

Part B – Summary: Green School Activities 2014-2015 St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic School

The main objective of St. Vincent Ferrer Catholic School's Green School initiative is to empower our stakeholders to be good stewards of the gifts that God has given to each of us. We actively engage students in educational, experiential, interactive, "hands on" learning experiences that foster a culture of sustainability, responsibility and leadership. Our mission statement sums up our passion: Hearts to God, Minds to Learning, Talents to Service, and Stewards of the Earth. We proudly share our successes in this document.

School Grounds Enhancements

St. Vincent Ferrer School takes pride in the gifts of God's creation. We cherish our outdoor local habitat and care for our campus.

- Our green team has expressed a desire to develop our current garden area to include raised garden boxes. The feasibility of this project will be explored during the fourth quarter of the school year.
- Our increased enrollment of an additional 60 students this school year brought about a feasibility study to determine expansion of our current school building. The new building plans include a new green space which occupies the entire span of the center of the campus.

School Sustainability

St. Vincent Ferrer School is actively embracing the mission of stewardship – we make every effort to recycle, reuse and not to be wasteful. We continue to make strides in conservation efforts, healthy living, energy efficiency, and the development of transportation awareness options.

Over the summer months, there were several facility upgrades that were carried out:

- All the duct work in the rectory and school buildings were replaced. We are breathing cleaner air indoors throughout campus.
- The Family Life Center obtained a complete air conditioner overhaul. This new efficient air conditioning system is digitally computerized via a remote which calibrates the timing of the air setting. As a result, our school's utility bill is approximately \$1,000 less per month.
- Our school is 100% compliant with the T-8 non-incandescent lighting saving dollars and energy.
- On March 6, 2015 a new school-wide water conservation initiative was revealed. The marketing division of the green team broadcasted their video at a live school assembly. Each grade level will be working on their own design to spread the message.
- A FPL grant application is in the works which if awarded will provide our school with a solar panel. This solar panel will power our existing tower garden.

Curriculum Integration

St. Vincent Ferrer School promotes integration of environmental themed units of instruction, concepts, field studies and laboratory investigations across the curriculum and between grades.

- One area of focus this year has been soil sustainability and conservation. Middle school student teams developed farm proposals, which included: a game plan for soil protection, managing water resources, crop sustainability, and a farm layout plan.
- Our student teams also researched the causes and effects of the ongoing water crisis in the Indian River Lagoon, and the St. Lucie River. Students created "out of the box" solution ideas based on their research findings.

Community Involvement

We look for opportunities to provide service to others, and are extensively involved in community outreach and have established partnerships with our local and global communities.

- On April 22, 2015, we will host our 8th Annual Delray Beach cleanup. This event is a collaborative, “waste-free” event. We are joined by members of the Delray Beach police department, parents, teacher, students and members of the parish - who are all committed to sustainability in our local community!
- Our “Caps of Love” program (collection of plastic caps for use in wheelchairs for the disabled) is thriving! This initial service project was established by a single student two years ago. The project has grown so large that our entire eighth grade class decided to make it their service project this year.
- This year’s parish festival brought in the community of Delray Beach and beyond for three fun-filled days. Our Green Team made sure that recycling bins were within reach for the disposal of aluminum cans and bottles. Following the exit of the festival rides, our field contained many holes left behind by the heavy machinery. The field was sanded, re-seeded, and watered. This is done each spring in order to keep our playing field in good order and safe for our students’ PE classes.
- We will be conducting a campus-wide clean-up on April 22nd for grades 4 & 5.

Administrative Support

Our school crest embodies our mission and is displayed proudly on our campus: Hearts to God, Minds to Learning, Talents to Service, and Stewards of the Earth. We take pride in the fact that our graduates move on with this mission instilled within them.

- In 2014, our new crest was officially added to the new uniform, and appears in all publications.
- Currently, we are transitioning into a new data management system called RenWeb which will assist the school in eliminating the use of paper. Parents, teachers and students will have the ability to locate and acquire information through an App via their cell phones, tablets and computers.
- The Cashless Campus program initiated this year provides for a paperless aftercare tracking and billing system.
- Transportation for teachers to NCEA conference – no separate cars, all on a bus.
- The administration is supportive of green initiatives, and purchasing choices are indicative of the philosophy of good stewardship.

Innovation

St. Vincent Ferrer has been on a journey towards developing a culture of sustainability for many years. We celebrate a well – established Green Team, an ever-expanding green space, and a school culture that promotes awareness and encourages innovative thinking and practices, especially in the areas of curriculum and conservation practices. We are currently developing school wide plans for our 1st annual Green Stewards Kids Teach Kids event. Each class will showcase a unique green learning activity or innovation.