Global Environmental Literacy:
A Year In Review
2017-2018

John P. Parker School
Dr. Kimberly R. Mack, Principal
5051 Anderson Place, Cincinnati, OH 45227
WEBSITE: https://parker.cps-k12.org
(513) 363-2900
What is GEL at John P. Parker School?

John P. Parker School serves 450 students in Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 6, located in Madisonville, an eastern suburb of Cincinnati. Its state-of-the-art facilities are designed to enhance and support the best practices in education. The man for whom the school was named, John P. Parker, was an engineer, entrepreneur, inventor, patent-holder, and conductor on the Underground Railroad. He loved to read books and had an extensive library in his home. Consequently, in the spirit of his legacy, John P. Parker School prepares students for college and career readiness, knowing that they have the responsibility to make a difference in the world and the ability to do so.

Through its Global Environmental Literacy Program, John P. Parker students build the skills and know how to claim their place in a global society. Students study real-world problems that impact local, regional, national and global communities using innovative technology, problem-based learning and field excursions. By mastering the science of analysis and investigation, our students learn that change is possible and they have the power to make it happen.

John P. Parker’s Global Environmental Literacy Program will be open to students in grades PK-6. Students will benefit from learning that integrates the five components of global environmental literacy—Global Citizenship, Environmental Literacy, Health and Wellness, Service Learning, and Digital Technology.
How Recycling Benefitted Our School Community

Grade 3 students led the Madisonville Community to recycle 527 lbs. of plastic bottle caps that benefitted two (2) schools.

John P. Parker’s Grade 3 students decided to study recycling as part of their GEL focus this year. Teachers integrated science, social studies, mathematics, and writing into the project which also included field excursions to Greenacres in Indian Hills and Rumpke’s Landfill.

After learning that plastics are one of the least degradable materials in the world, they decided they wanted to decrease the amount of plastics in the landfill by recycling plastic caps into a bench.

Students traveled to Evansville, Indiana, the boyhood home of President Abraham Lincoln. There we recycled our caps into benches and received plastic animals as souvenirs.

While in Evansville, students also toured a decommissioned warship and Lincoln’s Boyhood Home. They also had a swim party at the hotel where they stayed.

Upon returning, we learned that a school in Oberlin needed additional caps to reach their goal. Our students donated their excess to them to assist those students with reaching their goal. Our students kept 527 lbs. of plastic out of our local landfill.

Congratulations, Grade 3!!! Thank you, Madisonville Supporters.

Even 3 and 4 year olds

Pre-Kindergarten students participated in GEL to enhance their daily learning by exploring John P. Parker’s 13-acre campus.

Environmental Literacy: Our pre-Kindergarten students participated in table-top composting. They tracked their composting data to make predictions and observations.

Global Citizenship & Service Learning: These learners toured Matthew 25 Ministries to see their global village. They learned about how the organization responds to disaster relief and provides humanitarian aid to people who are affected.

While visiting, our pre-Kindergarteners helped to sort items for the relief organization as their service project. Even our smallest students live up to our school’s mission:

John P. Parker School prepare our students for college and career readiness, knowing that they have the responsibility to make a difference in the world and the ability to do so.
Students in Grades 4-6 participated in the Roadmap to Freedom project. They traced the Underground Railroad, while learning about the environmental, historical, and global implications during that time period.


What’s Your Quilt Code?

Grade 4 Students at John P. Parker School learned about the quilt codes that were rumored to be used by runaway slaves to find safe houses on the Underground Railroad.

As our students explored the Roadmap to Freedom, students had the opportunity to visit the Underground Railroad Museum in Maysville, KY, and the John P. Parker House in Ripley, Ohio. As fourth graders learned about the Quilt Codes, they brainstormed about what their classroom quilt code might look like.

Some people say that the quilting designs were actually a code that would lead slaves to safe houses along the route. Our students brainstormed what their quilt code might look like and how to memorialize the places along their community routes. Each student created a tile that were joined together to create a class quilt, which became their own class quilt code.
**Student Reflections**  
By Sariyah Jones

**The Living Museum—A Simulation:**  
On the first day, we traveled to Detroit. We visited the living museum and First Congregational Church. Upstairs, it was a church, but once you go downstairs... it feels like you are in a completely different university. They made it look so real. The floor felt like real dirt. They had grass and even a three trunk. It really felt like we were slaves, escaping to freedom.

They had a North Star and really good actors. There was the boy that popped out of the corner and wanted to join us on our journey. There was also a grandpa and other family members. Our conductor was the greatest actor of all.

We went over the river, the room represented the river looked like it was filled with real water. When we made it to freedom, everyone was so happy.

At the Living Museum, I learned that slaves used trees to find their way to freedom. The slave would look for mold which was always located on the north side of the tree.

---

**Student Reflections**  
By Christina Harris

**Uncle Tom’s Cabin:**  
We went to the Freedom Museum and then we went to Uncle Tom’s Cabin. We had a scavenger hunt to learn that Harriet Tubman nickname was Moses. She was enslaved but freed 70 slaves.

