



A “Cool” Cafeteria – It’s Really Possible

By Barbara Gilmour

“It was fun to have Clarissa visit our class last time. Tanner, Nicole, Rudy, Carmen, Stephen and Truman the dragon all wanted to know when she could come back. I hope she will come back soon.”

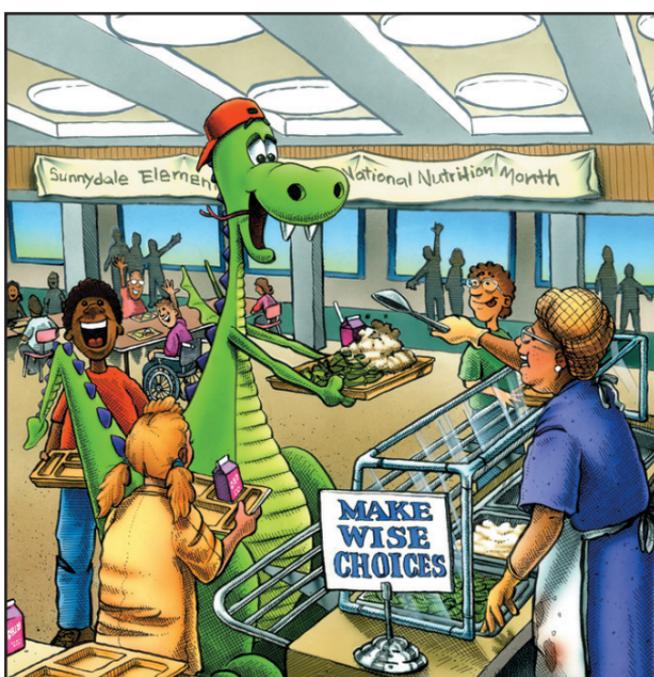
“How many of you took the Cafeteria Challenge at your school?” All hands went up.

Rudy jumped up and said, “My school cafeteria needs a lot of work. We had a low score. Kids push and shove and don’t wait patiently in line.”

Tanner shared, “Mine is like that, too. The kids don’t seem to care about how they act.”

Nicole added, “I don’t like when some kids won’t let others sit with them. That is just mean.” Everyone agreed.

Stephen shared, “Some kids in my cafeteria throw food or take others’



food. They think it’s funny.” Everyone nodded that the same things were happening in their cafeterias. It didn’t sound like there were any great scores.

“Did the Cafeteria Challenge list we made up last time help you to see some of the things that need to be improved?” All the kids said, “YES!”

Tanner was excited to share, “I took the list to my principal and asked him if we could do the Cafeteria Challenge, and he said, ‘Yes.’ I think that is great.

Now all the kids will learn how ‘Cool Kind Kids’ can act to have a ‘Cool Cafeteria’.”

Rudy added, “That’s so cool. I want to do that at my school.”

Carmen was looking at Truman and asked, “Truman, you’ve been very quiet today. What is going on in your cafeteria?”

He sadly said, “My school cafeteria isn’t any better than yours. We need to improve all the things on the Challenge list. It bothers me to see the unkind things that happen in the cafeteria.”

Carmen asked, “What do you mean?”

Truman continued, “The cafeteria is an easy place for kids to be mean and not get caught. Every day I see kids teasing and making fun of other kids. Many exclude kids for no reason. Some are bullying other kids. I try to stop this when I see it. I can do that because I’m so big. But kids need to know how much they are hurting other kids and stop this. Part of our Cafeteria Challenge should be to step in and help someone who is being bullied or get an adult.”

The kids all jumped up and cheered for Truman. “Do you think that you can help stop these things by stepping in when you see unkind things happen?”

Tanner was quick to respond, “Yes! ‘Cool Kind Kids’ stand up to bullies. We aren’t afraid of them!”

Nicole added, “I think some of them are hurting, so we can be nice to them.” Stephen said, “I think some of them just need a friend. We can be friends to them.” “Let’s do it!” they all shouted.

“Cool Kind Kids” help in bullying situations and know that telling when someone is being hurt is not tattling.