

“To address today’s entangled world of complex eco-issues, students simply have to know more than they did 40 years ago.” These words from an article entitled “The Window into Green” in the May issue of Educational Leadership, encourage educators to create “environmentally literate citizenry” for the future. The article goes on to say that many studies agree “Exposure to nature science raises test scores; increases creativity; cooperation, and self-confidence; reduces stress; and enhances cognitive abilities.”

Ascension School is ahead of the curve when it comes to environmental education.

Ascension School is the first elementary Archdiocesan school to be designated a Governor’s Green School. We were re-certified twice and, in 2010, Ascension School will be designated as a Model Green School. Mrs. Sandra Ward, our middle school Science and English teacher engages students in multi-disciplinary activities throughout the year, integrating environmental education throughout the curriculum. Some examples are:

- Middle School students participated in BirdSleuth (Classroom FeederWatch) through Cornell Lab of Ornithology
- Grade 8 raised, monitored, and planted SAV (*Vallisneria americana*). These grasses were transplanted in the Gunpowder River at the Hammerman area of the Gunpowder State Park
- Students in grade 7 participated in a citizen science activity titled Project Budburst, sponsored by the National Phenology Institute
- Grades 5-8 attended a fossil presentation given by William Smith of the Aurora Fossil Club on Nov. 6
- Grade 7 took a field trip to the Philip Merrill Center to canoe, seine, and marsh muck
- Grade 8 took a field trip to the Arthur Sherwood center to seine, canoe, marsh muck, and sail on an oyster boat
- Grades 1-8 attended a “Lifestraw” project presentation given by Catholic High
- The April charity was the Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- 8 classes raised ladybugs for Earth Day; 2 classes raised painted lady butterflies
- Ascension continued environmental efforts through ABITIBI recycling, classroom plastics recycling, and schoolyard cleanups
- Grade 4 adopted a polar bear cub through the National Wildlife Federation
- Kindergarten and grade 2 beautified the school grounds by planting flowers; grade 3 helped with the weeding
- Pre-K participated in the Great Backyard Bird Count through Cornell Lab of Ornithology
- Pre-K made birdfeeders for the trees around school
- Students participated in the “Maryland River of Words Poetry and Art Contest for 2009” sponsored by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources; 2 students were finalists

As Science coordinator, Mrs. Ward has ensured that all students study the natural environment and learn to respect and care for their world.

