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El Rincon Elementary to Compete in Trash-Free Lunch Challenge

The Culver City school is one of 16 selected across the county that will work to cut its lunchtime trash by 70 percent.

By [Kelly Hartog](#) | [Email the author](#) | November 5, 2012

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As part of a joint program with [Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County](#) and the nonprofit organization [Grades of Green](#), Culver City's [El Rincon Elementary School](#) has been selected alongside 15 other L.A. County schools to take part in the trash free lunch challenge.

The competition, which begins on Nov. 7, calls upon the schools to reduce their lunchtime trash by 70 percent by teaching the kids various eco-friendly methods including using reusable lunch containers and water bottles as well as cloth napkins.

Those who buy lunch will learn to sort waste into recycling and composting. Schools that participated in last year's competition reduced their trash by 70 percent on average and diverted more than 10,000 bags of refuse from landfills, all while saving thousands of dollars in bag liner expenses and waste hauler fees, according to an official release.

Representatives from the 16 selected schools will kick off the event by attending a training session and tour of the Sanitation Districts' Puente Hills Landfill and Materials Recovery Facility.

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Chan, sanitation districts chief en more importantly, it will

sn't have to be that way. A

generation ago, we packaged most products in reusable materials—and we can get back to those better habits by teaching kids to be trash free. In this coastal area, trash reduction is even more important, since plastic has insidiously made its way into the ocean food chain."

The 16 schools competing in this year's Trash-Free Lunch Challenge include:

- El Rincon Elementary in Culver City
- Walnut Elementary in Walnut
- Bell Gardens High in Bell Gardens
- Da Vinci Schools in Hawthorne
- Chapman Elementary in Gardena
- Vistamar School in El Segundo
- Arnold Elementary, Riviera Elementary, Seaside Elementary, Victor Elementary, and Waleria Elementary in Torrance
- Beryl Heights Elementary, Birney Elementary, and Washington Elementary in Redondo Beach

- Lunada Bay Elementary in Palos Verdes
- California Academy of Math and Science in Carson

Grades of Green will select three finalists from the 16 competing schools. A panel of environmental experts and other judges will evaluate the implementation and success of the three finalists' programs. The winning school will receive a \$1,000 science grant. The second and third-place schools will receive \$750 and \$500, respectively.

Though the deadline has passed to compete in this year's Trash Free Lunch Challenge, any school may still initiate a Trash Free Lunch program. Complete instructions are available at no cost to schools at www.gradesofgreen.org/initiatives/trash-redux/trash-free-tuesdays.

For more information on Grades of Green visit www.gradesofgreen.org or contact Nicole Sevier at 310-938-0974. For more information on the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, contact Rupam Soni at 562-908-4288, ext. 2303.

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