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After talking with a member of the cafeteria staff and doing my own research, I was able to get the answers to these questions.

What does your school currently do with its leftover food?

- I was told that the school puts the leftover food in a compost bin. Which is taken out to a compost pile behind our Horticulture Center.



Here is the area that the leftover food is taken to. After closer research, I found out that it is not maintained well. As you can see the structure has completely collapsed in parts of it and the rest of it is falling apart.



Upon closer research, I found out that the compost pile isn't even taken care of. You need to turn the compost pile and stir the contents to help the decomposition. This pile is not being sustained. You can noticeably tell that it had not been turned and the foods are accumulating a mold. Also, I found that most of the foods aren't items that are sold in our cafeteria. There are a few apples that are, you can tell by the sticker label on them. I'm assuming the other fruits and vegetables are grown in the Horticulture Center and since we don't use them in our cafeteria, they are just throw out. The one item that doesn't make sense in the pile is the large amounts of egg shells. We don't have fresh eggs for breakfast meals and we don't make food from scratch, so their origin is a mystery.

Does dining services donate any food to the school pantry or local community? (Is there a food pantry on your campus?)

- We have a food pantry on campus, that is worked by different clubs. The food isn't donated by the cafeteria. However, the head of the cafeteria's husband has a company that donates to the food pantry. They leave a truck at a loading dock and a group comes down and sees what items they can take to the food pantry. The pantry is also partnered with Midwest Food Bank. Midwest Food Bank helps generate a steady supply of food and hygiene products collected during on-campus food drives.
- The food pantry has a wide variety of food. This includes soups, fruits, vegetables, breakfast foods, rice, pastas, health and beauty items, and more.



Is your school part of the Food Recovery Network?

- No, we are not part of the Food Recovery Network.

What percentage of students from your school are food insecure?

- 22% of our school is food insecure, a majority of these students are international students.

Talk to two students who are food insecure to gain an understanding of how that impacts their daily lives and their academic pursuits.

Student 1: Izzy Evans

- “I definitely appreciate it because sometimes it gets hard. You can get down to your last little bit of food and then you remember, ‘Oh, yeah, ICC has a food pantry.’” Izzy is a student athlete here at ICC. The food pantry helps her stay at the top of her game for practice and games, along with classes and homework. I know Izzy from our econ class last semester, we were together in a group for our final project and I remember her talking about the food pantry and needing to get there before it closed. She is a very spunky and energetic girl and I know the food pantry had been a major help for that.

Student 2:

- “It’s very helpful. It’s nice to know that the school is trying to help me be successful”. This student asked to stay anonymous. He did say that he has seen a major difference in his academic and daily life after finding out about the food pantry.

Plan for a difference on campus

Plan that could make a difference on your campus’ approach to food waste.

- The plan I have for our campus is to utilize the Horticulture Center and compost area. After reading on Kennesaw State’s sustainability system, I think we should copy it. Kennesaw state takes the vegetables and fruits grown in their Horticulture Center and uses them in the cafeteria. This opens a wider variety of meals that can be made, especially with locally grown, fresh, and organic ingredients. Any food waste that comes from these fruits, vegetables, and other foods in the cafeteria are taken back to the Horticulture Center and are made into compost. This fertile compost is used to help grow the fruits and vegetables. It is a constant cycle.
- After doing some research and talking to some of the school’s staff, I found out that we once had a program set up sort of like this. We had a lady that would take the leftover food to the compost area. The compost was used on the fruits and vegetables that were being grown. However, the fruits and vegetables never made it over to the cafeteria. This stopped when the lady took a full-time job at a nearby high school.

- I believe that we can reimplement this but take it to the level Kennesaw State is on. If we have a set program with a hired position, we would be able to utilize our food waste and the food produced on our campus. I also think that we should incorporate the culinary school in the production of meals in the cafeteria. They would be able to use fresh fruits and vegetables and get experience trying out new meals for students to purchase. This would also give the cafeteria a wider variety of meals and would possibly offer a vegan, vegetarian, or allergen-free option.

Who did you meet with and what was their response?

- I brought up this idea at our environmental club meeting. I was told that it was a good idea, but it was too big of an idea. It was then pushed aside and forgotten.
- I am also a Senior Senator for my school's student government. This gives me connections to the school's president. I am going to talk to her about this idea and hopefully get her on board to implement the program and take it to a level that will benefit the Horticulture Center, the cafeteria, and possibly the culinary students.

Take 3 photos of campus food waste:



Here is a trash bin that food waste is thrown in. It is located by the cafeteria. It is wheeled down to an elevator by a janitor and dumped into a dumpster outside.



