



School Nominee Presentation Form

ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATIONS

School and District's Certifications

The signatures of the school principal and district superintendent (or equivalents) on the next page certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of their knowledge. *In no case is a private school required to make any certification with regard to the public school district in which it is located.*

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades early learning to 12.
2. The school has been evaluated and selected from among schools within the Nominating Authority's jurisdiction, based on high achievement in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. Neither the nominated public school nor its public school district is refusing the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district wide compliance review. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) is not subject to the jurisdiction of OCR. The nominated DoDEA schools, however, are subject to and in compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements to comply with Federal civil rights laws.
4. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the public school district concluding that the nominated public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan to remedy the violation.
5. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the public school or the public school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
6. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the public school or public school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or public school district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.
7. The school meets all applicable federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.
8. The school or its district has in place and is willing to provide a link to or a copy of a non-discrimination policy, upon request. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a nomination and/or rescind an award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools

Name of Principal:
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name:
(As it should appear on an award)

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space*

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature)

Date:

Name of Superintendent:
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in official records)



District Name:

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

Date:

(Superintendent's Signature)

Nominating Authority's Certifications

The signature by the Nominating Authority on this page certifies that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with the following requirements is true and correct to the best of the Authority's knowledge.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades Pre-K-12.
2. The school is one of those overseen by the Nominating Authority which is highest achieving in the three ED-GRS Pillars: 1) reduced environmental impact and costs; 2) improved health and wellness; and 3) effective environmental and sustainability education.
3. The school meets all applicable federal civil rights and federal, state, local and tribal health, environmental and safety requirements in law, regulations and policy and is willing to undergo EPA on-site verification.

Name of Nominating Agency:

Name of Nominating Authority:

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application and certify to the best of my knowledge that the school meets the provisions above.

Date:

(Nominating Authority's Signature)

SUBMISSION

The nomination package, including the signed certifications, narrative summary, documentation of evaluation in the three Pillars, and photos should be submitted online according to the instructions in the Nominee Submission Procedure.

OMB Control Number: 1860-0509

Expiration Date: December 31, 2023

Public Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1860-0509. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 37 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit P.L. 107-110, Sec. 501, Innovative Programs and Parental Choice Provisions. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202-4536 or email ICDocketMgr@ed.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1860-0509. Note: Please do not return the completed ED-Green Ribbon Schools application to this address.



Louisiana Green Schools Application for Green Ribbon Schools

Nominee Contact Information

School, District, or Postsecondary Institution Name: Academy of the Sacred Heart
Category of Nomination (Early Learning Center, School, District, or Postsecondary): School
Address: 4521 St. Charles Ave. City: New Orleans State: Louisiana Zip: 70115
Website: <https://www.ashrosary.org>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ASHrosarynola/>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ashrosary/>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ASHRosary>
LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/school/10011771>
YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SacredHeartNOLA>

Top official (School=Principal; District=Superintendent; IHE= President): Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./ Dr.): Mrs.
First Name: Micheline Last Name: Dutil Position/Role (Principal/ Superintendent/ President):
Head of School Email: mdutil@ashrosary.org Phone: (504) 891-1943

Lead Applicant (if different) Title (Mr./Ms./Mrs./ Dr.): Mrs. First Name: Karen Last Name: Dufour
Position/Role (Teacher/ Sustainability Director/ Facilities Director): Sustainability Coordinator
Email: karendufour8@gmail.com Phone: (504) 388-3719

School Information

Check all that apply:

Early Learning X	Charter <input type="checkbox"/>	Community College <input type="checkbox"/>
Elementary X	Magnet <input type="checkbox"/>	Career and Technical <input type="checkbox"/>
Middle X	Non-Public X	Urban X
High X	Two-Year <input type="checkbox"/>	Rural <input type="checkbox"/>
Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Four-Year <input type="checkbox"/>	Suburban <input type="checkbox"/>

Provide percentages, if any are relevant to your school, district, or institution:

Pell Recipients: 0%	Special Education: 0%
Free and Reduced Price Lunch: 0%	Graduation Rate: 100%
Minority: 5%	Attendance Rate: 100%
Limited English Proficient: 0%	

Provide the following:

Total Enrolled: 749 Number of Schools: 1 Buildings: 3 Campuses: 2



Part II: Summary Narrative

At the Academy of the Sacred Heart (Sacred Heart) in New Orleans, students are keenly aware and afforded an education attuned to the circumstances of the times in which they live, and are empowered through faith, academics, service, and highly integrated community connections to care for creation and practice sustainable stewardship. Founded in 1867, Sacred Heart is a private Catholic, independent [college preparatory school for students](#) educating 749 girls from age 1 through grade 12. In 2017, the Headmistress at the time was inspired to further the school's sustainability efforts by integrating the concepts and call to action put forth in Pope Francis' environmental encyclical letter, [Laudato Si: Care for the Common Home](#) – a worldwide wake up call to care for the environment. Sacred Heart's green strides began to gain momentum with a schoolwide [Green Means Pledge](#) focused on championing environmental care for creation throughout the school and community ecosystem. Sacred Heart has 5 overarching [Goals and Criteria](#) which serve as the cornerstone of its educational foundation. Students across 150 schools in 41 countries are united and guided by these goals. Goal 3, Criterion 4 emphasizes the importance of the care for God's creation: "All members of the school community accept accountability for the care of God's creation, practice effective stewardship of the Earth's resources and work to alleviate climate change." Criteria 6 states: "The school community engages in direct service, advocacy, outreach and partnerships to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation."

Guided by Sacred Heart's 5 Goals and Criteria, with an emphasis on Goal 3, "a social awareness which impels to action" the school expanded and systematically operationalized its commitment to environmental sustainability with support from 2 major grants and the establishment of the **Sustainable Hearts** program in 2019. The mission of this program is to instill transformative, community-wide action and environmental stewardship. [Sustainable Hearts](#) is a manifestation of an active commitment to environmental sustainability and a living framework of curriculum integration, service projects and community partnerships through which the school seeks to inspire long-term change in the community. Students, faculty, staff and families across 2 campuses work with 16 organizations in the greater New Orleans community who are actively engaged in implementing Sacred Heart's sustainability objectives into its curriculum and campus life.

A key component in the success of making long term change in the area of environmental sustainability for the community is a change in mindset – bringing the concept of environmental sustainability from "head" to "heart." Sacred Heart's theory is that the community will be moved to prioritize sustainability when the idea moves from logical thought to passionate belief in caring for creation. The school does this by educating its students, faculty and staff to a deep understanding of forces at work which propel and influence the current mindset and the values which affect a true systemic change. This "head" to "heart" shift comes as the students and faculty engage in sustainability projects that speak to their passion and desire to serve others. Sacred Heart's leadership in environmental sustainability has not gone unnoticed, and as a result of its forward-looking strategy, the school was selected as the recipient of an [Edward E. Ford Foundation](#) grant in the summer of 2020, and a [Patrick F. Taylor Foundation](#) grant in April 2021. Sacred Heart's sustainability mission is further enabled by the generous support of these 2 foundations.

The major framework components of service and support within **Sustainable Hearts** are to:



- Form a collective intelligence in the community through partnerships
- Develop mindsets oriented toward inclusive solutions
- Strengthen the communication skills needed to articulate issues and solutions around sustainability
- Build resiliency through knowledge and competency
- Empower the community as agents of hope with the tools of advocacy

Sacred Heart's **Sustainable Hearts** program provides age-appropriate, authentic, project-based environmental learning experiences which promote pathways to cherish the beauty of Earth and each person's role in protecting it. This starts with Little Hearts students (ages 1-3), and scaffolds through Upper School coursework and leadership service projects. Sacred Heart's Little Hearts students learn how to cherish the beauty of God's Earth by picking up litter on the playground, and about gardening, including observing the campus's [working worm farm](#). These young students learn the importance of clean air and healthy water across the globe through art and library books. Science and art projects often involve recycled or compostable materials. Lessons on keeping oceans plastic free and animals safe and observing and admiring trees in the neighborhood are enjoyed by students and their teachers. Preschool, Kindergarten and Lower School students learn the 3 R's – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle – as they study food waste and practice composting in their dining hall. They also learn ways to reduce trash by recycling and upcycling through art projects, and conserving energy through renewable energy experiments from the Engineering is Elementary curriculum.

