



Home ReSource
A COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY CENTER

ZERO WASTE AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

2024 - 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

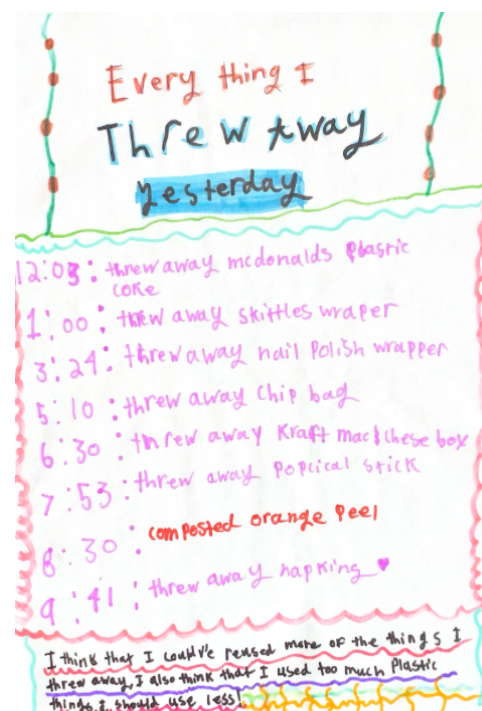
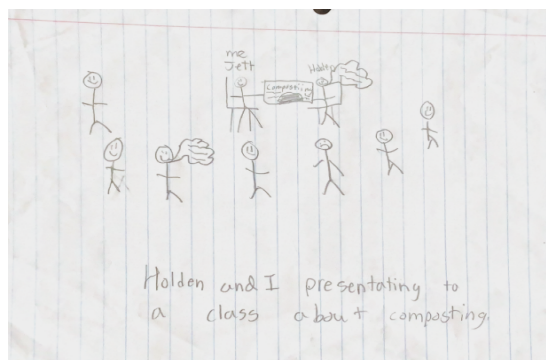
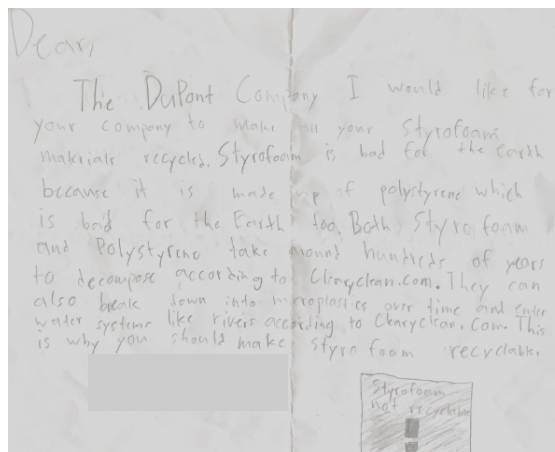
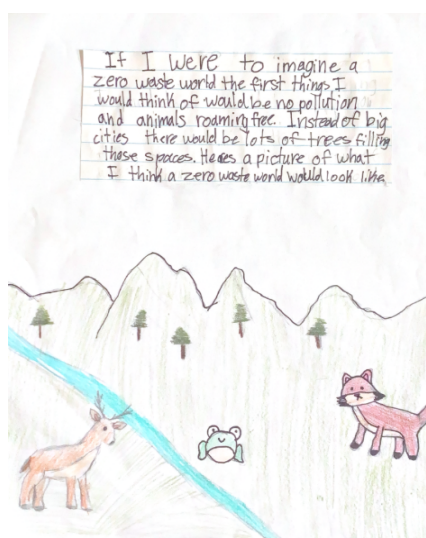


ABOUT

Home ReSource's Zero Waste Ambassadors Program, or ZWAP! for short, is a free, standards-aligned and inquiry-based program offered to all 5th graders in the Missoula area. ZWAP! dives into the complexities of zero waste, the materials economy, and the circular economy all while **uplifting student's voices and actions to create a vibrant, sustainable future.**

Students will begin their ZWAP! journey with a classroom lesson to learn about the systems that make, move, and dispose of our stuff. Then, they will envision what a zero waste world could look like by reflecting on the choices and actions they already do at home or at school. Finally, students will take a field trip to Home ReSource to see community reuse in action and come up with ways they can continue being ambassadors for zero waste!

