TRCCS: Green & Healthy School From Its Roots

Chamomile Nusz
School Coordinator
Tomorrow River Community Charter School
TRCCS

- In our second year of operation
- Inspired by Waldorf and Environmental Education
- Located at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station
- Prekindergarten through 6th Grade
- Ended last year with 59 students and this year we have 103
TRCCS Movie
Green School!

- Wisconsin Green & Healthy Schools
  - Sugar Maple Status
- U.S. Department of Education 2014 Green Ribbon School’s Award Winner
CWES

- CWES: the remote field site for UWSP's Natural Resources and Environmental Education programs
- 200 acres
- Glacial Sunset Lake
- Infinite environmental learning opportunities
Founders

- Founded by 4 mothers
- Alternative to the traditional and only options available
- Curriculum inspired by nature
- Child centered
- Developmentally appropriate
- Community driven
Community

- In the heart of the progressive community of Amherst, WI
- Lineage of alternative energy and sustainability
  - Renewable Energy
  - local organic farmers
  - lovers of the arts and outdoors
Waldorf

- Inspiration from nature
- Non-competitive
- Arts
  - Handwork, music, movement, woodworking
- Teachers follow students
- 1\textsuperscript{st} Waldorf-inspired Charter School in WI
Curriculum

- Developmentally appropriate
- Play based early childhood
- Main Lesson
- Aligned with the Common Core
- Foreign language beginning in 1st grade
- All subjects are interwoven, showing the connectedness of the world.
Green & Healthy School

- 9 Focus Areas
- Sugar Maple Status
Energy

- Energy Audit
  - Mid-State Technical College
- Renovations meeting Green Building standards
- Renewable Energy
  - Solar
  - Geothermal
  - Passive Solar
Energy

- Energy Saving Devices
  - Energy efficient lighting
  - Occupancy Sensors
  - Vending misers
    - Faucet timer
    - Motion sensor paper towel dispenser
  - Energy efficient HVAC system
  - Day lighting
  - Few electronic devices
Energy

- Curriculum
  - Where our energy comes from
- Culture
- Responsibility for the Earth
- Family/Community Education
- Demonstration Site
Water

- Annually tested
- Rainwater collection
- No irrigation
  - Proposed solar irrigation system for organic garden
- Native plants
- No impermeable surfaces
- Medications are collected and disposed of through UWSP
Water

- Bathroom faucets are on timers
- No running water in classrooms, refillable water containers
- Every student has a water bottle
- Portable restrooms saving an estimated 40,000 gallons a year
Water

- Curriculum
  - Water conservation
  - Water testing at Sunset Lake, ponds and streams
  - Ground water
  - Water cycle
  - Glacial lakes
  - Preservation
  - Culture
On-Site Lakes & Garden
School Site

- 200 acres
- 52 raised beds in the on-site organic garden
- The school District has 3 school forests
- Children spend approximately 1 to 2 hours outside a day
- 2 outdoor classrooms
School Site

- Outdoor play areas
  - Locally sourced wood
  - Sustainably harvested
  - Blends into the natural environment
  - Locally-sourced wood chips
  - No pavement
- Respect for surroundings
Natural Outdoor Play Areas
School Grounds Education

- Nature Studies
  - Twice a week with UWSP Environmental Education Practicum Students
  - Field-based and hands-on
- Ecology
- Sustainability
- Cultural aspects of community
School Grounds Education

- Gardening
  - Once a week with Garden Intern
  - Vegetable identification
  - Seed saving
  - Food storage/preservation
  - Garden planning
  - Starting seeds
School Grounds Education

- Professional Development
- Utilizing Site
- Resources and supplies
- Visiting experts
- Fieldtrips
Community Outreach

- Seasonal Festivals
- District events
- Community educational opportunities
Recycling & Waste Management

- Recycled Materials
  - Paper
  - Glass
  - Metals
  - Plastics
  - Ink Cartridges
  - Batteries
  - Teracycle
Recycling & Waste Management

- 100% Recycled paper used
- Composting of food waste
- Fallen branches used in play areas
- Hazardous waste policy
- Electronics
- Reuse
- Handkerchiefs
Recycling & Waste Management

- Green Cleaners
- Electronic communication with families and community
- Lap-size chalk boards
- Main lesson books
- Reusable containers
- All washable flatware and dishes
Transportation

- Carpooling
- Bus routing and parent driven transportation initiatives
  - Fundraising
- Proposal for a biodiesel van
- 80% of students come from outside the school district
Environmental Health

- Hard surface floors to prevent exposure to asthma triggers
- Energy recovery ventilation systems
- School prohibits smoking on campus
- Resort to pest management only in extreme cases
- The school does not use any pesticides
- Fresh air!
Environmental Health

- Classrooms
  - Open windows and doors
  - Natural, unfinished materials
  - Wool rugs
  - Cork flooring
  - Wood furniture
  - Wood toys
  - Glass, stainless steel and china
  - Natural paints and crayons
  - Recycled paper
  - Wooden flutes
Health & Wellness

- Wellness Policy
  - Physical Activity
- Nutrition
  - Meet nutritional requirements
  - Variety of fruits and vegetables
  - Water and Hormone free milk
  - Healthy Snack and lunch guidelines
- Recess will never be taken away as a punishment
Health & Wellness

- Salad bar offered at every hot lunch
- Food from on-site organic garden
- Yoga/movement once a week
  - Breathing and stress coping techniques
- Teachers stay with their students 1st-6th grade
- Psychologist, nurse, social worker and counseling services provided by district
Compassionate School

- Strong Anti-Bullying policy
  - Environment of love and support
  - Non-competitive
  - Respect
  - Responsibility for actions
- Trauma-Sensitive School
- Positive Discipline plan
- Warm, loving, supportive school environment
Health & Wellness

- More than 50% of the students’ annual physical education takes place outdoors
- Farm to School
- Movement twice a week
- Circle time starts each day for the grades students
- Outdoor time starts the day for the Early Childhood classrooms
Environmental & Sustainability Education

- All coursework is centered around the seasons and environment
- Environmental and sustainability concepts are integrated into:
  - Math, science, social studies, language arts, foreign language, agriculture science, art, drama, economics, consumer science, health education, music, physical education, handwork, woodworking and practical arts.
Community Involvement

- From the community
- Desire for alternative
- Roots in environmental educations
- Past Waldorf School
- Many community events
  - Fairs, parades, seasonal festivals, etc...
- Heart of the school
Community Involvement

- Community Partnerships
  - Field Trips
  - Visiting Artists
- Midwest Renewable Energy Association
  - Children’s Activities at the Energy Fair
- Waupaca Community Arts Board
  - Children’s Activities at Arts Festival
- Farmshed
- Wisconsin Center for Environmental Ed.
- One block dedicated to service project
Award Process

- Trainings
- WI Online Application
- Nomination for U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award
- Ceremony in Washington D.C.
- Opens Doors to so many opportunities!
Questions