

Grades of Green's Trash Free Lunch Challenge Final Report 2016 - 2017



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NORTHROP GRUMMAN



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Executive Summary

Grades of Green's Trash Free Lunch Challenge (Challenge) is a friendly competition that challenges elementary and middle schools in Los Angeles to see which school can reduce its lunchtime waste the most. Through fun, educational assemblies, interactive eco-starter kits, customized waste reduction plans, and hands on help from Grades of Green staff to personally guide each school, Grades of Green creates an environment where every school is successful. Grades of Green educates students from participating schools who bring lunch from home to eliminate trash by using reusable lunch containers, water bottles, and cloth napkins. All students, including those who buy lunch, are taught how to sort waste at their school's customized sorting station, which includes separating out recyclables, food waste to compost, liquids, and landfill waste. As a result, **waste from participating schools is reduced drastically, helping to protect the environment today. Even more important, Grades of Green's education results in students forming habits they will carry with them for a lifetime, thereby protecting the environment for years to come.** At the end of the school year, participating schools are evaluated based upon how well they:

- Educated and inspired the most people at their campus to care for the environment;
- Created and implemented a trash free lunch program that diverted the most trash bags from landfills, and best encouraged students to reduce their waste at school; and
- Established sustainability of their waste reduction program in perpetuity (i.e., making it a permanent part of their campus culture).

Grades of Green's 2016-2017 Trash Free Lunch Challenge brought together 24 diverse school communities that worked hard throughout the school year to reduce their lunchtime waste and inspire and empower students to care for the environment. With the help of Grades of Green Staff Advisors, schools accomplished their waste reduction goals by creating student driven Grades of Green Teams, developing and managing waste sorting stations personalized for their campus, educating their students and families on the importance of waste reduction, and establishing a legacy of environmental leadership that will last. In March of 2017, Challenge schools provided submissions to Grades of Green highlighting their school's waste reduction and environmental education accomplishments. After careful review, two sets of finalists were announced, three in the elementary school category and three in the middle school category. The top three schools in the elementary school category were: McGaugh Elementary in Seal Beach; Lindstrom Elementary in Bellflower; and Bridgeport Elementary in Santa Clarita. The top three schools in the middle school category were: Macy Intermediate in Monterey Park; Lindbergh STEM Academy in Long Beach; and Prairie Vista Middle School in Hawthorne.

The 2016-2017 Trash Free Lunch Challenge has **educated and inspired over 17,000 students** on how to reduce, reuse, recycle and rot (compost); saved schools over \$13,000 by reducing trash bag liners used and waste hauler fees; and empowered participating schools to **divert over 52,200 bags of trash, or 522 tons** from the landfill. On average, this year's schools diverted 70% of their lunch waste from the landfills.

Quick Facts

- Each dollar invested in the Challenge results in 8.8 pounds of waste being diverted from landfills in just 1 school year

In 2016-2017 alone:

- 17,131 students were educated
- 17 cities were represented
- 522 tons of waste was diverted from landfills (52,200 bags of trash)
- Over \$13,000 was saved in trash bag liners
- Average diversion rate was 70%
- 11 schools launched a composting program
- 23 Grades of Green Teams were established
- 9 schools gave a presentation to their local city council and/or school board about their accomplishments

In the past 6 years of the program's existence:

- 117 schools have participated
- Schools have been represented from 48 cities
- Over 96,000 students have been educated
- \$59,550 was saved in trash bag liners
- Over 227,700 bags of trash were diverted = about 2,300 tons. This resulted in:
 - 163,300 gallons of oil saved (approximately 3,900 barrels)
 - 138,000 pounds of air pollutants reduced
 - 16,100,000 gallons of water reduced
 - 23,460 million BTU of energy saved

Sustainability

Grades of Green has been reaching out to the 93 schools that have participated in the Challenge over the past 5 years to see how their trash free lunch programs have sustained themselves over time and have further developed, and to offer support and resources as needed. Each of these schools has access to unlimited phone and email support from Grades of Green Staff Advisors, as well as a plethora of resources available to download for free from the Grades of Green website. Our goal is to ensure a sustainable and thriving trash free lunch program at each school who participates in the Trash Free Lunch Challenge and ensure each school remains an actively involved and supported Grades of Green school.

School Summaries

McGaugh Elementary School



McGaugh Elementary School is part of the Los Alamitos Unified School District and serves approximately 855 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th. To reduce lunchtime waste, McGaugh set up a Grades of Green team with several students selected from their current Student Leadership Team led by Vice Principal Teri Malpass and active parent volunteers. These Grades of Green team leaders help to monitor their 3 sorting stations consisting of a liquids bucket, a cardboard and paper recycle bin, a plastic and metals bin, a compost bucket, a landfill container, a cart to stack lunch trays, and a Food Finders coolers in which students can place their unopened

cafeteria food for donation to those who are food insecure. McGaugh Grades Green Team student leaders manage the sorting stations daily. They encourage students to pack trash free by making weekly announcements and passing out raffle tickets for weekly reusable prizes as well as verbal praise from the lunch aide supervisors and parent volunteers. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 26 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2017, McGaugh Elementary had reduced their waste to only 3 bags of trash daily. Out of the 80% of kids who bring lunch from home, 50% of those kids are completely trash free at least one time per week.**

