



## Environmental Charter Schools

# Green News

April 2020



Dear ECS Team:

### Thank you.

Thank you for doing what ECS team members do so well - putting kids first and making this “new normal” work. Adjusting to this global pandemic overnight - comes with its ups and downs, tears and laughter, fears and hopes, and so much more. The emotions continue to overwhelm all of us. Thank you

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## Eddie's Corner

Hello ECS family! Though we are all treading through rough waters, and the vibe of society is rather despondent, we can still take needed solace in the reliable charm of the natural world. The warmth of Spring is sweetening the landscape; seasonal flowers are emerging en masse as if to cheer up the soul! Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds are buzzing, flittering, and zipping about -- dancing among the endless bouquets. Looking beyond the chaos, at nature's example, rough seasons always change, and beautiful things will bloom. Spring IS a changing season of hope and joy!

In the spirit of springtime, why not learn to grow food at home? Taking a jab at homesteading can yield a steady source of produce, depending on the passion put into the enterprise. Developing a measure of food self-sufficiency is a very healthy and therapeutic thing to do whilst stuck at home. Of course, a list of things deter many from attempting such an endeavor, first and foremost of which: "I got no space!". You'd be surprised, how productive even the most minimal of real estate can be. Heaps of vegetables can be grown in containers occupying a mere corner of a driveway. Renting an apartment? With a strong lamp, or adequate window sunshine, many vegetables, herbs, and even some fruits can be grown indoors! It all starts with taking the bold first step...try! Research and build on what





works for you. Need a headstart? Seedling plugs of chicory, French dandelion, tomato, collards, and lemongrass are available to distribute from our ECHS site, and more on the way! Reach out to the ECS Green Ambassador team or [eddie\\_cortes@ecsonline.org](mailto:eddie_cortes@ecsonline.org) if you are interested in seedling plugs.

## Green Improvements



**Mike Garcia, owner of Enviroscope** (a local small landscaping business), environmental food justice guru and ECS partner, volunteered to update our sprinkler systems on our middle school campuses and to improve our pond features. His goal was keep his crews working during this COVID 19 and do good in the world. We couldn't be more grateful for his donation of services equally more than \$20,000. Look how clear the water in the Gardena pond is! Thank you to our campus engineers for working alongside Mike to make these improvements.



**Optima Energy**, a local Gardena company, to install two electric vehicle charging stations on the Gardena campus over Spring Break. This is a pilot that takes advantage of the ...grant/ stipend. We hope to implement similar systems at Inglewood and ECHS based on the success and efficacy of this program.

## News Articles

### Articles about COVID 19's Impact on Justice and Equity

**Racial Equity Tools**, an organization designed to support individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity, states that most of those communities that are most frequently exposed to environmental hazards are communities of color. The site shares resources that explore principles of environmental justice and documents several profound racial inequities in environmental quality. Linked [here](#). Racial Equity Tools also arranged COVID-19 news articles in categories [here](#).

**US News: It's Time to Sound the Alarm for Communities Most Vulnerable to the Coronavirus.** The spread of COVID-19 inordinately threatens communities that have suffered from environmental injustice and racial bias. Read more [here](#).

**Center for American Progress: Coronavirus Compounds Inequality and Endangers Communities of Color** Inequality is magnified in times of national hardship. [ ]Amid this major public health crisis, the compounding effect of existing inequities puts people of color in an increasingly precarious situation. Read more [here](#).

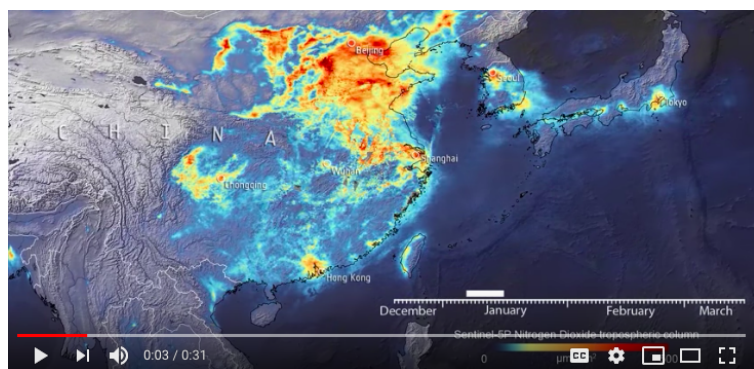


**Green Buzz:** Environmental Justice and the Climate Movement in Light of COVID-19 GreenBuzz Berlin held [an event](#) to highlight the voices and experiences of black, indigenous and people of colour (BIPoC) regarding sustainability and the climate crisis. Read more [here](#).

**Covid-19** is an EJ Issue by Alexis Sutterman, Fellow at California Environmental Justice Alliance writes in the pressing times of Covid-19, it has become increasingly critical to recognize connections and patterns, and understand what they mean in the context of achieving justice and liberation. Read more [here](#).

**EdSurge: Who's Doing Remote Learning? Depends on Who You Ask** --- and How Wealthy They Are: Public school and private school teens are having very different experiences during the coronavirus outbreak. Read more [here](#).