Lower School students, 1st-4th grade, are immersed in environmental education and awareness. After learning about the anatomy of plants and the needs of different plants, 1st grade students planted seeds for spinach and carrots in the indoor garden bed, with plans to transfer the sprouts into one of the outdoor garden beds. 2nd grade students are very proud of their Victory Garden they built on the Mater campus. These students learned how to plant seeds, studied Victory Gardens during WWII, and observed and recorded plant growth in their journals. The garden has been a place of observation and guided lessons for all ages. Growing on the knowledge and experiences with their Victory Garden, 3rd grade students continue to learn about plants and their positive impact on the Earth. This led to a project to help the science room have a larger indoor garden and utilize the large space in this room dedicated to learning about plants. The 3rd grade students learn about water filtration systems and in 2022, design, build, test, and improve their own water filters to clean contaminated "mystery water."

In May of 2021, 4th grade students demonstrated their knowledge of renewable energy, design-thinking, engineering and communication skills in the Innovation Lab (iLab). They built Brookehaven, a fictional city that would operate solely on power from the sun, wind, water, and underground heat. To demonstrate understanding of the concepts, students were docents to guests of all ages, including Upper School students, faculty, and staff, by taking these guests on a "tour" of the city. The students explained how they solved the design challenge and described each renewable energy source, how the city uses it, and why each works in its specific geographic location. In 2022, 4th grade continues to carry out Goal 3, by offering 9 hours of community service working alongside Pre-K students to make eco-friendly Mardi Gras door decorations for Lambeth House, a local retirement community. Also, every student in 4th grade offers 30 hours of service per year, including the work of the Take Action Club who are leaders for caring for the Earth. For example, in 4th grade, students continue the long



tradition of making pixie dolls from recycled fabric and yarn, in turn selling these dolls to support non-profits in the community.

In Middle School, 5th grade students study the United Nations Sustainable Goals, including Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action), 14 (life below water), and 15 (life on land). They use recycled goods to build neolithic structures, Egyptian art, and models of the solar system. In 6th grade, students participate in Hearts for Humanity, a social entrepreneurship project with a yearly theme of helping global communities in need of fresh, abundant water. In 2021, these students engineered, [built and sold birdhouses](#) for local songbirds in the iLab to raise funds to provide fresh water tanks to the Navajo Nation in New Mexico.

In 2019, 6th grade students participated in the National Geographic Geochallenge and produced a feature called [Plastic Problem Preventers](#). For this project, students picked a single use plastic issue and an impacted watershed. They learned about the global effects of single use plastic and then worked in teams to brainstorm possible solutions. Students built prototypes in the iLab and created maps to show the pathways of single use plastics. The project culminated with each team creating a video to share out their issues and the solutions they designed. “The National Geographic GeoChallenge empowers young people to learn about issues in their community, engage in critical thinking to identify innovative solutions, and take action as champions for the planet.”

In 7th grade, students clean up Pontchartrain Beach in New Orleans each spring and witness first hand the abundance of harmful plastics in our waterways. In 2020, 8th graders participated in the GeoChallenge as well. These students prototyped solutions such as making recycling fun by creating a giant plastic ball, and repurposing fabric to make reusable Ziplocs®.

As students matriculate, they progress in their understanding of environmental principles and concepts, as well as knowledge and dispositions. The Upper School students demonstrate awareness of the complex socio-ecological nature of local systems and serve as environmental advocates through volunteer efforts, social media campaigns, and outreach. Students in 9th through 12th grade are members of the Sustainable Hearts Club, communicating and acting on best practices in sustainability across both campuses and with the local community. 11th grade students volunteer 50 hours annually for 8 local organizations supporting environmental awareness. Upper School juniors and seniors are immersed in project-based Environmental Science classes, which includes service and education for the wider community. In 2020, Sacred Heart’s 12th grade Environmental and Digital Media students wrote, edited and produced [Water or Plastic?](#), a documentary on microplastics, educating their peers and wider community on the origin of microplastics and their impact in Louisiana. The documentary won **1st Place** in a national environmental film contest. As a culmination of their years at Sacred Heart, senior students fully embrace their roles as leaders. These students volunteer in an annual cleanup of Bayou St. John in New Orleans, plant trees for coastal restoration, and create and sell artwork in support of [Louisiana State University’s Coastal Roots](#). The Environmental Science seniors make sure the wider community is aware of environmental issues through a school news show written, edited and produced by students, for students called [ASH NewsFlash TV](#) which can also be found on Sacred Heart’s YouTube channel.

In April of 2021, Sacred Heart administered a survey to all faculty, staff, students and parents to establish a baseline for the community’s interest in, and knowledge of, sustainability efforts as part of the mission of Sacred Heart. The survey results included responses from 382 students and 55 members of the faculty and staff. 79% percent of respondents believe engaging in activities that promote sustainability supports our mission as a school; 80% believe it is important for Sacred Heart to be



committed to sustainability and to take active steps to be more sustainable; and 50% of respondents are motivated to be more sustainable by caring for God’s creation. These survey results demonstrate a strong desire in the Sacred Heart community to prioritize environmental sustainability efforts. Sacred Heart recognizes its achievements in sustainability, and acknowledges there is much more work to be done. Sacred Heart seeks to continue its mission and leverage the notoriety from a Green Ribbon School Award to promote best practices and continue its legacy for the love of creation.

Part III: Documentation of State Evaluation of Nominee

PILLAR I: REDUCE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND COSTS

Element 1A: Energy Conservation

In December 2021, the Academy of Sacred Heart’s Administration and Board of Trustees made the decision to take a dynamic and holistic approach to conserve energy and in turn sought the expert help of [Johnson Controls](#), an Energy Savings Company (ESCO). A global leader in technology and a leader in its industry, Johnson Controls offers innovative services to systematically create a phased energy conservation implementation plan. Phase 1 commenced December 2021 with a preliminary analysis and detailed audit. The following systems were analyzed: Lighting; Building Envelope; Energy Management Control; Heating, Ventilating and Air Conditioning; Water Consuming Fixtures; and Computer Power Consumption. While the implementation of a Performance Contract is in the process of development, the Director of Facilities and Operations is reviewing systems and working with its existing, contracted local vendors to make energy efficient changes such as converting large spaces to LED lighting. Meanwhile, the school continues to convert non-LED lighting to LED in targeted areas. A key component of Johnson Control’s service is to educate and include students on the various methods and approaches that promote campus-wide energy efficiency and long term sustainability. This educational piece is highly important and aligns with the school’s sustainability goals.

In August 2021 construction began on renovations to the campus’s historic buildings with funding from the school's current Capital Campaign. Sustainability and energy conservation were top of mind for the renovation, placing focus on creating a healthy learning environment for students and teachers. New VRF HVAC systems were installed to improve climate control and substantially increase energy efficiency, paving the way for the removal of the building's boiler system. Mechanical and infrastructure updates, combined with the integration of various control systems, will result in maintenance cost savings such as LED lighting, occupancy sensors and individual thermostatic controls. The contractor reused and repurposed existing materials such as wooden doors, window frames and baseboards where possible. Prior to this, in a 2014 and 2018 construction project in the Gym and Nims Fine Arts Center, efforts focused on upgrading newly built and renovated spaces to reflect priorities in energy reduction.

Element 1B: Improved Water Quality, Efficiency, and Conservation

The school’s primary water source is provided by the Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans. The quality of finished water and river water is tested daily at the Water Quality Laboratory of



the Sewerage and Water Board. Needs to upgrade equipment in some of the older bathrooms were identified and will be addressed in an effort to conserve more water on campus. Sacred Heart has irrigation systems all over the grounds that are set on timers. Irrigation systems are not used during or after heavy rainfall which New Orleans receives frequently. In addition, the school has installed faucets and toilets that are motion-sensored, as well as filtered water refilling stations. The school maintains the quality of the water filling stations by changing the filters regularly. As of February 2022, nearly complete construction of the 3rd floor terrace and gallery spaces will provide opportunities for green learning, including container gardening and rainwater collection.

