

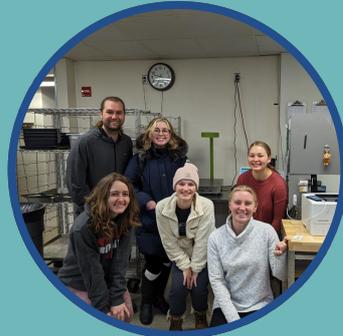
BADGERS LIVE SUSTAINABLY

2023 SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



University Housing
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

HOUSING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE LAST DECADE



2013

First **Housing Sustainability Coordinator** position is created

Housing Sustainability Committee is formally established

Installation of **water bottle filling stations** begins in residence halls

2014

The first **Sustain-a-Bash** event is hosted to educate residents about sustainability

Leopold Hall opens, Housing's first LEED Certified building

Housing wins a **green cleaning award** for its use of sustainable aqueous ozone cleaning product

2015

The first **Spring Sweep** is hosted, a free exchange of materials between Housing departments

Housing receives an Administrative Achievement Award for its innovative **Sustainable Move Out** program

2016

Permanent Goodwill **donation bins** placed in Ogg and Dejope for residents to donate unwanted items

Food Recovery Network starts gleaning surplus food from Dining locations

2017

The **Housing SWAP Shop** is established to optimize material reuse and recycling

2018

Reusable containers replace disposables as the only to-go option in dining markets

2019

Toilets are upgraded throughout Housing to low-flow fixtures to conserve water

Dining launches the **Frozen Meals Program** to package, freeze, and redistribute surplus food as a free resource to students

2020

Tower Gardens are installed in Dining Markets in partnership with the Green Fund and the People's Farm

Solar panels are installed on the Gordon Dining & Event Center roof

2021

Dining purchases the 100% sustainable **Electric Eats food truck** to bring more mobile options to residents

2022

The **solar array expands** on top of Gordon Dining & Event Center by 44 panels

Dining implements **Leanpath** food waste tracking software at Rheta's Market

The **Resident Sustainability Ambassador program** is established to inform residents about sustainability practices

University Housing transitions to **single-stream recycling**

Waters Hall improves energy efficiency by installing variable frequency drives, occupancy sensors, and light timers

2023

The Dining & Culinary Services **Campus Farm** is established

Dining expands Leanpath food waste tracking to Four Lakes Market

HOUSING SUSTAINABILITY

Dear Housing staff and partners,

This past year, University Housing celebrated 10 years since the official establishment of the Housing Sustainability Committee in 2013. The committee is a diverse group of staff and students from across campus that meets regularly to discuss and act on improving sustainability within University Housing operations. A decade later, this committee is more committed than ever to uplifting our divisional core value of *Stewardship*. We recognize and celebrate the many sustainability accomplishments that came before 2013 and invite our colleagues and partners to reflect on a few of the exciting projects from the past decade.

This report highlights the work of the committee's four primary focus areas:

- Landfill Waste Reduction (page 7)
- Resource Conservation (page 8)
- Educating Housing Residents and Staff on Sustainability (page 9)
- Sustainable Dining (page 10)

We hope the following pages create a deeper awareness of our divisional work in the area of sustainability and spark momentum toward a more sustainable future for University Housing.

Sincerely,

2023 Housing Sustainability Committee Members

- **Kathy Casper**, Housing Maintenance
- **Olivia Dikeman**, student representative
- **Malorie Garbe**, Housing Sustainability
- **Dan Kerkman**, Food Service Maintenance
- **Jodi Krause**, Housing Building Services
- **Gregg Schmitt**, Housing Maintenance
- **Carley Suemnicht**, Housing Marketing
- **Andrew Werner**, University Apartments
- **Ian Aley**, Office of Sustainability
- **Ross Berge**, Campus Services
- **Travis Blomberg**, Office of Sustainability
- **Tim Blankenship**, Waste & Recycling
- **Tim Lindstrom**, Office of Sustainability
- **Brad Schenkel**, Campus Services
- **Anna Silverman**, student representative
- **Jeff Templin**, Waste & Recycling

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

2023 was a record-breaking year for Housing sustainability efforts. From waste diversion to student engagement, we've made great efforts to decrease the impact of our operations on the environment.



