

Tuesday, April 6, 2010

GreenLeaders

Businesses across Long Island are turning over a new leaf and leading their employees, customers and communities to a greener future. Once a month, we'll use this space to recognize those organizations a GreenLeaders.

Círculo de la Hispanidad



For 30 years, Círculo de la Hispanidad has been delivering educational, cultural and economic development programs to Long Island's most vulnerable Hispanic residents. Now, Círculo has taken the lead in a new way, becoming the first green facility of its kind built by a nonprofit social service organization in New York State, according to Sarah Brewster, Supervisor of Services at Círculo.

Círculo's new facility, a 35,000-square-foot building in Hempstead Village, was built to LEED standards, meaning that the building was designed for optimal energy savings, water efficiency, and other environmental benefits. (Círculo is awaiting final LEED certification approval.)

Just some of the building's green features: bathrooms with automatic faucets, low-flow toilets and waterless urinals; motion-sensitive light; high-efficiency boilers; low-VOC paints and adhesives for better indoor air quality; and they use Green Seal certified cleaning products and recycle glass, aluminum, cardboard, plastic and paper.

"We also included a white roof designed to reduce heat effect," says Brewster, adding that Círculo plans to install solar panels when funding allows.

Brewster and Círculo founder Gil Bernardino hope the building will serve as an inspiration. "We want our center to be an educational facility that teaches other businesses, nonprofits and individuals about ways to go green and reduce their impact on the environment," says Brewster.

While building green incurred some higher upfront costs, the future energy savings will make the investment worthwhile, Brewster says. Even more important: "We're reducing our impact on the environment and helping to make the world a better place for our children and future generations. That should be a priority for all of us."

For more information on the GreenLeaders program or to nominate a local company you know, go to GreenStreetLI.com.



Círculo de la Hispanidad wants its new building in Hempstead Village to inspire others on Long Island to participate in greening their facilities in whatever ways they can.

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