

SANTA MONICA Mirror

Westside Neighborhood School has partnered with the Grades of Green organization to expand on going more green. Grades of Green is a nonprofit organization, â€œwith a vision of making environmental protection â€˜second natureâ€™ in young minds.â€

Environmental stewardship is a core value at WNS and is reinforced at every morning assembly with its "Pledge to the Earth."

WNS said it is always looking for authentic and meaningful ways to put the school's words into action. Through its partnership with Grades of Green, the school is rolling out a new program this year that they hope will grow over the years to come.

WNS is partnering with Grades of Green to both educate the school community on the importance of reducing trash and to see how much lunchtime trash can be reduced at the school.

To help implement the program, volunteer middle and elementary division WNS students have been separated into two student-led green teams.

With the support of WNS elementary science teacher Shellinda Barre and middle school math and science teacher Kaitlin Lester, these students will help lead WNS in this important initiative.

â€œPartnering with Grades of Green enables us to provide opportunities for our students to practice their leadership skills as they help to implement a program that will help to keep trash out of our landfills and preserve our natural resources,â€ Barre said. "Already, our students have displayed their dedication to the cause by showing up to our green team meeting and helping to create informative posters and assembly presentations during their free time.â€

One element of the Grades of Green program that the student green teams are in the process of introducing to the WNS community is â€œTrash Free Tuesdays.â€

The ultimate goal of the Trash Free Tuesday program is to reduce the amount of trash sent to the landfill.

Students are encouraged to bring lunches that contain reusable containers and utensils instead of disposable ones.

A new waste sorting system will be introduced at the school's Trash Free Tuesday kick off that includes a bin for landfill trash, recyclables, compostable items, and liquids.

Several other Los Angeles County schools will also be participating to reduce lunchtime waste.

Collectively, schools will divert thousands of bags of trash destined for landfills this year alone.

Even more importantly, the Grades of Green program will teach children better habits that will protect the environment in the years to come.

Anyone interested in learning more about WNS or Grades of Green head to www.wnsk8.com or visit www.gradesofgreen.org.