



New Composting System at MHS Decreases Trash Output by 75%

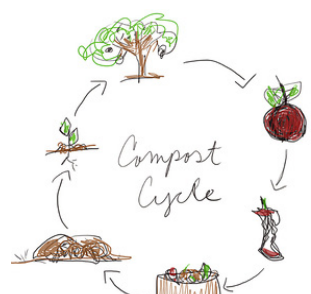
Sophie Hauck, Junior
ASSISTANT EDITOR

The food that Marblehead High Schoolers throw out every day can take as long as two years to compost. Over this same period of time, MHS students have developed the school's composting program, a project born in 2017, but one that they continue to perfect. Over the past two years, the basics of the program have remained the same: the program still encourages students to minimize the school's waste production by composting and recycling items whenever possible. However, in the 2019-20 school year, this encouragement has become mandatory guidance, led by English teacher Connor Ryan, and the newly-established Environmental Honors Society, NGSS, or the National Green Schools Society. By limiting the number of waste receptacles to only one bin for trash, one for recycling, and one for composting, there is less room for error, and as Mr. Ryan says, "fewer choices make it easier to make the right choice." In fact, this system has led to a 75% decrease in the school's daily lunch trash output, going from twelve bags per day to just three.

"What we learned the hard way is that giving people too many options or too much choice is not really successful," Mr. Ryan says, standing beside the composting headquarters, where the three waste bins stand every day for all three lunches. "The new system, instead of having multiple bins in multiple locations, centralizes everything. It allows for a much, much closer monitoring process. So now we can offer students advice about what to put where, we can remind them of how to do it, and we can keep it much cleaner and free from contamination."

Volunteers fuel this improvement, guiding people toward the bin their trash belongs in under the advisement of Mr. Ryan, who monitors at least one of the three lunch blocks every day. "My goal is to make sure that you guys are here, talking to people, and to insure that everybody does what they're supposed to do. As a bonus, I really, really like the idea of high school as a communal place, so I've gotten to know 30 or 40 people whom I didn't have in class before and whom I don't have in class this year. Now, we just know each other, which is the sort of thing that I can't tie directly to the success of the program or teaching here, but I really, really like it. I think it's important."

So do the students, who have ultimately put up little significant resistance. Even junior Eliot Piper, who once teased Mr. Ryan with the label of the food police, is now on board with the program despite his humor: "It's something to gag about, at the least, but if it does good, I mean, sure." Others have developed their own composting systems at home, proving that the school's composting program may be outside of the classroom, but it is surely an educational experience.



Graphic from Teachers Pay Teachers

Volunteering at the table myself at least once a week, I've found a rhythm within the routine. The bins' wheels hum against the linoleum floor as I set them up at the beginning of

lunch, and Mr. Ryan will always make the same joking comments to students as they come up and throw out their trash. I'll laugh with friends when they stop by, smile at strangers who remember to put their brown paper bag in the compost bin, and am pleasantly surprised by the students who are most careful with putting their waste in the correct bin—oftentimes the students I'd least expect. Something about this routine is comforting, inspiring even. Every lunch that I volunteer at, I see the faces of the students who are making a positive impact on our community, one piece of trash at a time. It's small, but also a huge step forward in not only the school's sustainability, but in the way we view environmental issues: as a community project. As Mr. Ryan says in respect to the composting, "If 95 people do a great job and then the last five people put trash in it, it's all useless." Without a school community that stands behind this mission, the program could never have improved so rapidly, but thanks to an accepting student body, the environmental impact of MHS is far from decomposing.

An Easy Guide To Stepping Out of Your Shell For One Day

Olivia Spell, Sophomore
REPORTER

Growing up in a small town allows us to make close friends and is a wonderful way to find the friend group that fits us. But over time, we begin to only associate with our small groups. Today, branch out and leave your shell by following the simple steps below. This activity can be done with a friend or just by yourself. Have fun!

1. Smile at someone you don't know.
2. Compliment someone's outfit.
3. Smile when entering one of your classes.
4. Converse with a teacher.
5. Talk to a lunch server.
6. Reflect and think about one good thing that happened today.

