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Hey CQ Fans,

We just finished wrapping on an episode of Curiosity Quest Goes Green that has left me so inspired and so energized by what the youth of today can accomplish. Last summer I did a keynote presentation where I was told that middle school students and high school students just didn't care as much as elementary school students. I'm sure I wasn't the only one in the room that was a little astonished by this comment. I became determined to find out if in fact it was true.

So last October we set out to follow Grades of Green, a wonderful organization in which I proudly sit on the board of advisers, as they launched the "Trash Free Lunch Challenge." The Challenge involved 24 schools that participated and went through the learning and implementation process of reducing the amount of trash they throw away at lunchtime

All of the schools had to put their truth out on the table; how many bags of trash were they throwing away, how much were they recycling, how many students brought their lunches to school. Grades of Green helped to provide education and resources to the participating schools so that they could implement this program and make it sustainable beyond the Challenge.

The crew and I decided we would focus in on the participating middle schools. We wanted to see if they really did care. What we found blew our minds! I won't go into all the details, but hopefully when the episode airs you will watch and enjoy the show and be inspired by these students.



The final statistics were staggering. Many of the schools went from throwing away over 40 bags of trash daily at lunch to 4 bags of trash. Schools went from recycling only bottles and cans, to also recycling cardboard, paper, milk containers, liquids, compost, and even Styrofoam lunch trays. Several schools went from having no program whatsoever to having a 90% participation rate by all the students on campus. These were not small schools. Each school had about 1,000 students on campus! Wow!

On the final day of recording I interviewed one of the principals of the schools. He told me that at the beginning of the challenge he was very skeptical that the students would get involved. But, the students "showed him!" They were all in! In fact it was this particular principal's school that won the Challenge! Guess what? It was a middle school! I guess they really do care!!!

I am so inspired by these students and I know you will be too. I can't wait to share this episode with you.

Joel Greene
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