

STUDENTS LIVING **CARDINAL, GOLD AND GREEN**

During the 2025-2026 academic year, five undergraduate interns and a graduate student coordinator collaborated with the Director of Sustainability to invigorate Iowa State University's campus and lead the Live Green! Initiative. In their roles, each student dedicated time to educating, engaging and empowering the campus community while deepening their own understanding of the three pillars of sustainability.

Through campus-wide events, social media campaigns, a monthly newsletter and various sustainability initiatives, their efforts sparked curiosity and participation in sustainable practices. In addition, the Live Green Team experienced personal growth and an increased dedication to applying sustainability to their own lives and futures.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Campus and Community Engagement

The Campus and Community Engagement (CCE) Team plans and executes campus events to promote sustainability and share resources with students, faculty and staff. Two interns worked

together to make up the CCE Team: Trinity Khalek, a senior in event management, and Ruadhri Deans, a senior in environmental engineering and pursuing a concurrent Master of Science in civil engineering with an environmental focus.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

"We provide an opportunity for students and individuals in the ISU community to learn and become involved in sustainability," Khalek commented. During the 2025-2026 academic year, the team planned, strategized and completed three campus events.

At each event, a collection of student clubs and campus and community organizations are invited to table and share information about their sustainability initiatives. Another feature of each event is a hands-on sustainability opportunity through GIY (Green-It-Yourself) activities and crafts.

On October 20, the team hosted the Campus Sustainability Month Celebration, where 25 different groups and over 300 attendees joined the celebration.

Sustainapalooza was held on March 3, where 37 organizations connected with nearly 700 attendees. On April 22, the Earth Day Celebration hosted 17 tabling organizations, and over 450 attendees participated.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Reflecting back on their internships, connection is significant for both Khalek and Deans. "The most meaningful part of my position has been connecting with students through sustainability events," Khalek emphasized. For Deans, the most meaningful piece of his position was seeing a real impact.

Together with the Sustainapalooza planning committee, Khalek and Deans designed creative GIY activities to make the event especially meaningful for the Ames community and attendees.

This year's GIY activities taught attendees how to make overnight oats, natural hand sanitizer, upcycled earrings and keychains, fleece tie-blankets, port pillows and pinecone bird feeders. "I have been able to see the actual outputs of our efforts in our

community and seeing where the final product goes," Deans noted, "I have been able to see how the pinecone bird feeders are used at Reiman Gardens or see the cats/dogs that use the tie blankets at the animal shelter."



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Seeing the positive impact through their role on the CCE Team invigorated a passion for sustainability beyond their internship responsibilities. Khalek enjoyed "seeing students partake in our events and seeing what they are most interested in and engaged with." Following her graduation this May, she hopes to continue to participate in volunteer activities in the Des Moines and Ames area and make a positive impact.

"Seeing how sustainability can be applied to every sector shows how intertwined it is within our daily lives," Deans emphasized. Outside of his position with Live Green, he currently works in a campus lab to study PFAS ("forever chemicals") and groundwater. "Sustainability is tied into my career field more than ever, with drinking water

and PFAS research being a link to sustainable health," Deans noted. His time with Live Green has added an extra level of invigoration to his vision for the future, as he pursues his graduate degree following this academic year and internship.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

The CCE Team provides ample opportunities for students to engage with sustainability. Khalek added that her drive for sustainability began after volunteering at the Earth Day event in 2024. "Students can also jump into sustainability by joining a student or community group," she noted.

The tabling organizations at Live Green events are a great place to start looking for a group to get involved with. "You could be a volunteer, on a planning committee or simply an attendee," Deans added, "but that first experience allows you to really see what interests you and find your sustainable connection."

To learn more about the CCE Team's work, read their event

blogs on the Live Green WordPress ([@isulivegreen](https://www.isulivegreen.com)).

Social Media Engagement

The Social Media Engagement (SME) Intern is responsible for several different components related to social media connections. This year's intern, Morgan Becker, is a junior in animal ecology on the pre-vet track. She is also pursuing minors in animal science and African American studies.

