



Closing the Loop While Building Communities
Rob Friend and Anne Ludvik

USCC 21st Annual Conference and Tradeshow
The Magic of Compost
January 29, 2013 | Orlando, FL

Setting the Stage for Compost Magic

- Company Overview
- Case Studies
- Closing the Loop
- Building Community

Who We Are

- Specialized Environmental Technologies, Inc. dba The Mulch Store located in Minnesota
- Sold over 55,000 yards of compost in 2012
- Feedstocks : yard waste & source separated compostable materials.
- Members of STA, CCUP & Million Tomato Campaign
- Customers include: homeowners, municipalities waste haulers, and landscapers



Our Beginnings

- Involved in yard waste composting since late 1980's – MN yard waste ban put in place
- 1997 added a new site designed for food waste composting
- Processing of food waste/yard waste presented new challenges resulting in variable compost quality
- Limited compost markets in the early days



Our Beginnings continued

- No significant food waste volumes until 2008
- Composting process refined and improved as volumes increased
- Compost markets began to expand
- Compost quality improved with increased educational outreach and banning of plastic bags from yard waste programs in 2010



Current Driving Forces in Marketplace

- MN sets numeric organics recycling goals for all Twin Cities metro counties
- Composting Rules under revision
- MN Composting Council created in 2012
- Residents and businesses demanding organics recycling services.
- Waste haulers responding to customer demands
- Increased awareness/focus on community gardens, local foods, the connection between healthy soils, foods, and the environment



Hennepin County



Closing the Loop

Community Gardens with Gardening Matters

ISD 197

SCHOOL DISTRICT 197
to offer _____

The Compost is from our own classrooms, bringing our recycling efforts full circle!! Use nutrient rich compost to fertilizer lawns, gardens and pots.

Compost opportunity for the whole community!
"Turning Your Lunch into food for the Earth"

PICK UP DATES:
April- 21, 28,
May- 4, 5, 12, & 19

TIME:
10:00 am - 1:00 pm

LOCATION:
Sibley High School
west of the track
& field.

COST:
\$2.00 per 5 gallon pail
\$5.00 per 15 gallons

WHAT TO BRING:
Your own bag, pail or tarp

COMPOST for SALE

Henry Sibley students will be available to help load.

Contact Lisa Johnson if you have any questions.
lisa.johnson@isd197.org

Building Community



Hennepin County School Organics

- Largest County by population in Minnesota- 1.2 M
- Includes Minneapolis and surrounding suburbs
- Organic collection started early 2000's
 - 2003 – 15 schools
 - 2012 – 140 schools
 - 330 total schools



Hennepin County School Organics

Collection Incentives:

Digging Deep Through School Trash

A waste composition analysis of trash, recycling and organic material discarded at public schools in Minnesota



Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

September 2010

- 2 year start-up grants
- Free technical assistance
- Free educational materials
- School support group
- Subsidized tip fee for haulers.



Hennepin County School Organics

Compost to the Schools

- Available to all schools
- Voluntary participation
- Coordinated with ICAW
- Used for gardens, lawn application, tree restoration, in-class teaching aids
- Several schools grew and served food from gardens in lunchrooms



Hennepin County School Organics

Compost to the Schools 2011



- The Mulch Store provides compost at discounted rate
- Seven schools participate
- Over 300 students participate activities using compost
- 60 yards compost delivered

Hennepin County School Organics

Compost to the Schools 2012



- The Mulch Store donates compost
- Increased participation:
7 to 20 schools
- Increased usage:
60 to 162 yards
- Participate in Minneapolis Schools Farm to School Community BBQ

Hennepin County School Organics



The
Mulch
Store
www.mulchstoremn.com

Hennepin County School Organics

Challenges



- Coordinating transportation of compost to multiple schools in a short time frame
- Time for teachers to do projects with kids
- Space to store compost



Hennepin County School Organics

Compost to Schools – Future Plans

Increase number of participants
Designing Hennepin County Bag
Offer bagged compost fundraiser option



