



King County Green Schools Program

# Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

## Montessori Children's House

**School Location:** Redmond

**Began to participate in the Green Schools Program:**  
September 2008

**Level One of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in April 2009

**Level Two of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in April 2017

### Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)

- Montessori Children's House reached a recycling rate of 69 percent.
- The school converted to an electronic parent newsletter, after 92 percent of the parents, in response to an on-line survey, indicated a preference for an on-line paperless newsletters.
- In a few classrooms, yogurt and applesauce cups were reused for seed containers and art projects.
- Each classroom and office was provided with a paper reuse box so staff and students can use both sides of a piece of paper before recycling.
- To reduce paper use, office employees started to edit content on-line, and, when copying, to use double-sided copies.
- The school began serving the afternoon snack in durable containers so leftovers could be stored and served the next day.



This student's waste free lunch is packed in durable containers.



Student artist and her art work about the environment.



Student works with the compost in the school garden.



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- During National Green Week (February 2 – 9), the school held waste-free Wednesday to promote the practice of packing reusable containers for lunches.
- In classrooms, at parent events, and staff meetings, pitchers of water and durable cups were provided instead of single-use water bottles or paper cups.
- Students and staff used metal silverware and plates for lunch and snack time.
- Grass clippings were left on school lawns (grass cycling).
- Most of the school's food scraps were fed to three goats and eleven chickens living on school property and the remainder was placed in on-site composters.
- A yard waste bin was added to the school's waste management system to hold pizza boxes left over from special events as well as excess food scraps that cannot be handled by the methods listed above.
- A battery disposal and printer cartridge exchange box was set up in the office.
- To educate students and employees, the following was completed.
  - The school formed a Green Schools Team comprised of three teachers, director of operations, director of education, executive director, and a parent. One teacher was asked to serve as lead.
  - The Green Schools Team used methods that have been effective communication tools for other types of messages to parents, staff and students. These methods included e-mails to staff and parents, the school's web site, and centrally located white boards.
  - The teacher in-service day in February included information about waste reduction, recycling, and green school curriculum.
  - Several classrooms regularly took a close look at garbage and recycling bins in the classrooms to ensure proper sorting.
  - In November 2008, at the Nature Trail Grand Opening, the school held a recycling relay race where families sorted trash from recycling and placed items in the proper receptacles. This helped the community see how many commonly trashed items are recyclable.
  - Several early childhood teachers created and continued to implement hands on curricula that included waste reduction, the science behind composting and the introduction of worm bins.



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- The school created a school Waste Management Plan to promote proper sorting and overall waste reduction.
- A formal student Green Team was created in 2016-17 and consisted of upper and lower elementary school students who presented information in classrooms.
- Composting in classrooms was improved when students collected food and liquid waste separately then measured/recorded their findings.
- A Green Team fundraiser was held and reusable containers were sold online.
- The Environmental Acts of Consciousness campaign was rolled out, and included a one week challenge.
- Staff started to bring recycling and composting bins to off-site events.

## Energy Conservation (Level Two)

- The leader of the Green Schools team created stickers for light switches, and posted one sticker at each light switch to remind staff and students to turn off lights when they leave the room.
- The school architect submitted a plan for a series of cascading roofs to connect classrooms. These roofs would collect water; the rain cascades from one canopy to the next, traversing a green roof of plants, and then falling into an aqueduct and rain barrels that store the water for irrigation of school grounds. In addition, the plan included solar panels for some sections of the roof. As of April 2009, the community had raised \$3,000 toward this project.
- The school Operations Team investigated replacing overhead fluorescent lights with a more energy efficient lighting system and adding motion sensor switches.
- The school established a no-idle policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Information on this was included in a school newsletter and in-person conversations by staff parking/traffic monitors.
- Students learned about energy use through science lessons incorporating how people all over the world handle limited resources.
- Green Team advisors gave an all-staff presentation in fall 2016 about energy consumption and conservation.



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## Environmental Education

- The school held a community event to celebrate Earth Day. Students and their parents helped prepare gardening space for planting and learning the basics of composting.
- The school Grant Committee submitted grant proposals to take the school's gardening program to the next level. Grant proposals included rain barrels, downspout diverters, and worm bins to help garden beds produce a year-round supply of fruits and vegetables for the children's snack times.
- A new unit titled Humans as Consumers was developed and taught in the elementary classroom. The unit's purpose is to help students understand the interconnectedness of all living things and see how their daily choices affect the environment. Students learned how to conserve resources and reuse what they already have.
- In alignment with traditional Montessori curriculum, the school implemented an integrated approach to education. Children as young as three years of age were introduced to life cycles of animals and plants, parts of plants and animals, and the natural elements that make life on earth sustainable.
- To nurture each child's spirit through connection with the outdoor environment, the school offered access to an enclosed nature trail, a meadow, a mixed conifer and deciduous forest, several wetland areas and children's gardens.
- Elementary age students were introduced to an in-depth study of life sciences including taxonomy, the periodic table, the function and parts of living organisms, and how all parts of the natural world are interconnected with one another.

For more information about this school's participation in the Green Schools Program, contact:

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