

Congratulations to Beachside Montessori Village in Hollywood!

One of only 47 schools in the USA to receive the prestigious Green Ribbon Schools Designation, Beachside Montessori Village was honored through the US Department of Education's 2016 Green Ribbon Schools Award program. Please read their inspiring story below.

Connecting the child to the natural world is an integral component of Montessori education. Studies and practical life experiences in the natural world are imbedded into the curriculum at an early age. To further strengthen this connection, Montessori encourages leadership by children. Beachside Montessori Village, a public magnet prekindergarten through eighth-grade school, aims to create an environment that inspires children to take ownership of their surroundings and action for change toward a more peaceful and sustainable world. Reducing environmental impact, promoting health and wellness, and integrating sustainability education accomplish this goal.

Beachside's facilities staff, teachers, and students collaborate to reduce environmental impact and costs. To reduce energy use, Beachside participates in the NBA's Miami Heat's How Low Can You Go Energy Efficiency Challenge. Students from Beachside's sustainability elective class visit classrooms to read and discuss environmentally themed books. In an effort to educate and to standardize recycling, the school partners with Recycle Across America. Beachside's Recycle Rangers have placed recycling labels on all bins throughout the school to reduce contamination.

Progressive Waste, the school's hauler, partners to conduct schoolwide assemblies, recycling audits, and art contests. Through a Green Team fundraiser, three water bottle refilling stations have been purchased, saving over 5,850 plastic water bottles in just a few months. Additionally, the Montessori curriculum uses reusable manipulative lessons, student notebooks, and key experiences, reducing the need for single-use materials. To reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions on campus, Beachside offers a Green Car Pool, and students oversee a no-idling program. With support from partner On Air Schools-Clean Air Campaign, students collected data to measure the amount of CO₂ and air pollutants produced, then educated parents and asked them to sign a pledge promising not to idle their vehicles.

Promoting health and wellness among students, staff, and the community teaches children to take ownership of their own health. As part of Beachside's peace education, the school begins each week with Mindful Monday, featuring schoolwide guided relaxation. Several teachers have certified yoga teachers volunteer in classes once a week, and others use GoNoodle or other brain break exercises. Beachside is proud of the beautiful stone labyrinth that the school community came together to build by hand, offering students an opportunity for walking meditation. Beachside's recess area is shared with a community park, so local residents also benefit from the labyrinth.

All over campus, upcycled murals, artwork, and inspirational quotes create a positive, nurturing, learning environment. The school's outdoor environment includes an NWF-certified wildlife habitat. Through classroom gardens and a weekly gardening club, students learn about planting, maintaining, and harvesting organic edibles. Beachside holds an annual food drive and Turkey Trot walk for students and staff, while its PTA organizes a community five-kilometer race. Staff members have an opportunity to participate in various activities from the Nike+ Challenge to a community dragon boat team.

The Montessori curriculum teaches "cosmic education" to help students understand the connections between the world's biodiversity and themselves. Interconnectedness of all things provides a way for children to be able to study math, science, nature, and the universe. Beachside is the first middle school in its district to offer a sustainability elective for students, resulting from a partnership with ASU Sustainability Teacher Academy. Students participate in off-campus, field-

based environmental studies at Everglades National Park and Pigeon Key. Off the Canvas, a program run entirely by parent volunteers, cultivates a sustained awareness and interest in art and crafts, using of recycled materials and socially responsible practices through monthly classroom hands-on projects.

The Warriors of Rainbow student green group provides opportunities for school leadership and service learning. The group was chosen to attend the Algalita International Youth POPS Summit, where they presented solutions to the ocean's plastic pollution problem to the city of Hollywood's Green Team, resulting in a partnership to work on this issue. Montessori Model United Nations (MMUN) students research and offer solutions for global environmental issues from climate change to affordable energy services. Resolutions are presented to ambassadors, as well as their peers, at the MMUN conference held at the United Nations in New York.

The Montessori philosophy coupled with strong partnerships and a passionate school community create a unique environment that inspires students to become guardians of the planet.

School Contact: Elaine Fiore at Elaine.fiore@browardschools.com