Green Woods Charter School Green Ribbon Application

Summary Narrative: An Overview of Your Work Encompassing All Three Pillars

Located in Northwest Philadelphia, Green Woods Charter School provides a rigorous education for 700 students in kindergarten - 8th grade, cultivating a lifelong passion for learning and instilling students' deep understanding of the natural world, their place in it, and responsibility within it. Our mission is to nurture our students as knowledgeable and conscientious investigators by fostering a keen understanding of the interdependence of and our impact on our local and global existence; creating active young stewards of the natural world. Established in 2002 on the grounds of the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Green Woods quickly outgrew its initial space. In 2014, we transitioned to a purpose-built facility on a brown-field site that was designed to immerse students in environmental learning. Our expansive campus boasts a large pond, stream, a rain garden, and a dedicated wetland area as part of our stormwater management. Every day, our students take their classroom knowledge and apply it to the real world, actively engaging with the outdoor environment that surrounds them. Through hands-on experiences in the local forests, ponds, and streams of Northwest Philadelphia, we empower our students to become not just learners, but lifelong stewards of the natural world.

The 2022-2023 school year marked Green Woods 20th year educating Philadelphia students with an integrated approach that is succeeding in engaging students, inspiring teachers, and increasing achievement for young Philadelphians. Green Woods Charter School was recognized by the National Wildlife Federation's Eco-Schools USA program for exceptional achievement in educating for sustainability and improving the environmental footprint of the school grounds, facility, and curriculum with the Bronze Award in 2022 and the Silver Award in 2023. Eco-Schools USA is a national program that engages Pre K-12 school students, faculty, administrators, and community volunteers in a comprehensive, environment-based program to improve student environmental literacy and skills.

Our unique Green STEM program extends student learning outside the classroom through inquiry and hands-on exploration. Students lead initiatives such as recycling, composting, water quality testing, and the creation of a local green museum. Green Woods is committed to addressing climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Students study the environmental impacts of climate change and actively engage in community education through posters and videos shared via newsletters and social media. The school embraces renewable energy sources, including on-campus solar panels, and participates in tree-planting initiatives for a greener campus.

To minimize environmental footprint, Green Woods has implemented a waste management system focusing on recycling, composting, and waste diversion. Students actively participate in waste reduction efforts, sorting cafeteria waste, managing paper recycling, collecting mixed recycling, and composting school lunch waste. Launched in the 2021-2022 school year, the Consumption and Waste Management initiative has successfully diverted 7,353 pounds of waste from landfills, contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Green Woods Charter School is dedicated to creating environmentally

conscious and responsible stewards of the natural world through a modern, innovative educational approach.

In each grade, students tackle a variety of service projects that aim to investigate the local impacts of climate change and develop strategies for mitigation and adaptation. Students spearhead a variety of initiatives, including recycling, composting, water quality testing, and our local green museum that focus on the environmental impacts of climate change within our own community with middle school students.

Green Woods emphasizes health and wellness through physical and mental well-being initiatives. Regular gym class, outdoor classrooms, and recreational spaces provide opportunities for physical activity. An environmental health program integrates eco-friendly materials and technologies to ensure a healthy indoor environment. The school utilizes UVGI lamp technology and MERV 13 filtration for effective air quality management. The commitment to health extends to educational initiatives, integrating sustainable practices and healthy living principles. The school supports nutrition through healthy cafeteria menus, bottle filling stations, and an annual education program on sugar intake. During this project, 3rd grade students measure out the amount of sugar contained in popular drinks and foods. They create an informational board that goes in our main hallway for students, staff, and visitors to view and discuss.

Aligned with the Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (STEELS) Standards, Green Woods incorporates science into various disciplines, notably English Language Arts (ELA). The school utilizes curricular programs across disciplines, fostering environmental literacy. Through hands-on learning in science classrooms and literacy programs, students actively engage with real-world situations, promoting critical thinking. The school's mission is to deepen students' connection to sustainability by providing immersive learning experiences on the school grounds. This includes field studies in collaboration with external organizations such as the Morris Arboretum and the Wissahickon Environmental Center, both local to the Roxborough area and focused on similar missions. Green Woods emphasizes the importance of building connections between science and literacy, integrating science-themed texts into the curriculum.

