

# Three Ways to Think Beyond Recycling for National Recycling Day

 [greenschoolsnationalnetwork.org/three-ways-to-think-beyond-recycling-for-national-recycling-day/](https://greenschoolsnationalnetwork.org/three-ways-to-think-beyond-recycling-for-national-recycling-day/)

November 15, 2022

## Three Ways to Think Beyond Recycling for National Recycling Day



greenschoolnationalnetwork.org

National Recycling Day is November 15. If your school or district doesn't have a recycling program, now's a great time to start! If your school or district has an established program and you want to take your recycling game up a notch, here are three fun ways to do so that engage students and the school community.

### Host a Donation Drive

Invite students and their families to reduce unnecessary waste and give back to the community by hosting a donation drive. Gently used clothing, shoes, toys, and household items are greatly appreciated year-round, but especially as the holidays and winter months approach. Encourage youth voice and choice by asking students which community organizations should be the recipients of their donations. You could even make the drive into a competition to see which grade level can bring in the most donations. A related idea is to hold a schoolwide used book sale where students and families can donate their gently worn books and have an opportunity to shop for something new to read or gift for the holidays.

### Hold a Waste-Free Lunch

School meals can create a lot of waste. Holding a waste-free lunch can be a great way to raise awareness of this issue. Encourage students to bring their own flatware and cups if they purchase lunch at school and to only take as much food as they intend to eat. If students bring a homemade lunch, encourage them to use reusable lunch bags and food containers. Food scraps can be collected and turned into compost for landscaping or the school garden. You can reduce food waste even further by setting up a food share table. Students can leave whole or unopened packaged food on the table and take items that appeal to them. Leftovers can be donated or reused in the cafeteria or at afterschool programs.

### **Upcycle Trash in Class**

---

One person's junk can be another person's treasure – especially when it comes to creativity in the classroom! Teachers can set aside a box or bin to collect reusable materials like paper or wood scraps, paper towel rolls, fabric, yarn, buttons, and other odds and ends. Students can go to these boxes and bins to find the raw materials they need to create works of art, models for science class, or other curriculum-related projects.

*Recycling is one of the practices highlighted in our [GreenPrint](#). [Download the GreenPrint](#) and discover more best practices for healthy, equitable, and sustainable facilities and operations.*