

## Part B- Summary of 2014-2015 Green School Activities

South Grade Elementary continues to support and maintain the conservation efforts previously established in years past. With several ongoing programs that serve as an educational tool for conservation, we proudly present what we are continuing to do at South Grade Elementary School.

Our school garden serves as an extension of our classrooms and creates an environment that fosters exploratory learning. With the assistance of each of the grade levels, all students get the chance to participate and learn about the maintenance and care of the garden. Through the help of several families, faculty, students, and community members, new plants have been added and are in the process of growing! Our raised flowerbeds have huge leaves and broccoli heads. Our tomato plants are getting taller each day! This year we planted broccoli, kale, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, a variety of herbs, and flowers. Some teachers even took home seedlings to prepare them planting. We are working with The Kiwanis Club of Lake Worth to help us rebuild and repair our hydroponic waterbeds. We are eagerly awaiting our harvest in April.

In our courtyard, we have several bird feeders, birdbaths, butterfly gardens, and flower boxes. The courtyard is a place where teachers bring students to learn, relax, and be inspired by the world around them. The butterfly gardens and bird feeders attract different insect species and birds. Our students have had the opportunity to watch the baby birds grow into adult birds while learning about the responsibility that they have to keep their environment clean. The other day, we even got to see a beautiful new moth. A few of the third grade classes have even sat in the courtyard to write poetry. While embracing an environment that encourages learning, we have also enhanced the student's awareness and love of nature.

When thinking of our schools efforts to be green, we encompass our desire to have a positive effect on the environment by carpooling. As a "neighborhood school," we do not utilize the bus transportation provided by the Palm Beach County School District. The majority of our students are classified as walkers and a few car riders. Of the car riders, approximately 35% of our student population carpools to and from school. We also have several parent volunteers with vans that make multiple trips to transport ten students at a time in order to conserve gasoline. As well as carpooling, about 5% of our students rides their bikes. We are encouraging more students to ride their bike, as we are a neighborhood school. One of our after school programs arranged for all of their students to receive a bicycle and helmet before Holiday Break. St. Andrew Academy, one of our community partners, donated these.

The Green Committee has continued to organize a school wide campus cleanup. Each grade level has established a class rotation in order to accommodate the involvement of all in the green initiative. Through this ongoing schedule, we are able to maintain a litter-free campus. Students are instructed to analyze what they find and classify it into four categories: recyclable, up-cyclable, disposable and compostable. This system increases the chances of all waste being disposed of in the most "green" way.

South Grade is involved in a multitude of recycling and up-cycling programs including; TerraCycle, Solid Waste Authority Recycling, Southern Waste System's Sneakers 4 Shelters, Shoes for the Cure, and collecting and reusing uniforms for the students. The TerraCycle program allows students to learn about the "up-cycling" process. At South Grade, the Up-cycle process targets chip bags and glue sticks as a way to earn school funding while at the same time conserving natural resources used in the production of such materials. TerraCycle's goal is to

eliminate the idea of waste by collecting anything that must be sent to a landfill and South Grade's Green Team is proud to be a part of this effort.

South Grade works with the Solid Waste Authority (SWA) to recycle paper, glass, aluminum, and plastic in order to conserve natural resources and receives financial rewards in return. These efforts are now made possible by South Grade's afterschool Recycling Club which carries out the weekly chores of gathering these recycled materials. Every classroom, the cafeteria, main office, and hallways, are equipped with multiple recycle bins to accommodate the effort and send a clear message that recycling solid waste is important and worth the effort.

All of South Grade's recycling efforts are supported by a multitude of caring individuals. The physical education teacher, Mike Trotta, partnered with the South Florida Fair and Southern Waste Systems to implement the "South Florida Fair Read, Run, & Recycle" event which integrates cross curricular activities and the importance of recycling to minimize waste while helping others in need. The "Sneakers 4 Shelters" portion of this event raised awareness and provided for families in need in Palm Beach County and helped students understand that re-using and recycling shoes not only helps the planet by conserving natural resources, but also helps needy families as well. The South Grade Green Committee has made efforts to partner with the Pineapple Beach Neighborhood Association to hold monthly school/community cleanups. Students, teachers, parents, and community members are invited to come out and lend a hand. As an incentive, volunteers can leave with a free cleanup t-shirt, bottle of water, flower seeds, sponges, and a feeling of accomplishment for our planet. A large amount of trash, as well as a recyclables, were collected and disposed of properly.

In addition to these recycling and up-cycling efforts, our school's I.T. Support also collects and recycles ink cartridges. He encourages it on campus as well as off-campus. Teachers and students bring used cartridges from home also. Any funds go back into the school funding account.

South Grade has collaborated with schools in Guatemala so that they receive gently used school supplies. South Grade collects used pencils, crayons, markers, notebooks, erasers, pens, and other school supplies and sends them to different schools in Guatemala. These materials, if not collected, would end up in a landfill. Instead, they are going to benefit children who otherwise would not be able to afford them. This also promotes a global sense that nothing should go to waste and there is a need for used materials in the world. At the same time, we are teaching our students to be involved in our environmental efforts as well as our civic duty to help others.

Overall, small changes happen every day all over South Grade's campus. Our "parking lot" garden enhances science units and brings the classroom to life while producing vegetables and fruits for the community. Butterfly gardens and bird feeders attract different insect species and birds while enhancing the student's awareness and love of nature. Faculty, parents, and students practice planet-sustaining skills by recycling, upcycling, and collecting items that would normally be sent to the landfill to rot. Cleanups bring volunteers together from on campus and within the community to make the neighborhood a "greener" place to live. All of these small acts instill a sense of ownership and pride in their community and the world around them.