

GRADES OF GREEN

WASTE CAMPAIGN

FINAL REPORT 2019



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Grades of Green's Waste Campaign is a semester-long, virtual program that provides students across the globe with the mentorship and leadership training needed to implement impactful solutions to waste issues in their community. The inaugural 2019 Waste Campaign was launched in January 2019 and provided environmental leadership tools and mentorship to 879 student leaders across the globe. By participating in the Waste Campaign, students educated over 25,000 community members, peers, and government officials about waste issues specific to their area. Grades of Green empowered 80 Campaign Teams of students and educators from 42 cities and 11 countries to research their local waste issues, develop a solution to an issue, and then share that solution and a call to action with the community to result in real-world change. All Campaign Teams were paired with a Grades of Green Mentor to receive customized support for their Campaign project including virtual meetings, weekly email check-ins, and expert guidance to keep students on track and engaged in the Campaign. Campaign Teams also had the opportunity to partner with another team globally to share ideas and learn from each other.

Through the Waste Campaign, students received comprehensive waste reduction resources, including hands-on activities that complement NGSS and 21st Century Learning Standards, webinars featuring experts to inspire their projects, and a virtual discussion platform to connect with student leaders across the globe. By implementing the Waste Campaign, Campaign Teams collectively diverted more than 114.6 tons of waste from landfills, resulting in 4.6 million KWH of energy, 800,000 gallons of water, and 43,000 gallons of oil conserved, as well as 45,000 tons of CO₂ reduced. These numbers will continue to grow as many Campaign Teams are continuing to expand on their waste reduction projects.

By completing the Waste Campaign, each student achieved the following:

- Identified an important waste issue in their school or community;
- Created an innovative solution to that issue;
- Educated and inspired their community to reduce waste with a call to action through a short video or live presentation;
- Compiled and submitted their results (i.e. pounds of waste diverted, community members educated, presentation attendees and video views) to Grades of Green to be considered for grant prizes to expand their waste solution.

Campaign Teams who completed the program had the opportunity to win Eco-Grant prizes between \$500 to \$1,000 to expand their innovative waste solutions. Grades of Green selected a group of finalists and voted to award \$500 grants to four winning

teams. An expert panel of judges reviewed the top finalists to select the Grand Prize, \$1,000 grant winner. Student movements are sustained through continued mentorship and leadership trainings with a culminating Grades of Green Youth Leadership Summit, the Impact-a-thon, on June 2nd, 2019.

The Waste Campaign was developed using best practices from Grades of Green's award-winning Trash Free Lunch Challenge, which resulted in an average of 70% waste reduction in participating schools and diverted over 2,700 tons of waste from landfills over the past 7 years. Thanks to generous sponsor support, the program is available at no cost to participating students, ensuring cost is not a barrier to becoming an environmental advocate. The Waste Campaign creates a sustainable model for waste reduction by empowering student leaders around the globe to create an environmental action campaign to reduce community-wide waste generation. Students develop their leadership skills, change their waste habits, and improve community culture, leading to a ripple effect of positive change.

Grades of Green will expand this high-impact program during the spring 2020 semester to empower 800+ student leaders across the globe to implement waste reduction solutions in their communities. Both the fall 2019 Water Campaign and the spring 2020 Waste Campaign will have a specific focus on single-use plastics reduction. The Waste Campaign will reduce the harmful effects of plastic waste on the environment by providing student leaders with customized mentorship, access to environmental experts, a virtual library of NGSS-aligned hands-on resources and activities, and the opportunity to collaborate with other student teams across the globe. 2020 Waste Campaign Teams will implement plastic reduction solutions and advocate for plastic bans at the school and city level.

RESULTS AND METRICS

Grades of Green is very proud of all the participants in the first Waste Campaign. Through hard work and perseverance, students created effective and innovative solutions to a wide variety of waste issues in their communities. Below are the key results that the 879 participating student leaders achieved in just one semester of action. These numbers will continue to grow as students expand their projects and further develop their leadership skills with support from Grades of Green.

- **879** student leaders implemented waste reduction in their schools and communities
- **80** Campaign Teams of students and educators across the globe created innovative solutions to waste issues in **42** cities and **11** countries
- **229,217** pounds of waste, equal to **114.6 tons** of waste were reduced by Campaign Teams during one semester of action, resulting in:
 - **4.6** million KWH of energy conserved
 - **800,000** gallons of water conserved
 - **43,000** gallons of oil conserved
 - **45,000** tons of CO₂ emissions reduced
- **12,657** community members world-wide were reached through **28** live presentations given by students, including:
 - **4** presentations to city councils
 - **4** presentations to school districts
 - **14** presentations to the school community
 - **6** presentations to the wider community
- **13,072+** people were collectively educated by student-created Waste Campaign videos showcasing each team's local waste issue, innovative waste solution and call to action to their community

CAMPAIGN TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

Grades of Green is proud to share some highlights from the 2019 Waste Campaign Winners and Finalist Campaign Teams, who achieved exceptional results. Highlights include links to the short campaign video that each team created and shared with their community.

