

Immaculate Conception St. Joseph School

2023 First Place - Middle School Division



The Project: As a participant in the 2022-23 cohort of the Illinois Green Schools Project, Immaculate Conception St. Joseph School started a new club — the Green Dolphins — that worked on building green habits and developing a zero waste lunch. Working with their mentor, Amreh Hopkins, and supported by an Illinois Green Schools Project mini grant, the students and staff champions built new waste stations and ran an awareness campaign for composting and lunch choices.

Project Focus: Path to Net Zero, Waste Reduction

Staff Involved: 4

Location: Chicago, IL

Students: 18



The Green Dolphins Club will 100% continue their job next school year showing our community the way for a more sustainable living.



The Process:

We created a team of students, school staff and parents to learn about sustainability and share that knowledge with our community. Their new green team, dubbed the "Green Dolphins" (after the school's mascot) met nine times throughout the year to look at ways to improve school sustainability, ultimately focusing on cafeteria waste. They observed the current waste system and recognized the need for changes in both the lunchroom and the community's mentality about waste. They outlined two tactics to address waste problems: sharing basic knowledge of recycling & composting etiquette through info segments in morning announcements and creating a proper waste station for the cafeteria to make it easier and more attractive for students and staff to recycle and compost.

The Outcomes:

In addition to quadrupling their landfill diversion, students outside of the Green Dolphins club are becoming more aware of how they pack their lunches and what they consume. They are also more curious about "fixing" the current waste situation by requesting their parents to choose reusable containers rather than individual packets, compostable and recyclable bags instead of plastic, and by hiring their own compost service at home. Since the Green Dolphins introduced the new waste station students are constantly coming with ideas of how we can improve the waste situation in their classrooms and the rest of the school.

