

In 2016, Burnaby produced 68 568 tons of garbage and those numbers are only increasing. We had already done previous projects on climate change this school year and realized that we can change how much garbage we produce. So, we decided to base our project on reducing our school's contribution to the landfill by getting our school to have a litterless lunch. Science World's BC Green Games motivated us to follow through with our actions. We were inspired by the litterless lunch project by realizing the importance of what we were doing, learning how to deal with challenges, and thinking about our future impact on our school and community.

Did you know we are throwing recyclables away as garbage? We noticed how much our garbage bins were overflowing with recyclable materials and had to put a stop to it. We started off our project by sorting out the garbage to see how much of it could be recycled. All of us saw there were many things in the garbage that could be taken home to recycled, like soft plastics, snack wrappers, yogurt tubes, and Ziploc bags. Our next step was to go to all the classes to tell them about the litterless lunch, so they can also be aware. Our class put informational posters around the school and we also had garbage and food compost bin monitors during recess and lunch.

In this ongoing project we have encountered some challenges. The main challenge was that when we went to monitor what was being thrown away as garbage like recyclables, kids waited for us to leave then threw their garbage away or threw them away anyways in front of us. The result of this was that we took all the garbage bins away and continued to remind kids to take their recyclables home. Some kindergarten classes have snacks before recess, so their teachers had to watch for their recycling. Our class also looked for garbage at the end of every day on school grounds and brought them back in to recycle. Our PAC also sells snacks for weekly fundraisers which produce more waste. We are trying to help the environment by not making recyclable materials go into landfills. After we complete this project, we are hoping that Brantford will continue the litterless lunch without needing constant monitoring.

Have you ever thought about what you put in the trash? We want to continue this project and are even considering going no waste, but that's a whole other idea. We tried to inspire kids, parents, and teachers to recycle and practice having a litterless lunch. It will impact the school, environment and neighborhood because we are finding out that so many people don't know that you can recycle specific items such as chip bags, juice boxes, plastic bags, etc. by putting in a little more effort to take them to places to recycle. Since plastic bags and snack wrappers are two of the more major items we throw away at school, if we are able to inform people that you can recycle them, it will probably impact the Earth – or at least the neighborhood – because it will help reduce the amount of trash that goes into the local landfills, and make the environment less crowded with litter. So, if we can continue this, our school and community are bound to go green!

The litterless lunch project gives us determination to discover how to deal with challenges, track our progress and results, and think about how our school and community would be impacted in the future. The class found that the school is throwing recyclables into trash can, so we told everybody about our project, and sent down students to monitor the compost bin at recess and lunch time. During the project there were some challenges, but we found a way to help the students by moving the garbage cans which helped improve Brantford by getting everyone to “think before they trash”. In the future we hope to continue the legacy of litterless lunch. We want the whole Brantford family and staff to participate in making our school and community green. The whole journey of the litterless lunch project made the Brantford family more connected while becoming BReagles (Brantford Recycling eagles).

February update: After our teacher had a conversation with Mr. Daniel Rotman from SPEC & Master Recycler, our class is more motivated to think and talk about our values connected to this project. Why do we want Brantford and our community to recycle? Why do we eat snacks that come in single-use wrappers? Can we change our snacking habits? Do we want to change our habits? Can we change the recycling or snacking habits of those around us?