

# green team

## CAMPAIGNS to REDUCE LUNCHROOM WASTE

The school lunchroom is the source of a significant portion of school waste. Such waste includes food packaging, food scraps and food soiled paper, and recyclable materials such as plastic bottles, aluminum cans and milk cartons.

A student who brings a disposable lunch - one that is packed in non-recyclable, non-reusable containers and that results in leftover food and packaging being thrown away - generates an average of 67 pounds of waste per school year (*wastefreelunches.org*). For a middle school of 500 students, that's 33,500 pounds of waste per year. Double that figure for a high school of 1,000 students.

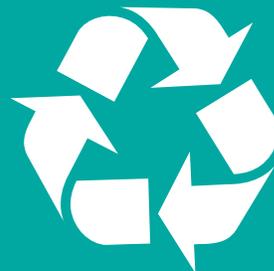
The Green Team Campaigns to Reduce Lunchroom Waste has three components:

- **Recycling beverage containers**
- **Recycling food scraps and food soiled paper**
- **Promoting waste-free lunches**

Depending on your school's particular needs and goals and the readiness and willingness of your student body, these three actions can be done all at once to create large-scale changes in a school's lunchroom waste over the course of a year, or they can be done separately for incremental changes. The campaigns are intended to be student-initiated and run at schools with already established recycling programs. If your school does not have a recycling program in place, consider applying for the King County Green Schools Program ([www.kingcounty.gov/greenschools](http://www.kingcounty.gov/greenschools)) to receive assistance on getting started.



**WE  
RECYCLE  
FOOD SCRAPS**



## Campaign 1 - Step-by-step guide to promoting can, bottle, and milk carton recycling in the lunchroom

Adding recycling bins to the lunchroom can significantly reduce the amount of waste going to the landfill. Because recycling is familiar to most people, the lunchroom is a great place to improve conservation practices. Highland Middle School in Bellevue decreased garbage in the cafeteria by 50 percent by adding milk cartons, plastic bottles and aluminum cans to the materials already being recycled in the lunchroom.

### SUCCESS STORY ON RECYCLING

To boost recycling, students at Illahee Middle School in Federal Way conducted skits, prepared posters and staffed an educational booth at lunchtime. They also presented recycling information at three local elementary schools to fifth graders who would be entering Illahee Middle School the following fall.



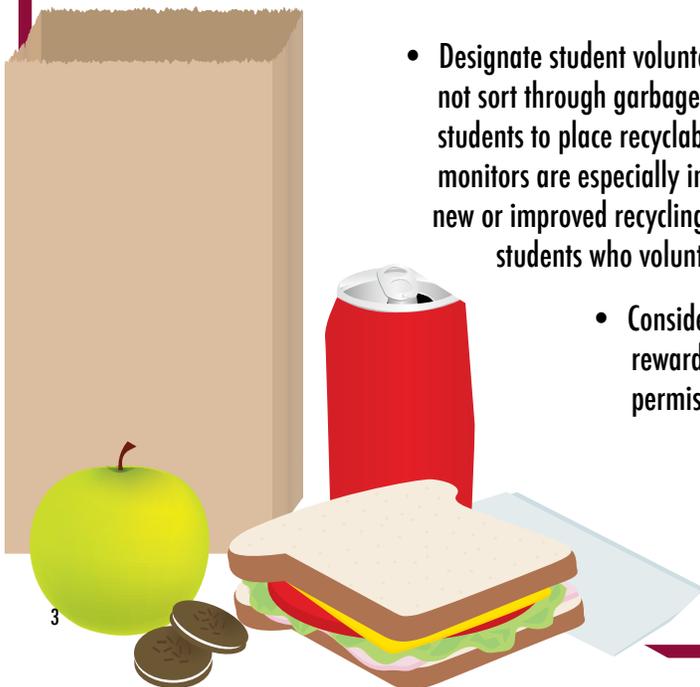
**Use the step-by-step instructions below to set goals, put your plan into action, and measure and share results.**