McGaugh established a very strong student Grades of Green Team comprised of many student volunteers led by staff and very active parent volunteers. This group collaborated with the rest of the students, faculty and staff to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- Students used the program to teach others: 3rd students were excited to start a school wide bottles and cans recycling program for which they kept track of how many bottles and cans they collected to create math problems for their class. 4th grade students held a build your own composter contest where several students created mini composters out of various materials to see which composter worked the best;
- Students created waste sorting signage to ensure successful sorting;
- When McGaugh students started collecting compostable waste at lunch, some students asked if they can take some of the organic waste home for their animals and McGaugh also reached out to a school board member who composts and asked her to take the compost waste until the school can start using it in their garden;
- Students from all grades were invited to be super sorters so everyone had a chance to help others;
- Committed Grades of Green parent, Courtney, reached out to City of Seal Beach to acquire blue recycle bins to use in their sorting station and a solar belly recycle bin;

- McGaugh presented about their waste reduction program at a City Council meeting where they were awarded from Seal Beach for their efforts.

McGaugh Elementary School was selected as the *Grand Prize Winner* in the elementary school category for the 2016-2017 Trash Free Lunch Challenge. The Grades of Green team hosted a school wide celebration at McGaugh on April 13, 2017 to celebrate the school's accomplishments, and to present them with a \$1,000 sustainability grant. Los Alamitos District Officials attended the celebration along with the Kings Care Ice Crew. Everyone joined in for a fun DJ and dance party after the presentation.

Lindbergh STEM Academy



Lindbergh STEM Academy is part of the Long Beach Unified School District and serves approximately 600 students in 6th through 8th grades. To reduce lunchtime waste, Lindbergh set up two sorting stations – one in the cafeteria and one in the outside lunch area. The stations each consist of a liquids bucket, a compost bucket, a food donation cooler,

a recycle bin, a landfill can, and a chair to stack lunch trays. Lindbergh Green Team student leaders manage the sorting station daily and the school district hired a Recreation Aide to act as the recycling supervisor at lunch as well. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 25 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of March 2017, Lindbergh had reduced their waste to only 1-2 bags of trash daily.**

Lindbergh established a Green Team within their Student Council and a strong adult team including the entire science department, the librarian, the tech specialist, and the head custodian. These groups worked together with the rest of the students, faculty and staff to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- All Lindbergh science teachers incorporated environmental research into their curriculum;
 - ❖ The 6th grade students researched water conservation solutions
 - ❖ The 7th grade students researched waste reduction strategies
 - ❖ The 8th grade students researched clean energy alternatives
- The Green Team collected waste reduction data each week to update the school website, the school's morning announcements, and the Green Team display board;
- A Green Team student reached beyond the school to contact the Councilman Al Austin's office - to make him aware of how students can work together to reduce the city's waste;
- Lindbergh also implemented 5 different waste reduction activities to become a Grades of Green certified school.

Lindbergh STEM Academy was selected as the *Grand Prize Winner* in the middle school category for the 2016-2017 Trash Free Lunch Challenge. The Grades of Green team hosted a school wide celebration at Lindbergh on April 11, 2017 to celebrate the school's accomplishments, and to present them with a \$1,000 sustainability grant. The students were also awarded with a fun DJ and dance party after the presentation.

Lindstrom Elementary School



Lindstrom Elementary School is a Transitional Kindergarten through 6th grade school, serving approximately 820 students from the cities of Lakewood, Bellflower and Cerritos. To reduce their lunchtime waste, Lindstrom developed three sorting stations in their lunch areas, each consisting of a liquids bucket, a bin for recyclables, a landfill container, and a crate to stack lunch trays. There is also a designated spot in the cafeteria where students may place whole fruits and unopened items from the cafeteria to share. The sorting stations are manned daily by students from

every class. Each day, students are chosen for this privilege based on good behavior and effort. Students on campus are encouraged to sort waste and pack trash free through raffle tickets for prizes given weekly and by lunch aides who are supportive of and involved in the program. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 18 bags of trash each day at lunch. Currently, Lindstrom Elementary has consistently reduced their waste to only 7 bags of trash daily.**

Lindstrom's Grades of Green Team is composed of students, parents, teachers, and staff. Student volunteers consist of 4th through 6th graders from the "K Kids" group as well as students who are chosen daily to monitor sorting from each grade. This team of adults and students has worked hard over the school year to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- Student leaders making posters, signs and giving tips and announcements to continue to educate the wider student body throughout the year;
- Petitioning their district to secure recycling service on their campus for the first time ever;
- Presenting their program and accomplishments at a Bellflower Unified School District meeting;
- Launching a Grades of Green parent team to support the existing programs and build onto them;
- Planning a Lindstrom/Grades of Green Family Engagement Earth Week celebration.

