



King County Green Schools Program

# Success Story

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Rethink

## Camelot Elementary School

**School district:** Federal Way

**School location:** Auburn

**Began participating in the Green Schools Program:**  
January 2009

**Level One of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in May 2010

**Level Two of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in November 2010

**Level Three of the Green Schools Program:**  
Achieved in May 2011

### **Sustaining Green School recognition**

- **2014-15:** Achieved in May 2015
- **2015-16:** Achieved in May 2016
- **2016-17:** Achieved in May 2017
- **2017-18:** Achieved in May 2018
- **2018-19:** Achieved in May 2019
- **2019-20:** Achieved in Dec. 2020
- **2021-22:** Achieved in May 2022
- **2022-23:** Achieved in May 2023



Students and staff are proud of conservation efforts



Student Green Team members help with lunchroom sorting of recyclable and compostable materials.

### **Waste Reduction and Recycling (Level One)**

- Camelot Elementary School maintained a 48% recycling rate.
- Camelot began to recycle food scraps in its lunchroom which reduced the garbage dumpster size and garbage service costs by 25%.
- Beginning in 2009, the Green Knights, Camelot's Green Team, achieved significant changes in how the school community thinks about and treats natural resources. By including a daily green tip in morning announcements and posters, the team helped fulfill its theme "Camelot Cares about the Earth."



- A student team wearing green aprons provided by the Green Schools Program monitored lunchroom sorting stations to help fellow students sort into recycling, food scrap, and garbage bins.
- The Green Knights placed bins for used paper towels near classroom sinks. Students emptied those bins into lunchroom food scrap bins each day so paper towels would be composted along with food scraps at a regional composting facility.
- The school reduced lunchroom waste by recycling Capri-Sun pouches and chip bags through TerraCycle, a company that used those items to make new products.
- In 2011, Camelot families used City of Federal Way recycling events to recycle batteries, plastic bags, and polystyrene from holiday and birthday packaging.

## **Energy Conservation (Level Two)**

- Camelot's Green Knights used the motto "Being Green is Cool."
- The Green Team placed labels on each computer and on light switches to remind students and teachers to turn them off when not in use.
- Camelot made a number of energy improvements including setting standard school-wide heating and cooling points and installing fluorescent light bulbs, occupancy sensors in frequently used rooms, an energy-efficient soda machine in the staff lounge, and new energy-efficient exit signs.
- Students generated posters that graphed Camelot's monthly energy use.
- Energy conservation facts shared by the Green Schools Program were added to the school website.
- Teachers removed personal space heaters, refrigerators, coffee pots, and other appliances they had brought into classrooms.
- In 2017, the Green Knights completed an energy audit of the school and created signs based on the results to remind students to conserve water and energy.

## **Water Conservation (Level Three)**

- The school held an annual water conservation poster contest and received over 100 entries from students in 2014-15.



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- The Student Council participated in a WE Day conference and raised money to build a well for a community in Ghana. The WE Act program offers educational resources to help youth take action on local and global causes.
- Custodial staff monitored the water meter and fixed broken sprinklers. Students graphed the school's monthly water consumption.
- Camelot received \$3,000 in local community grants to build a community garden.
- To save water, maintenance staff reduced water pressure in classroom sinks.
- Students participated in the *Salmon in the Classroom* program, welcomed King County guest speakers, and participated in a field trip to the Issaquah Hatchery.

## **Sustaining Green School recognition**

Camelot sustained and built on its Level One through Three practices. How the school accomplished this is detailed below.

## **Sustaining Green School 2014-15**

- The school held a Green Festival Harvest where students presented conservation successes, and local vendors showcased green business practices to the community.
- In 2015, the school received 100 bags of Cedar Grove compost because students and staff removed fruit and vegetable produce stickers that otherwise would have contaminated food waste sent to Cedar Grove Composting facility.
- Students worked with Weyerhaeuser for three years to create an outdoor classroom to foster environmental stewardship. In 2012, students designed the project to include native plants and pathways accessible to all students. Sixth-grade students from Kilo Middle School helped to plan work parties, meet with district maintenance staff, and present updates to the school board.
- Over the years, students participated in many Geo-Literacy Alliance Summer Leadership Institutes to understand connections between human and environmental systems. Students applied knowledge by investigating and acting on local issues.



