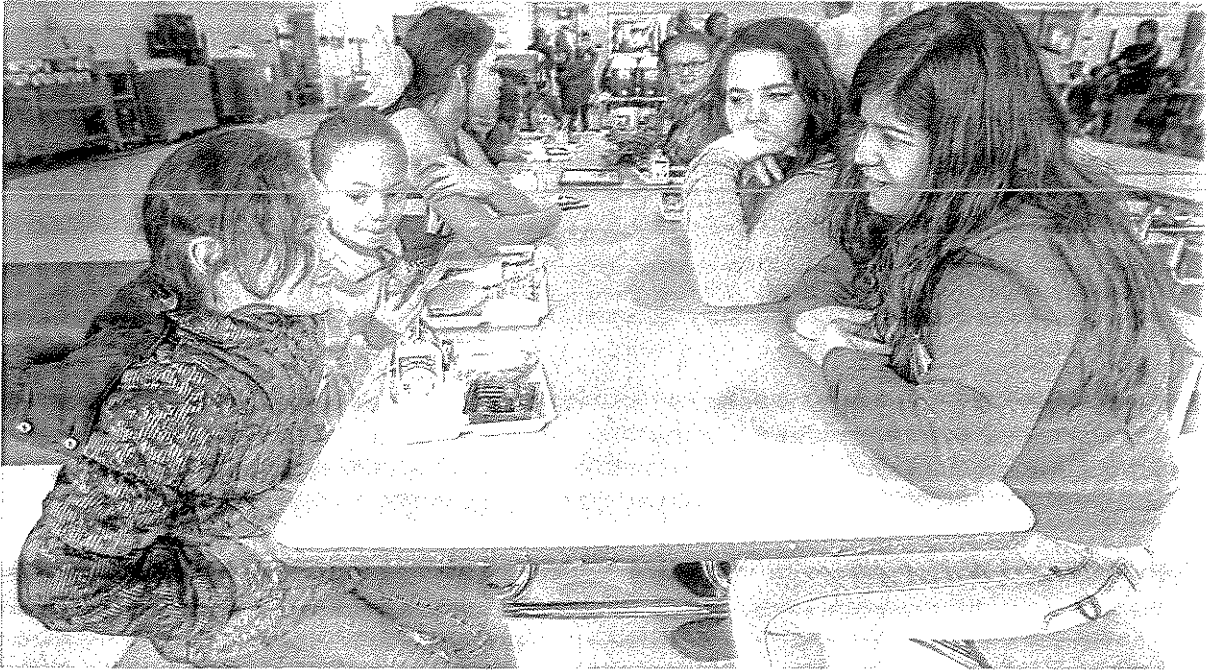


High school students in Kansas become lunchtime buddies for lonely kids

By The Wichita Eagle, adapted by Newsela staff on 02.13.17

Word Count 412

Level 540L, N101P



Anderson Elementary second-graders Leslie Ayala-Money (left) and Ariana Allen (center left) have lunch with West High junior Destiny Reicher (center right) and Samra Nunez (far right) at Anderson during a nationwide event called No One Eats Alone, in Wichita, Kansas, February 10, 2017. Photo: Fernando Salazar/Wichita Eagle/TNS

The school cafeteria isn't just a place to eat your lunch. It is also a place to sit and talk with friends. This can be fun. For some kids, though, it can cause stress and worry.

Not everyone has a good friend in the lunchroom. Some kids sit alone. For them, the cafeteria can be a scary place.

Kira Pullum goes to West High School in Wichita, Kansas. Kira says most kids don't talk about lunchtime stress. Everyone feels it though, she says.

It's great to eat with someone, Kira says. It's not so great to eat by yourself.

National No One Eats Alone Day

That is why Kira got involved in National No One Eats Alone Day. This event happens once a year. Hundreds of students across the country participate.

The event encourages kids to be kind in the lunchroom. How? By sitting down with someone they don't know. On this day, students make sure no one eats alone. That way, says Kira's classmate Selma Nunez, no one feels excluded.

Older Lunch Buddies

This year, Kira and her classmates went to Anderson Elementary School. They thought younger kids might like to have an older lunch buddy.



Alexis Chicalas wore her cheerleading uniform. Her hair was pulled back in a big bow. Her second-grade lunch buddies grinned.

"What's your favorite subject?" Alexis asked.

"Math," Leslie Ayala-Munoz whispered.

"Oh, I like math, too," Alexis said, smiling.

The girls talked about big brothers and little sisters. They talked about their pets and favorite colors. They ate pizza and drank chocolate milk.



Shyness In The Lunchroom

Anderson students don't really have to worry about eating alone, says Jamie Angell. She works at the school. Students at Anderson sit with their classmates.

Still, some kids are shy, Angell says. Having an older lunch buddy can make lunchtime more fun.

Changing The School For Better

Sarah Owen is another West High student. She thinks the event has already changed her school.

"I do see people sitting alone at lunch," Sarah said. "But I often see people going over there and sitting with them."