Lindstrom Elementary School fully embraced the TFLC program and piloted waste reduction for the first time in the Bellflower Unified School District, paving the way for other schools to follow their lead. **For these efforts, they were selected as a *Finalist* in the elementary school category for the 2016-17 Trash Free Lunch Challenge. The Grades of Green team**

celebrated the school and presented them with a \$750 sustainability grant on May 18, 2017.

North Park Elementary



North Park Elementary is a public school with 700 Kindergarten through 6th graders in the Saugus Unified School District. 10 very passionate, eco-minded 6th grade students, facilitated by Principal Brunet, led the North Park students as they took on the Trash Free Lunch Challenge. These 10 student leaders met regularly to make sure the TFLC was running smoothly and to reward fellow students for packing Trash Free lunches and

sorting their lunch waste properly into liquids, recycle, landfill and bottles and cans. **Before participating in the TFLC, North Park was making 16 bags of lunch trash daily. After the TFLC, they now only produce 6 bags per day, annually diverting 1800 bags of landfill trash per school year.**

We celebrate the North Park Student Green Team leaders for the initiative they took in leading the program on their campus this year. They along with supportive staff members educated their peers and greened their school community by:

- Installing a Brita Hydration Station and adding signage to promote its use;
- Giving all school broadcast announcements with updates about the TFLC and promoting use of hydration station;
- Making educational videos on caring for the environment and distributing them to the entire campus community;
- Sharing about the TFLC in a teacher meeting, a PTA meeting and to the noon supervisors;
- Taking away one landfill dumpster and adding a recycle dumpster in its place.

The Green Team student leaders at North Park not only have walking assemblies about the importance of sorting properly at lunch but they also completed the TFLC application to win the Challenge on their own. **For their passion for the environment and their collaboration to educate their school, Grades of Green awarded North Park Elementary with the *Best Student Leadership* in the 2016-2017 Trash Free Lunch Challenge.**

Prairie Vista Middle School



Prairie Vista Middle School (PVMS) is part of the Hawthorne Unified School District and serves approximately 1000 students in grades 6th through 8th. To reduce lunchtime waste, PVMS set up sorting stations in their lunch areas, each consisting of a liquids bucket, a bin for recycling, a landfill container, a place to stack lunch trays, and a share basket for students to place untouched lunch menu items to share with other students. Grades of Green Team students monitor the sorting station every day. A student manager is in charge daily to ensure all stations

are monitored adequately. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced about 24 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2016, PVMS had reduced their waste to only 4-6 bags of trash daily.**

PVMS established a very strong student Grades of Green Team comprised of student volunteers and teachers. These groups worked together with the rest of the students, faculty and staff to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- Making morning announcements and creating short films to remind and encourage all students to sort properly and about their participation in the TFLC;
- Motivating many students to bring a reusable water bottle instead of a buying a disposable one;
- Rewarding students with a “fast track lane” at lunch time if they sorted properly;
- Handing out raffle tickets to encourage students to sort properly and keep them excited about the TFLC.

Prairie Vista Middle School was selected as a *Finalist* in the middle school category for the 2016-2017 Trash Free Lunch Challenge. Advisors from Grades of Green have planned a visit to the school to celebrate their accomplishments, and to present them with a \$750 sustainability grant.

Riviera Hall Lutheran School



Riviera Hall Lutheran School (RHLS) is a private school located in Redondo Beach and serves 242 students in preschool through 8th grades. To reduce campus waste, Riviera Hall set up a system to allow students to sort their waste into the following bins: CRV, recycle bin for plastics and paper (milk cartons and trays), landfill, a container for unopened food, and compost twice weekly. **Before RHLS took on the TFLC, they were producing 5 bags of landfill trash. Now each day, they only make 1-2 bags. Since most students bring lunch from home, they emphasized being completely TRASH FREE at**

lunch to all students and about 100 of the 242 RHLS students regularly pack Trash Free lunches.

With support from Principal McCabe, adult Grades of Green Team facilitators led the Student Grades of Green Leadership team. This team consisted of two middle school students and several younger students working together to reward students who are trash free and help peers sort properly. This team also made strides to further green their campus by:

- Reaching out to their families to promote packing reusables, teaching the importance of not wasting food and making RHLS reusable snack bags available for every family;
- Making weekly updates on waste reduction and the 3 R's;
- Taking the compost waste from lunch to the garden tumbler two times per week;
- Making monthly reports to the school board and the principal to keep the Church Council up to speed to the program;
- Promoting reusable water bottles for their hydration station to reduce the amount of CRV recycling.