40%

REDUCTION IN FOOD WASTE

at Rheta's Market in Spring 2023 using new Leanpath Food Waste Tracking Software



82,787

DISPOSABLE CONTAINERS

saved from landfill by the reusable Ticket to Takeout container program



613

VOLUNTEER HOURS

helping with Housing's Sustainable Move In & Move Out programs



5,260

POUNDS OF VEGETABLES

grown at the new Dining & Culinary Services Campus Farm



5,400

MEALS RECOVERED

and distributed for free to students through the Frozen Meals Program



71%

OF ALL WASTE RECYCLED OR COMPOSTED

at the annual Convocation Cookout event serving 8,000+ first-year students

100,000+

POUNDS OF FOOD SCRAPS

composted at Gordon & Four Lakes Markets

650K+

POUNDS DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL

through Housing donation and recycling projects in 2023. This number does not include routine recycling and compost collection that are standard practice in Housing buildings.

STANDARD SUSTAINABLE OPERATING PROCEDURES

IN OUR RESIDENCE HALLS

Daily materials like paper towels, toilet paper, and plastic bags purchased by Building Services are all made with recycled materials. Housing prioritizes the use of aqueous ozone and other green cleaning products that are sustainable and meet EPA standards. Fixtures and operations that conserve water are prioritized whenever possible, including dual flush and low-flow sinks and toilets, water-efficient Energy Star washers in residence halls, energy-efficient Energy Star refrigerators in resident rooms, and LED lighting throughout our buildings.

Residents and staff can bring specialty recycling options to drop-off locations throughout Housing:

- Plastic bag collection containers at every hall desk
- Goodwill donation bins at Ogg and Dejope
- E-waste towers at Sellery and Holt

IN OUR DINING MARKETS

Dining reduces waste through reusable dishware for dine-in customers at all markets. The Ticket to Takeout reusable to-go container program is the only option to take food to go from Dining Markets, which saves around 100,000 disposable containers from the landfill every year. Trayless markets help reduce food waste in our markets by up to 50%, and other disposable items, such as plastic straws, have been eliminated.

Vegetarian and vegan menu options are available at each meal to provide diners with healthy, low-carbon choices. Dining further celebrates food sustainability within markets at the annual Earth Day theme meal, tower gardens at Four Lakes and Gordon Markets, and frequent messaging and outreach events around consumer food waste.





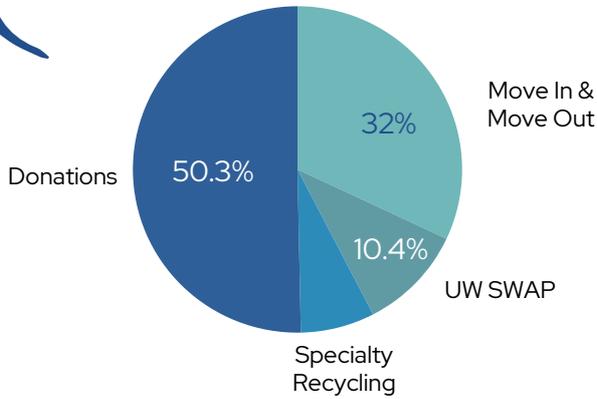
2023
SUSTAINABILITY
HIGHLIGHTS

WASTE DIVERSION

652,082 POUNDS*

DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL IN 2023

**highest quantity repurposed and recycled in Housing history*



SUSTAINABLE MOVE IN

Housing Sustainability supports new residents by setting up additional recycling outlets during Move In. Volunteers are stationed at sites to ensure proper sorting of recyclables and set the stage for responsible recycling habits for the year ahead. This effort prevents over 50,000 pounds of material from entering the landfill annually.



