

Carmel Catholic High School

2023 First Place - High School Division



The Project:

Carmel High School embarked on a plan to responsibly reduce waste generated by students, teachers, and faculty. This program focused on cutting down cafeteria & classroom waste, as well as electronic waste. Additionally, the community suggested additional programs which have since been implemented. The program involved two dual credit classes: an environmental science class and a human ecological footprint class.

Project Focus: Path to Net Zero,
Waste Reduction

Staff Involved: 15

Location: Mundelein, IL

Students: 29

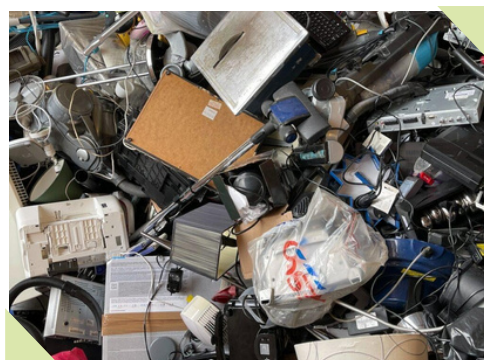


We engaged the broader school community through our advisory/homeroom lessons as well as through games and education at lunchtime in the cafeteria.



The Process:

Students began by conducting waste audits aimed at addressing ways to cut waste. Using insights from these audits, students implemented changes to the operations and waste program, which included a composting program at the cafeteria, waste stations with student waste monitors, and the replacement of single use ketchup packets and utensils. They also used the Illinois Green Alliance mini grant funds to purchase new recycling bins for rooms without them. Students designed their own creative signage for waste bins which are now consistent throughout the building. Additionally, student ambassadors went door to door collecting the surplus equipment from classrooms to be evaluated and inventoried. Finally, Carmel student ambassadors created training videos to educate students and staff on how to manage waste properly.



The Outcomes:

Following their E-waste program, the team hopes to conduct an E-waste and used batteries collection on an annual basis. The school plans to switch to compostable packaging for sandwiches and yogurt in the cafeteria. They also hope to be free of plastic water bottles on campus by next year. Furthermore, when the cafeteria gets renovated in the next two years, the school plans to install a dishwasher to implement a reusable/returnable silverware program.

