

The Athenian School Danville, California

Teaching environmental stewardship is a key component at The Athenian School. Students engage in community service projects each year such as programs to encourage recycling and gardening.

The Athenian School is committed to conserving natural resources and teaching students the true cost of their impacts. Students and faculty participate in campus greening events, making the school a model for all.

The Athenian School has a campus compost for food scraps. The compost diverts about six tons of food waste a year, saving the school about \$6,000 in waste hauling costs. Currently, 60 percent of the hauled waste is material to be recycled, emphasizing The Athenian School's commitment to diverting waste from the landfill and their dedication to recycling.

Perched above the baseball field on a hillside, The Athenian School has a 0.2 Megawatt (MW) solar array that provides the school with 65 percent of its daily energy use. The panels save the school \$150,000 a year in energy costs. Additional panels are placed on top of the school's gym and both auditoriums: the Dase Center and the Center for Performing Arts. When the panels are not in use they feed into the electric grid, providing power to the city.

The Athenian School is also dedicated to conserving water. The school has saved over 2 million gallons of water due to a comprehensive water conservation policy which includes an all-weather sports field made with recycled infill, water-saving plumbing fixtures, micro water heaters and landscaping policies.

The Athenian School was named School of the Year by Sustainable Contra Costa in 2010, Green Ribbon Partner by the U.S. Department of Education in 2012, EPA Green Power Partner, the Acterra 2013 Business Environmental Award for Sustainability and many more.



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1,200 solar panels are arranged in the letter "A" on the hillside above a baseball field at The Athenian School.

School Snapshot:

The Athenian School is a private K-12 school with 475 students that is committed to reducing its footprint and teaching students about the environment.

Green Actions:

- A comprehensive water conservation policy has saved over two million gallons of water
- A campus compost diverts six tons of food waste from the landfill each year
- A 1,200 panel solar array providing 65 percent of Athenian's energy use

Cost Savings:

- A school compost saves over \$6,000 a year in reduced waste needing to be hauled away and disposed
- Solar panels provide 65 percent of the school's energy and save them \$150,000 a year on electricity costs

Awards and Recognition:

- Acterra Environmental Award for Sustainability
- Athenian was named a Green Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education in April, 2012
- The Athenian School won the Best in Show: Contra Costa Eco-Award from Diablo Magazine in 2012 for leading the way in the green

How are students involved with Athenian's green actions?

The Athenian School encourages students to be concerned about the environment and actively seek solutions that can help mitigate the school's carbon footprint. After a student came to the administration concerned about how much gas was being used to run campus lawn mowers, The Athenian School purchased a push-mower. Students organized a rotating volunteer list to use the push-mower and help maintain campus grounds to help justify the extra time needed to trim the lawns. Students are involved in the food waste compost program and sort their waste at lunch time.

How does The Athenian School teach students about the environment?

The Athenian School offers biology and environmental science classes to students to provide a basic understanding of the environment. High school juniors also must take a course called The Athenian Wilderness Experience, a 26-day backpacking course where the students learn how to interact with the natural environment in a low-impact way. Students must complete community service projects to graduate. Environmentally focused projects are available for students to complete.

What does The Athenian School have planned for the future?

Students and faculty are dedicated to protecting the environment and are always looking for more ways to lower their impact. The school is looking to purchase more solar panels to add to their extensive 1,200 panel array. The students recently planted an apple and pear orchard hoping to produce fruit for a local food bank. Though the trees will take a few years to mature, the students and faculty are excited to produce food on campus. In honor of a retiring faculty member, students and teachers took sustainability pledges like increased bike riding, reusing, recycling, carpooling, decreased shower times, air conditioner use and much more.

The Athenian School serves as a model in the community. It is leading the way in environmental sustainability and teaching the next generation the importance of conservation.

"Athenian students demonstrate an active concern for the natural environment, an awareness of proven problems and an active role in tackling environmental issues."

Pillar of The Athenian School
mission



Students collect recycling at The Athenian School. 60 percent of solid waste collected at the school is recyclable.

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