



**ECOSTUDENTS**

My name is Tammie Stockton and I am proud and honored to be the Principal and Director of High Desert Montessori Charter School in Reno, a WCSD sponsored charter school. Our school has grown from 40 to over 400 students over the past 14 years. We are located in northeast Reno off Oddie and Silverada Boulevard and continue to provide a Montessori education to a diverse student population ranging from infants through 9th grade.

A small but important part of our school's mission statement says, "We urge all of our students to be participating members of a socially-conscious and green community by inspiring them to be critical thinkers capable of reflection, communication and action." With that being said, we strive to work towards a school environment which addresses the 3 pillars of Green Ribbon Schools. Here is just a few examples of the ecoliterate and empowering school environment we strive towards.

1. Reduce environmental impacts and costs; High Desert Montessori has installed 210 Kilowatts of solar over the past 5 years. We have reduced our utility bills by  $\frac{1}{3}$  which allows us to use those funds for student support and resources. The school continues to recycle and reuse whenever possible and works in collaboration with NV Energy in making more energy efficient decisions for our school campus with the ultimate goal of LEED certifying the entire campus.
2. Improve the health and wellness of students and staff; In addition to a robust STEM and STEAM focused curriculum, High Desert Montessori has an onsite organic school lunch program, school gardens and just this last year purchased a nearly 2 acre empty lot to increase our classroom space and outdoor learning environments. Our school stresses the sciences in all we do from the Montessori Great Lessons in the classroom, our continuous connection with outdoor education in our area to having our 4th-9th graders participate in the recent "Kids For Clean Energy" day on April 14th at the legislature where High Desert Montessori students spoke to their representatives and 3 students made public comment at the hearing on community solar projects.

3. Provide environmental education; High Desert Montessori started what we call “EcoStudents” with our 7th-9th graders two years ago. Our EcoStudents, under the direction of their science teacher, Ms. Ellie Busse developed a sustainability focused curriculum based on LEED certification guidelines. This one of a kind curriculum was adopted and approved by Washoe County School District and our EcoStudents receive a credit of environmental science for their ongoing participation in making our entire school campus a greener school environment for all. Currently our EcoStudents are working with TMCC’s Architect Program in designing our next phase of school expansion on our 2 acre empty lot which will include classrooms, community center and outdoor learning spaces. We call this the “Students Designing For Students Program”. In addition, we have 3 Schoolyard Habitats in partnership with the Nevada Fish and Game Department to use as outdoor classrooms.

Our partnership with NV Energy, Black Rock Solar and most importantly Sustainable Nevada has propelled High Desert Montessori towards meeting our goals of continuing to be a “socially conscious and green school capable of reflection, communication and action”. Thank you to Department of Education for their leadership in promoting green schools, NV Energy and their Energy Smart schools program for helping make High Desert Montessori more energy efficient and my students for their vision of sustainable school.

On behalf of the EcoStudents, staff, parents and Board of Directors of High Desert Montessori Charter School, Sustainable Nevada, Washoe County School District, NV Energy and the Nevada Department of Education, we are proud and honored to accept this designation of being the first Green Ribbon School in Nevada.



