

July 2008

Dear RHSM Lower School Parents,

Beginning in the fall of 2008, Rowland Hall-St. Mark's School will no longer offer single-serving disposable plastic water bottles in the McCarthy Campus Dining Hall.

***We are asking that you send a reusable water bottle to school with your child everyday.***

By using reusable water bottles, our community can significantly decrease our consumption of plastic, while at the same time ensure that our students have plenty of water during the school day. At present, approximately 200 disposable plastic water bottles are used daily in the cafeteria, with many more used at special events. Parents, as well as Dining Hall staff, have observed several problems with the water bottles: many children have difficulty opening the disposable plastic water bottle screw caps; students often take only a few sips and pour the remainder into the wet waste receptacle, frequently missing the bucket and creating a slippery hazard; many bottles end up in the trash rather than the recycling bin. In addition, the time allowed and social nature of lunch may prevent some students from eating a complete lunch or drinking enough water. Carrying a personal reusable water bottle throughout the day offers an effective way for students to stay properly hydrated. Given the dry climate we live in, this is a good habit for our students to develop.

Here is how the water bottle program will work:

- Parents are asked to supply their student with a reusable water bottle. The bottle should be labeled with the child's name
- Students can bring their reusable water bottle to school each day already filled with water. No other liquids will be allowed. The school has "gooseneck" style taps available in the classrooms to make it easier to fill water bottles should students need to refill during the day.
- Students are encouraged to sip from their water bottles throughout the day, as well as carry them to lunch. Teachers will be responsible for managing water bottle use in their classrooms. Should a child forget a water bottle, there are various drinking fountains throughout the campus and in the cafeteria. During lunchtime milk will continue to be available for purchase.
- Students will take water bottles home each afternoon for cleaning and refilling.

Given the enormous variety of water bottles available, we would like to suggest a few based on our personal experiences. Sigg, Klean Kanteen, and Nalgene (look for the new "BPA-free" labels) water bottles can all be purchased locally at Whole Foods or REI as well as at company websites and other online retailers. Regardless of brand, water bottle attributes you may want to consider are:

- Size (we recommend a size of 12-22 oz for the lower school age group)
- Spill/leak-resistance
- Cap to prevent contamination of the mouthpiece
- Ease of cleaning
- Carry loop or handle

We hope to have water bottles for sale at the Back to School Picnic in the Fall.

**Did you know...**

- Making bottles to meet Americans' demand for bottled water requires more than 1.5 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel some 100,000 U.S. cars for a year.
- Americans will buy an estimated 25 billion single-serving, plastic water bottles this year. Eight out of 10 (22 billion) will end up in landfills.
- In 1999, NRDC conducted 1,000 separate tests of more than 100 brands of bottled water and concluded that bottled water is not necessarily any purer or any safer than city tap water.
- Producing one kilogram of PET [#1] plastic used in disposable water bottles requires 17.5 kg of water and results in air emissions of hydrocarbons, sulfur oxides, carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and carbon dioxide.
- Petroleum based plastic will never biodegrade and less than 6% of our country's plastic is recycled.

We believe that teaching our students to reuse resources rather than rely on disposables is a great way for them to learn how individual actions can collectively make a significant difference. Thank you for your support. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of us listed below.

Mary Jacquin, RHSM Parent  
(435) 659-1117  
[maryjacquin@yahoo.com](mailto:maryjacquin@yahoo.com)

Anna Topham, RHSM Parent  
(801) 532-5085  
[antopham@tophamonline.com](mailto:antopham@tophamonline.com)

Sarah Uram, RHSM Parent  
(801) 486-7633  
[saruram@comcast.net](mailto:saruram@comcast.net)

**Sustainability Committee:**

Rob Wilson, Committee Chair, Upper School Science and Health Teacher  
Amy Bird, Director of Transportation  
Stacey Collett, 3 Pre-K Teacher and RHSM Parent  
Patrick Godfrey, Director of Technology  
Bob Hunt, RHSM Parent  
Bruce Hunter, Director of College Counseling  
Walter Jarman, Board of Trustees and RHSM Parent  
Mary Lawlor, 6th Grade Teacher and RHSM Parent  
Molly Lewis, 6th Grade Teacher and RHSM Parent  
Marilyn Osborne, 2nd Grade Teacher  
Liz Paige, Director of Service Learning  
Laurie Staton, Director of Annual Giving  
Jeanne Zeigler, 2nd Grade Teacher

Alan Sparrow  
Head of School

Deborah Mohrman  
Principal, Lower School

Mary Hill  
Manager, Food Services

Relevant links:

[Bottle Water Facts](#)

[Plastic Recycling Facts](#)

[Problems with Plastic Bottles](#)

[Bottled Water - Problems and Solutions](#)

[Myths about Plastics](#)

[Information on BPA](#)