

SUSTAINABILITY
SUMMIT



Tackling Food Waste In New Jersey Schools

May 5, 2023

Speakers

Jennifer Shukaitis

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Rutgers Cooperative Extension

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Member, Leonia Environmental Commission

Kelly Stone

Teacher, Long Branch Public Schools

Elysia Caraballo

Director of Community Schools, Newton Public Schools

Agenda

- Introduction – **Véronique**
- Overview of food waste problem and strategies for reducing food waste in schools – **Jen**
- Leonia's food waste story – **Julie**
- Long Branch: George L. Catrambone School's experience with food waste reduction – **Kelly**
- Newton: Halsted Middle School's experience with food waste reduction – **Elysia**
- Q&A

Sustainable Jersey for Schools Waste Actions

New actions focused on food waste are currently under development – funded by DEP

↑ BACK TO TOP EXPAND ALL ↓ COLLAPSE ALL ↑

Waste Management & Recycling

Waste Audit

10 Points

📍 Priority 🏠 School 👥 Collaboration

Document Recycling Rates

10 Points

🏠 School

Food Waste Management

15 Points

🏠 School

Materials Reuse

10 Points

A close-up photograph of a pile of food waste. The waste includes various vegetable scraps like green leafy pieces, orange peels, and purple eggplant pieces. There are also pieces of paper, including a white paper with a logo and some crumpled paper. The background is dark and out of focus.

Food Waste: Background and School Solutions

Jennifer Shukaitis
Assistant Professor
Department of Family & Community Health Sciences
Rutgers Cooperative Extension

Background on Food Waste

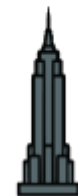
In the US we waste
30%-40%
of our food system.



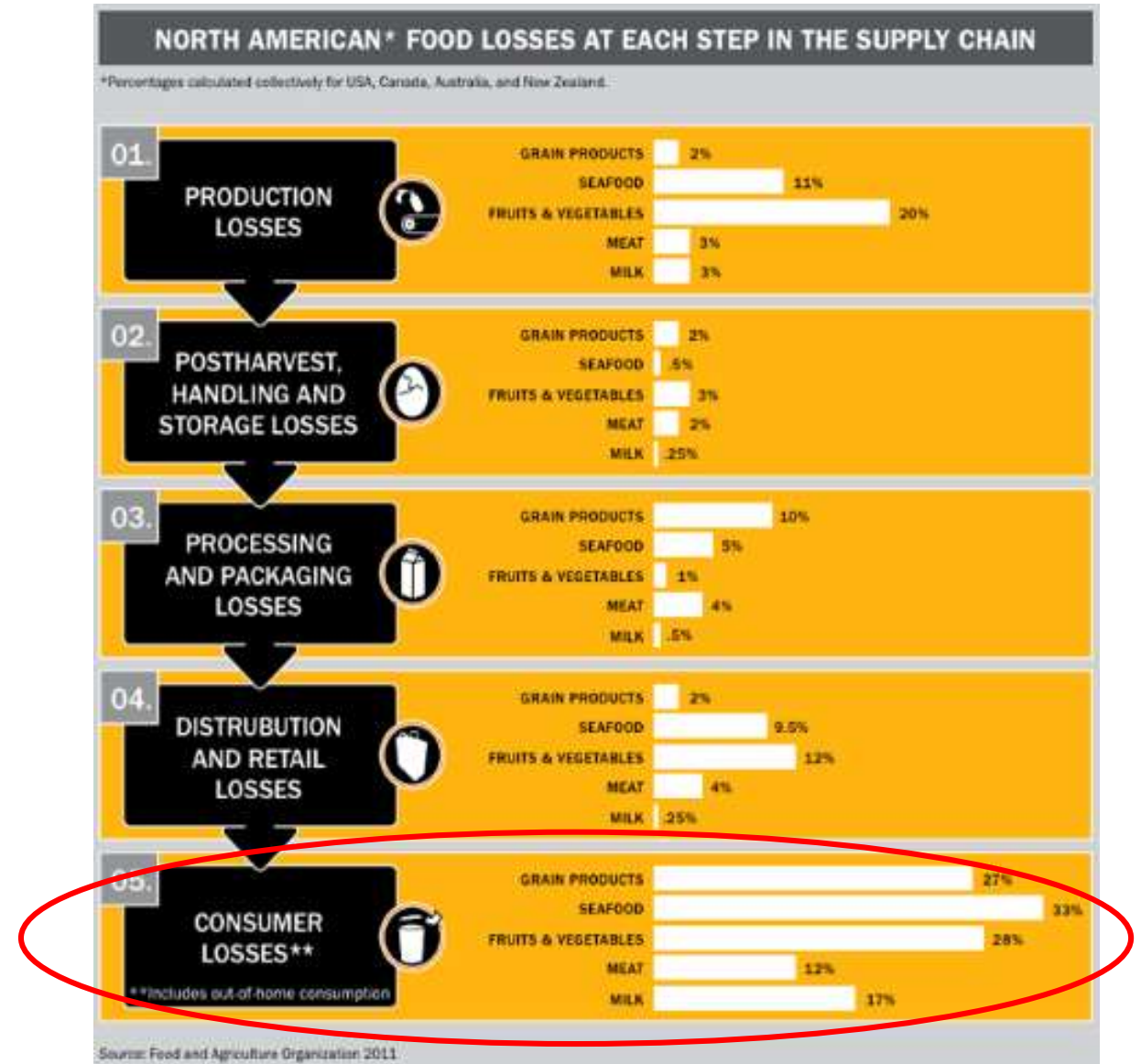
On average, each person
wastes more than
**20 pounds of food per
month**

