

JAWS: THE CAFETERIA

BIO: Morgan Smith, 11, Grade 6

LIVES IN: Colorado Springs, Colo.

ALLERGIES: peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, fish, shellfish

Dealing with the school lunchroom is like swimming in shark-infested waters. For me, the sharks are people eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, sesame seed breads or crackers, and granola bars with nuts. Many kids bring these items, but they don't sit with me or near me. The lunchroom doesn't serve PB & J sandwiches anymore, instead they now serve sunflower-seed-butter sandwiches.

I navigate the lunchroom waters by sitting with my friends who don't eat food containing my allergens. A custodian



cleans the table for me. The other kids have to clean up with a wet cloth. Kids are supposed to wash their hands after lunch, but most don't. Up until Grade 2, I had a table sign that said, "It's Cool to be Peanut Free!" But now, I'm old enough to ask potential sharks to move. It's a 50-50 chance that people understand why they are asked to move. Once a shark came right up to my table eating a PB & J sandwich. (Of course, he didn't know about my food allergies.) I had to ask him to move down two tables.

Lunchroom monitors (who are adults) are there to help, so students do change seats when asked. Most kids understand that my food allergies are serious. A few new kids need help understanding but, overall, I feel safe among the sharks!