



Virginia

Little Tree Huggers Preschool

Honoree Profile:

Location: Leesburg, Virginia

Type and School Level: Independent; Early Learning

Enrollment: 12 students

Summary of Achievements:

Little Tree Huggers (LTH) Preschool is a bilingual, nature-based preschool where students learn the importance of environmental stewardship by participating daily in aspects of farm operations, from caring for rescue animals to planting seeds in the garden. LTH established a wildlife sanctuary around a fully restored, 3-acre, mid-19th century farm complex that has been recognized for its extensive wildlife habitat and riparian conservation areas, all of which have been planted and maintained by students, staff, and parents. Each spring, students work the compost they have prepared into the school's vegetable and flower gardens, plant seeds for the next crop, and tend the garden through harvest. They harvest fruit crops grown on-site and participate in making meals and preserves. LTH's curriculum has students engaging in movement 500 or more minutes, five days a week, and muscle strengthening daily, with such activities as climbing and carrying water. LTH installed geothermal heating and cooling, a 48-panel solar array, generating approximately 16,000 kilowatt hours of energy annually, as well as various other energy efficiency solutions, making LTH carbon neutral. LTH reduces its materials use by building 90% of all play and outdoor instructional areas with repurposed or recycled materials, making 80% of all classroom projects with repurposed or recycled materials, and composting all food waste on-site. LTH has created an ecologically balanced campus that requires virtually no watering. Numerous rain barrels and rainwater troughs are installed around the property, and rainwater is used for the school and farm. LTH leverages its environmental and sustainability curriculum to conduct outreach to the community, showcasing the incorporation of sustainability features to positively impact both the environment and the school's bottom line.



Little Tree Huggers students engage in plentiful outdoor physical activity through farm tasks and play.

