

Project Haiti's Seeds of Hope

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Photo credit: Marisa Long

What do a 5.5 million-square-foot research university in Saudi Arabia and a 6,000-square-foot orphanage in Haiti have in common? Inspired by sustainable architecture on two vastly different scales, their bond will soon help hundreds of children begin their journeys home.

The HOK team that designed the LEED-NC Platinum [King Abdullah University of Science and Technology \(KAUST\)](#) campus in Thuwal, Saudi Arabia, earned a \$50,000 award. Instead of dividing this money among the team, Science + Technology Director [Bill Odell](#) and other project leaders [set out to donate the \\$50,000 to a needy cause.](#)

I'm delighted that HOK's team decided to donate their money to the USGBC's [Project Haiti Orphanage and Children's Center](#) in Port-au-Prince. Since June 2011, an all-volunteer [HOK IMPACT](#) team has worked on their own time and in partnership with the USGBC to design this special project, which replaces an orphanage destroyed by the 2010 earthquake.

KAUST was the first of what has grown to a list of 16 LEED Platinum projects designed by our people. We anticipate that Project Haiti, a net-zero energy project targeting LEED Platinum and inspired by [principles of biomimicry](#), will be added to that list. Our hope is that this donation that began with KAUST – a high-tech example of next-generation sustainable design – plants seeds that will advance a new generation of safe, sustainable design in Haiti, where 80 percent of the population lives in poverty.

Our team's \$50,000 donation comes one month after HOK Chairman Emeritus [Bill Valentine](#) quietly made a \$20,000 personal gift to Project Haiti. Bill has devoted his career to helping others, so we were delighted but not surprised. He allowed us to make his donation public for one reason: because it could influence others to donate. When we factor in these donations with our people's pro-bono design time, direct expenses and other individual donations, HOK's total contribution to Project Haiti exceeds **\$300,000**. Every team member says they have received much more than they have given.

We thank the USGBC for this opportunity to make a positive impact, both in the developing world and in the world of sustainable design. The most exciting news is that the USGBC has nearly raised enough money to begin construction this spring, which would enable the orphanage to open one year later.

We're almost there! With your help, the USGBC can close the funding gap. Please [give today](#) and contribute to planting Project Haiti's seeds of hope.

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