

Federal Street School Composting Starts with A Bang

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Recorder Staff/Tom Relihan Amy Donovan of the Franklin County Solid Waste District shows Federal Street School fourth-graders Jayden Tyler and Shelby O'Leary a bin that will be used to collect food waste from lunch for the school's new composting program on Tuesday, November 15, 2016

By TOM RELIHAN

GREENFIELD – Federal Street School fourth-grader Jayden Tyler tugged a pair of blue latex gloves on as he peered into a bright yellow bin in the cafeteria.

Behind him, students munch happily on spaghetti and meatballs. For some, whose eyes may have been bigger than their appetites, Tyler and that bin represent a shift in where the leftovers end up.

The school on Tuesday became the latest facility in the Greenfield School Department to begin composting its food waste, following in the footsteps of the Discovery School at Four Corners, the Math and Science Academy and Greenfield High School, which started their on programs in the spring.

Donovan said the programs represent a “significant waste diversion,” since the program collects not only food and liquid waste, but paper food boats, napkins, lunch trays and milk cartons, too. It’s all sent to Martin’s Farm for composting, saving the environment from pollution and the district money in waste removal.

At the end of the school's five lunch periods, the bins had collected 81 pounds of compostables, Donovan said. "That means 91 percent of waste from lunch (that day) at Federal Street School was composted, and only 9 percent was sent to a landfill as trash," she said. "Those are some of the best results I've ever seen."

In the first week of the program at each of the previous three schools to implement it, Four Corners collected 273 pounds of food and paper waste, while Math and Science Academy collected 215 pounds. Greenfield High School collected 550 pounds.

Four Corners has been routinely diverting about a ton of food waste per month to composting, and each of the schools has significantly reduced kitchen waste.

"These positive results are continuing because students are getting very proficient at sorting their waste," Donovan said. "The sorting lines are set up for success, and the cafeterias are still producing the same number of bags of compost each day."