**80
billion
pounds
each year**

Enough to
fill the
Empire
State
Building
1,000
times.



Where Does Food Loss & Food Waste Happen?



Why Food Waste Matters



Environmental Impact

The FAO estimates that if FW globally were a country it would be the **3rd largest emitter** of greenhouse gas after China and the US.

Economic Impact

Wasting 30-40% of the food we grow in the US is equal to throwing away **\$161-\$218 billion** per year.

Social Impact

10.5% or 13.7 million U.S. households were **food insecure**, yet we throw out food that is very nutritious.

National & State Food Waste Reduction Goals



On September 16, 2015, the first-ever national food loss and waste goal in the United States was launched, calling for a 50% reduction by 2030.



In August 2017, the first Food Waste legislation in New Jersey was passed. Bill S3027 establishes that NJ will reduce its Municipal Solid Food Waste by 50% come 2030

A cardboard box filled with various fruits and plastic containers. The box contains several red and green apples, some wrapped in clear plastic. There are also several clear plastic cups and containers, some of which appear to be partially filled or used. The text "Focus on: School food waste" is overlaid in white on the center of the image.

Focus on:
School food waste

Focus on School Food Waste

USDA
United States Department of Agriculture

REDUCING FOOD WASTE

WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO TODAY

USDA's Economic Research Service estimates that 31% of the overall food supply at the retail and consumer level went uneaten in the U.S. in 2010.

Serving smaller portions can reduce plate waste by **AS MUCH AS 30%**.

Flavoring lunch drinks from 20 to 30 minutes reduced plate waste by nearly one-third.

SMARTER LUNCHROOM STRATEGIES such as how foods are named and where they are placed in the cafeteria, can reduce food waste and increase fruit and vegetable consumption by **UP TO 70%**.

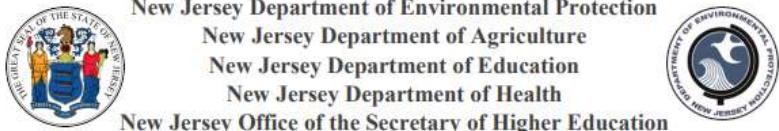
SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE STEPPING UP TO THE CHALLENGE WITH INNOVATIVE NEW STRATEGIES, SUCH AS:

- Educating students to keep a clean and beautiful cafeteria for consumption later in the school day.
- Using portion sizes based on the Smarter Lunchrooms Self-Assessment Score Card as a guide to avoid over-portioning.
- Flipping signs, labels, and signs to draw attention to items that are going to expire soon.
- Encouraging students to use up their lunch.
- Using portion sizes for adult operators.
- Collaborating with local farmers on composting and food donation programs.
- Offering reusable, reusable, and clean reusable containers.
- Engaging the U.S. Food Waste Challenge to help your school or community reduce food waste.

