

## GREEN TEAM ADVOCACY ACTION KIT

Following the steps below, students can design a custom advocacy campaign to involve the entire school in a successful recycling program

**OVERVIEW:** This kit is designed to channel student efforts into creating a customized recycling campaign for your school. The following sections are divided into multiple weeks and are designed for **middle and high school students**. Facilitators should approach each step in a consecutive manner for maximum impact. The material can be adapted to accommodate time constraints and needs of your school.

### AWARENESS

Weeks 1-4

- Students will raise their **AWARENESS** as they acquire knowledge about how waste is managed in school and its effects on the environment.
- At the end of the section, students will understand and be able to articulate the challenges with waste, some solutions, and identify opportunities to reduce waste within their own school.

### ADVOCACY

Weeks 5-8

- Students will develop **ADVOCACY** strategies about how to communicate issues related to waste and meet with various school stakeholders about the issue.
- This section will allow students to gather relevant information and design an advocacy campaign through the development of slogans and messaging based on school needs.

### ACTION

Weeks 9-15

- Students will take **ACTION** by working on specific projects to bring attention to and move the school towards the adoption of better recycling practices.
- Action projects designed to engage the entire school, rather than just the Green Team, are included in order to increase recycling participation.

## Unit 1: AWARENESS—Understanding the Problem

### *What Happens to our Waste and Why Does it Matter?*

**Unit Theme : Generating awareness about our waste**

**Estimated Time: Ideal for a Green Team - to be completed in two to four sessions depending on time allocation and students’ scope of interest.**

**Unit Outline: Students will gain knowledge about waste in two areas:**

- I. **Individually:** challenges and solutions related to NYC’s waste management, the connection between waste, natural resources and consumerism, and some solutions for addressing the waste problem.
  
- II. **School-wide:** students will investigate the school’s waste and recycling procedures. Data collection will include surveys to faculty and classmates.

#### **Section I: Understanding the Problem (Generating Awareness)**

*TIME: Approximately 1 hour*

Begin by showing a Recycling Champions PowerPoint or a couple of videos on NYC waste management. Consider inviting a guest expert or speaker to share with your students.

**Key Terms:**

**Waste** – Anything we no longer want that has been discarded into a trash bin. This may include items that could be recycled or composted.

**Landfill** – A facility that manages waste material by burying it in large sections of land and covering it over with liners and/or soil. Most of NYC’s trash is sent to landfills located in other states.

**Recycling** – the recovery of useful materials, such as paper, glass, plastic, and metals from the waste stream by breaking them down and remanufacturing the material to make new products.

**Materials** - Projector with laptop (or Smart Board) that runs PowerPoint, internet access. Optional: audio speakers (if showing video)

1. [Present a Recycling Champions Presentation:](#)

[[www.grownyc.org/files/rcp/RC\\_Resources\\_HS-MS\\_Presentation\\_UPDATED.pdf](http://www.grownyc.org/files/rcp/RC_Resources_HS-MS_Presentation_UPDATED.pdf)]

[and/or show video clips:](#)

[[www.grownyc.org/recyclingchampions/media](http://www.grownyc.org/recyclingchampions/media)]

- Video 1: Where does our trash go? [NY Times Living City](#) series explores the complex systems of NYC waste management and the positive benefit recycling has on the city.

[[www.nytimes.com/video/nyregion/10000003131953/where-does-our-trash-go.html](http://www.nytimes.com/video/nyregion/10000003131953/where-does-our-trash-go.html)]

Video 2: [NY1 news segment on how paper is collected](#) and recycled in NYC, featuring Pratt Industries' recycling

facility and box factory located on Staten Island. [[vimeo.com/103909819](http://vimeo.com/103909819)]

Video 3: [NY1 news segment on how plastic, metal, cartons, and glass are collected](#) and recycled in NYC, featuring Sims Metal Management's recycling facility located in Brooklyn. [vimeo.com/104539921]

2. After the presentation, facilitate a discussion about the students' impressions of waste and appoint a student to record all the responses. What did they find most surprising? Interesting? Ask for ideas on how they might change habits at school

**Optional Activity: Student Waste Journal**

The average American generates 4.4 lbs of waste *every day*. Ever wonder what makes up your waste? A waste journal serves as a great way to study and analyze WHAT we are a throwing away and how it could be minimized. A waste audit can be a very eye-opening experience. Students can be encouraged to share results via a chart or school newspaper article.