How High School Has Been so Far as a Freshman

Zoe Gast, Freshman
REPORTER

Clueless, *Mean Girls*, *The Duff*, and *High School Musical* (1, 2, and 3) all have something in common. These are all movies outlining the unrealistic daily life of any high schooler. Even though I know that those movies are wildly inaccurate, freshmen do know that the coming year will be very different from years prior. Most eighth graders are apprehensive about the transition to high school, especially with all the teachers using "you will be in high school soon" as a way to tell us that our behavior is unacceptable and our work is lacking.

I was not as nervous as some. I was lucky and already had friends and siblings in high school, and I had spent a great amount of time there due to outside activities. Even so, I was nervous about the social aspect and challenging courses, especially knowing that my grades actually matter now. Still, the summer eventually came and went and back-to-school season loomed upon us. That fateful morning of the 27th rolled around, and all the freshmen had to enter into unknown territory after seeing meme after meme about how terrible they are.

Personally my first day went fine. I am not going to lie: the seniors screaming and yelling as we walked in almost made me cry, but after that, it was normal. I walked down all the hallways, my face firmly down on my schedule, and went to all my classes. It seemed like I had already gone to school there, and everything seemed normal. As the quarter progresses, I have begun to feel much more enthusiastic.

As a new student, everything is new and exciting, so even if my judgement is deluded, let me just say how much I love high school. The classes, the people, and the environment makes it so much better than middle school.

Before high school, many of my friends warned me to not take too many hard classes and gave me their condolences when I did not listen. Now that I am around two months into my classes, I am extremely grateful that I did not listen. I think that too many people do not trust their abilities and run away from the H in Aspen. I know so many people that transferred down from honors classes and are now bored out of their minds. If there is one thing that I suggest for Vets, it's making sure people are not scared of a class just because of its name. Anyway, I personally love my classes. The content is interesting and inspiring, and except for a few lazy days, I have genuinely wanted to go to some of my classes. This is in part because they are not as hard as I pictured. Now, it is still very early in the year, but I have found that if you put in effort, you can usually keep up with the

work and the assessments. That is except for Biology, as I am still not sure how to do well in that class.

The people in high school are also unlike what I imagined. In much of the media about high school, everyone is always in everyone else's business and people are

all-around mean. This is far from true in my experience. One of my favorite parts about my time so far is that everybody is in their own world. It's a hard experience to describe, but that fact that you can do, wear, and say pretty much anything you want and no one really pays attention is very peaceful. Everyone is also very welcoming, especially school leaders and people in after school clubs, which defies the stereotype that upperclassmen are flat-out rude to freshmen.

Obviously, I have liked the school so far and found the transition very easy, especially with orientation after orientation, but that is just my experience so far. I have a feeling I will be much more mellow as the months draw on.



Graphic from Marist High School

Come See MHS's Production of Peter/Wendy!

Julia Greenway, Sophomore
PHOTO MANAGER

This fall, the MHS Drama Club is putting on a production of *Peter/Wendy*, a simple version of the classic Peter Pan story. Performances are Friday, the 15th of November at 7 PM, and Saturday, the 16th at 7 PM. In addition to the performances this month, *Peter/Wendy* will compete in the Massachusetts Education Theater Guild Drama Festival in early March against other high schools all around Massachusetts. Ashley Skeffington, the director and English teacher at MHS, is most excited about the many new elements involved in the show. This includes flight choreography by Maia Williamson and fight sequences taught by Will Johnston, who Ms. Skeffington invited to teach basic stage combat to the drama students at the high school. She is most excited that "the cast gets to flex some new skills," which is very interesting for performers and audience members alike.



Isabelle Tinti-Kane, a senior at MHS who is part of the ensemble, most appreciates the fact that much of the dialogue is taken directly from J.M. Barrie's original play, which was written over one hundred years ago. Because of this, much of the story is told in a narrational manner which further separates *Peter/Wendy* from the typical story. The style is very different from the Disney version we are accustomed to, which gives the audience something new to watch out for.

Despite many difficulties during the rehearsal process, like the many days off from school during the past few weeks, the cast and crew of *Peter/Wendy* have been working incredibly hard on this production. In order to learn all of the stage combat, the cast has attended extra rehearsals to make the performances more realistic and exciting for viewers, and their dedication will pay off on the 15th and 16th of November. Please help support the MHS Drama department and the entire cast and crew by coming to see *Peter/Wendy* at the MVMS PAC next week!

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