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CONTACT: John Hagerty
Advancement Director
Urban Community School
216.631.4352 x 176
jhagerty@urbancommunityschool.org

URBAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL RECEIVES HONOR FROM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

School recognized as a National Green Ribbon School for environmental practices and learning model

Cleveland, Ohio – Urban Community School (UCS) has been named the only National Green Ribbon School in the state of Ohio by the U.S. Department of Education (US ED). The US ED gives this distinction to select schools, districts, and educational institutions across the United States for success in reducing environmental impact and utility cost, improving health and wellness, and ensuring effective environmental education. UCS was recognized for its ongoing efforts to reduce its ecological footprint while promoting active, healthy lifestyles for children and their families, and school representatives will travel to Washington, D.C. in July to receive the award in person.

"We commend the faculty, staff, students, and parents of Urban Community School for their efforts in creating a green learning environment and providing leadership to other schools," said Maureen Dowling, Director for the Office of Non-Public Education (ONPE) in the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement.

"Urban Community School is honored to receive this distinction from the U.S. Department of Education," said Principal Lisa De Core. "Our school is dedicated to reducing our environmental impact while also incorporating green principles into our pedagogy and teaching our students the importance being green."

De Core cited a number of recent initiatives the school has undertaken that demonstrate its commitment to green, sustainable principals and learning, including:

- Setting up timers on computers and lights to power them down when not in use
- Installing refillable water bottle stations and water fountains with filters
- Encouraging students to carry reusable water bottles to avoid disposal of plastic bottles
- Composting food waste in The Early Childhood wing and recycling waste throughout the campus
- Using recycled ink cartridges and purchasing 100% recycled paper products.

"Urban Community School students and faculty take great pride in playing our part to safeguard our environment and the Earth's resources," said Sister Maureen Doyle, UCS's Executive Director. "It's rewarding for us all to be recognized by the Department of Education."

Doyle also noted the emphasis on environmental learning and health and wellness for students at UCS, such as a focus on field trips that immerse students in environmental learning including:

Cleveland Metroparks, Rocky River Nature Center, Huntington Nature Center, Cleveland Zoo, and Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

All sixth-level students also participate in a three-night environmental camp at Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center (CVEEC). Ellie Reagan, science teacher at UCS and coordinator of the CVEEC program, said "It's an incredible experience for the kids, who hone their skills in science while gaining a new appreciation for the environment and building confidence." Reagan said UCS alums often point to the CVEEC trip as an inspiration to study science and the environment in college.

Director Dowling also cited UCS's partnership with The Refugee Response and the Cleveland Botanical Garden in 2014 to create a learning garden where students learn about green, healthy eating. Students also use the learning garden to grow their own vegetables, helping students gain a sense of accomplishment as they develop habits of healthy eating. "We commend Urban Community School's partnering [. . .] to establish a learning garden," said Dowling. "Your garden is enhancing student learning while providing greens and other vegetables for your cafeteria. Giving local refugees an opportunity to participate in the work of the garden speaks to your school's values and inclusivity."

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ABOUT URBAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Urban Community School (UCS) is an independent, non-graded, pre-K through 8th level school that provides primarily low-income children from Cleveland's Near West Side with an individualized, innovative, and challenging education. Founded and sponsored by the Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland, UCS is an ecumenical school in the Catholic tradition. For more information, visit urbancommunityschool.org.