

LEED Gold Certified Welcoming Center Green Features Overview

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life. ~The Earth Charter

Honoring our commitment to environmental justice and education, Presentation Center has built a sustainable straw bale structure, intricately detailed with green features. We invite all our guests to reflect on their need to reverence and preserve the earth and their responsibility to work toward a just and sustainable future for all creation. Our Welcoming Center and Dining Facility is the first LEED Gold Certified building in Santa Clara County.



Straw Bale Walls

Straw Bales are a local and renewable material, which provide the thermal mass of the wall structure and natural insulation. Straw bales promote high-energy efficiency and provide sustainable, super insulated walls without releasing toxic materials. The straw bale walls provide the equivalent of high insulation plus extraordinary acoustic and fire resistance. And, at the end of a building's 100 year life, straw can be composted back into the earth.

Our Living Roof

The **Living Roof** on our new Welcoming Center is a vegetated surface over a membrane roof, planted with grasses and plants and irrigated with spring water that flows through the site year round. The living roof helps reclaim the land taken by the building's footprint. It also captures rainwater and returns a portion of it back to the atmosphere via evapo-transpiration. This type of roof also provides insulating benefits, helping cool the building during the warm summer season. The vibrancy of the living roof reminds us of our responsibility to respond in kind to the generosity of nature and appreciate the sustainability of plant life through a beneficial design feature that promotes the biodiversity of life.

What is LEED Certification?

LEED stands for **Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design**. LEED is a set of criteria put forth by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) in 1998. The LEED rating system is a voluntary standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings and has become the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of green buildings.

Photovoltaics

The Welcoming Center includes an architecturally integrated **photovoltaic system** to supplement the building's electricity needs. This amorphous silicon laminated photovoltaic system stores the renewable energy of the sun to help power the building, having the potential to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than eight tons annually.

Solar Thermal Systems

A **solar thermal system** stores the renewable energy of the sun to supplement the heating of water in the kitchen and bathrooms.

Native Water Sources

The site of Presentation Center was redesigned to depend on the water sources native to the property for landscaping. Spring water is used for irrigation of the Living Roof. The creek and drainage swales direct native spring water and rainwater away from the new building -- channeling it into visible wetlands. The creek and swales will help reduce storm water runoff, filter the site runoff, and provide a riparian habitat to help restore the native landscape.

Passive Solar Design

The main dining spaces are oriented to the south to use the sun for heating and light.

Other Green Features

~ **An earth sheltered basement** pre-cools the intake air for the dining areas, which allows for efficient evaporative cooling, eliminating the need for air conditioning.

~ **Cellulose** sprayed into the ceiling and walls is made from **recycled newspaper** and is much safer for our health than fiberglass.

~ **Cotton insulation** in the stud walls is made from **recycled blue jeans**.

~ We used **wheatboard**, which is made from rapidly renewable resources. It saved us from using raw materials such as old growth wood in our shelving and cabinetry.

~ **Compressed sunflower seed board** was used for the countertops in the Bookstore as well as for the cabinetry in the main dining room. Sunflower seed is also considered a rapidly renewable resource.

~ The ceramic tile used as the flooring and wall finish in the bathrooms contains over **55% recycled glass**.

~ **Compact fluorescent lighting, high performance windows, and energy efficient appliances** contribute significantly to our energy savings. This building performs **47%** better than the California Title 24 2001 Energy Code.

~ Our **organic garden** provides fresh, pesticide-free produce for our meals and is cared for by the UC Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County. Our kitchen scraps are composted in the garden.

For more information about our many green features, please visit our wonderfully informative Eco-Display in the Welcoming Center and our website: www.presentationcenter.org.

We're also happy to give tours of the building.