

ELIMINATING STYRO-FOAM FROM ELEMENTARY CAFETERIAS

Partnering with the City of Santa Barbara's Environmental Services Department and working with Jeff Davis, owner of Eco Green Supply, all ten elementary site cafeterias in our District are now able to serve all students and staff on fully compostable serviceware in support of a Food Scraps Program. We have been able to offset our costs of these specialized compostable goods by adhering to the practice of scratch cooking which ultimately lowers food cost.

The City of Santa Barbara's Environmental Services Department orchestrates, through a general assembly for all elementary students, a discussion and demonstration on the process of composting and how food scraps, paper products, and trash assort into different colored containers. The students are able to absorb this information at lightning speed and the entire Food Scraps Program can be taught, learned and facilitated in one day.

IMPLEMENTATION

Initially, a cost analysis was performed in order to assess hard costs associated with the switch from Styro-Foam to compostable serviceware. The difference was somewhat off-putting but the outcome, absolutely necessary in the face of what this Director sees as an ethical responsibility to the community and world at large. Again, finding cost savings through scratch cooking and more efficient time and labor management, we have been able, as a department, to fund this program. We have no alternative!

LESSONS LEARNED

When a conviction is rooted in a fundamental and essentially humanitarian cause, the lessons learned are life long. As a Director, I must carefully evaluate and balance issues that are looming and imperative, then prioritize and orchestrate the outcome. For our district, the eradication of Styro-Foam in the effort to change culture and create a more environmentally conscious student population means acting now to reach our little ones so that when they enter high school, recycling will be second nature. We can not afford to shirk such a valuable earth lesson.

