

# Engage students and help your local environment... Start a YES! team at school!



Youth Eco Solutions (YES!) empowers MN youth in grades 7-12 to create solutions to today's ecological challenges through hands-on action projects

YES! students:

- Learn about energy, waste reduction, local foods, soil health, habitat restoration, water quality issues, climate change and more
- Become community advocates and leaders
- Solve real-life challenges, fulfill community needs, and build lifelong skills

School administrators, teachers, businesses and community members play a key role in the success of YES! team projects. Since 2007, more than 7,250 local businesses, organizations, and community members have been involved with YES!



*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.*

- Teacher / YES! Coach



Students on YES! teams are learning by doing! Project examples include: planting pollinator gardens; building solar panels; conducting energy audits; constructing compost bins, super-mileage vehicles, solar boats and wind turbines; growing local food; restoring shoreline; monitoring water quality; and much more!

# A Year in the Life of a YES! Team

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun-Aug
Attend Fall Summit										
I.D. Community Needs & Assets										
Plan Team Projects										
Develop Community Partners										
Implement Team Projects										
Collect Evidence of Project Impacts										
Attend YES! Workshops/Tours										
Assemble Final Report										
Present Work for YES! Competition										
Attend YES! Awards Celebration										
Showcase Team in Community										
Optional: Summer Activity or Project										

Students have opportunities to interact with other YES! teams at the Fall Summit (a kickoff for the year), customized educational workshops, and Spring Awards.

## Funding Resources for YES! Teams

- The YES! program provides project seed funds to teams. Each team is eligible for district expense reimbursement, like transportation & substitute teacher fees. (Amount available varies from year to year.)
- By participating in the YES! program, teams compete for YES! awards and cash prizes.
- YES! coordinators assist teams with seeking additional support from local organizations and businesses, fundraisers, and grants.

*You can think about saving energy or you can talk about it, but you really need to just get out and do something to protect the environment. I think that YES! is a great way to do that!*

- YES! Student



## Through YES! team projects, students have:

- Restored local lakeshores, cleaned up local lakes and rivers, built rain barrels, and planted rain gardens
- Completed a \$25,000 school tree trench installation
- Reduced school electricity costs by \$5,000 annually
- Reduced cafeteria food waste by over 50%
- Operated a passive solar greenhouse
- Restored native prairies and shorelines
- Created a vehicle that achieves 425 miles per gallon
- Educated elementary students and community members on ecological literacy
- Hosted community events including Youth Convening Minnesota
- Impacted 345,850 additional students and community members

**Teams must complete at least one project on the yearly theme and can choose from other categories for additional projects:**

*Clean Transportation*

*Climate Change Solutions*

*Environmental Education*

*Land Restoration & Habitat*

*Local Foods & Gardening*

*Regenerative Agriculture & Soil Health*

*Renewable Energy & Energy Conservation*

*Waste Reduction*

*Water Quality & Water Conservation*



***YES! benefits are not temporary; the skills stay with you for a lifetime!***

***–YES! Student***



## Choose a YES! format that works best for your school and team!

- **YES! as an Elective Course:** YES! team projects and workshops can help your students master STEM standards, complete service-learning requirements, and earn science credits needed for graduation. The course could be a school quarter, semester, or entire year.
- **YES! as Part of an Existing Class:** Enhance a current class by adding project-based learning to your curriculum! YES! can be tailored to any subject, including science, technology, math, social studies, language arts, business, and career exploration.
- **YES! as an Extracurricular Club:** Teams have found creative ways to form a YES! club before or after school as well as during lunches and study halls. Some teams meet once a week; others meet biweekly or monthly. YES! can also be integrated with an existing club.
- **YES! as a Community Council:** Teams can pair with other community groups or members to form a council that partners in YES! initiatives.

Visit the [Start a YES! Team page](#) on our website ([yesmn.org](http://yesmn.org)) to learn more and access the Team Registration Form!

Questions? Email [sayyes@yesmn.org](mailto:sayyes@yesmn.org) or reach out to staff directly.

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