The school benefits from a completed drainage project from 2014 addressing rainwater runoff issues, though the school still experiences drainage issues in some areas. To address these, in 2021, Sacred Heart's Upper School Environmental Science class created a plan to mitigate flooding in an outdoor space called the Sister Miller Courtyard on the Rosary campus. The students have narrowed the three infrastructures to a rain garden, rain barrels, and stormwater planter box. The students have created prototypes and are working on the implementation plan. The goal is to implement one or more of these student-driven ideas to improve drainage, while working under the guidance of Dinah Maygarden, a Research Associate with a Masters in Science Teaching from the University of New Orleans – [Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences \(PIES\)](#).

Element 1C: Reduced Waste Production

In 2021, Sacred Heart's new Head of School initiated new and exciting recycling drives to increase its reduce/reuse/recycle efforts as well as improve both campuses' recycling systems. Challenged by Hurricane Ida's impact on the City of New Orleans' suspended recycling service, Sacred Heart continues its dedication to recycling through a private contractor. Each month, Sacred Heart diverts 43.5 cubic yards of recyclables from the landfill. The school's recycling initiative is run by students across both campuses. Classrooms, dining halls, hallways, teachers' lounges and gyms have single-use recycling bins, which are emptied at the end of each day by the school's cleaning crew, with the help of classroom "captains", the Sustainable Hearts Club and the 4th grade Take Action Club. To expand the school's recycling efforts beyond its daily routine, Sacred Heart partnered with many local organizations. [Glass Half Full](#), the only glass recycling center in the state of Louisiana, partnered with the school to hold 2 successful drives to date. The Earth Day 2021 drive was student driven and led by the Upper School National Honor Society, and another was held in January 2022, assisted by the Upper School's Sustainable Hearts Club and by 4th grade's Take Action Club. A total of 4,950 pounds of glass from both drives was diverted from the landfill. Education is a critical component to complement the action so the founders of Glass Half Full met with the Upper School National Honor Society, and also presented to Middle School and Kindergarten students to describe the glass recycling process, the impact that their nonprofit is having on Louisiana's coast and landfills, and how the recycled glass' product - sand - is used for disaster relief and eco-construction. During their visits and presentations, the nonprofit helps students consider math, science, art, and entrepreneurial skills as well as volunteer opportunities for experiential learning.

In October 2021, Sacred Heart became the first K-12 school in New Orleans to partner and continually be serviced by [The Composting Network](#), a local commercial composting provider. The Composting Network services food waste from both Sacred Heart campuses. The program has been adopted with much enthusiasm from students of all grades and has been extremely successful. The most



recent waste audit data from February 2022 revealed Sacred Heart has diverted 6,820 pounds of food waste away from the landfill. Since recycling services in New Orleans were suspended after Hurricane Ida in August of 2021, students were eager to collect cans. In November of 2021, Sacred Heart held a very successful aluminum recycling drive. The school collected 75 pounds of aluminum cans, raising funds to support further sustainability efforts.

In addition to the school's efforts to divert waste from the landfill through recycling and food waste diversion, Sacred Heart hosted several opportunities to reuse or upcycle materials around campus in conjunction with opportunities to serve our wider community. In 2019-2020, the school partnered with nonprofits that offered opportunities for reduce/reuse/recycle including Sobares Emergency, DePaul USA and St. Michael's Special School. In 2019, Sabores Emergency Relief took gently used clothing our community collected and shipped them to Hurricane Eta victims in Honduras. Furniture that we no longer needed was donated to DePaul USA for homeless individuals who qualified for housing and St. Michael's Special School received tables. In response to the 2021 Hurricane Ida in 2021, Sacred Heart held a book drive for Holy Rosary in Larose, LA (PreK-8th grade) who lost their entire library during the storm. The drive was a huge success and a great example of reuse. The Lower School students collected over 1,000 books, Middle School over 4,000 and Upper School over 1,800. Sacred Heart supported its neighbor, St. Stephen's Elementary School by holding a [food and water drive](#) after their school was heavily damaged from Hurricane Ida. At the end of the 2021 school year, the school collected over 350 new or gently-worn uniform items, including jumpers, sweaters, shoes and accessories to distribute to Sacred Heart families for the upcoming school year. This collection will take place as a yearly event.

In November of 2021, the Head of School issued a school-wide "Great Plastic Bag Challenge." Teachers and Upper School students were tasked with using only single-use plastic shopping bags to create something useful and beautiful. The groups created lunch bags, plant hangers, tote bags, lanterns, Sacred Heart-themed pillows and more. The Upper School challenge was followed by a presentation from Dinah Maygarden of UNO on the hazards of plastic bags in our waterways. The 7th grade science teacher and Head of School discussed how they bring their own tote bags to the grocery store, ideally inspiring students and their families to do the same. This challenge diverted over 1,000 plastic bags from the landfill. To encourage students to replace plastic shopping bags with reusable bags, the school has ordered 1,000 high-quality, made-in-the USA cotton canvas tote bags, with a Sacred Heart message imprinted. Every student, teacher and staff will receive a bag in hopes to promote the message to the wider community to reuse, and refuse plastic bags while shopping. Prior to the plastic bag challenge, the school's Global Education Co-Coordinator/Middle School teacher taught a social studies unit about clean water in India, which morphed into a different plastic bag project of crocheting the bags into mats for homeless people. This is a wonderful example of looking at an item that appears to have no inherent value, shifting the community's mindset, and reusing it in a way that helps others.

In 2017, Sacred Heart began installing Elkay EZH2 refillable water stations on both campuses. There are 20 stations thus far, and each provides data on how many times students fill a water bottle. As of January 2022, the school has prevented 223,388 single-use plastic water bottles from entering the landfill.

During the 2019-2020 school year, great strides to green the school's 2 dining halls were made. In years past, Styrofoam plates and bowls, and plastic cutlery and cups were used during lunch. Styrofoam and plastic have since been eliminated on the Mater campus and the dining hall uses reusable plastic trays, metal cutlery, and recycles all milk cartons and plastic bottles. The Rosary Campus



transitioned to a new vendor for the 2021-2022 school year. Together the school continued efforts during the pandemic to offer biodegradable food containers made of sugarcane, a local commodity in Louisiana. Despite COVID restrictions, Sacred Heart uses ceramic plates and bowls and metal cutlery for anyone eating in the dining hall. Both campuses have receptacles in all dining areas for composting, and recycling plastic and aluminum cans.

Sacred Heart continues to reduce its need for paper in classrooms by use of Chromebooks and laptops for grades 5-12. Teachers have moved their classes to paperless where course materials are available online and assignments are submitted electronically. The school's Communications and Marketing department has made great strides towards reducing the school's paper footprint by converting programs, packets, newsletters, publications and Institutional Advancement materials to all-digital platforms in recent years. With the conversion of all Student/Parent Handbooks, informational booklets, applications and re-enrollment to a digital format, the school eliminated the printing of almost 5,000 pieces and saved the school over \$7,500 in printing and mailing costs.

Since 2018, Environmental Science seniors have researched the impacts of fast fashion on the environment (excessive water use, water and air pollution, poor agricultural practices, textile waste in landfills) and the poor working conditions for factory and agriculture workers. Each year, the students design dresses using all recyclable material and showcase their designs in a catwalk-style fashion show. This topic moves the students to encourage their peers to change buying habits, which ultimately signals companies to do better.

Every December, Sacred Heart sponsors a decorated Christmas tree for Celebration in the Oaks in New Orleans City Park to support the park's own fundraising efforts. Schools and nonprofits from around the city participate and are encouraged to use recycled items as decoration on the trees. Sacred Heart partnered with Glass Half Full for the colored crushed glass on snowflakes used as ornaments - a subtle yet strong example of Sacred Heart's commitment to sustainability.

