



# 2023-24 YES Team Accomplishments

## 17th Season of YES



On Wednesday, Oct. 11th, YES kicked off the 2023-24 Season with the annual Fall Summit at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center. Seven teams participated with over 100 middle school and high school students and coaches in attendance; what an amazing day it was! Participants not only had the opportunity to spend time with like-minded peers from across the state, but also take part in six educational workshops led by organizations including Friends of the Boundary Waters, Get the Lead Out, Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District and Purpose Artisans.



Throughout the season, 175 students on 10 YES Teams across the state of Minnesota completed 26 eco-action projects focused on water conservation and quality, energy efficiency, renewable energy, environmental education, climate change, habitat creation and restoration, wildlife advocacy, invasive species, solid waste reduction, composting and soil health, local foods, sustainable agriculture and land restoration.



16 YES Workshops throughout the season provided a great opportunity for YES Students to connect with 40 local Minnesota green career experts and professionals who provided training, project support, and exposure to green careers. These 2023-24 YES Workshops included: Voice For The Wilderness with Emily Ford, Water Protection and Indigenous Leadership with Waankam: People of the Estuary, Evergreen Collective with Taylor Hall, Climate Change Photography with Olaf Kulke of Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD), How To Adopt-A-Drain, Energy Efficiency with Heidi Auel of Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) and Solar Energy Education with Bryn Shank of Cooperative Energy Futures.

The YES Students' accomplishments from the 2023-24 YES Season were celebrated on Saturday, May 11th, at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center with an opportunity to share their project journeys and learn how to engage, transform and build community with guest presenter, Ben Weaver.



YES empowers youth to create solutions to today's ecological challenges through hands-on action projects. [www.yesmn.org](http://www.yesmn.org)

Since its inception in 2007, YES has supported over **5,085 students** in working with more than **7,330 local businesses, organizations and experts** to impact an **additional 366,333 students and community members**.



## During the 2023-24 season, YES Participants...

Approximately **175 YES Students**, participated in activities including projects and workshops

Spent **500 hours** volunteering

Partnered with **95 Community members** that **volunteered for more than 170 hours**

Impacted an **additional 1,145 students** through YES Team educational outreach events

Picked up **112 lbs** of trash

Collected **115 lbs** of plastic bags

Collected and recycled **1365 lbs** of holiday lights



# 2023-24 YES Teams

## Harbor City International

### 3rd year team

Educated other students about recycling, worked with their local Clean and Safe Team and neighboring schools to clean up the streets of Duluth, planted trees with Tree-Plenish and developed a workshop with People of the Estuary to learn about Rights of Nature and water protection.

## MACCRAY

### 3rd year team

Expanded their recycling program into the elementary school by educating younger students about proper recycling practices.

## Mankato East

### 2nd year team

Worked on furthering their school's recycling education, researched storm water drainage both at their school and within their local neighborhood - working to understand how drainage impacts water quality in their local community and investigated next steps of adding prairie restoration or a pollinator garden to their school grounds.

## Mankato West

### 13th year team

Hosted monthly campus clean-ups in which partnerships were built with other school clubs and began the conversation of electric busing or other eco-friendly alternatives to diesel buses with school administration and local bus company.

## New London-Spicer Middle School

### 16th year team

Educated elementary students about the importance of the environment and guided them in creating seed bombs to help improve their school prairie restoration project.

## Royalton

### 12th year team

Continued to make progress on their school grounds' prairie restoration project, which included creating interpretative signs, removing invasive species, building bird houses, teaching kindergarteners about prairies and innovating outdoor classrooms. They also visited Camp Ripley water treatment center and solar field where they learned about microbial scrubbing.

## Sleepy Eye

### 12th year team

Collected broken and worn out Christmas lights in their annual "Recycle Your Holidays" event, which has grown to include eight drop off locations. This team recycled over 1000 pounds of holiday lights alone!

## Watertown-Mayer Middle School

### 1st year team

Concentrated on recycling projects this year including gathering recyclables within their school, collecting and recycling broken and worn out holiday lights, visiting the local recycling center and implementing a school pen, marker and crayon recycling program.

## Westbrook-Walnut Grove

### 12th year team

Assisted local hospice garage sale in campus clean up, collected plastic bags and recycled artwork in hopes of creating a bench out of the plastic.

## Willmar Community Ed.

### 1st year team

Lead and participated in campus clean-up. Created winter ornaments out of recycled paper. Educated peers on climate change, energy efficiency, environmental education, solid waste reduction and green careers through Middle School Education Display for Earth Month.



“YES is a great program for kids who want to learn how they can help make the world a better place. It is a privilege to be in YES, as many good opportunities will come your way.”

Jyeshtha  
YES Student



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For more information about Youth Eco Solutions visit [yesmn.org](http://yesmn.org).