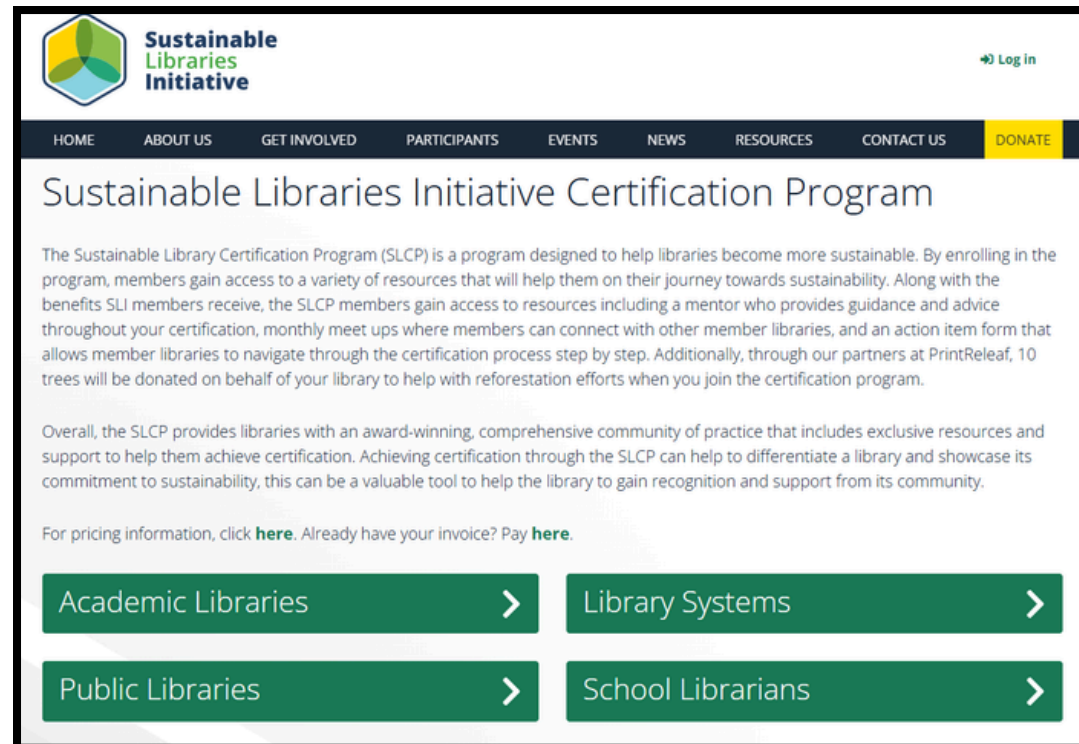


Journey to Becoming Sustainable Libraries Initiative Certified

Melissa A. King, MLS | Flower Hill Elementary School

1

Onboarding Zoom Call with an SLI Staff Member



2

Next Logical Certification After Achieving Maryland Green Schools Recognition in 2023



"The Maryland Green Schools program empowers educators to incorporate meaningful environmental literacy into their curriculum, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for the places we live, learn, and play. The program teaches future generations to evaluate the impact of human choices, develop real-world solutions, and take meaningful action to reduce environmental harm."

