

New clinic supports healthy planet, healthy people

In Spanish, *la maestra* means “the teacher” and for more than two decades a City Heights nonprofit organization bearing this name has provided low-income, immigrant and refugee residents with basic medical care, housing assistance, job training and other services. Now, with a new 34,660-square-foot, three-story building, La Maestra Community Health Centers is nurturing the well-being of a growing clientele while teaching the community about being green.

Medical facilities, with their considerable technology requirements, typically consume enormous amounts of energy, making green design especially challenging. In recent years, though, the notion that sustainable design affects the health of the earth and the people on it is gaining traction. This notion is put into practice at the La Maestra facility, which has applied for LEED® Gold certification.

With its vibrant colors and contemporary features, the health center became an instant landmark in its urban neighborhood upon opening in July 2010. The facility houses comprehensive medical, employment and liter-

acy services, a food pantry and demonstration kitchen, 7,500 square feet of entrepreneurial retail space, and a two-level subterranean parking garage.

“We think sustainability is important not only to protect the larger environment outside the clinic walls, but also to provide a healthy place for our employees to work and patients to receive care,” says Zara Marselian, CEO of La Maestra Community Health Centers.

“La Maestra is an extraordinary client committed to sustainability. Striving for LEED Gold certification takes a dedicated and intelligent client, and a cooperative effort by everyone involved in the project to incorporate sustainable features – everything from situating the building to take advantage of prevailing breezes and solar orientation, to making the most of energy-efficiency opportunities,” says design architect Richard Yen, AIA, of Richard Yen & Associates Inc. in San Diego.

Incentives total nearly \$113,000

The building is designed to perform 25.4% better than required under California’s 2005 Title 24 energy-efficiency standards. That translates into



La Maestra's main lobby features a soothing blend of the colors, textures and forms of nature for an atmosphere conducive to the healing process. Daylighting helps keep energy costs down.

annual savings of 338,529 kilowatt-hours of electricity, or about \$50,800 per year at current energy prices. As a result, La Maestra earned SDG&E incentives totaling \$112,730 – \$84,632 in owner incentives and \$28,098 in design team incentives. A bonus owner incentive of \$16,926 is pending the outcome of the LEED certification process.

Energy-efficiency measures included: high-performance glazing; reflective cool roof; premium-efficiency motors with variable-frequency drives on air handlers and heating hot-water pumps; and a combination of natural and artificial light sources that trimmed 23% off the allowed lighting power density. In addition, an SDG&E-owned 20-kilowatt photovoltaic system on the roof provides renewable energy to the community.

DESIGN TEAM

La Maestra showcases how green buildings are an integral part of the community's health, thanks to a San Diego-based team that included: architect **Richard Yen, AIA**, principal, Richard Yen & Associates; mechanical engineer **Gene Walsh, PE**, president, Walsh Engineers; electrical engineer **Rocky Tanner, PE**, president, Tanner Engineering; LEED commissioning engineer and energy modeler **Tom Lunneberg, PE, LEED AP**, principal, Innovative Energy Solutions; LEED consultant **Hernando Miranda, PE, LEED AP**, principal, Soltierra LLC; building owner representatives **Linas Naujokaitis, AIA**, of LMA Consulting Group, and **Zara Marselian, CEO**, and **Alexei Ochola**, board member, La Maestra Community Health Centers; and SDG&E Savings By Design program representatives **Peggy Crossman**, senior account executive, and **Bob Nacke, PE**, new construction supervisor.



La Maestra Community Health Centers is saving about \$50,800 per year at current energy prices, thanks to energy-efficiency measures designed to yield 25.4% better performance than required under Title 24.

Photo by Zygmunt Krylat, courtesy of La Maestra Community Health Centers

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