Schools can reach larger audience
Increased educational benefits

Independent School District 197 Organics

- Located in Twin Cities Metro Area – Dakota County
- 8 Schools – 4600 students
- Full-time Sustainability Coordinator on staff
- Start Up grant received in 2009
- All schools started together
- Living Green Leaders at each school



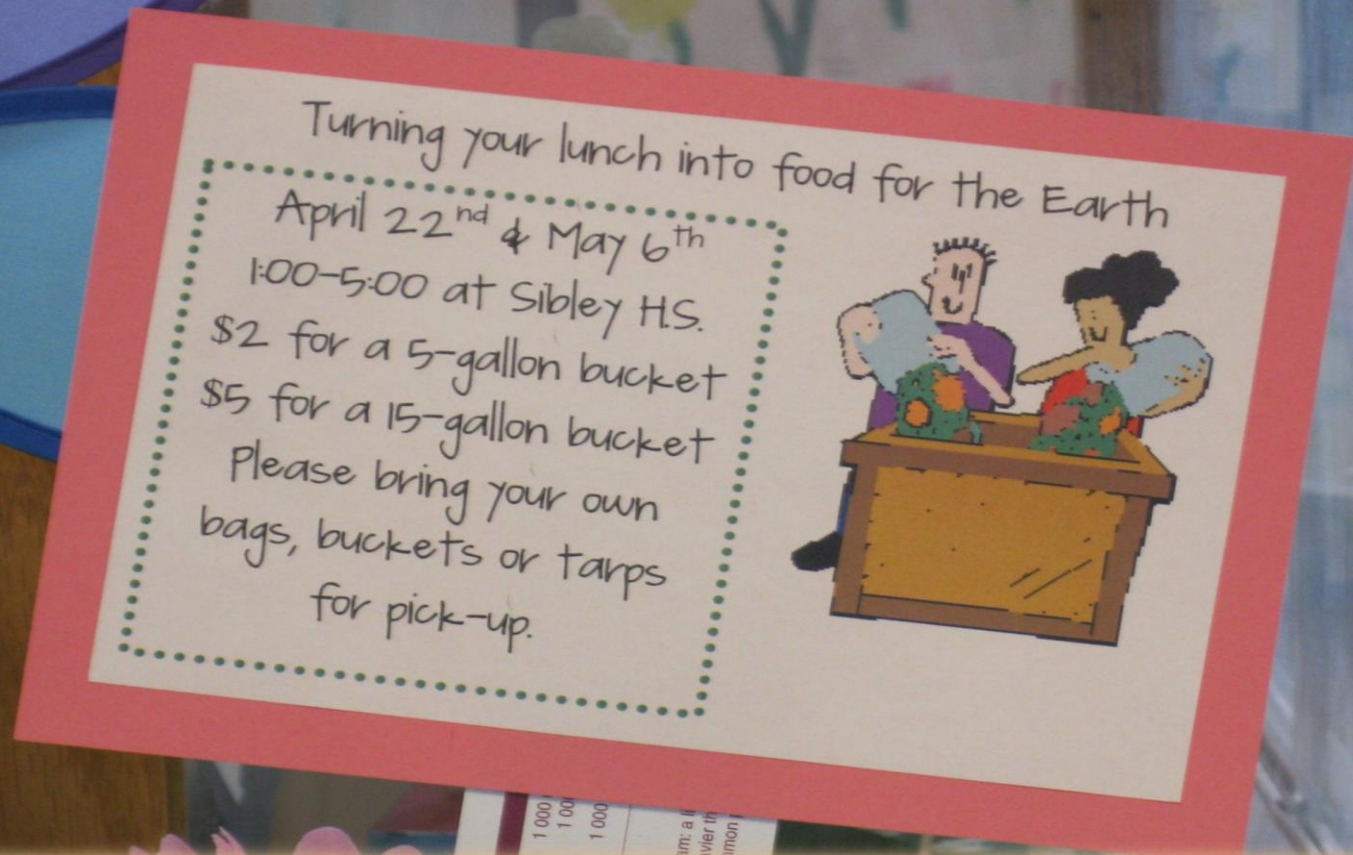
Independent School District 197 Organics