Each month, Becker designs a campaign which she implements through Live Green's WordPress, Instagram and Facebook accounts. Her campaigns during the 2025-2026 academic year have included "Fall Into Sustainability," "Love Your Land," "Sprout Something" and several other engaging sustainability topics.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Becker stated that her content "aims to provide readers/followers with information regarding how the chosen topic impacts the three pillars of sustainability." Each blog also includes a direct engagement piece, designed to empower

readers with the knowledge and resources to make small, sustainable adjustments to their daily routines.

Her time in the SME position has invigorated a dedication to social, economic and environmental sustainability. "Being a part of the Live Green Team has allowed me to conduct research on meaningful topics and encourages me to make changes in my own life and routine," Becker emphasized. Each monthly campaign involves substantial research and planning to ensure Becker is offering a comprehensive view of the topic.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

For example, in the February campaign, "Love Your Land," Becker conducted research on the seven different eco-regions in Iowa and the flora and fauna that inhabit them. She then shared information on how readers can protect and help revitalize the land they love and live on.

By choosing topics that resonate with the campus community and her followers, Becker is able to turn her own invigoration into

a learning opportunity for every reader or follower.

Her involvement in the Pre-Vet Club at Iowa State helped shape the journey to her current position. After a club member shared a volunteer opportunity at the 2024 Campus Sustainability Month celebration, Becker formed a personal connection with Live Green. She joined the three event planning committees and continued to volunteer for the next several events.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

When she joined the Live Green Team as an intern for the 2025-2026 school year, she was able to share her passion with the campus community through her social media campaigns. "I absolutely love being able to share my knowledge and use kindness to encourage others to live sustainably, while also learning from them," Becker thoughtfully noted.

For students who are feeling invigorated and want to begin their sustainability journeys, Becker offers a helpful piece of advice. "Do not be afraid to

question things/processes that you believe can be made more sustainable," Becker suggested, "just make sure to be respectful and hear perspectives from others." She also encouraged students and the campus community to stay informed, curious and open to learning about new ideas.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

"I have also met so many inspiring people who practice sustainability in several aspects of life," Becker noted, adding that these new connections have invigorated her to "follow suit and live by example to hopefully encourage others as well." Becker is excited to remain in the SME intern role for an additional year to further apply her expanded invigoration and passion.

Becker's monthly campaigns can be accessed on Live Green's [WordPress](https://www.isulivegreen.com), [Instagram \(@isulivegreen\)](https://www.instagram.com/isulivegreen) and [Facebook \(@isulivegreen\)](https://www.facebook.com/isulivegreen) platforms.

Marketing and Communications
The Marketing and Communications (MC) Team focuses on sharing sustainability

information with the campus community through the Live Green! Monthly Newsletter. Two students made up the 2025-2026 MCTeam: Ava Haynes and Calla Foster, both juniors in advertising. Additionally, Haynes is pursuing a minor in design studies and Foster is pursuing minors in psychology and environmental studies.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Each month, the team researches, writes, designs and edits a unique monthly newsletter publication. Each issue consists of two feature articles, opportunities to get involved and a hands-on connection (GIY) element — all focused on and connected to a specific theme relevant to the month and season.

The two feature articles include “Now You Know,” which takes a deeper dive into the consideration and application of the monthly theme; and “Students Living Cardinal, Gold and Green,” which highlights student commitment and connection to the monthly theme through projects, initiatives, events, clubs and accomplishments.

For example, in the November newsletter on community, several student organizations specifically dedicated to building supportive communities on campus were featured. In March, several members of the Iowa State University Student Government were highlighted under the theme of perseverance.

Past articles can be read on the Students Living Cardinal, Gold and Green webpage on the [Live Green website](#), as well as in past newsletter issues.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

The monthly newsletter also includes a list of Green Engagement Opportunities and a Green Events Calendar. “Compiling the green opportunities and events each month has really shown me the depth of sustainability activities on campus and in Ames,” Foster noted, “There are so many opportunities to engage with nature and the community throughout the year.”

The list compiles events from ISU, the City of Ames, Story County Conservation and several

other sources to provide a well-rounded introduction to monthly sustainability events, initiatives and activities.

Finding a way to connect students to sustainability is a key goal for the MCTeam. Both members of the team emphasized how their positions have helped them feel invigorated and more connected to the campus community.

