Dear Friends,

Don’t you love seeing good things grow?

Please join me in celebrating the discoveries students are making in Explore Ecology programs across the county and beyond their classroom walls.

I am delighted to share the joy of seeing the next generation blooming amidst school garden pathways, at local creeks and beaches, and in a Makerspace filled with creative possibilities.

With the help of supporters like you:

- Our **youngest students are triumphantly pulling carrots** from the soil in our new Garden Explorers Early Childhood Education Program
- Children are **inspired to innovate and participate in solutions** to pollution on field trips to the Tajiguas Landfill
- Proud shouts of “**Look what I made!**” can be heard in our new EE Makerspace creative reuse workshops
- Fourth graders are **thrilled to watch whales** breach in the Santa Barbara Channel as they learn about watersheds in our Flows to the Ocean program

Of course, we are continuing our time-tested programs like Art From Scrap, too!

Explore Ecology is committed to **creating a culture of environmental stewardship that will positively impact our community for years to come.**

I am so proud - and grateful - to share the value of our work and to show you how our visionary staff, donors, and partners are making a lasting difference.

We appreciate everyone who has supported our mission over the last 34 years and are excited to grow forward together!

With gratitude,

Lindsay Johnson
We are School Gardens
Growing healthy minds, bodies, and little green thumbs in outdoor classrooms

We are Environmental Education
Delivering lessons that inspire meaningful connections with the natural world

We are Creative Reuse
Sparking the imaginations of all ages with recycled materials and resourceful ideas

Our Mission: Empowering our community to protect and preserve the planet with innovative environmental education and nature-based learning
We connect our entire community with neighborhood and beach cleanups, unique events, our signature store, and creative reuse workshops.

OUR IMPACT

By interacting with students multiple times during their school journey, we engage in hundreds of thousands of student interactions annually.

Each personal connection empowers students to take positive action and deepens their understanding of the world around them.
16 SCHOOL DISTRICTS
32 SCHOOL GARDENS
33 TITLE 1 SCHOOLS

100,000+
STUDENT INTERACTIONS
annually with
Explore Ecology educators
from Santa Maria to
Carpinteria
In classrooms and on field trips, students connect with the natural world, learn how they can reduce waste, and explore how their actions can support healthy watersheds.

**EXCITING NEWS!**

Our 5th -12th graders are witnessing where waste ends up with new field trips to the Tajiguas Landfill and the County’s new ReSource Center on the Gaviota Coast. Students learn how trash and recycling is sorted and discover that there is no “away” when we throw something away.

**Meet the Ocean Advocate**

“My passion to love and care for the ocean was ignited when I won an Explore Ecology Award in 4th grade, for teaching my school and neighborhood about the importance of a clean coastline.

I’ve been volunteering with Explore Ecology for over five years, helping with beach clean-ups and leading Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers as a Site Captain. I am now proud to be a NOAA Ocean Guardian Youth Ambassador! Though I haven’t decided yet on my career, I do know that I will continue to be a voice and a positive influence for the ocean.”

Pyp Pratt, NOAA Ocean Guardian Youth Ambassador
Students connected with the world beyond their classrooms in 165 field trips at Art From Scrap, the Watershed Resource Center, and Tajiguas Landfill.

Volunteers picked up 2.8 tons of litter on Coastal Cleanup Day, and 1,955 pounds of trash was removed from Arroyo Burro Beach at 13 beach cleanups.

Students learned about their environment in 590 class presentations, including Creek Kids, Watershed Stewards, and the Replace the Waste series.
Countywide, school gardens serve as outdoor classrooms for science and ecology and offer safe, inclusive spaces for social-emotional learning, discovery, and connection.

**EXCITING NEWS!**

Gardens enhance physical and mental well-being, while fostering creativity, curiosity, and imagination. Through our new Garden Explorers program, we teach early childhood educators the skills and knowledge they need to integrate garden education into their daily activities.

**Meet the Kale King**

Franklin Elementary students were excited to make garden salad tacos, so their teacher Mrs. Lopez showed them the types of kale they could harvest in their Explore Ecology school garden.

A 3rd grader who had never tried kale, put a big leafy piece in his mouth and broke into a smile! After that, each time the class returned to the garden, he would head straight to the kale, earning him the nickname "Kale King." He didn’t just grow a love for kale, he brought his garden connection home to his mom, and it’s become a family favorite.
2,000 Pounds of fruits and vegetables harvested from 30 biodiverse gardens for taste tests, cooking lessons, and sent home to share.