Element ID: Alternative Transportation

Sacred Heart conducted a schoolwide transportation survey in February of 2022. Out of 340 responses from students, faculty, staff and parents, the survey revealed 280 drive alone, 33 carpool or ride with someone, 22 walk, 3 bike, 1 take the streetcar, and 0 take the bus. After studying these results, the 4th Grade Take Action Club and Upper School Sustainable Hearts Club will discuss ways to promote alternative means of transportation to school. The majority of students at Sacred Heart live within a 5-mile radius of the school resulting in commuters' low carbon footprint overall. New Orleans is fortunate to have historic streetcars which run the length of St. Charles Avenue in front of both campuses. The longest of New Orleans' streetcar lines, the St. Charles Avenue line, is the oldest continuously operating street railway system in the world. The City installed solar panels to power this line and other streetcar lines, providing approximately 2.5 megawatts of solar-generating capacity. Kindergarteners in the Lower School enjoy a field trip on the streetcar. During their journey, they learn about the history of New Orleans and their school's geographical location along the line, giving these young students a new appreciation of the streetcars they see pass by during recess.

PILLAR II: IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

Element 2A: Integrated School Environmental Health Program



The Academy of the Sacred Heart is committed to maintaining a clean, healthy environment for its students, faculty, and staff. The school contracts with Action Cleaning for its cleaning needs. Each evening a crew from Action cleans all restrooms, vacuums or mops hallways and stairwells, vacuums classrooms, empties trash bins, dusts as needed, cleans faculty and student lounge areas, and performs other routine cleaning tasks. Action Cleaning also provides a day porter to complete the same tasks including laundry throughout the day. The school has begun replacing current cleaning supplies and hand soap with more eco-friendly products.

Sacred Heart's original structure dates back to 1865, thus routine maintenance is essential. Sacred Heart employs 6 full-time facilities staff who are present throughout the day. The staff promptly address cleanup, plumbing, HVAC, electrical, and other repair and maintenance needs as well as coordinate contractors on campus. The campus's HVAC system is monitored by the chief engineer. Filters are changed regularly and a continued maintenance program is in place with the help of 2 outside vendors to repair HVAC as needed. The school is moving towards more efficient HVAC systems in all areas under the present renovation. Air purifiers/air scrubbers have been placed in all classrooms, multi purpose rooms and offices. The Director of Facilities and Operations works directly to hire contractors as needed for outside expertise. Examples of recent contractor maintenance work include, painting, caulking, and glazing repairs of windows due to water intrusion; roof repairs due to hurricane damage; updated irrigation systems in the playgrounds; and exterior and interior wall repairs due to moisture. A licensed pest management contractor visits the school each month to spray insecticide and inspect for any rodent issues as well as spraying for mosquitos. All treatments are conducted outside of school hours. Sacred Heart has consulted with the pest management contractor to minimize hazardous chemical use as much as possible. All insecticides and bait blocks provided by the pest management contractor are federally approved. The school is monitored 2 times each year for asbestos by certified members of the facilities department that have completed the 16-hour training course. A consultant is called when needed. Asbestos abatement is completed prior to any construction or remodeling projects, and piping insulation has been removed in all occupied spaces in the building. Sacred Heart is a smoke-free campus and the use of tobacco products, e-cigarettes, and vaping devices is prohibited.

The school stores all hazardous materials, chemicals, paint, gasoline and cleaning supplies in a locked area which is off limits to students. These items are only accessible to the maintenance staff and select members of the administrative team. A binder with a list of all chemicals and cleaning materials used by the cleaning crews is kept and maintained by the Director of Facilities.

Element 2B: Nutrition and Fitness

In 2020, Sacred Heart established a new partnership with Pigeon Catering & Events for the Rosary Campus dining hall. The selection committee reviewed many proposals for this service, placing a priority on the quality of food, availability of healthy choices for students and alignment with the school's sustainability practices. With the help of Pigeon's nutritionist, a healthy and varied menu was created and presented. The menu choices are popular with the students and adults, thus resulting in very little food waste. The food waste is diverted to a composting facility 3 times per week, where it is turned into fertilizer and mulch. Students are encouraged to eat outdoors on nice days.

Sacred Heart has a robust fitness program for students, including a fully-equipped, state of the art fitness facility in which faculty and staff are also encouraged to utilize. To demonstrate Sacred Heart's commitment to the development of the whole child, there is a Health and Wellness Coordinator on



campus full time. All students are required to take Physical Education. The Upper School students are required to take 4 semesters of P.E, Middle School students attend P.E. twice or more per week, Lower School students twice per week, and Preschool students twice per week. Mind, Body, and Spirit activities are practiced weekly as well. All Upper School students are required to take an Adult and Pediatric CPR/AED/First Aid certification course each semester. The P.E. Department follows the State of Louisiana Standards, and the curriculum concentrates on lifetime fitness and Health and Wellness. In the Upper School, students who participate in school sponsored sports are enrolled in Athletic P.E. for the duration of their sport. This allows these students to have time during the school day to concentrate on their academics and wellness. The ASH Athletic Program is vast and encourages students to participate in afterschool sports. As of February 2022, 72% of Middle School and 75% of Upper School are enrolled in afterschool sports, which includes 12 offerings, including 5 in Lower School and Preschool.

Middle School P. E. has many outdoor activities such as Track and Field and Golf. The golf team helps to maintain the putting green by pulling weeds, sanding the greens, and removing debris. Middle School P.E. has class outside whenever possible, and Middle School lunch and recess is conducted outside. Lower School P.E. participates in the Jump Rope for Heart program and encourages healthy living through fitness challenges. 1st-4th graders are encouraged to participate in intramurals at recess and participation is very high, nearing 100%. Lower School students on the Mater campus enjoy recess in the various yards, with a variety of playscapes and gardens including playing in the [custom-made streetcar](#) 6th grade students designed, engineered and built on their own with guidance from their teachers and a local architect.

Element IIB (cont.): Coordinated School Health, Mental Health, School Climate, and Safety
Diverse and Dynamic Support Services: Educational, Physical, and Social-Emotional

The Academy of the Sacred Heart is fortunate to have a dynamic Department of Counseling and Student Support Services, offering a coordinated, integrated approach to the physical and mental health of its students, staff, and faculty including outreach to families and the community. The Department's mission promotes the Goals and Criteria of Schools of the Sacred Heart with emphasis on the health and wellness development of the whole child. The integrated services offered promote a healthy school climate. The Developmental Counseling Program is proactive in nature for all students in grades 1-12, and addresses the needs of students in regard to their social emotional development, achievement, and strategies that build life skills. Services include 3 Licensed Professional Counselors, Nurses, Learning Specialists, a College Counselor, and a Coordinator of Diversity and Inclusion. This full-time, 10-member team is responsible for promoting and advocating for the educational, physical, and social-emotional well-being of all students in the Sacred Heart Community. The program, in existence for over 35 years, includes Group Guidance/Group Sessions for all students in 1st-12th grades, 6 to 7 times a semester with topics focused on the current needs of the specific age group. First through 4th grade students spend 32 hours per year in Group Guidance, 5th-8th graders spend 69 hours per year, and 9th-12th grade spend 36 hours per year. Topics discussed include relationship building, conflict resolution, communication skills, decision making, personal safety, and suicide prevention. In all divisions, Counselors actively engage with faculty and administration to promote a healthy social emotional school climate and assist the adult population as needed. Published articles, videos, tips and techniques, presentations, community speakers, and handouts all serve as ongoing education training for faculty and parents. **Play Group** for 1st-4th grade allows students to take responsibility for scheduling their own appointment for



