

Ramsey/Washington County Success Story: Children's Discovery Academy – Vadnais Heights

When staff from the Children's Discovery Academy (CDA) in Vadnais Heights attended a local presentation by Ramsey County, they learned about the BizRecycling program – including a grant available to local businesses to encourage waste reduction and recycling. After signing up for a site visit, the CDA had a MN Waste Wise consultant tour their facility to help identify opportunities to enhance their current recycling program and evaluate the waste generated throughout the building. At the time, the CDA was using 15,500 disposable paper products a month to feed 134 students each day.

Since the frequent use of disposable dishes and silverware was generating a lot of trash, the Children's Discovery Academy used Waste Wise's assistance to apply for a BizRecycling grant to cover the cost of purchasing and installing a new dishwasher and buying reusable dishes. When asked about the new dishwasher, Director Andrea Vorderbruggen said, "Things are great! Having a dishwasher saves so much time. We are able to not use paper and disposable products like we used to and have seen drastic changes, mainly much less garbage, as a result." Not only was Children's Discovery Academy able to purchase a new dishwasher and dishes with the grant money, but the CDA now enjoys a whopping annual savings of \$6300! "We have seen great cost savings, which would have been much more difficult without the grant. Our cook has adjusted well and the transition has been very smooth," Andrea said. The \$6300 saved annually is a result of no longer needing to continually purchase disposables each month.

Vorderbruggen highlighted many benefits of the new dishwasher, saying, "It's great that we have been able to stay away from paper, both for the environment, and also, the parents love it! It's something that we are very proud of. The dishwasher is also helpful to sanitize toys, so we have been seeing a lot



Highlights

What: Eliminated disposables by purchasing a dishwasher and reusable dishes.

Why: To reduce the 15,500 disposables being used every month – which were causing recurring purchasing costs, constant trips to the store, and a large volume of trash.

How: With Waste Wise's guidance, used a BizRecycling grant to purchase a dishwasher and reusable dishes.

Results: Saving \$6300 annually by eliminating the cost of purchasing disposables.

of added benefits besides waste reduction and cost savings." The Children's Discovery Academy is a great example of how reusable service ware can be used to significantly reduce waste generation. In some cases, making the switch to reusables can eliminate the need for disposables altogether!