Community-based service projects extend the students' academic learning into meaningful actions. Elementary school students' projects are focused within our immediate school community, supporting initiatives right on our own campus and local park system. Middle school students collaborate with local organizations such as the Upper Roxborough Reservoir, local park associations, Roxborough YMCA, and the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, combining service projects with applied science knowledge.

Green Woods Charter School aims to provide a comprehensive educational experience that intertwines sustainability, environmental education, and academic disciplines, fostering a commitment to science and service among students.

Pillar I: Your Efforts to Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs

Through a unique educational model that strives to connect the concepts of sustainability and environmental education within real life education, Green Woods Charter School uses a Green STEM model that advances the core concept of sustainability and environmental education through incorporating the latest technologies and providing state-of-the-art tools, techniques, lesson plans, and modalities. Our mission is to nurture our students as knowledgeable and conscientious investigators by fostering a keen understanding of their interdependence of and our impact on our local and global existence; creating active young stewards of the natural world. As part of this educational plan, Green Woods is designated as an Eco-School through the National Wildlife Federation's Eco-Schools USA program, and was recognized with the Silver Award for exceptional achievement in educating for sustainability, improving the environmental footprint of the school grounds, facility, and curriculum in 2023. Eco-Schools USA is a nationwide program that engages Pre K-12 school students, faculty, administrators and community volunteers in a comprehensive, environment-based program to improve student environmental literacy and skills.

Our unique STEM program extends student learning outside the classroom through inquiry and hands-on exploration. In each grade, students tackle a variety of service projects that aim to investigate the local impacts of climate change and develop strategies for mitigation and adaptation. Students spearhead a variety of initiatives including, recycling, composting, water quality testing, and our local green museum that focus on the environmental impacts of climate change within our own community with our middle school students.

Reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas emissions

Green Woods recognizes the importance of addressing climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions to ensure a sustainable future. Within the classroom students study the impacts of climate change through novel-based study in English Language Arts (ELA) classes and hands-on activities in science and Green STEM classes. They then create informational posters and videos to educate the community through our newsletters and social media. Our commitment extends beyond the classroom, as we embrace renewable energy sources with our own on campus solar panel, participate in tree-planting initiatives, and engage in projects that promote a greener and cleaner campus. Additionally, Green Woods has purchased two vans that are used for after-school activities and local field study programming transportation. The goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with school transportation by replacing traditional school buses with more fuel-efficient and eco-friendly vans. By doing so, we aim to create a ripple effect that discourages parents from driving individually and promotes a collective, sustainable mode of transportation.

Moreover, 7th and 8th-grade students at Green Woods lead a service project focused on air quality. Using the Air Quality Flag Program, students assess and display daily air quality with colorful flags corresponding to the air quality index. This hands-on approach not only raises awareness about the impact of greenhouse gas emissions but also engages students in in-class activities to understand air pollution's effects and discover ways to improve air quality.

Energy Audits

Green Woods conducts regular audits to assess energy consumption and identify areas for improvement. Embracing eco-friendly technologies and practices, such as building tune ups, LED lighting and energy-efficient appliances, helps minimize our environmental impact. Annually We have created a facilities management and maintenance checklist and partnered with a consultant to perform a complete building tune-up reviewing energy systems and controls and minor tweaks to bring them up to a good state of performance. On average, these tweaks result in 10–15% annual energy savings for a building.

LEAF Project

Green Woods 8th grade students participated in a Green Museum Project that emphasizes how trees and water systems intertwine in the environment. Students study a sampling of trees on the school campus and charted the impact they have on local energy consumption and water run off. It is estimated that over a 20 year time period, these trees will uptake 2,760.23 pounds of carbon and avoid 21,188.57 gallons of stormwater run off-saving the community $1,700.34. This is designed to raise environmental awareness, connect students to the natural world, improve the school's environmental footprint, and increase student engagement.