- 1 Make sure that your school has a good lunchroom recycling program in place before you start. If your school does not have an effective lunchroom recycling program and you need support to start or improve one, consider joining the King County Green Schools program. For more information, visit [www.kingcounty.gov/greenschools](http://www.kingcounty.gov/greenschools).
- 2 Talk with the custodian to learn about the school's current lunchtime recycling practices and get his or her support. The custodian can tell you who is responsible for collecting the recyclables. Ask the following questions:
  - Does the school's hauler collect cans, bottles and cartons? If the custodian does not know, look on the outside recycling dumpster to find out which company hauls the school's garbage. Call the number listed on the container to ask about recyclable materials. Signs on the dumpsters that say what can and cannot be recycled are not always accurate as accepted materials change over time, so be sure to call.
  - If the hauler accepts cans, bottles, and cartons, are there containers for collecting these materials in the lunch room? Are the recycling containers placed next to garbage cans? Having a recycling container next to each garbage can makes it convenient and easy to properly separate recyclables from garbage.
  - Are there lids for the recycling containers with holes cut in the top to indicate that cans, bottles and cartons are to be placed inside?
  - Do the recycling containers have signs listing what can and cannot be recycled? (King County Green Schools Program provides recycling containers, lids and stickers to place on the containers.)
  - Do students and staff know that liquids need to be emptied and caps placed in the garbage? Is there a convenient location to empty leftover liquids, such as a bucket placed next to the recycling containers?

- Are the recycling bins emptied regularly? (Overflowing bins will discourage participation in the campaign.)
3. Calculate your school's pre-campaign recycling volumes and recycling rate. See the Calculate Your School's Recycling Rate worksheet. Use the pre-campaign recycling rate as a basis for comparison at the end of the campaign.
  4. Determine the size and reach of the campaign.
    - Set a goal to measure success. Do you want to double the amount of lunchroom recycling? See an increase in the overall recycling rate?
    - Do you want to make this a quarterly or monthly event? Consider kicking it off on America Recycles Day (November 15) or Earth Day (April 22). You could also make it an ongoing campaign and chart improvements throughout the year.
  5. Think about how you will evaluate the success of the campaign. If you want to measure the increase in the amount of recycling, count the number of recycling bags before and after the campaign, noting how full they are. If your goal is to increase the recycling rate at school, recalculate the rate after the campaign and compare it to the pre-campaign rate. Establish a consistent time and day for checking recycling bins or dumpsters to minimize the effects of normal daily fluctuations in recycling volumes.
  6. Gather support from administrators and teachers for the project. Talk to the principal and teachers individually or at a staff meeting to see if they would be willing to distribute information about the campaign, or to allow students to visit classrooms to talk about it. Let teachers know that it would not require extra work for them, but may involve a student announcement in class or a poster by the door.
  7. Encourage participation and gather support for the campaign school-wide.
    - Create a slogan to remind students and staff about the campaign such as "Say 'no' to plastic bottle and aluminum can waste".

- Designate student volunteers to monitor lunchroom recycling stations. The monitors do not sort through garbage or recyclable materials, but instead remind and encourage students to place recyclable materials in the proper containers. Lunchroom recycling monitors are especially important during the first two to three weeks after starting the new or improved recycling practices. Teachers may be willing to offer extra credit to students who volunteer to serve as monitors.

- Consider some "waste-free" prizes such as lunchtime music or videos to reward proper recycling. (Talk with a teacher or administrator to get permission.)



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- Sell durable drink bottles and use the proceeds for new recycling bins or prizes for a recycling contest.
- Create a signup sheet with a pledge that commits students to recycling at lunchtime. The pledge could read "To conserve natural resources, limit the generation of greenhouse gases, protect habitat, and promote sustainability, I will recycle my bottles, cans, and cartons in the lunchroom." Post the pledges at the school entrance or outside the lunchroom.

## 8. Publicize the campaign.

- Consider the reasons why people don't recycle and see if you can address them. If people feel that recycling is easy to do, your campaign will be more successful. In your publicity, be sure everyone understands that bottle, can and carton recycling is easy and convenient.
- Use the fast facts on the back pages to include in morning announcements, or create a video PSA to share with the school.
- Work with the art teacher to have his or her students create posters or other art forms that educate the school about recycling. Display the posters throughout the school.
- Design posters that list what can and cannot be recycled and illustrate them with examples. Hang the posters above the lunchroom recycling stations.
- Hold a competition to see which lunch session or grade level can recycle the most lunchtime items. Use a large chart in the lunchroom to display the results.
- Share information about the campaign and why recycling is important in the school newsletter, on the school website, or in daily bulletins.
- Create a "thermometer" chart that identifies your goal and how close you are to reaching it.

