

# Saving the Planet One Lunch Tray at a Time



The Green Trays Program is a partnership with Norman Public Schools and Sodexo that focuses on waste reduction and sustainable practices in the cafeteria. The program started on April 22nd (Earth Day) 2024 at Lincoln Elementary, McKinley Elementary and Jefferson Elementary. Previously these schools provided meals in single use styrofoam containers, aka plastic foam. One common estimate is that styrofoam can take up to thirty percent of the space in some landfills, and the lifespan of styrofoam in a landfill is around 500 years\*. By using reusable, washable trays we have reduced cafeteria trash in each of these locations by 50%. Because the pilot program was so successful and well received, we doubled locations this school year to include Wilson Elementary, Jackson Elementary and Roosevelt Elementary. The plan is to add three more schools when operations with the current participating locations are fully integrated.

\*Society of Environmental Journalists,

<https://www.sej.org/publications/backgrounders/styrofoam-facts-why-you-may-want-bring-your-own-cup#:~:text=Once%20in%20the%20landfill%2C%20it.put%20it%20way%20beyond%20that.>