

# 'Green' first for village

*New Montessori  
school is eco-friendly*

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The Alexander Graham Bell Montessori School's white roof is helping it become the first green building in Wheeling.

In the next few weeks, the school will move from Mount Prospect to its bigger location in Wheeling. School board members decided very early in the project they wanted the new building to be environmentally-friendly.

"We have board members that are very supportive of the environment," said Carol Martorano, principal of the school. "It also goes with Montessori education."

The school received a \$50,000 grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation for its energy-efficient construction.

The building project itself costs about \$2.4 million, which Martorano said was likely more expensive than regular construction. However, the school will save money in the



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**Principal Carol Martorano tests the rain barrel that harvests the water from the downspouts. The Alexander Graham Bell Montessori claims to be the first "green" building in town.**

long run, she said.

"It just makes sense," she said. "We're a private school. We have to watch the budget."

The air-conditioning system, for example, brings back much of the air it expends to be reused within the system.

"All the exhaust in the building goes to an energy recovery unit," said Dale Villiard, the vice president of operations for Vanderwerff Construction.

Villiard said the company hadn't built a green building before this project, so he learned the different ways to save energy as the construction progressed. "The president has taken green classes since this first project," he said.

The school also has solar tubes that act as a mirrored skylight. Unlike a normal skylight, however, the tubes reflect the rays and magnify them to make better use of natural light.

The white roof helps reflect sunlight so that the building stays cooler, and the four classrooms will share two rain barrels which the students will use to water their class gardens.

The lights also turn on automatically when someone walks in, and the air conditioning automatically shuts off if anybody opens a window.

The toilets have dual flushes: turn it in one direction and you help conserve water. The

paint emits fewer chemicals, and the grass also only grows a limited amount each year, calling for less water.

"There's a lot that was put into the building that you can't see," Martorano said.

She said the green efforts also will help the school educate its students on the environment. The playground is made of 90 percent recycled materials and the students will use part of it to grow their own plants.

The school will have an open house for the community from 3 to 5 p.m. Aug. 17 to show off the new facilities. For more information, call the school, at 9300 Capitol Drive, at (847) 850-5490.