

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

GreenRibbonSchools



Highlights from the 2014 Honorees



U.S. Department of Education - 400 Maryland Ave, SW - Washington, DC 20202
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2014 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

Ohio

West Geauga has avoided producing nearly 7 million metric tons of CO₂, and has provided the

Metro Catholic School, Cleveland, Ohio

Truth and Environmental Justice for All

Twenty-six years ago, three urban Cleveland parish schools joined as one to form Metro Catholic School. The goal was to create a fiscally sound school that would be available for all urban children, regardless of religion or ethnicity. From this outset, this school has provided cutting-edge educational programs along with a focus on justice issues, especially the environment, now serving 80 percent of students below the poverty line.

The school of 550 preschool through eighth grade students operates out of three buildings that previously were part of the individual parishes. Each building was built in the late 19th or early 20th century, so bringing them up to date environmentally has been most challenging. However, over its 26-year history, the school has continued to move forward in teaching and modeling environmentally sound principles. The 2008 renovation of a classroom resulted in a model LEED classroom for the students and teachers to become familiar with LEED principles. In addition, during the 2013 renovation of a men's lavatory, Metro took the first steps toward designing all the school lavatories to use water and energy saving devices.

School and community garden projects begun in the 2002-2003 school year for the school's 15th anniversary, and as an antidote to violence in the lives of the students, are ongoing to this day. A junior garden club has been created with a partner adult garden club to maintain the campus through the summer. St. Stephen Parish has built a greenhouse on the school property, and offers education sessions for the neighborhood and students of the school on Saturdays throughout the year. The school boasts a green space as a result of partnership with Detroit Shoreway Community Development Corporation and Cuyahoga Land Bank. The space includes a learning garden, an outdoor stage, raised growing beds, rain barrels, permaculture, a meadow, and a wildlife habitat, along with an outdoor classroom, which is used for instruction and engagement in earth literacy and STEM projects.

Recycling is implemented in all three buildings, and the building housing the preschool through first grade classrooms recently began a program that will bring awareness of how many trees are saved through this process.

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Metro has cultivated partnerships with Cleveland EcoVillage, Cleveland Botanical Garden Center, local urban gardens, and local food providers. In addition, the school provides staff with training through Earth Partnership for Schools, Great Lakes; two teachers now have expertise focusing on bioregion and project-based restoration and sustainability.

