

The Colorado Springs School
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NEWS

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GET THE SCOOP ON GREEN INITIATIVES AT THE COLORADO SPRINGS SCHOOL *Fostering environmental stewardship through energy reduction and education*

Colorado Springs, Colo. – At The Colorado Springs School back-to-school Ice Cream Social, families reconnected over summer stories, welcomed new students and learned who their classroom teachers would be. Additionally, CSS families got the scoop about steps taken in the school's energy reduction program. In order to educate the community, The Colorado Springs School gave each family a back-to-school gift --- a reusable grocery bag. The purpose of the bag is to emphasize that a combination of little steps can collectively make a big difference in the use of energy, land, and other resources. The bag also offers a simple message that embodies the school's educational mission, but also doubles as a green-era message, ***“These are important years...Use them well.”***

In the face of increasing energy costs, the school is taking major steps with the energy reduction program. **The new strategy formally transpired after the CSS Board of Trustees set a goal of decreasing energy costs by 10% in the 2008-2009 school year.** The strategy not only protects the environment, but also increases awareness and education of the environmental impact of schools' and students' daily actions and their ability to use resources at a sustainable rate.



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Utilizing the recommendations of a Colorado Springs Utilities energy audit, simple steps are being taken, such as wrapping pipes with additional insulation and installing photosensitive lights in appropriate areas. Facility usage policies were also examined in the renovation of Middle School learning spaces in the 101 year-old Trianon building this summer. The school made several “green” considerations during the renovations which included: using low-VOC adhesives and paints, energy-efficient lighting designs, installing low-e, double-pane windows and “smart strips” that power down peripherals when the computers go into sleep mode. With the use of Energy Star appliances and campus-wide assessments to make the heating/cooling system more efficient, the carbon footprint of the school will significantly decrease. Many of these decisions are not only environmentally friendly, but also create classroom environments that increase the learning potential of students.

In order to make sure that the benefits of the program will be ongoing, education about being a pro-active environmental steward through responsible personal decision making will be reinforced with an AP Environmental Science course. The popularity of this topic can be seen by the enrollment of 40% of juniors and seniors in the course. Blue recycling bins are becoming much more prominent as Jenn Gaskin, Science Teacher, has also led students in rolling out a revamped recycling program.

“Our students tend to be intellectually curious, enjoy a global perspective, and seek to become responsible leaders, so the new class is a natural fit for us,” said Kevin Reel, Head of The Colorado Springs School and LEED certified by the US Green Building Council.

The Colorado Springs School will explore the financial possibilities for the installation of wind and solar power. The long term goal of the program is to diversify energy consumption.

“Schools are major energy consumers during peak-time hours. Eventually, I would like to see CSS join with other schools --- public and private, with support from CS Utilities—to be powered entirely by solar energy. Such an investment would help schools operate at lower costs, set a standard for the community, and teach our students about thoughtful stewardship,” said Reel.

To learn more about CSS, please contact Director of Communications, Jessica James at (719)434-3506 or visit www.css.org.

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About Kevin Reel, Head of The Colorado Springs School

Reel was installed as the Head of School at The Colorado Springs School in 2007. At the national level, Reel is involved with the publication of science education materials, developing innovative curriculum, and helping to establish environmentally sustainable practices. He has authored a frequently used review book for the AP Environmental Science examination. He is one of the few educational leaders who is LEED certified by the US Green Building Council. Reel is a frequent speaker on sustainable practices for schools, including the Association for Colorado Independent Schools, Southeastern Association of Independent Schools, and the National Association of Independent Schools. His academic background includes graduate work in chemical ecology at Stanford University's Hopkins Marine Station.

About The Colorado Springs School (CSS)

CSS offers experiential educational opportunities for PreKindergarten – 12th graders. Through superior academics and mentoring, The Colorado Springs School prepares students to think independently and to meet the needs of a dynamic world with leadership, ingenuity, problem-solving skills, and personal integrity.

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