

The University School of the Lowcountry

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One of the first people you meet at the University School of the Lowcountry will smile, shake your hand, and introduce themselves. As you look down at the face of the sixth or seventh grader whose hand you are shaking, you can't help but be impressed by their courtesy and good manners.

One of the goals of the University School is to teach their students the importance of being polite and respectful to everyone they meet, and to them, it is a lesson that is just as important as algebra or history.

Jason Kreutner, founder and head of the University School, takes pride in his students and encourages them to get out in the world and do some really unique things. The school opened in August of 2007, and has approximately 10 students in grades 6-8. The school is in Mt. Pleasant, and accepts exceptional students from all surrounding areas.

As Kreutner explained, the daily schedule for the sixth and seventh graders includes fundamental classes the students must take, along with some very special programs. On a typical day, students meet with Kreutner in the morning for their Life and Leadership class, where they talk with each other about world events and watch "CNN for Students." After this class, the students move on to Math, Spanish, Humanities (English and History), lunch, and then Science and Art. Students are in class a little longer than most of their peers. "We have really long classes," said Kreutner. "Students are in class four hours a week for every discipline."

Each class is structured to fit the needs of every student and this is important because the students are in different grades and learning levels. For example, a sixth grader who is doing well in Math has the option of doing seventh grade work, while an eighth grade student who may be struggling can learn at a seventh grade level as well.

Another unique opportunity that the University School offers is their online course program. Kreutner explained that if a student is sick and has to miss school, they can go online and see what their fellow students learned that day, and even chat with their teachers. The school has provided laptops for every student and teacher, which they keep at the school and can use to do assignments during the day. "When we have online course assignments, the kids knock them out in a second," said Kreutner.

Parents also have a login name and can review the progress their child is making. Kreutner also posts a daily letter that summarizes what the students have been learning every day.

Every week, the students take a field trip to learn about the world around them. Recently the students attended the John McCain meet and greet at Alex's Restaurant, and explored the wastewater treatment process at the Mount Pleasant Waterworks facility on Rifle Range Road.

The University School has also been teaching the students about the importance of taking care of the environment. During the fall semester, students conducted an environmental project that included traveling to the local beaches and learning about beach renourishment and erosion. Kreutner also took the students kayaking on Shem Creek to learn about our local water. "Water has been a big focus," said Kreutner. "Because it involves chemistry, biology, and geography."

Mentoring is another important element to the University School. Students from local high schools visit and do activities with the students, and in turn University School students do activities with children in the Hibben Preschool program. This really helps the students become positive role models.

The University School is hoping to expand quickly in the future, and will be adding an intermediate school, grades 4 and 5, this fall. Ninth grade will begin in 2009-2010, and each subsequent high school grade will be added one year at a time. The school is currently accepting applications for students entering grades 4 through 8 for the 2008-2009 school year.

For more information about the University School, please contact Jason Kreutner at 884-0902 or visit their website at www.uslowcountry.org.