The State of New Jersey School Food Waste Guidelines



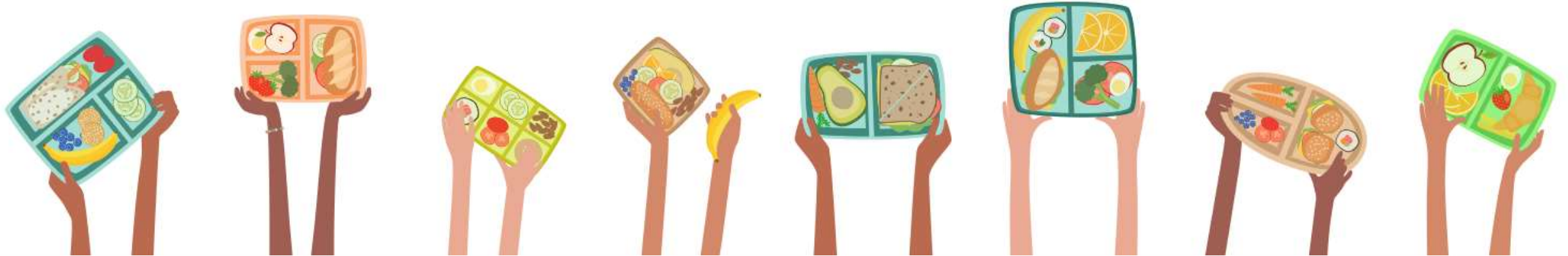
K-12 Schools Edition November 2019





School
solutions to
food waste

School Food Waste Literature: Interventions



Policy

- Time allocated to lunch
- Recess before lunch



Education

- Nutrition education for students & personnel



Changes to the Cafeteria Environment

- Menu changes
- Smarter Lunchroom Movement



School Solutions:
Smarter Lunchroom Movement

Smarter Lunchroom Movement

- The Cornell Behavioral Economics Center researches how behavioral economics influences students' food choices.
- Make healthy choices visible, convenient, and appealing to students
- Students *select, eat, and enjoy healthy school food*





Smarter Lunchroom Movement (cont'd)

- In the language of *behavioral economics*, these factors are called ***Visibility*** and ***Convenience***, and they influence consumers' choices of everything from snacks to cars to political candidates.
 - Choices influenced by environment
 - Most choices are so subliminal they seem automatic
 - Very hard to “out-think” this tendency, even if you are aware of it
 - **Change your environment = change your habits.**
-