She used to use a tranquilizer to make babies be quiet. She also used a gun to make sure that slaves did not turn back. She believed if they turned back, they would be caught and even killed.

---

**Student Reflections**  
By Kevin Mosby

**Niagara Falls:**  
Today, we got on the mist boat ride. It was so fun. Then, we took a tour through Niagara Falls. We went to lunch at Friday’s near the hotel.

Probably the best part of the day was when we went to the Butterfly Conservatory and went to a fancy restaurant called Kasbah. They served food from the farm. We enjoyed our day.

---

**Student Reflections**  
By Dariyah Turner

**Uncle Tom’s Cabin:**  
We went to Uncle Tom’s Cabin. We had to hunt for clues about freedom. It took my group 10 minutes to find a clue. That’s what made it fun. We found our freedom club and then, we made it to freedom.

**Hornblower:**  
We went on the boat to Niagara Falls. We got so wet, but I had my poncho on wrong and got even more wet. After that, we went to the mall. I got a pair of glasses and a

---

**Student Reflections**  
By Madison Brown

**What I Learned!**  
When the master had you for a long period of time, they could sell you to another master. If you were with your family with the other master, there was a big chance you won’t see your family again.

We first got to the back of the museum, the tour guide said when they are seeing you they will make sure you have a shower and smell good.

When we went to the Second Baptist Church, we learned that slaves couldn’t be educated, compensated, or competitive.

When we went to Uncle Tom’s Cabin, I learned that Harriet Tubman carried two things when she was freeing slaves. She carried a gun and a tranquilizer. Thank you for this amazing trip. I learned a lot.

I will be  
Educated,  
Compensated,  
And Competitive.
Composting with Kindergarten

Kindergarten students learned about the importance of composting as a means of being a steward of our environment. They collected 100 lbs. of “green waste” for their composting activities. From the project, students learned valuable lessons.

Kindergarten students participated in the Vermicomposting program sponsored by the Captain Planet Foundation. Provided by a grant written by Ms. Farrell, we purchased two vermicomposting bins that were used to teach students about composting.

Students were empowered to make a difference in the world by taking the refuse from the program and reusing it instead of throwing it away. They visibly see the impact on others and our world. They now understand why must lower the amount of trash going into the landfill at Rumpke.

Our students are problem-solving real issues that affect them. Parents have requested information about how to compost at home.

They now know how to improve soil quality of a garden through composting. They extended their classroom learning into their home.

Primary level students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 used hydroponics to learn about how plants grow. With these lesson, students were able to share their work products and learning with others.

Intermediate level students in Grades 3 to 6 used field excursions on the Ohio River to develop consciousness of our environment, while making observations and studying water samples.
First graders had lots of experiences with GEL. Many of their learning units incorporated all the components of GEL, using thematic units.

One unit focused on natural disasters and how people around the world are impacted by them. This unit was called “Wild Weather.” Activities included reading fiction and non-fiction texts to build vocabulary, mapping wild weather across our nation and the role of first responders, graphing local weather patterns, and using the Internet to develop graphs, and visiting Matthew 25 Ministries to learn what they do and how students can help people suffering disasters. Students also participated in a service learning project at the site.

Another unit focused on how human beings impact the basic needs of penguins. The unit was called “Protecting Penguins.” Activities included writing informational pieces about the basic needs of penguins, comparing the height and weights of various species of penguins, and reciting poetry about penguins.

Pictured above are penguins from the Wave Foundation that visited us.

Protecting Penguins with Pride in First Grade

Health and Wellness with Mission2Move

Students in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten learned about body control, mindfulness, and meditation with Mission2Move weekly. The 45-minute sessions taught students several exercises each week. The students’ favorites were “The Mummy,” “The Washing Machine,” and “The Michael Jackson.” Teachers also learned the exercises so that they could reinforce the skills in the classroom setting.

Above: Students are practicing movement drills during their Mission2Move time.

Learning to Play Chess

Grade 2 students participated in Chess class weekly to improve their ability to problem-solve. Each week, representatives from the ProScan partnership would meet with students and teach them the fundamentals of the game. We expect to continue this training each year at Grade 2 as we build a strong team to compete in the Queen City Classic.
Cuyahoga Valley Environmental Education Center

John P. Parker Students in Grades 5 and 6 traveled to Parma, Ohio, to visit the Environmental Education Center at the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The park lies along the Cuyahoga River between the Ohio cities of Cleveland and Akron.

Students experienced the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail that was recently restored. For 4 days and 3 nights, students learned to become the steward of their environment. They learned to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Students experienced farm-to-table meals. They were asked to reduce their waste from meals. By the end, they had reduced their waste to virtually nothing. They participated in water sampling and making observations of the natural world with Park Rangers and staff members.

While visiting the site, students participated in hikes and learned about the history of the Erie Canal, making connections to its role in the Underground Railroad. Parents noticed that the child was more independent upon returning from the experience. Our school has received a 3-year grant from the National Park Foundation to support this experience for students at John P. Parker School.

John P. Parker School
Where we have courage to achieve great things and make a difference in the world!