Students will be asked to record all items (including any food) they throw away over a two to three day period in a journal. Results will then be shared to create a better understanding of what is being thrown away and compared with items they noticed were commonly thrown away at school.

**Materials**—Scrap copier paper or notebook paper for students to draw a graph that will serve as their waste journal (or students can make their own journal from reusable items as a craft project). The graph should look like this:

List item	Where <u>should</u> the items go?				Comments/Where did the item actually go?
	PAPER	MGP*	TRASH	FOOD WASTE	
<i>Water bottle</i>			X		<i>The bottle should go in the blue, MGP bin.</i>
<i>Chip bag</i>			X		

\*MGP = Metal, Glass, Plastic and also include cartons such as milk and juice boxes

After the audit have students share their results. Lead a discussion with the following questions:

- What were the main components of your waste? How was this different from the waste at your school?
- What were some of the items that could have been reused or recycled instead of thrown away?
- Why do you think you didn't recycle or the items weren't recycled?
- How could you reduce waste going into landfills?

TIP: To inspire students with this project & stimulate discussion, show them photos from *Slate* of [people lying with a week's worth of their trash](#).

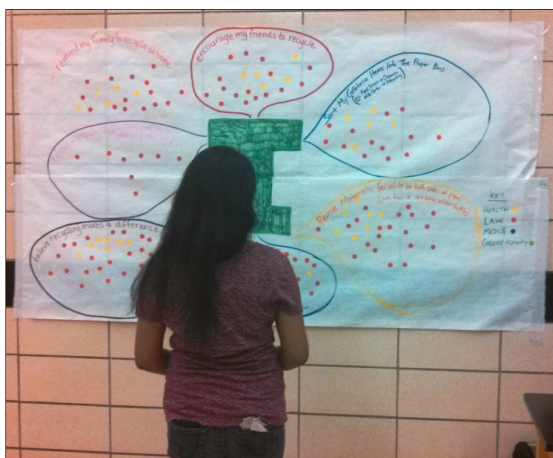
[[www.slate.com/blogs/behold/2014/07/08/gregg\\_segal\\_photographs\\_people\\_with\\_a\\_week\\_s\\_worth\\_of\\_their\\_trash\\_in\\_his.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/behold/2014/07/08/gregg_segal_photographs_people_with_a_week_s_worth_of_their_trash_in_his.html)]

## Section II: Gathering Information about Waste Practices at the School

**TIME:** Each activity will take approximately 1 hour

Before successfully creating an advocacy campaign to bring about change, it is important to understand current practices. The following activities will allow students to gather information about the faculty and students at the school with regard to their waste disposal habits.

**Activity 1: Survey Students & Faculty using I-Dot.** An I-dot is a method of survey in which students will generate a list of questions and then create the diagram for their classmates to fill out. The results from the I-dot will be used in the following section (Advocacy – section II, pg 6). Allow one class period to make the I-Dot and one day during the following week to conduct the survey (i.e. during lunch, recess, etc.).



**Materials:** Butcher or kraft paper, stickers (colored dots), markers and tape

**Assembly:** Cut a piece of butcher paper (6'-8' long depending on the wall space) and draw a large "I" in the middle of the sheet. Around the "I" draw large "thought balloons" that connect the following phrases or ideas to the "I" in the center of the paper (see the photo). Be mindful to leave enough space in each of the balloons for participants to leave stickers.

### Participant Directions:

Ask students to place a sticker in each of the "thought balloons" that corresponds with an item or action that they do to benefit the environment. Students are encouraged to place stickers in as many categories that are true for them. If in a busy area or students are quick to pass by, you may solicit participants by asking students if they can take a quick survey.