Smarter Lunchroom Movement Strategies



Focus on Fruit



Vary the Vegetables



Highlight the Salad



Move More White Milk



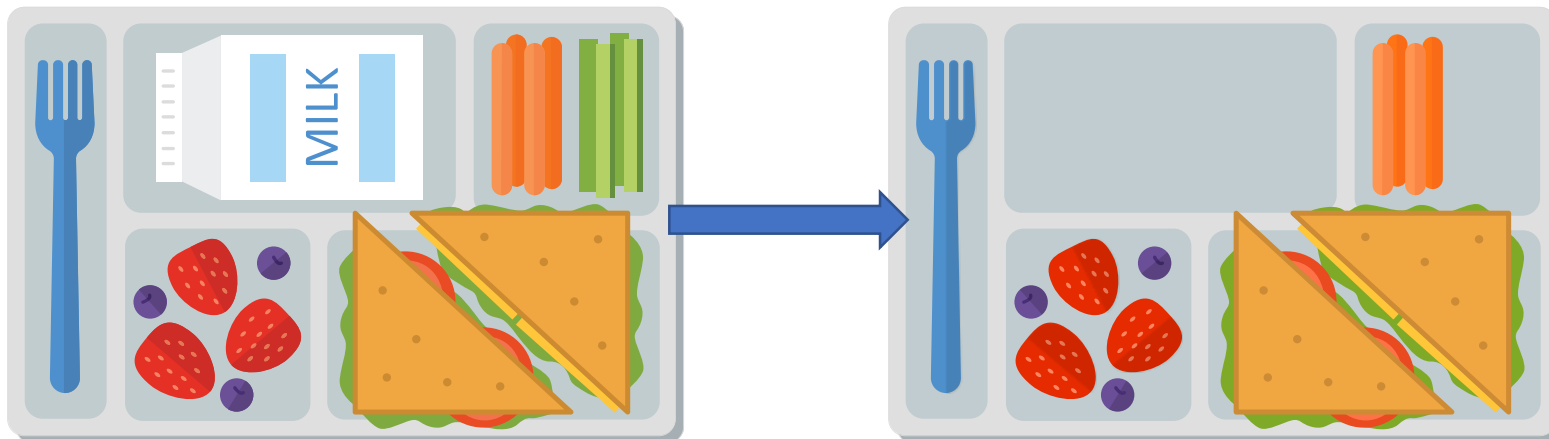
Welcoming Lunchroom Atmosphere



School Solutions:
Offer vs. Serve

USDA's Offer versus Serve Guidelines

- Offer versus Serve (OvS) Guidelines
 - Allows students to DECLINE some of the food offered in a reimbursable lunch or breakfast.
 - Does not affect the unit price for Breakfast or Lunch
- School is reimbursed for a meal if a student takes:
 - 3 or 4 of the 5 food components offered for lunch
 - As long as, there is at least a 1 cup of the fruit or vegetable component.





School Solutions:
Share Tables

Share Tables

- Designated place in cafeteria where students place uneaten food
- Share Table food may be used to address the second most desirable way to reduce food waste (feed hungry people) by re-using food in schools OR donating outside the school



Share Tables

- Only non-perishable, pre-packaged foods are allowed on share tables.
- Fruits and Vegetables that are wrapped or have a thick skin are allowed
- Milk, cheese, cut fruit and any other temperature-controlled foods need to be put in an ice bath or refrigerator.



Food Waste Legislation

- Laws protect those who donate food in good faith
- Federal and State laws exist to protect and encourage food donations
 - Good Samaritan Act
 - New Jersey food waste legislation





