**Egg Harbor Township Schools**

[www.eht.k12.nj.us](http://www.eht.k12.nj.us)

Administration Offices

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Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** **Contact: Ellen Gregory**

March 16, 2016 (609) 646-8441, ext. 1017

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**\*\*\*INVITATION TO COVER\*\*\***

**Egg Harbor Township Schools Kick Off *No Foam Cafeteria Zone Project***

**with ‘Trayless Thursday’**

**Who:** Egg Harbor Township School District

**What:** Trayless Thursday

**When:** Thursday, March 24, 2016 (lunch periods)

**Where:** All District Schools

Times? Egg Harbor Township High School, 24 High School Drive, EHT

**12:30 – 1:15 pm**, Alder Avenue Middle School, 25 Alder Avenue, EHT

Time? Fernwood Avenue Middle School, 4034 Fernwood Avenue, EHT

Time? C.J. Davenport Elementary School, 2501 Spruce Avenue, EHT

Time? C.J. Davenport Primary School, 2499 Spruce Avenue, EHT

Time? E.H. Slaybaugh Elementary School, 11 Swift Drive, EHT

Time? E.H. Slaybaugh Primary School, 13 Swift Drive, EHT

Time? H. Russell Swift School, 5 Swift Drive, EHT

**EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP, NJ –** After months of planning by the district’s Green Team members, Egg Harbor Township Schools will kick off its grant-funded ‘No Foam Cafeteria Zone’ pilot project with a “Trayless Thursday” planned for March 24.

Made up of teachers and administrators, Green Team members have brainstormed ideas while meeting after school, during professional development planning time, and while traveling to and from sustainability workshops and conferences to help them learn new ways to reduce/eliminate the use of polystyrene (Styrofoam) in the cafeterias, create sustainable solutions that can be replicated in other schools, districts, and classrooms; develop new Board of Education policies that promote sustainability practices, and introduce student-driven recycling programs in each of the 10 schools.

Initial data calculated by Alder Avenue Middle School students showed that Egg Harbor Township School District uses about 7,300 polystyrene cafeteria trays per day, or 1.3 million trays per year. Stacked one on top of the other, 1.3 million trays would equal about four miles or 15 Empire State Buildings, and end-to-end, they would cover a span of ground equal to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and New York. Like other school districts that use the cost-effective, single-use polystyrene trays, once the trays are used, they are discarded by students into trash cans taking up enormous amounts of space and requiring the use of many trash bags. Along with other trash, these trays are hauled away and exported to landfills where they do not disintegrate.

 Egg Harbor Township School District contracts with the Township of Egg Harbor to haul solid waste. If the district-wide recycling and no-foam efforts are successful, the Green Team hopes to see a reduction in trash that is hauled which could calculate into savings for local taxpayers.

The $10,000 grant was made available through the *Sustainable Jersey for Schools* Small Grants program. Funded by the PSEG Foundation, the grant program is in place to help districts and schools make progress toward a sustainable future in general, and specifically toward Sustainable Jersey for Schools certification. Egg Harbor Township School District was honored with the *2015 Sustainable Jersey for Schools Leadership* *Award in* 2015 by the New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA) for demonstrating district leadership in coordinating the work of multiple schools and enabling all schools in the district to achieve a minimum of Bronze certification from Sustainable Jersey for Schools in the first year to the program. Nine of ten EHT schools received Bronze certification. Egg Harbor Township High School received Silver Certification and the 2015 Sustainability Champion Award.

For more information on these programs, please contact Ellen Gregory at (609) 646-8441, ext. 1017 or via email to gregorye@eht.k12.nj.us.

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***About Sustainable Jersey for Schools***

*Sustainable Jersey for Schools is a certification program for public schools in New Jersey. Launched in October 2014, Sustainable Jersey for Schools is a program of Sustainable Jersey, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that provides tools, training and financial incentives to support and reward schools as they pursue sustainability programs. The process is one hundred percent voluntary and each school can choose whether it wants to get certified and the actions it wants to do in order to achieve enough points to get certified.*

*Sustainable Jersey for Schools is underwritten by the New Jersey School Boards Association, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU) Clean Energy Program and the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA). Small Grants for Sustainable Jersey for Schools are underwritten by the PSEG Foundation and the New Jersey Department of Health. The Founding Sponsors are South Jersey Gas, New Jersey Natural Gas and NJM Insurance Group. The program supporters are the Foundation for Educational Administration and the Bayer Foundation.*

*Program partners include: New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), New Jersey Association of School Administrators (NJASA), New Jersey Association of School Business Officials (NJASBO), New Jersey Education Association (NJEA), New Jersey Parent Teacher Association (NJPTA), New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA), New Jersey School Buildings and Grounds Association (NJSBGA) and The Sustainability Institute at The College of New Jersey.*

*Website:* [*www.SustainableJerseySchools.com*](http://www.SustainableJerseySchools.com)

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