the PlayRoom on the Mater Campus. This 25-minute session offers an alternative to afternoon recess. “Play is the work of a child” and learning new games and activities, building relationship skills, and having healthy conversations form the basis of the Play Group activities. **Peer Support** is a mentor program developed for 8th grade students. The foundation of this program is built on findings of developmental research demonstrating that adolescents listen, relate, respond, and learn best from their peers. Each year a group of junior and senior applicants, who exhibit exceptional leadership skills, serve as Peer Support leaders for these sessions. **University Affiliations** - The Sacred Heart Counselors are all sought by colleges/universities for placement and supervision of graduate students in the Counseling profession. This program has been utilized by the administration from neighboring universities such as Loyola University, LSU Health Sciences Center, Southeastern Louisiana University, University of New Orleans, Our Lady of Holy Cross College and Seton Hall University. The program offers internships and as of 2017 has educated 12 interns. Sacred Heart continues to offer a healthy school climate through the help of the **Coordinator of Diversity and Inclusion**. This coordinator provides consulting and programmatic services to all Divisions at Sacred Heart, with conversations that matter around diversity, equity and inclusion. The Coordinator supports the sharing of stories through a 55-member Middle and Upper School Diversity Club, as well as Affinity Groups for students as needed. **Learning Specialists** are available for Pre/Lower, Middle, and Upper Schools and each work in concert with the administration, faculty, counselors, and parents to identify students who may need outside academic services as well as an educational evaluation. The Learning Specialists design a student’s learning profile and communicate with the faculty and parents regarding accommodations and strategies to best meet the individual learning needs of the student. The Learning Specialist in the Pre/Lower School offers additional services such as individualized learning groups. Coordinated extended time testing in distraction-reduced testing spaces is offered, as well as helping students learn how to set up extra-help schedules and planners, and providing study skill workshops. **The College Counseling Program** educates students from 5th-12th grade. Each child is seen as a unique reflection of God’s vision and it is through this lens that the counselor views each student’s individualized plan as they begin the dialogue with their family and within the Sacred Heart community about college testing, college options, and scholarship opportunities. The program is a personalized and supportive one, designed to help each student navigate the complexities involved in the college search and application process within the 3,000 colleges and universities to choose from. The goal is to find a college or university that will enrich the life of the person within.

Sacred Heart employs 2 **full-time nurses** – one RN and one LPN. The healthcare program’s goals are to establish and maintain professional standards in accordance with other school health care providers in the area. The program maintains a well-equipped infirmary to care for the daily and emergency needs of the school community. The program reviews the physical plant for safety infringements and reviews policies of the school in regard to safety, and works with the administration to formulate a program which educates students on positive health habits, such as diet and nutrition, use of over-the-counter drugs, substance abuse, personal hygiene, self-examination, and first aid. The school’s nurses care for the administration, faculty and staff and are responsible for their physical and mental well-being in case of accident or emergency illness until transferred to the care of another health care provider or responsible family member. The nurses inform the division heads and teachers of special health considerations of any students as reported by their parents, as well as being available to train faculty and staff. The nurses collect, review on a regular basis and maintain student health information



provided by parents as well as communicate immunization updates. The nurses provide screening of height, weight, vision, hearing, scoliosis, and for general health care, such as head lice, and refer any student to the appropriate health care provider.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school nurses participate in pandemic preparedness, such as: re-opening and re-entry planning; safe screening and triage for both ill and well students/staff/visitors in accordance with current CDC recommendations; monitor attendance to promote safe and timely post-COVID-19 return to school/work; manage aerosolized procedures that can increase the risk of COVID-19 spread; plan for and manage the care for suspected COVID-19 cases while protecting the well population from exposure; isolate suspected COVID-19 cases, and address space, ventilation and staffing needs; plan the care of students requiring daily nursing intervention to manage chronic diseases, while limiting exposure to possible COVID-19 cases; support and plan for physical distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, use of face masks; and manage resources and budget that address personal protective equipment (PPE), no-touch thermometers, increased first aid supplies for dissemination to classroom staff.

Sacred Heart educates the Upper School students in safety through the Louisiana State Police Sudden Impact Program, an interactive program that educates high school students throughout Louisiana about the dangers of driving impaired, driving without a seat belt, and distracted driving. Middle and Upper Schools and faculty participate in the Suicide Prevention Program as well as learn leadership skills through book programs - *Odd Girl Out*, *The Curse of the Good Girl*, and *Enough As She Is*. Middle and Upper School Counselors further the health and wellness of their students by practicing what they have learned through the acclaimed 3-day course intensive, *Girl Meets World (GMW)*, a program designed to equip participants with the latest research, tools, and interventions to support girls' social-emotional development. This curriculum has been taught at locations such as Girls Leadership's Summer Program and other settings across the world including the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls. The Middle School Counselor has coordinated and implemented numerous local and national programs/speakers, such as The Kind Campaign; Public and Permanent: Promote Responsible Use, Prevent Abuse; The Embody Love Movement; The Council on Drug and Alcohol of Greater New Orleans; and Teen Life Counts with Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans.

Historically, the Academy of the Sacred Heart has engaged in personal safety presentations for students beginning at age three. As developmentally appropriate, these topics have included a general recognition and avoidance of possible harmful situations or persons in one's surroundings. These have included Halloween/Mardi Gras Safety/Summertime Safety, Drug Education, and presentations from the Attorney General's Office, Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, the New Orleans Police Department, and the Safe Environment of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Parent Presentations have included "How to Stay Safe in a Digital World," by Brian Klebba, Assistant United States Attorney; and "Facilitating Your Child's Ability to Problem Solve," by Dr. Erin Dugan, LSU Health Sciences Center. Each Division Counselor hosts coffees/conversations on relevant topics for parents.

For the counselors and other faculty, the COVID "shutdown" presented challenges with virtual learning, but the time also allowed an opportunity to connect with administration, faculty and particularly students and families in a different and most engaging way via Zoom and Google Meet. This enhanced communication by way of the website and emails, and deliveries to the homes of Sacred Heart students. (After 11 weeks of closure, Sacred Heart reopened in June 2020 with "Summer Learning" on



the Mater Campus). Counselor activities, videos, articles on the web included sessions on: dealing with anxiety; self care; taking care of the family while in isolation; wearing a mask; reading facial expressions; giving acts of kindness at home and in the community; developmental Group Guidance sessions; and dealing with loss and grief. To uplift everyone's spirits, the Department of Counseling and Student Support Services engaged in delivering a "cupcake bake-off" activity to each Sacred Heart senior. The Sacred Heart Interns also made videos reading stories sent to the Little Hearts families. And, the Middle School Counselor provided professional development for their division's faculty on COVID-19-related anxiety in children.

Sacred Heart ensures a safe campus by employing 3 part-time sheriff deputies and 2 full-time armed guards. The deputies are present during morning and afternoon carpools and for any after school activities and sporting events, 2 armed guards are present during the entire school day. Both campuses are fully gated with locked entrances equipped with intercom systems and security cameras. The school's 2 receptionists are trained to handle school emergencies, monitor security cameras and manage visitor programs. The school conducts fire drills and crisis drills monthly. The campuses' sprinkler systems, fire alarms and fire extinguishers are tested regularly.

PILLAR III: ENSURE EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION

Element 3A: Interdisciplinary Learning about the Key Relationships between Dynamic Environmental, Energy and Human Systems

Across the school, Sacred Heart's faculty are focused on ways to integrate best practice curriculum in the critical topics of food, water, and energy into student learning. Emphasis is placed on the shifting of mindset, spiritual awareness and Catholic Social Teaching. From Little Hearts through Upper School, God's Creation is celebrated in the classroom, at assemblies, in chapel services, and in all liturgies. Middle and Upper School study Catholic Social Teachings, with Care of Creation being one of the foundational principles. All grade levels emphasize that God made the world, Creation is good, and humans must take care of Creation. Stewardship is celebrated with gratitude, and explored through the lives of the saints, prayer, Scripture, and catechesis.