SINGLE STREAM RECYCLING

Housing completed the transition to single stream recycling that began in the fall of 2022. All recyclables (cans, glass, paper, hard plastics #1-7, cardboard) can be combined into the same blue recycling bin. Learn more about Housing recycling guidelines at the [link here!](#)

SURPLUS DONATIONS

We continue to prioritize landfill reduction in residence hall updates and renovations. All material from Sellery, Davis, Zoe Bayliss, and other building updates in 2023 was repurposed on campus via UW SWAP or donated to our network of 200+ community non-profit partners.

SUSTAINABLE MOVE OUT

This weeklong effort diverts over 150,000 pounds of material from the landfill annually with the help of 200+ volunteers. An addition of 7 specialty recycling streams and 7 donation streams during Move Out allow us to offer residents a home for every unwanted item.

SPOTLIGHT: HOUSING SWAP SHOP

University Housing works hard to responsibly manage surplus, broken, or hazardous Housing-owned property. The Housing SWAP Shop located at the storage garage near Tripp Circle is a multi-purpose material recovery space that centralizes surplus and disposal for the Division, maintains compliance with state disposal laws, and streamlines



communications with partners at FP&M, UW SWAP, and community non-profits. The shop processes everything that University Housing uses: cleaning and paint supplies, batteries, lightbulbs, metal, Styrofoam, equipment, appliances, small furniture, and more. In 2023, the Housing SWAP shop processed well over **31,133 pounds** of material for recycling and another **27,819 pounds** of surplus material.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION



GORDON SOLAR PANELS

The Gordon Dining & Event Center solar array was initially installed in 2019 through a partnership with the **Office of Sustainability Green Fund**, which supports student ideas that improve campus sustainability, and **Helios**, a student organization that aims to promote renewable energy on campus. The array was expanded by 44 panels last year, now producing around 53,000 kWh of electricity a year for the building.



DID YOU KNOW?

Around 80% of all lighting in Housing has been updated with energy-efficient LED fixtures and lightbulbs over the last few years. This helps us save energy and utility costs associated with less efficient lighting.



GREEN FUND PROJECTS

The Office of Sustainability Green Fund remains an integral partner in improving sustainability in University Housing. In addition to funding countless Housing projects over the years, the Green Fund facilitates a connection with student leaders and helps to make University Housing a living & learning laboratory for residents.

WATERS ENERGY EFFICIENCY

At Waters Residence Hall, Helios students worked with Housing staff to add occupancy sensors and timers to hallways and bathroom lighting fixtures. These changes will save about 32 megawatt hours and \$4,700 per year.

FOUR LAKES LIGHTING UPGRADE

Students from Helios and Enactus proposed upgrading the lighting in the kitchens, hallways, and other back-of-house spaces at Four Lakes Dining Market. The new LED bulbs installed will save 112 megawatt hours of electricity per year.

SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION



RESIDENT SUSTAINABILITY AMBASSADORS

Since 2021, the RSA program has trained an annual cohort of students living in Housing to become peer liaisons for sustainability education and outreach. 2023 marked the program's first year in partnership with the Leadership Certificate, and now a dozen students represent different residence halls and advocate for change across campus. So far, RSAs have been involved in food waste auditing, recycling outreach, peer leadership, and event planning.

10TH ANNUAL SUSTAIN-A-BASH

This year, Sustain-a-Bash celebrated its tenth year with a full week of sustainability-centered activities. Through partnerships with student organizations, the Office of Sustainability, and campus institutions like the Wisconsin Energy Institute, every day boasted at least one educational event. On Friday, the Sustain-a-Bash Showcase on the Gordon lawn was attended by around 300 students and featured tables from over 30 campus and community organizations.

SPRING SWEEP

Housing staff were encouraged to practice sustainability through a 2023 revival of the Spring Sweep, a 3-day event encouraging a free exchange of material between Housing departments. Look for this event to take place every year in the first week of April!



