



Conserving our natural resources through education, demonstration, and collaboration.

A Goodbye Letter from Sylecia Johnston

Dear friends,

I'm sad to tell you that my time working with the Green Schools Program has come to an end. My husband recently received PCS orders to move to Monterey, California for the next two years, and we will be leaving early October. I can tell you that my time working for Sustainable Sandhills (SS) and with Cumberland County Schools (CCS) has been an amazing experience and a lot of fun. Let me tell you a little about it:

For the past year I have been a part of a great team at the CCS Operations Center that has expanded and grown the Go Green Initiative across the county's schools. To spread the word, I designed a logo and brand for the program and developed a clearinghouse of resources which I began sending to our schools' green team leaders in a monthly newsletter. We all worked together to make the important changes needed to conserve energy, save taxpayer dollars, promote environmental responsibility, and support sustainable education for future green jobs.



This year we worked with the waste management company and promoted recycling in the schools which will result in over \$100,000 savings in trash pickup billing next year and divert over 14,000 cubic yards of waste from the landfills. By encouraging energy conservation in our schools, performing energy audits and analyzing utility bills we have avoided almost \$500,000.00 in energy related costs and have received rebate monies for energy efficiency upgrades.



Under my direction, 20 schools and 2 auxiliary buildings have become green certified using the Sustainable Sandhills checklist. I was able to teach classes to students, give presentations to all of the custodians and maintenance staff, and speak before the Board of Education. When I saw a need, I am so thankful that I was given the freedom to be creative and find a

solution. Those solutions included things like writing grant proposals, which ended up funding the new educational solar energy system at Douglas Byrd Middle School and an “Exceptional Children’s Learning and Sensory Garden” at Terry Sanford High.

Many other fun projects have taken place... (That’s me in the bag monster costume)... and it’s definitely hard to let go of a job that you actually enjoy and fits your skill set and personality. But when the Army says move... Luckily, I will be able to continue pursuing Sustainable Development and Environmental Education since California is a national leader in these fields. - Pray I find a job - I will also be working on my degree in Sustainable Destination Management through George Washington University’s Accelerated Master of Tourism Administration online program.



Environmental Education is an incredibly important focus for our nation right now and for the future of our world. It has been an honor to help Sustainable Sandhills expand and excel in this area and I look forward to hearing great things from the Sandhills - even across the nation.

Sincerely,
Sylecia Johnston