



Situation: The Norfolk (VA) public school system carried out cafeteria upgrades at six of its elementary schools, with a two-day window in which to remove the old furnishings.

Material Composition and Quantity: A total of 112 folding rectangular tables, 10- or 12-foot long, with attached seating, 33 round tables 60" diameter, 224 chairs.

Setting: Six schools in the 96 square-mile district, urban and suburban residential setting.

Overview

The Norfolk (VA) School District implemented cafeteria upgrades at six of its elementary schools. The first step was to remove and dispose of existing tables and seating, before contractors arrived to clean, paint, polish floors, and install the new furnishings. The District’s schedule allowed only a single day to remove the furnishings.

The District selected Contrax Furnishings to supply new cafeteria tables and seating. A longtime IRN partner, Contrax suggested to the District that reuse offered the most cost-effective means to dispose of the existing furnishings, along with environmental and social benefits. The District agreed, as long as IRN could meet their tight time-line.

Composition

School	10' or 12' Rect. Table w/ Seats	Round Table, 60"	Cafeteria Chairs
Granby	30		
Sewells Point	20	5	
Mary Calcott		28	224
Fairlawn	20		
Ingleside	28		
Poplar Halls	14		
Total	112	33	224

Implementation

What set this project apart was the physical bulk of the 112 large rectangular cafeteria tables. With attached seating, these could not be packed tightly into trailers. Additionally, the large number of tables made it challenging to find the appropriate recipient or recipients. Even among IRN’s large network of charitable partners, there are few that are capable of absorbing 145 large cafeteria tables, accommodating nearly 1,000 students, from a single project.

Case Study in Reuse
 Norfolk Public Schools, Virginia



Implementation (ctd) IRN’s longstanding partner Life for Relief & Development (LRD) supports educational and other humanitarian development across the U.S. and internationally, particularly in Africa, the Middle East, and other parts of Asia. LRD matched the Norfolk furnishings with six independent U.S. schools in five states from Maryland to Arizona. Working closely together, LRD and IRN’s logistics staff set up a loading and shipping schedule to fill five 53-foot tractor trailers in a single day, mixing and matching the Norfolk inventory with the specific needs of each of the recipient schools identified by LRD.

Truck	School	Rect. Table	Round Table	Chair	Destination
1	Granby	30			Ann Arbor, MI
2	Sewells Point	10			Detroit, MI
	Sewells Point	10	5		Elk Ridge, MD
	Mary Calcott		5	40	
3	Mary Calcott		23	184	Louisville, KY
4	Fairlawn	20			Yonkers, NY
	Ingleside	8			
5	Ingleside	20			Phoenix, AZ
	Poplar Halls	14			

IRN also coordinated the load crew for the project, splitting and moving the crew from school to school as needed to meet the load schedule. The first truck arrived in Norfolk at 7:00 AM. The fifth and final truck arrived at 2:00 PM, and was filled and dispatched to its destination by 2:40 PM.

“We were happy to offer a solution that kept tons of furniture out of the landfill, helped disadvantaged kids, and cost no more than throwing the old furniture away. From now on I know the District will be thinking reuse, whenever they are turning over old furnishings.”

Greg Cave, Account Executive,
 Contrax Furnishings



IRN – The Reuse Network