The interest in creating a sustainable educational infrastructure in the Lower School began with the Learning Specialist attending Faces of the Heart, a Sacred Heart International Assembly, aiming to make **Global Networking** a living reality for students. In July 2018, this Assembly consisted of 47 students from 14 countries and 8 educators from the U.S., Mexico and France. During this time, the Specialist met and conversed with students from different countries and discussed how their school was reducing their carbon footprint through sustainable initiatives. One student in particular fundamentally changed the way Sacred Heart's Learning Specialist viewed sustainability initiatives, specifically recycling, upcycling and gardening within a Lower School Environment. Upon her return to New Orleans, she met with the Head of School to discuss her ideas surrounding sustainability. In Spring of 2020, the Learning Specialist completed a 16-week course and received a Certificate in Sustainability from the University of New Orleans. The program offers international and regional perspectives on trends in sustainability, as well as the tangible tools and practical skills needed to impact the lives of individuals, communities, and businesses, and to make the New Orleans and Gulf region more sustainable. Professional development in sustainability continues and in June of 2019, 25% of Sacred Heart's faculty and staff experienced a tour with [The Great Delta Tour Company](#), who offers day-long eco-educational tours to local wetlands. The tour is led by Master Naturalists, discussing our place among the Mississippi River Delta, its history



dating back to the 1500s, coastal restoration, bird and wildlife, and an understanding of how Louisiana's Mississippi River Delta has delicately woven a rich and distinctive tapestry of natural environment, cultures and economic engines for the region and the country. The tour was offered again in 2020 and 2021 for new faculty and staff members. Sacred Heart would like to offer the tour for Upper School students in the future.

On March 16, 2017, Sacred Heart enthusiastically welcomed World-renowned ethologist and conservationist, [Dr. Jane Goodall](#), DBE, founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and UN Messenger of Peace. Dr. Goodall spoke to Sacred Heart students in grades 1-12 as well as students from neighboring schools: Holy Name of Jesus School, Louise S. McGehee School, Samuel J. Green Charter School, Sophie B. Wright Charter School, and Stuart Hall School for Boys. Over her 60 year career, Dr. Goodall's work has grown into a global movement to improve communities for humans as well as wildlife and protect the environment we share.

To inspire faculty, staff and students, Jordan Webb, founder of [Casa Verde](#) in Nicaragua, presented virtually to the entire Sacred Heart faculty and staff in 2021, and to Middle School students in October 2021. Jordan's focus and mission is shifting mindsets in sustainability. Casa Verde is a nonprofit organization that developed a program for encouraging a sustainable mindset in Las Piñetas, Nicaragua. Jordan's presentation focused on sustainability as a journey and the importance of seeing the value, good or bad, of the items that we are using every day by asking questions such as, "Can we find other uses for them? Can we recycle them? Can we do without them?" The school community was moved and inspired by his talk.

In February of 2022, Sacred Heart invited Assistant Principal and Sustainability Coordinator Eric Krakowski from the [Duchesne Academy and Preschool of the Sacred Heart](#) in Omaha, Nebraska to share his knowledge of best practices to Sacred Heart's faculty, staff and students based on what has worked at his school. Eric's school was honored as a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon School in 2020. His visit included a presentation to the school's faculty and staff outlining the development of Duchesne Academy's sustainability plan and its subsequent goals which were developed in 2017. He also addressed a wide variety of unexpected sustainability outcomes and achievements, large and small, that illustrate the commitment and creativity of his school's students, faculty, and staff. During his visit Eric toured Sacred Heart's facilities, visited with students, and offered advice and encouragement based on his experience as well as his observations of the school community.

For the 2021-2022 year, the Curriculum members of the Sustainable Hearts committee placed focus on consumer reduction and with a thematic approach of Living With Less. Faculty encourages students not only to care for God's creation but also to live a more virtuous life—one that is rooted in temperance and humility.

The Academy of the Sacred Heart offers two dynamic and popular Environmental Science classes with 18% of all junior and seniors immersed in sustainability education. As one topic, the classes focus on plastic water pollution. Students research water pollution and participate in an online Laysan Albatross bolus dissection lab. To demonstrate what they learned and to encourage change, students created an infographic, PSA, and TikTok. In 2020, students engaged with Dr. Mark Benfield from the Department of Oceanography & Coastal Sciences at Louisiana State University to write, edit and produce [Water or Plastic?](#), a documentary on microplastics. The documentary won **1st Place** in the Watertopia category in a national environmental film competition hosted by GreenShorts Louisiana. Environmental



Science and Digital Media students collaborated on the project to educate their peers and larger community on the origin of microplastics and their impact in Louisiana.

Environmental Science students create *In the Know While You Go* newsletters that are placed in bathroom stalls around the Rosary Campus. The students develop the theme and topics for each issue. They are required to do research, cite their resources, and deliver a clear, concise message.

Other topics covered in Environmental Science include studying public-owned natural resources, biodiversity and invasive species, environmental disasters and governmental policies, as well as the impacts of the meat and fast fashion industries. Each unit has a hands-on learning component such as experimenting with vegetarianism and a concrete demonstration of learning through creating PSAs, newscasts, and children's books. To further expand education in sustainability, a future Environmental Science course is planned on nonrenewable and renewable energy studies, sustainable building, and sustainable city planning, which includes a LEED proposal created by students.

Sacred Heart's Digital Media students collaborate and interview students, faculty and administration about sustainability action on campus for use during their bi-weekly student-driven news show called [ASH NewsFlash TV](#). Thirty-five percent of the weekly show is dedicated to sustainability and has been well-received and proven effective in communicating the school's sustainability efforts across multiple grade levels.

Element 3B: Use of the Environment and Sustainability to Develop STEM Content Knowledge and Thinking Skills

i-Lab (Emphasis on Engineering and Design Thinking to Promote Community Resiliency Locally and Globally)

In 2017, Sacred Heart's Innovation Lab, or iLab, was born. The Innovation Lab promotes design thinking methodology to problem solving. It is filled with recyclable materials, advanced machinery such as 3D printers and laser cutters, and power tools. In the iLab, one annual project takes place called Hearts for Humanity, which enables students to fulfill Goal 3, to educate "a social awareness which impels to action." Students in the iLab engage in design thinking, empathy and community resiliency by participating in social entrepreneurship projects such as Hearts for Humanity. For this unit, students first complete a financial literacy course and produce goods to sell in order to help communities impacted by the global water crisis. In 2021, the 6th grade students built birdhouses and nesting platforms for songbirds whose habitat is Southeast Louisiana. The focus of this unit was to support indigenous people of the United States who have a great need for freshwater on their tribal lands and as a people are dedicated to nature and creation. These songbirds left the area after Hurricane Katrina, but are coming back. Students engineered the houses, researched the species' needs, and studied the importance of the Native American culture. While helping local birds, the students' goal was to sell the houses to raise funds to provide fresh water tanks to the Navajo Nation in New Mexico. The students sold 32 houses, raising \$1,240 to support the Navajo Nation.

In May of 2021, 4th grade students took on the challenge of building a city in the Innovation Lab that would only run on alternative energy sources. The students learned about alternative energy and collaborated to imagine and build Brookehaven, a fictional city that operates on power from the sun, wind, water, and underground heat. To demonstrate understanding of the concepts, students were docents to guests of all ages, including upper school students, faculty, and staff, and took guests on a



“tour” of the city. They explained how they solved the design challenge and described each renewable energy source, how the city uses it, and why each works in its specific geographic location.

The Lower School students enjoy their campus’s Makers Space – a creative area for students to use recycled materials. They use these materials to create from their imagination particularly during lunch and recess. Students from 1st-4th grade have the ability to use this space with 10 children per 30 minute session. In science class, the 4th grader students make examples of natural and artificial light. Both 1st and 4th grade learned about light in class. 4th grade uses the Makers Space to bring the examples the 1st graders came up with to life, such as fireworks, fireflies, and a lighthouse. As of February 2022, 4th grade students in the Maker Space are working on projects aligned with their research of a black scientist in honor of Black History Month.

In 2018, math teachers in the Middle School noticed their students were interested in more real-world practice in their curriculum on measurements. This observation resulted in a collaboration with the iLab to help the students learn the information and then apply it in real time with Project Build. 6th grade students were tasked with building [5 playhouse structures](#) built to withstand hurricane-force winds. Local experts such as architects were brought in to educate the students on current standards. Project Build demonstrates the school’s approach to design thinking, experiential learning with hands-on experiences, and the commitment to fostering connections within the local community through partnerships.