## 9. Determine the results of the campaign. Recalculate your recycling rate and compare it with the pre-campaign rate.

Do a student survey to find out how people felt about the campaign and whether their behavior changed as a result.



10. Share your successes with the school, the district, and the larger community. Send the results of your campaign to the school board, your local paper, and to the King County Green Team program. Student groups that complete projects are recognized by the Solid Waste Division each year. Send project information to [greenteam@triangleassociates.com](mailto:greenteam@triangleassociates.com)

## Campaign 2 - Step-by-step guide to promoting recycling of food scraps and food-soiled paper in the lunchroom

In King County schools, food scraps make up an estimated 32 percent of school garbage. Add in food soiled paper and the number climbs to 50 percent or more. There are two ways schools can recycle food scraps and food-soiled paper:

- Contract with a hauler such as Cedar Grove Composting or the school's garbage/recycling hauler. If the school has yard waste collection, the hauler may allow food scraps and other compostable materials from the lunchroom to be placed in the outdoor yard waste container. The hauler will take the food scraps and other compostable materials to the Cedar Grove Composting facility to be turned into a soil amendment.
- Set up worm bins or an Earth Tub to compost food scraps at the school.

Campaign 2 is for schools planning to have food scraps and food-soiled paper collected by a hauler and taken to a facility for composting. Schools without access to an offsite composting service can consider using an onsite system such as a worm bin to reduce school food waste. See the box on page 8 for more information.

The benefit of using an off-site composting service such as Cedar Grove Composting is that schools merely have to collect the food scraps and food-soiled paper and remove it to an outdoor dumpster for pickup, just as they do for garbage and recyclables. At the composting facility, the materials are recycled into a high quality soil product that can be purchased at hardware and garden stores. Student groups can tour the Cedar Grove Composting facility in Everett.

### SUCCESS STORY ON FOOD COMPOSTING

Glacier Park Elementary in Tahoma increased its recycling rate from 10 to 68 percent by collecting lunchroom drink containers for recycling and sending food scraps to Cedar Grove for composting. Lunchroom garbage volume decreased from 80 to 16 bags per week – an 80 percent reduction. To accomplish this, the school's Green Team visited classrooms and gave presentations, held a contest, and created posters to promote participation in the program. To demonstrate the cycle of use and reuse, the school used soil products from Cedar Grove Composting in their native plant garden.

Here is how Forest Ridge Elementary in Bellevue set up containers and signs for sorting food scraps and food-soiled paper, recyclable materials and garbage in its lunchroom.



**Use the step-by-step instructions below to guide you in planning and promoting your food scrap and food-soiled paper recycling campaign and in measuring and sharing the results.**

1. Make sure that your school has a food scrap and food-soiled paper recycling program in place (or plans to start one). Talk with the custodian to learn about the school's current practices to get his or her support. Ask the following questions:
  - Does the school have yard waste collection service or access to it? If so, the hauler may allow food scraps to be mixed in with the yard waste.
  - If the school has a hauler that accepts food scraps and food-soiled paper, are there containers for collecting these materials in the cafeteria? Are these containers placed next to garbage cans?
  - Do students and staff know what materials belong in the food scrap container? Do the containers have signs listing what can and cannot be recycled?

If you do not have food scrap and food-soiled paper recycling but have the support of your school district and custodians, work with your hauler to assess the feasibility of collection, or contact Cedar Grove Composting at 1-877-994-4466 for more information. The King County Green Schools Program can help your school set up composting collection.

With collection of food scraps and food-soiled paper, many schools are able to decrease garbage collection service, either by reducing the size of the garbage dumpster or the frequency of garbage collection. The resulting cost savings are then applied to the fees for the food scrap collection service.

