

GREEN APPLE DAY OF SERVICE

99 IDEAS YOU CAN
START ANYTIME, ANYDAY!

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Wondering how you can be part of this year's Green Apple Day of Service? The Center for Green Schools team came up with 99 ideas that anyone can do at their school. Yes, anyone. In this list you'll see ideas for teachers, parents, volunteers and students at any grade level, from pre-kindergarten through college and beyond. Pick one, pick two, pick two dozen! Be sure to register at greenapple.org to tell your community what you're up to, receive prizes for your work, and attract donations.

MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

How much waste can you keep out of the landfill?

1. Create a scrap paper pile in the school copy room, and include signage for teachers about how and when to use it.
2. Invite students to decorate a reusable water bottle and pledge to use it every day for a full month.
3. Conduct a waste audit at school to see what makes up the most trash and what can be improved.
4. For the next school dance, make it a zero-waste event.
5. Create a waste management system (or a series of bins) to use at home.
6. Make a plan to collect recyclables from an athletics, performance, or other afterschool event.
7. Assemble trash-free meal kits using only reusable containers for food, drink, utensils, and snacks.
8. Host a zero-waste school lunch day, and pair it with educational materials for students and their parents.
9. Map all of the trash, recycling, composting bins on your campus, and make sure they're located next to each other to help students and teachers sort their waste.
10. Make signs encouraging use of and explaining the benefits of hand dryers in bathrooms and/or facts about paper towel consumption.
11. Create signs to improve recycling education on campus, to be posted on or near bins.
12. Add a recycling and composting bin to your classroom.

How many square feet of habitat and green space can you create?

13. Install a green wall on campus using recycled water bottles and wire on a chain link fence.
14. Create a water filter to install in rain gutters at school.
15. Design and plant a small rain garden near a drainage area on campus.
16. Plant trees to promote habitat restoration.
17. Plant species that are native to your geography.

How many gallons of water can you save?

18. Create a water fixture inventory for campus and work with facilities staff to see what efficiency changes can be made.
19. Invite students and teachers to sign a pledge to take showers that run the water for less than 5 minutes.
20. Install a rain barrel for the schools' downspouts that uses recycled materials.

How much energy can you save?

21. Conduct a classroom light bulb audit and present the results to your facilities staff.
22. Lead a "lights-off class" for one or more days.
23. Encourage all classes to hold one "lights-off" hour at the same time each day for a week.
24. Work with the IT staff to begin an automatic power-down initiative for computers across the school or district when they are not in use.
25. Investigate options for cutting down power going to vending machines, such as installing Vending Misers at each.
26. Organize a field day of fun indoor or outdoor activities like a scavenger hunt or flying a kite that don't require any electricity.
27. Organize a Friday campus walkthrough to ensure lights are powered off for the weekend.
28. Bring in energy-saving power strips or install daylight sensor outlets for a group of classrooms.
29. Work with the facilities department to create a display that shows the amount of energy used at school every day/week/month, and translate the energy used into the equivalent number of households or cars.
30. Use a light meter to look for areas that are more brightly lit than needed, and work with the facilities department to explore de-lamping options.
31. Create a substantive greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory for the school using the EPA's Climate CHECK software or a similar online tool to see where improvements can be made (recommended for high school students).
32. Invite energy auditors to check on school building energy usage, and have a class shadow the auditors during their visit.
33. Create a map of energy use in the school using simple tools (e.g., watt meter, light meter) and then generate suggestions for conservation in different locations.

SUPPORT HEALTH AND WELLNESS AT SCHOOL

How many healthy eating habits can you inspire?

34. Plant a small vegetable garden with help from parents, friends and neighbors.
35. Plant vines (grapes, beans, or other similar plants) on railings.
36. Create a map of water fountains on the campus or locations where you want water fountains – or bottle refilling stations!
37. Plant herbs like basil, cilantro or mint in a recycled container and maintain it in your classroom.
38. Create signage about how to pack a healthy, zero-waste lunch.

How much additional active time can you make for students?

39. Host a "walking school bus" or a bike-to-school day.
40. Experiment with holding recess before lunch time to encourage active time and healthy eating.
41. Work with teachers to incorporate movement into classes, with a goal of 50 percent active time, by playing learning games and stand-and-sit questions.

How much healthier can you make the environment at school?

42. Recruit a local professional to train custodians on green cleaning practices.
43. Raise awareness of outdoor air risks by looking up the outdoor air quality in your area from the EPA and posting it each day for students and teachers.
44. Create a no idling campaign for cars and busses at drop off and pick up, including signage and student patrollers.

