



photos provided by: The Women's Center of Southern Oregon

"LEED"ING THE WAY FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH THE WOMEN'S CENTER OF SOUTHERN OREGON

When The Women's Center in Grants Pass found themselves looking for new office space several years ago, circumstances led them to join with Asante's Woman's Imaging in a new building project close to the Grants Pass hospital. Very quickly, both groups agreed that they wanted the new structure to meet the highest possible standards for environmental responsibility. "We came into it knowing we wanted to build sustainably," recalls Lisa Solomon, executive director of Women's Health Center of Southern Oregon. "And they did too."

Their new building was built to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification standards, and includes natural light and vistas in every area, high efficiency heating and air systems, and water and energy conservation measures, including an on-site swale planted with regional vegetation. Materials were sourced as locally as possible and lighting designed to reduce both energy waste and excess "pollution" at night. Clients and staff are encouraged to use alternate transportation with priority parking given to electric vehicles or carpools. "It made sense that when building our facility, we would make every effort to contribute to the health and well-being of our community," says Solomon.

It's a difference that can be seen and felt. Natural textures and colors, low-VOC products and the plentiful natural lighting all combine with their focus on women's health to provide a unique environment. "You just feel better being in this building," laughs Alison Pazourak of The Women's Center. It's a by-product of their focus on sustainable building, says Solomon. "People get anxious going to a doctor. Anything we can do to reduce that anxiety is good. Building to LEED standards ensured that our construction process and final product would reduce our footprint by minimizing our use of natural resources, provide a peaceful, healing environment for our patients, and provide our employees with a joyful space to work."

Along with the many innovations of their new building, The Women's Center is also incorporating green living into their daily routine, whether that's by offering incentives for staff that walk, bike or carpool, a recycling program in place throughout the building, or even a targeted reduction in paper use. With their focus on doing what they can, The Women's Center is looking to a healthier future for their patients and their community. "It's big things and it's little things," says Pazourak. "It all makes a difference."



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