

Part B - Summary of Green School Activities

Unity School has continued its commitment to *School Grounds Enhancement* during the 2014-2015 school year. Last year's installation of a security fence has created several vast areas for outdoor learning. To allow greater access to these lawns, three walk paths were installed near classrooms. In addition, picnic tables were repositioned to these areas promoting increased outdoor learning and project collaboration. Our Toddler, Preschool and Kindergarten classrooms have outdoor areas, as an extension of the classroom, to support Montessori teaching. Herb/vegetable gardening as well as butterfly gardening are seasonal favorites for our young learners. For the past two years, students have shown an interest in the spontaneous sprouting of a small citrus tree along the heavily traveled Peace Walk. This year the tree was transplanted to allow more room for growth and sun exposure. The tree was placed by the schools community garden where students can continue to observe and learn from seed germination.

The importance of *School Sustainability* and conservation of resources is understood and practiced throughout the Unity campus. Beginning this school year, the aeroponic tower garden is completely powered by solar energy. The garden produces vegetables and herbs that are used on the salad bar and in lunch preparation. The School's Carambola tree has produced large amounts of fruit this year, which many students enjoyed for lunch while other students tried this unusual fruit for the very first time. Near the cafeteria tray line, a *Tree to Tray* display board shows fruits and vegetables for each harvest season. This display serves as a reminder to parents/staff who wish to donate organically grown foods from their own trees to our students' lunch trays. Building on the successful use of iPads in our middle school, one hundred new iPad Air tablets have been purchased. This will allow approximately one hundred existing iPads to be redistributed into our elementary school. Through access to these devices, our younger students can help to further reduce paper waste by utilizing Google Docs and Google Drive. In addition, workbook purchases can be replaced by educational apps for select grades. Recycling of plastic/carton co-mingle, paper, cardboard, ink cartridges and cell phones continues campus wide. Students are responsible for emptying classroom recycling containers into the recycling totes located throughout the school grounds. Our Recycled Uniform Sale remains popular with families, as gently used uniforms are sold well below retail cost and both time and resources are saved by eliminating a trip to the uniform store. Our Toddler, Preschool and Kindergarten classes continue to use water harvested through rain barrels to water their gardens.

Unity School continues their strong interdisciplinary approach to *Curriculum Integration* of environmental education. Classroom instruction includes the study of plants, coastal ecosystems, the Florida Everglades, animal habitats, rainforest preservation, gardening, global warming, reducing our carbon footprint, and natural energy sources. This year, Preschool through 8th grade will research and teach lessons on Solar Energy. Each grade will conclude their study with a solar project/display that will be showcased during our Earth Day Celebration in April. Students, faculty, parents and representatives from Florida Power and Light will attend this special celebration and will be energized by projects such as Solar Cookers, A Solar Shower, Solar Crayon Sunbursts, Solar Lit

Mason Jars, and the History of Solar Power. Another interesting project, led by 5th grade students, is their calculation and display of the number of 12oz. plastic water bottles that have been saved from the landfill by using the water bottle filling stations on campus. To date our students calculate that we have kept 20,495 plastic water bottles from our landfills. The students put together a visual display of this result, which supports the value of using our refillable water bottles.

Unity students remain in the forefront of *Community Involvement* through service partnerships within the school, their community and on a global level. School projects such as the food drive, coins for the Earth, beach clean ups, and Learning Partners (pairing younger students with older students) result in successful collaboration at school and in the community. This year our Middle School students added gleaning to their long list of community service commitments. One Middle School student, inspired by years of community outreach at Unity School, started a non-profit organization called *Shoes2You*. His organization donated over 1,400 pairs of used shoes to Nicaragua, regions of Bali where children need black closed-toe shoes for school, and locally to the Delray Beach Health Department. Lastly, plans are in place for a community partnership with Farmer Jay to guide us in a campus wide composting program.

Administrative Support remains steadfast and is leading Unity teachers in educating 21st Century Students. Through administration, 100 new iPads have been purchased this year. With frequent use of the water bottle filling station, that was installed last year, administration replaced all remaining water fountains with new Elkay EZH20 filtered water systems. Bottle filling stations are now located throughout the campus (6 in total), and more students are using refillable bottles instead of plastics. Through the support of administration, all grades continue to participate in field studies during trips to Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, Green Turtle Cay, Butterfly World, and the Fishing Hall of Fame. In addition, 18 teachers and administrators attended the FETC this past January.

Our newest *Innovative* project at Unity is called "Scrap It Up." This started in a Middle School math class, where students often use scrap paper for math work. Rather than using a new piece of paper, students go to a "scrap bin" that contains paper that has only been used on one side. This simple project, promoting use of both sides of the paper before recycling, has expanded into each classroom. Students are finding many creative ways to utilize the paper from their "Scrap It Up" bin rather than taking a new piece of paper. A "Scrap It Up" bin was also placed in the teachers' lounge beside the copy machine. Paper from this bin can be used by anyone whose own bin is low on paper. This simple program has brought attention to just how much paper tends to land in the recycle bin prematurely. Our students like to "Scrap It Up" first, and then recycle!