“It helps to stay connected to and involved with your natural environment and your community,” Haynes encouraged. Foster added, “Featuring different students in SLCGG has introduced me to many student organizations and areas of campus that prioritize and encourage sustainability.”



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Outside of their internships, the MCTeam has found a new dedication for sustainability. “Live Green has been a support for me in reinvigorating my passion for sustainability,” Haynes emphasized. After growing up in a house that prioritized sustainability, Haynes struggled to find ways to continue that dedication in

college. Her time with Live Green has introduced her to several accessible resources for students. Foster echoed that sentiment, “Learning from the other interns and students we feature has introduced me to such a wide variety of tips and habits to add into my day.”

Following the end of their internship year, Haynes and Foster are committed to continuing to implement sustainability into their lives and career goals. “I plan to stay connected to the environment through art, outdoor activity, and community involvement to fuel my drive for sustainability,” Haynes noted.

Foster hopes to connect sustainability and her major in advertising in her future career. “I want to be able to promote products and services that make a positive impact on the earth and the communities they influence,” she emphasized.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

The MCTeam hopes that they were able to make sustainability feel more accessible to students by providing relevant information and resources over the course

of their internship. “I think the biggest thing I have learned is that sustainability is a collection of habits,” Foster noted, adding that “making one small change each day can create a positive impact.”

Haynes shared a similar message, “When you find something you can enjoy and gain fulfillment from, sustainability becomes a passion.” Both interns encourage invigorated students to jump in and start adding sustainability into routines and habits.

To sign up to receive future newsletters or read past issues of Live Green! Monthly, visit the [Stay Connected webpage](#) and [Live Green! Monthly Newsletter](#) webpage, respectively, on the Live Green website.

Sustainability Coordinator

The Sustainability Coordinator is a key part of the Live Green Team. Maddie Feller is a third-year student completing her Master of Architecture this May – and has held this role for the past two years. In this position, Feller directly assists the Director of Sustainability to support sustainability initiatives as well as mentor all members of the Live Green Team.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

She assists the SME and MC Teams with editing and designing the newsletters, blogs and social media posts and plays an essential part in advising the CCE team during the event planning and implementation process.

In addition to assisting team members, Feller also supports professional development and skill building. “I love seeing how each person on our team grows throughout the year,” Feller noted, “Each team member starts their job a little nervous and then shows immense growth with each new newsletter, campaign or event they complete.”

Feller’s work helps the interns stay motivated, confident and curious about sustainability opportunities to apply their interests and talents to their own position.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Feller received her undergraduate degree and a sustainability minor from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She applied to the Sustainability Coordinator position to learn more about sustainability at Iowa State and familiarize herself with resources

and opportunities in the ISU and Ames community.

Through her position, Feller had the opportunity to personally learn more about resources available on campus and throughout the community that support a sustainable future. "From Food at First, The SHOP and the Design Closet in the College of Design, there are so many resources on campus that exist to help students and give them the resources they need to succeed," she shared.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

Her time with the Live Green Team has invigorated and motivated Feller. "Working with a team of people who are all passionate about sustainability, despite our very different backgrounds, has been really invigorating and has motivated me to push my sustainability efforts to every part of my life," Feller emphasized.

This invigoration will follow her into her future career, as she starts a new position with an architecture firm in Atlanta, Georgia and continues learning about and utilizing sustainable building materials and processes.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

She encourages students to connect with organizations that align with their own personal passions to stay invigorated. She noted many opportunities for students on campus, adding that "you never know what organizations are out there until you start getting involved."

Over the past year, the collective efforts of the Live Green Team members turned invigoration into action through networking and connection, sharing of resources and opportunities and online engagement and awareness building. The team's creativity and agility helped spark discussion and participation, ignite personal exploration and enhance connectivity across campus.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green

For students and community members who are looking for ways to engage in sustainability, the Live Green Team provides a jumping off point. By attending Live Green events or reading through social media campaigns and newsletters, invigorated individuals can find a wide variety of resources and helpful information. For more information about the vision, goals and initiatives of this year's team, visit the [Leadership Team](#) webpage on the Live Green website.