Bridgeport Elementary School Green Team (Santa Clarita, California)

- **Waste Campaign Issue:** This team of 37 elementary students noticed the large number of edible food items being thrown into the landfill bin at lunchtime. Inspired to create change, the team set the goal of rescuing the wasted food and reducing the overall amount of landfill waste generated at lunch time.
- **Solution:**
 - Sorting waste into separately labeled bins at lunchtime;
 - Setting up “Trash Free Tuesdays” to challenge kids who pack lunch to go zero-waste by bringing reusable containers and utensils;
 - Implementing a food rescue program to donate good, uneaten food to the local food pantry and homeless shelter.
- **Call to Action:** To raise awareness and encourage other schools in their community to start a food rescue program, Bridgeport shared their video and approach with all the families at their school and with all the schools in the Saugus Union School District. Watch their video [HERE](#).



Bridgeport Elementary was the Grand Prize Winner of the Spring 2019 Waste Campaign and received a \$1,000 Eco-Grant. They plan to use the winnings to sustain and build their waste reduction program by purchasing refrigeration for perishable unused food items, implementing a composting system for fruit and vegetable scraps, and encouraging Trash Free Lunches every day. Their long-term goal is to achieve a ban on polystyrene and plastic wrappers within their Food Services Program.

Deep Creek Middle School (Chesapeake, Virginia)

- **Waste Campaign Issue:** This team of 5 middle school students noticed a large amount of single-use plastics on campus. They found that single-use plastics were not being recycled and were filling up landfills, creating a negative effect on their coastal environment.
- **Solution:** This innovative team created a virtual "Escape Room" game to inform students about the effects of single-use plastics on the environment – try it out [HERE!](#) They also implemented “Plastic Free Fridays,” encouraging fellow students to replace single-use items with reusable items, such as bringing reusable water bottles to school instead of buying plastic bottles.
- **Call to Action:** The Deep Creek Team presented to Chesapeake City Council about the excess waste that their school’s food provider creates, including the plastic waste generated by individually wrapping oranges in plastic wrap. The team also participated in the Youth Resilience Leaders Expo at Nauticus in Norfolk, VA to encourage other schools in their area to reduce plastic waste. Watch their video [HERE.](#)



Deep Creek Middle School won the award for Best Innovative Idea and an Eco-Grant of \$500. They plan to use their winnings to purchase a water bottle refill station. After the Waste Campaign ended, students also held an online sale with a local company who sells sustainable, zero waste products to help their school reduce single use-plastics and to raise funds for their team’s future waste reduction initiatives.

PSGR Krishnammal Nursery and Primary School (Tamil – Nadu, India)

- **Waste Campaign Issue:** This student, parent, and faculty team of 100 focused on reducing food waste and landfill waste in their community.
- **Solutions:** The PSGR team monitored food waste on campus and made sure that all food was either eaten or composted. Students and adult volunteers created sorting stations at lunch, introducing recycling and composting. Compost is created on site by students, with the help of faculty, and recycling is sent to a local facility.



- **Call to Action:** The school worked together to create a presentation and innovative (and catchy!) song to show the importance of not wasting food. They educated the entire community including all students, parents, administration, school board and government representatives.

PSGR won the award for Best Community Changemakers and an Eco-Grant of \$500 for their efforts to involve the entire community in their Campaign. The team plans to expand their garden program with their winnings. Watch their video [HERE](#).

Boys and Girls Club at Towne Avenue Elementary (Carson, California)

- **Waste Campaign Issue:** The team of 6 elementary students at Towne Avenue noticed that every day at snack time each student receives a milk carton that ends up in the landfill, which adds up to 18,000 cartons in landfills every school year. From their research, they found that it takes 5 years for a milk carton to break down in a landfill.
- **Solution:** Club members created a fun recycling basketball game as an interactive and educational way to encourage students to empty and recycle their cartons.
- **Call to Action:** The team gave three live presentations to the 100 Boys and Girls Club members to provide education on why it's important to recycle milk cartons and the fun way they created to do so. Watch their video [HERE](#).