### Some sample survey phrases may include:

- I...Encourage my friends to recycle
- I...Reuse Materials (ex. write on both sides of the paper)
- I...Turn off lights when leaving the room
- I...Believe recycling makes a difference
- I...Recycle paper in the classroom
- I...Remind my family to recycle at home
- I...Sort my waste into the correct bins in the cafeteria



## Unit 2: ADVOCACY—Creating a Campaign

**Unit Theme: Communicating knowledge & persuading people to get involved! *How can people be persuaded to change their habits regarding waste?***

**Estimated Time: Ideal for a Green Team - to be completed in three to four sessions depending on time allocation & student's scope of interest. Each session will last approximately one hour.**

**Unit Outline: Students will learn about advocacy and how to create a campaign to persuade classmates and faculty to recycle. Students will:**

- I. Create a recycling slogan, central message and talking points. Succinctly state challenges and action steps for successful outcomes.
- II. Practice advocating for change through classroom presentations and meeting with school leaders to make an “ask” for change.

### Section I: Understanding Advocacy & Creating an Effective Message

**What is Advocacy?** (10 min)

Advocacy is a means of effectively communicating issues or organizing activity in order to engage others in a desired change.

- Planning strategies that will make your cause become a reality. This involves identifying the perceived and real barriers to change, and identifying opportunities to remove those barriers.
- Its purpose is to communicate in ways that engage more people to support your ideas, especially those who might perceive a need but do not yet feel inspired to do something about it. Student understanding of the school's unique culture will help your campaign be successful.

***Use the example on the following page (p. 7) to illustrate how advocacy can be a tool for change in NYC schools***

#### **Part I: Brainstorming an Effective Message**

Students create talking points using information gathered from the I-dot survey and interviews and create a message for their advocacy campaign.

**Step 1 of 4:** (15 min) Review the interview, bin survey and I-dot survey data to look for any common themes. Are there any correlations between student responses and those from the faculty? Share common themes and record theme overlaps on the board. NOTE: Depending on the quantity of information gathered, it may be necessary for someone to synthesize these findings in advance.

**Step 2 of 4:** (35 min) With the entire group, create a mind map to further brainstorm about how students can create an effective recycling program

## ADVOCACY IN ACTION: Murray Bergtraum High School

### Wall of Shame

In order to persuade classmates about the importance of recycling in the cafeteria, Green Team members at Murry Bergtraum High School in Manhattan created a "Wall of Shame". Photos of "worst recyclers" in the school and environmental travesties, such as turtles constricted by plastic litter increased awareness about recycling. This persuasive campaign, coupled with hallway and classroom flyers, reinforced recycling practices for students and staff. To help foster recycling habits in the cafeteria, Green Team students launched their campaign and then rewarded their peers with Jolly Ranchers until sorting became second nature. Green Team member Jorge Sacasari reflected on the student led effort: "I am really proud of the progress we've made from the beginning to now. Going from no recycling to school-wide recycling is a huge improvement. Hopefully in the future, our school's recycling rate maintains the same or, even better, improves."