www.maeoe.org

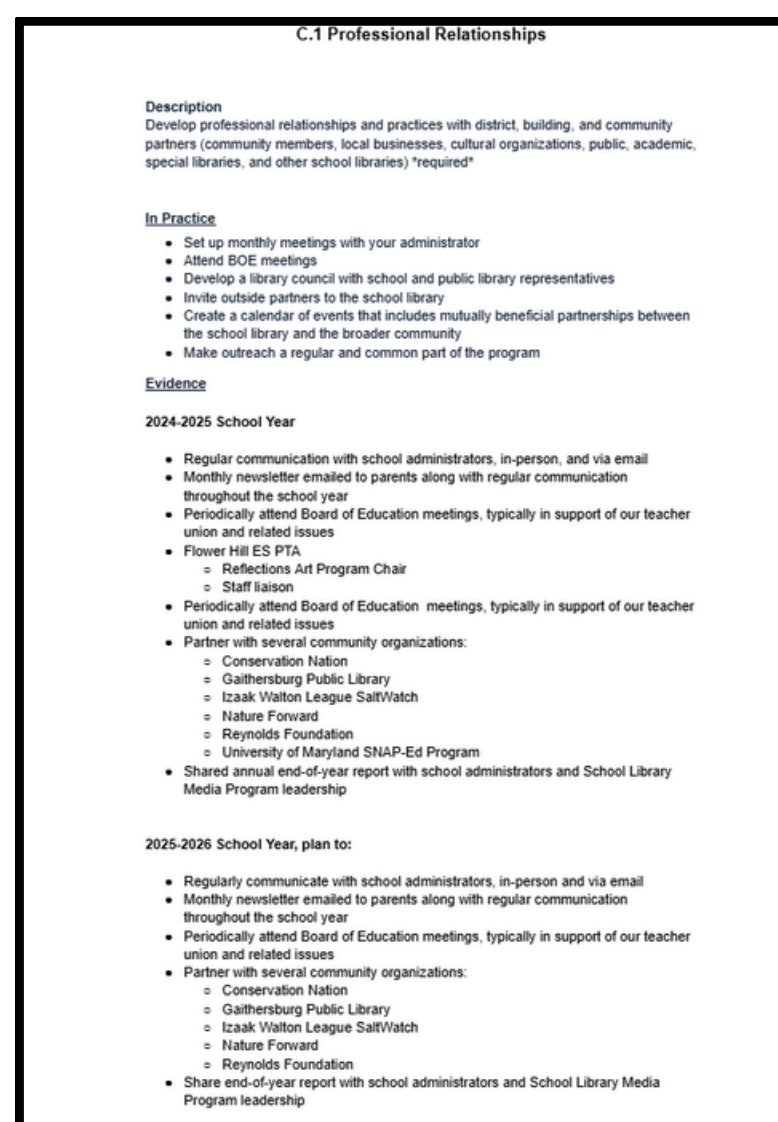
3

Met with Mentor & Reviewed the Requirements



Created Google Documents for Each Area of the Application and Added Documentation

4



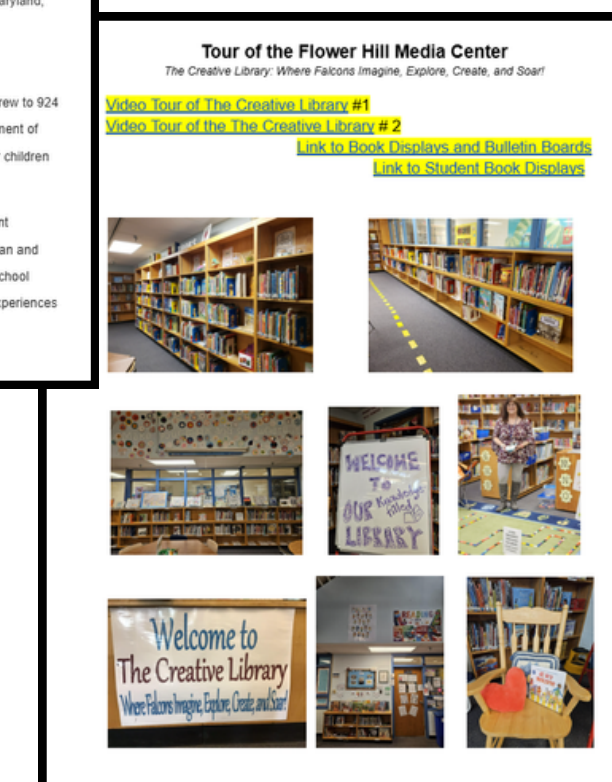
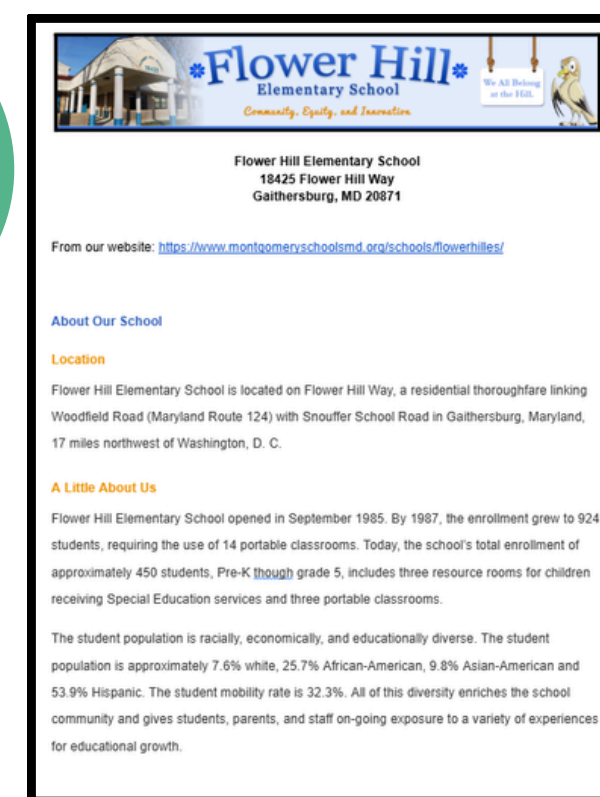
5