Reducing solid, food, and hazardous waste production

To reduce our impact on the environment, Green Woods has a waste management system focused on recycling, composting, and diversion of waste from the waste stream. As part of our science and service learning model, students run this program that supports our school-wide waste management mission.

Lunch waste

The cafeteria has a disposal system that is run by students who sort waste into the proper bins. This is where a majority of the waste is diverted, unfinished fruit and vegetables and cafeteria lunch trays are composted while plastics and metals are sorted for recycling. Students across all grades have the opportunity to volunteer as Lunch Monitors who are responsible for ensuring waste is being properly disposed of and placed in the right containers during lunch.

Paper recycling

Our 2nd grade students are responsible for paper recycling, collecting and shredding all school-wide paper waste each week. This goes hand-in-hand with their science theme of "Trees, Paper, and Upcycling" and the importance to the environment. During the year, students learn about the history and invention of paper, issues of deforestation, and how to reduce waste through recycling and upcycling.

Composting and Mixed Recycling

Both the fifth and sixth grades work collaboratively to collect mixed recycling twice a week and compile the recycling waste into different stations for sorting. Each station has a specific task in order to handle the different types of recyclables. These grades are also responsible for composting school lunch waste.

They gather green composting bins from the cafeteria, sort through organic waste and process fruits, vegetables, and nuts to accelerate the decomposition process for compost. In these grades, students delve into ecosystems, living organisms, and weather and climate, examining the impact of our daily influences on these areas. Consequently, students actively contribute to improving services in these domains. For instance, they focus on the role of decomposers in ecosystems, participating in learning sessions about how food waste breaks down and the involvement of worms in that process.

Community Garden

The compost created through school lunch waste is then used by our 3rd grade students to plant in our community herb garden. Students start plants in the classroom from seeds in winter, then plant them on Earth Day. Once ready, students harvest the fresh herbs to distribute to the school community. During third grade students travel the globe to experience weather and climate and solve weather-related problems; explore life cycles of diverse organisms and relate how traits of species are affected by inheritance and the environment. By involving students in the agricultural process, from seed germination to the final harvest, they experience first hand the impacts of weather and climate and experience the life cycle of plants.

Impact

Launched in the 2021-2022 school year, the purpose of the Waste and Consumption initiative is to inform issues on improper disposal of waste, establish an effective Waste Management System, prevent overall waste from being discarded to landfills and aid in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Since 2021, the program has diverted 7,353 pounds of waste from landfills from just paper and mix recycling.

	Paper Recycling	Mixed Recycling (Cans, Plastic, Glass, Cardboard)	Year Total Diverted from Landfills
2021-2022	1,522 lbs	870 lbs	2,392 lb
2022-2023	3,324 lbs	1,385 lbs	4,709 lbs
2023-2024	261 lbs (November - Present)	150 lbs (November - Present)	411 lbs (Current)
Grand Total (21-23):			7,353 lbs (3.6 Tons)

Pillar 2: Your Efforts to Improve the Health and Wellness of Students and Staff

Improving water quality, efficiency, and conservation

To ensure a seamless integration of the indoor and outdoor classrooms, our campus was constructed with a large pond, stream, rain garden, and wetland area. As a part of our mandate from the Philadelphia Water Department, Green Woods is required to maintain all stormwater runoff on our 5.5 acre site. This creates an opportunity for students to explore, identify, and learn to solve issues relating to the health of our own mini-watershed. You will often find students on campus testing the water quality of our onsite pond and stream and examining the environmental effects of storm runoff.

