



JOVITA IDÁR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1ST PLACE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AWARD WINNER



THE PROJECT: SEEDS OF CHANGE THRIVE IN CONCRETE

Through the Seeds of Change Thrive in Concrete project, Jovita Idár Elementary implemented a composting and waste reduction program with Urban Canopy, involving students and staff in the collection and education efforts around the work. This initiative focused on composting organic waste, developing a hydroponic produce garden, and reducing single-use plastic in the school. The project aimed to educate and activate students around environmental protection and circular systems, fostering environmental responsibility and significantly reducing the school's carbon footprint.

Project Type: Composting/Waste Reduction
Students Involved: 550
Staff Involved: 3
Location: Chicago
Grade Levels Involved: K-8
Number of Students Impacted: 600



Overall, students not only learned about environmental sustainability but also actively contributed to making a tangible difference in their school and community. They developed a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the environment, empowering them to become agents of positive change.



- Ryan Johnson

PROCESS

Students played a central role in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the project. They collected organic waste, managed composting processes, and participated in planting and maintaining hydroponic systems. They also led campaigns to reduce single-use plastics including posters, presentations, social media, and artistic projects using recycled materials. To ensure the success of the project, students conducted background research to understand the environmental impact of different waste management practices and the benefits of composting and circular growing. They executed waste audits of their breakfast and lunch programs for organic waste, a waste/trash audit to figure out what people were throwing away, and water audits to figure out how much water could be saved by using reusable water bottles.

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

The composting program has so far reduced landfill waste by 860 pounds and enriched the school garden's soil with the resulting compost. Students produced over 10 pounds of vegetables that are being used for school meals and shared with the community. The plastic reduction campaign recycled over 300 pounds of single-use plastics. The project has also added new sustainability elements to the school's infrastructure, including composting bins and circular growing systems. The student's work partnering with local organizations has further extended the project's impacts. Overall, the outcomes demonstrate the power of collective action in addressing environmental challenges and fostering a sense of environmental stewardship among students and staff.