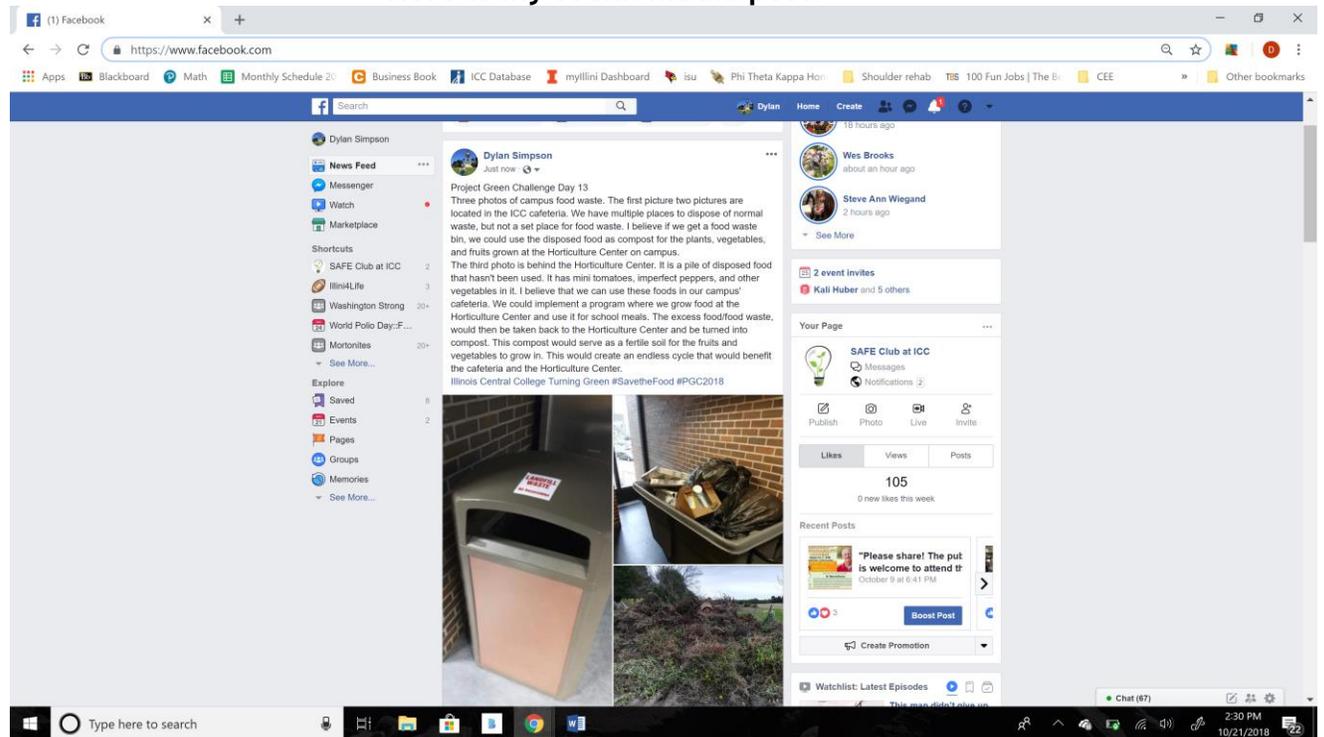
Here is a trash can that is in the cafeteria. We have specific bins for glass, plastic, paper, cell phones, and more. However, we don't not have a bin specifically for food waste. It is emptied out by a janitor and is wheeled out of the cafeteria. Even though this trash can isn't being thrown in the trash bin above, I believe they have the same destination. Each time I am in the cafeteria, I see student throw away food in both bins. This is why we need a specific compost bin. If we had one where students could dump their food into, we could use it to help fertilize the fruits, vegetables, and other plants that are being grown in the Horticulture Center.



This is a heap of food waste that I found out by the compost bins. Upon closer inspection, I found perfectly ripe mini tomatoes. I also found imperfect peppers and other vegetables. These foods could be used in meals rather than pitched in an empty field behind the Horticulture Center. If we implement the plan of using the food grown at the Horticulture Center, there would not be an excess amount, all would be utilized, and the rest could be thrown into well maintained compost pile. Below are close up pictures of the different foods that are just thrown out.



Here is my social media post:



The screenshot shows a Facebook post by Dylan Simpson titled "Project Green Challenge Day 13". The post text reads: "Three photos of campus food waste. The first picture two pictures are located in the ICC cafeteria. We have multiple places to dispose of normal waste, but not a set place for food waste. I believe if we get a food waste bin, we could use the disposed food as compost for the plants, vegetables, and fruits grown at the Horticulture Center on campus. The third photo is behind the Horticulture Center. It is a pile of disposed food that hasn't been used. It has mini tomatoes, imperfect peppers, and other vegetables in it. I believe that we can use these foods in our campus' cafeteria. We could implement a program where we grow food at the Horticulture Center and use it for school meals. The excess food/food waste, would then be taken back to the Horticulture Center and be turned into compost. This compost would serve as a fertile soil for the fruits and vegetables to grow in. This would create an endless cycle that would benefit the cafeteria and the Horticulture Center." The post includes three photos: a food waste bin in a cafeteria, a tray of food waste, and a pile of food waste outdoors. The post has 105 likes and is from the "SAFE Club at ICC" page.

The caption reads:

“Three photos of campus food waste. The first picture two pictures are located in the ICC cafeteria. We have multiple places to dispose of normal waste, but not a set place for food waste. I believe if we get a food waste bin, we could use the disposed food as compost for the plants, vegetables, and fruits grown at the Horticulture Center on campus. The third photo is behind the Horticulture Center. It is a pile of disposed food that hasn't been used. It has mini tomatoes, imperfect peppers, and other vegetables in it. I believe that we can use these foods in our campus' cafeteria. We could implement a program where we grow food at the Horticulture Center and use it for school meals. The excess food/food waste, would then be taken back to the Horticulture Center and be turned into compost. This compost would serve as a fertile soil for the fruits and vegetables to grow in. This would create an endless cycle that would benefit the cafeteria and the Horticulture Center. “