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SAGE Dining Services® Launches Program to Measure and Reduce Food Waste

LUTHERVILLE, Md. — In an effort to minimize waste and implement environmentally responsible business practices, SAGE Dining Services® has launched U+SAGE™ (pronounced “usage”), a proprietary food waste tracking program.

With the addition of U+SAGE™, the communities SAGE serves can assess how much waste is generated in their kitchens and dining halls and learn from that data to develop methods to boost efficiency and sustainability. The U+SAGE™ process involves sorting waste into different categories (e.g., expired items, production waste, composting, leftover food from service), weighing each category, recording the data into the online platform, and using that platform to set goals and reduce waste. A key element of U+SAGE™ is community partnership, awareness, and education. Managers work with student sustainability organizations, faculty, and staff to make the program a success. U+SAGE™ provides detailed reports and charts of food waste trends and strategies that can be displayed and shared with the communities to track progress and set objectives.

Sustainability has always been a foundational principle for SAGE. As a leader in sustainable practices, they partner with the communities they serve to make responsible choices and develop innovative solutions that will positively impact people and the planet, including promoting the use of campus gardens, compost bins, and recycling programs. They work with more than 800 local and regional distributors to source fresh and seasonal food. In the kitchens, they use Scratch and Batch Cooking to maximize the use of minimally processed food and minimize waste. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, over one-third of the U.S. food supply goes uneaten through loss or waste. Reducing food waste can help the environment in numerous ways, including lowering greenhouse gas emissions and preserving the land, water, energy, labor, and money needed to produce, prepare, and discard food.

“Food waste is a big problem that is often overlooked when it comes to sustainability practices, yet it has a significant environmental impact,” SAGE Registered Dietitian Taylor Chan said. “U+SAGE™ aligns with the sustainability values of the communities we serve by increasing awareness of food waste produced in our kitchens and dining halls. Through this program, we monitor and track food waste, partner with the community, and provide education to ensure we are using food as responsibly as possible.”

“The school has been very happy with the change in our trash program! The sustainability group has done a great job promoting us, and we are composting more than double that of last year,” said Kevin Thiele, Senior Food Service Director at Moses Brown School, one of the many schools that SAGE serves across 36 states, D.C., and Canada. “We post the results from the previous week each Monday. We use the weekly results in our sustainability meetings, and we also share back-of-house results in preservice meetings. ... It just creates awareness and helps us strategize new ways to keep waste to a minimum.”

About SAGE Dining Services®

SAGE Dining Services®, established in 1990, is the leading food service provider for independent schools and colleges throughout North America. SAGE's unparalleled expertise in nutrition, sustainability, and culinary trends produces exceptional dining experiences that delight the senses, inspire minds, and foster community. Learn more at SAGEDINING.COM.

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