

Greenest Building in Washington State Features Rain Garden, Living Wall and Solar Panels; Opens this Friday

Community celebration of Bertschi School's Science Wing to take place on February 11

SEATTLE-Feb. 8, 2011 – Seattle continues to be a leader in the green building movement – now more than ever with the completion of [Bertschi School's Science Wing](#). The new Science Wing is Washington State's greenest new building and a project that is on track to be the first certified [Living Building](#) in the state.



Bertschi School, an independent elementary school on Capitol Hill, is hosting community festivities to celebrate the opening of its sustainable science classroom on **Friday, February 11 at 1:45 p.m.** The ribbon cutting ceremony, which will take place in the Bertschi Center, will include remarks by Seattle City Council President Richard Conlin, Ciscoe Morris, Head of School Brigitte Bertschi, and Chris Hellstern and Stacy Smedley of KMD Architects. An open house will follow the ceremony.

“With the integration of sustainable practices into our curriculum, our students are empowered to make a difference by learning, synthesizing, and sharing their newfound knowledge with our local and global community. Our students are counting down the days and hours until they can explore and investigate science in new and innovative ways with the opening of our Science Wing,” says Brigitte Bertschi, Head of Bertschi School.

The new building features an ethnobotanical garden to grow food; cisterns for rainwater harvesting; a green moss-mat roof; composting toilet; natural ventilation and radiant floor heating; a living wall of tropical plants to treat grey water; and solar panels, which will produce all of the building's energy. All of these aspects will provide students with an active learning environment where they're encouraged to harvest native vegetation in order to gain an understanding of urban agriculture, as well as interact with the building's water and energy-saving features.

The design of the Science Wing derived from a partnership between Bertschi School and the Restorative Design Collective, a multi-disciplinary team led by [KMD Architects](#) and comprised of leading green building professionals from the Pacific Northwest — including



general contractor, [Skanska USA Building](#). The Collective contributed their design services pro-bono to gain experience constructing a Living Building. Their donations amount to more than \$500,000 in professional time and building materials.

“We were inspired to bring together this creative team to design a Living Building in Seattle after attending the Cascadia Green Building Council's Living Future conference,” says Stacy Smedley of KMD Architects. “We’re excited to return to Living Future this year to share with others the knowledge and experience of what it takes to construct a Living Building,” adds Chris Hellstern of KMD. “We hope the Science Wing will pave the way for more green building and net-zero projects, as well as make sustainability inherent for generations of students”

“We have helped show a new way to approach sustainability in construction,” says Kris Beason, Skanska Project Executive. “The Living Building Challenge not only seeks to demand sustainable building, but to also create a paradigm shift in the building industry. We’ve shown that the right team can make the vision a reality.”

This state-of-the-art facility was designed and built to meet the requirements of [version 2.0 of the Living Building Challenge](#), which is widely regarded as the world’s most rigorous green building performance standard. Version 2.0 broadens the focus of the Living Building Challenge, a standard launched by the Cascadia Green Building Council and managed by the International Living Building Institute, to include new imperatives based on additional societal and site requirements, including urban agriculture and equity. A building must perform as modeled for one full year of occupancy before receiving certification as “living.”

Bertschi School is located at 2227 10th Ave. East in Seattle. Following the opening celebration, tours will be offered on a regular basis to the community, building professionals and teachers to act as an educational tool encouraging sustainable design and practices. KMD will also lead an education session about the project at this year’s [Living Future](#) (April 27-29 in Vancouver, BC). More information about the Science Wing can be found at: www.bertschi.org/campus/science.html.

About Bertschi School:

An independent elementary school known for its integrated, innovative program, Bertschi School has a strong commitment to sustainability and incorporates this focus into both its curriculum and operations. In 2007, the school completed construction on its main building, The Bertschi Center, which is the first LEED Gold certified elementary classroom building in Washington State. www.bertschi.org

About the Restorative Design Collective:

The Restorative Design Collective was founded in 2009 by Stacy Smedley and Chris Hellstern of KMD Architects. KMD’s strong commitment to research-based design and collaboration fostered the opportunity to bring together a group of Seattle-area design professionals who share the desire to push themselves and their firms to the forefront of the sustainable building movement. Members of the Collective recognize and endeavor to further the Living Building Challenge, which plays an essential role in raising green building standards, meeting the [2030 Challenge](#) and creating net-zero buildings. Members of the Restorative Design Collective and its collaborators include; GGLO, 2020 Engineering,

GeoEngineers, Quantum Consulting, Rushing, O'Brien and Company, Back to Nature Design LLC, Parsons Public Relations and Skanska, as well as the City of Seattle and King County.

About the Living Building Challenge:

Since its inception, the Living Building Challenge has gained global recognition as the most radical and revolutionary green building standard. It was initially launched by the Cascadia Green Building Council and is currently operated by the International Living Building Institute. It serves as a challenge to builders, owners, architects, engineers and design professionals to create buildings that are net-zero energy, net-zero water, and use resources efficiently and for maximum beauty. There are currently more than 70 proposed Living Buildings in the design or construction phase worldwide. The first two Living Buildings were certified in October 2010, along with a residence that received partial certification.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST. Image credit to KMD Architects.

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