

Green Giant 2017 Tradesperson: Jonathan Wright

Nomination-

Jonathan Wright has been a leader in sustainable building practices for years. His team views every project is an opportunity to educate the client about the importance of energy efficiency, building durability and how building to higher standards saves money in the long run and is good for the planet. Along with Wright Builders and his development company, New Harmony Properties, Jonathan has personally invested his own resources into creating a walkable, sustainable neighborhood on Village Hill in Northampton, MA, comprising single family homes, townhouses and apartment style condominiums. The buildings are designed and built to a high level of energy efficiency. Energy Star and Tier Three Energy Star are achieved throughout with all buildings achieving LEED for homes. All these homes continue to operate at a fraction of typical heating and cooling costs for this area, while providing state-of-the-art ERV ventilation.

Wright Builders recently completed two Living Building Challenge projects right here in the valley. This is the highest standard of sustainable building practices in the country, including net-zero energy and net-zero water thresholds. Only a handful of these buildings exist nationwide. Jonathan flew members of team to Seattle Washington to the LBC headquarters to learn firsthand for themselves the tenants and rigors of the program. During the course of construction Wright Builders educated tradespeople, suppliers and vendors in the importance and practice of how to achieve the goals set forth in the LBC and, in the process assisted in the creation of two world class structures; the Kern Center at Hampshire College and the new Hitchcock Center building, also on the Hampshire campus. **Over the years Wright Builders has embraced Energy Star and LEED in their building and development. Along the way they have educated the greater community of home owners, real estate agents and sub-contractors in the importance and necessity of building in ways that will endure, save on energy consumption and be beautiful.**

Jury Comments -

"Anyone who has accomplished a Living Building Challenge project is in a league of their own."

"That Jonathan has become a client/developer is exactly what we want. He is really walking the walk."

"Bringing an LBC Project to market twice - and bringing clients along as well - is the kind of leadership we need in the industry."

"Jonathan's work is head and shoulders above anyone else's."

Green Giant 2017 Educator: Ajla Aksmamija, UMass Amherst Dept. of Architecture

Nomination-

Ayla Aksmamija is receiving the Green Giants award for Educator this year in honor of two of her classes at the University of Massachusetts Amherst: a Graduate design studio focusing on net-zero energy design, and a Seminar on sustainable and high-performance building facades.

These two courses teach sustainable design to graduate students, and offer unique and innovative way for learning about net-zero energy design strategies, methods to improve building performance, and how to integrate building performance analysis procedures with design process. In 2016, these two courses were selected to participate in the Architecture 2030 Curriculum Project as one of the most innovative models for teaching sustainable design in the nation (one of twelve participating universities). **The teaching methods, pedagogical approach, assignments and projects were captured to be shared with all architecture schools in the nation as exemplary programs for sustainable design education.**

Jury Comments -

"There aren't many people teaching what Ayla is teaching."

"The 2030 class is a model that should be replicated at other schools."

"When I was in graduate school, I had to go to Europe to get this kind of an education."

"That she is making students ask these questions is courageous and sets her apart from other educators; she's really doing something different."

Green Giant 2017 Owner: Julie Johnson, Hitchcock Center

Nomination -

To recognize the extraordinary achievement of the Hitchcock Center's recent Living Building Challenge project, we are awarding the Green Giants Award in the Owner category to Julie Johnson, executive director.

The Center took on this strenuous project as a reflection of their mission as environmental educators, seeking to demonstrate their commitment to a healthy environment and a sustainable life.

The Center is truly a Living Building complete with interactive exhibits about the building and site, as well as a, practical showcase of energy efficiency and durable, sustainable materials and technologies. It hosts many school and other grouped for, tours, classes and activities, introducing thousands of people each year to their programs and philosophies and now their facility. **The inspiration is daily and the education significant.**

Jury Comments -

"The Hitchcock Center's work, which is already trending towards sustainability, is impressive."

"Julie is inspiring because she had a vision, and then completed it."

"It is to be expected that an environmental education facility would be sustainable, but an LBC project is above and beyond."

"This is an educational tool that will be used by generations to come."

"Most owners of buildings see their buildings as simple assets, but this is an asset for the whole community."