

# Sacred Heart Academy is a certified Green School

“It started with a casual reference one day,” said Jennie Queen-Baker, Sacred Heart Academy STEM Lab Coordinator, who is now the Green School Coordinator as well. “We said, ‘Someday we want to be a Green School’. Working on the requirements during the COVID pandemic might not have been the best time, but we achieved it,” she said, adding that SHA is the only school in Isabella and Gratiot Counties currently certified.

Sacred Heart Academy was notified in the Spring that the school had received Michigan Green School certification. To be certified, the school participated in or initiated activities within four categories: Materials/Recycling, Energy, Environmental Protection, and Education.

Students participated in a service-learning project with a teacher from Mid Michigan College which included a trash audit at Central Michigan University. They also set up a new recycling program at the school, complete with a student-produced video broadcast on Earth Day about how to recycle. An energy audit, an educational bulletin board at the school, and the addition of an Environmental Science Class to the electives curriculum were also part of the school’s Green School application.

“One of the biggest efforts was the planning and development of a pollinator garden and bat box on the school campus,” said Mrs. Queen-Baker. “We applied for funding from a local United Way program and were fortunate enough to receive it, allowing us to prepare the ground/ garden area, purchase the native plants, and install the bat box.” Sacred Heart is now registered as an official Monarch Waystation.

To retain the Green School certification, Sacred Heart Academy must complete 10 activities across the four major categories each year. Mrs. Queen-Baker says in addition to maintaining the butterfly garden and continuing the recycling program, introducing hands-on Ecology lab experiences, inviting guest speakers from various fields, and involving elementary classes to help “adopt an endangered species” are planned.