2. Determine the size and reach of your campaign. Do you want to focus exclusively on the lunchroom, or are there classrooms where food is prepared or eaten that could be included? Is the staff interested in recycling food scraps and food-soiled paper in the staff lounge? Start the program with a kick-off event that focuses attention on the benefits of recycling food scraps and teaches students and staff proper recycling techniques. Consider kicking the campaign off on America Recycles Day (November 15), Earth Day (April 22), or your school's Spirit Day. To maintain the program, designate students to be lunchroom monitors, remind students about the program throughout the year, and track your improvements to share with the school.
3. Set a goal to measure success and gather baseline data to support that goal.
  - If you want to measure the decrease in the amount of garbage being thrown away, weigh your garbage before and after the campaign. To get a sampling, weigh one garbage can before the campaign and then weigh the same one when the campaign is over. Or to get a full picture of how much is being thrown away in the lunchroom, weigh all the lunchtime garbage. Make sure to weigh the empty garbage can and subtract its weight from the full can to get an accurate garbage weight. As an alternative to weighing lunchroom garbage, you could count how many bags of garbage are generated at lunch before and after the campaign.
  - If you want to measure the increase in your school's overall recycling rate, calculate your school's pre-campaign recycling volumes and recycling rate. (See the Calculate Your School's Recycling Rate worksheet.) Use the pre-campaign recycling rate as a basis for comparison at the end of the campaign. Even if you don't increase volumes of the regular recyclables (paper, bottles, cans), the decrease in garbage volumes will reflect a higher percentage of recycling as a portion of the total waste.

4. Know what can and cannot be composted from your lunchroom. Contact your hauler for more information or if you are contracting with Cedar Grove for off-site composting, go to [www.gogreenscene.com/what\\_we\\_recycle.asp](http://www.gogreenscene.com/what_we_recycle.asp) to determine what belongs in your food scrap bins.
5. Gather support from administrators and teachers for the project. Talk to the principal and teachers individually or at a staff meeting to see if they would be willing to distribute information about the campaign or to allow students to visit classrooms to talk about it. Let teachers know that it would not require extra work for them, but may involve a student announcement in class or a poster by the door.
6. Encourage participation and gather support for the campaign school-wide.
  - Designate student volunteers to monitor the lunchroom for proper separation of food scraps and food-soiled paper from garbage. Teachers may be willing to offer extra credit to students who volunteer to monitor the lunchroom.
  - Consider some “waste-free” prizes such as lunchtime music or videos to reward lunch sessions that properly sort their food scraps and food-soiled paper. (Talk with a teacher or administrator to get permission.)
  - Sell durable lunch bags or durable food containers and use the proceeds for prizes for a food scrap and food-soiled paper recycling contest or to purchase bags of Cedar Grove compost for a school garden.
  - Create a signup sheet with a pledge that commits students to recycling lunch time food scraps and food-soiled paper. The pledge could read “To conserve natural resources, limit the amount of greenhouse gases in the air, protect habitat, and promote sustainability, I will recycle my food scraps and food-soiled paper in the lunchroom.” Post the pledges at the school entrance or outside the lunchroom.
7. Publicize the campaign.
  - Educate staff and students about food scrap and food-soiled paper recycling. Share information in the school newsletter, on the school website or in daily bulletins about the percentage of the school’s waste that could be composted and about how food scraps and other compostable materials can be used to make compost.
  - Decide on a slogan or message that you want everyone to remember and associate with the campaign.
  - Use the fast facts on the back pages to include in the morning announcements or to create a video PSA to share with the school.
  - Create posters that list what can and cannot be composted. Attach fake food or photos of food to the posters as examples and hang them above the food scrap and food-soiled paper collection containers in the lunchroom.
  - If the school has a garden, use compost to improve the soil and as an educational tool. Explain the benefits of compost to students through interpretive signage.
  - Hold a competition to see which lunch session or grade level can generate the least amount of garbage. Use a large chart in the lunchroom to display the results.



8. Determine the outcomes of the campaign based on how you decided to measure your successes. Did the number of lunchroom garbage bags decrease? How many pounds of waste were diverted from the lunchroom? Did the school's overall recycling rate (including compostable materials) increase?
9. Share your successes with the school, the district, and the larger community. Send the results of your campaign to the school board, your local paper, and to the King County Green Team program. Student groups that complete projects are recognized by the Solid Waste Division each year. Send project information to [greenteam@triangleassociates.com](mailto:greenteam@triangleassociates.com).

