have heard from several teachers and our principal that your assembly was the best assembly of the year! I am SO thankful for all your time and hard work!"

- Shannon Pischke, Fireside Elementary, 2nd grade teacher

18. **New Waste-Free Lunch Prize Drawing:** *Explore a Waste-Free Lunch* is a COVID-adapted virtual version of the Waste-Free Lunch Contest. It offers a new way for students to discover how to reduce lunch waste at home and at school through reuse, recycling and composting. Two versions were created. The K-2nd grade version featured a short video and follow-up sorting activity in Seesaw, while the 3rd-5th grade version featured an interactive Google Slideshow, including embedded mini-video lessons followed by a short fun-fact quiz. Grade-level teams assigned the 15-minute, fun and interactive *Explore a Waste-Free Lunch* version that was appropriate to their grade. Participating schools earned one drawing entry for each grade level that assigned the activity. Family letters were provided to all participating grade levels to make families aware of the eco-friendly initiatives their student was learning about and to offer at-home Zero Waste tips (see attached).



On April 30th, two of the participating grade levels were randomly selected to win \$100 each and one school was randomly selected to win \$400. The school \$400 prize drawing winner for *Explore a Waste-Free Lunch* was Bear Creek Elementary. The two grade-level \$100 prize drawing winners were University Hill Elementary kindergarten and Eisenhower Elementary first grade.

All in all, this new *Explore a Waste-Free Lunch* promotion was notably successful in a year with countless challenges for students, families and teachers. Thirteen schools registering for the promotion reaching 122 faculty members, 2,648 students and countless family members. See the participation data below:

School Name	# of grade levels	# of faculty	Total Students Enrolled
BCSIS	2	4	93
Bear Creek Elementary	6	15	341
Central Elementary	6	13	227
Creskide Elementary	3	5	120
Crest View Elementary	2	6	130
Eagle Crest Elementary	3	9	190
Eisenhower Elementary	6	17	358
Flatirons Elementary	3	5	103
Foothill Elementary	4	10	320
Longmont Estates Elementary	5	11	199
Monarch PK-8	2	5	118
University Hill Elementary	3	11	193
Whittier Elementary	5	11	256
Total	50	122	2,648

[View the virtual preview of the *Explore a Waste-Free Lunch* project format and activities.](#)

[View the Seesaw activity, Kindergarten to 2nd graders.](#)

[View the Interactive Google Slideshow, 3rd to 5th graders.](#)

The following are comments from participating teachers:

"I do have to mention that one of my students brought in home-made reusable fabric napkins to share with everyone! They also enjoyed the activity on Seesaw!"

- **Marina Orozco-Ngu, Uni-Hill Elementary, 2nd Grade teacher**

"Thank you! I appreciate the effort you put into making this so easy for teachers!"

- **Sara Weisman, Foothill Elementary 1st grade teacher**

19. **Reusables Rule at Our School! Reusable Water Bottle Project:** The *Reusable Water Bottle Project* was funded by the City of Boulder, BVSD and Eco-Cycle. The goal of the program is to eliminate waste from single-use water bottles and to promote the safety of tap water, while also making it easier for kids to refill their bottles at school. The project involves automatic bottle-filler retrofits to school water fountains and an education campaign. Family letters, announcements, posters and student contests (with water bottle and movie ticket prizes) are customized for each school. This project has been especially important during COVID since the CDC has recommended that only bottle-filler fountains be used in schools and other public buildings.

This year, two bi-level automatic bottle-fillers were installed at Fairview High and one bi-level unit was installed at New Vista High. These schools will receive an education campaign with city funding in the fall when schools are expected to resume full-time in-person learning.

20. **Virtual Locker Leftovers and Classroom Cleanout:** At the end of every school year, the Green Star Schools program supports waste reduction with the *Classroom Cleanout* and *Locker Leftovers* projects. Due to COVID restrictions, Eco-Cycle Schools staff could not go on-site for this project this year. Instead, a virtual version was created.

Three staff collaborated to create two new videos: *Classroom Cleanout* for elementary schools and *Locker Leftovers* for middle and high schools. In these videos, teachers, students and families learn how to properly dispose of unwanted school supplies with an emphasis on reuse. Knowing which materials can be recycled and composted also reduces trash generated at the end of the school year. In addition, the *Classroom Cleanout* and *Locker Leftover* videos cover the topic of reuse as it relates to gently-used items like clothing, shoes and books. Students learn about reuse options like giving items to family and friends, donating to local thrift and resale shops, as well as shopping at resale businesses.



A family letter was created as a written companion piece to the *Classroom Cleanout* and *Locker Leftover* videos. This letter to staff, students, and families reinforces ways to reduce waste by reusing, recycling and composting school supplies. In addition, reuse of gently-used items is highlighted including a link to Eco-Cycle's *Tour de Thrift* map. This map helps users locate local establishments where they can donate items and shop resale. These actions reduce waste and support local businesses.

The *Classroom Cleanout* and *Locker Leftover* videos and companion publications were distributed to 58 local elementary, middle and high schools in Boulder County. Each school received the family letter in English and Spanish and was asked to forward the resources to their staff and school community.

[Click here to view the Classroom Cleanout video.](#)

[Click here to watch the Locker Leftover video.](#)

[Visit the Tour de Thrift map on Eco-Cycle's website by clicking here.](#)

The following is a quote from an enthusiastic teacher:

"Thanks so much for these resources! There is a lot that gets cleaned out of our classrooms as we approach the end of the year. These are great 'I didn't know's' and helpful reminders!"

