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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Six Boulder and Broomfield County Schools Compete to
Conquer Their Mountain of Lunch Trash
Winner Reduced Waste by 52%**

Boulder, CO (November 30)—Students in six Boulder and Broomfield County schools have substantially shrunk the mountain of chip containers, plastic bags, leftover peanut butter sandwiches and all the other waste they previously produced in their lunchrooms. They did it by competing in this year’s Waste-Free Lunch Contest, sponsored by Eco-Cycle and the Boulder County Resource Conservation Division. The six schools diving in to take a bite out of lunch litter were Eisenhower Elementary (Boulder), Heatherwood Elementary (Gunbarrel), Kohl Elementary (Broomfield), Niwot Elementary (Niwot), Ryan Elementary (Lafayette) and Spangler Elementary (Longmont).

During the Waste-Free Lunch Contest, elementary students are challenged to make as little trash as possible during lunchtime for an entire week to stop the flow of natural resources from cafeterias to landfills. This is the fourth year that schools have significantly reduced their waste as part of this contest. The 483 students at this year’s winning school, Niwot Elementary, reduced their lunch trash by 52 percent! Kohl Elementary, with an enrollment of 450 students, weighed in at second place with a 43 percent reduction in lunchtime waste. Between 24 and 39 percent reductions were also achieved at the four other participating schools.

Schools participate in the contest as a way to educate students about trash produced during lunchtime and to empower them to take care of the Earth. There is also a chance to win prizes. Niwot Elementary was awarded a \$400 certificate with which to buy environmental school supplies, and Kohl Elementary received a similar \$200 certificate for their second place achievement.

Students went all out to reduce their waste. Instead of bringing their lunches in disposable containers or single-use packaging for everything from sandwiches to drinks, students used reusable bags and containers. They chose recyclable packaging over disposable, were careful to recycle all they could, and they lowered their amount of food waste by taking the time to eat their lunches rather than feeding them to the landfill.

“This contest is a great opportunity for students to help reduce their school’s trash bill and help the earth at the same time,” said Cyndra Dietz, Eco-Cycle’s School Recycling and Environmental Education Coordinator. “We hope the reuse and recycling habits they develop during Waste-Free Lunch week will continue far into the future.” Stacy Swank-Lambright, Community Outreach Coordinator for Boulder County Resource Conservation Division, said “Educating students about packaging choices that can be reused as well as recycled is crucial to reaching a higher waste reduction level for all of us in Boulder County.”

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