

# STUDENTS LIVING **CARDINAL, GOLD AND GREEN**

## Leaving a Live Green Legacy

Over the past year, the Live Green team not only supported sustainability but also helped shape a legacy. From day one to the final weeks of the academic year, the team's commitment to making a sustainable difference in the community and on campus fortified a foundation for future generations of Cyclones to build upon.

Through engaging events, educational outreach and a continued presence across campus and in community, the team embodied what it means to leave a sustainable legacy. This month's SLCGG celebrates the contributions of the 2024-2025 team.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

## Campus and Community Engagement

The Campus and Community Engagement (CCE) team was charged with bringing three major events to life—Campus Sustainability Month,

Sustainapalooza and the Earth Day celebration. This team was at the heart of connecting campus and community to sustainability. Their day-to-day work ranged from reaching out to sustainability-focused organizations for event participation to designing eye-catching promotional materials to boost awareness for their events.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

As interns for the CCE team, Julia Biehl (JB), a junior majoring in Agricultural Communication, and Sarah Luster (SL), a senior majoring in Environmental Science, centered their mission around 3 E's: Engage, Educate, and Empower the campus and community in sustainability. The main goal of the CCE team was to create relevant and impactful events that raised awareness, encouraged involvement and inspired sustainable change.

As devoted members of the Live Green team, their passion for connecting the community to sustainability extended beyond their shared responsibilities and duties.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

Each CCE member shared personal reflections from their time on the team and the meaningful legacy they had in advancing sustainability across Iowa State's campus.

*What initiatives did you personally participate in or complete that you believe contributed to your individual commitment to sustainability and made a lasting impact?*

**JB:** I played a key role in organizing and promoting Sustainapalooza, a major sustainability celebration on campus. I managed tasks like creating the social media event page, designing promotional materials, recruiting volunteers, and coordinating logistics with partners. I also helped strengthen our social media presence by creating engaging content that educated others on sustainability topics and upcoming events. These

experiences helped me directly impact our campus culture by making sustainability more visible, approachable and exciting for others.

**SL:** The biggest personal initiative I took part in this year was challenging myself to reduce food waste by meal prepping and composting. By meal prepping and having a plan for groceries, I was able to buy only the ingredients that I needed and not purchase excess things. This not only helped me reduce food waste but also supported my financial sustainability. I also began composting the waste that I produced, allowing it to be reused and repurposed. This initiative will definitely be something I will continue to do in the future.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

*What legacy do you feel you have helped nurture at Iowa State University, during your time with Live Green or what do you hope your legacy is?*

**JB:** I hope my legacy is collaboration, creativity and commitment—in helping make sustainability events educational, enjoyable and accessible. I hope students felt more connected to environmental efforts because of the experiences we created, and I hope we helped others see that sustainability is for everyone and that each small action contributes to a larger, lasting impact.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

**SL:** I hope my legacy at Iowa State is one of determination and passion for making a difference not only in our own personal lives but in the lives of friends, family, peers and colleagues to embrace sustainability. Also, knowing that we were each capable of making change. You do not have to be in a certain position or have a certain number of followers—it is just a matter of starting and growing your own commitment in your own life and local community.

### Social Media Engagement

The Live Green Social Media Engagement (SME) intern oversaw a variety of responsibilities including creating monthly social media campaigns, writing blog posts on WordPress, designing and scheduling content and monitoring social media analytics. This role focused on promoting sustainable initiatives across Iowa State's campus and in the community, while also highlighting the events and opportunities our team has experienced.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

As an SME intern, Grace Rowe (GR), a senior majoring in Public Relations, deepened her knowledge of sustainability as she managed and developed content for the team's social media platforms. Her goal was to maintain strong engagement with Live Green's audience while increasing both followers and content views. Throughout the year, Rowe became more confident in her design skills, learned how to design following brand guidelines

and developed a system for efficiently organizing and planning monthly content.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

Not only did she gain more confidence in her creative design skills, her dedication to promoting the team and their efforts went above and beyond. Rowe shared her personal reflections from her time on the team and the meaningful legacy she had in advancing sustainability across campus.

*What initiatives did you personally participate in or complete that you believe contributed to your individual commitment to sustainability and made a lasting impact?*

GR: Getting involved in campus events like the Campus Sustainability Month Celebration and Sustainapalooza gave me the chance to not only participate in sustainable activities but also help spread the word and get others involved. Over time, I learned so much about sustainability—whether it was through writing blogs, working with the team or hearing from

guest speakers—and I was able to take that knowledge and share it with the people around me in everyday conversations.

*What legacy do you feel you have helped nurture at Iowa State University, during your time with Live Green or what do you hope your legacy is?*

**GR:** I truly hope my work inspired our audience to become more involved in building a consistent, sustainability-focused community. Our audience showed genuine interest in learning about what was happening in the world and within our local community and were motivated to take meaningful action.



Image Courtesy of Live Green!

