



Using LEED for Good

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Kobe Bryant and President Clinton display the LEED Platinum plaque for the Step Up on Vine project. (KelleyWestPhotography.com)

It's not everyday you see President Clinton & Kobe Bryant together holding a [LEED](#) plaque. But this Monday was no ordinary day.

Monday marked the grand opening of Step Up on Vine: LEED Platinum, permanent supportive housing for the chronically homeless in Hollywood, owned by the non-profit organization [Step Up On Second](#).



The Los Angeles Homelessness Services Authority estimates that 50,000 people are homeless in LA County on any given night. Of those, around 6,000 are considered both chronically homeless and mentally ill. While these statistics are bleak, Step Up On Second has risen up as a game-changer and a cause for immense hope. In 2010, the organization made a [Clinton Global Initiative \(CGI\) Commitment to Action](#) to "sustainably end homelessness in Hollywood." Together with Shangri-La Industries, the Corporation for Supportive Housing, and the American Roundtable to Abolish Homelessness, they set a goal to acquire, develop and operate 200 LEED-certified permanent supportive housing units by 2014. As of Monday, they are now halfway to reaching that ambitious goal.

The opening of this incredible facility is further realization of this promise. At Step Up On Vine, "LEED Platinum" is more than just a plaque. It says that these residents matter. They deserve a Platinum building with clean air, daylight and rooftop vegetable garden. This is sustainable housing that will offer shelter, a healthy environment, and the opportunity to grow their own food to eat and to sell locally. It's a place to call home, where people can "step up" to better lives.

Through their call for Commitments to Action, President Clinton and CGI have been a catalyst for massive societal and sustainable change across the world. Being on-site to witness Step Up to Second's commitment realized was incredibly moving – and the chance to celebrate with the Step Up folks, President Clinton himself, as well as Kobe Bryant, who is active in ending homelessness, this was a pretty unforgettable night. Like I said: far from a normal Monday!

The point is: In spite of all the politicking, the fighting, the everyday hurdles and perpetual crises, there is good happening all around us. BuzzFeed recently ran a post featuring [21 moments that restore our faith in humanity](#) – meeting the folks at Step Up On Second was my most recent moment. Witnessing their use of LEED to make the lives of formerly homeless residents better and healthier was invigorating and inspirational. It's the same feeling I get as we continue to work on our own CGI Commitment to Action - our [Project Haiti](#) initiative to build a LEED Platinum orphanage and children's center in Port-au-Prince. It's what motivates the affordable housing developer to work renewable energy and healthy building materials in to a project. It's why more than 30 USGBC staff members volunteer serving meals and supporting the homeless community in Washington, DC at [Miriam's Kitchen](#). It's the reason thousands of USGBC's community members and chapters volunteered more than 300,000 hours toward the missions of green building & social equity in 2012.

I'm proud to be a part of a community that brings together architects, engineers, change agents, pro-athletes and Presidents – all for the sake of doing the *right thing*. You should be, too.

Rick Fedrizzi
CEO & Founding Chairman
U.S. Green Building Council



3 comments

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Tami Hulcher

1 year 50 weeks ago

Nutritionist/Health Educator, President, The Queen of Health

I'm proud to be part of the Tower Garden partnership! This LEEDS program will provide a green, sustainable, enjoyable sanctuary for the homeless plus provide them with their very own 'farmer's market'...where they can enjoy the freshest, nutritious produce from rooftop to table! I'm working on putting the Tower Garden in schools, senior centers, restaurants...and making them available to the public. www.TheQueenof.TowerGarden.com Keep up the great work! Your pal in prevention and gal in green, Tami Hulcher, CNC, CHE "The Queen of Health"



Jennifer Berthelot-Jelovic

1 year 52 weeks ago

President & CEO, A SustainAble Production and Director of Sustainability at Shangri-La Construction, Shangri-la Construction

Thanks for coming to our Opening Rick! It was a pleasure to have you, Kobe & Vanessa and President Clinton! I have three Tower Gardens in my backyard now, after seeing the ones at Step Up!



Haw Chu Shiau

2 years 11 hours ago

Managing Director-LEED AP, Polar Vista International Co.,Ltd.

Doing the right thing-We should be too.

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