

1. Developing Virtue Secondary School

2. Ukiah, California, 1977 to present

3. Profile:

The Developing Virtue Secondary Girls' School is located in the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, a Buddhist monastery in Ukiah, California. It is a private Buddhist Girls' School established in the 1970s to produce students who are practitioners in 8 virtues: respect, trustworthiness, fairness, filial piety, global citizenship, integrity, humility, and honesty. The culture in the school inherently adopts environmentalism, hence, the school itself is not labeled a "green school". Although it is not labeled so, it surpasses many other green schools that exist with the year-round vegetable garden, all-vegetarian meals, recycling, composting, and energy savings. The students themselves are mindful of their impact on their environment by meditated, praying, and community service.

Key words: Buddhist, virtues, culture, mindfulness

4. Green School

It has many attribute that could be labeled as a green school. All the meals are vegetarian, and the vegetables are supplemented by the organic garden on campus. There is a recycling and compost program that all the students manage and operate. The outdoor space is utilized heavily for classes for all topics, especially for religious and Buddhist studies.

The school also use energy saving methods, along with decreasing light and heat consumption. There are solar panels on the dining hall, so the school taps into renewable power.

What is successful about the school in making environmentalism a culture via the meditation, repentance, and cultivation of mindfulness and virtues. These are the values that are instilled the students, and these are the components missing elsewhere. The schools develops students who are practicing environmentalism in their daily lives.

5. Mission and Goals

Our Buddhist schools, in partnership with parents, work to instill and develop in our students the core virtues of kindness, filial piety, respect, trustworthiness, fairness, citizenship, integrity, and humility. We provide an environment for our students to achieve their full academic potential and become outstanding citizens who will contribute to making our world a better place.

6. Context: Origins, Organization, and Operation

The monastery was started in 1974 by a Chinese Buddhist monk named Venerable Master Hua. We wanted to spread Buddhism in the United States, so he established the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association. After founding a temple in San Francisco, he

purchased the Mendocino State Hospital which has approximately 2000 rooms and 3 gyms in 70 buildings. The land totals 488 acres and includes orchards, forests, and meadows.

Currently, the place is overseen by another abbot named Heng Lyu. He is the representative of the monastery. It is run by monks and nuns, as well as lay people who volunteer their time. These three groups manage the school, as well as teach students. If needed, external teachers and parents are hired for courses.

The operation is supported by the tuition and donation. Tuition is \$3000, and boarding is \$8000. Visitors and parents also donate to the temple as well. Another support system is the parents. A lot of the work is through volunteering, which reduces costs. The students also take a lot of responsibility for operating the school, jobs like custodial work, and dining hall services.

Outside of the school, the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association has a broad network that reaches across the USA, Asia, and Europe. There is also a Dharma Realm Buddhist University that can provide services.

7. Programs

Top to Bottom, Left to Right



Organic Gardening



Harvest



Lunch Prep
Food Literacy



Student Servers
No Food Waste



Student Cleaners
Water Conservation Methods



Student Cleaners
Sort Waste and Recyclables



**Green Infrastructure
Energy Saving**



Meditation



Outdoor Educational Use



**Outdoor Maintenance
Environmental Literacy**



Community Service



**Cherishing Youth Day &
Recycled Art**

- a. Organic Garden: supplements food in the dining hall. Students work 1-2 hours during community service to help weed and plant.
- b. Harvest: the students also harvest the vegetables in the garden, as well as pick grapes and walnuts.
- c. Lunch Prep: during community service, some students clean, chop, and bake food.
- d. Student Servers: students help serve food. That way they practice reducing food waste. Students are also told to finish every portion of their food, and are checked for leftovers when they clean their dishes.
- e. Student Cleaners: also clean their dishes. This increases their awareness of their impacts after consuming. Students practice water conservation methods, such as the three step washing method. During the same time, students sort through compost, waste, and recyclables.
- f. Green Infrastructure: The school is covered in greenery that manages storm water.
- g. Meditation: every morning students meditate for an hour. That enhances their ability to be mindful, focused, and centered.
- h. Outdoor Maintenance: students during community service also maintain the outdoors, which improves their environmental literacy.
- i. Community Service: as mentioned, students participate in 2+ hours of community service every week to improve the environment around them.
- j. Cherishing Youth Day and Recycle Art: Every year, students host an event called Cherishing Youth and invite 5-8 surrounding schools to celebrate the youth. One of the booths is recycled art.

8. Assessment

- a. Strengths: The school leaves an incredible impact on students because of the strong sense of community, place, and responsibility. Students are leaders, and thrive under this environment. Another strength is the amount of land space available, which is not accessible for schools in Philly.
- b. Weaknesses: The school is unorganized since many of the teachers are volunteers, so a lot of people come in and out. There are also times when the students are torn from studies because of their responsibilities. Another weakness is that there is a dominant culture (Chinese Buddhist) which can be suffocating for students who do not feel comfortable in that space.
- c. Opportunities: The school could attract a lot more locals rather than internationals. They could proceed to label themselves as a green school, and develop a model that could be replicated in other temples or even charter schools.
- d. Threats: Since the school runs on very low tuition charges, the school is constantly running short on money. There is also a fine line on the legality of some things. Child labor is **not** one of them, because the students consent to their role in the community. The children are not being exploited. However, teachers do take measure that breach privacy boundaries when they attempt to improve a student's academic life by learning about their social life.

9. Lessons for Philadelphia

If Philadelphia wants to be successful in truly making a holistic impact on a student, then they need to learn from unorthodox schools. The Developing Virtue Secondary School is one of them. Key lessons they can take is giving students trust and responsibilities. Students are incredibly underestimated, and when shown they are needed in a community, then they will feel empowered to be a leader.

The faculty and staff need to be fully committed to the holistic development of the students, academically, socially, and spiritually.

The elective courses are Buddhism, gardening, meditation, and community service. They are ingrained into the lives of every student, so that each student is literate in every component.

The school constantly holds celebrations that are operated and managed by students. In this way, they celebrate their achievements as well as feel tied to the community even further.