



Jaime
Franke
at
Phil's



Tim
Andrews

An Edge On Green

By Susan Bence

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[Images of Edgewood.](#)

Nestled along the shores of Lake Wingra in Madison is Edgewood College.

The 80-year-old private school may appear staid and unchanging, but it bears the distinction of being the first university that Wisconsin's Green Tier has accepted.

The program challenges institutions to surpass rules and regulations in order to be gentler on the environment.

WUWM Environmental Reporter Susan Bence visited Edgewood and met a couple of the forces taking the school to the next green level.

It's that quiet lull between breakfast and lunch at Phil's, Edgewood College's café. Jaime Franke has been in charge here for three years.

"I'm the dining services manager, so I oversee all the production. I hire, I fire," Franke says.

The first thing Franke slashed was Styrofoam and plastic carryout containers. She pulls out their eco-friendly replacement.

"These are made out of sugar cane. They take the stalk of the sugar cane, they beat the sugar out of them and this is made from the stalk refuse," Franke says.

Then Franke and her staff set about to explain to students, the switch to more green containers.

But Franke says, she created her own monster.

"We promoted the disposables so well that they, they're like, oh, they're eco-friendly, it doesn't matter, I'll just use them. But they're not realizing that really, it takes energy to make these. It costs money to make these," Franke says.

Franke is on a mission to convince students to eat in the sun-filled café on real dishes and silverware, instead of toting out food.

A few months ago, the 5-foot-2 fearless leader took on an even bigger battle against the ubiquitous water bottle.

"We do not sell bottled water here," Franke says.

Instead, Franke installed a snazzy triple filtration system that purifies tap water. It saves her money and it's cheaper for students, too, if they

simply refill their own personal, Nalgene type of bottle.

“Seventy-five cents for filtered water compared to, I think it’s like \$1.40 a bottle. Just trying to make them understand their ecological impact when they’re buying that bottle of water. We don’t try to shove things down people’s throats, but we want them to be informed,” Franke says.

Franke’s hoping to win over freshman and sophomores, who are required to live on campus. And she says it helps having 50 student employees under her wing.

“We get to know them and we get to know their friends. So, it’s a neat thing, we get to teach them, it’s great learning environment,” Franke says.

You may not hear in Franke’s voice, her passion to live sustainably, but on campus, she’s known as “eco-queen.”

She’s not just tuned into wasted water bottles, but sustainability spills over into the food Franke presents to Edgewood students.

“The way I live, I bring it here. If I can make 10 people change the way they eat and look at things, I can sleep better at night,” Franke says.

Franke walks back into the kitchen, where tatter tots sizzle in the deep fryer. She’s not happy about the deep frying, but has to choose her battles.

“Our students are Wisconsin-based students, so are meat and potatoes and mac and cheese, as plain as possible,” Franke says.

Franke will work on their limited palates.

Over the summer, she plans to incorporate more fresh produce, like tomatoes.

“We’re going to be making our own sauces, with fresh tomatoes and things. We’ll be freezing them, we have a huge freezer,” Franke says.

I ask whether that would require more cooking time.

“Processed food is much more expensive, you know, and my staff, they like to cook, they like to create and we encourage that,” Franke says.

While Jaime Franke wields her environmental power in the kitchen, Tim Andrews is Edgewood’s outside man.

He’s overseen the replacement of dozens of inefficient aluminum windows on campus.

“They were made in 1960 in Cuba and there were holes that the birds could almost fly in and out of,” Andrews says.

He points to one of the school’s oldest buildings.

“Marshall Hall it’s over 150 years old and last year it just got its first insulation ever,” Andrews says.

Andrews says energy-saving measures have just begun and the school has already cut its natural gas use by 12 percent in one year’s time.

You might be surprised to learn, this man, who remembers the tree he fell in love with at age 4, wears more than one hat at Edgewood.

"I've also taught here now for 12 years. My course that I've taught the whole time, is a continuous, every semester course, called Roots and Shoots and it teaches students, first of all, what the environment is. And then the second semester we study the human impact on the environment," Andrews says.

As far as Andrews is concerned, things are just getting better and better at Edgewood.

Next fall, incoming freshmen will be required to take at least two environmentally related courses during their Edgewood career.

They'll also be introduced to Jaime Franke's more locally-based menu.

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