The Wall of Shame in Murray Bergtraum H.S. Cafeteria



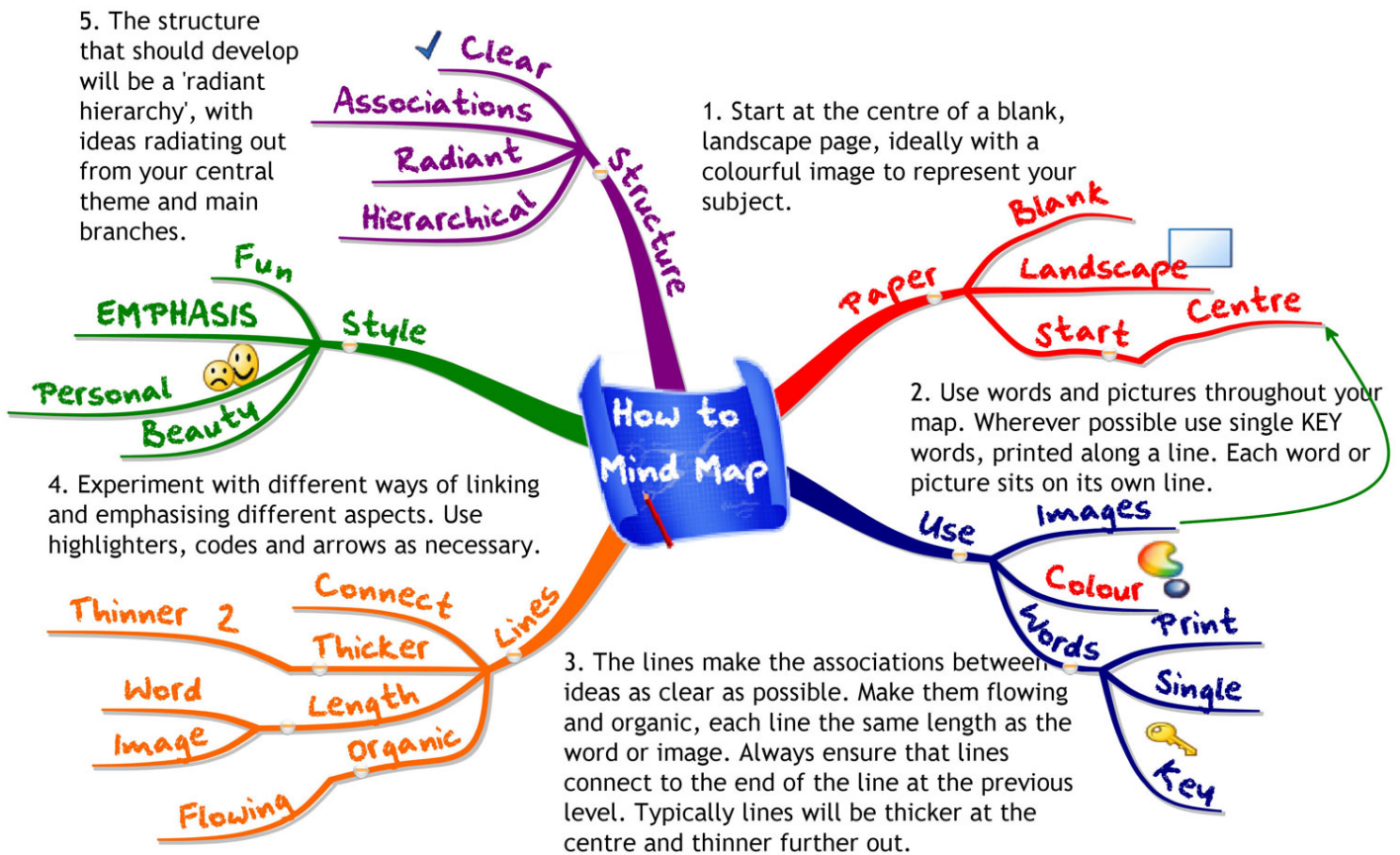
Murray Bergtraum H.S. Green Team

### Successful Cafeteria Petition

In addition to the Wall of Shame, the Green Team also started a school-wide petition for SchoolFood to stop using foam trays and other excessive plastic packaging with the meal service. After several weeks of collecting signatures from the majority of the student body, the signatures were presented to the SchoolFood Manager. In the weeks following, a meeting between representative of the Green Team and SchoolFood eventually resulted in SchoolFood purchasing food service items with less packaging.

## MIND MAPPING - MAXIMIZE YOUR BRAIN'S POTENTIAL

1. Write or draw your main idea in the middle of the page and frame it. Use color.
2. Draw a branch off your main idea, on it write or draw a main topic related to your main idea.
3. Continue to branch off from your main topic.
4. From your main topics, branch off with sub-topics (continue to use color).
5. From your sub-topics, branch off with supporting details (write and/or draw). Continue to add more details - you are free to add more topics, sub-topics or any other items.



