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A monthly newsletter covering area schools

Kennedy High School recognized for its efforts in 'going green'

At Kennedy High School (AKHS) has gone green. And now they have been rewarded for their work.

Earlier this month, AKHS was honored as the newest Oregon Green School in Lane County by the group Partners for Sustainable Schools. The distinction places the school as the 148th school in the state — and the first in the South Lane School District — to have taken steps to engrain sustainability in the school.

"It means a lot because we are known to be the smaller school. We're known to not be the best kids out there, but for us to get an honor like this, it really means a lot to show that we are something," said Nathan Anderson of AKHS.

Anderson has been an active part of Kennedy's Green Team.

The Green Team, comprised of students that choose to take this class as an elective, have spearheaded all things environmental across the school. A key project has been making sure each classroom is provided with a compost bin and adding additional recycling bins around the school.

The cafeteria at AKHS uses reusable plates, cups and utensils while the school printers are all set to print double-sided.

What is being done now at AKHS was all recorded in the group's application to be considered a green school. This honor, which also came with a \$500



Zach Silva/Cottage Grove Sentinel

Waste Reduction Specialist Sarah Grimm (left) presents the AKHS Green Team with a certificate and \$500 to continue their work with sustainability.

check to help the school continue their efforts, was at the forefront of The Green Team's mind this year.

"Our most exciting project is becoming a green school because last year we tried and we came so close but we didn't make the quotes," said Anderson. "So, this year being able to have the extra couple people that we do really helped getting it started and we actually reached our goal."

To be a green school, schools have to complete a waste audit that examines all the garbage from the school from one day. Schools also fill out an application that includes what the school is currently doing in terms of sustainability, future goals and a look at the makeup

of the school.

This includes an examination of gas, water and electrical use all the way to what cleaning supplies the school is currently using.

Once approved, the school is considered a green school for three years at a time at which point they have to renew their application.

In 2009, when the school was located at what is current-day Harrison Elementary, AKHS was a green school. Since the school was moved to Delight Valley, it has been a goal to get that honor back but has been difficult as the school tried to get used to their new spot and sharing a space with Head Start.

"Sharing the building with Head Start ...

it was really difficult to get a good judge of how much waste do we produce. And we can't really affect that much change on Head Start because they are a separate thing"

said AKHS teacher Jessica Martinez who leads the Green Team.

But now after three years at the school's new home, they are settled in and back to being a green

school.

"I'm really proud of the kids because it's neat and they work really hard. And getting acknowledged for their hard work on this level," said Martinez. "It's great that we're a green school but what's really great is having that be part of our community then when kids leave here then we created these green healthy habits that they carry on and they spread out there."

Now at AKHS, they are looking towards the future that will include bees (the bees that were previously on the property were wiped out in the recent snow storm), a greenhouse that is set to be on the property this May and a full chicken coop.

"One of the kids said, 'We should just make it a farm,'" Martinez said with a laugh. "I said, 'Well, I don't know about that.'"

Garden beds available for rent at school gardens

For anyone looking for a place to grow their own vegetables, community garden beds are available for rent in two school gar-

dens this season at the low cost of \$15 per bed. The gardens are managed organically.

For more information,

contact Melissa Fery at Melissa.Fery@slane.k12.or.us. You can also call or text her at 541-513-3208.



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