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## In the Middle: Composting at Krueger

By KARLEY RIGGS Jan 22, 2019



Karley Riggs

Did you know that Krueger Middle School is now composting and recycling lunchroom waste?

Our environmental science teacher, Ms. Daisy Lee, came up with this idea and we started in April of 2018. Every lunchtime, a group of student volunteers helps other students compost and recycle. This involves a garbage bin, a recycling bin, buckets for compost, bins for chip bags and clear plastic bags, and a “share table.” After eating, instead of just dumping the contents of trays into the trash, students put each item in the correct place.

Last year, Krueger had more than 10,000 bags of cafeteria trash a week. Now, with composting, we have a much smaller amount of trash and use a lot fewer bags.

You might be wondering, where does this compost go? Students take it to a place on the Krueger property not too far in the woods where we dump it so it can decompose. Bugs such as millipedes, centipedes, slugs, spiders, and worms feed off of this compost.

Composting helps our environment by helping the soil hold carbon dioxide. In addition to emission reductions, compost replenishes exhausted soil by replacing trace minerals and organic material, reducing erosion and helping stormwater runoff. The lunchroom waste we recycle also helps the environment because it's an effective way to reduce greenhouse gases. The untouched food items (like milk and fruit) from the "share table" get eaten by our friends or go to local food pantries and shelters, which is much better than sending them to the landfill.

Some of the compost we make will be used at Krueger to help our landscaping. You can try composting at home, too. To improve sandy soil: Work in 3-4 inches of compost. Then top it off with mulch such as plants and leaves, wood chips, bark, hay or straw. Mulch retains moisture and cools the soil.

Our students and our environmental science teacher encourage everyone to try composting and recycling. It takes some work but can also be fun. There are many advantages — saving money, energy, water, and the environment! It feels good doing something small that can have such a big effect.

Karley Riggs is a student at Krueger Middle School. In the Middle is a regular column produced by MCAS middle school students.