Their TFL program will be maintained with new Student Senate Green Team leaders in place for the next school year ready to educate new students and continue not only waste reduction but adding other GOG activities to make their campus even greener. **Congratulations to Riviera Hall Lutheran School for their great strides in Reducing, Reusing, Recycling and Composting across their campus and their 2016-17 TFLC 3R HeRRRoes Award.**

Citizens of The World Charter School-Hollywood



CWC-Hollywood is a public charter school located in Hollywood and serves 432 Transitional Kindergarten through 5th grade students. Their lunch waste reduction program consisted of a sorting station to separate liquids, recyclables, landfill waste and trays. **Before joining the TFLC in the Fall, CWC-Hollywood was generating 6 bags of trash in each of their two eating areas, by using their new sorting system, they now only produce only 6 bags of landfill waste total each day. The campus has also seen an increase in the use of reusables and fewer single-use items brought in lunches from home.**

Principal Marissa Berman and Grades of Green Parent Chair, Susan Mitnick implemented a waste reduction program that focused on education by involving the student leadership group in educating their peers. 4th and 5th grade student Green Captains were chosen and they led their community to help grow a sustainable waste reduction program. Citizens of The World Charter-Hollywood developed an exemplary campus wide education program that inspired change for their entire campus community by:

- Spreading the word about being a part of the TFLC at Back to School Night and hosting a parent education workshop on the importance of being trash free and how to reduce waste;
- Creating the new “Green Captains Leadership Program” thoroughly organized with an orientation day, responsibility chart, regular meetings, tee-shirts and an assessment survey for 24 Green Captains;
- Designing and displaying banners over the two sorting stations that show exactly what waste materials go in each bin;
- Securing more recycle carts from the City of LA to accommodate their increased sorting of waste;
- Planning to incorporate campus composting into the Green Captains responsibilities next school year.

Way to Go CWC-Hollywood for taking their passion for the environment to the next level with success in the TFLC. **Their sustainable waste reduction program, led by well-organized Green Captains, is a solid foundation to continue to lead and grow environmental activities well into the future. For their accomplishments, Grades of Green awarded CWC-Hollywood the *Best Education Program*.**

Meadows Elementary School



Meadows Elementary School is a Kindergarten through 5th grade school, serving approximately 435 students in the Manhattan Beach Unified school district. To reduce their waste on campus Meadows set up two sorting stations in their cafeteria where the majority of students eat lunch. Each station consists of bins for liquids, recyclables, food waste (serviced by Waste Management), landfill waste and a table for stacking trays. Students are encouraged to sort their waste daily by student, parent, and staff sorting

helpers and are encouraged to pack trash free lunches with raffle tickets and prizes. **At the beginning of the school year the campus produced 10 bags of landfill waste each day at lunch. Since implementing the Trash Free Lunch program, the campus has consistently produced only 1.5 bags of landfill waste each lunch period.**

A new Student Grades of Green Team was established this year to help implement and promote the lunchtime waste reduction program and “green” activities at Meadows. Student volunteers can come from all grade levels and meet after school. This team of students along with two parent volunteers have worked throughout the school year to:

- Create signs and posters on campus to educate and label sorting station bins;
- Share *Earth Tips* with school families to help them support the students’ efforts both at school and home;
- Develop and perform a skit to further educate students to sort waste properly;
- Share their TFL and other green programs with their district to inspire others in the community to take action;
- Green special events on campus with hydration stations to replace single use plastic bottles.

Meadows Elementary School inspired and empowered their whole community to rethink their habits and reduce waste whenever possible. For that they have been awarded with the 2016-17 Trash Free Lunch Challenge *Greenest School Community Award*.

Bridgeport Elementary School



Bridgeport Elementary School is part of the Saugus Unified School District and serves approximately 870 students in grades Transitional Kindergarten through 6th. In order to reduce their landfill waste on campus, Bridgeport worked with their custodian to set up 2 sorting stations consisting of receptacles for liquids, recyclables, landfill waste and trays. Recyclables and trays are collected in clear bags to help custodians differentiate them. **At the beginning of their waste reduction program Bridgeport was producing 23 bags of landfill**

waste each day at lunch; currently the campus has reduced its waste down to 3 bags of landfill waste daily. The district could modify their waste hauling service so Bridgeport's landfill dumpster is only picked up two time per week instead of daily.

Bridgeport's Grades of Green team originally started with several 6th grade boys who had gotten in trouble for throwing food. To make amends for their behavior, they decided that they would like to start a club to clean up their campus. In the Fall 2016 when they started their Grades of Green Team and the TFLC, these boys were the leaders of the team. Because of their enthusiasm, many other kids joined the GOG student green team facilitated by Assistant Principal Karen Harvey and they have inspired their community to care for the environment by:

- Creating several PSAs about sorting and packing trash free lunches that were posted on school YouTube for the entire school community;
- Launching Trash Free Tuesday's in which kids who are trash free can earn raffle tickets to win a prize;
- Giving weekly morning eco-messages on school morning news site;
- Conducting a week-long grade level sorting contest in which 3rd grade won for being the best sorters;
- Presenting updates about their success at a PTA meeting;
- Presenting and being recognized at a School Board meeting to inspire other local schools to replicate Bridgeport's success.

Bridgeport Elementary School created a comprehensive student led waste reduction program on campus where the student leaders inspired peers and their community to care for the environment. **For their hard work and dedication to the Trash Free Lunch Challenge Program, Bridgeport was a *Finalist* in the 2016-17 Trash Free Lunch Challenge. On June 2nd, they will receive a \$750 education grant for their accomplishments during an all school award ceremony.**

Thomas Starr King Middle School



King Middle School is part of the Los Angeles Unified School District and serves approximately 1800 students in grades 6th through 8th. To reduce their landfill waste on campus, student leaders set up eight rolling recycle carts throughout the campus where most students eat to collect recyclables. They also walk around at lunch time with large reused pretzel containers to collect fruit and vegetable scraps to compost. All students are encouraged to be trash free by student monitors who provide raffle tickets to those who pack food in reusable containers. Students are also verbally praised for sorting properly and picking up litter on campus. **At the beginning of the school year, all lunch waste on the King campus went directly to landfill bins. Currently, recyclables are collected and landfill waste is sorted daily by students with no assistance from the custodial team. Collected bottles and cans are redeemed by students to further their green programs on campus.**

King utilized an existing group of student volunteers from 6th and 7th grades called the Earth Savers to develop programs and achieve their green goals on campus. Along with support from key staff members, these students have made tangible change in their school community by:

- Painting and decorating recycle carts on campus to help students recycle properly;
- Pulling out bottles and cans after lunch to turn in for redemption (proceeds will go to installing hydration stations on campus);
- Creating an anti-littler campaign and a recycling PSA;
- Writing to their district representatives to encourage selling less single-use items on campus;
- Requesting that the district eliminate spork packets at lunch.

King Middle School developed a program in which passionate students have taken responsibility for developing and implementing every aspect of their green programs on campus. **For their perseverance and hard work within the Trash Free Lunch Challenge Program, King student leaders were awarded the *Green Leaders of Tomorrow Award*.**

Ramona Elementary School



Ramona Elementary School is part of the Hawthorne Unified School District and serves approximately 775 students in grades Transitional Kindergarten through 5th. In order to reduce lunchtime waste, Ramona set up a sorting station in their lunch area consisting of a bin for mixed recycling, a landfill container, a table to stack lunch trays, and a share basket for students to place untouched lunch menu items to share with other students. Ramona Grades of Green Team student leaders managed sorting stations, asked Green Trivia questions at lunchtime and picked up litter on campus. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 27 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2016, Ramona Elementary had reduced their waste to about 7-8 bags of trash daily.**

Ramona has a core Grades of Green Team comprised of student volunteers and a 5th grade teacher to advise. The group worked together to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- Picking up litter on campus during recess;
- Encouraging all students to contribute to a “Reduce” pledge poster;
- Keeping students engaged and interested during lunchtime by asking Green Trivia Questions.

Ramona Elementary School was selected as the *Grades of Green MVPs* for the 2016-2017 Trash Free Lunch Challenge. The Grades of Green team presented them with a certificate at a school wide Spirit Rally at Ramona on April 29th and celebrated the school’s accomplishments in the waste reduction program.

Hamilton Middle School



Hamilton Middle School is part of the Long Beach Unified School District and serves approximately 900 students in the 6th through 8th grades. The Hamilton Green Team decided to focus their waste reduction efforts on recovering trays. Students were asked to stack their trays at the end of all the lunch tables for recycling (approximately 95% of Hamilton students qualify for free or reduced breakfast and lunch so the school consumes a very larger number of trays). By stacking trays to be recycled the school has been able to reduce their lunch trash by 50%. **At**

the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 18 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of March 2017, Hamilton had reduced their waste to only 9 bags of trash daily. The school plans to add food donation coolers to their system in the fall to further reduce waste.

The Hamilton Student Council oversaw supervising each of the trash cans in the lunch area – to ensure that all trays were stacked for recycling, rather than thrown away. As the daily stacks of trays grew, the Hamilton head custodian, LaMont Stinson, challenged the students to find out just how high they could stack the trays. Stinson put a couple of rules on his challenge: The Tower had to be self-supporting, and only recyclable materials (glues, etc.) could be used in Tower construction. Soon all kinds of engineering concepts were being spontaneously tested and discussed. The kids experimented by expanding the base of the tower and by using smaller stacks of trays to buttress a central tower. In the end, the Hamilton Tower of Trays reached a height of over 14 feet. The “just for fun” project was so successful, Stinson plans to make the Tower of Trays Challenge a yearly event.

York Elementary School



York Elementary School is part of the Hawthorne Unified School District and serves approximately 620 students in grades Transitional Kindergarten through 5th. In order to reduce lunchtime waste, York set up a sorting station in their lunch area consisting of a bin for recycling, a landfill container, a basket to stack lunch trays, and a share basket for students to place untouched lunch menu items to share with other students. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 15 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2016, York Elementary had reduced their waste to about 10 bags of trash daily.**

York established a Green Team comprised of upper grade students, and key staff members. York encountered some

challenges incorporating new sorting stations and tried various set-ups to see what worked best for their campus. Currently, York is reducing waste in the following ways:

- Having a permanent share basket during lunchtime so food doesn't get wasted;
- Students are bringing reusable containers and water bottles;
- Three recycle bins for bottles and cans have been placed throughout campus;
- The student Green Team created posters to put up around campus to promote reducing waste and to educate the community on conserving natural resources and showing how long it takes waste to decompose in a landfill.