10,833 Students experienced interactive learning by sowing seeds, composting, tending plants, and proudly harvesting and tasting what they grew together.

5,500 Gallons of cafeteria food scraps transformed into nutrient-rich compost in 9 worm composting bins that reduce waste, and create full-circle learning opportunities.
Meet the Artist

“Having grown up in Santa Barbara, I’ve been coming to Art From Scrap since childhood. In my previous career as a display artist, I donated many excess materials and installation components to the creative reuse store. In my current studio practice, sustainability is at the core of the work I create, so naturally Art From Scrap is always my first stop when I’m in need of supplies.”

Eliot Spaulding, Interdisciplinary Fine Artist and Illustrator

CREATIVE REUSE

The Art From Scrap Creative Reuse Store diverts thousands of pounds of clean, reusable items from the landfill each year, while providing schools and crafty community members with art supplies and unique materials for creative projects.

EXCITING NEWS!

Located above Art From Scrap, the EE Makerspace is a new community workshop for artists of all ages, brimming with upcycled materials, work stations, cutting-edge tools, classes, and inspiration.
Artists of all ages joined 55 creative workshops in the EE Makerspace, including family friendly Crafternoons and adult special skills classes taught by local artists.

Students used their imaginations in 43 field trips at Art From Scrap and EE Makerspace as they created projects with upcycled supplies.

Teachers from 72 schools utilized our School Materials Program that provides affordable materials for classroom arts projects, theater productions, and more.
THANK YOU

With deep appreciation for the 2023 donors who share our mission and vision

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Special Thanks to Our Education Contract Partners

These agencies have provided continued support for over 20 years!
- County of Santa Barbara Project Clean Water
- County of Santa Barbara Resource Recovery and Waste Management Division
- City of Lompoc
- City of Santa Barbara
- City of Goleta

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Jessica Scheeter & Zach Gill
Christian Schlumberger
Myrna Smith
Kathy Snow & Bendy White
Lynne Sprecher
Linda Whalen

Thank you so much for having us. My favorite part was picking up the trash on the beach I had a great time.

Love, Cloe

P.S. I wish it was longer.

P.S. One of the most best field trips ever!!!

Up to $100
Peter & Rebecca Adams
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Ani Ahavah
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Kay Warner
Betty Wells
Ron & Charlotte Williams
Victoria Wood
Heidi Zetzer & Greg Ashby
In 2023, Explore Ecology invested 82% of our annual revenue into our education programs.

We recently hired more educators, improved employee compensation, grew our environmental education programs, and successfully reimagined our art workshop into the new EE Makerspace.

Now, we are expanding our program reach, growing our base of community donors, and building new relationships with local businesses, non-profits, and community partners.

Explore Ecology’s total revenue for 2023 was $1.53 million—and more than $1.27 million was invested directly into our environmental programs.

"I am so appreciative to all who have donated to allow my students a place where they take charge of their learning and their own well-being. I can only hope that more schools get to experience the magic that comes from learning in school gardens like this one."

Mrs. Lopez, Franklin Elementary School
GROW FORWARD
WITH EXPLORE ECOLOGY

Shop for inspiration and materials at our Art From Scrap Creative Reuse Store
Register for Crafternoons and art workshops in our new EE Makerspace
Join the fun at our fundraising or community friendraising events
Volunteer at a beach cleanup or school garden work day
Book a private workshop in the EE Makerspace
Make a contribution, become a sponsor, or include us in your financial planning
(IRA contributions, donations of stock or property, and estate planning)

Do you want to collaborate? Let’s discuss ideas for a mutually beneficial partnership or team-builder. Elevate your brand and further environmental stewardship as a sponsor, with a percentage of sales, a promotional event, or a 1% For the Planet contribution.

Contact our Development Director, Morgan Coffey, at 805.884.0459 x3, or morgan@exploreecology.org

501(c)3 Federal Tax ID #: 20-4944165

You can make a difference in so many ways:

- $50 can provide seeds and tools for a school garden
- $100 can support Crafternoons where families create together
- $250 can fund a bus for 60 students on an Explore Ecology field trip
- $500 can supply a school with creative reuse art supplies for a year
- $1000 can sponsor a beach cleanup and engage your community
Empowering our community to protect and preserve the planet with innovative environmental education and nature-based learning

**Explore Ecology Supporters:**

- **Create opportunities** for discovery and connection
- **Empower our community** to take environmental action
- **Encourage artistic expression** through creative reuse
- **Instill confidence** in the next generation

**ExploreEcology**

302 East Cota Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
805.884.0459
ExploreEcology.org