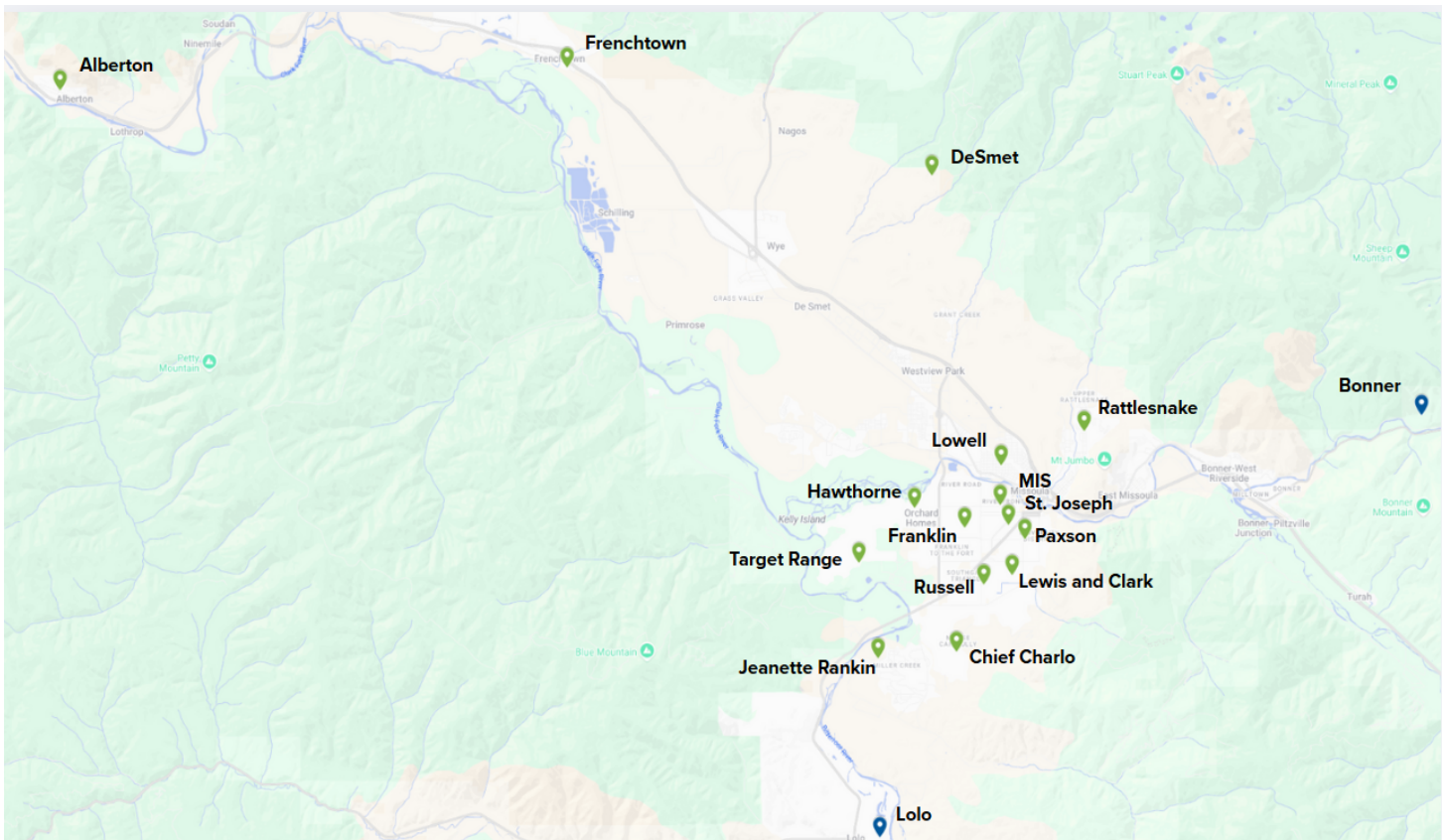
Below are some students' visions depicting their ideas for a zero waste world from left to right: A zero waste future, a letter requesting a company to change, data collection on what and when a student threw away, a self portrait of students teaching another class about composting as zero waste ambassadors, and a birdhouse made out of extra building materials.



