



IMPACT REPORT 2025



eco-school
NETWORK

DEAR FRIEND,

In a time when the world has felt divisive and unsteady, *we're* choosing connection. In classrooms across Oregon, students and adults choose to come together, showing that caring for the world can be grounding, creative, and even fun.

Eco-School Network student-led projects are small but mighty antidotes: **pocket forests planted by fourth graders, repair fairs where kids fix toasters alongside grandparents, pollinator gardens buzzing back to life, worm bins tended with surprising devotion, and solar chargers built on wheels.**

Students are learning to collaborate, problem-solve, and to trust that their actions matter. Their joy and connection builds the kind of resilience that keeps them showing up for their communities, and their impact is rippling far beyond their school grounds.

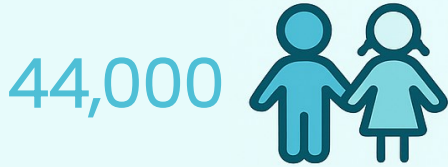
I'm grateful for our changemakers, supporters, partners, and students leading with courage and creativity. Your work is not a band-aid; it's long-term change, rooted in community, fueled by belonging, and strengthened by joy. Thank you for believing in this work, and in the grassroots magic that makes it possible.



AMY HIGGS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



THIS YEAR'S IMPACT



44,000

OREGON KIDS REACHED

(imagine 1,100 school busses full of kids)



88

SCHOOLS ENGAGED

(across Oregon communities)



\$954,200

VALUE OF VOLUNTEER HOURS

(>35,828 hours volunteered)



171

SCHOOPYARD GREENING PROJECTS

(fresh air! shade! wildlife!)



10,000+

HAPPY WORMS

(turning waste into soil)



162

ACTIVE CHANGEMAKERS

(leading projects with kids)



4,860

GALLONS MILK SAVED

(by 9 schools switching to dispensers)



87

SCHOOLS WITH WALK & ROLL

(healthier bodies, cleaner air)



147

TONS CARBON OFFSET

(by trees planted in schoolyards)

HYDRO MAGIC SPREADING FAST

At Kinnaman Elementary, curiosity and greens are sprouting all over. The school has launched a popular after-school gardening club with a new twist—hydroponics!

Led by Eco-School Network changemaker and STEAM teacher Michael (Evans) Reed and funded by the Oregon Department of Education's Farm to Child Nutrition Program, these hydroponic systems allow students to grow plants from seed to harvest, even in winter.

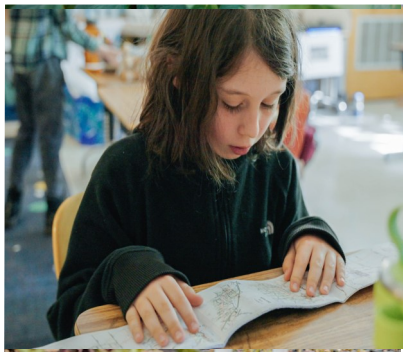
The compact systems fit in small spaces and are easier to manage than outdoor gardens, giving students the chance to explore science, sustainability, and healthy eating in a hands-on, year-round way.

Evans' hydroponics work has inspired teachers and students across the school and district. **What began as a single classroom project has now spread to 17 classrooms in just one year**, shaping the next generation of green thumbs and healthy eaters.



Check out this video to see the garden club in action!







A GREEN TEAM THAT GREW UP TOGETHER

At Prairie Mountain School in Eugene, eighth grader Jason (in purple above) has practically grown up with the Green Team. When he was in the first grade, he tagged along with his older brother John, later became captain himself, and now his little brother Jayden has joined. "It's kind of a family thing now," he says.

The team tackles projects that make a visible difference: creating a **Critter Courtyard for Pacific Chorus Frogs**, running a 1,360-shoe recycling drive, upcycling 50 pounds of sauce packets into **playground surface**, and hosting a beloved **Summer Share Fair** where families donate and pick up clothes for free. Their newest adventure, their first Fix-It Fair, is a free repair event with

stations for sewing, electronics, bikes, and DIY repairs.

Their changemaker teacher Ellie Owens (above on the left), supports paid Green Team Leaders in all 11 district schools and brings them together bimonthly to share ideas. Ellie notes that change isn't always easy, but student perseverance paired with strong district support keeps projects forward.

When asked what inspires him most, Jason didn't hesitate: "**Ms. Owens inspires me. She shows us how amazing wildlife is and helps us see that even small actions add up.**" He adds that the hands-on, energetic Green Team projects keep the crew excited to lead the way toward a greener Eugene.

A NEW ERA OF STUDENT-LED CLIMATE ACTION

Across Portland Public Schools, something inspiring is taking shape: students stepping forward as climate leaders, with real resources and support to bring their ideas to life. Through PPS's Climate Friendly Schools program funded by Portland Clean Energy, **student teams have a \$10,000 annual budget** for five years to lead the solutions their school community needs most.

This year, Portland Public Schools and Eco-School Network launched a Changemaker Coach pilot to deepen that support. Ten middle school teams now have a network coach who offers encouragement, project-planning tools, and hands-on help. With this added guidance, students are proposing ambitious projects, from **a flood-prevention rain garden at Astor to a Pioneer Special School program teaching students with special needs to safely walk, bike and ride Trimet independently.**

Together, this partnership strengthens PPS's bold Climate Crisis Response Policy, which our network helped shape. We're honored to play a supporting role alongside the PPS staff and partners empowering these young advocates. Their creativity, persistence, and optimism are already helping schools become more climate-friendly – and they're only just beginning.



Watch this PPS video of what students started last year. Here's to four more years of impact!



U.S. EPA GRANT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

We're thrilled to share that Eco-School Network has received our **largest (and first federal) grant** from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Thriving Communities Program, administered by Philanthropy Northwest. This funding will help us demonstrate how student leadership can turn schools into hubs for environmental health and justice.

The grant will expand our work in Oregon

schools most affected by environmental hazards—places where creativity and resilience thrive. We've chosen ten Title 1 schools in Portland, Beaverton, and North Clackamas and welcomed 20 Environmental Health Fellows to support student green teams. Together, they're designing two-year projects to **improve air quality, expand green space, reduce traffic, and reduce exposure to chemicals.**

What makes this work special isn't just the grant size, it's the spirit behind it. **By centering leadership in historically marginalized communities, we enable students to shape solutions rooted in joy, resilience, and hope.** From fourth graders replacing herbicides with hand-weeding to families leading bike buses, we're excited to see students spark community change.

\$250,000 grant
20 Environmental Health Fellows
10 Title 1 schools
5,000 students



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Many others gave up to \$99. We thank you ALL!



“Working in our garden makes me feel calmer.
We’re taking care of the plants... but secretly,
the plants are taking care of us.”

–Ben, 4th grade

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Changemaker of the Year Kate Prakash, Beaverton school librarian, parent, and green team leader, shows what's possible when one person says "yes" again and again to kids and to nature.



eco-school NETWORK

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