SUSTAINABLE DINING

A VISION FOR FOOD SUSTAINABILITY

In Dining & Culinary Services, we recognize the significant role that food service operations of scale play in the global supply chain and the collective impact of food on oceans, forests, biodiversity, landfills, climate, economies, health, and student learning. Dining has a long history of leadership in the area of sustainability, and we have set ambitious goals to enhance efforts moving forward and ensure a healthy, responsible, and sustainable food system at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT GOALS

1. Increase purchases from the **state of Wisconsin** by 10%.
2. Increase purchases with **sustainable attributes** by 2% every year.
3. **Reduce climate impact** through menu offerings by 10%.
4. **Reduce back-of-house food waste** at all Dining Markets by 50%.
5. **Eliminate single-use plastics** in front-of-house standard service operations in all Dining Markets.
6. **Increase student engagement** in Dining Sustainability projects.

To reach those goals, Dining is building on existing initiatives, fostering new partnerships, and exploring new areas of opportunity. In 2023, Dining made big strides toward these goals in the areas of increasing campus-grown vegetables, reducing food waste, and student engagement.



FOOD WASTE TRACKING Leanpath

Leanpath is an innovative food waste tracking system that helps us track and reduce food production waste. The project was first introduced at Rheta’s Market in 2022 thanks to the Green Fund, where it saw a successful 40% reduction in waste in just one year. The technology was recently expanded to Four Lakes Market in winter 2023.



FOOD WASTE OUTREACH

Front-of-house food waste audits have been conducted annually since dining markets transitioned to all-you-care-to-eat service, and this year saw a greater influence of food waste action in campaign work. Resident Sustainability Ambassadors conducted surveys and food waste audits in all 6 Dining Markets, and food waste messaging posters were developed in partnership with the UW-Madison Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment. As a result, we saw a 21% decrease in the weight of waste per plate from October to late November.



2,400 plates analyzed



48% of diners had plate waste

21% ↓

in plate waste as a result of outreach efforts



FOOD RECOVERY

The Frozen Meals program is a student-run initiative through Dining & Culinary Services to divert surplus Dining food into pre-packaged microwaveable meals at no cost to any UW-Madison student. The program hosts weekly packaging sessions to freeze and distribute the frozen meals to four locations in our campus community. In 2023, about 5,400 meals were distributed through this program.



