

BOOMERANG LUNCHES

Part of our Eco-School Program

Did you know that food, yard and garden waste makes up 30 % of the garbage in our landfill sites?

In June, our school was accepted into the District School Board of Niagara's Eco-School Program. (Take a look at www.dsbn.edu.on.ca to see other schools that are involved. Last year, Colonel John Butler School participated in this program as a pilot school and we will be working closely with their staff to identify ways that we can form partnerships and learn from their experience. Mrs. Inglis, Mrs. Andrews and Mrs. DiVincenzo will head up the Eco-Team in our school. We will also be looking for parent volunteers to help us out!!

Many of our students and families have made a big effort to send along recyclable containers that can be used to take home leftover foods, to help reduce the volume of garbage at school each day. Many schools across Ontario are moving toward Boomerang Lunches as a way to make a difference... for our environment. The purpose of a Boomerang Lunch is not to transfer trash disposal responsibilities from the school to home. An important objective of the program is to encourage parents and students to review and think about the way they prepare and package lunch foods. Most lunch trash comes from disposable packaging of single-use food items. Food is also often packed in single-use plastic bags, aluminum foil or wax paper. Admittedly, these products are extremely convenient, but what is the environmental cost? It has been estimated that on average a school age child using a disposable lunch generates 67 pounds of waste per school year. At Parliament Oak with approximately 190 students eating at school each day that equates to over 12 000 pounds of waste per year! We believe strongly that we need to educate and support our children so that they can be more aware of how things like disposable lunches impact the environment. We hope that families have discussions at home about the waste that is generated, and also take actions on how to reduce this situation, so that "Together, we can make a difference" and help the environment. A Boomerang Lunch helps to reduce the number of containers that are thrown away or placed in our school's recycling bins. A Boomerang lunch also provides parents with first hand knowledge of the eating habits and preferences of their children. All leftovers are carried home at the end of the day so that parents can see what's been eaten or not! We know that this is asking families to re-think lunch preparations and student actions.

In collaboration with our School Council, we will be moving forward with promoting Boomerang Lunches throughout Parliament Oak School throughout the 2008-2009 school year. **. We're very grateful for the support of our School Council by providing the Ziploc bag that is coming home today with your child!** We hope that our Parliament Oak families will make good use of this Ziploc bag by encouraging your child to put his / her garbage into the bag, carrying it home, emptying the garbage into the compost or family recycling bin, and then rinsing out the bag, so it can be reused another day.

Our motto at Parliament Oak is "PRIDE, OPPORTUNITY, SUCCESS" and Boomerang Lunches will help our entire school community to make a show PRIDE in our school, have the OPPORTUNITY to participate in saving our environment and build on our SUCCESS by being a strong Eco-School.

PS: There are several websites on the internet that provide further information about Boomerang Lunches.

One site that families may wish to check out is <http://www.rco.on.ca/wastefreelunch.htm>