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## **Sustaining Green School 2015-16**

- The Green Knights took turns going from class to class once each month with a checklist to monitor energy use in individual classrooms. Classes with the highest accomplishments received a green flag award at the end of each month.
- The school garden was expanded to accommodate more classes that participate in school garden efforts.
- The school planned its third annual week-long Garden Summer Camp for K-5 students, with hands-on garden education provided by master gardeners, local chefs, and engineers.
- With a grant, the school built a drainage system to prevent storm water run-off from eroding a campus slope. Storm water run-off was filtered to a collection pond where wetland plants filtered pollution and slowed storm water flow.
- Students helped restore campus areas by cutting back invasive blackberry bushes and planting native plants.

## **Sustaining Green School 2016-17**

The school hosted an Earth Day festival for school community members and staff from Puget Sound Energy (PSE) and Lakehaven Utility Conservation District.

## **Sustaining Green School 2017-18**

At its annual Green Festival for students and families, students raised awareness about environmental issues by offering workshops, games, and competitions.

## **Sustaining Green School 2018-19**

- The Green Knights set out bins in school hallways to collect old batteries, plastic bags, old markers, and crayons to be recycled.
- Students held the school's annual Green Festival and worked in the school's garden with a new garden coordinator.

## **Sustaining Green School 2019-20**

- The Green Knights helped their fellow students sort lunchtime materials into recycling, composting, and garbage bins. They also made announcements at



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the start of each semester and at each assembly about waste reduction, recycling, and other conservation practices.

- The Green Knights provided a Green Tip of the Week to remind students about energy and water conservation.
- In summer 2020, the Green Knights created a Drive up to the Garden event so Camelot families could drive to the school parking lot to receive seeds, pots, plants, and compost to bring home free of charge. King County Bio-Solids Program donated 200 bags of compost for the event. Participants were encouraged to start container gardens at home. Forty-five cars representing about 190 family members attended this event.

## **Sustaining Green School 2021-22**

- The Green Knights helped organize an Earth Week Recycle Art contest, and hosted drive-through U-Pick Harvest Day events. Families selected freshly picked produce and flowers from Camelot's garden.
- The Green Knights visited all classrooms after school to rate conservation practices using a checklist of practices. The checklist was used to decide Green Classroom Awards. The checklist included correct waste sorting, lights off, blinds closed, and class visits to school garden or forest areas.
- The Green Knights partnered with Truman High School and AmeriCorps to restore the school's forest area. Students removed blackberries and other invasive plants, removed debris, and added wood chips to create pathways.
- The district created Story Walk paths using Camelot's restored forest areas and garden. Along the paths, the Native American legend of the First Strawberries unfolded.
- Green Knights participated in a local tree planting event organized by the Thomas Jefferson High Green Team with a goal of planting 365 trees.



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## Sustaining Green School 2022-23

- The Green Knights team of 30 students worked in the school garden, helped with the campus' South Forest restoration project, created starter plants from seeds for a May plant sale, distributed pumpkins from Camelot's garden to each class, started and maintained a native species and rain garden with drought-tolerant plants, and helped at drive-up harvest and U-pick events in the school garden. The district summer program was held in Camelot's garden and forest area.
- First-grade classes participated in a unit on the native strawberry plant and indigenous ways of life in western Washington, and fourth-grade classes participated in a salmon release program with the City of Federal Way.
- The Green Knights continued to conduct classroom assessments every six weeks after school and gave Green Classroom Awards at school-wide assemblies, based on correct sorting of garbage, recyclable materials, and compostable materials in classrooms, as well as classroom practices such as lights off, electronics off, and a paper tray for paper used on one side.
- Signs in sink areas reminded students and staff to wash their hands, use one towel, and turn off the water.
- Garden water valves were turned off during the winter to prevent busted pipes and flooding. A leaking pipe was replaced. A timer was installed on the irrigation system so watering happens early in the morning and later at night to conserve water that would otherwise evaporate in the sun.
- In April 2023, the team organized events promoting earth stewardship.
- The team prepared for the school's annual Green Festival to be held in May.
- The team advisor maintained a team bulletin board in a school hallway showing the King County Green Schools banner and awards, photos of projects the Green Knights have participated in, and other information.



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## **Awards**

- Camelot received King County Earth Heroes at School awards in 2009 and 2016.
- Camelot received a \$1,000 Terry Husseman School Award in 2011.
- Mrs. Fischer's class participated in the Project Citizen National Showcase and recommended a plastic bag ban ordinance for City of Federal Way. The class received first place in Washington State, with Best Oral Presentation and Best Portfolio, as well as achieving Superior Level at Nationals.