

Green School Conquering Autism Earns EPA's Rare DEES Designation & Saves \$170,000

The EPA's ENERGY STAR® program last week recognized The Monarch School's new green building as exemplary with the EPA's rare and coveted "Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR" (DEES) designation. The school's Chrysalis building achieved a score of 86 out of 100, meaning it ranks among the top 14 percent of buildings in the United States. This building is designed to use 33 percent less energy and carbon than an average, comparable building, saving more than \$170,000 and nine million kilowatt-hours in energy over the next 25 years. The efficient design also qualified The Monarch School as the first private school to receive a cash rebate -- \$2,300 -- in CenterPoint Energy's SCORE program.

HOUSTON, Texas -- August 8, 2009 (FPRC) -- The EPA's ENERGY STAR program last week recognized The Monarch School's new green building as exemplary in design with its rare and coveted "Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR" (DEES) designation. The school's Chrysalis building achieved a score of 86 out of 100, meaning it ranks among the top 14 percent of buildings in the United States.

In the coming weeks, the Chrysalis building will become the new campus for The Monarch School, a national leader in therapeutic education for hundreds of children with neurological differences, many of which are related to autism.

"We're excited about our students' future, and about promoting a healthy, sustainable Texas," said Head of School and Founder Dr. Marty Webb. "As we began planning the future of the thousands of people who will use this building in the next century, we were delighted to find that energy-efficient design could be another affordable, practical way for The Monarch School to serve more families, better."

The Chrysalis building will use 33 percent less energy and carbon than an average, comparable building, which will save more than \$170,000 in energy bills over the next 25 years. The 9,000,000 kilowatt-hours saved are the annual equivalent of the greenhouse gas emissions of nearly 1,200 passenger vehicles, or the electrical usage of more than 900 homes.

Dr. Webb said, "This DEES designation confirmed that our early decisions to bring together an experienced 'green team' have helped our donors' contributions go farther today and over the coming century." The sustainable design team included:

- Architects: Jackson & Ryan Architects
- Green Building Consultants: Green Building Services, Inc. (GBS)
- MEP Engineers: Wylie & Associates
- Energy Modeling: BVM Engineering
- Civil Engineers: Brewer & Escalante
- Structural Engineers: Matrix Structural Engineers
- Acoustical Engineers: HFP Acoustical Consultants
- Landscape Architects: TBG Partners; Home & Habitat

– Green Electricity Broker and Sustainability Consultant: Momentum Bay Associates LP (d.b.a., GREEN POWER 4 TEXAS)

The school also earned a cash incentive of more than \$2,300 from CenterPoint Energy's SCORE Program, which rewards participants for incorporating energy-efficient design into new and existing buildings, specifically for more efficient lighting, HVAC and building envelope systems. The Monarch School was the first private school allowed to join the program.

The Chrysalis building is expected to help the utility avoid nearly 6,500 metric tons of carbon dioxide over 25 years, and reduce peak demand for electricity significantly, by saving:

- more than 12 kW in electric demand above ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2004 requirements for lighting and HVAC, and
- 30,558 kWh/yr in energy, roughly the annual electricity used by three average homes in Houston

The efficient design complements the school's ongoing sustainable operations strategies of conservation, energy efficiency, hybrid transportation and green power. For example, The Monarch School's two existing campuses approached a zero carbon footprint over the past three years, largely by purchasing 100 percent green power. The new campus has also contracted for 100% green power, continuing The Monarch School's commitment to the EPA's Green Power Partnership and 100% Purchasers group.

"With electricity and green power prices at six to 10-year lows, our little nonprofit has found it quite economical and practical to approach carbon neutrality and strive with others for clean air and a healthy, sustainable Texas," said Dr. Webb. "While market research, case studies and anecdotes have confirmed a zero to three percent premium for the design of green schools and green buildings over the past decade, this DEES designation confirms that our building's energy savings alone may yield the equivalent of nearly a 14 percent-off coupon on our design professionals' fees. That's a healthy value.

"When other school administrators ask 'How was The Monarch School able to secure cash rebates, energy savings and avoided emissions?' I answer two factors: a great team and great tools," shared Dr. Webb. "First, our design team members pursued exemplary design throughout the project. For example, we committed to pursuing LEED® for New Construction certification for not only the Chrysalis Building, but also the entire campus' future buildings.

