

Part B – Summary of 2014-2015 Green School Activities

Royal Palm School serves students with special needs from pre-k to age 22. We continue to pursue the Green Schools initiatives by adhering to green practices, expanding existing green projects, and creating new ones.

I. School Ground Enhancement

- A. Outdoor Learning: We have four outdoor learning areas installed by volunteers from Home Depot # 6313. The school landscape was designed with drought tolerant native plants. We have an outdoor Agriculture lab that is used daily by our students who grow and sell plants to fund agricultural projects. We have three raised beds to allow wheelchair students to tend to the plants. Classes used the raised beds to grow Tomatoes, Carrots, Basil and Bok Choy. These plants were used in cooking lessons.
- B. Habitat Improvement: Through a grant from Home Depot, we have a new Butterfly Garden. Team Depot store 6313 supplied the labor, plants, soil amendments and mulch. Additional plant donations came from staff members and the Kiwanis Club of Boynton Beach. Staff and students made signs that were placed on a fence behind the garden. Students come out to check on the butterflies as they walk our Heart Trail. Mr. Easley brings chrysalis inside for students to observe and study.

II. School Sustainability:

- A. Energy: All lighting and air conditioning are controlled by sensors. Toilets and sinks use motion detectors to reduce water usage. Our agricultural area includes a timer for watering. Periodically, we request a report on electricity and water usage. That information is shared with staff. To conserve gas, many teachers carpool, drive hybrid vehicles, and 6 ride bikes.
- B. Green Fundraising: We have arranged for a non-profit organization called **Fun-Raising** to set up a clothing receptacle out front for donations. We then receive a check from them when the box is full. We recycle used ink/toner cartridges, cell phones and old electronics through Dade Recycling for which we also receive funds. That money is spent on enhancing our green space. With these funds we have purchased a bench to be placed by the Butterfly Garden. We're also purchasing some signs to identify the plants there. Our media center has set up a bin to recycle non rechargeable batteries.
- C. Health and Well-being: Our staff participates in wellness activities such as **An Apple a Day** and **Wonderfit**. Most classes go outside daily to walk our heart trail or enjoy 1 of 3 playgrounds. A volunteer comes to school once a week to conduct **Yoga classes** for interested staff. One of our themes this year was health and nutrition. Students learned about "Our Plate", a nutritional curriculum concentrated on the food groups and ideal portion control. In agriculture class, students grew organic vegetables for classroom cooking lessons.
- D. Solid Waste: Our students' **Green Team** go room to room weekly to collect recyclables. They collect paper, cans, plastic bottles, milk cartons, bottle caps, ink and toner cartridges, and cell phones. The bottle caps collected are sent to France where they are redeemed to purchase wheelchairs for needy students.
- E. Transportation: We currently have five staff members that regularly ride bikes to school. There are 4 groups of staff members that carpool to and from school. An estimated 20

staff members drive either hybrid or gas efficient vehicles to school. Due to the handicapping nature of our students, all of them must be transported by bus or car.

- F. Water: Toilets and sinks use motion detectors to reduce water usage. We currently do not have a working sprinkler system. Drought tolerant plants were initially installed when the school was built. Our agricultural teacher installed a timer for the gardening areas which is adjusted for seasonal requirements.

III. Curriculum Integration:

- A. Interdisciplinary: Our school uses the **Unique Learning System Curriculum** geared towards students with disabilities. This interdisciplinary core curriculum integrates lessons on conservation and the environment.
- B. Environmental Topics: Throughout the day, students are taught to recycle scrap paper, milk cartons, soda cans, and plastic bottles.
- C. Field Studies: One of our themes this year was butterflies. Students studied their lifecycles and observed them in our butterfly garden. Mr. Easley brought caterpillars into the agriculture lab to be viewed and studied. Mr. Easley also set up his egg incubator in the main hallway for all classes to observe and collect data on the chickens hatching.

IV. Community Involvement:

- A. Partnerships within the School Building: Our school has formed a **Student Green Team** made up of students from 5 classes that weekly collect paper, cans, plastic bottles, milk cartons, bottle caps, ink and toner cartridges, and cell phones. Classes are all provided with recycling boxes from the Solid Waste Authority.
- B. Community Service Projects: Bottle caps are collected and given to Valerie at the Lantana Home Depot. She sends them to an organization in France called **Caps of Love** where they are used to purchase wheelchairs for needy students. Families are networking in their neighborhoods to collect bottle caps and send them into the school. Two of our students are the first US recipients of wheelchairs through this program. We send soda can tabs to the **Ronald McDonald House** in Ft. Lauderdale to raise funds to offset their expenses. Our staff and parents send in food each year for Food for Families. We also gather food for our more needy families at Royal Palm. Those families are also included in our annual Angel Tree drive that is set up at the local Cracker Barrel, a community partner.
- C. Community Partnerships in School Activities: Staff members have attended workshops from Project Wild. Under their guidance we plan to create a **Wildlife Refuge** at our school by planting more trees. Last May, the Arthur R. Marshall Foundation came to our school to present an instructional assembly on Everglades National Park. Kings Point Woodworkers repurpose donated wood to make adaptive equipment for our students. Project Linus use donated fabric and yarn to make blankets and bibs for our kids. Staff members and parents contributed clothing for our **Clothing Closet** that we use for students in need. Unusable items are then sorted out and put in the clothing recycling box. Home Depot 6313 supplies our Industrial Arts and Agriculture classes with wood, potting soil, plants, and other materials for use in their classes.

V. Administrative Support:

- A. School Philosophy and Culture: Our administration supports all our green endeavors as evidenced by our school-wide recycling program, our addition of a butterfly garden, and our business partner relationships. Our administration encourages the use of paperless

communication. Documents are sent electronically and only printed when necessary. Documents such as IEP's and agendas are printed on both sides of paper.

B. Professional Development: Staff was encouraged to attend the Learn Green Conference, and the Project Wild Workshops. District employees from Environmental and Conservation Services came on Day of Service to clear and plant a vegetable garden with the students.

VI. Innovation:

Our Agriculture teacher has created a microscope using an iPad, a small pin light, and two pieces of Plexiglas. This microscope enables him to carry it around the classroom for all students to view. He also created living centerpieces using old light bulbs. We have plans this year to create a hydroponic system using a plastic storage bin, aquarium filters, and tubing.