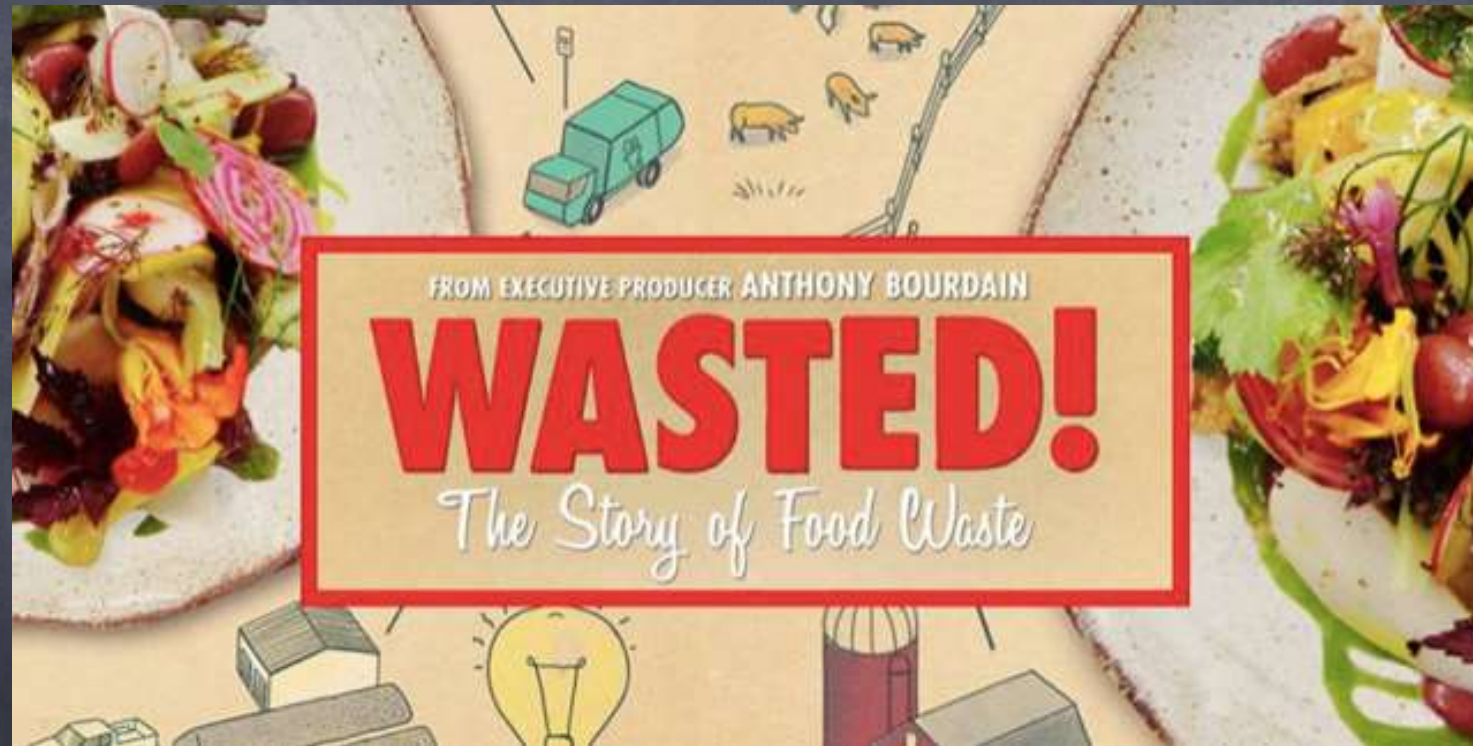
Summary

- We throw out 30% - 40% of the food that is produced in this country
- Food waste has implications for food security and the environment
- Schools can address food waste in their cafeterias
- Potential school solutions:
 - Education for students & personnel
 - Increase time for lunch
 - Have recess before lunch
 - Smarter Lunchroom Strategies
 - Offer vs. Serve
 - Share Tables

Sustainability in the Leonia Public School District

Julie E. Ulbrich
5/5/23

Hometown Hero: Anthony Bourdain



10 bags of
garbage to
2 bags
daily!

WE DID IT!

Get FREE Compost & Tree Saplings!

Every day is Earth Day in Leonia!

10 bags of cafeteria waste a day to only 2! How?
The Green Team's food waste dehydrator and recycling initiatives.

1 Composting Food Waste in the Cafeteria
Over 100 pounds of food waste is separated by the children and dehydrated into compost every day. Compost is used to nourish the plants on our school grounds.

2 Recycling Milk & Juice Cartons
Children separate milk and juice cartons from the trash at lunch and add them to the paper recycling stream.

3 Paper Lunch Trays Instead of Styrofoam
Dirty paper trays are composted and clean paper trays are added to the paper recycling stream.

Check out ZeroWasteLeonia.org to learn more!

Join us in celebrating Earth Day
Friday, April 21, 2023
at Dismissal - All ACS and LMS Exits
The Leonia District Green Team and Leonia Shade Tree Commission will be handing out **FREE bags of cafeteria compost and FREE tree saplings!**

Food Waste Separation





SAVE EARTH

SAVE EARTH

SAVE EARTH

SAVE EARTH

LOVE OUR PLANET

Maschio's

stack YOUR TRAYS

trash GOES TO THE LANDFILL

recycle PLASTIC GLASS AND METAL

empty LIQUIDS

Go GREEN!

LOVE OUR PLANET

170,544 sheets of paper

Recycle Me

5,776 gallons of water

LEOPHA GOES GREEN

97 tons

Recycle Me

400 double lengths of waste

Trays

Food Garbage

BRUTE

Share Fruit

Simpler separation = quicker lines



EcoVim and Biomass



food for school



Earth Day
Tree sapling
and biomass
distribution
community





Long Branch Public Schools

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

George I. Catrambone Elementary school
Long Branch Public Schools
Long branch, nj