"Second, we wanted to articulate these benefits for our students, families and donors and set ongoing operating budget goals," continued Dr. Webb. "The EPA's Target Finder tool and DEES designation helped us quantify and communicate much of the LEED-NC benefits long before we could receive LEED certification for the campus. In fact, the energy modeling required by DEES may have propelled the project into a higher level of LEED certification."

Dr. Webb concluded by saying, "Achieving the DEES designation is still quite rare nationwide and in Texas, with just over twenty DEES buildings in Texas. What that fact means, though, is that our team merely followed the lead of other rational, forward-thinking Texas neighbors. And, that decision really paid off. 'Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR' clearly makes business sense for commercial offices and even schools."

About The Monarch School

Founded in 1997 by Dr. Marty Webb, The Monarch School is now one of the nation's leading schools that provides an innovative, therapeutic education for children ages 3 to 25 years old. It serves the needs of children with neurological differences, such as Autism Spectrum Disorders (Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Disorder, PDD-NOS), Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder, Learning Disabilities, Tourette's Syndrome, Mood Disorders (Bipolar Disorder, Depression), Anxiety Disorders, and other neurological differences. With a ratio of 2.5 students for each teacher/mental health professional, the school develops individualized plans to help each student make progress in the school's four core goals: executive functions, relationship development, self-regulation/self-awareness and academic competence.

About Jackson & Ryan Architects

Since 1986, Jackson & Ryan Architects has provided architectural services for a variety of private and public sector clients, both nationally and locally. The firm's portfolio includes work that is widely varied in type, style, scope and increasingly sustainable. For example, completed projects include Looscan Neighborhood Library, the Children's Museum of Houston, St. Martin's Episcopal Church, the Smithsonian-affiliated Museo Alameda in San Antonio, the Houston SPCA, & Reckling Park baseball stadium for Rice University.

About the EPA's "Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR" designation

Created in 2004, the EPA's "Designed to Earn the ENERGY STAR" designation is one of two prominent methods to distinguish the building developers', owners' and design teams' commitment to energy-efficient design. (Certification under the US Green Building Council's LEED for New Construction or LEED for Core & Shell Rating Systems is increasingly pursued in conjunction with the EPA's DEES designation.) Once a building's Architects of Record has completed the schematic design phase and energy modeling, the architect can submit the building's DEES application simply by:

- Using the online Target Finder tool to rate the expected Design Energy Use of the Building, and generating a Statement of Energy Design Intent (SEDI)
- Achieving a Rating of 75 or higher out of 100, on a scale from 1 to 100, where 50 is average, and
- Mailing the completed Application Form and SEDI to the EPA.

About the SCORE SM Program

Schools Conserving Resources (SCORE) is a no-cost program sponsored by a number of Texas utilities to help school districts and higher education institutions identify and implement energy efficiency upgrade projects. The program's administrator is Austin-based CLEAResult Consulting.

About Momentum Bay® and GREEN POWER 4 TEXAS

Momentum Bay, established in 2002, is a Texas-based comprehensive "green" management consulting firm. The firm's sustainability and business experts help schools and other organizations go green profitably and practically by:

- developing strategic plans,
- executing specific projects,
- helping others to discern green facts from fads and fiction, as well as
- equipping and inspiring teams to do these same functions in-house.

One of the firm's services is GREEN POWER 4 TEXAS, the state's most economical electricity aggregator, broker and consultant focused exclusively on renewable electricity. GREEN POWER 4 TEXAS is also one of Texas' few brokers of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). Uniquely, the firm

offers long-term green power clients sustainability consulting at no additional cost, i.e., as part of their reduced broker commissions.

Momentum Bay's GREEN POWER 4 TEXAS helped The Monarch School procure 100% green power at a substantial discount, while affordably offsetting almost all scope 1 and scope 2 greenhouse gas emissions at the school's former campuses and new campus. Moreover, Momentum Bay has helped The Monarch School make valuable connections with corporations, foundations, recognition programs (including DEES and LEED), and even vendors, both in the Houston area and around the country.

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