

WILLARD'S ZERO WASTE EVENT GUIDE



A zero waste event is one in which organizers emphasize reusable, recyclable and/or compostable materials in order to minimize landfill-bound waste from the event. While “zero waste” is the common term for these events, most zero waste events are considered a success if they can divert 90% of event waste from the landfill. In reality, any waste that can be diverted from the waste stream and in favor of being reused or recycled is a victory. Every little bit counts! ~**The Willard Green Team**

Ten steps to achieving a zero waste event:

1. Designate a **Green Ambassador** volunteer(s) on your committee: they will liaise with the Green Team leading up to the event to confirm supplies are in stock, work with the Green Team to recruit volunteers to help oversee proper disposal of waste during the event,* and ensure the waste station is in place before the event.

2. Determine **how much food** you'll need with [this calculator](#) (www.savethefood.com/guestimator). Purchase in bulk whenever possible and be on the lookout for items with the least amount of packaging, i.e., large condiment dispensers or bottles over individual condiment packets. If serving candy, consider bulk candy with compostable wax-coated wrappers (Starburst, Tootsie Rolls and Dum Dums are completely compostable), any lollipop/sucker (the candy and stick is always compostable), or in cardboard boxes that can be recycled (e.g., Milk Duds and Nerds). *See #9 for water details. If you do need to purchase beverages for your event, select cans over plastic bottles.

3. Spread the word! Inform guests in every email and flyer that we are striving for a zero waste event and to please BYORWB (bring your own reusable water bottle. They can always refill them at the Owl Oasis!). If it's a potluck, request guests to bring dishes in reusable, labeled containers.

4. Compostable serveware: the PTA supply is now stocked with all compostable plates, utensils and napkins. No need to purchase anything! Two weeks before the event, determine what kind and how much serveware will be needed (plates, utensils, napkins, cups and serving pieces), email the Green Team and they will confirm amounts are in stock.

5. Compost: if your event has a large number of guests and you're using a significant amount of serveware, we may need to secure an additional compost tote. Please be in touch with the Green Team at least two weeks prior to your event to determine this. The Green Team will coordinate the delivery of extra totes with Collective Resource on the event committee's behalf.

6. Reduce: please avoid/minimize single-use decorations like balloons and giveaway items like plastic trinkets, and aim for decorations that can be reused, such as tablecloths. Please, no straws, #6 hard plastics (like Solo cups), and polystyrene (Styrofoam) as they cannot be recycled and would contaminate the compost or recycling if misplaced. Avoid unnecessary items like frilly toothpicks, paper doilies, and inedible garnishes. **When purchasing food from a restaurant, request they not include utensils, condiment packets, etc.** (Napkins are fine since any brand can be composted.)

7. Ensure signage at the event: if your event is outdoors, the Green Team can provide compost and recycling signs for your event and provide covers for stationary trash cans so guests know to instead look for compost and recycling bins.

8. Recycle: double check with our custodians before the event begins that numerous blue bins are available. All [#2 and #4 plastic bags](#) (e.g., hotdog bun bags) can be placed in the Trex bins in the front foyer to be recycled.

9. Use the Owl Oasis! If your event exceeds 250 attendees, compostable cups are available. If your event is large and outdoors (Fall Fest and End-of-the-Year Picnic), please consider the [City of Evanston's mobile water station](#) and reach out to the Green Team for further details.

10. Share event successes in Owlnotes! If you can, send a couple of lines to Owlnotes (owlnoteseditor@gmail.com) and share highlights of your event, like how much money was raised, who performed, etc. and include how much we were able to compost and recycle:

- Each 32-gallon compost tote holds approximately 50 lbs. of mixed food and serviceware
- Each blue recycling bin holds 95 gallons of recycling

*If the Green Team and your committee are unable to secure enough volunteers, and a Green Team member is not able to attend and help at your event, then the Green Team will cover the cost of a Collective Resource associate to oversee the waste sorting. Staffing the waste station with volunteers greatly assists with eliminating contamination.

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**Thank you for reading and especially for all your help.
Protecting our environment and showing our children simple, effective
ways to reduce our waste is truly a community effort!**