Signed up and Completed the ALA-SLI Course: Librarianship: Core Competencies and Practices



6

Completed the Library Program Rubric to Identify Strengths in my Library Program



7

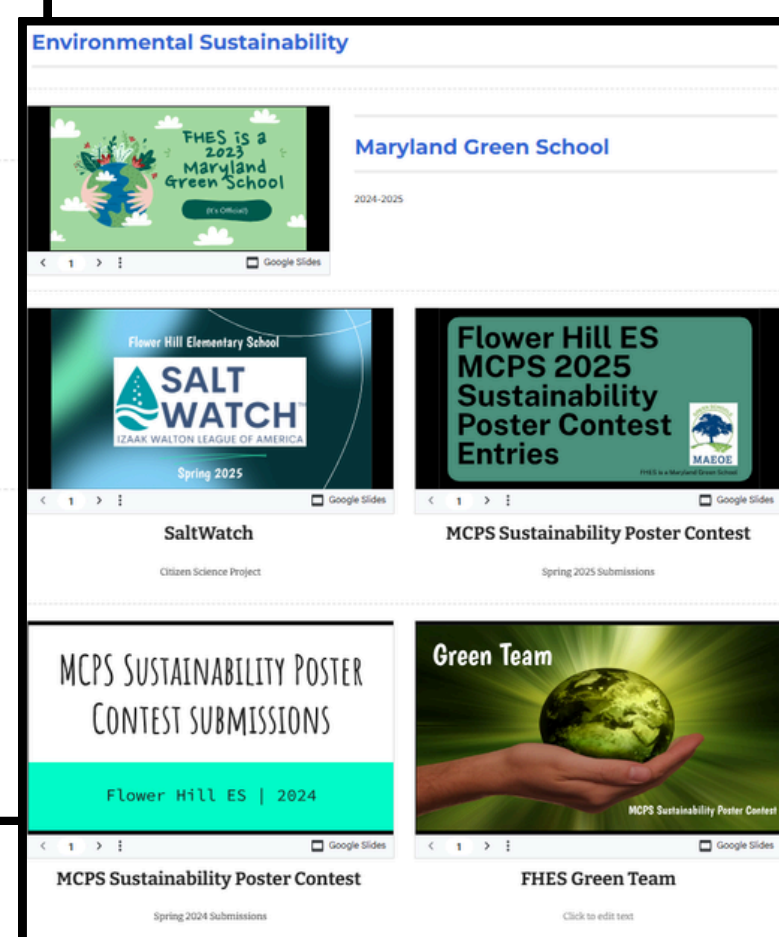
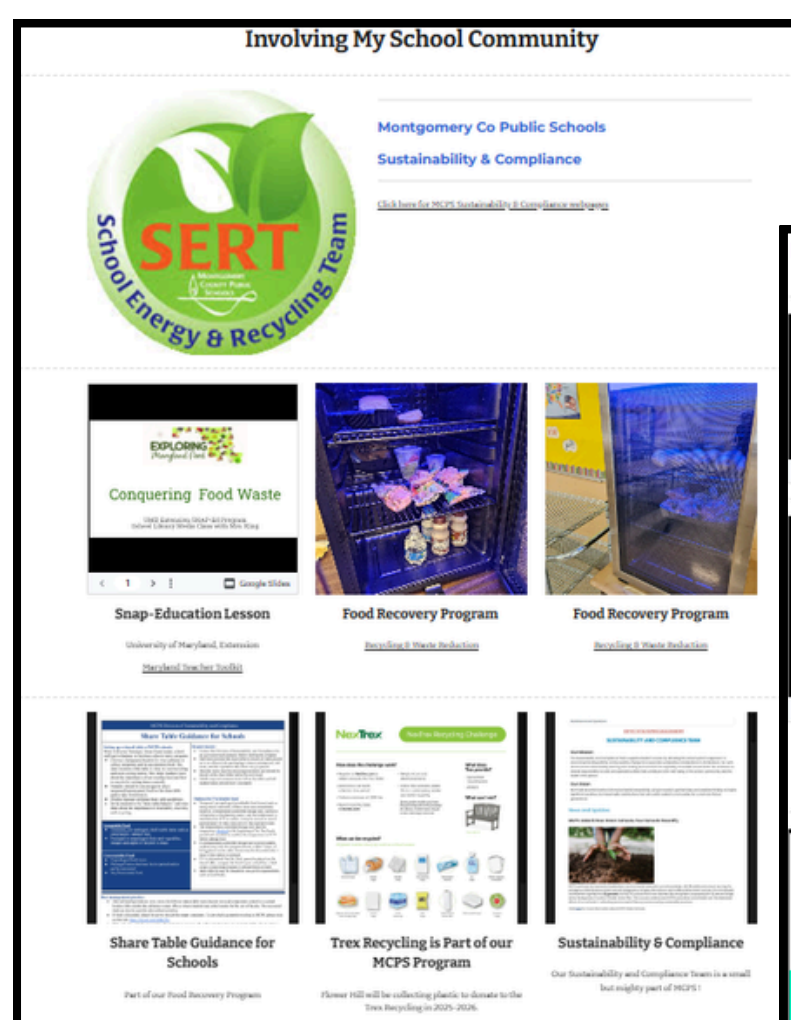
Dove into the four Areas of the Certification

