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GREEN STAR SCHOOLS® NEWS

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CELEBRATING GREEN STAR SCHOOL MILESTONES!

Welcome **Fall River Elementary**, the newest Green Star School! Fall River students and staff joined our Green Star Schools community, reducing waste, and fostering a generation of environmental leaders.

Lyons Middle/Senior High School relaunched student composting in the cafeteria this spring. Thank you for recommitting to reducing waste!

In March, **Blue Mountain Elementary** celebrated their milestone of being a Green Star School since 2010! The celebration, provided by Eco-Cycle, included a sorting wheel at recess, raffle drawing for students, refresher education and lunchroom waste sorting support, a free book table from Eco-Cycle's Children's Used Book Project, and a special assembly from Raptor Education Foundation featuring live birds of prey. Congratulations, Blue Mountain!

There are currently 60 Green Star Schools in Boulder County. Eco-Cycle's Green Star Schools program is looking forward to continued collaboration with existing Green Star Schools, as well as the enrollment of new schools, bringing waste reduction practices to every school in Boulder Valley and St. Vrain Valley School Districts!



Fall River custodian, kitchen, and lunchroom staff

SUPER SORTERS SPOTTED IN ACTION!

As Eco-Cycle educators have been at schools supporting the compost changes to food scraps only, we spotted waste goalies and super sorters in the lunchroom who help to educate students and peers to increase waste reduction.



WHAT ARE THE COMPOST CHANGES? This spring, A1 Organics, the operator of the Front Range's only large-scale commercial compost manufacturing facility, joined other quality-driven compost manufacturers in simplifying the materials they accept. In compliance with the new guidelines, please compost **FOOD SCRAPS and PLANT & YARD TRIMMINGS ONLY!**

Despite these mid-year changes, Green Star Schools quickly adapted and continue to collect clean compost. Composting keeps food waste out of the landfill, prevents harmful methane emissions, and creates a valuable soil amendment to build healthy soils that absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. In turn, healthy soil reduces water and chemical use while growing nutritious foods!

LET'S TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT SOME OF THESE SUPER SORTERS!



Kindergarten & 1st grade students at **Longmont Estates** volunteer to collect utensils and food share items to help their school reuse, rescue uneaten food, and assist classmates with sorting!



Red Hawk 3rd and 4th grade helpers collect uneaten packaged food items and waste goalie during cleanup to ensure students are sorting the recycle and compost right!



3rd grade volunteers at **Blue Mountain** arrive early to the cafeteria to help younger students sort their lunch leftovers.

Silver Creek High's assistant principal, Eric Ottem, is a model of waste reduction. Armed with his bucket and grabber, Mr. Ottem makes the rounds to each waste station, ensuring that the bins are sorted correctly while encouraging students to sort right along the way. He even takes time to rescue recyclables and food scraps from trash bins in outdoor eating areas, diverting even more waste from the landfill!



Eric Ottem, Silver Creek

Food is a contaminate in recycling. All recyclables should be clean. Plastic tubs that held yogurt, applesauce, or other sticky foods contaminate recycling. Not at Silver Creek!



Wash bucket & clean recyclables

With a wash bucket half-full of hot water, Mr. Ottem rinses the food residue from yogurt and cereal cups and other recyclables. Way to keep the recycling clean!

To all the students, custodial, kitchen, and school staff, and those in our Green Star Schools community not pictured here, thank you for working hard everyday to model excellent sorting behaviors to reduce waste and help the planet. Your support makes this program a success allowing it to grow and thrive.

Thank you for your support and partnership!

PLASTICS: WHICH CAN I RECYCLE?

The recycling symbol can be found on most plastics, but that does not mean the item is actually recyclable. Confused? You are not alone. Because use of the recycling symbol is currently unregulated, the recycle symbol does not always mean it is recyclable in your area. ***It is always best to consult your local guidelines to find out what is recyclable.***

In Boulder County, recyclable plastics include bottles, tubs, jugs, jars, and clamshells. [Visit the Boulder County recycling guidelines to find out more.](#)

The number inside of the recycling arrows indicates the type of resin that is used to make that plastic. In general, there are some plastics that have more value than others. When possible, choose plastic resins such as #1 (PET), #2 (HDPE), and #5 (PP) which are less toxic and are more recyclable. Try to avoid plastics #3 (PVC), #6 (PS), and #7 (Other) whose production processes are often toxic, have health hazards associated when we consume food or drink out of them, and are significantly harder to find recycling markets. #4 (LDPE) plastics include plastic films such as bread and grocery bags. While these types of plastic films can be recycled, they should never be placed in single-stream or curbside recycling bins. Collect clean plastic film to be dropped off at the Eco-Cycle/City of Boulder's Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM) or storefront collection sites.

Unlike glass and metals, the quality of plastic degrades as it is recycled. At best, a plastic bottle can only be recycled a few times. When you have a choice, opt for aluminum or glass bottles and cans instead, which can be recycled infinitely!

At **Boulder High**, Julie Thompson's Environmental Science class created a plastic display case to help decode the confusion about plastics. [Test your plastic knowledge in this student-created quiz.](#)

Contributed by Julie Thompson, Teacher, Boulder High, BVSD



Plastic display case at Boulder High

STUDENT PROJECTS SUPPORTING THE ENVIRONMENT

At **Eisenhower Elementary**, EcoEagle Green Team Ambassadors not only focus on school sustainability efforts, but also on the greater community to have a larger impact.

After learning about how a bill becomes a law, the EcoEagles participated in Colorado Youth Lobby Day by writing letters to state senators and representatives, expressing concerns and offering ideas and solutions.

Students worked in mixed grade groups to compose letters on topics they felt were the most critical environmental issues in the state, including banning single-use plastics, regulations on home construction efficiency, imposing a trash tax, and increasing tree planting.

Senator Fenberg and Representative Joseph replied to students, validating their concerns with positive comments on their suggestions.



Eisenhower EcoEagles (1st-5th grade)

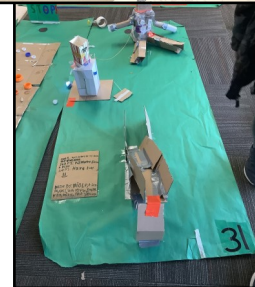
They expressed appreciation for the student letters and empowered the EcoEagles to continue striving for a greener future!

Contributed by Marti Hirsch, School Staff, Eisenhower, BVSD

Mountain View students reused materials in STEM class for a variety of design challenges. 4th grade used recyclables to explore their knowledge of the skeletal system.

They designed and built a life-size skeleton and a skeletal pet. 3rd grade designed and created a home for an animal who would be living and adapting in a new biome. All Mountain View students helped create holes for a "Sphero putt-putt" golf course.

Contributed by Lauren Vargas, Teacher, Mountain View, SVVSD



STEM projects

The **Eagle Crest** Eco Eagles were busy this spring with the **Waste-Free Lunch: Precycle** promotion, organizing their annual fork and spoon community utensil drive, planting gardens, and celebrating Earth Day. Students made several educational materials to promote waste reduction in the lunchroom. They also made seed paper using seeds harvested from the school gardens last year, and gifted it to classrooms on Earth Day to be planted in the gardens again this spring. They hope to have lots of pollinators and birds coming by when the flowers bloom!

Contributed by Katy Schwirtz, Teacher, Eagle Crest, SVVSD

Cheers to another GREEN year!

It has been my privilege and pleasure to work with staff and students at all the Green Star Schools across Boulder County in their efforts to reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost waste in schools. I look forward to continued collaborations next school year.

Thank you all for being Zero Waste Community Partners!

Happy Summer! *Kathy*