

Reflecting on Moments Making the Year Meaningful

From Joe Lombardi, SWACO's Executive Director

As central Ohio continues to grow and our population becomes more diverse, SWACO is focusing on helping local educators, school administrators and the families they serve connect with the waste reduction, reuse, recycling and food waste prevention resources they need to become live-long waste warriors.

From at home activities, kid games and tours of the landfill to financial grants to help offset the cost of recycling containers, curriculum for classroom learning and cost-effective opportunities to expand

and improve waste reduction services in your school district, SWACO wants to help more schools reach their goals.

And, while the school year may only be about halfway over, I'm pleased by the progress many schools in the Solid Waste District have already made and I want to reflect on a few of those moments making this year meaningful.

Congratulations to these K-12th schools who are working towards becoming a 2025 SWACO School Recycling Champion:

Finland Middle, Grandview High, Holt Crossing Intermediate, Kilbourne Middle, KIPP Columbus, Larson Middle, McCord Middle, Perry Middle, Phoenix Middle, Slate Ridge Elementary, St. Charles Preparatory, St. Matthews K-8, Stevenson Elementary, Westerville North and Worthingway Middle schools.

There's much to celebrate in higher ed too:

- **Otterbein University's** efforts to expand recycling (and landfill stations) to the common areas around Otterbein's Campus Center.



- **The Ohio State University** where we partnered with faculty, staff and students on projects pertaining to clothing recycling, expanding the recycling of metal cans and food scrap composting in and around campus, and working collaboratively on an effort to strengthen central Ohio's circular economy.

Finally, I want to commend the **Columbus City Schools Marion Franklin High School** for their collaboration with non-profit, and SWACO grant recipient, Level the Playing Field to fill gaps in physical education classes with gently used donated sports items in order to make it possible for all kids to experience the benefits of being active through sports.

As we prepare for the upcoming holiday winter break, we hope you'll join us in celebrating these schools and their accomplishments and hope that as you return to the classroom in January, that you'll reach out to SWACO to see how we might be able to help you reach your waste reduction goals.



Become A School Recycling Champion In 2026

SWACO's School Recycling Champion program provides FREE recycling containers for schools in Franklin County and educational resources to help schools implement lasting recycling programs.

Participating schools are asked to assess their current recycling efforts, adopt recycling best practices, and educate staff and students with

resources from SWACO. Learn more about the [School Recycling Champion Program](#) and apply today!

November Is America Recycles Month

SWACO has all sorts of resources to help Franklin County residents Recycle Right this month and all throughout the year. Visit [RecycleRight.org](#) to learn about what's recyclable and how to properly dispose of various kinds of waste as well as locating recycling drop-off sites near you.

Use the resources below to encourage students to recycle right and empower them to make a difference!

- [America Recycles Month Calendar](#): Complete a daily challenge. How many days in a row can you reduce, reuse, and recycle? Adapt the calendar for December to meet your needs.

- [Personal Waste Inventory](#): This activity is designed to help students understand the amount of waste they produce.


**Recommended for grades three and up.*

- [Additional Resources](#): Check out these other fantastic resources you can use to help educate and encourage your students.





'Tis The Season of Sustainability


Twenty-five percent more waste is created during the holidays, making it the perfect time of year to help make a difference when you bring a little sustainability into your classroom. These simple, eco-friendly ideas will help you and your students celebrate the season while reducing waste and saving energy.

 RE-Gift exchange - have students bring in something from home they no longer need or want to swap with another student in class. Challenge: it can't be in a new gift bag or wrapping paper. Encourage students to use newspaper, fabric, or a

reusable bag instead of gift bags or wrapping paper.

 Zero Waste Crafts - make ornaments or cards from old magazines, cereal boxes, or fabric scraps.

 Snowball Fight - make learning fun by putting content on scrap paper and having a "snowball" fight while answering questions or completing the tasks written on them. Then recycle or compost the paper.

 Acts of Kindness - teach students that giving out acts of kindness is always waste-free.

Free Landfill Tours and Interactive Presentations!

Every year, the Franklin County landfill receives a million tons of waste material from central Ohio homes, schools, and businesses, and SWACO provides FREE tours and presentations to educate students on landfill operations and why it's important to reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost. Franklin County schools and youth programs can even be reimbursed up to \$220 per bus trip to the landfill.

If your classroom isn't already on the schedule to visit the landfill, check out the details and explore the different presentation options available [here](#), and call 614-782-9429 or email Tours@SWACO.org to schedule your visit.

Quick Links

[GRANTS FOR SCHOOLS](#)

[SWACO'S GREEN TEAM NETWORK](#)

[SIGN UP FOR OTHER SWACO NEWS](#)

[SCHOOL FOOD WASTE RESOURCES](#)

News to Know

[WORTHINGTON ESTATES STUDENTS LEAD THE WAY IN REDUCING FOOD WASTE](#)

[FOOD SCRAP COLLECTION SITE OPENS NEAR OHIO STATE, GIVING STUDENTS A NEW WAY TO REDUCE WASTE](#)