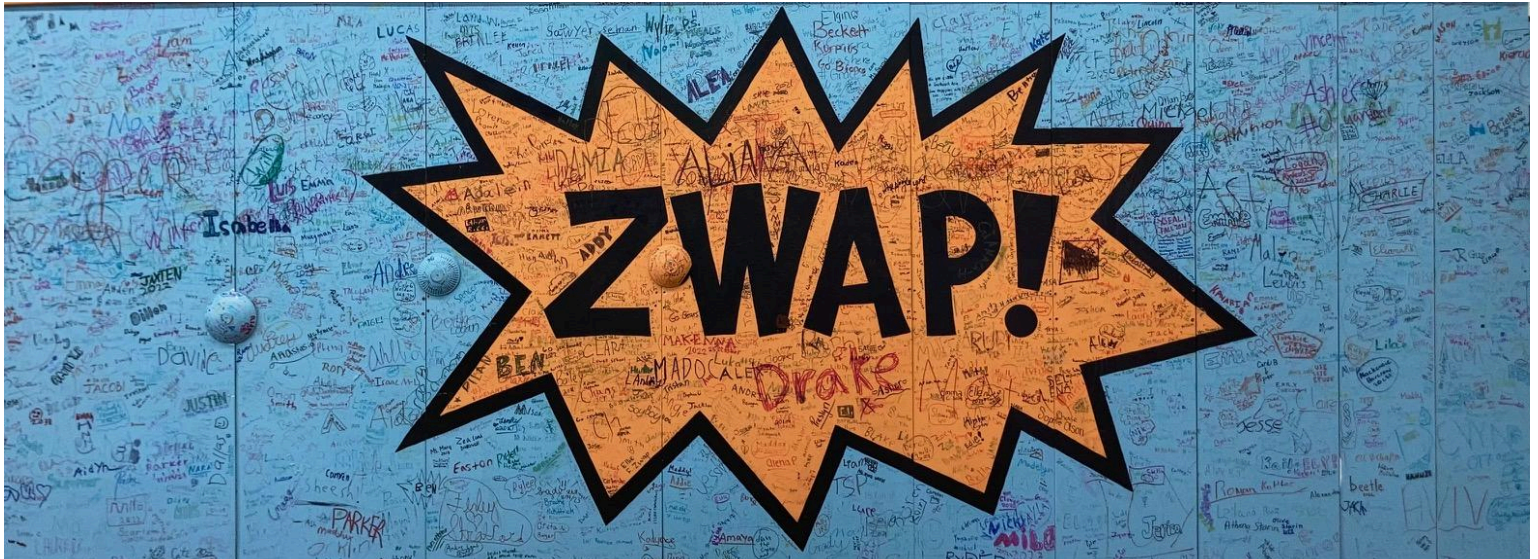
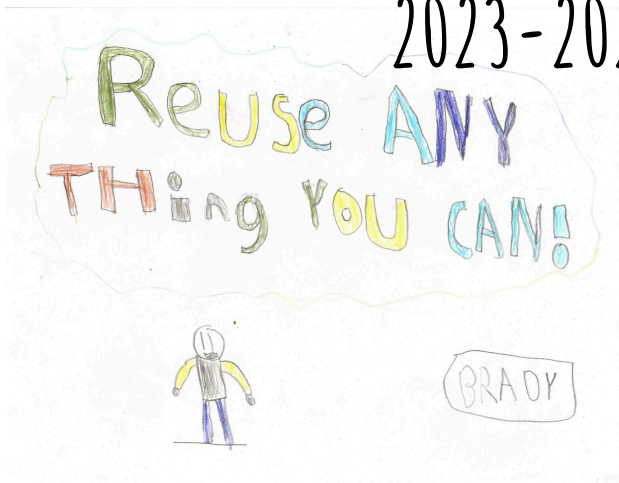




Home ReSource
A COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY CENTER



2023-2024 YEAR END REPORT



About ZWAP!

Our award-winning Zero Waste Ambassadors Program, affectionately known as ZWAP!, reached a milestone 10th season this year. This inquiry-based education program for fifth graders motivated our young citizens to think more critically about materials - where they come from and where they go - and how we interact with that system to create a circular economy.

Home ReSource educators provide a total of 3 hours of engagement through an in-school lesson and a field trip to our sustainability campus using interactive, STEM-aligned curriculum that supports three key messages: We have a **CHOICE**, each of us can take **ACTION**, and when we do so, we can make a **DIFFERENCE** to reduce waste.

CHOICE + **ACTION** = **DIFFERENCE**

2023-2024 Program Reach

ZWAP!'s reach in the Missoula area is huge. Throughout this school year, 782 students from 14 different schools learned about the circular economy and became lifelong zero waste ambassadors.

