



# YES! Accomplishments 2020-2021

## 14<sup>th</sup> Season of YES!

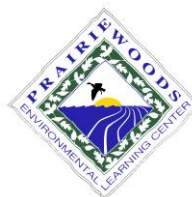
The 2020-2021 season included 11 passionate teams and 348 students working on 35 projects across the state. This school year, YES! students worked directly with 55 local resource experts to impact an additional 7,403 students and community members.

Since its inception, YES! has supported over 4,476 students in working with over 7,200 local experts, businesses and organizations to impact an additional 299,403 students and community members by completing over 1,400 action projects.



During the 2020-2021 season, teams:

- Volunteered for over 388 hours
- Served over 70 Minnesota communities
- Organized and participated in 35 educational events in their schools and communities
- Leveraged over \$15,000 for action projects in their schools and communities



*YES! empowers youth to create solutions to today's ecological challenges through hands-on projects to fulfill community needs and build life-long skills.*

## 2020-2021 YES! Team Project Highlights

### Carlton

*6<sup>th</sup> year team*

Worked with local organization, school administration, and custodial staff to explore composting as a way to recycle organic waste from their school. Gave virtual presentations for middle school classes about climate change. Participated in a community clean-up event where students helped rake leaves and pick up trash around their community.

### Lac qui Parle Valley

*13<sup>th</sup> year team*

Kayaked Signalness (Mountain) Lake at Glacial Lakes State Park to learn about aquatic invasive species and water quality. Collected prairie seeds with US Fish and Wildlife expert to be used in other restoration projects. Collected and recycled over 40 pounds of holiday lights and 25 pounds of markers.



*"It feels really rewarding to know that we are actually making a difference!"*

*-'21 Carlton Student*

### Mankato West

*10<sup>th</sup> year team*

Created an informational video on the potential of solar energy in their school and community for the Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) Solar on Schools Video Contest and received 1st place. Continued to investigate cost, feasibility, and impact of installing solar panels or a solar demonstration site at Mankato West. Planned an environmental week within their school to teach students about how they can be more environmentally conscious and get involved in climate activism.

### Minnewaska Schools

*4<sup>th</sup> year team*

Completed the Lights! Water! Action! Home Energy Kits at their homes to increase energy efficiency and water conservation awareness. Assessed the energy usage of each classroom at their school and then educated staff and students within the school about how to reduce their use. Designed and installed pollinator boxes to learn about the benefits of native prairie plants.

### New London-Spicer Middle School

*14<sup>th</sup> year team*

Completed the Lights! Water! Action! Home Energy Kits at their homes to increase energy efficiency and water conservation awareness.

## New London-Spicer High School

*4<sup>th</sup> year team*

Harvested and spread native prairie seeds in their rain garden. Completed the Lights! Water! Action! Home Energy Kits at their homes to increase energy efficiency and water conservation awareness. Planned to install bike repair stations along the trail by their school to promote alternative transportation.

## Royalton

*9<sup>th</sup> year team*

Built a stand-alone 12-volt DC solar power system by using the We Share Solar Suitcase kit. Finished building 2 more E-bikes for a total of 3 to demonstrate the use of alternative energies. Started a feasibility study on the best approach to compost school lunch waste.

## Sleepy Eye

*10<sup>th</sup> year team*

Collected and recycled 1,117 pounds of used holiday lights. Presented lessons for all K-3<sup>rd</sup> graders to raise environmental awareness in their school. Knitted sleeping mats for the homeless out of used plastic shopping bags.



## Springfield

*13<sup>th</sup> year team*

Created an indoor hydroponics system to grow lettuce. Collected and recycled 500 pounds of holiday lights from the community. Created Earth Day Posters to celebrate and raise awareness about the environment.

## Westbrook-Walnut Grove

*12<sup>th</sup> year team*

Hosted a week of school-wide activities to teach other students about the impacts of carbon emissions from vehicles and promote less polluting transportation choices. Donated over 257,000 pop tabs to the Ronald McDonald house. Continued to improve their West End Reclamation project area.



## Yellow Medicine East

*11<sup>th</sup> year team*

Continued work on their community garden and orchard with the help of their elementary students.

*"I believe that it is essential that programs like YES! are available to students. YES! has taught me so much about leadership, service to the community, and teamwork and has been crucial to my development throughout high school."*

*–YES! Student '21*



## 2020 State Award Winners

1<sup>st</sup> Place: **Westbrook-Walnut Grove High School**



2<sup>nd</sup> Place: **Mankato West & Sleepy Eye Schools (tie)**



*"I think one of the best things about YES! is that the kids learn that they are not observers of the system, they are part of a system...and for us it's really being part of the community."  
 –Sleepy Eye YES! Coach '21*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, YES! had to pivot programming from in-person to virtual. We continued to support our students, coaches, and environment by hosting interactive online events including 10 educational workshops, spring judging day, and the state awards announcement.



Major support for YES! comes from LYFT Career Pathways, Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF), and Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs).