

Grades of Green's Trash Free Lunch Challenge Final Report 2017 - 2018



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Converting Waste Into Resources



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 (Advisors) 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, tray stacking 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 in the community 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 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge brought together 20 diverse and unique 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 Advisors, schools accomplished their waste reduction goals by creating student driven Grades of Green Teams, developing, creating, 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 2018, 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: Victor Elementary in Torrance, Charles Helmers Elementary in Santa Clarita, and Our Lady of Guadalupe K-8 in Hermosa Beach. The top three schools in the middle school category were: Helen Keller Dual Immersion in Long Beach, Oak in Los Alamitos, and South Pointe in Walnut.

The 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge has **educated and inspired almost 13,000 students** on how to reduce, reuse, recycle and rot (compost); saved schools over \$11,500 by reducing trash bag liners used and waste hauler fees; and empowered participating schools to **divert over 46,300 bags of trash, or 463 tons** from landfills. On average, this year's schools diverted 65% of their lunch waste.

Quick Facts

- Each dollar invested in the Challenge results in 10.2 pounds of waste being diverted from landfills in just 1 school year

In 2017-2018 alone:

- 12,920 students were educated
- 12 cities were represented
- 463 tons of waste was diverted from landfills (46,300 bags of trash)
- Over \$11,500 was saved in trash bag liners
- Average diversion rate was 65%
- 11 schools launched a composting program
- 20 Grades of Green Teams were established
- 6 schools gave a presentation to their local city council and/or school board about their accomplishments
- 70 pounds of trash per student diverted from landfills

In the past 7 years of the program's existence:

- 137 schools have participated
- Schools have been represented from 52 cities
- Over 108,000 students have been educated
- \$68,500 was saved in trash bag liners
- Over 274,000 bags of trash were diverted = about 2,740 tons. This resulted in:
 - 194,540 gallons of oil saved (approximately 4,658 barrels)
 - 164,400 pounds of air pollutants reduced
 - 19,180,000 gallons of water reduced
 - 27.9 million BTU of energy saved

Sustainability

Grades of Green has been reaching out to the 137 schools that have participated in the Challenge over the past seven 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 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

Victor Elementary School



Victor Elementary School is part of the Torrance Unified School District and serves approximately 1,000 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th. In order to reduce lunchtime waste, Victor Elementary set up a sorting stations in their lunch area, consisting of a liquids bucket, a compost bucket, a bin for mixed recycling, a landfill container, a bin 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 17 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2018, Victor Elementary had reduced their waste to about 3 bags of trash daily.

Victor Elementary School has a core Grades of Green Team called the Victory Elementary Environmental Engineer Club students (VEEEEC) comprised of 40 student volunteers and three teacher leads to advise them. This very dedicated group of students and campus adults worked together to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- Giving out raffle tickets to students that answer environmental questions, sort correctly and pack trash free lunches;
- Hosting weekly skits about the environment and the importance of reducing waste during schoolwide assemblies to teach and reinforce proper sorting behavior;
- Creating a VEEEC challenge to encourage students to collect bags of leaves to help the compost production in their school gardens;
- Running a website to capture content about the program and encourage students to take care of our environment.

For their hard work and dedication to the Trash Free Lunch Challenge Program and the significant waste reduction changes made on their campus, Victor Elementary was chosen as the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge Elementary School Winner. The Grades of Green team presented them with a celebration and certificate at a school wide assembly and they received a sustainability grant for \$1000.

Helen Keller Dual Immersion Middle School



Helen Keller Dual Immersion Middle School is part of the Long Beach Unified School District and serves approximately 250 students in grades 6th through 8th. To reduce their waste at lunch, Keller set up one sorting station in their outside eating area, and another station in their cafeteria. Both stations consist of a liquids bucket, a compost bucket, a landfill container, and a food donation cooler. At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 11 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of March 2018, Keller had reduced their landfill waste to only 2 bags of trash daily.

The school created a student Green Team that supervised the sorting station each day at lunch, with the support of the librarian, plant supervisor, and enthusiastic Rec Aides. The Green Team's goal was to create a more sustainable and less wasteful campus community. Together, the campus adults and students pursued that goal by:

- Pairing every trash can on campus with a recycling bin;
- Setting up a sorting system at both lunch and breakfast;
- Establishing a classroom recycling program – in addition to lunch and breakfast recycling;
- Starting a composting program for fruit and veggie scraps;
- Hosting weekly competitions to acknowledge students (and grade levels) for good sorting habits;
- Educating the campus with a Green Team page on the school website, dedicating a bulletin board to environmental issues, and updating the school community every week as to its lunch waste reduction statistics.

The waste reduction program at Keller is enthusiastically embraced by the entire student body, so much so that the sorting stations no longer require student supervision. **The school was able achieve 82% overall waste reduction. Keller was selected as the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge Middle School Winner and awarded with a \$1,000 sustainability grant and a dance party celebration from Grades of Green.**

Our Lady of Guadalupe School



Our Lady of Guadalupe (OLG) School is a Kindergarten through 8th grade school in Hermosa Beach, serving approximately 200 students and is part of the Los Angeles Catholic Archdiocese School System. To reduce their lunchtime waste, OLG first assembled an incredible Green Team led by two 8th grade students. These motivated student leaders developed a sorting system for the lunch area consisting of a liquids bucket, a bin for recyclables, a bin for CRV recyclables, a compost bucket, a landfill container, and a crate to stack lunch trays. Students manage all aspects of the sorting station, from setting up the stations to overseeing the sorting efforts and composting fruit and vegetable scraps daily. Students

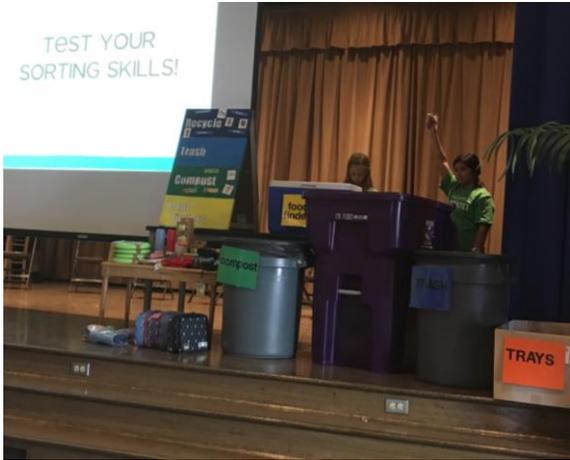
on campus are encouraged to sort waste and pack trash free through weekly announcements, skits, and education from the Green Team and raffle prizes for participation. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 4 bags of trash each day at lunch. Currently, OLG has consistently reduced their waste to only 1-2 bags of trash daily.**

OLG's waste reduction efforts were truly a campus wide initiative. Green Team student leaders were well supported by administration, dedicated teachers, parents and staff members. The community worked hard throughout the year to focus on environmental stewardship by:

- Creating their own "Green Team" website to disseminate information regarding the program;
- Creating PSA videos to educate the school and staff about proper waste sorting;
- Attending a composting workshop to learn how to properly compost on their campus;
- Holding a campus wide "leaf drive" to support their composting efforts;
- Educating the students with "walking assemblies" and announcements throughout the year.

The OLG community fully embraced the Trash Free Lunch Challenge and incorporated it into their campus culture and school wide focus of caring for God's creation. **For these efforts, they were selected as a *Finalist* in the elementary school category for the 2017-18 Trash Free Lunch Challenge. The Grades of Green team celebrated the school and presented them with a certificate in April 2018.**

Prisk Elementary School



Prisk Elementary School is part of the Long Beach Unified School District and serves approximately 550 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th. To reduce their waste at lunch, Prisk set up two sorting stations, one in their outdoor eating area and the other inside the cafeteria. Both stations consist of a liquids bucket, a compost bucket, a recycle bin, a landfill container, an area for stacking lunch trays, and a food donation cooler. At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 15 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of March 2018, Prisk Elementary had reduced their waste to only 5 bags of trash daily.

The school created a sorting station supervision system that includes student representatives from each classroom, Green Team student leaders, and volunteers. These key people worked together throughout the year to green their school by:

- Creating posters and videos about the new system;
- Presenting walking assemblies to all the classrooms;
- Working with Food Finders to donate uneaten food to the hungry;
- Establishing on-site composting of fruit and vegetable scraps;
- Selling reusable snack bags in the student store to encourage students and families to replace disposables with reusables.

The Prisk lunch sorting supervision system involved the school's Girl Scout Troop, Green Team leaders, as well as student volunteers at every grade level. **The school was able to achieve 67% overall waste reduction. Prisk Elementary School was selected to receive the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge Super Sorters Award.**

Cyrus J. Morris Elementary School



Cyrus J. Morris Elementary is part of the Walnut Valley Unified School District and serves approximately 500 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th. In order to reduce lunchtime waste, CJ Morris set up two sorting stations in their lunch area, each consisting of a liquids bucket, a bin for mixed recycling, a landfill container, a cart 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 8**

bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2018, CJ Morris Elementary had reduced their waste to about 4 bags of trash daily.

CJ Morris Elementary has a core Grades of Green Team comprised of 16 student volunteers and a 5th grade teacher to advise them. The group worked together to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- Giving out raffle tickets to students that pack trash free lunches and sort correctly;
- Keeping students engaged and interested during lunchtime by performing skits about the importance of reducing trash during their school assemblies;
- Creating flyers and posters about the importance of recycling;
- Asking all students on campus to take a pledge to protect the environment.

CJ Morris Elementary School was selected as the *Best Education Award* recipient for the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge. The Grades of Green team presented them with a certificate at a school wide morning announcement and celebrated the school's accomplishments in the waste reduction program.

Overland Elementary School



Overland Elementary School is part of the Los Angeles Unified School District and serves 500 students in Kindergarten through 5th grades. To reduce campus waste, Overland set up three sorting stations in the three different eating areas on campus, each consisting of bins for: landfill waste, recyclables, leftover liquids, and a table for stacking clean trays to be recycled. Student volunteers are on hand daily to incentivize students to sort waste accurately and pack a trash free lunch. **Before Overland took on the TFLC, they were producing 5 bags of landfill trash. Now each day, with sorting and an added emphasis on packing a trash free lunch, they only make 2.5 bags.**

Green efforts on campus were led by students from Student Council who enthusiastically embraced the Challenge. Along with supportive parent volunteers, adults on campus, and 4th and 5th grade volunteer "Trash Troopers" they were able to green their campus by:

- Creating and making signage for three sorting stations on campus;
- Creating a schedule and managing sorting volunteers to ensure sorting accuracy at each station;
- Continuing to educate the school by posting flyers, signs, and announcements on the bulletin board;
- Holding assemblies throughout the year to keep environmental topics at the forefront of school culture;
- Having all students fill out a questionnaire to see how the program can be improved in the future.

Overland did a great job of utilizing passionate parents, supportive administration and dedicated staff members to create a platform for students make positive earth friendly changes on their campus. They have strong plans in place to keep their waste sorting system thriving for years to come. **Congratulations to Overland for successfully completing the Challenge and earning this year's Grades of Green *Greenest Community Award*.**

Castle Rock Elementary School



Castle Rock Elementary is part of the Walnut Valley Unified School District and serves approximately 700 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th. In order to reduce lunchtime waste, Castle rock set up two sorting stations in their lunch area, each consisting of a liquids bucket, a bin for mixed recycling, a landfill container, a bin 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 34 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2018, Castle Rock Elementary had reduced their waste to about 6 bags of trash daily.**

Castle Rock Elementary has a core Grades of Green Team comprised of 29 student volunteers and a 5th grade teacher to advise them. The group worked together to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- Giving out raffle tickets to students that pack trash free lunches and sort correctly;
- Creating a chart at lunch that lets students know exactly what can be recycled;
- Keeping students engaged and interested during lunchtime by creating flyers and posters about the importance of reducing, reusing, and recycling;
- Ensuring every trash can inside classrooms is paired with a recycle bin.

Castle Rock Elementary School inspired and empowered their school community to reduce, reuse, and recycle whenever possible. For that they have been awarded with the *Best Recycling Award* for the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge.

Carthay Environmental Studies Magnet School



Carthay Elementary School is a Kindergarten through 5th grade school, serving approximately 350 students in the Los Angeles Unified School District. To reduce their waste on campus, Carthay focused on improving its existing sorting station in the lunch area to make it more user friendly and intuitive for the students. The station consists of a table for students to place compostable scraps, clean trays to recycle and unopened food to share, a can for landfill waste, a can for liquids waste and a cart for recyclables. Students are encouraged to sort their waste daily by student 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 5 bags of landfill waste each day at lunch. Since implementing the Trash Free Lunch program, the campus has consistently produced only 2.5 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 Carthay. Student volunteers from the 5th grade worked with dedicated staff members on campus to promote green practices at school by:

- Creating a bulletin board on campus to display green tips and encourage recycling;
- Managing the sorting station daily to ensure sorting accuracy;
- Taking the leftover fruit and vegetable scraps to the garden every day to compost and feed the chickens;
- Cleaning the lunch area of trash after students are done eating to keep the campus clean and litter free;
- Taking the recycling and composting message home to their families to start a wave of waste reduction in the community.

Carthay Elementary School inspired and empowered their students to take pride in their campus and work together to keep it clean. For that they have been awarded with the 2017-18 Trash Free Lunch Challenge *Litter Busters Award*.

South Pointe Middle School



South Pointe Middle School is part of the Walnut Valley Unified School District and serves approximately 900 students in grades 6th through 8th. In order to reduce lunchtime waste, South Pointe Middle School set up one sorting station in their lunch area, consisting of a liquids bucket, a bin for bottles and cans, a bin for mixed recycling, a landfill container, a cart 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 30 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2018, South Pointe Middle School had reduced their waste to about 4 bags of trash daily.

South Pointe Middle School has a core Grades of Green Team comprised of 25 student volunteers and five teachers to advise them. The group worked together to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- Managing the waste sorting station and acting as role models to their peers;
- Giving out raffle tickets to students that pack trash free lunches and sort correctly;
- Manage classroom recycling efforts;
- Creating classroom contests to encourage participation in packing trash free;
- Creating a training video to keep current students engaged and introduce the program to new students and school visitors.

For their hard work and dedication to the Trash Free Lunch Challenge Program, South Pointe was chosen as a *Finalist* in the 2017-2018 middle school category. The Grades of Green team presented them with a certificate at their school wide morning broadcast show and they will be receiving a sustainability grant for \$500.

Waite Middle School



Waite Middle School is part of the Norwalk La Mirada Unified School District and serves approximately 600 students in grades 6th through 8th. To reduce their landfill waste on campus, student leaders set up three sorting stations in the various lunch areas each consisting of a paired trash and recycle can. In addition to these pairs, the school has receptacles for CRV recyclables throughout campus and set up a share table in the cafeteria where students can either donate or take unopened food items. Students on campus are encouraged to be trash free and sort their waste by student leaders who monitor the stations daily at lunch and create posters to teach students how to pack a trash free lunch.

At the beginning of the school year, Waite Middle School was producing approximately 16 bags of landfill waste each day

at lunch. After implementing the sorting stations, the campus has cut that number in half and produces only 8 bags daily.

Waite Middle School's Grades of Green Team is comprised of administrators, custodial staff, teachers and student volunteers. This group has held weekly meetings and worked throughout the school year to make tangible change on their campus by:

- Creating their sorting stations and monitoring them daily;
- Creating and presenting a walking assembly script to address issues that were arising with their sorting accuracy;
- Establishing a share table to help eliminate food waste and make sure all students have enough to eat at lunch;
- Making signs and posters to continue campus education and keep the message forefront in the student's minds.

The Waite group of student and adult leaders worked through many challenges throughout the year to develop a program that is sustainable and effective on their campus. **For their perseverance and hard work within the Trash Free Lunch Challenge Program, Waite student leaders were awarded the *Most Determined Award*.**

Roosevelt Elementary School



Roosevelt Elementary School is part of the Lawndale Unified School District and serves approximately 200 students in grades Transitional Kindergarten through 5th. To reduce their waste at lunch, Roosevelt set up one sorting station in their outside eating area consisting of a liquids bucket, a compost bucket, a landfill container, and a food donation cooler. At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 36 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of March 2018, St. Anthony Parish School had reduced their waste to only 10 bags of trash daily.

The school created a 5th grade Green Team that supervised the sorting station each day at lunch, with the support of a 5th grade lead teacher and enthusiastic Rec Aides. The Green Team's main waste reduction goal was to end food waste at the school. Together they pursued that goal by:

- Establishing on-site composting of fruit and vegetable scraps;
- Emphasizing every day, the importance of not taking a food item if you don't want it or don't think you can finish it;
- Collecting sealed, packaged foods and drinks and whole fruits to be redistributed to students during snack time, after school, on field trips, and at the school exit at the end of the day.

The food recovery program is enthusiastically embraced by the entire student body! **Each week the school is able to compost or feed almost all the food that is served on campus. Through this act along the school was able to achieve 72% overall waste reduction. Roosevelt was selected to receive the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge Best Food Recovery Program Award.**

Jackie Robinson Academy



Jackie Robinson Academy is part of the Long Beach Unified School District and serves approximately 1,000 students in grades Kindergarten through 8th. To reduce their waste at lunch, Chavez set up a sorting stations in the cafeteria 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 60 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of March 2018, Robinson had reduced their waste to only 9 bags of trash daily.

The school created two supervision systems. For grades 1 through 5, each classroom identified two students to supervise the sorting stations during their lunch shift. These students were known as the “Junior Green Team.” For grades 6-8, a small team of 5 girls handled the supervision. These girls, known as the “Power Girls,” lead the waste reduction efforts for the school throughout the year, including:

- Creating the waste sorting system and training the Rec Aides, custodial staff, and the Junior Green Team in how the systems work;
- Managing the sorting supervisor schedules;
- Holding weekly contests to reward good sorting behaviors;
- Making weekly announcements to update the schools waste reduction statistics;
- Establishing a food recovery program that collects and donates an average of 1,000 pounds of milk, juice, fruit, and packaged foods every week!

The sorting program is enthusiastically embraced by the student leaders, the plant supervisor, the school administration, teachers and the entire student body. They achieved an impressive 88% overall waste reduction. Jackie Robinson Academy was selected to receive the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge *Green Leaders of Tomorrow Award*.

Charles Helmers Elementary School



Charles Helmers Elementary School is part of the Saugus Union School District and serves approximately 900 students in grades Kindergarten through 6th. In order to reduce lunchtime waste, Charles Helmers Elementary School set up two sorting stations in their lunch area, consisting of a liquids bucket, a bin for mixed recycling, a bin for plastic bottles, a landfill container, and a bin to stack lunch trays. In addition to this,

the school has plans to start collecting fruit and vegetable scraps and composting next year in their school garden. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 17 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2018, Charles Helmers Elementary had reduced their waste to about 4 bags of trash daily.**

To lead their efforts, Charles Helmers Elementary School has a core Grades of Green Team comprised of 17 student volunteers and two parent leads to advise them. They also have a group of younger student volunteers in training called “The Green Beans”. These groups worked together to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- Giving out raffle tickets to students that pack completely trash free lunches;
- Creating educational videos to keep students engaged and remind them how to sort their trash correctly and pack trash free lunches;

- Holding weekly Green Team meeting to trouble shoot any issues that come up and brainstorm to improve the program;
- Hosting a week-long trash free lunches competition to see which classroom could pack the most trash free lunches.

For their hard work and dedication to the Trash Free Lunch Challenge Program, Charles Helmers was chosen as a *Finalist* in the 2017-2018 elementary school category. The Grades of Green team presented them with a certificate at a school wide assembly and they will be receiving a sustainability grant for \$500.

Carr Elementary School



Carr Elementary School is part of the Torrance Unified School District and serves approximately 380 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th. In order to reduce lunchtime waste, Carr Elementary set up two sorting stations in their lunch area, each consisting of a bin for mixed recycling, a landfill container, a bin 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 8 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2018, Carr Elementary had reduced their waste to about 2 bags of trash daily.**

Carr Elementary has a Grades of Green Team comprised of 6 core student ambassadors, 81 student volunteers, and a 4th grade teacher to advise. The group worked together to educate and inspire the community in the following ways:

- Monitoring the sorting stations and giving out raffle tickets to students that pack trash free lunches and sort correctly;
- Cleaning the eating area after lunch daily;
- Keeping students engaged and interested about the program and the importance of reducing waste at weekly flag assemblies;
- Ensuring every trash can inside classrooms is paired with a recycle bin.

Carr Elementary has by far, the largest Grades of Green Team in this year's Challenge and they are continuing to do an awesome job of educating their peers. Due to their strong commitment and high level of student participation, Carr Elementary received the *Best Green Team Award* for the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge.

Skyblue Mesa Elementary School



Skyblue Mesa Elementary School is part of the Saugus Union School District and serves approximately 520 students in grades Kindergarten through 6th. In order to reduce lunchtime waste, Skyblue Mesa Elementary School set up a sorting station in their lunch area, consisting of a liquids bucket, a bin for mixed recycling, a bin for plastic bottles, a landfill container, and a bin to stack lunch trays. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch**

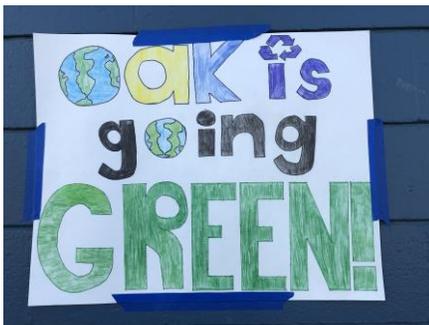
Challenge program, the campus produced 13 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of April 2018, Skyblue Mesa Elementary had reduced their waste to about 2 bags of trash daily.

Skyblue Mesa has a core Grades of Green Team comprised of 50 Peace Patrol students and 5 campus supervisors leads to advise them. The group worked together to educate and inspire the community by:

- Monitoring the sorting stations daily to ensure waste is sorted correctly;
- Encouraging students to pack trash free lunches, and advocating for food sharing;
- Speaking about their program and food waste reduction at a school board meeting;
- Collecting and disposing of classroom recyclables weekly throughout campus.

Skyblue Mesa Elementary School was selected as the *Community Activists Award* recipient for the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge. The Grades of Green team will present them with a certificate at a school wide morning announcement and celebrate their school's accomplishments in the waste reduction program.

Oak Middle School



Oak Middle School is part of the Los Alamitos Unified School District and serves approximately 1200 students in grades 6th through 8th. In their effort to reduce their landfill waste on campus, Oak Middle School created five sorting stations to replace approximately 18 landfill trashcans in the lunch area. The five stations each consist of bins to separate liquids, bottles and cans, mixed recyclables, landfill waste, and trays. Students are encouraged to sort their waste by Grades of Green Team student leaders who work at the five stations daily on a rotating schedule.

At the beginning of their waste reduction program, Oak was producing 18 bags of landfill waste each day at lunch; currently the campus has reduced its waste down to just 10 bags of landfill waste daily.

To achieve their goals in the Challenge, Oak created a Green Team consisting of student volunteers from the Scholarship Club led by the vice principal and two teachers on campus. These students and adults work together to bring environmental awareness to the Oak community by:

- Creating and managing five lunch area sorting systems;
- Making posters and flyers to put around campus and PA announcements to remind students to use the sorting stations correctly;
- Displaying messages about the program on the school marquee to educate parents and community members about the school's waste reduction efforts;
- Handing out raffle tickets to students who sort correctly to encourage participation;
- Presenting their program to other district administrators to spread the word and encourage other area schools to join.

Oak Middle School created a comprehensive waste reduction program on campus that included over 50 students, administrators, custodial staff along with other staff members collaborating and working together. **For their hard work and dedication to the Trash Free Lunch Challenge Program, Oak was chosen as a *Finalist* in the 2017-18 middle school category.**

Whittier Elementary School



Whittier Elementary School is part of the Long Beach Unified School District and serves approximately 1,000 students in grades Kindergarten through 5th. To reduce their waste at lunch, Whittier 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 36 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of March 2018, Whittier Elementary had reduced their waste to only 7 bags of trash daily.

The school created a student Green Team of 4th grade students led by the Vice Principal with support from kindergarten teachers and the plant supervisor. These key people worked together throughout the year to reduce waste at their school by:

- Starting a classroom recycling program in addition to lunch recycling;
- Implementing a waste reduction curriculum in seven classrooms;
- Including breakfast sorting in addition to lunch sorting in their program;
- Hosting a workshop on recycling and composting for parents and guardians.

The Whittier student green team showed tireless dedication to supervising the sorting systems and to encouraging their peers to understand and believe in the process. **Their program resulted in an 88% overall waste reduction. Whittier Elementary School was selected to receive the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge *Most Inspirational Award*.**

Gaspar De Portola Middle School



Portola Middle School is part of the Los Angeles Unified School District and serves almost 2000 students in grades 6th through 8th. To reduce the waste being generated on their campus, Portola set up three sorting stations in their lunch area and also placed blue recycle carts around campus paired with existing trash cans. Sorting stations included bins for landfill waste, blue carts for recycling, and buckets for compostable food scraps. Green team students are responsible for sorting station management. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the**

campus sent all waste to the landfill. As of May, 2108, 14 recycle carts are filled weekly with recyclables that would have otherwise gone to landfills.

To create positive environmental change on campus, a Green team was formed, led by the school's GATE coordinator. The team meets weekly to discuss the program and brainstorm areas for growth. Over the course of the year, this team has spread environmental awareness on campus by:

- Managing waste sorting stations and compost collection on campus;
- Coordinating the placement of recycle carts on campus and wheeling them curbside for service weekly;
- Creating flyers and making announcements to promote waste reduction efforts on campus;
- Implementing a classroom recycling program;
- Organizing and holding an Earth Day event that educated the student body about waste, water conservation and energy.

Portola Middle School has created environmental change and awareness on a large campus with almost 2000 students. They are the first school in their city to implement lunch recycling efforts and their accomplishments are set to create a ripple effect in their community that will continue to create positive change for years to come. **The efforts of this hardworking Green team has earned Portola the Trash free Lunch Challenge 2017-18 City Leaders Award.**

Saint Anthony Parish School



St. Anthony Parish School is a private Catholic school in Long Beach and serves approximately 200 students in grades Transitional Kindergarten through 8th. To reduce their waste at lunch, St. Anthony set up one sorting station in their eating area consisting of a liquids bucket, a compost bucket, a recycle bin, a landfill container, and a food donation cooler. The school set up a modified sorting station in the TK-Kinder yard that includes a trash can and an area for stacking trays. **At the start of their Trash Free Lunch Challenge program, the campus produced 3 bags of trash each day at lunch. As of March 2018, St. Anthony Parish School had reduced their waste to only 1 bag of trash daily.**

The school created a supervision system that includes two teams – a 5th grade team to guide the younger students in grades 1- 5, and an 8th grade team to guide the older students in grades 6, 7, and 8. These two teams numbered 35 students and were led by the student council ecologist. The teams integrated their new waste reduction program into the school’s overall mission to “nurture God’s creations.” Together they greened their school by:

- Sending home flyers and earth tips to include the whole school community in their green efforts;
- Reading earth tips during each morning assembly;
- Hosting weekly sorting contests between grade levels;
- Working with Food Finders to reduce food waste and donate uneaten food to the hungry;
- Establishing on-site composting of fruit and vegetable scraps.

The sorting program is enthusiastically embraced by the entire student body and the school was able to achieve 67% overall waste reduction. St. Anthony Parish School was selected to receive the 2017-2018 Trash Free Lunch Challenge *Green Steward’s Award*.

Berkeley Hall School



Berkeley Hall School is a Kindergarten through 8th grade private school, serving approximately 260 students in Los Angeles. In order to reduce their waste on campus Berkeley Hall implemented the use of two sorting stations, one in the elementary school lunch area and one in the middle school lunch area. Each station consists of small buckets to collect liquid waste and fruit and vegetable scraps to compost, a cart for mixed recyclables, a landfill can, and a crate for stacking clean

paper trays to be recycled. Students are encouraged to sort their waste daily by student council members who lead the green efforts on campus. **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, Berkeley Hall now produces just 6 bags of landfill trash daily.**

Student Council members were recruited by staff members to lead the Challenge on the Berkeley Hall campus. These students worked with staff members to green their school by:

- Establishing daily composting of lunchtime fruit and vegetable waste;
- Managing the sorting stations to ensure sorting accuracy;
- Holding raffles for students who packed trash free lunches

Berkeley Hall School inspired and empowered their students to take action for a greener school campus. They established a successful compost program that has been incorporated into the science curriculum on campus. For their efforts, they have been awarded with the 2017-18 Trash Free Lunch Challenge *Best Compost Award*.

		<h2 style="text-align: center;">2017-2018 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
St. Anthony Parish School	Long Beach	6	1	5	900	\$225	214
F.D. Roosevelt Elementary School	Lawndale	36	10	26	4680	\$1170	640
Berkeley Hall School	Los Angeles	10	6	4	720	\$180	260
Our Lady of Guadalupe School	Hermosa Beach	4	2	2	360	\$90	200
Charles Helmers Elementary	Valencia	17	4	13	2340	\$585	800
Carr Elementary	Torrance	8	2	6	1080	\$270	380
Cyrus J. Morris Elementary	Walnut	8	4	4	720	\$180	500
Helen Keller Middle School	Long Beach	11	2	9	1620	\$405	291
Prisk Elementary School	Long Beach	15	5	10	1800	\$450	553
Skyblue Mesa Elementary School	Canyon County	13	2	11	1980	\$495	528
Carthay Environmental Studies Magnet	Los Angeles	5	3	2	360	\$90	349
Gaspar de Portola Middle School	Tarzana	40	40	0	0	\$0	1500

Robinson K-8 School	Long Beach	60	9	51	9180	\$2,295	1000
Victor Elementary School	Torrance	17	3	14	2520	\$630	950
Castle Rock Elementary School	Diamond Bar	34	6	28	5040	\$1,260	700
Overland Elementary School	Los Angeles	5	2	3	540	\$135	500
Waite Middle School	Norwalk	16	8	8	1440	\$360	595
Oak Middle School	Los Alamitos	18	11	7	1260	\$315	1200
Whittier Elementary	Long Beach	34	7	27	4860	\$1215	1060
South Pointe Middle School	Walnut	30	4	26	4680	\$1,170	900
TOTAL:	12 Cities	387	130	257	46,080	\$11,520	12,920

Total number of bags diverted every year due to the environmental leadership of the 2017-2018 schools	46,080
Total amount of trash diverted in tons in the 2017-2018 school year	460
Total amount of trash diverted in tons in the past 7 years among all 137 schools	2,782
Total number of students educated and inspired in 2017-2018	12,920
Total number of students educated and inspired in the past 7 years	109,051
Money saved by schools on trash bag liners in the past 7 years	\$71,070

Press

[Long Beach Newsroom](#)

[Orange County Breeze](#)

[The Signal – Santa Clarita Valley](#)

[Easy Reader News – Hermosa Beach](#)

[Daily Breeze – South Bay](#)

[KHTS Radio News – Santa Clarita](#)

[Kings News](#)

[Southern California Sustainable Living](#)

Testimonials

“This challenge made our school a better place in many ways: it reduced the trash, it gave our older students a sense of responsibility, and it provided a tangible example of how we can make a BIG difference by doing small things altogether.”

“The support from Grades of Green was great, as were the many resources provided.”

“Very positive experience and aligned with our school's call to be good stewards of our natural resources.”

“The Trash Free Lunch Challenge truly pushed the Our Lady of Guadalupe school's green team because we were being pushed to achieve everything we possibly could. We are surrounded by people who have the same passion and truly want you to succeed in your goals.”