## Articles about Climate, An unlikely beneficiary.



**CNN: There's an unlikely beneficiary of coronavirus: The planet.** Factories were shuttered and streets were cleared across China's Hubei province as authorities ordered residents to stay home to stop the spread of the coronavirus. It seems the lockdown had an unintended benefit -- blue skies. The average number of "good quality air days" increased 21.5% in February, compared to the same period last year, according to China's Ministry of Ecology and Environment. And Hubei wasn't alone.

See video of [Nitrogen Dioxide emissions over China](#)

**Forbes: Is The Coronavirus The Transportation Industry's Opportunity?** So how do we learn from this? Is the pandemic an opportunity to rethink our transportation priorities?

**GreenPeace: Can the Pandemic Sound the Alarm on Climate Change?** Given the tremendous impact of this pandemic on people's lives combined with the fact that [many experts](#) believe that global heating and other environmental disturbances could facilitate the development of more novel viruses such as COVID-19.

**YALE: Coronavirus Holds Key Lessons on How to Fight: Climate Change:** When the COVID-19 pandemic is past, societies may adopt some important measures that would lower emissions, from more teleconferencing to shortening global supply chains. But the most lasting lesson may be what the coronavirus teaches us about the urgency of taking swift action.

**NY Times: What the Coronavirus Means for Climate Change:** Lockdowns and distancing won't save the world from warming. But amid this crisis, we have a chance to build a better Future.

**Fast Company: What would happen if the world reacted to climate change like its reacting to the corona virus?** What would a fast, coordinated, collective response to climate change look like? The coronavirus has transformed everyday life so significantly that the effects are already visible from space.

**The Economist: The epidemic provides a chance to do good by the climate.** An optimist might see these changes as a silver lining to what is an extremely dark cloud -- but depends on their being sustained when things return to normal.

**The Nation: Rethinking Our Relationship to the Natural World After Covid-19**

**Earth Justice: What EPA's 'Enforcement Discretion' During COVID-19 Really Means**





## EarthDay 2020 & Other Resources

1. **TreePeople:** Generation Earth's youth leadership coordinators are happy to conduct virtual classrooms experiences with you on the following topics: Recycling at Home, Composting, Native Plants, Water Pollution and Prevention, Waste in the Fashion Industry. For more information, reach out to [ramos@treepeople.org](mailto:ramos@treepeople.org) / [generationearth@treepeople.org](mailto:generationearth@treepeople.org) or (818) 623-4856. And or visit them online [here](#).
2. **Captain Planet:** Middle and High School virtual resources [here](#)
3. **Cabrillo Marine Aquarium:** Digital Earth Day Poster Contest. For more info, click [here](#). Registration Deadline is 4/17 .
4. **Projet Green Schools:** *Race for the Planet: Virtual Home Edition* [here](#)

### Celebrating Earth Day on April 22

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. Given the current circumstances, celebrations may be a little different than planned but there are still many ways to come together virtually. Earth Day Network is taking Earth Day digital with [EARTHRISE](#). We can also take actions from home to cultivate new habits: try composting, cook a vegetarian meal, spend time in nature (away from others), or start a garden. How will you be celebrating next month? Let us know on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [LinkedIn](#).



## DIY Activities During Covid-19

1. Check out this [list](#) of 40 Easy One Day DIY Lawn And Garden Projects over the holidays. There are a few upcycled ideas that you may be able to do without ever leaving your home.
2. Manhattan Beach PTA put together this list of ideas [here](#).
3. Read. For our students, reading has the double advantage of providing escape and improving our children's reading ability. For the adults in the community, it can be a stress relief as well. A few books book lists you may want to consider:
  - [Goodreads Environmental Justice](#) recommended reading
  - [13 Must Read books on the environment and Climate Change](#)
  - [Best Environmental Books for Readers Who Want to Save the Planet](#)
4. Or begin your own small vegetable or herb garden. [Here](#) are some pinterest ideas. And [here](#) is a how-to YouTube video. Good luck!
5. Check out the ["Learn at Home" page on TreePeople's website](#)

## Alison's Corner: COVID and the Environment



Our schools have the mission of creating a more equitable and sustainable world, and many have appreciated the positive impact that this health crisis has had on our environment. They celebrate the fact that Greenhouse gas emissions are down and air quality has gone up. However, the head of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Inger Andersen, has cautioned against viewing this as a boon for the environment. [In this First Person editorial](#), Ms. Andersen calls instead for a profound, systemic shift to a more sustainable economy that works for both people and the planet.

Her editorial does not mention the unequal impact the health crisis has had on low-income communities of color. [The Hill](#) reported disparate rates of sickness and death emerging within our black and brown communities. Nor as the [Ed Surge](#) Article suggests does it consider whether online, remote instruction will have disparate results depending on how wealthy the family is. It's often our low income communities of color that are most vulnerable.



Some wonder whether this pandemic is a harbinger of upcoming and ongoing climate crisis challenges that will inevitably impact our world's most vulnerable communities. And there are some like Timothy Papandreu in the [Forbes](#) article that look to the future and ask, "Is this an opportunity to future proof our systems to be more flexible, equitable and resilient? While we have moved mountains in the first weeks of the pandemic to adjust - including meeting the food needs of our communities, distributing tech to ensure every student can attend school virtually, and creating online classrooms learning experiences, we cannot stop here. We must look for ways to future proof our educational systems. Should we think of ways to toggle between virtual and campus life? Are there best practices from the virtual classroom that we should shift to permanently? What about our system must change so we are better prepared to address the inequities inherent in our society?