Adapted from: Robyn Boswell 1995, © Ministry of Education, Wellington, New Zealand (First published 1998)  
[www.education-resources.co.nz/mind-maps.htm](http://www.education-resources.co.nz/mind-maps.htm)  
[www.mind-mapping.co.uk/make-mind-map.htm](http://www.mind-mapping.co.uk/make-mind-map.htm)



EXAMPLE OF A MIND MAP USING RECYCLING AS THE CENTRAL THEME:



## PART II: Creating an Effective Message

**Step 3 of 4:** (20 min) Depending on the size of your group, you may want to break into small clusters so that students can formulate a list of 3-4 themes/phrases created through the mind map process.

**Step 4 of 4:** (20 min) After 20 minutes, ask each group report back their top ideas. Decide on consensus for a school slogan and some effective messaging/discussion points for the Custodian Engineer, Faculty, Administration.

As a facilitator, keep the following tips and guidelines in mind when encouraging students to develop a message/slogan:

1. Know your audience – who can bring about the change? Who will the change effect?
2. Keep your message simple and brief – make sure the information can be easily understood by someone who does not know the subject
3. Use real life stories and quotes – these can have a big impact
4. Use powerful language, active verbs
5. Use a limited number of clear facts and numbers creatively
6. Present a possible solution – tell your audience what you propose to solve the problem.

*Examples of effective messaging:*



**Effective messages often are:**

- Humorous
- Use popular expressions
- Adaptation of popular songs, metaphors, stories or poetry
- Brief, rhythmic, and witty

Image Sources:

Click it or Ticket: [www.nhtsa.gov/planners/thanksgiving09/images/logos/CIOTLogo\\_preview.jpg](http://www.nhtsa.gov/planners/thanksgiving09/images/logos/CIOTLogo_preview.jpg)

Smokey the Bear: [www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot/](http://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot/)

## Section II: Becoming an Advocate – Using the Message to Promote Change

*TIME: To be conducted over 2-4 sessions; approximately 1 hour each.*

This session challenges students to turn their awareness into action! Students take the slogan and talking points developed during the Session I and form quick classroom presentations and plan meetings with the school leaders about the issue.

### **Activity I: Speak to the Custodian Engineer, Principal or SchoolFood Manager**

Arrange a meeting with the custodian engineer, principal or SchoolFood manager to discuss the findings of the survey and talking points. More than likely all of these people will be willing and excited to hear the student’s ideas and findings about this issue. This is also a great opportunity for the students to make a “ask” for what they would like to see changed in the school with regards to recycling. Share with them your plan to bring the whole school on-board and how a recycling program will benefit everyone.

Before you speak with your school leaders, it is important to understand their typical roles and responsibilities as it pertains to recycling:

<b>Principal, Assistant Principal</b>	Provide leadership to make recycling a priority for the school. Support staff in implementing program. Can use discretionary budget money to order bins (if money is available)
<b>Sustainability Coordinator</b>	Link between faculty and Custodian Engineer, Educate staff on recycling, work to create green team
<b>Custodian Engineer &amp; Crew</b>	Collect recyclables, Maintains separation of recyclables, Can use discretionary budget money to order bins (if money is available)
<b>SchoolFood Manager</b>	Work with custodial crew to maintain recycling setup in the cafeteria. Provide the liquids bucket and blue recycling container for cartons, plastics, metal and glass

**Activity II: Developing a classroom presentation:** Remind students that it is important to keep the message concise and to include both how to recycle and why recycling is important.

Once students have developed a script and assigned speaking parts, allow them to practice their roles for several minutes. Remind students that the classroom presentations should be less than five minutes and they should allow time for questions. Students can also create visuals (posters, recycling bins, a couple of PowerPoint slides) and include some examples of recyclable items in their presentation.

**ACTION ITEM**  
**Classrooms should be equipped with proper recycling bin setups prior to delivering presentations so that students will be able to immediately practice their new knowledge**

### **Activity III: Delivering classroom presentations**

Talk to principal about scheduling classroom presentations for students beforehand.

## Unit 3: ACTION – Involving the Entire School

**Unit Theme: Implementing action projects to get the whole school on board**

**Estimated Time: Varies by project scope and planning. At a minimum, each project should require two, 1 hour sessions for material prep and implementation.**

### Unit Outline:

1. Student leaders will select projects they wish to complete; each one varies in length and is designed to sustain momentum with recycling throughout the remainder of the semester.

