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SUSTAINABILITY

## Springfield College and ARAMARK Partner to Introduce Sustainability Programs to Students

SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS



Known as a primary provider of food and service to colleges, universities and preparatory schools, ARAMARK serves more than 200 million meals annually to students, faculty and visitors at more than 400 institutions. Among these daunting tasks, ARAMARK at Springfield College in Springfield, Mass., implemented several sustainable programs and practices within its dining halls and campus life. In addition, they used energy- and water-efficient food equipment such as Hobart's FT900 Flight-Type Warewasher. This installment alone can cut water and energy bills in half by using up to 50 percent less final rinse water, saving 696,600 gallons annually. In the end, Hobart's FT900 Flight-Type Warewasher saved ARAMARK a total of \$6,635.82 annually.

### Farm to Fork

ARAMARK partnered with outside sources to accommodate Farm-to-Fork practices. First, ARAMARK implemented a preferential purchasing system that identified local produce items and the area from which it originated, placing preference on food grown within the area, state and region of the country. Buying produce locally allowed Springfield College to conserve energy and contribute to local farms and the community. In addition, Springfield College's Cheney Hall provides to students and staff High Lawn Farm milk purchased from High Lawn Farm in nearby Lee, Mass.



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ARAMARK has also partnered with Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program, which recommends what seafood to buy and what seafood to avoid. This partnership helped Springfield College become stronger advocates for an environmentally friendly seafood supply that protects species' survival for the surrounding ecosystem.



### Internal Efforts



ARAMARK purchased SCA Tissue 100 percent recycled towels for all of its dispensers, which saved Springfield College more than 15,040 gallons of water and more than 8,800 kilowatts of energy in one year alone. In addition, they conserved more than 6.5 cubic yards of landfill space. Return on investment resulted in a saving of \$125.12 annually.

Springfield College also eliminated the use of trays, which saved more than 668 gallons of water per day that was previously used to wash the trays. Over an entire school year, this change resulted in a total saving of 149,632 gallons of water, which has saved the college \$37,431.13 a year. By not having to constantly wash trays, the college also reduced the amount of chemicals used throughout the year. To broaden this conservation effort, Cheney Hall opted to not offer straws to students and staff, saving the college approximately 450 pounds of waste in one year and \$843.

ARAMARK also partnered with the facilities department to increase the amount of recycled products. This partnership led to the recycling of more than 140 tons of materials, decreasing the amount of landfill space used in the last year. In addition, they instituted a composting program in the fall of 2007 to combat growing concerns associated with food waste. Dining Services and the facilities department worked with the Student Environmental Club to develop solutions to this challenge. Through rigorous training with Dining Services employees and delivering contents to Martin's Farm in nearby Greenfield to be composted, the college has seen a drastic improvement in handling food waste. On average, Springfield Dining Services now recycles 8.66 tons of food waste every month. By instituting a composting program, the college has seen an annual return on investment worth \$1,433.04.



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## Promotional Programs

In addition to these significant internal efforts, Springfield College launched an awareness campaign called "Take Action" during April 21-25 in honor of Earth Day. Take Action encouraged students to celebrate Earth Day by participating in programs and activities to support ecology, conservation and sustainability.

Promotional pieces such as ads, posters, table tents and other materials provided an at-a-glance look at the week's activities. The printed pieces informed students and faculty about programs such as recycling and conservation tips while other information and resources focused on the environment. Programs and events that were held throughout the week included the collection of cell phones, batteries and toner cartridges. Drop-off locations were constructed out of recycled cardboard boxes and made available to students all week long. Other programs such as "bring your own travel mug and save" offered students coffee refills at a reduced rate or even a free cup of coffee by purchasing a travel mug in the store.

Students and staff were also given the opportunity to find out at an information booth sponsored by the Student Environmental Club if they were using more than their fair share of the earth's ecological footprint. Earth Week Specials consisted of various culinary activities such as vegetarian dishes created from local produce and sustainable seafood. Lastly, Cheney Hall held a "dim the lights day," which allowed Dining Services to conserve 35,478 kilowatts of energy in one year just by turning off 18 lamps throughout the dining hall. This step alone has saved the college \$3,223.02.