## WORM BINS

Although worm bins do not allow a school to collect the same types or quantities of food scraps, they do offer the benefits of waste reduction on a smaller scale, while teaching students valuable lessons about decomposition, recycling, and soil. Maintaining a classroom or garden worm bin is easy if you know what and how to feed your worms. Worms eat small scraps of grains, vegetables and fruits. Meats, dairy, or liquids are not suitable foods for worm bins. If you feed the worms the right amount and bury the food under leaves or dirt, there will be no odor and the bin can stay in the classroom without incident.

To learn more about how to start and maintain a worm bin, visit [your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/naturalyardcare/wormbins.asp](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/naturalyardcare/wormbins.asp) or [www.cityfarmer.org/wormcomp61.html](http://www.cityfarmer.org/wormcomp61.html), or contact a King County Green Team Program Specialist at [greenteam@triangleassociates.com](mailto:greenteam@triangleassociates.com).

## Campaign 3 - Step-by-step guide to promoting waste-free lunches



What is a waste-free lunch? It's a lunch in which everything can be eaten, reused, recycled or composted – nothing ends up in the garbage bin.

This campaign focuses on food packaging and can be done even if you do not have the ability to collect recyclable or compostable materials in the lunchroom. Remember, the best way to reduce garbage is not to create it in the first place, and it's not as difficult as it sounds. At Benjamin Franklin Elementary School in Kirkland, students sorted and weighed their lunchroom trash and found that they generated an average of 77 pounds of garbage daily. That lesson prompted them to start 'Waste-Free Fridays,' days on which student are asked to bring a waste-free lunch. By charting their improvements on a large poster in the lunchroom, they were able to see how small individual changes add up to big environmental benefits.

**Use these step-by-step instructions to set goals, put your plan into action, and measure and share results.**

1. Learn more about waste-free lunches. Visit [www.wastefreelunch.org](http://www.wastefreelunch.org) or [www.epa.gov/osw/education/lunch.htm](http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/lunch.htm) for suggestions and resources on encouraging waste-free lunches at your school. Planning a "waste-free" menu and bringing food packed in reusable containers are examples of ideas found on these websites.
2. Consider combining a waste-free lunch program with a program to recycle cans, bottles and cartons or even food scraps in the lunchroom. If these programs already exist at your school, talk to the custodian to find out how the system is currently working. Knowing the status of any existing recycling and waste reduction efforts helps you judge the effectiveness of your new campaign.
3. Identify a specific campaign goal and gather some pre-campaign data to measure success.
  - Do you want to reduce the volume or weight of lunchtime garbage? To measure these goals, you will need some pre-campaign data. For volume, count the number of garbage bags at the beginning of the campaign and again at the end. Or weigh your garbage before and after the campaign. The "Be a Garbage Gumshoe" activity sheet, geared toward elementary level students but relevant to all levels, provides some ideas for weighing your waste. See [your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/elementaryschool/documents/gumshoe.pdf](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/elementaryschool/documents/gumshoe.pdf).
  - Do you want to increase the number of students committed to reusing lunch-packing materials? If so, gather pre-campaign data by visiting classrooms and interviewing a selection of students to find out what they eat for lunch and how it is packaged. After the campaign, return to the same classrooms to see if there is a change in practices. Or you could count the number of reusable containers and reusable bottles in the lunchroom before the campaign and again after the campaign.
  - Whatever your goal, consider doing a trash sort before the campaign begins to get a sense of what is currently being thrown away. To do a trash sort, take one lunchroom garbage bag, and, using gloves, sort the garbage into piles of recyclable materials, disposable packaging, food and other waste. A sort provides students with information about their school's waste and is an excellent tool for a school-wide education effort.