- A. Teach for Learning
- B. Build the Learning Environment
- C. Empower Learning Through Leadership
- D. Final Reflection and Presentation



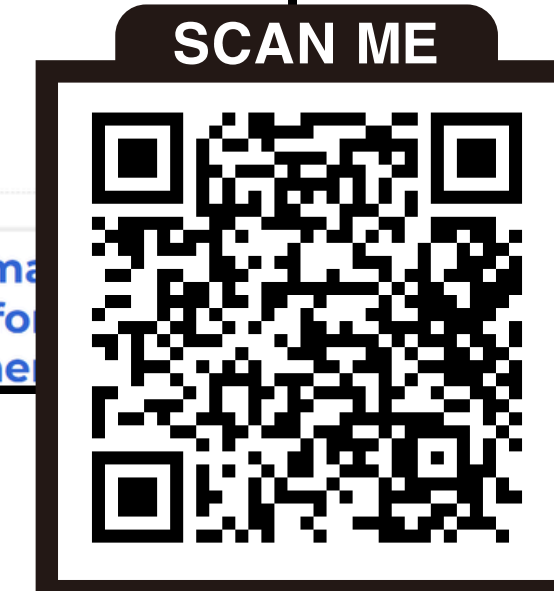
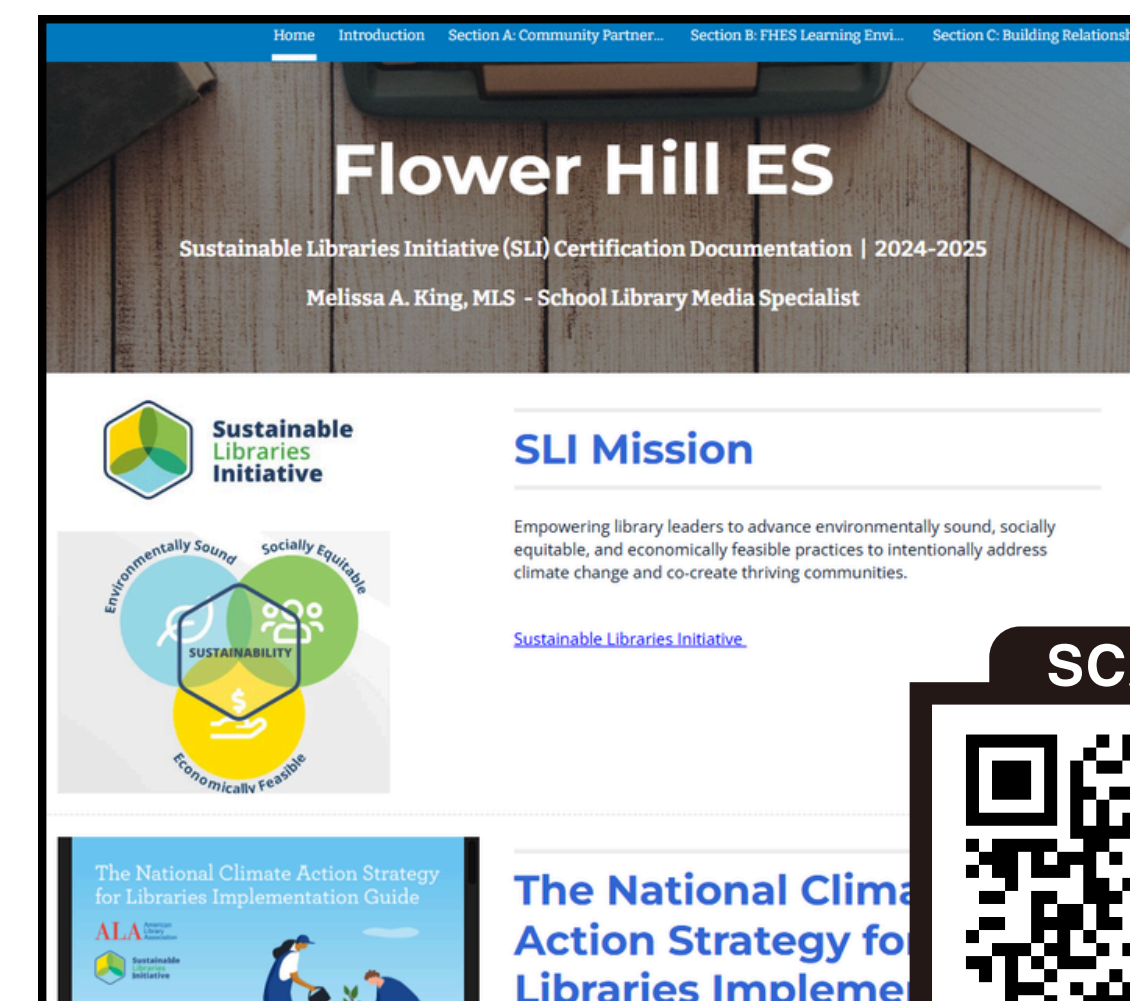
8

Examples of our Sustainable Library Work



9

Created a Website to Serve as My Portfolio



Achieved Certification - December 2025
First School Librarian in Maryland

10



THE CREATIVE LIBRARY

WHERE FALCONS IMAGINE, EXPLORE, CREATE, AND SOAR!

CURATE RESOURCES

Pulling together exactly what you need to teach your standards or support a research project.

[Destiny Discover & Online Databases](#)

READER ADVISORY

Connecting the right book with the right reader at the right time.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Partnering with a variety of organizations to bring exciting programs to our students:

[Nature Forward](#)
[Big Picture Living](#)
[Code.org](#), [MAEOE](#), [NEED.org](#)
[SERT](#) [SNAP-Ed](#)

INFORMATION LITERACY

Reading and viewing critically, identifying bias & misinformation.

LIBRARY COLLECTION

Continually curating a diverse library collection for staff and students. [Click Here.](#)

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Focusing on specific creators and types of literature

DESTINY COLLECTIONS

Organizing and curating collections of books and online resources by topic. [Destiny Collections Click Here](#)

LITERACY PROMOTION

Creating a community of readers with programs celebrating reading. For example: [International Dot Day](#), [#BeWhoYouAreDay](#), [Read for the Record](#), [World Read Aloud Day](#), [Poem in Your Pocket Day](#), [Picture Book Month](#) + lots more!

MAKERSPACE

Developing a STEAM Makerspace full of items and activities for students to explore.

