

## **Wilton Manors Elementary – P3 Eco-Challenge 2015-16 Overall School Winner**

### **Narrative Summary**

Wilton Manors Elementary is an exemplary P3 Green School as demonstrated by our full student, staff and community commitment to the environment. Through our integrated International Baccalaureate curriculum, global environmental topics are researched and taught through the interdisciplinary units of inquiry.

Our school grounds are a place where students can interact with native plants through observation and measurement, and improve the sustainability of the school as a whole. Our school-wide beautification projects follow the path to making our community an example for sustainability, recycling and environmental preservation. Our campus courtyard serves as an outside learning lab for all students, Pre-K through 5th grade. All grade levels utilize the space by planting and maintaining garden boxes which are used by students and staff for activities ranging across the disciplines. Additionally, our school's Butterfly Garden was recognized by the National Wildlife Fund's Eco-schools School Yard Habitat award. We have also been approved for the NWF Eco-Schools Pathways.

Our school strives for optimal sustainability by conserving energy through monitored and careful allocation and use of resources including energy, water and solid waste. Students and staff attended the Water Matters Day hosted by NatureScape, where we presented county recipients with the Emerald Award created by our school's art teacher and Art Club members. They brought back drought resistant trees, native to the area to enhance our school's campus.

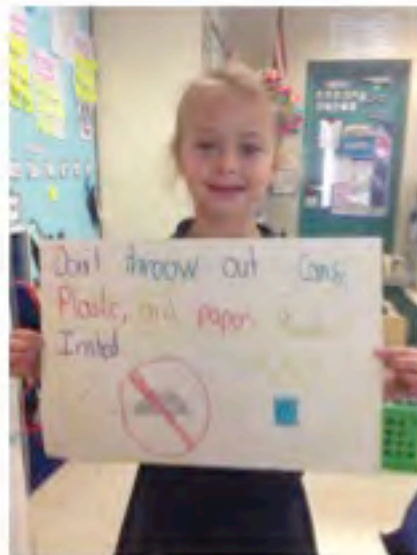
Each grade level completes six, in-depth, integrated units of inquiry that intertwine throughout the disciplines. Environmental topics are frequently chosen as areas of study so that students may fully engage, research and reflect about these omnipresent and significant issues. These units connect to the Action Cycle, in which students take responsibility for their world in order to be more productive global citizens. This culminates in the 5th grade final project: Exhibition. During this time students engage with faculty mentors and select a topic they wish to research and educate their communities about. Their final product is a PowerPoint Presentation, video and display that demonstrates their findings and a student-created brochure is disseminated to the community for further involvement.

Wilton Manors has several community partners that assist staff, students and volunteers with school grounds improvement and environmental preservation. The entire school and surrounding community has spent the last several months working on mosaics that encompass our school's character education program as well as the IB Learner Profile attributes. Once completed, these mosaics will eliminate the need for additional paint that could potentially introduce chemicals that are harmful to our students and garden areas.

The principal and administration are supportive and encouraging of staff development in sustainability and other green initiatives. Additionally, they consistently reach out to the community to build strong partnerships to address how our community and school can best participate in conservation efforts to minimize our contributions to climate change. Our school's head custodian attended the NatureScape Broward Custodial Training on water usage to best inform our conservation efforts in this area. Administration has also partnered with the Kiwanis Club on a recycling initiative Caps of Love, that encourages students to bring in bottle caps for recycling.

A special project was recently completed by Kindergarten and 4th grade classes that engaged with the Flying Classroom lesson designed to combat food waste. After the project, the students shared their findings with the school. They also brainstormed ideas for eliminating food waste from our own cafeteria, and students made posters to display in our school. Their ideas included separating and sorting food from the garbage in the cafeteria to have a measurable idea of how much food is wasted by our student body each day.

Wilton Manors Elementary is an exceptional example of a school that is taking action to protect and preserve our environment. Students and staff directly participate in green initiatives that strive to optimize environmentally sustainable conservation, and encourages community partnerships and involvement. Through this, it is our hope to set our students on a path to global citizenship through environmental action and awareness.



Students taking action after learning all about Natural Resources. The posters were posted around the school to remind others on how to take care of the environment.