Specifically, the 4th grade year at Green Woods focuses on a year-long journey that immerses students in the intricate study of local watersheds, focusing on our backyard Wissahickon Park system. Collaborating with local organizations, students delve into the intricacies of streams and waterways, forming relationships with experts and actively participating in the nurturing and releasing of brook trout on Earth Day. Green Woods students have participated in raising and releasing trout through the Trout in the Classroom organization since 2016. In February eggs are received and counted, students observe the life cycle of the trout first hand until their release during the par phase into the Wissahickon Creek. Culminating their watershed exploration, students embark on a reflective trip to Cape May, examining the global interconnectedness of water systems. This comprehensive experience fosters a profound sense of connectedness, both locally and globally. Additionally, in 7th and 8th grade our students focus on the impacts of climate change on water quality, efficiency, and conservation. They explore how human influences contribute to greenhouse gas emissions and recognize the effects of global warming. To address these changes, students conduct research and study various sectors contributing to climate change. They also monitor weather trends and patterns, actively participating in informing the school community about air pollution quality by raising different flags that communicate the anticipated air quality for the day.

Alternate Transportation

We actively encourage students, staff, and parents to explore and embrace locally available, energy-efficient transportation options. This includes promoting walking and biking to school, organizing carpools, and utilizing public transportation systems. Additionally, Green Woods is involved with initiatives to enhance alternative transportation infrastructure, such as installing bike racks and creating designated car line drop-off zones. We collaborate with local authorities to advocate for policies that support alternative transportation, such as improved pedestrian pathways and bike lanes.

Facilities

We recognize the dual potential of our grounds as both ecologically and educationally beneficial spaces. Through initiatives like gardens and wildlife habitats, we aim to enhance biodiversity and provide hands-on learning experiences for students. Moreover, we prioritize responsible waste management by establishing methods for the proper disposal of both solid and hazardous wastes. Recycling programs,

waste reduction campaigns, and hazardous waste disposal guidelines are integral components of our commitment to creating a more environmentally conscious and sustainable school environment.

At Green Woods we have an ongoing commitment to enhancing the health and wellness of both students and staff through a range of initiatives to promote physical and mental well-being. Regular gym sessions are a staple in our weekly schedule, ensuring that students stay active and maintain a healthy lifestyle. We've also invested in ten minimalistic and sustainable outdoor classrooms on-site, providing refreshing environments for lessons and creating spaces that seamlessly blend learning with nature. In good weather, our students take advantage of open spaces for activities like soccer and basketball, contributing to a dynamic and wholesome campus experience. Beyond physical health, we prioritize mental well-being through various programs and resources. Each year we partner with the American Heart Association Kid Heart Challenge to discover ways to be heart healthy, practice kindness, gratitude and learn ways to de-stress. Additionally our mindfulness coach works with students to develop the ability to manage stress through breathing. These efforts collectively underscore our dedication to fostering a supportive and healthy environment for everyone within our school community. Often our playspace is filled with families well after the school day ends, as they enjoy the environment on campus.

Environmental health program

Green Woods is deeply committed to enhancing the health and wellness of both students and staff by integrating a comprehensive environmental health program. This program is designed to prioritize sound health and safety principles in all aspects of our facilities and grounds, from initial design to ongoing maintenance. In the construction and renovation of our buildings, we emphasize eco-friendly materials, energy-efficient systems, and proper ventilation to ensure a healthy indoor environment. We have installed UVGI lamp technology to all of our rooftop HVAC units. This technology has been in use for more than a century to fight bacteria, mold, and pathogens. When combined with our MERV 13 filtration, UVGI is proven to be 99%+ effective in the inactivation of bacteria and viruses. There are no, known, pathogens that are resistant to a lethal dose of UV Germicidal energy. An added benefit of installing UV lamps in a RTU are energy and maintenance savings. UV light inside of the rooftop units VS in the ductwork will constantly clean the cooling coil reducing pressure in the duct reducing the load on fan motors as well as reduce or eliminate the need for manual coil-cleaning.

School Campus

Our school building was constructed in 2014, and is structurally sound, and weather-tight to control mold, dust, and entry of insects and/or rodents into the building. Interior spaces are in excellent condition and finished to control exposure of the occupants to hazardous levels of toxic fumes, dust, mold or noise. Wall and floor coverings materials ensure safe and sanitary conditions, and all areas of the buildings and grounds are free from visible hazards.