The Boys and Girls Club at Towne Avenue was the recipient of the Best Elementary Impact award and received a \$500 Eco-Grant. They plan to use the funds to buy aprons for each of the team members because throwing milk carton basketballs can get messy! They would also like to bring professional speakers to their club to learn more about waste reduction, in addition to going on environmental education field trips.

Whitney High School (Cerritos, California)

- **Waste Campaign Issue:** The 19 high school team members at Whitney recognized the considerable amount of food waste was going to the landfill daily.
- **Solution:** The team collected fruit and vegetable scraps at lunchtime and started making compost in a tumbler compost bin. Their goal was to generate 500 pounds of compost over the course of one month.
- **Call to Action:** While collecting compostable scraps, the Whitney team presented on Whitney High School LIVE, their school's live video stream. They broadcasted a competition between two teachers and student Waste Campaign Team members answering questions about composting, reaching their whole school (over 1,000 students). Students also shared a video that highlighted the little amount people know about composting, and what they could do to improve their knowledge. The desired outcome was to provide all grades, from 7th to 12th with the tools to reduce landfill waste. Watch their video [HERE](#).



Whitney High School is the recipient of Best Alumni Grades of Green Team award and received a \$500 Eco-Grant. The team plans to use the grant to help pay for biodegradable forks and knives for their annual International Day event. In addition, they will also use the funds to purchase a second compost bin. They were previously a finalist in the 2018 Fall Water Campaign.

Mira Costa High School (Manhattan Beach, California)

- **Waste Campaign Issue:** Growing up next to the ocean, the Mira Costa Student Team of 11 high school students observed litter on nearby beaches. They decided to take action to solve this big local issue because litter threatens ocean ecosystems and pollutes the environment.



- **Solution:** The team organized and led three weekend beach clean-ups in their community during the Campaign with the goal of collecting 100 lbs. of waste total.
- **Call to Action:** Students recruited volunteers by reaching out to their community through social media and local news outlets. The team educated participants about the effects of plastic and litter in our oceans and on marine life.

Mira Costa was a Finalist in the Waste Campaign. Through the three beach clean-ups, the Mira Costa team collected 250 lbs. of trash; far exceeding their goal of 100 lbs. The team plans to continue hosting beach clean-ups once per month. Watch their video [HERE](#).

Bottega Delle Arti Creative (Rome, Italy)

- **Waste Campaign Issue:** This group of 18 high school students focused on the overflowing garbage bins throughout Rome and the corruption in the waste hauler industry.
- **Solution:** Bottega Delle Arti Creative is a dance school, and students created public performances to educate their community about Rome's waste pollution issue and infrastructural problems.
- **Call to Action:** Along with their innovative video, Bottega students have presented Rome's waste problem through conferences focused on the UN Sustainable Development Goals and art exhibitions requesting residents to reduce waste. The team also set the long-term objective of presenting to local government officials. Watch their video [HERE](#).



Bottega Delle Arti Creative was a Finalist in the 2019 Spring Waste Campaign. The team plans to keep sharing their video through social media and news outlets and wants to meet with politicians who can help create a better system for waste collection and to promote waste reduction.

**Human Environmental and Animal Rights (HEAR) Club
at the California Academy of Math and Science
(CAMS) (Long Beach, California)**



- **Waste Campaign Issue:** The HEAR club of 9 students at CAMS high school was driven by the knowledge that people in the U.S. throw out 70 lbs. of clothes every year on average and that the textile industry is the second highest contributor of waste.
- **Solutions:** The HEAR club's approach was to first share unwanted, used clothes with friends through clothing swaps, then to upcycle unwanted items or donate them. Student leaders hosted several used-clothing drives as well as workshops that taught community members how to upcycle used garments.
- **Call to Action:** The HEAR club presented to students and teachers at CAMS. Their goal was to educate all students, faculty and their families about the problems posed by textile waste and to provide them with easy ways to reuse donate and upcycle clothing.

HEAR was a Finalist in the 2019 Spring Waste Campaign. They exceeded their goal of collecting ten bags of textiles during clothing drives by collecting 11 bags. The team plans to continue to hold clothing drives three times a year and to host textile upcycling workshops. Watch their video [HERE](#).

**Daves Avenue Elementary
School (Monte Sereno, California)**



- **Waste Campaign Issue:** Daves Avenue students use approximately 12,000 crayons every school year, which end up in the landfill. The 24 elementary students leading the Daves Waste Campaign discovered that crayons do not break down well in the landfill, contributing to the national issue of overflowing landfills.
- **Solution:** With a goal of diverting 120 lbs. of crayons from the landfill, the team joined the Crayon Initiative. The Crayon Initiative recycles old crayons into new crayons and donates them to children's hospitals.

