For Immediate Release

It’s Easy Being Green at Altamont Creek Elementary

March 20, 2019 - Livermore, CA - A single school is its own ecosystem – containing its own community, culture, and climate. Students and staff collectively decide what their school represents and what they are capable of when they work together to pursue a goal. At Altamont Creek Elementary, the entire school has been trending greener through the concerted efforts of a population committed to cultivating the best possible environment in which to learn, play, and grow. Recently, in a validation of that commitment, Altamont Creek Elementary was named a 2019 California Green Ribbon School Silver Award Honoree.

This achievement represents a coordinated effort across three “pillars” – based on the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools criteria – to reduce environmental impact and costs; to improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; and to provide effective environmental and sustainability education. With the commitment of its entire school community, and collaboration with District and community partners, Altamont Creek is the first school in the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) to earn this distinction.

“We are honored to be receiving this prestigious award,” said Principal Tara Aderman. “Altamont Creek is a leader in reducing environmental impact, improving health and wellness, and providing effective environmental and sustainability education. We are focused on improving our recycling efforts to reduce waste, reducing energy consumption, and working on health and wellness initiatives for our students, families, and staff - ensuring that our Wildcats understand and can address the major environmental and sustainability challenges we all face.”

By incorporating a green mindset into nearly every day-to-day activity, from the classroom to the cafeteria, Altamont has developed a culture of collaboration and innovation revolving around reducing its environmental impact that feeds into its curriculum and health choices. As a Project Lead the Way school, Altamont has piloted some cutting-edge courses in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) that encourage thoughtful and creative engagement in the sciences. This – especially with the guidance of science teacher Fenna Gatty, who was instrumental in the Green Ribbon application process – gives students knowledge to apply toward meaningful real-world actions.

“Our students are interested in taking ownership of their school,” said Gatty, who leads Altamont’s Green Council leadership group. “I hope to help them feel sure they made an impact when they leave here.”

Gatty’s science lessons extend to the school’s gardens, which operate as outdoor classrooms for students to investigate the flora and fauna of their environment, and to discover how wildlife interacts with their everyday lives. In the gardens, students are encouraged to discover new vegetables – which are grown seasonally – as they care for and learn about the source of their food. Here, the relationship between the soil, composted materials, their
water, and nutrition intersects into a network of comprehension and action that extends to students’ tables in the cafeteria.

Altamont has partnered with StopWaste and Livermore Sanitation to perform waste audits and, through these partnerships, has made huge strides in consciously reducing solid waste and developing an intentional attitude toward reusing, recycling, and sharing. The school is currently equipped with dispensers for utensils and napkins to eliminate waste from plastic packaging. In addition, the cafeteria now has a food share table where unopened and uneaten food from students’ lunches are shared with others – leading to more thoughtful consumption and discarding of food.

Along with fourteen other schools in LVJUSD, Altamont has also installed solar panels in an effort to reduce its carbon footprint. These panels provide clean energy to the campus and save money for the District to distribute toward further development of academic programs. The school is also committed, along with the other LVJUSD schools, to curbing the exhaust from idling cars during pickup and dropoff, asking its community to honor an air quality pledge to turn off engines when parked or waiting near the school.

Countless more activities, programs, and commitments contributed to Altamont Creek’s well-deserved CA Green Ribbon honor. Students in classes and clubs are continuously contributing new strategies to be better stewards to their environment and community. As they grow in the school, they become more connected to it, becoming collaborators with the staff and District to exchange ideas for the benefit of all.

Photos courtesy of LVJUSD

Photo 1: Altamont Creek’s Green Council leadership group
Photo 2: Food share tables in Altamont Creek cafeteria
Photo 3: Students exploring the garden
Photo 4: Examining plants in the Altamont Creek garden

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**ABOUT LIVERMORE VALLEY JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

LVJUSD is an award-winning district that serves more than 13,900 students in transitional kindergarten through 12th grade at nine elementary campuses, two K-8 schools, three middle schools, two comprehensive high schools, and two alternative schools. The LVJUSD features International Baccalaureate Programmes and a STEM pathway, TK-12. The mission of the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District is to ensure each student will graduate with the skills needed to contribute and thrive in a changing world. For more information about the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, please visit [www.livermoreschools.org](http://www.livermoreschools.org)

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