



Nardin Academy was founded in 1857 as the first Catholic Academy and free school in Buffalo, NY. Nardin Academy is a private, independent, Catholic academy with three unique schools: a co-ed Montessori, a co-ed elementary, and a college preparatory school for young women.

WHERE TO START?

Beyond Green Sustainable Food Partner's (BGP) began with a series of visioning sessions and focus groups. Two sets of meetings were held in the Spring of 2013. The visioning session brought together a variety of stakeholders including principals from all three schools, students, parents, administrators, and the green team coordinator. During the visioning session the team produced a statement to reflect their program moving forward as follows:

Nardin nourishes the body, mind, and spirit in harmony with the environment and in partnership with the community.

The focus groups included teachers, principals and other administrators, students, and local restaurateurs and delved into successes and opportunities for the school food program. The student focus group participated in recipe tastings.

IDENTIFY PRIORITIES

At the beginning of the project, the school had a foodservice operator running the cafeteria. Since Nardin Academy is a private school and not held to USDA regulations, the operator did not run any nutritional analysis or recipe standardization, nor encourage students to take a nutritional meal. A report compiled by BGP indicated that the operator was serving approximately 14% non-processed, fresh foods.

Nardin Academy's wellness committee looked to the seven social teachings of the Catholic Church and realized the food system touches much of God's creation. This care for the environment led Nardin to focus on improving their cafeteria program to align with their beliefs.

The team concluded lunch is not just food on a plate, but also miles traveled, farmers working hard, nourishment, and non-renewable resources used to process and package the food.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Over the course of the 2013/2014 school year, BGP worked with Nardin to create a plan for Nardin to take over the management and operation of the cafeteria, planned out standardized recipes for healthy meals with both costs and nutritional information, trained the staff on preparing those items, incorporated waste reduction measures, and created market resources to publicize the new menu and waste reduction steps the cafeteria was taking. Additionally, BGP worked with the school's foodservice consultant and architectural team to redesign and equip the kitchen for the new menu and goals. This plan became the sustainability strategy against which operations were measured.

GETTING RESULTS

Since then, the foodservice team has planned new menus, sources ingredients from up to 30 local providers, and carefully monitors waste levels in the kitchen and dining room, with the goal of becoming a zero-waste operation. The kitchen staff procures, prepares, and serves food in ways that are ever more local, cost-effective, nutritious and pleasurable.

In Year 1 the use of locally procured foods increased to an average of 22% compared to the total budget. During this time **the percentage of fresh food increased to 44%**.

By monitoring and weighing eight separate streams, the school **diverted 90% of their dining hall waste** in 2015-2016.

The school served at most **80 lunches** per day with the previous food service and **increased** this to an average of **500 lunches per day** with BGP.

Students have learned the practical application of how to take care of the environment. During each lunch period, students separated their garbage for composting and recycling. Students have gained an integrated understanding of the cycles of the earth, of food, of garbage, of energy, and of their bodies. The kitchen staff procures, prepares, and serves food in ways that are locally grown, cost effective, nutritious, and pleasurable.

TRAINING FOR SUCCESS

Nardin's sustainability strategy included several training goals and outputs for school employees including:

Kitchen staff sustainability training.

BGP developed a training module and each staff person participated in a minimum of one hour of sustainability training per semester.

Kitchen staff engagement training to improve customer interactions.

Each staff person participated in a minimum of one hour of training per month.

All employees given financial training and feedback for personal development.

Minimum of one hour of training per semester.



**Is your organization looking
to green things up?**

WE CAN HELP!