[Makerspace at your library](#)

Follow me! [Instagram](#) @Cre8tiveLib & @FlowerHillMedia
[Twitter](#) @Cre8tiveLib & @FlowerHillMedia

Community Partnerships That Encourage Reading

Family Arts Night MCPL Open House Family Book Club

Literacy Night

STEM NIGHT

ESOL Family Night

The Flower Hill Arts Team Presents
Family Arts Night
An Evening of Art, Movement, Music, and Reading
Thursday
NOVEMBER 16
6:30-7:30 pm
We look forward to spending time with you and your family!

Montgomery County PUBLIC LIBRARIES

FLOWER HILL FALCONS

FAMILY BOOK CLUB

Arts Nights

2020 Theme: Family

2021 Theme: Gratitude

2022 Theme: Teamwork

2023 Theme: Kindness & Belonging

Guest Author Fred Bowen spoke about importance of teamwork & his MG sports titles.



MCPL - FHES Open Houses

Join us for a fun, interactive, Flower Hill ES Family LIBRARY OPEN HOUSE*

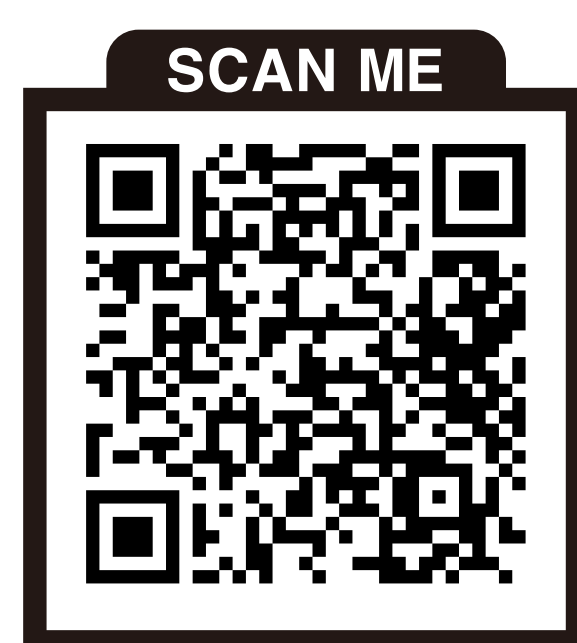
Esika Watson & Melissa McDonald
MCPL Children's Librarian Flower Hill ES Librarian

Saturday, December 10, 2022
12-3pm
MCPL Gaithersburg Branch
18330 Montgomery Village Ave
Gaithersburg, MD 20879

Únase a nosotros para una familia divertida e interactiva de Flower Hill ES
CASA ABIERTA DE LA BIBLIOTECA*

Esika Watson & Melissa McDonald
MCPL Bibliotecaria Infantil Flower Hill ES Bibliotecaria

Sábado, 10 de Diciembre de 2022
12-3pm
MCPL Gaithersburg Branch
18330 Montgomery Village Ave
Gaithersburg, MD 20879



Family Book Club

Bring a Book from your shelves to share, at work or home!

Sept 27th
Media Center

Bring a Book from your shelves to share, at work or home!

Sept 27th
Media Center

This Month's Books

All Are Welcome
Read 23 with Ms. Tanya Payne

LUNCH from HOME
Make Center with Mrs. Melissa King

COZY CREATIVE FAMILY AFTERNOON

Friday, December 27, 2-4 p.m.
at Gaithersburg Library

Drop in anytime from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. to listen to books, see local student art, and get creative with cozy crafts and activities inspired by Peter H. Reynolds's book, *Our Table*.

Gaithersburg Library is teaming up again with FableVision Learning and Flower Hill Elementary School for a special edition of our Library Open House event for students and their families!

For children in preschool through 5th grade and their families.

Please contact Gaithersburg Library at 240-773-9490 at least five days prior to the event to request reasonable accommodations.

Making Our Green Hearts Proud

Flower Hill Elementary School in Gaithersburg is not only a Maryland Green School—an important achievement in its own right—it's home to the first school librarian in the state to complete the Sustainable Library Certification Program.

Melissa King was recently honored by the Sustainable Library Initiative, a community of library leaders focused on climate change and resiliency, for the many ways she supports her students—from helping set the stage for learning with positive affirmations to partnering on hands-on lessons delivered by Nature Forward's GreenKids team.

King's recognition is a win for the larger community. Sustainability benefits everyone, and through her story, King serves as a wonderful testament to the impact of Nature Forward's GreenKids program. Jeff Chandler, GreenKids Director, and Gina Gherner, GreenKids Lead Educator, have worked with King and her students over the years, doing salad science and so many other fun things.

