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Sidwell Students Making ‘Friends’ in New Orleans

Fifth Graders from prestigious Washington, D.C., Middle School travel to New Orleans to learn about Sustainability while helping other kids

NEW ORLEANS, La. — In March, fifth grade students from Sidwell Friends Middle School will be traveling to New Orleans to volunteer in *Historic Green’s* “Spring Greening” event, as a requisite for their part in the school’s Apprenticeship Program. These students will work to establish rain gardens and plant trees at the Delery Street playground in the Holy Cross neighborhood of New Orleans’ Lower Ninth Ward.

“Sidwell Friends Middle School offers a creative opportunity for students to set up an individual apprenticeship with adults in a professional non-profit school or business situation,” says Robyn Nichols, Sidwell Friends School fifth grade teacher and co-coordinator of the Apprenticeship Program.

While volunteering, these students will learn about how rain gardens and trees provide environmental benefits to the community.

“Rain gardens have a huge impact on our neighborhood,” says Kathy Muse, Holy Cross resident and recipient of a rain garden at her residence in March 2008. “They not only beautify the surroundings, but serve to manage and treat storm water naturally by protecting our already overburdened storm sewer system. It’s the best of both worlds. And we get a functional, beautiful playground as a result. I’m very excited these students will learn about how to establish rain gardens.”

Environmental stewardship is a core element of Sidwell Friends School’s curriculum. In 2007, the middle school’s renovation received several awards for environmental design and construction. Now the school uses its building as a teaching tool.

“The middle school’s sustainable design is a true representation of its ongoing commitment to practice environmental stewardship,” adds Nichols.

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About *Historic Green*

Historic Green is a nonprofit organization with a mission to transform and revitalize communities through education and charitable activities integrating sustainable design and heritage conservation practices. To learn more about *Historic Green*, email press@historicgreen.org, call Ryan Evans at (913) 209-9400 or visit www.historicgreen.org.

About Sidwell Friends Middle School

Founded in 1883, Sidwell Friends School (SFS) is a PK-12 Quaker day school with campuses in Washington, D.C., and Bethesda, Md. Because of its Quaker roots, environmental stewardship is a key element of SFS's core curriculum. Furthermore, the school practices what it preaches as demonstrated by the LEED® Platinum renovation of the middle school in 2007. The LEED® Rating System was developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) as a way to evaluate a green building's environmental impact. LEED® Platinum is the highest award offered by the USGBC. Visit <http://leedcasestudies.usgbc.org/overview.cfm?ProjectID=775> for more information on SFS's LEED® Platinum middle school.

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2009 *Historic Green* "Spring Greening"

Historic Green is about the possibilities. About knowing a place; respecting its rich heritage for future generations; and seeing the promise of sustainability to create healthier, safer, more livable communities. "Historic Green" represents a blending of the past, the present and the future.

What was, meets what could be.

New Orleans' Holy Cross Neighborhood and the Lower Ninth Ward offer one path to "sustainable preservation". Nowhere else could it happen on such a scale as here – an entire community brought to its knees in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Struggling to recover and rebuild. To restore in a way that makes it even better than before.