Compost to the Schools 2011

- The Mulch Store provided discounted bulk compost
- 45 yards delivered
- Sold in 5 gallon buckets
- Two Saturday sales
- Run by volunteers



Independent School District 197 Organics Compost to the Schools 2011



Over \$200 Raised



Independent School District 197 Organics Compost to the Schools 2012



For the second year, The Mulch Store and ISD 197 are teaming up to offer compost to families and staff, just in time for spring gardening! The compost is from our own lunch rooms, bringing our recycling efforts full circle!! Use nutrient rich compost to fertilizer lawns, gardens and pots.

Compost opportunity for the whole community!
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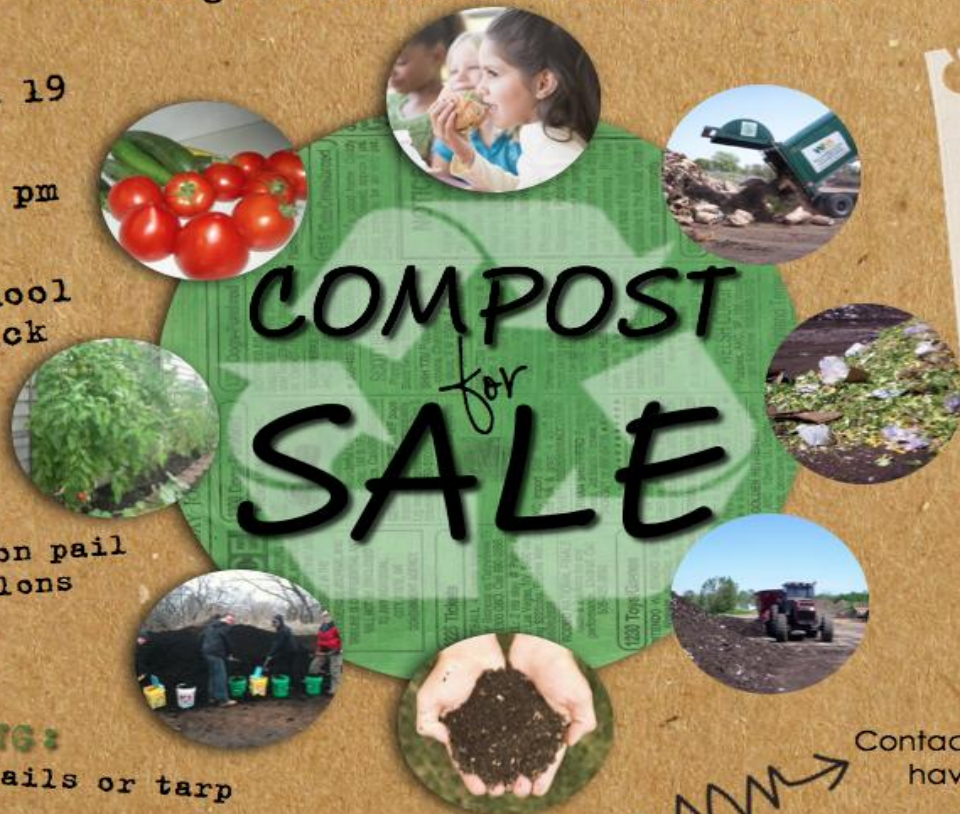
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Contact Lisa Johnson if you
have any questions.

Lisa.johnson@isd197.org

Independent School District 197 Organics

Compost to the Schools 2012



- The Mulch Store delivered 45 yards discounted bulk compost
- 6 days of compost sales
- Sold in 5 gallon buckets
- Raised almost \$500

Independent School District 197 Organics



Compost used for
indoor gardens

Curriculum part of
science classes



Independent School District 197 Organics

LIVEGREEN is the district wide sustainability program. LIVEGREEN promotes energy saving and recycling initiatives.

