

Prather Recognized As Green Team Of The Year

by Chris Mitchell
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GRANITE CITY – Prather Elementary School has been named the 2021 Madison County Green Schools Program Green Team of the Year.

The Madison County Green Schools Program Green Team of the Year award recognizes students and/or staff that demonstrate a commitment to organizing, managing, and leading conservation-related activities as part of the Madison County Green Schools Program.

Nominated by Prather Reading Specialist/Title I Teacher Allison Downing, the Prather Green Team works to encourage sustainable practices among the students and staff. The Green Team consists of Paula Ward, Lisa Mink, Dana Allen, Sarah Fernandez, Marvin

Pellazari, Kenny Britt, Wayne Downing, and many of the kindergarten students at the school along with Downing, who serves as the school Coordinator for the Madison County Green Schools Program.

The Green Team worked to provide opportunities to students and staff centered on recycling, reusing, composting, air quality, keeping waste out of our oceans, and the importance of native pollinators.

Hailey Lutz from Madison County Building and Zoning presented Downing with a \$500 check and a plaque Tuesday at Prather.

"Every time I had an idea to create an activity to help our students learn about sustainability, the Green Team has been there to support the effort this year," said Downing. "Receiving this award will help to recognize all of the hard work and their dedication to Prather's sustainable efforts. I want them to know how much their willingness to help means to me. I could not have done all of this without them, we make a great team! We have also had a lot of support from our Principal, Genie Bratten."

Prather placed a strong emphasis on students becoming "Earth Protectors" during the 2020-21 school year. Students earning an "Earth Protector" title and badge participated in lesson plans and learning opportunities that taught them to be more aware about their environmental footprint and how they can take better care of their environment.

Bulletin boards displayed at the school allowed for interactive learning to teach the students about proper disposal of waste. It gave the students the opportunity to think about the items that they use, e.g. banana peels, water bottles, milk cartons and how their waste can affect the environment. Additionally, Mrs. Downing has worked to make a connection between virtual learning and environmental education.

She prepared and recorded a virtual field trip to the Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Gardens, which provided students the opportunity to identify different types of leaves, practice sorting techniques, and identify various plants and animals out in their natural environment. Prather is also looking forward to World Turtle Day and will be celebrating with an interactive Facebook live event with a sea turtle rescue organization - Sea Turtle Trackers on May 24.

For more information about Granite City School District #9, visit www.gcsd9.net.