

Benjamin Franklin said “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn” and at Olympics Heights this could not be truer. Combining mentorship, community service, education, and compassion have been the cornerstones of our Green program this year. We have brought our students together with the community and created a program that continues to inspire and motivate our students through active learning, mentorship, and growth. We created and implemented universal Green practices beyond just grade specific or department practices. We applied a strategic five year plan starting last year and within that plan was to expand, document, and grow our outdoor learning areas to allow for all subject areas to have the ability to incorporate outdoor learning into their subjects. Our students were active participants in the design and implementation of the building and design of the outdoor learning areas as well as the future plans for expansion. We have added multiple active outdoor learning gardens to our campus and our students have been integral in the expansion and planning of these spaces. We have worked extensively with our local community to expand and grow our Green areas. Working directly with the Fl. Dept. of Ag, Home Depot, Lowes, & Whole Foods, all supporting our program and the learning opportunities in our outdoor learning areas. We have expanded exponentially in the areas of school sustainability. We have implemented a school wide lights out campaign with a student designed poster to remind our teachers of power reduction and conservation. Through the introduction of rain chain irrigation conservation we have been able to reduce dependency on county water for the plants as well reduce utilization of electricity by not having to power the IGS system. We have two green fundraising programs, one through “Funraising” and the recycling of used clothes and shoes, the second is our “Make your Mark not your Footprint” program of coco plum donations from graduating students and from faculty and staff to add to our campus outdoor learning areas. We have continued to promote our health and wellness and increase activity in our students. Integrating Green into the curriculum as a standard has been our goal since last year which is expanding into fruition this year. We have seen a 35% increase since last year of our teachers utilizing outdoor education and incorporating Green lessons. We have implemented an interdisciplinary approach to learning about Green allowing all subject areas to approach the inclusion of Green. Our students take the lead in environmental projects directing the focus of expansions. Our Multi-Generational Green Mentor Program has been able to expand not just the Green areas of campus, but the minds of our students creating a generational bridge from seniors to high school students, creating an educational system allowing students to learn the plants and structure and have the ability to teach to another generation. Our partnerships made our growth possible through funding and volunteerism on campus allowing the admin., staff, students, & community to work together to accomplish great changes within the campus. The school philosophy is inclusion, acceptance and making strides towards a healthier environment through education and active learning that strives for change and growth. We have created a program that continues to grow not just through the height of a plant but through the minds of our students and of our staff, making strides to protect the planet through the changes that we can make every day. Theodore Roosevelt said “Of all the questions which can come before this nation, short of the actual preservation of its existence in a great war, there is none which compares in importance with the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us.” That is at the heart of OH.