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Media Contact: Noelle Collins  
Communications Coordinator  
[noelle.collins@solanacenter.org](mailto:noelle.collins@solanacenter.org)  
(760) 436-7986 ext. 705

## **SOLANA CENTER AWARDED 2018 EMIES FOR FOOD WASTE DIVERSION PROGRAMS IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY BY THE SAN DIEGO FOOD SYSTEM ALLIANCE**

ENCINITAS—Solana Center for Environmental Innovation (Solana Center) has been recognized for the 2018 Distinguished Program, EMIES UnWasted Food Award by the San Diego Food System Alliance (Alliance) for its commitment to food waste diversion programs in San Diego County. Solana Center's Executive Director Jessica Toth received the award Tuesday at the Alliance's annual Food Waste Solution Summit.

The EMIES UnWasted Food awards celebrate businesses, organizations, and institutions with exemplary practices around prevention and source reduction, food recovery and donation, feeding people, feeding animals, and composting and recycling. The program is based on the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 1996, championed by U.S. Representative Bill Emerson, that minimized liability for food donations to nonprofits. According to a 2013 study by the Alliance, food waste diversion includes donating food to organizations that serve people in need as well as recycling in the form of composting or converting unsaleable food to animal feed.

"Solana Center has encouraged reduction of food waste and residential composting for more than 20 years," said Executive Director Jessica Toth, "and with the 500,000 tons of food waste generated each year in San Diego County, our community composting program assesses and leads post-consumer food waste recycling with businesses, farmers, restaurants, and homeowner's associations."

Most notably, the Center has worked with Dr. Bronner's in Escondido and Kashi in Solana Beach to conduct food waste assessments, lead workshops, and create on-site composting opportunities that reduce the waste sent to landfills. Solana Center is also retained by local jurisdictions throughout the region to educate and guide constituents.

Through its innovative community outreach such as backyard composting, master composter, and vermicomposting training, green living tours, and electronic waste recycling, Solana Center hosts as many as 1,850 community volunteer hours, trains up to 90 master composter ambassadors, and reaches 30,000 people a year. Solana Center mobilizes the San Diego community through outreach and consulting services to businesses and local jurisdictions to address the region's most pressing environmental issues and enact impactful change.

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