

GREEN SCENE

SMUGGLERS' CHILDRENS CAMP LUNCH PROGRAM SAYS NO TO TRASH!

Trash. It's probably safe to say it's not something you usually think about while on vacation, but consider for a moment the leftovers from Smugglers' daily children's camp lunch program. The garlic bread crusts, the lonely bits of pasta, the used paper cups ... where do they go? Off to be composted. And the lunch tray and utensils? Off to the dishwasher. So what's missing? Trash.



Wait a minute. No trash from a program that feeds 200 children on a busy Summer day? It's true; not a piece of trash to be found, unless a sandwich bag or cookie wrapper infiltrates from a camper's home-packed lunch. This trash-free effort marks the continuation of an innovative program begun this past Winter to reduce trash in Smugglers' children's program lunches. The children's lunch program for Smugglers' Snow Sport University went trash-free when Smugglers' food service manager Peter Brown, who oversees the lunch program, decided to add to already existing composting programs and eliminate any throw-aways from lunch service.

Everything involved with children's camp lunch is now reusable or compostable. The process has been carefully thought through. Brown chose washable (and ultimately recyclable) plastic compartmented food trays, which represented a better choice environmentally than the paper plates previously used. Sturdy, washable metal cutlery replaced plastic cutlery. And compostable milk cartons have replaced the giant plastic pitchers that camp counselors used to fill for their group, which inevitably led to a lot of milk being dumped in the trash.

Ski and snowboard campers at Smuggs this past Winter were the first group introduced to the new zero-trash initiative. The campers, their instructors, and Smugglers' food service staff worked together to ensure that lunch items were properly diverted to collection points for "compostables" or "washables." Dave Farrell, children's program manager for Snow Sport University, says that for the counselors, who had the job of explaining and guiding the children through the process, and for the ski and snowboard campers, processing their own lunch items at the end of a meal became part of the daily routine, "like washing their hands before eating."

Peter Brown has undertaken his environmental initiatives in stages, mastering at one location (the restaurant) before extending the efforts to the lunch program and to the other sites he manages, such as the Morse Highlands Day Lodge and the Madonna/Sterling Base Lodge. The lunch composting program kicked off during Summer 2008, when Brown decided to extend the restaurant's composting efforts to include the camp lunch program. All the compostable material is sent to Sanctuary Farm Compost in Morrisville, Vermont.

As kids finished their camp lunch, they dropped their compostables (food waste and paper products) into the proper bin, recyclables into another, and trash into a third bin. During the first week of the effort, teams of employees volunteered to guide counselors and campers on the ins and outs of the new system. Feedback from kids and counselors on that early effort was positive, and continuing efforts through Winter 2008-2009 directed 40 percent of the Grille's waste stream to compost. Over the course of Winter 2009-2010, 30 tons of compostable material were collected.

Brown says, "The impact on the solid waste produced from the food service department has been amazing. Our trash production continues to decrease because we are continuing to change products and select those that can be reused or composted." He is seeing more and more people among his staff support the new initiatives, and notes that one benefit is that the efforts are "creating a culture or awareness of how things can get reused and not sent to the dumpster."

Looking ahead, Peter Brown's efforts will next focus on establishing the food service at the Morse Highlands Day Lodge as a zero-trash program. He'll continue working with all of his Smugglers' food service locations (which include the Base Lodge eateries in

Winter) to encourage greater awareness and commitment to recycling and composting.



In addition to the efforts with the camp lunch program, the Smugglers' food service department supports several other environmental initiatives. For instance, at the Morse Mountain Grille, the to-go containers are made of a compostable product derived from sugarcane harvest waste. Cleaning and dishwashing supplies have been 80 percent converted to green label products. This year Brown has chosen green label products that use less plastic because the products are wrapped rather than enclosed in hard plastic containers. Brown estimates that plastic usage for those products has therefore been reduced 98 percent, thereby the amount of plastics that need to be recycled. The Grille recycles plastics, cardboard, cooking oil, metal and glass. Powering down kitchen appliances to "green mode" during times of the day when the kitchen is less busy nets savings on energy use.

Karen Boushie is the director of Public Relations at Smugglers'. When she's not eating donuts or experimenting with compost – she can be found discovering new adventures in the Smuggs area.