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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Sarah Buchholz
619.704.2781 / 503.881.8704
sbuchholz@cleansd.org

Holiday Food Waste Solutions for Residents

SAN DIEGO COUNTY - In the United States, 5 million tons of food are wasted between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day alone, which is the equivalent of 833 million family Thanksgiving dinners! At the same time, 48.1 million Americans, including 15.3 million children, live in food insecure households, not always knowing where their next meal is coming from.

Most food waste ends up in landfills causing methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more powerful in the harmful effects of global warming than carbon dioxide. In recent years, the County of San Diego has made strides in reducing food waste, especially during the holiday season. This holiday season, you and your family can make a meaningful difference with simple changes to reduce food waste. The earth and your wallet will thank you.

REDUCE –Much like the mantra “reduce, reuse, recycle” applies to paper and plastics, it also applies to food waste, starting with the most important step first – reduce. The average American throws away roughly 20 pounds of food each month, or the equivalent of nearly \$400 a year, or \$2,275 for a family of four. There are several resources available through the Environmental Protection Agency at www.epa.gov to help residents track and reduce the amount of food waste they send to the landfill. Planning meals and shopping trips, incorporating leftovers into regular meal planning, organizing the refrigerator and kitchen to keep perishable foods front and center, and storing fruits and vegetables properly can significantly reduce food waste.

DONATE –Residents can help their neighbors by donating unwanted, untouched food, starting small with packaged and canned foods. The countywide database for recycling options, www.wastefreesd.org, includes hunger relief organizations that accept food donations. In addition, people can support donation efforts by asking their local grocery stores and restaurants if they donate leftover food and what they do with their food waste.

VOLUNTEER –There are also several volunteer groups harvesting fresh foods from local farms as well as residential and commercial properties. Volunteers, also known as Gleaners, collect fresh food that would otherwise go to waste and donate it to local food banks to feed hungry San Diegans and their families. Residents who are interested in volunteering or need fresh food harvested from their property can find a volunteer group on I Love A Clean San Diego's database, www.WasteFreeSD.org.

COMPOST – Composting works for homes large and small, including those residents that have limited outdoor space. The benefits of composting go beyond saving landfill space and minimizing harmful greenhouse gasses. Composting transforms fresh fruits, vegetables, egg shells, and coffee grounds into nutrient rich soil and saves water by increasing the water holding capacity of soil in your garden or potted plants. Residents are encouraged to learn more and debunk any misconceptions about composting by participating in one of the several free and low-cost workshops that happen around the county year-round, including several hosted by I Love A Clean San Diego. Starting November 2015 ILACSD will host free zero waste workshops as part of the Sustainable Living Series in partnership with the City of Encinitas. Visit www.Cleansd.org for more information.

FATS, OILS AND GREASE - While several types of food can be donated or composted, fats, oils and greases cannot be composted and should never be poured down kitchen sinks or drains. Although it may seem convenient, when these items are poured down drains they clog household pipes and form “fatbergs” that block sewers. When the flow of wastewater is blocked by grease, it overflows into homes, streets, lawns, and storm drains, eventually making its way to the ocean. Washing cooking oil down the drain with soap or at room temperature will not prevent these damaging effects. Instead, residents should save their used cooking oil for proper disposal at a local collection facility.

To find the closest drop off location for grease, compost and to get other recycling questions answered, unincorporated County residents can visit the County’s Recycling and Household Hazardous Waste database at www.wastefreesd.org or call 1-877-R-1-EARTH (1-877-713-2784).

About I Love A Clean San Diego (ILACSD) *As San Diego’s most influential advocate for sustainability, I Love a Clean San Diego (ILACSD) is an environmental catalyst, awakening passion and inspiring action, empowering everyone to improve the health and beauty of our local environment. For over sixty years, we’ve brought the best in all of us together for a lasting, positive impact on our region. We are passion in action. For more information, to volunteer or donate, visit www.cleansd.org or call (619) 291-0103. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*

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