"Jeff and Gina have been such an inspiration to me and incredibly supportive of my desire to keep learning," King said. "They have been exceptionally warm and inviting to my students. Because Gina is bilingual, she's been able to connect with some of my school's multilingual learners in ways I cannot. Seeing my students' faces light up when she speaks to them in Spanish is simply beautiful."

"Nature is magical and motivating," Gherner said. "We see children go from not wanting to touch wiggly worms to embracing them. Melissa is a great example, too. She went from being new to the Maryland Green School process to becoming a leader who brings others along."

King calls the library the heart of the school, adding: "Everything we do touches students and staff in some way. Just as a pebble tossed into water creates ripples, what my students are learning and doing will expand outward—helping the world become a more sustainable place."

Help create those ripples. Donate today: <https://give.natureforward.org/give/413799/#/donation/checkout>.

"She went from being new to the Maryland Green School process to becoming a leader who brings others along."

—GINA GHERNER, GREENKIDS LEAD EDUCATOR

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Name: Melissa A. King
Location: Gaithersburg, Maryland
Membership: SLCP School Librarian

School librarian Melissa King fosters a love of learning about the environment in her students and helps them build environmental literacy skills through partnerships, immersive programming, and experiential learning.

Originally joining the Sustainable Library Certification Program (SLCP) to support the school's status as a Maryland Green School, Melissa sponsors the Flower Hill Elementary School Green Team and introduces sustainability topics in fun and innovative ways.

As part of the Green Team's work, her students conduct campus cleanups; manage a pollinator garden; build and monitor bluebird boxes; monitor water samples from a neighborhood pond; harvest lettuce grown in their garden as part of the Nature Forward's Salad Science Program, combining the fresh greens with a rainbow of fruits and veggies, and having a Salad Party; among other learning activities.

Hands-on, experiential learning opportunities create an atmosphere for her students to develop lifelong skills and love for the natural world. One notable program was the *Emma and the Bees* bilingual book walk from Syncratic Press in which Melissa set up in the school's courtyard. The book walk was donated to Montgomery County Public Schools Outdoor Education Department by Conservation Nation. To enhance the experience, Melissa also reached out to a local beekeeper that provided honey for tasting and some equipment to demonstrate beekeeping.

Also important are the partnerships Melissa has formed with local organizations to bring additional resources to her students of all ages on the topics of nature, agriculture, wildlife, mindfulness, sustainability and energy conservation.

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For Immediate Release
December 12, 2025

School Librarian Melissa King is Certified Sustainable
The Sustainable Libraries Initiative recognizes School Library Media Specialist Melissa King as a leader in sustainability.

Suffolk County, NY - December 12, 2025 - School Library Media Specialist Melissa King of Flower Hill Elementary School in Gaithersburg, Maryland has been designated a "Certified Sustainable School Librarian" through the Sustainable Libraries Initiative's award-winning Sustainable Library Certification Program (SLCP).

School librarian Melissa King fosters a love of learning about the environment in her students and helps build life-long sustainability literacy skills through partnerships, immersive programming, and experiential learning.

Melissa is a certified Environmental Educator through the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE). As the sponsor for the Flower Hill Elementary School Green Team, she took the lead on the campus becoming a certified Maryland Green School, which was achieved in May 2023.

"The Sustainable Libraries Certification Program asks us to specifically look at how the library can help guide and positively affect the efficiency of the building and conservation efforts of the staff and students, and also how the librarian is guiding collaboration with classroom teachers and community partners," said Melissa. "The SLCP has reminded me of the importance of collaborations, and how my efforts to connect my students with a variety of learning experiences has benefited them, our school, and ultimately the world."

