

Topic: Greening Olathe South High School**Convener:****Room:**

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Discussion Summary:

INTRODUCTION: remarks about the waste reduction project: students did a waste sort at Harley...dumping, sorting and weighing waste; then made changes in the school—went from 64 bags of trash per lunch to 11 when took out the Styrofoam trays; got approval to get compostable plates in three different schools two weeks ago...the whole school knew about the change coming to Olathe South (what we put in the dumpsters)...now we compost the trays and also yard waste. One participant asked: How does lunch feel different? Student reported it feels calmer. We haul 12-15 bags of plastic that would have gone to the landfill...recycle paper, too... What we're striving to do is to show kids that they can make a difference.

The group viewed introductory slides then video. (The video can be viewed and downloaded on the www.olatheschools.com website: go to "schools" and "Olathe South".) The students will take this video to businesses, such as Garmin, and the District; 74 percent of waste can be eliminated from the landfill, as demonstrated by Harley Davidson, discussed in the video. One assignment for the kids is to find the alternatives to disposables (e.g. sugar cane flatware). Styrofoam plates are 4 cents apiece; the biodegradables are 7-8 cents: on the front end it costs more, but on the back end, with waste reduction costs, it will be a savings.

Video highlights: the plastic bottles just turn into toxics in the landfill; the average person who eats in the cafeteria (at Harley's cafeteria) will cause 83 pounds of trash per year (2.2 pounds of waste per day)...we're going to have to change the way we do trash; it's going take maturity and a change.

So, they are sharing the DVD around the district and are trying to start making a difference just with this. If we can get all of the Harley facility folks, then it can spread from there. It's kind of taking off and spreading like wildfire.

What we don't know is how to get on the docket for city council meetings. We want to ask for it to be mandated that all the schools have to do this, get our kids to work together to make this happen.

ISSUES RAISED BY SESSION PARTICIPANTS:

There are lessons to be learned from Europe, where they didn't have the luxury of landfills—look at opportunity, availability and motivation—20 years ago everyone owned their own shopping bag in Germany, they charged us for disposables—it is a marvelous thing you're doing—the City of Olathe does composting; also glass—rumor is that Deffenbaugh's rates are going up 300 percent; Olathe has the budget for it, but not so in Jackson County—get people together that see it as a way to make money—one participant offered to take the DVD to every school in Jackson county

Meeting time: Session 1: 9:30 a.m.**Recorder:** June Holte