



DATE: June 8, 2023
TO: Recycling Board
FROM: Michelle Fay, Program Manager
SUBJECT: 2023 StopWaste Environmental Leadership Awards

SUMMARY

The 2023 StopWaste Environmental Leadership Awards will be presented during the June 8 Recycling Board meeting to recognize six Alameda County entities for their leadership and innovations in advancing environmental sustainability, waste prevention, and contributions to building healthy, climate resilient communities in Alameda County. The 2023 awards celebration marks the Agency’s 21st event where businesses, institutions, and nonprofits are recognized for their commitment to the environment.

DISCUSSION

A call for nominations went out in April to solicit submissions from member agency staff, hauler representatives, StopWaste staff, and our partners. Nominations were evaluated based on environmental and health benefits, innovation and leadership, as well as equity considerations. We are excited to share the following list of 2023 awardees. Awards will be presented on June 8 and will be the primary topic of the Recycling Board meeting.

[Fertile GroundWorks](#), Livermore

Fertile GroundWorks is a nonprofit urban farm in Livermore, growing healthy, organic produce to help fight food insecurity. Each year they donate over 24,000 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables to community kitchens and food pantries in the Tri-Valley. With a strong focus on education, Fertile GroundWorks teaches well over a thousand volunteers each year about sustainable farming practices, local food systems, and composting, empowering them to share their learnings with others and build community. Fertile GroundWorks also helps rejuvenate and maintain food gardens at 20 local schools, providing seedlings, compost, knowledge, and encouragement. Since November 2022, they have partnered with the City of Livermore to host a Compost Hub, where over 210 home gardeners have come to pick up free compost to date.

[Good Eggs](#) and [Common Vision](#), Oakland

Good Eggs, an online food marketplace specializing in local sustainably produced groceries in West Oakland and Common Vision, a nonprofit committed to improving local food systems by planting orchards and supporting gardens in low-income schools, together have built a model partnership for surplus food recovery and distribution. Taking a highly transparent and proactive approach

driven by mutual trust and shared values, the two organizations ensure that Good Eggs' surplus of wholesome, high-value fresh food reaches West Oakland families in an equitable and efficient manner, using school gardens as food hubs. The two organizations are documenting their structure, creating templates, and writing a case study to help others follow their model of cooperative food recovery.

[Bay Cities Produce](#), San Leandro

Bay Cities Produce in San Leandro is a family-owned company distributing fresh, frozen, and prepared fruits and vegetables to food businesses and institutions throughout the Bay Area. A Certified Green Business, they have implemented energy efficiency measures, recycle their wash water, and follow a zero waste model. Their network of food recovery partners ensures that the company's edible surplus food goes to feed people, while all their produce trimmings and peels are used by local ranchers and farmers as animal feed or compost. They source fruits and vegetables mainly from family-owned BIPOC farms, helping them pool produce to make transport to buyers more cost effective and also help pay for their food safety training.

[Barnett Plumbing & Water Heaters](#), Livermore

Barnett Plumbing and Water Heaters in Livermore has created practical and innovative solutions to help homeowners opt for an all-electric heat pump water heater (HPWH) instead of a gas water heater replacement when their existing one breaks. Because the electrical and permitting work involved in a HPWH installation can get in the way of restoring hot water to the home immediately, Barnett offers a loaner water heater at no cost to bridge the gap. They also bake all available incentives into their heat pump vs gas water heater cost estimates for an apples-to-apples comparison—and the HPWH usually wins. In 2022 alone, they installed 177 heat pump water heaters in the Bay Area and helped homeowners collectively realize \$170,000 in incentive payments.

[Fremont Unified School District's Climate Literacy and Environmental Education Network](#)

In 2021, Fremont Unified School District passed a resolution, brought forth entirely by middle and high school students: to ensure that all graduating students are well versed in climate change and climate solutions. The resolution led to the formation of the Climate Literacy and Environmental Education Network (CLEEN), a network of educators, students, and community partners working to develop a district-wide climate literacy and implementation plan. CLEEN has mapped FUSD's environmental initiatives, developed an environmentally themed summer school program, launched a district-wide school garden network, and implemented an educator professional development series. In addition, CLEEN provides leadership and support for directors, principals, teachers, and students through grants, funding, and training. Its ultimate purpose is to drive student- and community-led climate solution initiatives, such as the transition to electric buses and solar energy to switching to reusable food service ware, all which have already taken shape.

RECOMMENDATION

This item is for information only.