PROGRAM REACH

313 CLASSROOMS 6,800+ ZWAP! AMBASSADORS SINCE 2015

Part of our curriculum updates have incorporated place-based learning into ZWAP!. We wanted to show students the direct impacts their actions have on **THEIR** communities. This means discussing the impacts of our trash in Montana, seeing photo and video footage of the landfill that all the trash goes to from every community we serve, and finding specific actions that they can take where they live. This approach is so important since we have expanded our reach to more communities around Missoula! Check out the scope of ZWAP! in the 2024/2025 school year. The schools in blue, Lolo School District and Bonner School District, were welcomed into the program for the first time or for the first time in a while.



896 STUDENTS @ 40 CLASSROOMS @ 17 SCHOOLS

This was our biggest year of ZWAP! These numbers show our direct impacts, but there are countless Zero Waste Ambassadors in the Missoula Area. The point of ZWAP! is to uplift youth voices and give them the knowledge and confidence to lead by example and encourage those around them to follow their lead.

IMPORTANCE

"I love the opportunity to teach my students about how much of a difference they can make, even as a fifth grader. Through fun activities that connect them with their peers, the Home Resource store, and even the public, they are able to learn how important reducing waste is for our world."

The power of ZWAP! is in the students. Once classes sign the ZWAP! wall and say yes to being a zero waste ambassador. Students from DeSmet School decided they needed a scratch paper bin and a recycling bin to cut down their use of paper in the classroom. Paxson fifth graders were inspired by past students to stop the use of single-use plastics in their lunchroom that were reintroduced a few years ago. They will continue to try their best to do zero waste actions whenever they can and teach the people around them about the importance of upholding knowing where our stuff comes from

and where it goes when we reuse, recycle, and even landfill! Check out some ZWAP! teachers have to say about the significance of this program in their classes.

Alberton fifth graders are not just zero waste ambassadors for their school, they are ambassadors for their entire community. Check out how Katie Cannon, the fifth grade teacher at Alberton, uses ZWAP! as an introduction for a year of zero waste education!

The City of Missoula has a plan to become a Zero Waste City by 2050. This means that our community is aiming to divert 90% of material

"I love that the kids commit to being Zero Waste ambassadors for their communities. This launches our year long project on physical sciences including chemistry, astro-physics, and bike mechanics. We take our Zero Waste job seriously and each fifth grader in Alberton builds a bike for the community at Free Cycles, keeping those materials out of the landfill, working on repairs, and having fun (human-powered transportation too!)."

from the landfill, instead finding reduction, recycled, or reused options. One of the pathways outlined in the city's plan is through education. ZWAP! is the Missoula-specific program that upholds this goal of the community!

LONGEVITY AND EXPANSION

Throughout the 24/25 school year, our zero waste education did not stop with 5th grade. Home ReSource staff spent an afternoon at the Montana State Science Fair with participants and their classmates and families discussing the circular economy and how they can continue to choose zero waste actions in their lives.

We also welcomed students from Big Sky High School to learn about community reuse and help them pick out materials for a physics project. Students got to explore Home ReSource and get creative to construct a simple machine to lift a 10 pound weight off of the ground. Take a look at this simple machine made out of pieces of trim, some rope, and a caster all from Home ReSource!



As summer progressed - Home ReSource welcomed **18 groups of summer campers** to Home ReSource as well. Campers from Missoula Parks and Recreation got to see community reuse in action and got their creative juices flowing with a reclaimed materials workshop! Check out the first photo of “towel” the turtle owl! Campers from the Montana Natural History Center spent time creating insect hotels out of hollow-core doors and understanding the connections between zero waste and the natural world. And, campers from the YWCA of Missoula spent their time in the workshop constructing and painting garden boxes!



ZWAP! TEN YEARS AND THE NEXT

This year, Home ReSource has supported all elementary and middle school zero-waste stations for Missoula County Public Schools. This commitment expands the touch-points that students experience with zero waste education and practices, supporting students school-wide.. On the right is a photo of a zero waste station located at Rattlesnake Elementary School in Missoula.



We are looking forward to another ten years of providing zero-waste education to students in the Missoula area. We would like to expand our supplemental materials and lessons for fifth-grade classrooms and beyond. ZWAP! Home ReSource is committed to helping all students continue learning, teaching, and growing to uphold zero waste in their communities today and in the future.

We couldn't do this vital work without the generous support of the Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation and the City of Missoula.