



Student Involvement in School Lunchroom Program

Students can be a great help by assisting other students to learn about the importance of reducing waste.



What schools are doing

Clara Barton Open School - Minneapolis

Each day at Clara Barton Open School, a class assigns students to tend the three container station, using “nifty nabbers” to retrieve misplaced items and to keep the area clean.



Custodians empty the cans as needed and place the trash/ recycling/ organics in the proper dumpsters. They put the responsibility in the hands of the students, a strategy they believe will sustain the program and establish lifelong habits.

Garlough Environmental Magnet School - West St. Paul

At Garlough Environmental Magnet School the lunch program is primarily run and maintained by students, so they OWN it, and it is not a behavior that occurs solely at school. It has become second nature to everyone at Garlough and new students are quickly inducted into their environmental initiatives. The Student Rot Rangers oversee correct separation of lunchroom waste, and encourage kids to eat that last bite of carrot. The Livegreen Student Group creates posters and fliers for distribution in the school. Booths at their Environmental Fair highlight ways to responsibly handle food

waste and composting outside of school.

There are plans to have students use an iPad to track data to analyze and evaluate the choices students make school wide.



They could look for correlations between the daily menu and wasted food. Hopefully this will help inform the District Food Service when making purchasing decisions to avoid food waste. This awareness will also be part of the students' experience, guiding them towards informed food decisions throughout their lives.

L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion School - St. Paul

L'Etoile du Nord French Immersion School has a pig food recycling project. They partner with a farm, collect all usable food waste and prepare it for pickup every day after lunch. The students themselves take the lead on this since they monitor the food collection and recycling project. It has been a very successful and meaningful project for the school and community.

Stowe Elementary School - Duluth

Stowe Elementary School's Waste Reduction Program succeeds because of student and staff involvement and ownership. Students at Stowe are fortunate to be educated about the importance of environmentally sustainable practices at a young age. With an emphasis on the environment, students participate in annual service/learning projects that help preserve the environment.

Students also have access to a vermicomposting farm right at school and are exposed to a remarkable ecosystem. Sustainability and environmental responsibility are integrated into their curriculum as well as their lives. Hands-on experience to accompany the environmental education curriculum allows students to take ownership of their sustainable choices. A form of experiential learning happens every day in the school lunchroom. The Waste Reduction Table monitored by a staff member and several students is incredibly efficient and

effective at reducing waste by separating it into appropriate containers to be disposed of in the most sustainable way.

Resources

The Jeffers Junior Naturalist program has been designed to give a group of children basically in 3rd through 5th grade opportunities to participate in service learning activities in their schools and communities. As the children move into higher grades the appellation changes and



they become Eco-teams or some such. These students learn sound principles of stewardship and then become mentors in their schools and families. In many schools these are the leaders of the recycling and food waste reduction programs, these are they who will help develop and maintain outdoor "classroom" areas, these are they who inspire the community towards better stewardship.

Junior Naturalist Video *(Jeffers Foundation)*

<http://www.jeffersfoundation.org/junior-naturalist.php>