Long Branch Public Schools

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

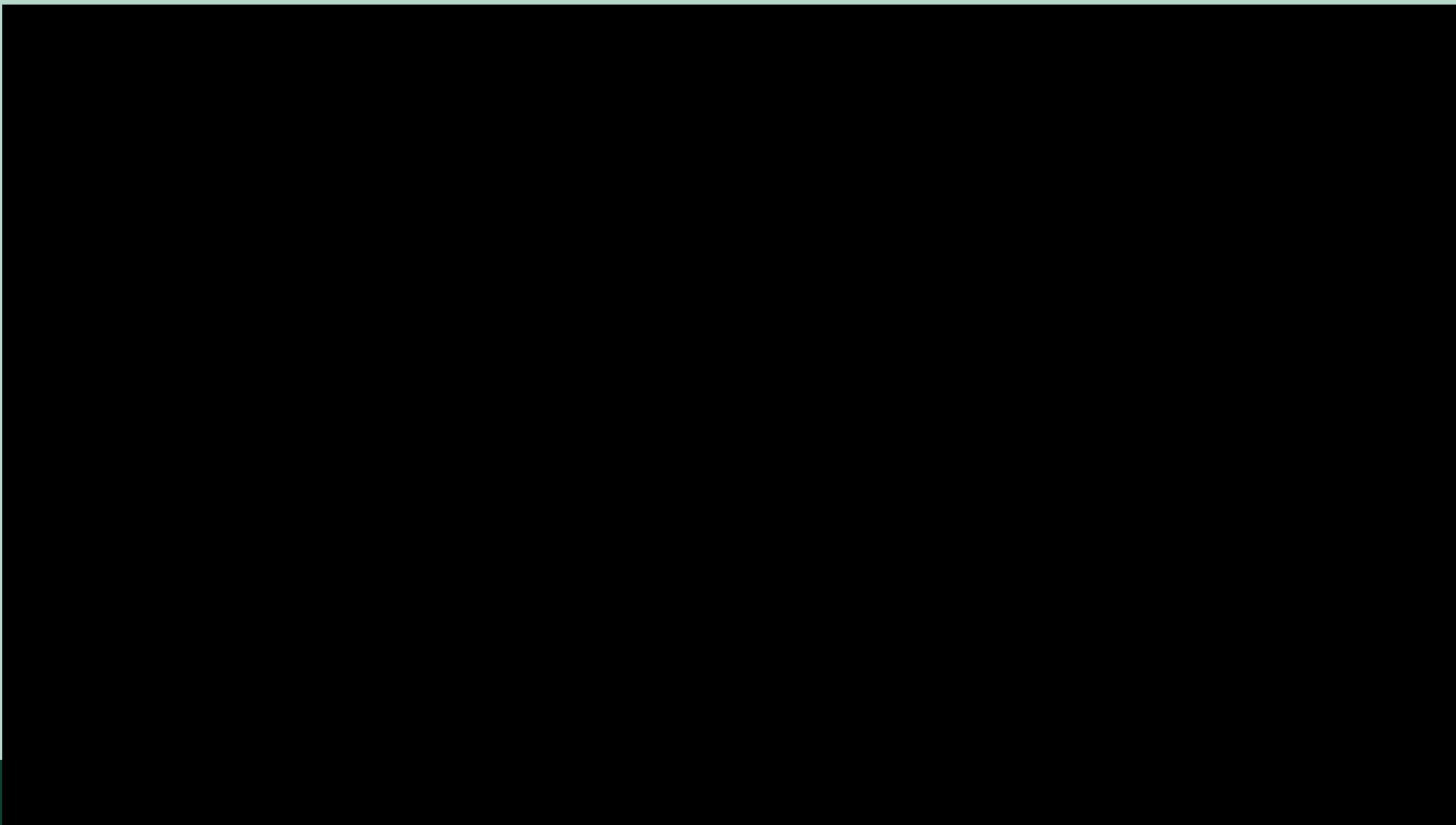
Our Journey Food Waste to Compost





Long Branch Public Schools

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





Long Branch Public Schools

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

GLC Waste Warriors





Long Branch Public Schools

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





Long Branch Public Schools

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Long Branch Public Schools

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Lunch Tray Treasures!



Newton Public Schools and Food Waste Reduction with our Community

Elysia Caraballo, Director of Community Schools

Food Waste Reduction and the Students

Our Food Waste Warriors created a video on the importance of food waste reduction and how they could help.



- Students know that if they take a vegetable or fruit they do not need to take milk
- Milk was the most wasted product in our cafeteria

Food Waste Reduction and the Students

Share Table

- Run by students, monitored by staff
- Custodians refrigerate any leftovers
- After School students distribute during the after school program



Family Involvement

THE BRAVE NEWS

THE NEWTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS' QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

- Our food waste efforts were shared with families in our district newsletter including how the Share Table functions
- We are also in the process of working with the Town of Newton to educate families on food waste at home

Staff Involvement

Garden Maintenance

- Students demonstrated for staff how to use the food compost in the school gardens
- Then everyone worked together to prepare the rain garden for the spring
- After the garden demonstration a compost sign up was created for staff



Community Involvement

- We partnered with the Sussex County Hunger Coalition and Local Share to bring the food waste experience full circle
- Students at the middle school participated in a gleaning at Circle Brook Farms in Andover, NJ



Community Involvement



- The harvested eggplant was brought to a free pop up produce market and the SNAP nutrition educator provided families with eggplant recipes.
- We have another gleaning and market for August

Community Partnership

Ag Choice-Capsule Connections Program

Students with special needs in our high school transition program work with AgChoice. AgChoice is commercial food waste composter. They offer a variety of jobs that help students with transferable skills, fine motor skills, teamwork, independence and responsibility, organization and sorting, communication, problem-solving to achieve goals that will not only help the environment, but could prepare them for their future career. Ag Choice is also partnering with the Town of Newton on town wide food composting through a Department of Agriculture Grant.



