

GODDARD SCHOOL IN ANDERSON TWP. GOES GREEN

By D. Frank Smith • December 5, 2011

ANDERSON TWP. — To encourage earth-friendly habits among preschoolers, The Goddard School® located in Anderson Township kicked off their Proud to be Green curriculum, recently.

Through a coordinated program including nature hikes, gardening, composting, rain collection, recycling, reusing, and reducing waste, and a full host of classroom activities, Goddard School children are getting a well-rounded picture of how to care for the environment.

Exposure to nature improves children's awareness, reasoning and observation skills, stimulates social interaction, and fosters imaginative and creative play.

It also helps children understand the difference between helpful and harmful actions toward living things.

Guided walks on Goddard's Nature Trail provide classes the opportunity to observe and discuss nature. Fossils, plants, trees, insects, sights and sounds make this a rich learning environment. The outdoor amphitheater provides faculty the opportunity to talk about what the kids see and hear, and how to respect nature.

"Gardening is a nurturing activity that teaches patience and responsibility, healthy eating, environmental awareness and more importantly, builds self esteem," said Wendy Reinhart, owner of The Goddard School in Anderson Township.

Children over 2 ½ years old participate in all phases of gardening from planting to harvesting, in one of four themed gardens (Pizza, Farmers' Market, Flower, and Sensory).

Composting and rain collection helps children recognize that nature supports life by meeting the unique needs of each organism. Composting enriches the soil, helps plants resist disease, and provides chemical-free garden fertilizer, all while also reducing waste.

At Goddard, classes take turns caring for the compost bin by adding appropriate waste material, checking the bin's internal temperature, and turning the pile with teacher supervision.

They also use two rain barrels to water their gardens and understand how this water is used to keep the campus green.

"Inside the classroom, children have a balanced lesson plan that includes books, music, games, video, interactive activities and experiments with recycled materials. They learn the sources and uses of paper, and how reusing and recycling reduces waste in our landfills" said Barbara Hattar, Teacher in the Dolphin Pre-K class. Children actively recycle on a daily basis. "We also explore alternative energy sources such as solar power and discuss the benefits of 'clean' energy."

Every day inside and outside the classroom, Goddard encourages children to lead a healthy lifestyle through a number of additional programs including yoga, dance, dramatic play, music and movement.

The Goddard Proud to be Green initiative supports Goddard Systems, Inc.'s ongoing commitment to promoting children's health.