

Sunset Palms Elementary (SPE) is proudly a Green School of Promise, Class of 2013 and School of Quality, Class of 2014. Our sincere intention is that with the extensive expansion of our green initiatives, we will become a 2015 School of Excellence!

We are excited to share the monumental expansion of our "green" endeavors over the past year. Our former "Project Green" initiative was such a success we expanded and rebranded to be called "TurtleCare". This collaborative approach encompasses environmental, philanthropic and health and wellness initiatives.

Our K-5 school, opened in 2008 is located in Boynton Beach on the Agricultural Reserve of PB County. Our physical structure hosts a number of environmentally friendly qualities including, but not limited to... energy and water conservation measures.

Our "TurtleCare" Team is a well-rounded group of individuals comprised of faculty, parents and community professionals. This unique collaboration provides an array of expertise and passion to implement our sustainable initiatives. Our "Green Team" consists of Sara Green-SPE PTA Board Member-TurtleCare Chair & PBCSD Substitute Teacher, Emily Guerra-SPE PTA Board Member-TurtleCare Co-Chair & Certified ToxicFree Coach, Holly Bromer-SPE PTA Board Member & Co-Chair TurtleCare, SAC Member & Certified Yoga Instructor RYT-200, Margi Newman-SPE Faculty, Kate McMillan-FSU Graduate Student, Katelyn Cucinnotta-Sea 2 Shore Alliance, Bonnie Lehmann-Whole Foods Wellington.

During 2014, the TurtleCare Team, along with complete support from administration, has strongly focused on School Grounds Enhancement initiatives. This year, Sunset Palms Elementary completed the requirements to become a National Wildlife Federation Certified Schoolyard Habitats® Site. In addition, we completed Phase One of a multi-stage project to create a comprehensive outdoor learning space that can be used by teachers at every grade level and across disciplines. In the area of School Sustainability, we have enacted a school-wide Ambassador program titled "TurtleCare Ambassadors" where each month a student from every class is elected to serve as the TurtleCare liaison, inspiring their peers and disseminating information about current TurtleCare activities. The School Construction includes water conservation measures such as low flush toilets. Solid Waste is addressed through very expansive school-wide SWA recycling programs as well as DadeRecycling and Caps of Love collections. SPE addresses Health and Wellness with a branch of TurtleCare focusing on health and wellness along with the support of our school nurse. We have an Allergy Club, Asthma/Diabetic/Allergy education, faculty training for epi-pen use and a multitude of other initiatives. In regards to Transportation, SPE participates in SchoolPool, a free service that is designed to increase the number of families that carpool, bike and walk to and from school. In the area of Curriculum Integration, teachers utilize the "green" lesson plans within Learning Village curriculum to educate students about a myriad of environmental topics. In the area of Community Involvement, SPE is proud to have numerous active Partnerships; such as Solid Waste Authority, Whole Foods, Runners Edge, Home Depot and many more! Regarding Administrative Support, our administration is extremely passionate about and supportive of our "TurtleCare" endeavors including providing an entire Faculty Team with a representative from each grade. We have integrated environmental education into our monthly faculty meetings; we also have added "TurtleCare" as a standing agenda item at our SAC meetings. In terms of Innovation, SPE continues to raise the "Green bar" for our students and the community. We established a Green Week, hosted designated car-pool days, enhanced curriculum with a 21-day lesson in live hatcheries, enhanced the TurtleCare Ambassador program, and went paperless in our TurtleTalk Newsletter. Moreover, representatives from our PTA Board presented at the Learn Green conference.