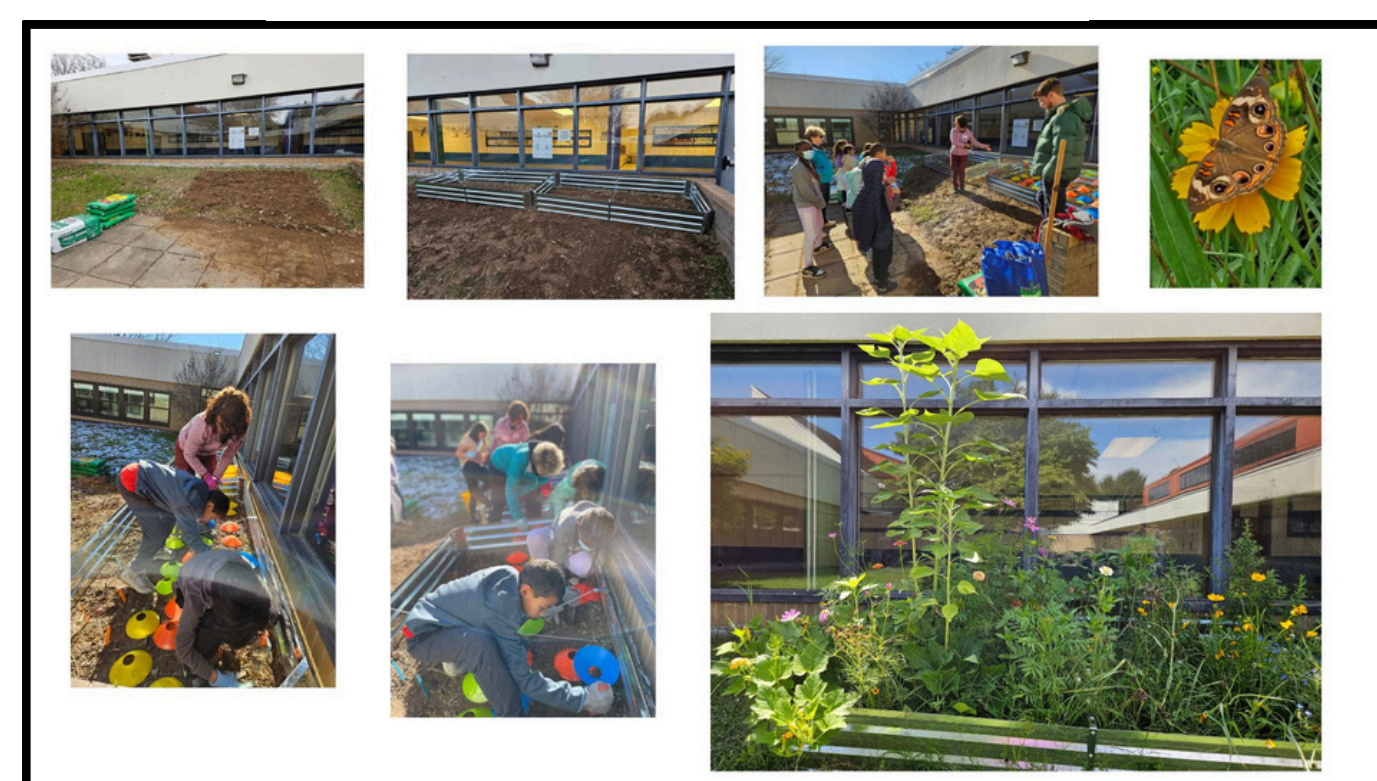
Melissa starts each lesson with mindfulness and positive affirmations to foster a sense of purpose and belonging in her students. Program topics have included salad science, pollinator gardens, water quality testing, campus cleanups, bluebird boxes, and a **food recovery program**.

Also important are the partnerships Melissa has formed with local organizations to bring additional resources to her students of all ages on the topics of nature, agriculture, wildlife, mindfulness, sustainability, and energy conservation.

Melissa is the first school librarian in Maryland to complete the Sustainable Library Certification Program: an award-winning benchmarking system designed to provide public libraries, academic libraries, library systems, and school librarians with exclusive resources and guidelines to shift towards a cleaner, greener, and more equitable future.

"Congratulations to Melissa King on achieving Sustainable Library certification!" said Melissa's mentor and fellow certified school librarian Anne-Marie Kalin. "Her dedication to this important work, coupled with her innovative use of Google Sites to document and showcase these efforts, exemplifies the forward-thinking leadership our profession needs. Well done, Melissa!"

For more information, please view Melissa's sustainability website [here](#) or reach out to SLI staff by emailing slidm@slifknet.org.



Emma and the Bees StoryWalk

Have a great idea you're proud of? Fill out the form linked below to submit your idea for future editions of the newsletter!