- Shannon Pischke, Fireside Elementary staff

21. **In-School Classroom Cleanout:** Classroom Cleanout was also conducted live and in person for four Green Star Schools at the end of the school year. Teachers looked through their classrooms for any unused or gently-used school supplies to donate. Eco-Cycle staff picked up and sorted the materials and redistributed them to schools in need. Four elementary schools donated supplies this year: Eisenhower Elementary, Mesa Elementary, Lyons Elementary and Niwot Elementary. Mapleton Early Childhood Center and University Hill Elementary received the donations. Any materials that could not be donated were recycled, composted, or terracycled, and if none of these options were available, landfilled. This program drastically reduced waste from the donor schools and provided low-income schools with much needed supplies.

22. **Green Star Schools Spring Newsletter:** The spring 2021 edition of *Green Star Schools News* continues to feature school staff. This edition celebrates kitchen managers, two from BVSD and two from SVVSD. Their work makes it possible for students to be happy, healthy and engaged learners. (The newsletter is attached.)



23. **Grant Support in SVVSD:** Prior to COVID, SVVSD's Energy and Sustainability Manager applied for and received a grant from Boulder County. The purpose of the grant was to support waste reduction through increased recycling and food recovery. Eco-Cycle is supporting SVVSD with administration of the grant. Eco-Cycle staff researched recycle containers, contacting vendors for cost information. This cost information was provided to SVVSD in order to purchase 800 classroom recycle containers to be placed in 16 schools. These recycle containers will serve to standardize the containers used in SVVSD schools and increase recycling capacity. In addition, Eco-Cycle provided Recycling Guidelines to be printed and distributed with the new containers in the fall of 2021. Eco-Cycle will continue to support this grant with faculty presentations at the schools receiving these new containers.

Program Successes and Challenges:

Although COVID restrictions in the schools defined and altered the program this school year, we were able to successfully develop and implement new virtual outreach tools and methods as detailed above. The learning curve for everyone serving the schools this year has been very steep and difficult, as it has been for school staff. Although the value of in-person education will always be superior to remote learning for quality hands-on, interactive instruction, healthy child development, socialization and relationship building, selectively adding some of these newly acquired virtual tools will be an effective enhancement to more traditional in-person programming.

In addition, both Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts plan to continue to offer on-line and remote education opportunities to families that prefer this option over in-person learning. We will continue to serve the students that attend the District on-line schools permanently with the virtual curriculum we developed this school year. In-person schools will continue to receive our in-person presentations and field trips.

We will also be looking at a model to launch the on-line schools as Green Star Schools in the near future. This model will include substantial outreach to families as the home will be the academic setting for students in these schools. Indeed, the virtual materials that we developed and implemented for this COVID-restricted year also had a substantial home outreach component.

List of Attachments:

- Signage for compost collection during COVID for Green Star Schools
- Flier of CHaRM collections for BVSD outdoor learning
- *Earth Friends Story Time Book List* for 2020-2021
- *Colorado Recycles Week* publication for all Green Star elementary schools
- *Create Your Own Wrapping Paper with an Eco-Elf* activity for Green Star elementary students
- *Wise With Winter Waste* publication for Green Star secondary students
- Fall 2020 *Green Star Schools News*
- *Waste-Free Lunch Prize Drawing* family letter
- *Classroom Cleanout and Locker Leftover* family letter
- Spring 2021 *Green Star Schools News*

Financials:

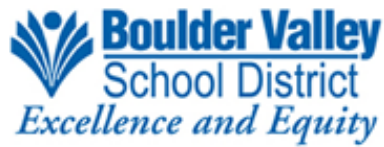
Funding was provided by the foundations and public agencies listed below. Eco-Cycle is grateful to these organizations for their generosity. The monies were used to fund staff time, materials, collection containers, education programs and incentive activities.

Eco-Cycle Green Star Schools Program Budget 2020-2021

<i>Expenses (through end of school year):</i>	Projected	Actual
<i>Posters and fliers</i>	\$500	\$0
<i>Print materials</i>	\$2,200	\$1,639
<i>Translation (Spanish)</i>	\$100	\$745
<i>Graphic artist/curriculum design</i>	\$720	\$0
<i>Materials/IT</i>	\$250	\$650
<i>Compostable/durable service ware for parties/events</i>	\$600	\$0
<i>Special waste reduction projects and contests</i>	\$300	\$0
<i>Bus costs for student field trips</i>	\$100	\$0
<i>Incentives and acknowledgements</i>	\$2,400	\$1,350
<i>Collection containers</i>	\$2,500	\$420
<i>Dumpsters (1 x \$550 each)</i>	\$2,750	\$0
<i>Mileage (122 x \$.41/mile)</i>	\$3,600	\$100
<i>Personnel</i>		
<i>Compensation</i>	\$108,274	\$117,934
<i>Benefits and Payroll taxes</i>	\$49,806	\$35,380
<i>Critical infrastructure/core support</i>	\$32,850	\$32,667
<i>Total Expenses</i>	\$206,950	\$190,885
<i>Revenue:</i>		
<i>Boulder County (program operating support)</i>		\$30,000
<i>City of Boulder (program operating support)</i>		\$15,000
<i>City of Longmont (program operating support)</i>		\$5,000
<i>Boulder Valley School District (program operating support)</i>		\$30,000
<i>St. Vrain Valley School District (program operating support)</i>		\$10,000
<i>Ball Foundation</i>		\$18,000
<i>Oracle Grants Program</i>		\$25,000
<i>Northrop Grumman Corporation</i>		\$800
<i>BVSD Trip Tracker</i>		\$300
<i>Eco-Cycle Deficit</i>		\$56,785
<i>Total</i>		\$190,885

Funders:

Thanks to our Green Star Schools funders for their support during the 2020-2021 school year!



The Community Foundation
BOULDER COUNTY



Northrop Grumman

BVSD Trip Tracker Student Donations