782 STUDENTS ⌚ **32 CLASSROOMS** ⌚ **14 SCHOOLS**

All 9 MCPS elementary schools participated in ZWAP! (Chief Charlo, Franklin, Hawthorne, Jeannette Rankin, Lewis and Clark, Lowell, Paxson, Rattlesnake, and Russell) and were able to expand their learning to become leaders in their school's Zero Waste lunchrooms, teaching younger students how to sort their unused lunches into reuse, compost, recycling, and landfill.

In addition, we also provided programming for Alberton School, DeSmet Public School, Frenchtown Intermediate School, St. Joseph's Catholic School, and Target Range Elementary School, all of which have connections to and impacts from waste streams in Missoula Valley.

"WE HAVE BEEN TAKING OUR CLASS TO HOME RESOURCE AND DOING ZWAP! EDUCATION FOR YEARS NOW. IT WAS PARTICULARLY POIGNANT THIS YEAR BECAUSE OUR SCHOOL JUST IMPLEMENTED ZERO WASTE SCHOOL WIDE. OUR FIFTH GRADE LEADERS HAVE BEEN EXCELLENT AMBASSADORS." - TEACHER FROM JEANNETTE RANKIN ELEMENTARY.



Students sign the ZWAP! Wall, committing to be Zero Waste Ambassadors

The Importance of ZWAP!

"The best thing about ZWAP is how students ... pass on what they have learned to their families and want to be better at reducing their waste right away". These words from Frenchtown teacher Kelsi Luhn now sum up the value of reaching young people in our community. Through participation in the program and by signing the wall to become a Zero Waste Ambassador, students are making the choice to use the tools and knowledge they learn to make small changes in their lives.

STUDENTS ARE "MAKING A RIPPLE EFFECT THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY"



A student's visioning activity drawing about ways to become zero waste.

ZWAP! has remained an integral part of the 5th grade curriculum for students in Missoula and the surrounding areas. We continue to hear that ZWAP!'s real-world application is of the utmost importance to teachers and students. We see the zero waste goals and ideas becoming integrated into the everyday routines of students, teachers, and schools.

5,900+ ZWAP! AMBASSADORS SINCE 2015

Longevity and Expansion

Since the start of ZWAP!, we have known that teaching 5th graders about zero waste would create exponential impacts down the road. Students in our first years of ZWAP! have now completed their secondary education and are thriving members of their community. This year, a student from a 2016 class visited Home ReSource for a tour. Upon entering our community room his attention was quickly drawn to searching for his name on our ZWAP wall. In speaking with our Executive Director, he talked about the impact the program had in his life. Since its start, ZWAP! has:

- Provided programming to over 5,900 students
- Visited 273 classrooms
- Seen ZWAP! Ambassadors
 - become leaders in their high school sustainability clubs
 - help implement zero waste sorting in their middle school lunchrooms
 - join the workforce through internships and jobs in the trades



Students create ReUse Robots during a summer camp.

Program education continues for students in our community during the summer when we host summer camps for field trips. During the 2024 summer, we'll host 15 camp groups from Frenchtown, Missoula Parks and Recreation, Montana Natural History Center, YWCA GUTS, and Zootown Arts Community Center. During these programs, we continue exploring the ideas of zero waste through creative reuse projects made with supplies that students find throughout the store.

The success of the program has also allowed us to provide programming outside of the 5th grade curriculum. This year, we were the 'client' for a 6th grade Project Lead the Way classroom at Washington Middle School who created a board game for Home ReSource. We provided them with the problem: create a board game for elementary aged kids that is inspired by a zero waste world. Students in the class used their prior ZWAP! experience to create educational games, some of which were donated to Home ReSource to be able to use in our programming. These students cleverly took concepts they learned of zero waste practices and displayed them as physical pathways players can choose to navigate - those more efficient routes being shorter paths and those with less overall impact being longer - a helpful way to illustrate to younger students the benefits and consequences of our waste streams.



Board game created by 6th grade students at Washington Middle School for Home ReSource's ZWAP! Program

ZWAP! In the Next 10 years

We are excited to be at the point to see long-term impacts from ZWAP!, and look forward to continuing this trajectory. Since the program started, we've seen significant increase in conversation and adoption of zero waste practices in schools, homes, and businesses. The 5th graders which we engage are using the concepts they learn to better their communities.

As we continue with the program, we are excited about creating a greater reach. From implementing zero waste concepts into middle and high school classes for projects to introducing a revamped 6th-grade curriculum, the possibilities to further engage students is empowering.

We are also excited about improvements to the current program to consider the introduction of new topics, like the people and professions in our community who make zero waste work.

We couldn't do this vital work without the generous support of the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation. The 2023-2024 Zero Waste Ambassador's Program was coordinated by Lena Kara.