- **Call to Action:** The team set up boxes at school to collect used crayons, which were sent in to a special facility to be properly recycled.

Daves Avenue Elementary was a Finalist in the 2019 Spring Waste Campaign. They have continued with the Crayon Initiative and also collect old markers for the Crayola ColorCycle program. They would also like to start a better trash sorting program for the playground, cafeteria and classrooms, in order to carry forth the goal of reducing landfill waste and single-use plastics in landfills and the ocean. Watch their video [HERE](#).

WASTE CAMPAIGN PROGRAM MEDIA MENTIONS

[102.7 KIIS FM](#)

Total Reach: 2.8 million



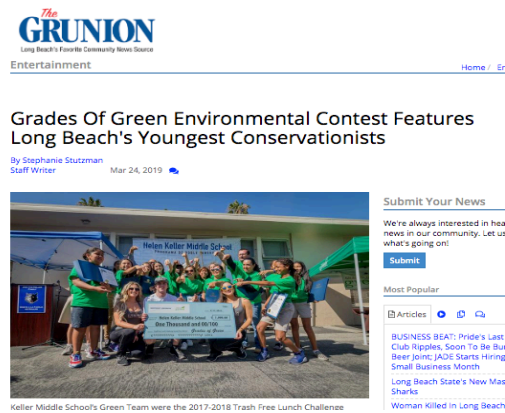
[SCVTV](#)

Total Reach: 50,716



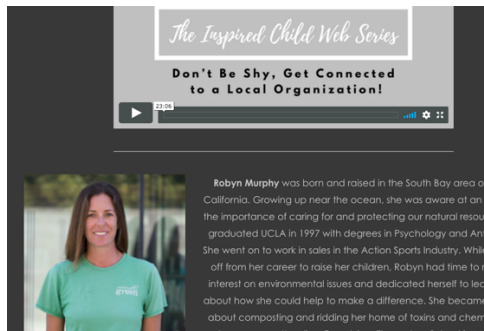
[The Grunion Gazette](#)

Total Reach: 17,400



[The Inspired Child](#)

Total Reach: 69,000



[South Bay Magazine](#)

Total Reach: 7,000+

southbay
(/)

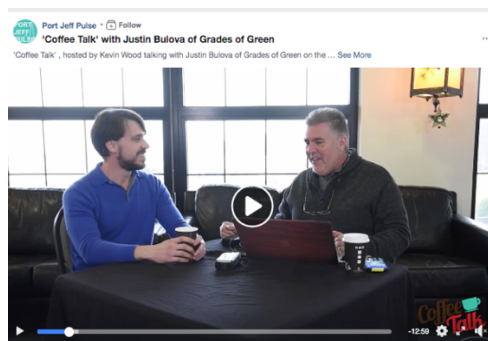
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A local nonprofit organization plants the seed for an eco-conscious community in students worldwide

[Port Jeff Pulse](#)

Total Reach: 2,200+



Plus many more mentions in local newsletters and podcasts, such as [Nonprofit Tangent](#)

THANK YOU

2019 WASTE CAMPAIGN SPONSORS

SANITATION DISTRICTS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY



Los Angeles
County
4th District

NORTHROP GRUMMAN



Los Angeles
County
3rd District



JOHNSON OHANA



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INFOGRAPHIC

WASTE



CAMPAIGN

IMPACT 2019

Grades of Green's spring 2019 Waste Campaign was a semester-long virtual program providing free mentorship and resources to empower student Campaign Teams to research local waste issues and create innovative solutions to reduce waste.

879 ECO LEADERS

From 63 schools and community groups empowered to create waste reduction solutions in their communities.

42 CITIES

Involved in student-led Waste Campaign movements

11 COUNTRIES

Represented in the Waste Campaign, including the United States, Indonesia, Italy, Turkey, Honduras and Uganda.

12,657 COMMUNITY MEMBERS & LEADERS EDUCATED

By student presentations advocating for their waste solutions at city council meetings, community events, school assemblies and more.

229,266 POUNDS (114.6 TONS) OF WASTE REDUCED

Through student waste solutions and daily habit changes such as composting food waste, buying groceries at local farmers markets, refusing single-use plastic items, and donating used goods.

= 17 AFRICAN ELEPHANTS

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County
Los Angeles County 4th District | Northrop Grumman
Kings Care Foundation | McHugh-O'Donovan Foundation
Long Beach Community Foundation | Subaru Pacific
Los Angeles County 3rd District | Carton Council
Johnson Ohana Foundation

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