**Marketing and Communications**  
The Marketing and Communications (MC) team

led the creation of seven Live Green! Monthly newsletters by writing articles, designing covers and developing strategies to promote sustainable engagement on campus. Their work included curating an events calendar and green opportunities section, crafting a monthly sustainability challenge and researching and planning feature articles.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

The MC team's goal this year was to encourage readers of the monthly newsletters to live more sustainably. The team really wanted to emphasize this year that living more sustainably did not have to take a lot of extra time and money. It was important to the team to find ways to emphasize that living a sustainable life is in the little efforts we made each day and finding ways to encourage readers to discover what resonates with them.

As interns for the MC team, Ella Ehlers (EE), a senior majoring in Journalism and Mass Communication, and Madelynn

Dake (MD), a junior in Graphic Design, effectively combined all elements to create a cohesive and well-structured newsletter. Each MC member shared personal reflections from their time on the team and the meaningful legacy they had in advancing sustainability across campus.



Image Courtesy of Live Green!

*What initiatives did you personally participate in or complete that you believe contributed to your individual commitment to sustainability and made a lasting impact?*

**EE:** Creating the monthly newsletters contributed to my individual commitment to sustainability. Whether I was writing an article, researching community events, or creating

monthly sustainability challenges, each contributed to the growth of my individual commitment to sustainability.

**MD:** Our team contributed monthly newsletters that helped provide the Iowa State and Ames communities with information, inspiration and opportunities for their sustainable journeys.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

*What legacy do you feel you have helped nurture at Iowa State University, during your time with Live Green or what do you hope your legacy is?*

**EE:** During my time with Live Green, I worked to make sustainability feel approachable and meaningful—especially for students who might not have thought about their role before. Through the seven monthly newsletters, I tried to show how sustainability connected to everyday life, and I hope I helped nurture that legacy at Iowa State University.

I hope my legacy is one of connection—connecting people to sustainability in ways that feel empowering. Whether someone started composting, joined a campus event or just looked at their everyday habits a little differently because of something I shared in the monthly newsletters.

**MD:** During my time at Iowa State, I hope I nurtured a legacy as a person of wisdom, integrity and kindness. I also hope people see me as a talented, hardworking designer who strove to produce the best work she could.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

#### **Sustainability Benchmarking and Reporting**

The Sustainability Benchmarking and Reporting (SBR) intern focused on data collection, analysis and reporting toward showcasing Iowa State University's collective sustainability commitment, accomplishments and impact through various

reporting platforms including AASHE STARS. Responsibilities included identifying sustainability highlights to feature on the Live Green website, and through various outreach publications and opportunities, as well as the most effective tools to use in featuring them.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

As an SBR graduate assistant, Elizabeth Smith (ES), a graduate student majoring in Community and Regional Planning and Sustainable Agriculture, also had the additional opportunity of taking on an independent study project as part of her SBR role, focused on examining the factors that influenced choices in higher education related to choosing sustainability performance tracking and benchmarking platforms.

With her years of experience in tracking and reporting sustainability achievements, it was an exciting opportunity

to cast her experiential net a bit wider toward developing a framework to assist colleges and universities, in identifying the best fit for their needs.



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

Smith shared her personal reflections from her time on the team and the meaningful legacy she had in advancing sustainability across campus.

*What initiatives did you personally participate in or complete that you believe contributed to your individual commitment to sustainability and made a lasting impact?*

**ES:** I took part in the Clothing Swap during Sustainapalooza and was busy THE WHOLE TIME. People were so excited to swap their old clothing for "new" items, and having as many helping hands there as we did made sure it ran as smoothly as possible. I have been a part of Sustainapalooza almost every year since I was a first-year undergraduate student, and it seems like every year the clothing swap has attracted more and more people excited to swap!



Photo Courtesy of Live Green!

*What legacy do you feel you have helped nurture at Iowa State University, during your time with Live Green or what do you hope your legacy is?*

**ES:** During my first internship with Live Green, when I was an undergraduate, I was also working on sustainability tracking and benchmarking. Iowa State received its FOURTH consecutive STARS Gold rating, which was very exciting! Through STARS, I nurtured a legacy of sustainability excellence by assisting in the preparation of the STARS certification report that highlighted Iowa State's commitment to sustainability and progress toward achieving their goals.

In addition, I assisted in building a sustainability research directory, to highlight the countless research opportunities around campus that were connected to sustainability. I was also a part

of completing annual updates to the Sustainability Course Directory—providing students with a resource they could use to integrate sustainability into their academic portfolios, regardless of their major. The directory included courses from **EVERY** college on campus — there is truly something for everyone to enjoy!

As passionate sustainability leaders at Iowa State and beyond, the Live Green team showed incredible dedication and effort in advancing sustainability initiatives and leaving a legacy of commitment to environmental, economic and social sustainability.

From the creative and impactful campaigns of Social Media Engagement to the monthly newsletters of Marketing and Communications, and the inspirational celebrations of Campus and Community Engagement to the collective reporting of sustainability achievements of Sustainability Benchmarking and Reporting, each team played a vital role.

Together, the 2024-2025 Live Green team worked with a focused purpose: building upon the foundation of ensuring a sustainability legacy for future generations.

Discover more about the Live Green team's impactful and legacy-driven year in our [May WordPress blog](#).



Photos Courtesy of Live Green