

NIEHS renovation team wins HHS Green Champions Award

By Kelly Lenox

A recent renovation in building 101, also known as the Rall Building, on the NIEHS campus in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, attracted some well-deserved attention from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Each year, HHS presents Green Champions Awards to individuals and groups who dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emission, energy and water consumption, and pollution, through projects within their organizations. This year, an award will be given to a team from NIEHS, during a June 13 ceremony at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.

The Green and Fit Retrofit Team, led by Debra Del Corral and Amanda Thompson of the NIEHS Office of Management, and Joseph Seufert III of the NIH Office of Research Facilities (ORF), won the Sustainable Design and Facilities Award, given in recognition of exceptional efforts toward sustainability.

"The entire team deserves recognition for winning," said Seufert, noting the strong support received from NIH ORF Engineering, Maintenance, and Operations; the NIEHS Office of Acquisitions; NIEHS end users; and many contractors.

A model green renovation project

The team focused on using repurposed, recycled, and reclaimed building materials in the remodel, which provided improved facilities for fitness, work-life balance, training, the library, and the Integrative Bioinformatics team (see [story](#)).

The Green Champions Award recognizes the exemplary use of green design and building materials in the renovation effort. "Throughout the project, building materials were reused; furnishings were refurbished and reinstalled; metal materials were recovered and recycled; healthy paints, adhesives, and finishes were applied; energy-efficient lighting and heating/cooling systems were installed; and water conserving fixtures were built in," wrote the HHS committee that selected the winners.

The award notice pointed to financial, workplace quality, scientific support, and health gains. "The Institute improved its ability to meet its emerging scientific mission in bioinformatics and scientific training, and saved hundreds of thousands of dollars. At the same time, NIEHS kept tons of material out of landfills, installed healthy and efficient materials and engineering systems, and promoted employee fitness and quality of life."

In an Institute dedicated to supporting environmental public health, this team's work stands as a model for other NIH projects. NIEHS and NTP Director Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D., wasted no time in congratulating the team. "I am so proud of the ways in which these award winners have contributed to the NIEHS mission and exemplify stewardship of our resources," she said.



According to the award committee, the efforts of Green and Fit Retrofit Team, from left, Del Corral, Seufert, and Thompson, helped cut overall construction costs by 30-40 percent by eliminating multiple project phases. Other efficiencies saved at least \$160,000, and the project improved space utilization by eliminating passageways and optimizing layouts. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)

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