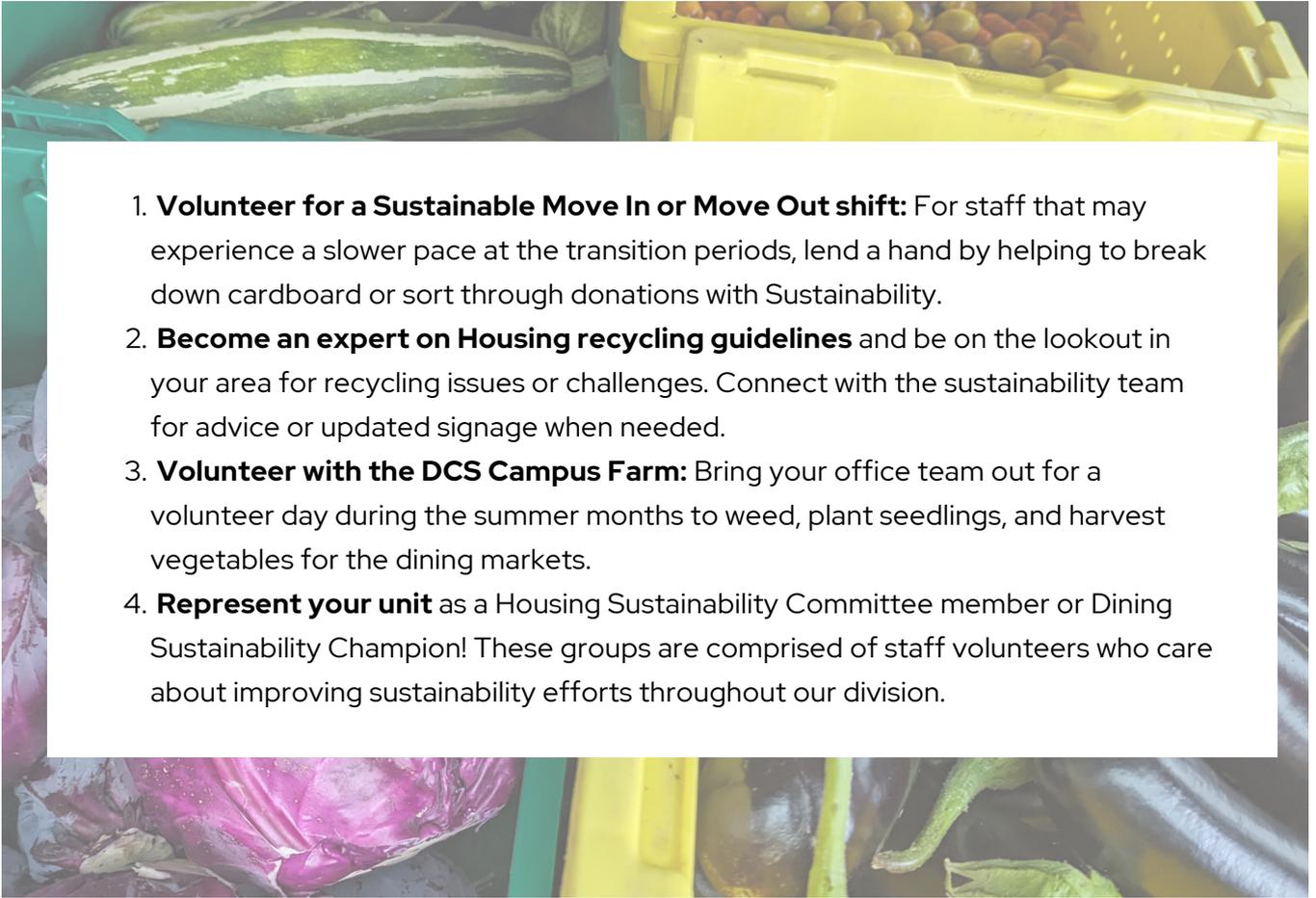
DINING FARM

The Dining Campus Farm was established in May 2023 as an initiative of Dining & Culinary Services to increase local, sustainable produce in the dining halls. The 1-acre farm adjacent to the Eagle Heights Community Gardens is supported by the DCS Farm Manager, Malachi Persche. The GreenHouse Learning Community helps start seeds indoors in the Leopold greenhouse, and Dining staff and student volunteers help plant, weed, and harvest out in the field.

The DCS campus farm stands out among other college and university garden projects because of its design by and for our residential dining operation. Specific crop varieties and timelines are developed in collaboration with chefs to best utilize seasonal Wisconsin produce creatively in menus throughout the academic year. Chefs visit the farm, experiment with the produce, and consult on the most flavorful or versatile varieties to offer students the freshest produce in their campus dining experience. Over 3,000 pounds of campus-grown vegetables were used in menus at all 6 of our all-you-care-to-eat Dining Markets, in Catering events, and on the Electric Eats Food Truck.



GET INVOLVED



1. **Volunteer for a Sustainable Move In or Move Out shift:** For staff that may experience a slower pace at the transition periods, lend a hand by helping to break down cardboard or sort through donations with Sustainability.
2. **Become an expert on Housing recycling guidelines** and be on the lookout in your area for recycling issues or challenges. Connect with the sustainability team for advice or updated signage when needed.
3. **Volunteer with the DCS Campus Farm:** Bring your office team out for a volunteer day during the summer months to weed, plant seedlings, and harvest vegetables for the dining markets.
4. **Represent your unit** as a Housing Sustainability Committee member or Dining Sustainability Champion! These groups are comprised of staff volunteers who care about improving sustainability efforts throughout our division.

To learn more or get involved, contact sustainability@housing.wisc.edu.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

Campus

- Office of Sustainability
- Waste & Recycling
- Campus Services
- Business Services - UW SWAP
- Lakeshore Nature Preserve
- Office of Sustainability Green Fund
- Food Sustainability Working Group
- Helios
- The People's Farm
- Food Recovery Network - Madison Chapter

Community

- Sustain Dane
- MGE Foundation
- Goodwill Industries of South Central Wisconsin
- St. Vincent de Paul
- Sergenian's Floor Coverings
- Reynold's Urethane Recycling
- Goodman Community Center
- The River Food Pantry

Photos by
University Housing Marketing and Sustainability staff