



THE PROJECT: CLOSED LOOP PROJECT

Building off their previous year's work in the program, the Family Matters Green Team expanded their Closed Loop Project composting program. The goal is to deepen youths' understanding of composting as a tie-in to the school-wide composting program they built through last year's project work. The children learned about the compost cycle; created educational signage for our landfill, recycling, and compost waste bins; received Compost Captain training; and began making plans for this season's Youth Garden where they will use finished compost to nurture vegetable plants.

Project Type: Waste Reduction

Students Involved: 17

Staff Involved: 6

Location: Chicago

Grade Levels Involved: PreK-4th

Number of Students Impacted: 80



We are building new relationships with other members of our community, including local community gardens and neighbors who are interested in getting involved in planting and harvesting.

- Ann Hinterman



PROCESS

This year, the faculty collaborated with other members of the staff to develop classroom projects to highlight waste, waste reduction, and composting knowledge. Students participated in education around what materials are compostable and the ways in which organic materials behave in landfills. They designed informational signage for the school's compost, recycling, and landfill containers. Students also worked towards expanding their edible gardening project to include the school's front yard. They voted on which veggies they most wanted to include and worked to prepare the garden beds, learn about growth and decomposition cycles, plant seeds, and tend the gardens. Edible produce grown from the raised beds are consumed by students and shared with families.

OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

Family Matters will be producing radish, lettuce, spinach, carrots, peas, tomatoes, basil, peppers, and a handful of pollinator plants including milkweed, sedum, and purple coneflower. Students also worked to create native plant "seed bombs" to use in their gardens and share with the community. Students participated in composting education and awareness, assuming personal responsibility over the school's composting habits. Through this work, members of the Family Matters community have expressed more confidence in using the compost bins, and the Compost Captains are being recognized as leaders in their composting initiative, instilling a sense of confidence as they introduce their peers and families to the program.