Our outdoor learning playspace was constructed in 2021 and was designed to provide an enriching and immersive experience for children, connecting them with the natural environment while prioritizing their well-being. Our playspace features carefully selected and inspected natural elements, such as logs, rocks, and plants, which are regularly assessed for any potential hazards. Protective surfacing in the form of

safety mulch, is in place to minimize risks associated with falls. Clear signage outlining guidelines for safe play is prominently displayed, and our dedicated staff monitors the playspace regularly to address any emerging safety concerns promptly.

Our facilities management program is dedicated to maintaining the building, grounds, and play areas with attention to detail, ensuring a minimal presence of health and accidental hazards. We uphold a standard of cleanliness and safety across all spaces, carefully managing storage spaces to keep them clutter free. Each evening, a routine cleaning is complemented by additional focus and disinfection procedures for high-touch areas as needed. To enhance safety, all cleaning and toxic materials are securely stored, inaccessible to students, and kept away from food preparation areas and activity spaces. Our maintenance practices incorporate sustainable and non-toxic cleaning supplies, contributing to improved air quality. We have implemented green spaces and outdoor learning environments, promoting physical activity and mental well-being. We have 10 on site outdoor classrooms where you will often see student lessons taking place. All students have gym weekly, and in good weather you will find them playing soccer, basketball, and exercising in our open spaces on campus.

Additionally, our environmental health program extends to educational initiatives that empower students and staff with knowledge about sustainable practices and healthy living. By integrating these principles into the core of our institution, we strive to create an environment that not only supports academic excellence but also prioritizes the overall health and well-being of our school community.

Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child

Nutrition

In partnership with our national school lunch provider, Lintons, Green Woods works to improve access to healthy foods both within and outside the school environment. Our cafeteria menus prioritize nutritious options, and the program participation metrics indicate a notable increase in the consumption of balanced meals among our student body. The school has numerous hands-free bottle filling stations and water fountains located on each floor of the building and outside the cafeteria. Free and reduced lunch is offered anonymously to families who qualify.

Physical activity

Outdoor physical activity is a cornerstone of our approach to holistic well-being. We've expanded recreational spaces, introduced outdoor classrooms, and organized regular physical activities to encourage students to stay active. Field studies and Earth Day projects are often outdoor, require physical activity, and lots of walking. Our afterschool sports programs are well attended and expose students to a variety of activities including running, basketball, volleyball, soccer, flag football, and golf. Sport program participation metrics reveal a rise in engagement, emphasizing the success of our outdoor initiatives in promoting a healthier, more active lifestyle. Our commitment extends to health education, where we integrate comprehensive programs covering a range of topics, including sun safety, mental health, and overall well-being.

Positive behavior management

The Trailblazer Club is Green Woods Charter School’s school-wide behavior plan. The Trailblazer Club is modeled from the Principal's 200 Club, which is a school-wide positive behavior program used in various school districts. The goal is to reinforce positive choices and actions by our students who demonstrate

their ability to follow the school-wide rules: “Be Responsible, Be Respectful, and Be Safe.” Ultimately, the program's goal is to reduce school notifications and office visits through positive reinforcement of those students following our three school-wide rules.
When incidents or infractions occur, Green Woods relies on a restorative practices approach to assist students on process through their decision-making, understand the impacts on the school community and restore their place in their class and community. Our staff has undergone professional development to learn proactive strategies that nurture conflict resolution skills and fortify community bonds. These holistic practices are designed to unearth and address the root causes of disciplinary issues among students, and steer away from exclusionary approaches to not only foster an inclusive and supportive environment but also hold the potential to alleviate racial disparities within our educational community.

Health services
Health services, counseling, psychological, and social services are readily available to students, ensuring a supportive environment for their emotional and mental health needs. We are staffed with a full-time, on-site nurse who provides clinical services to students, and staff are also trained annually. Our school leadership team and select staff are first aid and CPR certified. Additionally Green Woods has two full time school counselors who work to promote mental health, work with students in crisis, connect families with resources, and plan to meet the needs of the students in and out of school. The school counselors host a “lunch bunch” for students to foster positive relationships with others, in addition to proactive monthly whole group guidance lessons in each grade level and the direct counseling services provided to students in need.

