

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**FOR SOME NORTH SHORE SCHOOLS, EARTH DAY IS CELEBRATED EVERY WEEK**

**Evanston, Illinois, April 9, 2008** – With Earth Day just around the corner, communities and educators are scurrying to get their “green plans” in order. But for several schools on the North Shore, being green isn’t just a once-a-year obligation—it’s something they pride themselves on each and every week. One local company, Green Bag Lunch, LLC, has become both witness to and partner with these green initiatives.

**The lunchroom is often a foe to environmentalists.**

While the food on the plates of school kids have hardly changed in the last 50 years, the plates themselves certainly have. Said one Wilmette parent, “I remember we all had a turn in the lunchroom washing dishes and silverware with those huge sprayers. Now there are no dishes—it’s all disposable. You just can’t believe the amount of trash each day.” A group of 7<sup>th</sup> graders in Evanston’s Haven Middle School, has taken on one aspect of this waste—styrofoam trays used throughout the district to serve hot lunch. Calling themselves the “E-Town Tree Huggers,” they gathered hundreds of signatures in support of banning the trays in favor of an earth-friendlier option like recycled cardboard.

Hot lunch isn’t the only culprit. One study estimates that the average school age child generates 67 pounds of garbage in the lunchroom each year with waste from a bag lunch. Deerfield’s Wilmot Elementary’s Environmental Club sponsors a Thursday lunch, encouraging reusable containers and enlisting volunteer parents to help pick up recyclables before they hit the trash bin.

**Green Bag Lunch aims for the waste-free lunch.**

For families who just don’t have the time or wherewithal to live up to those green standards, one local company is making it a lot easier. Green Bag Lunch, founded by Evanston and Wilmette parents, Anne Weber and Dave Feinberg, delivers healthy, eco-friendly lunches to schools and camps from Chicago north. “Our packaging is very special. We use plant-based compostable cellulose baggies and cups, 100% recycled bags and napkins, and even vegetable starch cutlery. Yes, we could make far more money by using conventional plastic packaging and conventional produce, but we just don’t want that for our children and neither do our customers,” says Weber. A Green Bag Lunch survey of North Shore parents shows 90% are willing to pay a little more for organic and natural foods, and 85% want to do a better job “being green.” Dave Feinberg recaps their findings, “Simply put, parents want to prioritize healthy, natural foods for their kids—it just needs to be more convenient. So that’s what Green Bag Lunch does.”

One of those passionate moms is Amy Berger, parent at Kipling Elementary. Berger was driver behind bringing in Green Bag Lunch and parent volunteers each Monday to “walk the tables” and help kids sort and recycle. Says Berger, “With everything being recyclable or eco-friendly, it’s just as easy to throw it in the recycling bin as it is in the trash cans. The forty minutes we spend here each week make a huge impact on waste, on educating kids, and on the future of our earth.”

**Green behavior comes from the top.**

Delivering lunches to a variety of public, private and parochial schools gives a broad view of what’s happening on the North Shore. Says Green Bag Lunch’s Weber, “I can tell the moment I walk into the school or the lunchroom whether or not being “green” is a priority at that school. 9 out of 10 times, a school is environmentally sensitive if it’s a philosophy the principal sets forth. I got goosebumps the first time we delivered to South Park Elementary and Principal Sherman stood up in the front of the lunchroom a reminded all the kids how to separate their trash and recyclables. In Deerfield, they take green seriously.”

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Green Bag Lunch, LLC is based in Evanston, Illinois. Green Bag Lunch, LLC was founded by North Shore parents who actively live and work in the communities they now serve. Green Bag Lunch, LLC has served thousands of lunches since it began, in Spring 2007. The mission of Green Bag Lunch is: *Healthy kids living on a healthy planet.*

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