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'Green Janitor' Education Program Empowers Janitors to Help Building Owners, Managers on Energy Savings, Water Conservation, Healthy Buildings

LADWP, Sony Picture Studios Sign On to Program Created by USGBC-Los Angeles, Building Skills Partnership, SEIU-United Service Workers West, Building Owners & Managers Assn.

Los Angeles, CA (March 26, 2015) – The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power and Sony Picture Studios have signed on to the Green Janitor Education Program, further growing the understanding that janitors benefit businesses when they have a seat at the sustainability table alongside building owners and managers. The announcement yesterday was part of a presentation on the Los Angeles pilot program that trained and certified the first 126 janitors in eight buildings across the region, from the South Bay to Glendale. The program provides hands-on energy management and green cleaning training to address Operations and Maintenance practices that enable buildings to meet green performance standards, with special focus on resulting energy efficiency. The report on the pilot program—how it worked, what could be improved, and next steps is [HERE](#).

The program was designed and piloted as a collaborative effort among Building Skills Partnership (BSP), the U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles (USGBC-LA), the Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater Los Angeles (BOMA-GLA), industry experts, building owners and Service Employees International Union (SEIU)-United Service Workers West.

The companies that participated in the pilot program include Blackstone (Oppenheimer & Co., Inc., Sun America Center, Santa Monica Business Park buildings), CBRE (Pacific Corporate Towers), Calsters (City National Plaza), DreamWorks Animation Studios, and JMB Realty (Constellation Place).

Speaking at the event, Chief Sustainability Officer, City of Los Angeles, Matt Petersen stated, "Mayor Garcetti committed to create 20,000 local clean energy, energy efficiency and clean water jobs during his first term in office. This program fits in perfectly, representing the three legs of sustainability: environment, equity and economy. The janitors are really the front line of creating a sustainable LA...they are walking our talk. And then they take the knowledge into their individual communities, becoming citizen entrepreneurs, and encouraging friends and family to live and act sustainably."

Speakers at the event also included Aida Barragan, Executive Director, BSP; Dominique Smith, Executive Director, USGBC-LA; David Huerta, President, SEIU-United Service Workers West; and Ana Velasquez, program-Certified green janitor, for DMS at City National Plaza. Janitors from a number of the buildings also attended in celebration. The report is available at <http://usgbc-la.org/greenjanitor/>.

The training curriculum—presented in Spanish—was created jointly by BSP and USGBC-LA over a two-year period, and addresses Energy & Water Conservation, Recycling & Waste Diversion, Green Cleaning, and Health & Safety.

In LEED-certified existing buildings, which included four of the eight original buildings, green maintenance and operations practices are required. However, prior to this Program, the janitors, who are at the forefront of building operations, didn't necessarily understand *why* certain sustainable

procedures or materials were required, or the kind of impact they, as janitors, could have on energy reduction and water consumption—and ultimately, human health—through their work.

Several notable results documented in the [Report](#), based on post-program discussions with janitors and building management, include:

- Increased understanding of sustainable concepts—19% intermediate level prior, 81% high level after training.
- Increased understanding of the importance and urgency 'going green cleaning'—40% prior, 60% after training.
- Practice of sustainable methods at home—5% prior and 95% after training.
- 100% support of 'going green' and 'green cleaning' after training.

Overall, the janitors developed confidence in their communication skills and became empowered to demonstrate what they learned at work (with their supervisors) and home. Managers acknowledged that as the janitors learned how and why, for example, turning off lights, unplugging appliances (which can pull vampire energy when left unused), and using green products, all connect to the LEED Rating System, they felt an increased sense of ownership and responsibility in helping control energy use and improve building health.

States USGBC-LA's Smith, "We see this as a movement in Los Angeles that will hopefully become national, serving as an example of social equity, where *everyone* participates in management and maintenance of a building. Empowering the janitors to identify issues of energy over-use, or problems with leaks, makes a huge difference in operational communication, which ultimately saves the building owner money, reduces the building's strain on the local infrastructure, and improves the health of all people in the building."

USGBC National established a 'LEED Operations+Maintenance: Existing Building' pilot credit for building service worker training, adding value to the partnership and program participation, and encouraging other cities to follow Los Angeles' lead.

"Janitors are the eyes and ears of what happens in a building. The work they do every night impacts a building's ability to save energy, conserve water, divert waste and improve indoor air quality," states BSP's Barragan. "It is important to invest in their education and skills to promote the best practices of a sustainable cleaning system and to integrate this primary immigrant workforce into the workplace community and create confidence and skill for career pathways."

Funding for the program consists of approximately 40% employer contributions and the remainder from a state grant under the CA Employment Training Panel (ETP). A seed grant from the Southern California Gas Company was also used to develop the curriculum and launch the first pilot.

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About Building Skills Partnership

The Building Skills Partnership is a 510(c)3 non-profit collaboration between SEIU-United Service Workers West, janitorial employers, building owners and community leaders. BSP's mission is to improve the quality of life for low-wage, property service workers and their families by increasing their skills, access to education, and opportunities for career and community advancement and participation. (<http://www.buildingskills.org/>)

About Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater Los Angeles

The Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater LA is a national non-profit trade association consisting of over 300 commercial office building owners throughout LA County. Their mission is to enhance the value of commercial real estate through advocacy, education and professional networking. (www.bomagla.org)

About U.S. Green Building Council-Los Angeles

USGBC-LA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization committed to creating a prosperous and sustainable future within one generation. Our mission promotes sustainability in LA County's built environment by delivering access to knowledge, resources, recognition and networking. (www.usgbc-la.org)

About Service Employees International Union-United Service Workers West

SEIU United Service Workers West represents more than 40,000 janitors, security officers, airport workers, and other property service workers across California. (www.seiu-usww.org)