

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Aliso Viejo school nominated for U.S. Green Ribbon

By [SCOTT MARTINDALE](#)

2013-02-15 14:55:38



Journey School in Aliso Viejo is one of four California schools nominated Friday by state officials for a U.S. Green Ribbon School Award for its campus environmental efforts.

The K-8 public charter school, part of the Capistrano Unified School District, was nominated for its "eco-literacy" program that integrates ecological principles into the standard curriculum and engages students in a variety of environmental projects and fieldtrips.

"From the very beginning of the school, we wanted the students to have rich experiences engaging with nature," said Shaheer Faltas, Journey's executive director. "It's not compartmentalized at Journey –

the environment is fully integrated into our curriculum."

The other schools nominated were Redding School of the Arts, Long Beach's Charles Evan Hughes Middle School and El Cerrito's Prospect Sierra School. One school district also was nominated for the federal award – Oak Park Unified in Ventura County.

"These outstanding schools are proof that every school day can provide teachable moments about protecting and sustaining our environment," state schools Superintendent Tom Torlakson said in a statement.

At Journey, students help maintain five campus gardens, harvest rainwater and compost on-site, the California Department of Education reported. They also take zero-emission fieldtrips in which they walk or bike to their destination. Eighth-graders design and implement environmental projects that benefit the campus and local community.

Journey, which opened in 2000, follows the Waldorf humanistic educational philosophy. The school removed its front lawn so students could grow lush gardens full of native plants, Faltas said.

"The award nomination isn't just about gardening – it's about promoting the overall well-being of children and families, having a balanced education experience that nourishes them in every way, an age-appropriate approach to learning 21st century skills," Faltas said.

Green Ribbon Schools will be announced by the U.S. Department of Education on April 22, which is Earth Day.

Last year, in the first year of the award program, California nominated four schools – Lawndale's Environmental Charter High School, Long Beach's Longfellow Elementary, Manhattan Beach's Grand View Elementary and Danville's Athenian School. All of them won a Green Ribbon award.

Contact the writer: 714-796-7802 or smartindale@ocregister.com or Twitter: @MartindaleScott

© Copyright 2013 Freedom Communications. All Rights Reserved.
[Privacy Policy](#) | [User Agreement](#) | [Site Map](#)