



FOOD WASTE IN OUR SCHOOLS

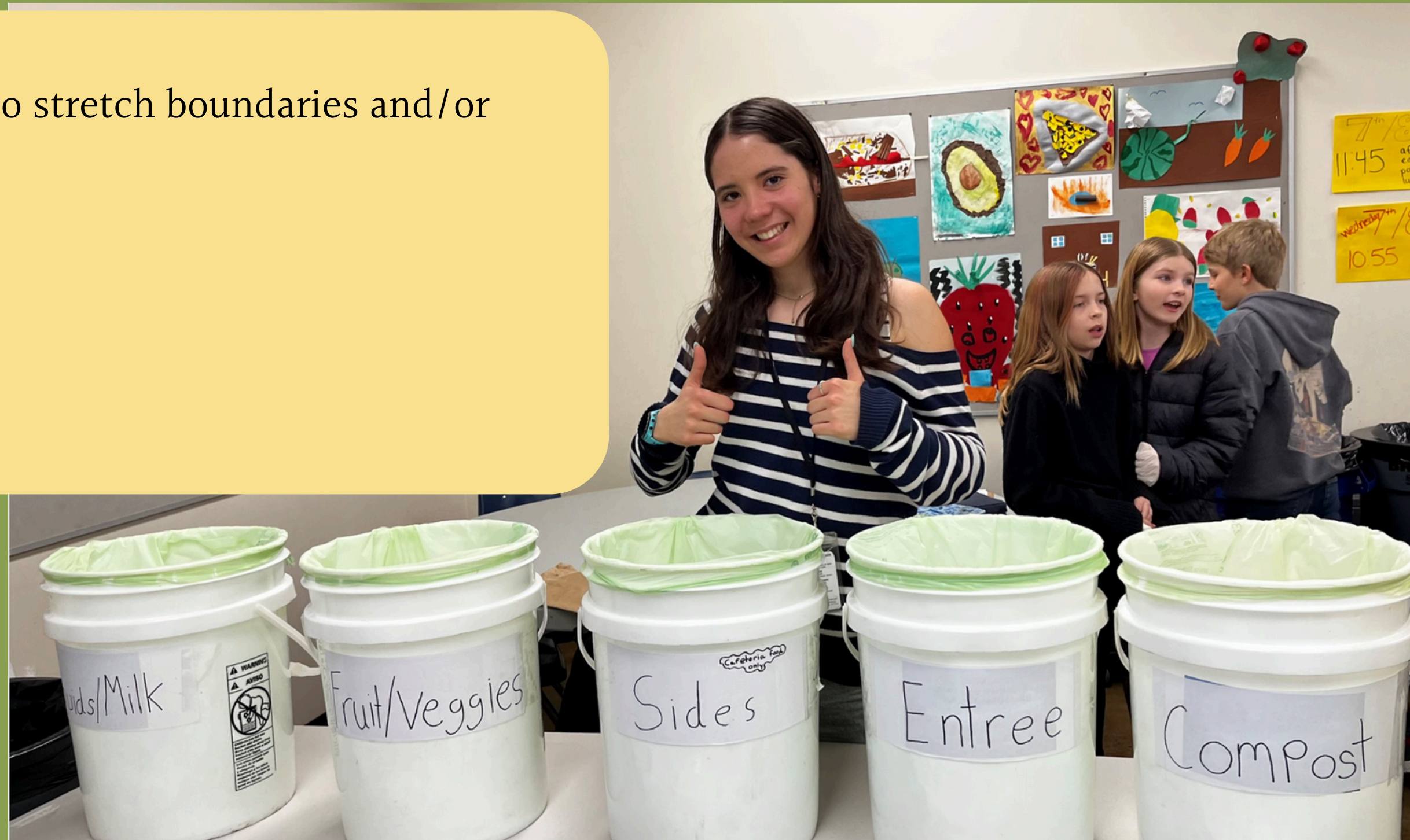
How much is wasted, why,
and what we can do

MY CAPSTONE

- 8th grade project at TRAILS, meant to stretch boundaries and/or addressing a problem
- Mentor; Magdalena Winter

What I chose

- Preventing food waste
- Food waste audit



WHAT IS A FOOD WASTE AUDIT

- Measure how much food is wasted (by students getting school lunch) in buckets
- 4 days during lunch
- Team of 4-6 student volunteers
- Interview students on why they didn't finish their food
- Compile data



Why conduct a student food waste audit?