Staff wellness
Staff health promotion is another priority, with wellness programs and resources aimed at fostering a healthy and supportive work environment for all staff. Family and community involvement are actively encouraged through regular communication channels, workshops, and events, establishing a collaborative partnership in supporting the well-being of our students. Staff participate in regular professional development on managing stress, working with community members, executive functioning and mindfulness for adults. Additionally, monthly themed in school lunches and out of school time sunshine events that promote staff morale and relationship building.

Family and community involvement
Regular communication channels, including newsletters, emails, and social media, keep families informed about school activities, events, and their child's progress. We host workshops and informational sessions to provide parents with valuable insights into our curriculum, teaching methodologies, and strategies for supporting their child's learning at home. Community engagement events, such as back to school nights, celebrations, PTA events, and field study chaperoning, provide opportunities for families to connect with each other and with school staff. These events create a sense of community and contribute to a positive school culture.

Pillar 3: Your Efforts to Ensure Effective Environmental and Sustainability Education

Through a unique educational model that strives to connect the concepts of sustainability and environmental education within real life education, Green Woods Charter School uses a Green STEM model that advances the core concept of sustainability and environmental education through incorporating the latest technologies and providing state-of-the-art tools, techniques, lesson plans, and modalities. As part of this educational plan, Green Woods is designated as an Eco-School through the National Wildlife Federation's Eco-Schools USA program, and was recognized with the Silver Award for exceptional achievement in educating for sustainability, improving the environmental footprint of the school grounds, facility, and curriculum in 2023. Eco-Schools USA is a nationwide program that engages Pre K-12 school students, faculty, administrators and community volunteers in a comprehensive, environment-based program to improve student environmental literacy and skills.

Moreover, Green Woods has shifted to align to the Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (STEELS) Standards and has systematically infused science into other disciplines, most notably our ELA course, where students across grades have at least one unit per school year focused on science-themed fiction or nonfiction texts. Through Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability (STEELS) Standards, in conjunction with the Eco-Schools pathways, students have the opportunity to learn about natural systems, such as ecosystems, on our school campus and with the local community; learn science in context; and apply science in real-world scenarios. The goal, which is supported through research, is to increase all students' enthusiasm for science and see a positive impact on science learning, literacy, and the ability to collaborate with peers.

With Eco-Schools as the framework, our students also engage in all the necessary disciplines required to build foundational skills. The Green Woods instructional team has adopted the below curricular programs that integrate across all disciplines to overlap environmental literacy:

Elementary and Middle School Science (K-8): TCI's *Bringing Science Alive*
Elementary and Middle School Math (K-8): HMH's *Into Math*
Middle School ELA (5-8): HMH *Journeys and Collections* to support novel-based instruction
Elementary ELA (K-4): American Reading Company's *CORE* and 100 Book Challenge
Elementary Phonics (K-2): Sadlier's *From Phonics to Reading*
Middle School Social Studies (5-6): HMH's *Ancient Civilizations*
Middle School Social Studies (7-8): HMH's *United States History*

Through our education model, Green Woods strives to deepen our students' connection to our mission and provide students the opportunity to become immersed in learning on our school grounds, to learn to look critically at environmental issues, and to take personal responsibility for finding solutions by asking the right questions. This is achieved through several innovative learning components at Green Woods:

Science Classrooms: Green Woods students across all grades engage in science every day. During science classes, students are engaged in hands-on learning, either in an indoor classroom or an outdoor classroom or learning lab, that gives students the opportunity to observe what they are learning in a real-world situation or apply their learning. In our elementary grades, this could look like a nature hunt on our school grounds, dissection of plant matter, the creation of habitat dioramas, or monitoring the growth of their indoor plants. In our middle school grades, this could look like observing ecosystems in our school pond, testing the pH level of our pond water and comparing it to other water sources, or creating a plan to improve the recycling program at our school. Through these hands-on opportunities, teachers prioritize depth of learning to provide students with a positive learning experience that also impacts their academic success. WIth a focus on hands-on learning and taking on the cognitive load in science, students are able to build their schema to then think critically across content areas.