45. Conduct an all-hands-on-deck classroom clean up to tackle dust.
46. Create a “biophilic” craft, or brainstorm how to bring nature into your classroom.
47. Bring plants into classrooms and create a schedule for watering.
48. Conduct an indoor air quality assessment using a checklist.
49. Create a green cleaning kit for teachers to share and borrow in their classrooms.
50. Research ideas to make the bathroom smell good without the use of chemicals.
51. Take an inventory of potentially toxic cleaning materials and create a proposal to the facilities team to use green products in their place.
52. Design a new outdoor, shaded area for learning, studying, and playing.
53. Make signs for classrooms about the value of daylighting and when and why curtains should stay open.

TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

How can you use creativity to inspire new ways of thinking?

54. Work with students to create a “Why I’m Inspired” wall, making environmental commitments at the same time.
55. Invite students to create a sustainability themed short film, documentary, infomercial, or music video, and share them with the school during morning announcements or an assembly.
56. Host a recipe contest for students that uses only local, seasonal foods.
57. Design a recycled materials arts-and-crafts project.
58. Help students organize a recycled material fashion design contest and show.
59. Coordinate a found material craft contest and art show.
60. Create a contest to design furniture using only recycled materials.
61. Have students build a model green school (with recycled materials or building materials/toys).
62. Create posters that showcase green aspects of your school building.
63. Create a classroom planter from used plastic bottles.
64. Have students find their favorite tree on campus and write a descriptive poem about it.
65. Have students find their favorite green space on campus, sketch it, and then share it with classmates and teachers.
66. Host a gallery for students to draw or write about a solution to a global sustainability challenge.

How can you involve non-academic staff to teach students and make changes to your building?

67. Work with school nutrition staff to provide a lunch menu with health information to students for one week, and use the week to teach students about nutrition.
68. Hold a taste test with samples of organic and non-organic foods to teach students about the benefits of organic farming on the environment and health.
69. Have students interview a wastewater treatment facility manager, on video or for your campus paper.
70. Connect your classroom with sustainability professionals online or in-person.

How can you use signage to remind others about good sustainability practices?

71. Create signage encouraging energy conservation to be posted in halls and classrooms.
72. With students, create a visual demonstration of the amount of water and/or energy used every day per person at school.
73. Craft light switch plate stickers reminding people to turn off the lights when they aren’t needed.
74. Paint a map of the watershed as a mural and have students write an explanation about its significance.

How can you get students to notice their current habits and actions?

75. Ask students to document their water usage for 1 day and discuss freshwater access around the world.
76. Have students create a home energy audit with 10 steps to make your home more greener, and have students present the results to the class.

77. Engage older students in making presentations about sustainable living to younger students.
78. Compile a how-to book on sustainable living where each student in a class contributes one page of the book using recycled materials.
79. Take a class trip to a landfill, wastewater treatment facility, green energy production plant, or another place that makes a difference in sustainability for your community.
80. Draw a concept diagram showing where waste, recyclables, and compostables go when each group of materials is taken from campus.
81. Have students create a poster demonstrating how the composting process works.
82. Create a recycling game or relay race to educate fellow students about recycling.
83. Create a green (or get greener) scavenger hunt on campus.
84. Build a team of student “sustainability captains” in your class or school.
85. Develop a charter for a sustainability club at your school.
86. Have all students and teachers sign a pledge to avoid using disposable plastic water bottles.

How can you teach students new sustainability concepts?

87. Educate students about the green building and the LEED rating system.
88. Read your favorite sustainability book as a class or as a whole-school project.
89. Build a sand landscape in a tub and use flowing water to learn about erosion and sedimentation.
90. Work with students to create or find the best spreadsheet, survey, or app for students to track their carbon footprints.

COMMUNICATE AND CELEBRATE

91. Help students get inspired by environmentalists, activists, educators, and more by attending TED events nationwide and/or watching them online at ted.com.
92. Host a movie night of environmental documentaries, or host an outdoor movie screening featuring an environment-themed movie
93. Teach parents and community members about an environmental initiative happening at school.
94. Ask school partners from the community to join you for Green Apple Day of Service.
95. Have students watch the USGBC YouTube Channel and write about & share what they learned.
96. Host short trainings for custodial and maintenance staff using online web trainings from the Center for Green Schools.
97. Develop a short presentation about opportunities to improve your school building and deliver it to campus and community leaders.
98. Research and write a “tip of the week” to be more environmentally responsible, and create a timeline for each tip to be shared in announcements, emails, or social media.
99. Create a series of Facebook or Twitter posts with environmental facts, articles, or videos.