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Massachusetts Envirothon Steering Committee.

Dear Committee Members,

As a Food Service Manager for Sodexo at the Fitchburg Public Schools I have had the pleasure of working with the Fitchburg High School Environmental Club. I began working with them in May of 2022. I was interested in engaging students at the high school in the issue of food waste from our lunch program. Although we did not get to complete any projects that school year it set the stage for August.


In October of 2022, I once again met with the club and proposed that they collaborate with me on solving the issue of food waste and how to decrease the amounts. They were excited about the project and immediately agreed. We developed a plan of action which included conducting a food waste study at the high school, reviewing the results and taking at least one action.

On December 21, 2022 we conducted the study during all lunch periods. We were joined by a local nonprofit, Growing Places, that was also working on the food waste issue. The study tracked what students threw out and why. The students from the club interviewed their peers as to why items were thrown out. Without their help we would not have been able to conduct such a thorough evaluation. The data from the study was analyzed by Growing Places and returned to the students.

As a group we were able to look at the data and determine the most prominent issues. This would allow us to create an action plan. After reviewing the data, the students realized that the most prominent issue was that students were confused on what they had to take and what was an option. Based on this information the students came up with a plan to create and film a PSA that would run at all of the district schools. They created a script and filmed



the PSA, which will run beginning next school year.



Food waste has been an issue in schools for many years. Working with the Environmental Club allowed me to get a clear picture of why students were throwing out certain items. Based on the work that the club did I am able to get the attention of students and help them to understand exactly what they need to take for lunch and hopefully avoid foods from becoming waste.

When the club decided that this would be their project for the year I was very excited. Trying to communicate to students at the different levels in a school district is very difficult. Having the club actually talk to their peers gave me the information I needed to identify the issue was a game changer. There is nothing better than having students help to solve issues at their own school.

While working on this project many questions arose about the requirements of school lunch and breakfast. We had many discussions on exactly what was required for the school lunch program. This allowed me to instill knowledge that these students would not have had otherwise. I am confident that many of their peers also learned more than they wanted to know about school lunch.

I totally enjoyed working with all of the students in the Fitchburg High School Environmental Club and look forward to continuing the relationship. I found the students to be engaged, resourceful and willing. Overall I believe it was a good experience for both the students and myself.

Warm regards,

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