In 2021, 4th grade Conservation Communicators Club was renamed as the Take Action Club. Students are the “communicators” of ways to recycle and conserve energy to their peers. This club gives the oldest students on the Lower School campus a leadership role and ownership of sustainability efforts. The students in this club participate in the multiple “green” events that the school does such as the aluminum can and glass drives. The club members have been instrumental in teaching the younger students, some as young as 3, what can and cannot go into the compost bins around the school.

In an effort to work with our students on developing the communication skills needed to articulate issues and solutions around sustainability, the Global Exchange Coordinator and 5 Upper School students (2 seniors and 3 juniors) began a Virtual Global Exchange Program, while exchanges were not possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Program brings together Sacred Heart students from around the world to discuss global sustainability, stewardship, and the building of community. In Spring of 2021, over 50 students from 6 Sacred Heart schools participated in an exchange, comparing ways their schools are “going green” by discussing their sustainability projects. For example, Sacred Heart students in Santiago, Chile have a Sustainability Club that has revolutionized the way their school collects waste and the Upper School girls learned about their waste bin sorting methods. One student’s family now uses metal straws after her exchange down to Chile. Through these conversations centered on stewardship and sustainability, the Upper School students were able to develop a greater understanding of the culture of Network schools across the globe and deepen relationships between these schools.

ELEMENT 3C: Civic Skills and Green Career Pathways

Sacred Heart has been building partnerships in sustainability for the past 9 years to offer students civic skills. A number of Sacred Heart students have committed to volunteering for nonprofit organizations that promote sustainability or include sustainable practices at their events. Sacred Heart partners with around 100 organizations with 22% fostering the school’s sustainability efforts. These



include: The [Coastal Education Program/CERF](#), [Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana \(CRCL\)](#), [EMR Southern Recycling](#), [Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate Coalition](#), [Glass Half Full](#), [Habitat for Humanity](#), [H2O for Life](#), [Instar Farms](#), [Keep Louisiana Beautiful/Love the Boot](#), [LSU AgCenter](#), [Molly Fay Flower Farm](#), [NOLA Tree Project](#), [Pontchartrain Conservancy](#), [Rebuilding Together New Orleans](#), [The Composting Network](#), [The Great Delta Tours](#), [The Green Project](#), [Pontchartrain Institute of Environmental Sciences \(PIES\) at the University of New Orleans \(UNO\)](#), [Tulane University Office of Sustainability](#), [UCLA Green Shorts](#), [Water Wise Gulf South](#), and [Grounds Krewe](#).

In alignment with Goal 3, “a social awareness which impels action,” the entire Sacred Heart community engages with its partners and the community all year, logging 1,000s hours with 100s of volunteers supporting local, national and global causes. Each year, [Sacred Heart Global Service Day](#) is a cumulative event which includes 24 Sacred Heart schools across the U.S. In 2018, 70 students, parents and staff served 10 partners for a half-day. The school community volunteered at various sites, including a local food bank, nursing homes, homeless shelters and participated in tree planting and litter abatement.

In addition to active service opportunities, Sacred Heart students practice philanthropy by hosting fundraisers. Each year, Middle School students come together to fundraise for local nonprofit organizations which specifically help children, with the goal of reaching every non-profit organization in the greater New Orleans area, as well as their continued support of the students at [Sacred Heart’s Kangole Girls’ Secondary School Uganda, East Africa](#). In February 2022, 5th-12th grade students raised \$927 for Kingsley House, a local shelter. In 2019 raised \$1,060 for Hotel Hope, a local women and children shelter. And to date, students have raised \$2,620 for Sacred Heart’s Kangole School in Uganda, East Africa. The students recently received correspondence from 2 students in Uganda about 2021’s donation: “To you our dear supporters, we highly appreciate your financial support. Through your generosity, you have guaranteed us the possibility of a future filled with hope and love. Your support of our food program enables the school to remain open and for that we say thank you! We promise to reciprocate these kind and generous gestures when we grow up. We pray for you especially during this terrible pandemic that God may keep you safe. Pray for us too that in the near future we may return to school.”

Twice a year, Middle and Upper School students work together by writing notes which are attached to prepared meals for Grace at the Green Light and Lantern Light at the Rebuild Center in New Orleans. In 2020, 350 meals were sent to this homeless shelter. Students also donated 500 socks for the Happy Feet program in 2020, benefiting homeless shelters. In 2021, seniors filled 8 large bags of needs for new mothers for October Right to Life. Every Christmas, Sacred Heart families enjoy the long tradition of preparing a food basket for Basket Mass, which is distributed to families in need in the community. In 2021, Sacred Heart families spent on average 2 hours shopping, filling and decorating 475 Christmas food baskets for families who are food insecure.

The school’s mission of service to the community is deeply rooted and alumni of Sacred Heart continue this tradition. A group of 5 women prepare and serve 400 meals once a month to the Ozanam Inn, a local homeless shelter. And with heart, each year Sacred Heart hosts a blood drive in memory of former student Shelby Leonhard. To date, 930 donors gave 777 usable pints of blood with the potential of saving 2,331 lives, making the drive an annual leader of blood donation in New Orleans.

Students strengthen their civic engagement skills while benefiting our local environment.



Annually, 60 junior students volunteer 50 hours for 8 organizations supporting environmental awareness, including: Rebuild Together NOLA - rebuilding and reparations of homes utilizing eco-construction and indigenous plants, trees and flowers; Sculpture Garden/City Park New Orleans/NOMA Sculpture Garden - maintaining gardens, ponds and trees for conservation; Long Vue House & Gardens Summer Camp - taking classes on local marine life, learning about indigenous plants and insects, building tide pools, cleaning of local grounds and planting of flowers and local food gardens; St. Michael's Special School Summer Camp - cleaning up with campers and counselors; and participating in on-campus events such as food collection, plastic bag recycling, and aluminum can and glass drives.

In 2019 students participated in Creativity for the Coast. The exhibit was a collaboration between Academy of the Sacred Heart and another local private school, Isidore Newman, and was originated by 2 Upper School students. The artwork was available for purchase and \$2,500 was raised to benefit the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana.

In February of 2022, the Middle School students were visited by Brett Davis, founder of the nonprofit Grounds Krewe. Their mission is to promote waste prevention, recycling and sustainable products at New Orleans special events, in particular Mardi Gras. The students learned about the wasteful nature of Mardi Gras beads and throws. Grounds Krewe partners with ARC of Greater New Orleans to employ adults with disabilities to recycle beads as well as keep beads out of the city's storm drains. Sacred Heart's Mater campus will serve as a collection site for 2 parades in February 2022, with students and parents helping to distribute bags for collecting unwanted beads during these parades.

In 2021, Sacred Heart connected with a diverse set of partners through the Greater New Orleans Interfaith Community Coalition (GNOICC) to celebrate Earth Week. Sacred Heart and nearby St. George's Episcopal School were paired to structure a day that encouraged civic engagement and stewardship by way of education, fellowship, prayer, and cleaning of shared spaces at a nearby park. The goal of this day was to highlight the interactions between natural and human social systems.

Each spring, 7th grade students work with the Pontchartrain Conservancy to gain access to Pontchartrain Beach in New Orleans for a hands-on learning experience studying marine debris and microplastics. Students are guided through activities led by educators from the University of New Orleans and the Louisiana Master Naturalist Program. The students conduct a marine debris survey by documenting and categorizing debris using NOAA data sheets. Students also learn how microplastics sampling is conducted by filtering a water sample using a vacuum pump to sieve sand in order to find microplastics. Students then measure water quality by parameters such as water clarity and temperature. They discuss the sources and fate of the plastics found at the beach and ways to reduce plastic pollution. The students learn that much of the found plastic comes from the streets of New Orleans - washed by rain into storm drains, and then pumped into canals by the Sewerage and Water Board. The canals carry the plastic to Lake Pontchartrain where prevailing tides deposit it on the beach. Students also learn that plastic decays into microplastics and takes hundreds of years to completely disappear from the environment. These real-world experiences show our students first hand why it is important to work toward living a more sustainable life, which goes back to the school's efforts to bring sustainability from "head" to "heart."

