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Company/Organization: Sodexo at Keene State College

Challenge or Opportunity: To reduce and effectively repurpose the food waste from the campus dining center through education.

Approach or Solution: Keene State College Dining is committed to helping students and the larger campus community recognize the far-reaching and varied impact of food waste. We have evolved our educational program to include table topper information with food waste facts and ideas on how to help curb waste while dining. We have also collaborated with our student Eco-Reps to conduct food waste audits in the dishroom, finding that the students respond best to communication from their peers. Jonathan Bloom, author of “American Wasteland” was invited to campus to speak to and work with classes focused on food and the environment. During Mr. Bloom’s visit in April 2014, a Waste Buffet, featuring a variety of intact, uneaten food items collected from the dishroom, was displayed as a beautiful catered buffet line. The impact of seeing wasted food set up as a complete buffet line had an immediate impact, and the concept has been repeated each semester. Additionally, we have an unofficial food waste spokesvegetable, The Carrot, as a larger than life Keene State art student-commissioned sculpture displayed as a centerpiece in our Dining Room. The Carrot has become a symbol of our food waste cause and has made “live” appearances that features one of our dining staff dressed as a carrot. Each Fall The Carrot interacts with first year student during orientation to educate and offer tips on reducing food waste on campus. The carrot is used on all of our printed and digital materials to emphasize the connection with Food Waste

Our Dining staff is also very well informed about the food safety procedures around holding, cooling, and reheating foods so that we are successfully and safely able to repurpose leftovers. Along with this, staff must be vigilant about preventing cross-contact if leftover items are to be used for both our vegan menu and gluten free salad special. Making several ingredient and food production changes has also been integral in our successful repurposing efforts

Impact: Our popular Valley Vegan menu and our daily composed salad bar special at the Granite State Salad Co. are the benefactors of many repurposed food items. The salad special is a menu item that we have committed to offering as a Gluten Free item and obviously our Vegan station requires careful preparation, handling & labeling to maintain the integrity of its vegan status. While it may seem difficult, thoughtful purchasing and food production, in addition to careful food safety and cross contact procedures, allow us to reuse leftover menu components in these two crucial areas of our dining facility.

Keene State College Dining Services was also honored by the US Environmental Protection Agency for significantly reducing its food waste over previous years. Keene State College donated 2,100 pounds of food and composted more than 79,000 pounds of food waste.

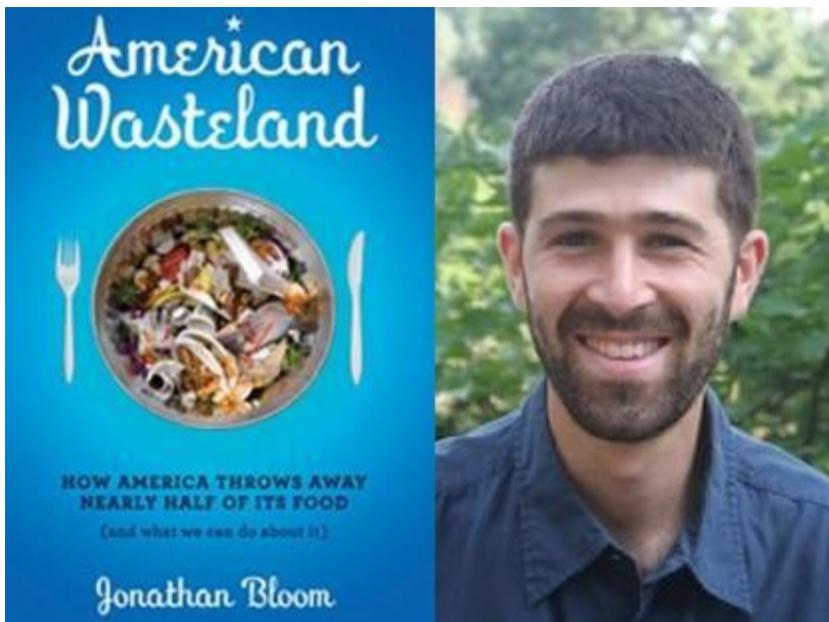
Our "Carrot" Mascot.



Our "Carrot" Mascot with the incoming freshmen at orientation. Note, the Carrot artwork that hangs on the wall year round.



Our Waste Buffet. All the food on this display table was removed from the student's trays that were in the dishroom. This was a powerful show of how much GOOD food is wasted every day.



Jonathan Bloom came to speak as part of a grant received from PepsiCo to educate the students on food waste and recovery.