4. Determine the duration of your campaign. Do you want to encourage waste-free lunches on a single day, for example on Earth Day or Spirit Day? Would you like to make this a monthly or quarterly event? Or consider a weekly event such as Waste-Free Wednesdays. If you make it a regular weekly event, challenge yourselves to beat the previous week's result.
5. Gather teacher, custodial, administrative and parental support for the campaign.
  - Request support from school staff.
    - o Talk to teachers to request their participation in the campaign and to get their ideas on ways to engage their students. Let teachers know that the campaign would not require extra work for them, but may involve a student announcement in class or a poster by the door.
    - o Inform the principal or other administrators so that they are aware of and will support the campaign. Ask to make an announcement at a staff meeting.
    - o The custodian will need to be aware of the campaign as well so that he or she can support your efforts in the lunchroom. Get information from the custodian about the feasibility of collecting recyclable and compostable materials in the lunchroom.
  - Involve parents. Since parents purchase and sometimes pack lunches for students, write a letter home to let them know about the campaign. Use the template from the EPA website, [www.epa.gov/osw/education/pdfs/wflwrite.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/osw/education/pdfs/wflwrite.pdf), or create your own. Provide tips to students on how to pack their own low- or no-waste lunches.
6. Encourage participation and gather support school-wide.
  - Set up a table at lunch with examples of waste-free packaging. Have a sign-up sheet at the table for students to commit to participation in the program.
  - Have a contest or raffle with a durable lunch bag as a prize. To enter the raffle, students sign a pledge to bring a waste-free lunch to school. An example of a pledge could be "In order to use fewer natural resources and send less waste to the landfill, I agree to bring a waste-free lunch every Wednesday."
  - Incorporate the pledges or sign-up sheet into a large poster to display at the school entrance. Or post the pledges at the entrance, arranging them to spell out the school's name.

- Work with teachers to incorporate the campaign's messages into classroom studies. For example, information and data on garbage weights could be part of a math lesson; a discussion of what people use and throw away could be part of a social studies lesson.



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7. Publicize the campaign.
  - Decide on a slogan or message that you want everyone to remember and associate with the campaign. Explorer West Middle School uses the slogan “Eat what you pack and pack what you eat.”
  - Use the fast facts on the back pages to include in the morning announcements or to create a video PSA to share with the school.
  - Work with the art teacher to have his or her students create posters or other art forms that educate the school about waste-free lunches. Display them throughout the school.
  - Hold a competition to see which lunch session or grade level can generate the least amount of waste. Use a large chart in the lunchroom to display the results.
  - Share information about the campaign and why waste-free lunches are important in the school newsletter, on the school website, or in daily bulletins.
  
8. Determine the results of the campaign. To see if there is a change, use the same method that you used to gather pre-campaign data. If you did a trash sort, do another one after the campaign to see how the amount and type of lunchroom garbage has changed.
  
9. Share your successes with the school, the district, and the larger community. Send the results of your campaign to the school board, your local paper, and to the King County Green Team program. Student groups that complete projects are recognized by the Solid Waste Division each year. Send project information to [greenteam@triangleassociates.com](mailto:greenteam@triangleassociates.com).

