

Saugus District schools join Trash Free Lunch competition

By [Christina Cox](#) - October 11, 2016



Two Santa Clarita schools joined a yearlong competition to reduce lunchtime waste.

North Park Elementary School and Bridgeport Elementary School are participating in Grades of Green's Trash Free Lunch Challenge for the first time this school year.

In the Trash Free Lunch Challenge, schools compete to see which can reduce the most lunchtime waste. The winning school will receive a \$1,000 education grant and the four finalist schools will receive a \$750 grant.

The competition teaches students environmental values and how to eliminate waste by packing lunches with containers, reusable water bottles, utensils and cloth napkins. Students also learn how to sort waste for recycling and composting.

"The mission of the organization is to instill environmental protection into young minds," said Vickie Wippel, public relations manager for Grades of Green. "Every school that participates in the program and adopts the principles we teach does well."

This year, 25 Southern California schools will be competing in the sixth annual competition. Grades of Green expects the students to keep 200,000 bags of trash from the landfill.

Wippel said a benefit to the program is the impact on the broader community. Students often take their recycling knowledge to the classroom to their homes.

In schools, a reduction in lunchtime and classroom waste saves the school hundreds of dollars on trash bags each year and frees up time for maintenance staff to work on other projects, Wippel said.

Wippell expects all of the schools involved in this year's challenge, including North Park Elementary and Bridgeport Elementary, to succeed in their waste reduction efforts.

"Whatever goal each school sets, we expect them to reach those goals," she said.

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