In November 2021, 12 senior Environmental Science students visited a habitat conservation site at Port Nickel in Braithwaite, Louisiana under the direction of Dinah Maygarden from the University of New Orleans. The site used to house a metal processing plant and has undergone environmental remediation. To further the remediation and conservation efforts at the site, students were engaged in



service learning, data collection and tree planting to restore the bottomland hardwood forest. The seniors were tasked with collecting transect data about trees previously planted by Sacred Heart students and with planting 56 new trees. 6 local experts including engineers and wildlife habitat representatives joined the activity. The seniors were also given a brief history lesson of the surrounding area including its geographical history going from agricultural land to industrial and back to a natural habitat as well as its natural river levee ecosystem. To strengthen the connection between the field experience and the classroom, Dinah visited these students a month later on Sacred Heart's campus to share the results of their work and data which will be utilized by UNO.

Upper School students are united in civic engagement through their Sustainable Hearts Club. The goals of the 2021-2022 club are to 1) inform the school about climate change through petitions and fundraisers, 2) communicate sustainable clothing and cosmetic brands to students and 3) organize regular community cleanups. The club is also responsible for furthering the school's sustainability efforts by working with students and teachers in every grade level.

Sacred Heart strives to inspire students to consider future careers in sustainability by engaging alumni and other community members in related fields. In addition to work in the Environmental Sciences courses, faculty are encouraged to utilize alumnae resources to present to students on how certain elements of the curriculum tied to future careers. For the past 2 years, Clesi Bennett, class of 2009, an Environmental Scientist in the Climate Change Programs at California Natural Resources Agency, has presented to the 9th grade World Geography class on the impact policy has on the environment and how that impacts people. This presentation helped inform their final project of presenting at Cultures Around the Fountain. In 2021, local artist Dana Beuler visited the Upper School art class. Dana is a sculptor and painter, and the owner and founder of Mardi Gras Customs. Beuler shared her experiences as a working artist in the union film industry, as well as her process in creating Mardi Gras magic. Her artmaking is eco-friendly; the paper is sourced from companies in compliance with the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program and endorsed by the Forest Stewardship Council. They also use water-based paints and low VOC adhesives whenever possible, and reuse plastics and shipping materials. In January 2022, 9th grade World Geography students enjoyed a visit from alumna Dr. Arie Kaller, the Regional Supervisor in the Office of the Environment and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management for the U.S. Department of Intervention. Dr. Kaller spoke about her learning path that led to her current job. She started her career as a marine biologist and now oversees all energy management in the Gulf of Mexico including renewable, marine minerals, and oil and gas. She has a broad view of the biodiversity and resources in the Gulf and explained the variety of careers and professionals who she works with in her office - marine biologists, marine archeologists, and environmental engineers. Her talk focused on her academic experiences and professional life. Arie emphasized that her science teachers at Sacred Heart encouraged and inspired her while she was a student at the Rosary.

Sacred Heart houses a local coffee shop on campus called PJ's. The owner teaches a financial literacy class for seniors, which offers an internship to work in the coffee shop. Students learn about running a local business which supports a locally made product - coffee - and that as an owner one can choose to incorporate sustainable practices within any business. Examples of these practices include using the coffee grounds to fertilize the flower pots surrounding the shop, recycling/composting coffee cups and supplies, and encouraging students to bring their reusable PJs cups to be filled by offering a discount.



Sacred Heart has 3 seniors in the class of 2022 who conducted a research project in the summer of 2021 analyzing the effects of heavy-metal pollution on soil/levee stability in southern Louisiana. They studied the Mississippi River levee system, and though their findings are still in the early stage, early analysis has indicated a relationship between concentration of farming and petroleum industry heavy metal pollutants and soil bulk density and porosity.

The Academy of the Sacred Heart is committed to sharing their sustainability efforts with the wider community, including a Student Leaders in Sustainability Roundtable planned for the Spring of 2022, as well as a wider-reaching conference in 2023 to share this curriculum framework and best practices.

Photographs may be accessed by [clicking this link](#)

Photo 1: Brookehaven Renewable Energy City - 4th grade students designed and engineered Brookehaven, a fictional city that runs on alternative energy sources such as solar, wind, water and geothermal heat, in the Innovation Lab (iLab), a maker space on the Rosary campus. The students served as docents by taking guests of all ages on campus on a “tour” of the city to share how they solved the design challenge and described each renewable energy source, how the city uses it, and why each energy choice is strategically optimal within its geographic landscape.

Photo 2: Earth Week - Youth on the Avenue - To kick off Earth Week 2021, students, faculty, staff and their family members along with neighboring St. George’s Episcopal Church participated in a day of education, fellowship and prayer, and cleaning of shared spaces. At a nearby park, the group was led in prayer, learned about native plants, collected litter and painted banners for both Sacred Heart and St. George’s to display during Earth Month.

Photo 3: Food Waste Diversion - Sacred Heart is partnered with The Composting Network, a local commercial composting provider to service food waste from both campuses. To date, Sacred Heart has diverted 6,820 pounds of food waste away from the landfill and was the first K-12 school in New Orleans to partner and be continually serviced by The Composting Network.

Photo 4: Coastal Restoration - In November 2021, 12 senior Environmental Science students visited a habitat conservation site at Port Nickel in Braithwaite, Louisiana to help restore Louisiana’s coastline. Under the direction of Dinah Maygarden from the University of New Orleans, students were engaged in service learning, data collection, tree planting and a brief history of the area to restore the bottomland hardwood forest.

Photo 5: Victory Garden and Working Worm Farm - Pre-K and 2nd grade students studied Victory Gardens of WWII, which inspired them to compare those gardens with their families’ backyard gardens planted during the COVID-19 “shutdown.” 2nd grade students built their own edible garden on the Mater campus, recording observations, measurements and bar graphs in a personal plant journal. The garden has been a place of observation and guided lessons for all ages. The garden includes worms from the farm which were released into it on Earth Day 2021. Students learned about composting as they watched the worms make tunnels to escape the light to break down banana peels.



Photo 6: Pontchartrain Beach Cleanup - Each spring, 7th grade students participate in a field experience at Pontchartrain Beach in New Orleans East to learn about marine debris and microplastics. Students observe, conduct a survey, document and categorize debris, and filter water and sand to find microplastics. The experience is led by the 7th grade science teacher and Dinah Maygarden from UNO.

Photo 7: Glass Recycling Drive - In partnership with Glass Half Full, Sacred Heart has held 2 drives to date, collecting 4,950 pounds of glass. Glass Half Full is the only glass recycling facility in Louisiana. They recycle glass into sand for coastal restoration efforts, disaster relief, and eco-construction. The nonprofit helps students consider math, science, art, and entrepreneurial skills during their visits to the school as well as volunteer opportunities. The drives were led by students - 12th grade National Honor Society, juniors earning volunteer hours, the Upper School Sustainable Hearts Club and 4th grade Take Action Club.

Photo 8: Global Virtual Exchange - Led by the 12th grade National Honor Society and the Global Exchange Coordinator, 5 Upper School students participated in a Virtual Global Exchange centered around sustainability, stewardship, and the building of community. Over 50 students from 6 Sacred Heart schools (22% of the Network) participated, comparing ways their schools are “going green.” The discussion was centered around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Photo 9: The Great Plastic Bag Challenge - In November 2021, the Head of School issued a school-wide “Great Plastic Bag Challenge.” Teachers and Upper School students were tasked with using only single-use plastic shopping bags to create something useful and beautiful. The groups created lunch bags, Sacred Heart-themed pillows and more. The challenge was followed by a presentation ideally inspiring students and their families to bring their own tote bags to the grocery store. This challenge diverted over 1,000 plastic bags from the landfill and prompted the purchase of 1,000 reusable Sacred Heart canvas tote bags to be given to every student, teacher and staff.

Photo 10: Fast Fashion - Since 2018, Environmental Science seniors have researched the impacts of fast fashion on the environment (excessive water use, water and air pollution, poor agricultural practices, textile waste in landfills) and the poor working conditions for factory and agriculture workers. Each year, the students design dresses using all recyclable material and showcase their designs in a catwalk-style fashion show. This topic moves the students to encourage their peers to change buying habits, which ultimately signals companies to do better.