## SUCCESS STORY ON LOW-WASTE LUNCHES

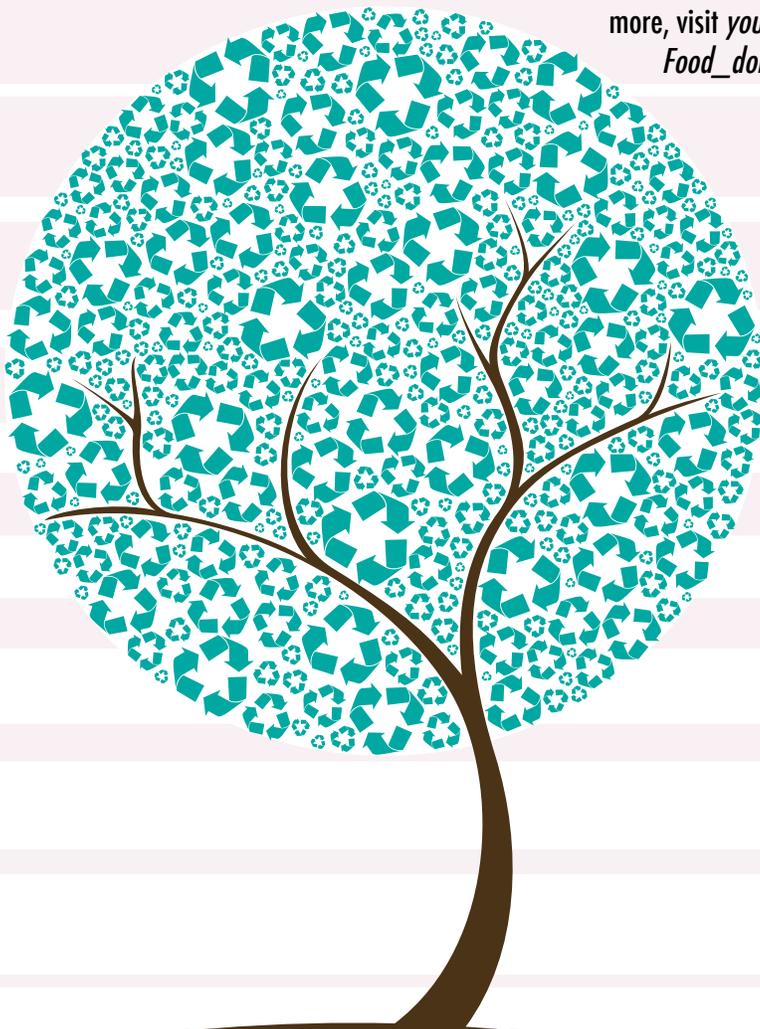
Students at Sunset Elementary in the Issaquah School District participated in a “Low-Waste Lunch Day” as part of a PTA-sponsored Wellness Week. A kiosk, the school newsletter, and student TV broadcasts informed students of ways to reduce lunchroom waste. Each student had the opportunity to purchase a waste-free lunch kit, consisting of reusable lunch containers, waste-free lunch tips, recipes and nutritional information. Students pledged to use the kit regularly to reduce waste. Students buying instead of bringing lunch also participated by pledging to reduce waste in other ways.



## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

**Are you ready for the next step? Do you want to further reduce waste at lunch or add another component to your campaign? Here are some additional ideas.**

- Switch from polystyrene to durable or compostable trays. Find out why this is a great idea at [your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/documents/polystyrene\\_facts.pdf](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/documents/polystyrene_facts.pdf).
- If your school has a food scrap recycling collection service, switch to compostable trays, eating utensils and/or food packaging and then all of these compostable materials can be collected for composting. Check out [www.gogreenscene.com](http://www.gogreenscene.com) for information on Cedar Grove's line of compostable materials.
- Talk with the lunchroom supervisor and kitchen staff about setting up a share table where unused and unopened food can be placed for use by another student.
  - Donate leftover edible food from your lunchroom's storage area to a food bank, either at the end of the year or during extended school breaks. To find out more, visit [your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/documents/Food\\_donations\\_Food\\_Lifeline\\_NWHarvest.pdf](http://your.kingcounty.gov/solidwaste/greenschools/documents/Food_donations_Food_Lifeline_NWHarvest.pdf).





## Calculate Your School's Weekly Recycling Volume and Recycling Rate

### Below are easy steps to calculate the effect of your lunchroom waste reduction and recycling campaign.

Use these calculations to establish baseline data that will enable you to later determine the impact of your campaign. **IMPORTANT:** Try to gather data on the day before trash and recycling are collected by your waste hauler. That will give you the best sense of how much solid waste your school generates every week.

1. Determine your school's garbage volume. You will need to ask the custodian for his or her input. To calculate the fullness of the dumpster, ask the custodian how full it normally is on the day before pick-up. Is it half full? 25 percent full? 75 percent full? Or look inside the dumpster to make your own estimate. Be sure to make your estimates on the day before garbage pick-up.



Sample calculation: If your eight cubic-yard container is 75 percent full and is picked up once a week, your weekly garbage volume is  $8 \text{ cubic yards} \times .75 \times 1 = 6 \text{ cubic yards}$ .

	X		X		=	
Size of garbage dumpster		Fullness of dumpster		Number of pick-ups per week		Weekly volume of garbage

2. Repeat step #1 for each garbage dumpster to get total amount of garbage discarded weekly.

3. Determine your school's recycling volume. You will need to ask the custodian for his or her input.

	X		X		=	
Size of recycling dumpster		Fullness of dumpster		Number of pick-ups per week		Weekly volume of recycling

4. Repeat step #1 for each recycling dumpster to get total amount of material recycled weekly.

5. The recycling rate is the amount of material collected for recycling as a percentage of the total solid waste generated (recycling volume plus garbage volume).

