

School Wellness Team Newsletter

April 2019 Holy Cross School, Champaign

School Breakfast - The Best Meal of the School Day

Thank you to all the students who have attended any or all of our school breakfasts this year! This year we have served 282 breakfast meals to our students. This is a really awesome number, except when you compare that to the 14,146 hot lunches the kitchen has served so far this school year. You hear continually that “breakfast is the most important meal of the day.” Which begs the question: are our students eating a healthy breakfast before coming to school each day?

During National School Breakfast Week in March, the School Wellness Team implemented a two pronged approach to investigate the students’ breakfast habits. The first approach was for each homeroom teacher, for each day of that week, to ask their students if they ate or skipped breakfast and the reason(s) why they skipped breakfast. In looking at the tally results, it would appear that the vast majority of our students eat breakfast every morning at home. There are, however, a handful that skipped or missed breakfast each day in every grade, including kindergarten.

Here are some of the reasons the students gave as to why they missed or skipped breakfast:

- Woke up late
- Don’t like eating breakfast
- Too busy packing their lunch
- Too busy getting ready for school
- Not hungry
- Didn’t feel like it
- Running late

Our second investigative approach was requesting parents to fill out a short online survey. We received 20 responses to our survey. 95% of parents say their children eat breakfast at home; 15% of parents say their children eat breakfast in the car; and only 50% of parents say their student’s breakfast is healthy. The majority of parents say their student does NOT eat breakfast because they “are not hungry”, with a smaller portion reporting that the student is “running late for school” or is “too picky”.

At this time the School Wellness Team will probably stay the course and sponsor two before school breakfasts each month, including into our next school year. And we will gladly serve any and all students who want to dine with us from 7:30-7:50 am!!!

Good-bye Straws!!

If you have been reading or listening to the news, you will have heard that many cities, recreational parks or other groups around the country have become more eco-conscious and are instituting eco-friendly practices. For instance, my family visited the Kennedy Space Center over winter vacation and they do not use straws at all on their campus. Many of the restaurants around Cape Canaveral were also using paper straws. Cities like Chicago and Sacramento have banned plastic bags or are taxing plastic bag use in favor of encouraging consumers to use reusable shopping bags.

In case you are not aware, Ms. Henwood and Mrs. Crull have led 39 students, 9 - 5th graders, 17 - 6th graders, 4 - 7th graders, and 9 - 8th graders students through the National Geographic's GeoChallenge this spring semester. This year's GeoChallenge focused on plastic and its impact on our environment. Additionally, 5 teams out of 8 advanced to regionals in Bloomington, IL. They present their project ideas on Friday March 29 and are dreaming of being selected for the national competition.

“The GeoChallenge is an annual themed and standards-based competition from the National Geographic Society that challenges student groups in grades five through eight across the United States to develop a creative solution to a real-world problem. Students form teams—between four and six people—and respond to a problem, challenge, or critical issue by using research, collaboration, creativity, and communication to create and present real-world solutions, just like National Geographic Explorers. Teams with the best projects can advance to the regional and national levels.”

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education/student-experiences/geochallenge/>

The school kitchen and cafeteria already have some eco/earth friendly practices in place.

- Use of washable trays, bowls and water cups instead of paper/styrofoam.
- Use of silverware instead of plasticware. Although there are some plastic sporks available.
- Recycling bins in the cafeteria for students to use.
- Kitchen staff recycles all their cans and recyclable plastic containers, as well as any paper and cardboard.
- Kitchen staff wears washable aprons and visors instead of plastic aprons/hairnets.
- Kitchen staff only cook what is needed to serve the student lunch requests each day, along with a small amount of “extra” servings in order to reduce food waste.

However, there is always room for improvement. One such improvement is that the cafeteria will no longer be using MILK STRAWS after the month of April, with the exception of our Littlest

Crusaders (preschoolers). The cafeteria spends approximately \$100 on milk straws throughout the school year. They are extraordinarily cheap. That is close to 30,000 plastic straws that are then thrown away and end up in a landfill... forever. In order to purchase the same number of paper straws, it would cost approximately \$1000, which is extraordinarily cost prohibitive. At this moment in time the kitchen's food wholesaler, Kohl Wholesale, does not sell paper straws. I am hopeful that within the next 3-5 years as this movement continues to grow, that more wholesalers will begin carrying eco-friendly products. But until then, we will make small changes in our school environment in order to help make big changes in the overall global environment.



Cafeteria to Celebrate Earth Day by Measuring Our Food Waste

Earth Day began on April 22, 1970, making this year the 49th anniversary! The School Wellness Team is looking to make an impact on our student and family awareness of food waste.

On Monday April 29 we would like 4 or 5 parent volunteers to help in the cafeteria to sort and weigh food waste from every student's school lunch that day.

Food waste has been a constant discussion point among school nutrition professionals for years now. There have been many ideas floated for decreasing food waste among the student population. The cafeteria quickly embraced the "offer" option in regards to school lunch service 5 years ago. There are 5 components to a school lunch: protein, milk, vegetable, fruit and grain. Students must take at least 3, with one being a fruit or vegetable. This allows each student pick a lunch that best fits their hunger level and desired food choices. However, anyone who spends time in the lunchroom can tell you, it

is not just the hot lunch children who are throwing away food. Unfortunately, many cold lunch kids throw away whole sandwiches, pieces of fruit and milk. Would you be available to help us on Monday April 29 to help sort and weigh all the waste that is gathered in the school cafeteria?

You can sign up to help at:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090A44AA92AA64-earth>



Europe bans single-use plastics. And glitter could be next.



By [Emily Tamkin](#) March 28 at 11:48 AM The Washington Post (www.washingtonpost.com)

For the European Union, it was the final straw. Final single-use plastic straw, that is.

The E.U. parliament on Wednesday voted to ban single-use straws as well as single-use plastic cutlery, stirrers, plastic plates and balloon sticks in a move that could lead to a ban on single-use plastics in E.U. member states by 2021. The new laws also say that, by 2025, the content of plastic bottles should be 25 percent recycled.

The United Nations estimates that 800 species are affected by marine debris, up to 80 percent of which is plastic. The new laws came about as a result of increasing concern about water pollution, as well as China's decision to cease waste processing.

Frans Timmermans, a vice president of the European Commission and champion of the fight on single-use plastics, said: "Today we have taken an important step to reduce littering and plastic pollution in our oceans and seas. We got this, we can do this."

Plastics weren't the only products banned — cotton swabs were banned, too. And some other products won't be banned, but their manufacturers will nevertheless have to make some changes. Packaging for wet wipes, for examples, must now tell potential consumers that the product contains plastic and therefore could be environmentally hazardous.

Single-use straw bans in particular are one popular but controversial way to combat environmental waste. Seattle became the first major U.S. city to ban single-use plastic straws — San Francisco followed soon after, as did Washington. And it wasn't just cities — businesses tossed the straws (from their counters, that is, not into the oceans), too. McDonald's in Britain and Starbucks also both announced they would be doing away with plastic straws.

But some say that, by focusing on straws, environmental activists are forgetting those with disabilities who rely on plastic straws to, say, hydrate, and have asked that policies pushed make exceptions for those who rely on plastic straws.

In other almost certainly controversial environmental advocacy news, campaigners are pushing for a ban on glitter in Britain. The reason? Most glitter products come from plastic, making it potentially environmentally hazardous in oceans.