

Mars rock

by Linsheng Zhang

“It is what it is,” was what I heard. Or at least what my friends thought. They thought the cafeteria food was okay. They thought it was okay to torture kids with this “food”. People giving out free food was freaky enough. And although it wasn’t real poison, it sure tasted like it— you had to endure metallic yellow-brownish red food all the time. Welcome, this is my life.

Everybody thought cafeteria food was just something in your life, and nothing you did could ever change it. Whenever I held the subject, my friends just rejected it. “There’s no point in changing something that has already been decided.”

I couldn’t believe everyone was going against me. All I wanted to do was to bring better food into their life and they treated the idea like homework! At one point I tried to give the idea up. What can you do when you have no support, no courage, no force to keep you going? *I’m not supported, and I definitely can’t do it.* But then it struck me—I was supported, and I could do it. I turned my frown upside down. Now the cafeteria was going to suffer.

It wasn’t soon before I decided I would do something about the food. It would change from a mars rock to an earth rock. I decided the only way was to notify the Principal. I wrote a letter to her, hoping she would acknowledge our existence, not just the people who made the cafeteria food. Acknowledging our existence includes acknowledging our needs, if I hadn’t made it clear.

In the letter, I wrote about how the orange juice needed not to taste like alcohol and that if they don’t stop it soon, people will waste food and the Earth will be polluted. And when the Earth becomes a trash bin, nobody is going to be the garbage truck. I also complained that they should give us foods from different types of countries. Not everyone on the face of Earth is Hispanic.

But the day after I wrote that letter, I was way too nervous to turn it into the Principle. The main reason was because it looked embarrassing, like you were in trouble. It took me an awful lot of days to have me finally decide I should send my letter to the teacher and let her give it to the Principal.

I was actually surprised that, a couple days after I sent the letter, my friends actually thought the cafeteria was making better food. “For example, the chicken we ate yesterday was good,” one of my friends said. It wasn’t like I hadn’t expected the cafeteria to change—I just couldn’t believe they listened to

every single word I said. Maybe the Earth wasn't going to become a trash bin after all.

The next day, I respected the cafeteria stuff as food, not rock. That day's food was fish fillet, and I instantly tried it. I have to agree that it wouldn't be a five-star meal, but I knew that the cafeteria people were trying their best to make it enjoyable for the kids (they probably were inexperienced with cooking.). Even though they still mainly served hispanic foods, the cafeteria was conspicuously improving.

Previously, you had to suffer to play. When the bell rang, they made you go straight to the cafeteria to grab your food, and then digest a strange substance that a crazy, mad evil scientist would have created. But now, with the improvement, we no longer have to endure the recklessly made food, and the cafeteria people no longer have to endure the wrath of us. Its a win-win — right?

I was happy about a lot of things, but I'm the most happy with the fact that my friends now look like a pack of wolves after a hunt, ready for the great feast. Nobody ever brought up my letter except Andy, who was the only one who knew about it excluding my brother and I, and plus he never told anyone else about the letter. I am glad that we kept it a secret.

Later I learned that small things can make a big difference. When you challenge cafeteria food to a duel, all you need is a pencil and a paper. So whenever you have a challenge, think things through and use the least amount and least effort.