



George L. Catrambone Elementary School

Long Branch Public Schools
240 Park Ave, Long Branch, New Jersey 07740

"Together We Can, Juntos Nós Podemos, Juntos Podemos"

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To Whom it May Concern,

This year the George L Catrambone School worked with Sustainable Jersey for Schools and the Rutgers Cooperative Extension to work on eliminating food waste in our school. After an astounding look at how much food is wasted daily thanks to an extensive waste audit over 3 days in our cafeteria, it was easy to see improvements were needed. While we are awaiting installation of the composter, there were actions we put into place to begin reducing the amount of waste we produce daily. With little actions and behavior changes from our students much of the waste that ends up in landfills has been diverted to feed more students. We are committed to eliminating as much of our waste as possible and are looking forward to having the composter up and running beginning this summer and in September as the new school year begins.

To facilitate reduction without the composter being available we began with some changes in our cafeteria. After meeting with the experts from SJS and Rutgers Cooperative Extension, we began a more conscious approach of serving food in the lunch line daily. Moving towards a student's choice and selections vs offerings approach we eliminated excessive food being taken when it was not desired. As long as students select three items from the offerings their meal is complete and all components of the meal did not need to be taken. This greatly reduced the amount of whole fruit and milk being disposed of each day.

In another effort, we added spices to encourage consumption of the healthy veggie choices. Students were more likely to eat with additional seasoning available contributing to the consumption of healthier choices as well as reducing throw out without tasting.

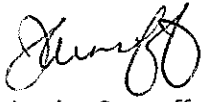
Fifth grade students began a vermiculture experiment in their classrooms feeding excess raw food waste to a worm farm, studying the results of how this helped the worms and could contribute to the garden in our school's courtyard. Much of the waste produced in this grade level contributed to the ongoing experiment and also helped to reduce some of our waste.

Another suggestion we received and implemented was the inclusion of share tables. With students eating in classrooms this year, sharing tables or baskets not only reduced the amount of unnecessary food waste but also helped to send hungry students' home with a nutritious snack at the end of the day. Students placed unwanted wrapped or whole foods with coverings like fruits or packaged unopened vegetables, cheese sticks, or milk in basked, stored them in a mini fridge. Students could take extra to eat from those baskets if wanted. At the end of the day the items left over were passed out to students as they were dismissed.

Lastly, a food waste curriculum was presented to staff and students and lessons were taught monthly to bring awareness to the community. Students learned ways to reduce their food waste, creative ways to reuse or recycle it, or even re-grow it. This awareness led to an overall reduction in the cafeteria. The lessons and many pictures from these lessons are shared in the documentation.

While we anxiously await our composter, we are confident that the steps we have taken to begin reducing waste will continue and create a reduction in our waste all while making sure that students gain the nutritious food they need and the education that backs the strategies we are using to reduce food waste.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Cunneff', written in a cursive style.

Jessica Cunneff

Principal

George L Catrambone School