

THE CAMBRIDGE RINDGE AND LATIN SCHOOL

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April 27, 2012

Dear CRLS Community,

Soon CRLS will be part of the exciting environmental initiative in the Cambridge Public Schools called *Food to Flowers*, the collection of lunchroom food scraps for curbside pickup. These food scraps go to a farm to be composted into nutrient-rich soil that will be used to grow flowers and food. Composting is nature's way of recycling.

CRLS joins the successful programs already underway at the King Open, Graham & Parks, Peabody, Tobin and Cambridgeport Schools. The CRLS 10th and 11th graders are very familiar with this program as they participated at the 9th grade campus. Since the program began in 2009 about 40 tons of food scraps have been collected.

Cambridge businesses have been part of the City's composting efforts since 2006. There are now 70+ businesses participating, including universities, supermarkets, hotels and restaurants. Plus, thousands of households compost food and yard waste in their backyards. Some residents even compost with worms in their apartments.

CRLS will enjoy many benefits from composting, including:

- Students gain first-hand experience of environmental stewardship and responsible citizenship outside of the classroom.
- The school will be recognized as an environmental leader for its green practices and for preparing well-rounded, socially responsible students.
- Students will help the District to reduce the amount of waste that is disposed of as trash. Composting is a waste component of the Cambridge Green Schools Initiative (CGSI).

DPW estimates that CRLS produces over 100 pounds of food scraps per day. The "bioware" containers and plates used to serve food in the cafeteria can be composted.



Frequently Asked Questions:

How will the composting program work?

The collection system will be easy, clean, and efficient. There will be several trash areas, and each will have four clearly-marked sections. When done with their lunches, students will:



1. Pour out all **liquids** in the **brown section**.
2. Put empty **recyclables** in the **blue section**.
3. Put **trash** in the **black section**.
4. Put **compostables** in the **green section**.

After lunch, the custodian will put the bags of compostable materials in curbside collection containers. A private hauler will bring the material to composting facilities that turn organic waste into nutrient-rich soil to help grow food.

What's compostable?

All food scraps and most food-soiled paper. Yes: meat, fish and dairy products, including bones; napkins; paper lunch bags; paper plates; paper food containers; and compostable plastic containers used to serve cafeteria food. Paper plates and cups that are not from the cafeteria shouldn't go in the compost because they likely have a plastic coating. Remember, no meat, fish or dairy in your home compost. This material is accepted in the *Food to Flowers* program because it's taken to a large composting facility that can handle it.

It is very important that everyone at the school do their part to make sure only food scraps and soiled paper are placed in the green compost section. Thank you very much for your attention to this.

What's not compostable?

Styrofoam, condiment packets, plastic, metal, snack bags and glass, and anything non-biodegradable. Use the liquids section for leftover drinks, soup and ice. We want to keep the compost and the trash as dry as possible.

Where else will there be composting at CRLS?

The media cafeteria and the Falcon's Nest will also participate. The CRLS cafeteria and RSTA culinary arts program kitchens have been composting since January.

What can be recycled?

The same materials that are accepted in the City's curbside recycling program can be placed in the blue recycling section, as long as they are empty of liquids and food, and have minimal food residue. This includes: cans, bottles, juice boxes, foil containers, foil, cereal bowls, regular plastic containers, paper bags, pizza boxes, and paper coffee cups. Remember, bioware should be placed in the compost section only.

You are important to this program's success and to our collective efforts to reduce waste and make our school even greener. Thank you in advance for your support of and participation in this program.

Sincerely,

Damon Smith
Principal