1. Student food waste audits are a quick way to learn which kinds of foods go uneaten by students in a school cafeteria. The data gained from an audit can help schools develop specific strategies to reduce wasted food. Most importantly, the audits identify why the students are throwing certain foods away, which can help schools develop strategies to encourage students to eat their nutritious meals.
2. Activities performed during an audit including project planning, data collection, data analysis, and conducting interviews, can be incorporated into math and science curriculum or used towards community service hours.
3. After an audit, schools will have a better idea of how and where to reduce food waste. Reducing food waste can help schools save money by reducing the cost of garbage collection. Reducing food waste also reduces the stress we put on natural resources through production of uneaten food, while helping reduce greenhouse gas pollution (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).



Photo by Melissa Terry, University of Arkansas

Food Waste – A National Problem



31% of food at the consumer & retail level goes uneaten
(Buzby et al.)



Only 24% of people say they are very knowledgeable about reducing food waste
(John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health)



Food waste is the single largest component of waste sent for disposal, much of which ends up in landfills, where it generates methane, a powerful greenhouse gas
(U.S. Environmental Protection Agency)





Sorting food



Audit week!



Student volunteers interviewing other students



Findings

103 lbs per week



Food waste at TRAILS

What

26
lbs.

of food wasted every
day



.4
lbs.

per student/per day

more than

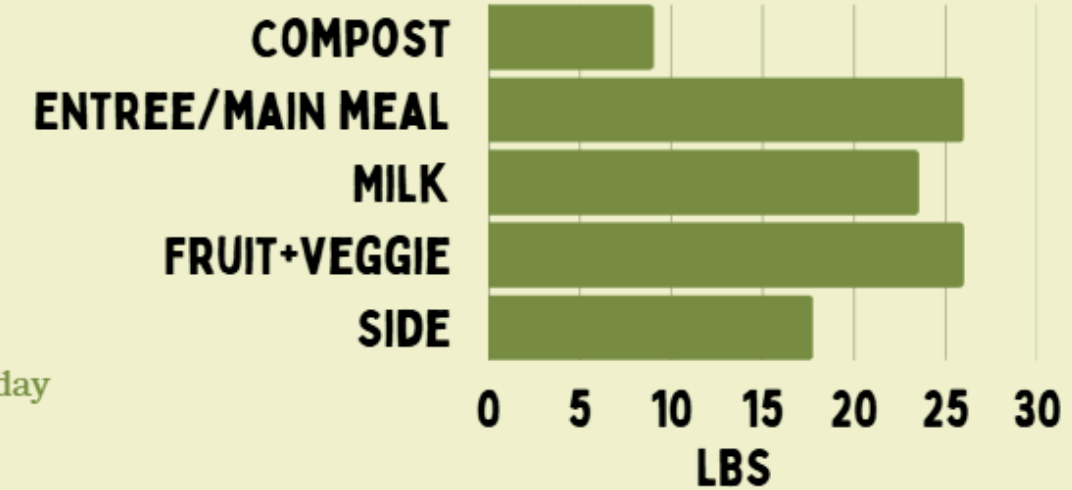


3,458 lbs.

wasted every year
at TRAILS alone

avg 68 students get hot lunch daily
~150 TRAILS students

Types of Food Wasted (over 4 day audit week)



Why

Students on why they
didn't finish their food



Food quality*
40%

Full
33%

Not enough
time
26%

*e.g., taste, didn't like food

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Students

- Use share Basket (unopened food redistribution)
- Take only what you will eat

TRAILS School/Staff

- Longer lunch period
- Recess before Lunch

ASD

- Cutting oranges into quarters
- Clear signs prompting/encouraging less waste
- more prominent signage and location for share basket
- Food scrap pickup Program



Sources:

- [Harvard Chan school of public health, 2015](#)
- [ScienceDirect, 2015](#)
- [Peaceful playgrounds fact sheet, unknown year](#)
- [Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2004](#)

Food scrap pickup program

What

- All food scraps go into ultra-secure bin
- 2x per week bin pickup
- Offsite composting
- Pilot: starter program for TRAILS, for 6 months
- Free for up to a year



Food scrap pickup program

Why

- USDA law requires K-8th grades portions size for school lunch to be the same
- Less money spent on trash
- Waste gets picked 2 times a week for this proposal, most likely less for current trash
- Food waste kept out of landfill lessens methane emissions
- Brings student awareness to food waste

Oregon families on average waste
\$1600 worth off food each year

Sources:

- Eugene.gov, [food waste prevention for households](#)

THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?