York Elementary School was awarded the certificate for *Best Eco-Posters* for the 2016-2017 Trash Free Lunch Challenge. The Grades of Green team is working to schedule a final visit before the end of the school year to present their award and celebrate the school's efforts and accomplishments.

Chavez Elementary School



Chavez Elementary School is part of the Long Beach Unified School District and serves approximately 500 students in grades Transitional Kindergarten through 5th. To reduce their waste at lunch, Chavez set up two sorting stations in their eating area consisting of a liquids bucket, a compost bucket, a recycle bin, a landfill container, a shelf for stacking lunch trays, and a food donation cooler. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 25 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of**

March 2017, Chavez Elementary had reduced their waste to only 7 bags of trash daily.

The school created a supervision system that includes student representatives from each classroom, Green Team student leaders, volunteers, and a special Recreation Aide hired specifically to act as the Recycling Supervisor at lunch. These key people worked together throughout the year to green their school by:

- Sending home flyers and Earth Tips to include the whole school community in the green efforts;
- Working with Food Finders to donate uneaten food to the hungry;
- Implementing paper recycling in the classrooms;
- Establishing on-site composting of fruit and vegetable scraps.

The Chavez lunch sorting supervision system involved every classroom at the school and encouraged widespread buy-in for the waste reduction effort. Students in each grade level spontaneously volunteered to supervise the stations and clean-up litter. The sorting program is enthusiastically embraced by the entire student body and their highly accurate sorting resulted

in a 72% overall waste reduction. **Chavez Elementary School was selected to receive the 2015-2016 Trash Free Lunch Challenge *Super Sorters Award*.**

Plymouth Elementary School



Plymouth Elementary School is part of the Monrovia Unified School District and serves approximately 420 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th. To reduce the amount of lunchtime waste being generated on their campus, Plymouth piloted a sorting station in their outdoor lunch area consisting of a liquids bucket, a compost bucket, a landfill container, a recycle bin, a box to stack lunch trays, and a share basket for students to place untouched lunch menu items to share with other students. The sorting station was managed by a group of 5th grade

boys. **Before participating in the Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 15 bags of trash each day at lunch. On the day of their kick-off assembly, they were able to reduce that number to only 6.**

While very happy with the results of their pilot waste sorting system, the principal ultimately decided that she needed more support in the campus community before she can continue campus sorting on a regular basis. The TFLC has shown Plymouth the potential waste reduction they will be able to achieve once student and adult teams are put in place to support the program.

Jack F. Macy Intermediate School



Jack F. Macy Intermediate School is part of the Montebello Unified School District and serves approximately 973 students in grades 6th through 8th. In their effort to reduce their landfill waste on campus, Macy Intermediate created four sorting stations to replace approximately 30 landfill trashcans in the lunch area. The four stations each consist of bins to separate liquids, compost, bottles and cans, mixed recyclables, landfill waste, trays, and a share table for uneaten fruits, vegetables, and other unopened packaged items.

Students are encouraged to sort their waste by Grades of Green Team student leaders. These student leaders also incorporated waste sorting at special school events. For example, at a school rally, a “waste race” competition between grade levels was held to see who could correctly sort their waste the fastest. **At the beginning of their waste reduction program, Macy was producing 45 bags of landfill waste each day at lunch; currently the campus has reduced its waste down to just 8 bags of landfill waste daily.**

To achieve their goals in the TFLC, Macy created an after-school student Grades of Green Team who worked with the existing 4-H club and an adult Green Team. These teams work together on campus to bring environmental awareness to the Macy community by:

- Creating and managing lunch area sorting systems;
- Successfully implementing at least five Grades of Green Activities making Macy one of the first certified Grades of Green schools;
- Implementing a successful composting program using soil savers and creating “trench” composting in place of existing grass in one of the hallways;
- Presenting their TFLC program at the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County;
- Encouraging other students to pick up after themselves and recycle during nutrition and lunch;
- Managing a school bulletin board which was updated with tips, facts and reminders about the TFLC.

Macy Intermediate School created a comprehensive waste reduction program on campus that included many different members of the school community collaborating and working together. **For their hard work and dedication to the Trash Free Lunch Challenge Program, Macy was chosen as a *Finalist* in 2016-17 middle school category and will receive a sustainability grant for \$750 and a school wide presentation to celebrate their accomplishments.**

Burcham Elementary School



Burcham Elementary School is part of the Long Beach Unified School District and serves approximately 600 students in grades Transitional Kindergarten through 5th. To reduce lunchtime waste on their campus, Burcham set up two sorting stations in their eating area, each consisting of a liquids bucket, a recycle bin, a landfill container, and a food donation cooler. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 20 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of March 2017, Burcham Elementary had reduced their waste to only 5 bags of trash daily.**

. The school created a Grades of Green team to supervise the system that includes student representatives from each classroom, Green Team student leaders, and adult volunteers. This team collaborated to create a successful green program on campus by:

- Introducing paper recycling in the classrooms;
- Taking on the *Walk to School Wednesday* activity on the Grades of Green website;
- Integrating the program into the classrooms with a contest to design an “Environmental Superhero” costume;

- Creating a butterfly garden on campus.