Select three or more of the following projects to complete during the remainder of the semester:

1. **Host a [Clicker Counter Competition](http://www.grownyc.org/files/rcp/ClickerContest.pdf) to gauge recycling participation:** Ready. Set. Click! Using hand-held tally counters, or “clickers”, student monitors, a green team, or any group in the cafeteria can quickly count the number of students participating in recycling. This is a fun way to help determine which period, grade or class is most actively sorting their waste and which needs help improving. [www.grownyc.org/files/rcp/ClickerContest.pdf](http://www.grownyc.org/files/rcp/ClickerContest.pdf)
2. **Make Posters & Banners** – to serve as an advertisement; can display campaign slogan, recycling reminders or customized sorting signage.



(Cafeteria signage created by Columbia Secondary School, Manhattan)

3. **Create a film or skit about recycling** to be used in an assembly. Here are some examples of other school films in NYC to serve as an inspiration
  - a. [Harlem Renaissance High School](http://bit.ly/1wEIAaf) <http://bit.ly/1wEIAaf>

- b. [P.S. 22 – Staten Island](http://bit.ly/1v9t8Yv) http://bit.ly/1v9t8Yv
  - c. [P.S. 316 - Brooklyn](https://vimeo.com/93521614) https://vimeo.com/93521614
4. **Host an Environmental Fair / Cafeteria Carnival** – These activities are a great way to engage a lot of people around recycling. Start by selecting a date and deciding on the type of event. Different activities could include: recycling relay, recycling hoop toss, trivia questions, a pledge wall, raffle prizes, guest speakers and more!



Pledge Wall and Recycling Hoop Contest from George Washington H.S., Manhattan Cafeteria Carnival

5. **Conduct a Waste Audit** and create display board to convey findings. Ever wonder what's in your school's waste? A waste audit is a scientific, structured process used to quantify the amount and types of waste being generated by an entity. Information from audits will help identify current waste practices and how they can be improved. In schools, they serve as a tool to educate students as to the importance of recycling, incorporate experiential learning to classroom subjects, measure effectiveness of existing waste management system and identify ways of reducing consumption of wasted materials. Download the complete guide here: [www.grownyc.org/files/rcp/WasteAuditGuide\\_Full.pdf](http://www.grownyc.org/files/rcp/WasteAuditGuide_Full.pdf)



Waste Audit conducted by the Green Team at DeWitt Clinton High School, The Bronx

6. **Host a Classroom Recycling Competition** – Student can inspect classrooms and post grades by the door, inciting a competitive spirit between students and teachers. [www.grownyc.org/recyclingchampions/classroom-best-practices](http://www.grownyc.org/recyclingchampions/classroom-best-practices)
7. **Lead a Professional Development Workshop** for the faculty and staff to learn about

ways they can support your students' recycling efforts and integrate recycling into the curriculum. Begin the workshop with an introduction by the Green Team. Download a Faculty PowerPoint here: [www.grownyc.org/recyclingchampions/classroom-best-practices](http://www.grownyc.org/recyclingchampions/classroom-best-practices)

8. **Make Up-cycled Art Projects** using repurposed items. Shown below is a change purse made from milk cartons and a bracelet made from plastic bags. In addition your school could host a "trashion show" in which students are encouraged to make clothing and fashion accessories from items that normally could not be recycled.



*For step-by-step directions and other ideas, visit the Recycling Champions website:*  
[www.grownyc.org/recyclingchampions/student-activities](http://www.grownyc.org/recyclingchampions/student-activities)

9. **Engage the Community** and parents about the importance of recycling by tabling at PTA meetings, hosting a parent outreach event, or sponsor a green jobs fair.



Student sponsored a family recycling night for the parents at the Muscota New School in Manhattan.



More resources online!  
[www.grownyc.org/rcp](http://www.grownyc.org/rcp)  
[schoolrecycling@grownyc.org](mailto:schoolrecycling@grownyc.org)