

Schools Are Implementing 'Share Tables' To Cut Back On Food Waste



[KATE STREIT](#) · 1 WEEK AGO

Schools across the country have found a way to cut back on food waste and feed hungry kids: They are implementing "[share tables](#)."

Students are encouraged to drop off any food or drink they don't want at the table, which other kids are then free to take from throughout the day. Whatever is left at the end of the day goes to a local food bank or charity. It sounds a bit like a [little free library](#) for food!

The concept is a great way to reduce waste as well as feed people who are hungry.



[Getty Images | Jana Birchum](#)

In Orange County, Florida, about 20 public elementary schools have implemented the tables to great success, according to the [Orlando Sentinel](#). In addition to donating to charity, some schools choose to send the leftover food home with kids whose families are in need.



83 likes 4 comments

Tune in to Twitter tomorrow at 1pm ET for a LIVE school lunch food waste audit (and 6th-grade silliness). Follow @melissaAtery or @foodfuelfuture on Twitter to find it. Meanwhile, there's a link in our profile to our new blog post about school food waste audits. * * #foodwaste #schoolfoodwaste #foodwasteaudit #education #STEM #sharetables #nofoodwasted #nokidhungry #savethefood #foodconservation #schoollunch #sustainability #sustainableschools #ivaluefood

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“Without this program, that would literally go in the dumpsters,” Pastor Stan Reinemund of Redeemer Lutheran Church, which receives food from Aloma Elementary School, told the Sentinel.



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The church puts some of the items in its food pantry and uses the rest for a weekly breakfast served to about 100 homeless people each week.

Eighth grader Nick Iannone started a share table at his school, James H. Moran Middle School in Wallingford, Conn., and takes pride in helping out his fellow classmates.



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"Students that are maybe less fortunate than others, don't have a lunch or a snack at school lunch, they can come up and take fruit or we've seen things like chips and yogurt come off the tables," Iannone told [WBUR](#).



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He says that since the table is open to all kids, there is no stigma in partaking in the free food offered.



333 likes 12 comments

Excited about our new #sharetable at school! 20 unwanted items were left in the share basket today for another student enjoy! #childhunger #schoolnutrition

In June 2016, the [United States Department of Agriculture](#) endorsed share tables as “an innovative strategy to encourage the consumption of nutritious foods and reduce food waste.”



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“Children may not always want to consume certain food or beverage items included in their meal,” the department wrote. “Share tables” are tables or stations where children may return whole food or beverage items they choose not to eat, if it is in compliance with local and state health and food safety

codes. These food and beverage items are then available to other children who may want additional servings.”



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What a great idea! Hopefully even more schools catch on to this clever idea!