The Burcham Green Program was an organized, comprehensive program that involved every classroom in environmental research, public speaking, and waste supervision. The campus achieved 75% waste reduction and **Burcham Elementary School was selected to receive the 2015-2016 Trash Free Lunch Challenge Eco Heroes Award.**

Longfellow Elementary School



Longfellow Elementary School serves 600 Kindergarten through 5th graders in the Whittier Unified School District with 80% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch.

Longfellow jumped into the Trash Free Lunch Challenge program by bringing 5 students to the TFLC Fall training session. **They had a successful kick off where by the campus went from producing 16 bags of landfill trash each day down to just 4 bags.** They achieved this by sorting their lunch time waste into compost, liquids, recycle, and landfill waste. Green Team adults from the school

community had plans to expand their garden and compost program. Longfellow did not submit an application to win the TFLC.

Lynwood Middle School



Lynwood Middle School is part of the Lynwood Unified School District and serves approximately 950 students in grades 7th and 8th. To reduce campus waste, Lynwood set up three sorting stations in their outdoor eating area. Each station consists of two landfill cans, two recycle cans, and a place to stack their empty trays to recycle. Students are encouraged to sort their waste and pack trash free lunches by student leaders who monitor the sorting stations daily and pass out Tiger Bucks (rewards) to those who are participating. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch**

Challenge Program, Lynwood was producing 40 bags of trash each day at lunch; currently the campus is down to 14 bags of lunchtime trash daily.

Lynwood created a green team to run the program consisting of staff members, a parent liaison, and students from the campus leadership and peer mentoring program and other student volunteers. This group worked together throughout the year to educate their community and change habits on campus by:

- Monitoring sorting stations at lunchtime;

- Making frequent announcements to remind students how to sort and keep them updated on their waste reduction progress;
- Informing parents about the Challenge through phone messages and website information;
- Working with custodial staff to determine the best roll out of the sorting stations on campus;
- Repurposing clean lunch trays to make art projects.

Despite obstacles with district and waste hauler support, Lynwood embraced the Trash Free Lunch Program and made big strides in reducing waste and changing habits on campus. **For all of their efforts, Lynwood Middle School was awarded the 2016-17 *Most Inspirational Program Award*.**

Mira Catalina Elementary School



Mira Catalina Elementary School is part of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District and serves approximately 400 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th. To reduce the waste being generated on their campus, Mira Catalina set up a sorting station in their lunch area consisting of a liquids bucket, a bucket for recycling bottles and plastics, a compost bucket, a landfill container, a box to stack lunch trays, and a share basket for students to place untouched lunch menu items to share with other students. Lunch Aides manage the sorting station every day. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 6 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of March 2017, Mira Catalina Elementary had reduced their waste to only 2 bags of trash daily.**

Students leaders contributed to the success of the waste reduction program and educated their peers by creating a sorting station with colorful signage to help other students identify bins and sort their waste properly.

Viewpoint School



Viewpoint School is a private school in the Calabasas area and has approximately 1200 students in grades Kindergarten through 12th. This year Grades of Green worked with the K – 8 community. In order to reduce their landfill waste on campus, Viewpoint added a “food waste” bin to their existing landfill and recycle bins in the eating areas. Students are encouraged to sort their waste by student monitors. **At the beginning of their waste reduction program, Viewpoint was producing 60 bags of landfill waste each day at lunch; currently the campus has reduced its waste down to just 14 bags of landfill waste daily.**

Viewpoint has many student clubs working on the campus waste reduction program including the Earth Club, Service Learning Club, Student Council, Garden Club, and Student Action Committee.

These students work together with key staff members on campus to bring environmental awareness to Viewpoint and the community by:

- Promoting proper use and managing lunch area sorting systems;
- Creating a composting video to show classmates how to compost correctly;
- Planning “Earthcella” for Earth Week where waste reduction education was a central theme;
- Presenting to classmates through “walking assemblies” to remind students how to sort properly and the importance of waste reduction;

Viewpoint School created a comprehensive waste reduction program on campus that included many different members of the school community working together. **For their hard work and dedication to the Trash Free Lunch Challenge Program, Viewpoint was awarded the certificate for *Best Compost Program*. Grades of Green advisors visited the school to congratulate them on their success and present them with their award on May 22nd.**

Environmental Charter Middle School (ECMS)



ECMS is a public charter school located in Gardena, serving approximately 360 students in grades 6th through 8th. To reduce their lunchtime waste, ECMS added components to their 4 existing sorting stations in the cafeteria so that each station has separate bins for liquids, cartons, recyclables, compost and landfill. Students from the Green Ambassadors program help their peers sort waste at lunch. **At the start of the Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, ECMS was producing 12 bags of trash at lunchtime; after expanding their sorting stations and re-educating the students on sorting procedures, the school reduced their waste to 5 bags of landfill waste daily.**

Student leaders for the TFLC program were chosen from the existing Green Ambassadors group on campus. These select students along with their staff advisor worked throughout the year to green the school by:

- Developing and managing new sorting stations in the cafeteria;
- Making signage and posters to market the program to the rest of the student body;
- Managing the composting of fruits and vegetable waste from lunch;
- Holding a recycled art contest.