Science in Literacy: With a science-focused mission, it is important to incorporate science across the disciplines. At Green Woods, one would often find teachers collaborating across content areas to ensure students find the connections across disciplines. In regards to literacy and science, students engage in science-themed texts in at least one unit during the school year. For our elementary students in grades 1-5 they use the American Reading Company's CORE program, which includes any of the following science themes:

- Kindergarten: *Ecology*; *Entomology*; and *Zoology*
- 1st Grade: *Plants* and *Wild & Endangered Animals*
- 2nd Grade: *Bugs in their Ecosystems* and *Animal Stories*
- 3rd Grade: *Weather* & *Climate and Marine Life*
- 4th Grade: *Animal Adaptations*
- 5th Grade: *Ecosystems* & *Space*

Middle School students in grades 6-8 engage in novel-based study that includes multiple science-themed novels throughout the course of the school year, including:

- 6th Grade: *Pax* by Sara Pennypacker and *The Dead and Gone* by Susan Beth Pfeffer
- 7th Grade: *The Last Wild* by Piers Torday and *Fever 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- 8th Grade: *Dry* by Neal Shsterman

The selection in texts in English Language Arts classrooms are not just focused on a science theme, but science and the connection between the environment and literacy is explored throughout the year.

Green Woods strives to build on the educational plan outside the regular school day through various experiences out of the classroom.

Field Studies: Field studies are a pillar of the GWCS educational model. Beginning in the elementary grades, students engage in environmental field studies where they explore the

natural environment and apply their learning outside of the classroom. For example, GWCS GWCS has a longstanding relationship with the Morris Arboretum, where our 2nd grade students visit multiple times a year to apply their knowledge learned on the grounds. Similarly, our 4th grade team works with the Wissahickon Environmental Center and Wetlands Institute to support their study of water and watersheds.

In 8th grade, students participate in culminating right-of-passage field study at College Settlement of Philadelphia with an overnight trip. Our students work collaboratively in new social settings, explore different environments, and share new experiences with their peers. Students leave the program with a new sense of personal responsibility, independence and understanding of the natural world around them. The trip focuses on team building, group challenges, leadership, and other outdoor learning opportunities.

STEM and Service Learning: Each week all students in grades K-8 have one Green STEM class where students are challenged to investigate and develop creative solutions for real world problems. In each grade, students tackle a variety of service projects, from recycling, composting, to gardening, and raising trout to replenish our waterways. These projects improve the schools environmental footprint and increase student engagement, while saving money for the school. One example is our recycling and composting service projects which to date has saved 7,353 pounds of waste from landfills and recycled 2,225 pounds of material.

Community Based Service Projects: Building on their academic learning in middle school, students partner with a number of local organizations to complete service projects while also applying their knowledge gained in science classes. Whether it is working with our local park system, the Roxborough YMCA, or the Wissahickon Environmental Center, our middle school teachers and students participate in service projects to learn about the environment around them while also providing community service for our local partners. Some examples of our community earth day service projects and partnerships include:

- Kelly Park: 5th grade students collect debris and clean up the park
- Gorgas Park: 6th grade students clean garden beds and plant spring flowers
- Pretzel Park: 7th grade students clean debris from the park and plant spring flowers
- Wissahickon Environmental Center: 8th grade students maintenance trails and assist with clean up activities around their Treehouse

Green Woods continues to engage the community beyond graduation. Alumni families are invited to reconnect with our school throughout the year, engaging in meaningful initiatives that leave a lasting impact. Whether it's participating in tree planting projects, contributing to on-campus cleanups, or joining forces during Comcast Cares Day, our alumni families actively collaborate with community and family volunteers to create positive change. This ongoing involvement underscores the enduring sense of connection and shared responsibility that defines the Green Woods experience, reinforcing the idea that our community remains united and dedicated long after graduation.