



College of Saint Benedict Sustainability Newsletter

2020 WEEK OF SUSTAINABILITY EDITION

Sustainability at Home

Since the middle of March, we have all been navigating a new normal that has likely been challenging, uncertain, and at times lonely. We may be grieving the loss of time with friends on campus and loved ones over the holidays or cheering over the fact that our Netflix binge-ability has increased ten-fold. Many are trying to develop a daily routine and good habits to at least brush their teeth and get dressed each day, but the question is; are your habits sustainable? Living a sustainable life includes being economically responsible, socially just, and environmentally sound. Some correlate living sustainably with eating a vegan diet and producing zero-waste, but the reality is there are many things you can do each day to be more sustainable. If you struggle with living sustainably, you're in the right place to get some tips on making that daily routine a little bit better! The CSB Sustainability Office has offered some great ways to develop or build off current sustainability habits and you can find them right here!

- Turn off the water while you brush your teeth and wash your hands
- Only flush #2... yes, people actually do this!
- Start a compost pile in your backyard
- Grow plants and herbs in your windowsill
- Try eating plant based/ meat free foods one day per week
- Create something new from items you no longer use
- Unplug appliances when not in use (ex. microwave, washer, dryer, oven, coffee pot)
- Play games with family and friends (virtually or in person)
- Send some snail mail
- Get outside!
- Deliver groceries to a neighbor
- Write positive messages with chalk in your neighborhood

The list can go on and on! If you have any questions, want to learn more or dig deeper into sustainability reach out to us! DM on Instagram @csb_sustainability_office or shoot us an email at csbsustainability@csbsju.edu. We love hearing from YOU!

Changes coming to Campus

Next fall, McGlynn's Sports Café will be taking part in a pilot project to exchange a portion of their single-use plastic containers for reusable ones. This project has been funded through a grant awarded to CSB this spring by the PepsiCo Zero Impact Fund. Funding was given to projects aimed at making environmental, economic and social sustainability impacts on that campus. The Sustainability Office, Institutional Advancement and Culinary Services all worked in partnership on the grant application and are excited to move forward with this in the fall.

SJU was also awarded \$1,000 from the same Zero-Impact Fund for much needed improvements to the Flyntown Compost Service (FCS). Grant money will be used to build a trommel (compost sifter) and to start a small garden next to the Marmion Ecohouse. Compost from the FCS will be used to amend the soil which has been compacted by a shed which once sat on the land. In this way, the garden will serve as a final resting place for organic waste in Flyntown, a soil restoration project, and an opportunity for students to garden during the summer at SJU.

Both CSB and SJU are extremely excited to begin putting these projects into place. We cannot wait to have everyone back on campus to share our new sustainability initiatives with all of you!

How are you celebrating?

How will you celebrate the Week of Sustainability? Share your photos with us by tagging @csb_sustainability_office on Instagram and #csBsustainable. You can also email us at csbsustainability@csbsju.edu with stories, pictures or videos of what you all are up to this week.



#csBsustainable





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Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day : A brief history

The first Earth Day, held fifty years ago on April 22nd, 1970, was billed as a national “teach-in on the crisis of the environment.” The idea was simple: bring communities together to talk about environmental issues at the local level and to generate support for action. By the 1970s environmental decline was evident across the United States in the form of smog-choked cities, polluted rivers and lakes, declining wildlife (the American Bald Eagle was on the brink of extinction), and growing concerns over public health and unchecked human population growth. The public champion of the event, Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson, was backed by talented organizer, a law student named Denis Hayes, who together leveraged media attention and an extensive network of local volunteers into a mass movement.

CSB|SJU and the monastic communities were there from the start. The official program from the “Saint John’s-Saint Ben’s Environmental Teach-In” noted two primary purposes for the day: to educate the community about “man’s apparent drive for extinction,” and “to lead toward immediate and significant action at SJU-CSB.” (Note: apparently the ordering of our institutional initials hadn’t quite firmed up yet.) Events began with a series of faculty-led discussion groups in the residence halls on the 21st, and a full day of programming followed on the 22nd, beginning with a keynote from the President of the Isaak Walton League—a prominent national conservation organization—and included afternoon panels on “Government, Industry, and the Pollution Crisis” and “How Can Ecology Action be Implemented Here?” Opportunities through the day included trash pick-ups on both campuses, a celebratory mass at CSB, a play called “The Golden World,” and an evening lecture on “The Population Problem.” The official program for the day ended with the exhortation—in all caps—to “MAKE LOVE, NOT BABIES.”

Earth Day received so much media attention nationally that virtually everyone was exposed to the ideas it promoted, whether or not they attended the events. It helped make the term “environmentalism” part of our lexicon and energized a mass movement that helped convince Congress to pass critical legislation in the years that followed, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Endangered Species Act. But most importantly it awakened Americans to the environmental problems in their own communities and turned many of them into activists—people who demanded solutions to local problems to improve quality of life for their families. Polling data shows that “the environment” became a central political concern for the major of Americans in the wake of the first Earth Day, and the decade of environmental gains that followed were due not in small part to the efforts of the regular people who showed up, learned about the environmental crisis, and volunteered to work for change.

Fifty years later Earth Day is still celebrated, but we’ve lost the focus on citizen action. The 20th anniversary, in 1990, was marked by volunteer events and talk of a reborn environmental movement but that has failed to materialize. The original focus on local, small scale problems worked in 1970 and was critical to getting solutions like the Clean Water Act put into effort. But in the era of climate change we really do need to focus on large scale, systemic challenges like fossil fuel dependence and the gross inequalities that a changing climate will only exacerbate. Literally Earth Day on a planetary scale. Though Sen. Nelson died in 2005 his legacy lives on in the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at UW-Madison, which continues his work. At CSB|SJU we can look back at 1970 and realize the work begun on campus that day is not yet complete—we all have more to learn and there is always more we can do. But the legacy of the faculty, students, and monastic leaders back then is still with us today in the form of our campus sustainability offices, embedded in our academic programs, and evident on the landscapes of both campuses. Care for the environment has, since the original Earth Day, become part of the identity of CSB|SJU. One would assume everyone who participated fifty years ago would be proud to know their efforts worked.

- Derek Larson, CSB/SJU Professor since 1998

For the full story, go to <https://www.csbsju.edu/environmentalstudies> and to learn more about Week of Sustainability events you can find the schedule at <https://www.csbsju.edu/csb-sustainability>.