ECMS is a unique school with a core emphasis on environmental values that is integrated through all areas of campus community. The Trash Free Lunch Challenge program allowed the school to refocus efforts on waste reduction and re-educate students as to how they can take an active role in caring for the environment at school and in all areas of their lives.

Helen Keller Elementary School



Keller Elementary School is part of the Lynwood Unified School District and serves approximately 700 students in grades Kindergarten through 6th. In order to reduce their lunchtime waste, Keller Elementary set up one mirrored sorting station in the cafeteria that consists of labeled and color-coded bins to separate leftover liquids, mixed recyclables, landfill trash, and a place to stack their used trays. Students were encouraged to sort their waste and pack trash free lunches by having students

from the newly formed Grades of Green team act as sorting station monitors, and offering raffle prizes and hand stamps for students who participate in waste free efforts. **At the start of the Trash Free Lunch Program, Keller was producing 35 bags of trash at lunchtime; at the kick-off Assembly hosted by Grades of Green, the school reduced their waste to only 9 bag of trash.**

Bixby Elementary School



Bixby Elementary School is part of the Long Beach Unified School District and serves approximately 500 students in grades Transitional Kindergarten through 5th. To reduce lunchtime waste, Bixby set up two sorting stations in their lunch area, each consisting of a liquids bucket, a compost bucket, a recycle bin, a landfill container, and a food donation cooler. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 10 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of**

March 2017, Bixby Elementary had reduced their waste to only 1.5 bags of trash daily.

The 5th Grade Green Team leaders supervised the sorting station every day and worked with the custodian, Jorge Sanchez, to help lower grades improve sorting. They also worked with other adults on campus to further green their school by:

- Partnering with Food Finders to donate uneaten food to the hungry;
- Incorporating environmental lessons into classroom curriculum;
- Handing out raffle tickets and holding raffles to encourage students to sort correctly;
- Creating and singing a "Let's Go Green" to parents and students to further educate and inspire their community.

The Bixby 5th Grade Green Team leadership was very strong. The students led trainings for the lower grades, trouble shot problems, planned new green initiatives, and ultimately became completely independent of adult oversight. Their team led the school to an 85% waste reduction. **Bixby Elementary School was selected to receive the 2015-2016 Trash Free Lunch Challenge *Best Green Team Award*.**

		<h2 style="text-align: center;">2016-2017 TRASH FREE LUNCH CHALLENGE FINAL METRICS CHART</h2>					
School	Location	Starting Trash Count Per Day	Current Actual Trash Count Per Day	Total Number of Landfill Bags Saved Per Day	Total Number of Landfill Bags Saved Per School Year	Liner Savings Per Year	Number of Students Educated
Bridgeport ES	Valencia	20	16	4	720	\$180	870
Lindstrom ES	Lakewood	18	10	8	1440	\$360	890
McGaugh ES	Seal Beach	26	23	3	540	\$135	850
Macy Intermediate MS	Montebello	45	8	37	6660	\$1,665	973
Prairie Vista MS	Hawthorne	24	5	19	3420	\$855	999
Lindbergh MS	Long Beach	25	22	3	540	\$135	580
Citizens of the World Charter – Hollywood ES	Hollywood	6	3	3	540	\$135	432
King MS	Los Angeles	60	10	50	9000	\$2,250	1800
North Park ES	Santa Clarita	16	10	6	1080	\$270	700
Cesar Chavez ES	Long Beach	25	16	9	1620	\$405	500
Lynwood MS	Lynwood	40	27	13	2340	\$585	940
Burcham ES	Long Beach	20	17	3	540	\$135	453

Ramona ES	Hawthorne	27	7	20	3600	\$900	775
Riviera Hall k-8	Torrance	5	3	2	360	\$90	225
Meadows ES	Manhattan Beach	10	8	2	360	\$90	435
View Point K-8	Malibu	60	14	46	8280	\$2,070	1200
Florence Bixby ES	Long Beach	10	8	2	360	\$90	489
York ES	Hawthorne	15	10	5	900	\$225	620
Mira Catalina ES	Rancho Palos Verdes	6	5	1	180	\$45	400
Environmental Charter MS	Gardena	12	8	4	720	\$180	360
Keller ES	Lynwood	35	26	9	1620	\$405	700
Hamilton MS	Long Beach	18	8	10	1800	\$450	920
Plymouth ES	Monrovia	15	0	15	2700	\$675	420
Longfellow ES	Whittier	16	0	16	2880	\$720	600
TOTAL:	17 Cities	554	264	290	52,200	\$13,050	17,131

Total number of bags diverted every year due to the environmental leadership of the 2016-2017 schools	52,200
Total amount of trash diverted in tons in the 2016-2017 school year	522
Total amount of trash diverted in tons in the past 6 years among all 117 schools	2,322
Total number of students educated and inspired in 2016-2017	17,131
Total number of students educated and inspired in the past 6 years	96,131
Money saved by schools on trash bag liners in the past 6 years	\$59,550

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