

NATIONAL CONSUMERS LEAGUE MEDIA ADVISORY

Pittsburgh to host student-led food waste activities on Earth Day, Saturday, April 22

Panel of high school students from across the nation to spotlight food waste causes, solutions at National LifeSmarts Championship hosted in the Steel City this weekend

Food Recovery Network's University of Pittsburgh chapter to partner with event organizers to recover surplus food and donate for use by local partner agencies

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Pittsburgh, PA — In celebration of Earth Day this Saturday, April 22, Pittsburgh will be home to a series of activities focused on identifying causes and solutions to America's food waste problems, led by student leaders from across the country who have gathered in the Steel City to compete at an annual national scholarship competition.

LifeSmarts (LifeSmarts.org) is a national consumer literacy scholarship opportunity and educational program, celebrating its 23rd season this year. LifeSmarts is a program of the National Consumers League, the nation's oldest consumer watchdog organization. The 2017 National LifeSmarts Championship kicks off this Friday, April 21 at the Westin Convention Center Pittsburgh and will feature welcome remarks by Pittsburgh's Mayor Bill Peduto.

Earth Day focus on food waste

LifeSmarts covers five topic areas in consumer literacy, including the environment, which will be a special focus of emphasis this Saturday, Earth Day 2017. On Saturday, a panel of students from across the country will share their experiences of food waste audits they conducted this spring in their own communities.

"Food waste is an economic, environmental, and moral issue. We can't think of a better day to help spotlight leadership by the next generation of consumers to fight this growing problem than Earth Day 2017," said Sally Greenberg, NCL Executive Director. "NCL and our LifeSmarts program are giving youth leaders the tools to recognize and fight our country's food waste crisis and become part of the solution."

"The dairy industry is looking at ways to reduce food waste that will help to increase U.S. food security and enhance sustainability. IDFA is pleased to be working with the National Consumers League to expand NCL's youth leadership education program on this important issue," said Dave Carlin, IDFA Senior Vice President of Legislative Affairs and Economic Policy.

LifeSmarts will partner with Food Recovery Heroes, the University of Pittsburgh's chapter of the national Food Recovery Network, to recover surplus food served during the event. Since 2011, Food Recovery Network has recovered 1.96 million pounds of food and donated it to those who need it most.

“Our model is successful because we combine the power of thousands of student leaders across the country to solve this complex issue of so many people going hungry, and the adverse impact of wasting food on our environment. Our University of Pittsburgh chapter is a shining example of positive change,” said Regina Northouse, Executive Director of Food Recovery Network.

Student volunteers from Food Recovery Heroes have been collecting surplus food from several locations on Pitt’s Oakland campus since fall 2014. Surplus food is safely delivered to local nonprofit agencies that are able to feed families and communities fresh, nutritious meals rather than canned, sodium-heavy, non-perishable foods. In May 2016 the University of Pittsburgh's Dining Services became Food Recovery Verified by the Food Recovery Network. Pitt is the first school in the ACC to be Food Recovery Verified, and Food Recovery Heroes managed to recover and donate 9,338 lbs of surplus food from its campus in 2016.

Food waste facts

40 percent of food is thrown out in the United States every year; this could feed 25 million Americans

1 in 7 people in America facing hunger are children

The United States wastes food at a higher rate than any other country in the world

MEDIA AVAILABILITY

Food waste panel discussion and food recovery efforts

When: Earth Day, Saturday, April 22, 2017 at 12 noon

Where: Westin Convention Center Pittsburgh, Allegheny Ballroom (third floor)

1000 Penn Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

The panel will feature student leaders as well as:

Sally Greenberg, National Consumers League

Regina Northouse, Food Recovery Network

William Loux, International Dairy Foods Association

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About the National Consumers League and LifeSmarts

The National Consumers League, founded in 1899, is America's pioneer consumer organization. Our mission is to protect and promote social and economic justice for consumers and workers in the United States and abroad. For more information, visit nclnet.org.

LifeSmarts is a competitive educational program, in which teams of students begin online.

Top-scorers progress to state competitions, and then state champion teams meet each April to compete in the National LifeSmarts Championship. This year’s lineup of state champion teams come from as far away as Roosevelt High School from Honolulu, Hawaii, and as near as the Pennsylvania team from Dallas, which returns to the National Championship to defend its title as the 2016 national champs.

Consumer-savvy teens representing 30 states and the District of Columbia will compete at this year's national event. Throughout the 2016-2017 program year, more than 100,000 teens competed online for a chance to represent their states at the 2017 National LifeSmarts Championship. Players answered more than 3 million consumer questions in the online competition.