LIVEGREEN
ISD 197— Together We Can Make a Difference!

Volume 2
Issue 1
Sept 2011

Back to School!!



School Lunch



Organic Waste



Compost



Fresh Vegetables!



We have completed the cycle!!

We are starting our third year of composting our lunch waste at all 8 schools. The organic material is brought to a composting facility in Empire MN. Last spring we brought back the compost to our yard waste location at Sibley to sell. With the help of the Sibley environmental club, many staff and community members purchased the compost for their yards and gardens. The fruits of the process came full circle with greener gardens and abundant vegetables for our community!

"Our tomatoes have never been better. This spring Chip took out most of the old soil and added \$15.00 of the compost from school lunches. Look how nice these tomatoes turned out, no blemishes, good color and very tasty," Margaret Hinke, Tech Integration Specialist.

Thank you to students and staff for sorting their lunch waste, **remember to put all food waste, trays, sporks, napkins and milk cartons in the green organic bins!** If you need compost for your gardens come see us in the spring!

Welcome back to school and welcome to the LIVEGREEN newsletter. LIVEGREEN is the district wide sustainability program. LIVEGREEN promotes energy saving, recycling and other cost avoiding and green initiatives.

One of the biggest and greenest energy resource is the energy we waste. Please continue to do your part, lead by example, encouraging those around you to turn it off when it's not in use.

LIVEGREEN CLUB!

We have a LIVEGREEN Leader for each building. The club focus will be to promote energy savings, recycling and other sustainability initiatives. Contact your school leader for details.

Henry Sibley-Tom Myers

Heritage-Kristi Cooper

FHMS-Doug Petty

GEMS-Katie Carter (Sibley teacher)

Moreland-Steph Rieppel

Mendota-Susan Bomberg

Pilot Knob-Jessalin Karsnia

Somerset-Perry Tinjum

Contact: Lisa Johnson lisa.johnson@isd197.org

The
Mulch
Store

www.mulchstoremn.com

Independent School District 197 Organics Challenges

- Adverse weather on some sale days
- Finding volunteers
- Marketing and promotion of sales



Independent School District 197 Organics

Compost to Schools – Future Plans

Continued compost fundraiser in spring

Increase utilization of compost on school grounds

Community Gardens



GARDENING MATTERS 

Community Gardens



Community. Growing. Food.

- Minnesota non-profit since 2008
- Connecting community gardeners
- Promoting and preserving community gardening across the Twin Cities
- 200+ member gardens
- Resources and training for gardens



Community Gardens

Compost to the Gardens 2011



- Partnered with Gardening Matters to promote ICAW
- Exhibited at Gardening Matters Spring Resource Fair
- Sold bulk compost for ½ price in May
- 9 gardens
- 206 yards



Community Gardens

Compost to the Gardens 2012



- Sponsored Gardening Matters Spring Resource Fair
- ½ price compost all year to community gardens
- Increased participation:
9 to 64 gardens
- Increased volume:
206 to 851 yards of compost
- Donate 300 yards to Minneapolis gardens annually



Community Gardens Gardening Matters Future Plans

- Joint educational classes and materials
- Continued compost distribution
- Increased outreach to gardens
- Increased collaboration with local food initiatives



Community Gardens Gardening Matters Challenges

- Small or non-existent budgets to purchase compost
- Delivery logistics
 - Timing
 - Space



Closing the Loop Building Community



- Three Case Studies
 - Hennepin County Schools
 - ISD 197
 - Gardening Matters



Closing the Loop Building Community



- Bringing compost to communities opens the door for “2 for 1” educational outreach
- Organics recycling education
- Reach a diverse audience
- Compost use education



Questions?



Contact :

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The Mulch Store

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