Sustainable Jersey for Schools program actions: <https://www.sustainablejerseyschools.com/actions/>

Actions related to food waste reduction:

- [Waste Audit](#)
- [Food Waste Management](#) (Composting)
- [Recycling Non-Mandated Materials](#) (e.g. juice pouches, chip bags)
- [Healthy Food Choices Beyond the Cafeteria](#)
- [Promote Locally Grown Foods](#)
- [School Gardens](#)

Sustainable Jersey municipal program actions: <https://www.sustainablejersey.com/actions/>

Rutgers Resources:

- Rutgers Food Waste at Schools webpage: <https://sites.rutgers.edu/food-waste/food-waste-at-schools/>
- School Food Waste Reduction Toolkit: <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/school-food-waste/food-waste-summit-toolkit.pdf>
- Rutgers guidance on share tables: <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/fs1352/>

Upcoming Events and Opportunities

FREE ENERGY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND MUNICIPALITIES IN ELIZABETHTOWN GAS, NEW JERSEY NATURAL GAS, AND SOUTH JERSEY GAS SERVICE TERRITORIES

Free technical assistance to identify and apply for utility incentives and New Jersey's Clean Energy Program (NJCEP) incentives for energy efficiency audits and facility upgrades. This technical assistance is funded by Elizabethtown Gas, New Jersey Natural Gas, and South Jersey Gas.

For more information please visit: bit.ly/EnergyTAforMunisandSchools

2023 MUNICIPAL CERTIFICATION CYCLE

The next deadline to apply for certification is **May 12, 2023**. The final application deadline is **July 27, 2023**. View the full cycle timeline on the 2023 Certification Cycle page.

For more information please visit: bit.ly/MuniCertCycle

2023 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GRANT PROGRAM

Atlantic City Electric and Sustainable Jersey are pleased to offer **\$50,000** to support municipal environmental stewardship and resiliency projects in Atlantic City Electric's service territory. Municipalities are encouraged to work with local organizations on applications, which are due **June 29, 2023**. An informational webinar will be held on **May 15, 2023 from 1:00pm - 2:00pm**.

For more information please visit:
<http://www.bit.ly/SustainableCommunitiesGrantProgram>

TRI-COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY GENERAL MEETINGS

This Sustainable Jersey Regional Hub will host virtual meetings on a variety of sustainability topics throughout the year. The next meeting is **May 31, 2023 from 7:00pm - 8:00pm**.

For more information please visit: <http://www.bit.ly/Tri-CountySustainability>

2023 SCHOOL CERTIFICATION CYCLE

The final deadline to apply for certification and Digital Schools Star Recognition is **June 15, 2023**. View the full cycle timeline on the 2023 Certification Cycle page.

For more information please visit: <http://www.bit.ly/SchoolsCertCycle>

TREES FOR SCHOOLS PROGRAM, TREE-PLANTING GRANTS FOR NJ PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

The Trees for Schools program will provide **\$2.5 million** in grants to New Jersey public school districts, county colleges and state colleges and universities to fund the planting of trees on campuses across New Jersey. Competitive grants of **\$10,000 to \$500,000** will fund costs associated with planning, site preparation, trees, planting, watering, monitoring and related expenses over a three-year period. Applications are due on **July 13, 2023**, for spring 2024 plantings. An informational webinar will be held on **May 18, 2023 from 3:00pm - 4:30pm**. The Trees for Schools program is a collaboration of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, The College of New Jersey and Sustainable Jersey.

For more information please visit: bit.ly/TreesforSchools

Sustainable Jersey Underwriters and Sponsors

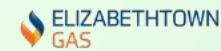
PROGRAM UNDERWRITERS



GRANTS PROGRAM



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SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT



Thank You

Session slides will be available on sustainablejersey.com by 5/12.

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