	X		X	100	=	
Weekly recycling volume		Weekly recycling volume plus weekly garbage volume				Recycling rate

6. Once the campaign is complete, it's time to recheck garbage and recycling volumes. Follow steps 1-5 to judge the campaign's impact.

# FAST FACTS

## ALUMINUM RECYCLING

- Aluminum is a metal that has to be mined from the earth. Once we have mined it all, it's gone forever.

- *Virginia Tech, Center for Economic Education*

- Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a TV or computer for three hours – or the equivalent of half a gallon of gasoline.

- *Recycling Revolution website*

- Aluminum can be recycled over and over without degrading its quality. It can be recycled forever!

- *Recycling Revolution website*



- Recycling one ton of plastic saves the equivalent of 3.85 barrels of oil.

- *Washington State Recycling Association*

## GLASS RECYCLING

- Recycling one ton of glass saves 10 gallons of oil.

- *Washington State Recycling Association*

- When a glass bottle is recycled, 50 percent less water pollution is produced than when a new glass bottle is made from virgin materials.

- *Washington State Recycling Association*

- Glass can be recycled again and again with no loss in quality or purity. Glass containers go from recycling bin to store shelf in as few as 30 days –again and again.

- *Glass Packaging Institute*

- Mining and transporting raw materials for glass produces about 385 pounds of waste for every ton of glass that is made. If recycled glass is substituted for half of the raw materials, the waste is cut by more than 80 percent.

- *Recycling Revolution website*

## PLASTIC RECYCLING

- Nearly 10 percent of U.S. oil consumption - approximately two million barrels a day - is used to make plastic.

- *Metabolix Bioenergy Company study*

- Supplying the plastic water bottles that American consumers purchase in one year requires more than 47 million gallons of oil, the equivalent of one billion pounds of carbon dioxide that is released into the atmosphere.

- *Container Recycling Institute*



# FAST FACTS

## FOOD WASTE

- In King County, food scraps make up about 32 percent of school garbage. Food scraps plus food soiled paper can make up more than 50 percent of a school's garbage.  
– *King County Green Schools Program*
- Food scraps and food soiled paper can be turned into compost, which helps build healthy soil in yards and gardens.  
– *King County Solid Waste Division*
- Crestwood Elementary School in Covington began composting its food scraps in an Earth Tub in the spring of 2004. By June of 2005, they had composted 1,881 pounds of food scraps.  
– *King County Solid Waste Division*

## OTHER LUNCHROOM PRACTICES

- During the 2005-2006 school year, Thoreau Elementary (Lake Washington School District, King County) reduced its lunchroom solid waste by 82 percent – and is keeping 47,000 Styrofoam trays out of the landfill each year – by switching to durable trays.  
– *King County Solid Waste Division*

- Norway Public School in Toronto, Ontario started a Litterless Lunch program. Parents reported that the program reduced the amount of packaging in their children's school lunches by about 60 percent. They reported a similar reduction (about 50 percent) in the use of "wraps and foils" at home, and an overall reduction of about 40 percent in the packaging of foods and products they purchased.  
– *www.wastefreelunches.org*

## GENERAL RECYCLING

- Trash that sits at the landfill and slowly decomposes is a source of greenhouse gases. Recycling reduces the amount of materials that are sent to the landfill.  
– *Environmental Protection Agency*
- If the U.S. had a national recycling rate of 30 percent, it could reduce greenhouse gas emissions as much as removing nearly 25 million cars from the road each year.  
– *Recycling Revolution website*
- By improving recycling throughout the school, Illahee Middle School (Federal Way School District, King County) reduced its garbage by 59 percent and saved the district over \$5,000 during the 2004-2005 school year.  
– *King County Green Schools Program*

This notice will be provided in alternate formats upon request.



**King County**

Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks  
Solid Waste Division

green team  
**REDUCE LUNCHROOM WASTE**

206-296-4466, 1-800-325-6165  
ext. 6-4466, TTY Relay: 711