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## CITY OF PALMDALE

### *NEWS RELEASE*

CONTACT: John Mlynar

PHONE: 661/267-5115

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City of Palmdale Presented with Outstanding School Recycling Program Award on  
Behalf of the Palmdale School District, SAVES and Grace Resources

PALMDALE – The City of Palmdale was presented with the 2017 Outstanding School Recycling Program Award by the California Resource Recovery Association (CRRRA) at its annual conference held in San Diego on Aug. 21 for an innovative food recycling program.

Palmdale's Environmental and Technology Manager Ben Lucha and Management Analyst Mica Schuler accepted the award for the City on behalf of its partnering organizations Palmdale School District, South Antelope Valley Emergency Services (SAVES) and Grace Resource Center.

Each year, the CRRRA's Outstanding School Recycling Program Award is presented to a business, government agency, community-based organization or school that has excelled in implementing and carrying out a recycling and/or diversion program.

In Palmdale, the program got its start in the Palmdale School District, when Todd Cherland, Director of Nutritional Services, was concerned over the number of local children who did not have enough to eat. With Californians disposing of almost 5.8

million tons of food--- 16 percent of which is edible---he was surprised with how much food was being thrown out and wasted in schools. Cherland contacted Food Bus, an organization that promotes food recovery for the sake of alleviating hunger by collecting unused and unopened food leftover from elementary school lunches and distributing it to food pantries, and learned that the district could qualify for refrigerators at no cost for food donations.

Cherland and his team implemented a pilot food recovery program at Cimarron Elementary which was so overwhelmingly successful, that 19 schools in the district are now participating.

The key achievements of Palmdale's award-winning program include:

- Kids are excited to participate in recycling. A food donation cart is left in the cafeteria and kids choose to donate food they are not going to eat.
- Waste at the schools has decreased significantly.
- Approximately 6,000 pounds of food is donated monthly.
- Milk is now being donated by creating a procedure for how it was to be handled and stored.
- Local food banks have benefited with the additional food donations. South Antelope Valley Emergency Services (SAVES) receives donations from 16 schools and Grace Resource Center received donations from three.

Due to the success of this program and in partnership with Palmdale School District, and Los Angeles County, the City of Palmdale created an educational video outlining the success of this program. This video can be used to share with other school

districts and organizations to encourage them to start similar programs. To view the video, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPXH7QVLLvc>.

#### About CRRA

The CRRA, founded in 1974, is California's statewide recycling association. It is the oldest and one of the largest non-profit recycling organizations in the United States. A 501(C)3 organization, CRRA is dedicated to achieving environmental sustainability in and beyond California through Zero Waste strategies including product stewardship, waste prevention, reuse, recycling and composting. CRRA provides its members with resources to advance local, regional and state wide waste reduction efforts which result in critical environmental and climate protection outcomes. CRRA's members represent all aspects of California's reduce-reuse-recycle-compost economy. Their members work for cities, counties, municipal districts, and businesses as well as hauling companies, material processors, non-profit organizations, state agencies, and allied professionals.

For more information about CRRA, please visit [www.crra.com](http://www.crra.com).