

Incarnate Word Academy

Zero Lunch Waste Challenge

sponsored by Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District

On April 28, 2009, Incarnate Word Academy (IWA) participated in the Zero Waste Lunch Challenge sponsored by the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District.

Method Used:

Each class had their lunchroom trash weighed on Monday, April 20th to establish baseline data. Trash weight for the entire school and the individual classrooms were posted in the school's main hallway to allow IWA students to visually see how much they throw away. This was also used by individual classrooms to set goals for trash reduction.

IWA Nature Club members and Junior Naturalists led an awareness campaign to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle throughout Earth Week (April 20th-24th). Activities during the week included:

- Daily announcements educating students about Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling
- Banner and poster contests to promote Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling and Zero Waste Lunches
- In-class Zero Waste Lunch presentations given by IWA Nature Club members
- Student-produced PowerPoint presentation shown in each classroom
- "What is IWA Throwing Away?" DVD shown in each classroom describing the Waste Audit that was conducted in January 2009 and the results that were found
- IWA Nature Club field trip to the Medina Solid Waste Recycling Plant

Results:

All of the IWA classes reduced their lunchroom waste from the pretest on April 20th to the Zero Waste Challenge on April 28th.

The total weight of all IWA classroom lunch trash on April 20th was 93.5 pounds. In contrast, the April 28th Zero Waste Challenge Day trash was only **24.25 pounds**. That is a difference of **69.25 pounds!**

IWA students have embraced the Zero Waste Lunch concept and the majority of the students are now using cloth napkins, plastic reusable containers, etc. In addition, students have been discussing healthy lunches and appropriate portions, with their parents to reduce food waste. The bulk of IWA's trash is the wax covered milk cartons. Currently, the IWA Nature Club students are researching the feasibility of converting to recyclable plastic milk containers and are preparing to write letters to administrators and distributors. (IWA is part of the Cleveland Catholic Diocese who has a contract with Dairyman's and they do not offer a plastic bottle option). This will be our next action step at IWA as we continue to Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle!!!