

GREEN TEAMS AS PART OF SCHOOL SUSTAINABILITY

As part of your school’s annual sustainability plan, each NYC public school is required to have a Green Team. The purpose of the Green Team is to create a group of dedicated school leaders and students who are committed to promoting and implementing the school’s sustainability plan (submitted annually to NYC’s DOE). Green Teams are an essential part of any school’s efforts to ensure that recycling becomes ingrained into a school’s culture. While outreach to the general student population should be ongoing, having a green team provides a forum for interested students to implement recycling-related projects. Green Teams can be organized in a number of ways, and their benefits include involving students in hands on environmental learning and fostering creativity and organization to achieve environmental goals.



Use ideas from this guide and their featured case studies of previous Recycling Champion Schools to get your green team going and ready to achieve Sustainability in your school!

ORGANIZING A GREEN TEAM

Finding the time to meet with your potential Green Team only needs a bit of brainstorming. Meetings can be held at any of the following moments:

Club meeting period

During lunch

After school



MS 94 Bronx-

Instead of forming a new green team, Kathy Brown, the sustainability coordinator at MS 194, made recycling the focus of an already existing club: the Student Leadership Club. Recycling service projects became an excellent way to fulfill the service learning requirements. The students started a poster campaign to promote recycling within their school.

Share the Love- Find one or two interested faculty members who would be interested in taking on this new responsibility. If you have the title of sustainability coordinator, that doesn’t necessarily mean that you have to take on the responsibility of running the green team yourself. Finding more than one faculty member creates a larger support system and allows the responsibility to be shared.



Student Leadership Club students become ambassadors of Sustainability at MS194.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE!

Use faculty meetings to recruit **staff members**.

Include the **Administration** in your meetings; keep them informed of team progress.

The **Custodian Engineer** is essential to achieving school sustainability goals. Involve them in meetings and project coordination.

Whether you are meeting during the school day or for a period after school, make sure that **parents** are aware of this new activity/club. Sending home a letter or permission slip to parents giving some information about the green team.

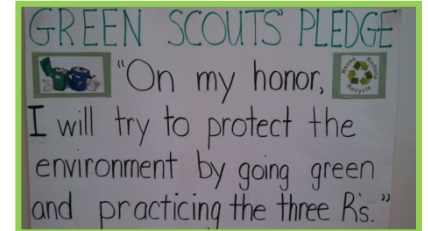


RECYCLING CHAMPIONS

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Students are eager to help, and their leadership can make a huge difference in spreading the word about recycling and conservation. Students are great messengers – they are more effective at reaching other students than faculty.

Mission Statement- Once you have a group of interested students and a consistent meeting time, assign roles, responsibilities, and create a **mission statement** with your green team. A mission statement sets the tone for the school year and allows students to reflect on their accomplishments at the end of each semester. Write your mission statement down along with a few realistic goals so that students can continuously be aware of their progress.



PS 682's Green Scouts Pledge



PS 154 Queens on Classroom Monitoring

The Green Team regularly monitored classroom recycling by instituting a school-wide grading and inspection system. Weekly spot checks were conducted in every office and classroom and the grades were posted by every door. The inspection sparked a friendly competition between the different classes as no teacher wanted to have a failing grade for their recycling inspection.

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Start with our own class: If you have a block in your weekly schedule, set this time aside to engage your class in a recycling project and brainstorm ideas. Elect officers and give responsibilities.

Green Team Lunch Meetings: Ask your fellow teachers to choose their best students who would be willing to meet during their lunch period (or another free period) to come up with ideas for recycling. Establish weekly meetings to conduct recycling outreach and planning.

Speak to the Masses: Give an assembly on recycling (or host an environmental guest speaker), and then have interested students sign-up to join the Green Team following the program.

PS 316 Brooklyn



This Green Team decided to teach their peers how to recycle through a video made by them, which they featured at a school-wide assembly.



Everyone Counts: Make an effort to include special needs students in your Green Team. For students that are more visual, hands on learners, being a part of green team is an excellent way to engage them in a new type of activity.



PS 25 Bronx

Deborah Medina, the sustainability coordinator at PS 25X, the Bilingual school, wanted the green team to be a reflection of the diversity of the student body. She reached out to bilingual teachers and the special education teachers to select students who would be interested in participating in the Green Team.



RECYCLING CHAMPIONS

STUDENT RECRUITMENT CONTINUED

Make Science Real: Recruit students from your science classes. Sustainability offers multiple connections to Ecology.

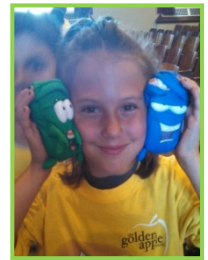
Recruit from Existing Clubs or Extracurricular Activities: Engage art, fashion, or film clubs, student government clubs at your school - use the interests of these students and incorporate the theme of recycling to them. A film club could possibly create a film on why recycling is beneficial to the environment.

Participate in Contests- Involving your green team in contests is a great way to let them know that their work is valued at a city-wide level, and that there are other schools working towards Sustainability.



PS 185, Brooklyn

PS 185's Green Team has done outstanding work in promoting and documenting its school recycling program, participating in various contests, such as Recycling Champion's The Big Lift and DSNY's Golden Apple Awards.



Promote Community Service Hours: School recycling projects are a great way to learn about environmental stewardship and complete service hours.

IDEAS FOR GREEN TEAM ACTIVITIES

Create recycling campaigns - Make recycling posters, give recycling presentations during homeroom, sponsor a classroom recycling competition, or sponsor an assembly to launch school recycling.

Fundraise for Recycling Bins - Sell T-shirts, plants or other items to purchase recycling bins for each classroom.

Monitor classroom recycling efforts - Conduct weekly inspections/audits of classrooms to grade their recycling efforts. Post grades on every classroom door.

Monitor cafeteria sorting and recycling - Green Team can serve as an effective way to remind students to sort their items. Rotate students through a lunch period to monitor and explain the sorting steps to their peers.

Collect recycling - Discuss with your custodian engineer about ways the Green Team can assist the custodial crew with collecting recyclables from each classroom (ex: collecting paper once a week).

Conduct a Waste Audit - Ever get curious as to the amount of trash your school produces? Answering that question through a waste audit is an eye-opening way of getting Green Teams to understand and better convey the importance of recycling in school.