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Phipps Executive Director Richard V. Piacentini Receives Living Building Challenge Hero Award
International Living Future Institute honors local leader as a global champion for sustainable innovation.

Pittsburgh, Pa. As the visionary behind Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens' newly debuted [Center for Sustainable Landscapes](#) (CSL), Executive Director Richard V. Piacentini has now been named one of 12 [Living Building Challenge](#) Heroes worldwide by the [International Living Future Institute](#) (ILFI), a nonprofit comprised of green building experts and thought leaders dedicated to creating socially just, culturally rich and ecologically restorative communities. For five plus years, this Challenge has inspired change in the way that buildings are designed, built and operated, and the award Piacentini received honors the efforts of those who have adopted the standard and nurtured the movement as a whole.

Since his tenure began in 1994, Piacentini has not only made great strides to revitalize Phipps, but he has also taken the lead on its transformation into one of the world's greenest public gardens with the building of the first LEED® certified visitor center in a public garden and the most energy-efficient tropical forest conservatory in the world when it opened in 2006. Phipps' latest accomplishment under his leadership is the CSL, an ultra-sustainable education, research and administration building that will generate its own energy, and treat and reuse all water captured on site, meeting or exceeding the three highest green building and landscape standards, including the progressive Living Building Challenge.

"From the moment I first heard about the Living Building Challenge and met its creator, ILFI CEO Jason McLennan, in 2006 I was inspired by the revolutionary principles behind it and eager to be among the first to pursue it with construction of the CSL," says Piacentini, who now travels extensively to speak about green design and operations, sharing his innovative spirit and expertise to help professionals around the globe operate more sustainably. "It is a tremendous honor to have received this award and I am truly humbled by the nomination from my colleagues. Equally rewarding has been the opportunity to share our accomplishments and lessons with others, offering a glimpse at the brighter future within our reach — one where our communities are healthier, safer and more supportive of all life."

Among the other international Living Building Challenge Hero Award recipients for 2012 are: Skip Bakus of the Omega Institute in New York; Bob Berkebile of BNIM Architects in Kansas City; Eden Brukman of the International Living Future Institute based in Portland; Mary Davidge of Mary Davidge Associates in California; Carolyn Aguilar Dubose of the Department of Architecture at Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City; Ben Gates of Central City Concern in Portland; Chris Hellstern and Stacy Smedley of KMD Architects in Seattle; Brian O'Brien of Solearth Ecological Architecture in Dublin; Warren Overton of VIRIDIS E3 in Australia; and Adam Robb of Jasper High School in Canada.

ABOUT PHIPPS

Built by Henry W. Phipps in 1893 at the height of Pittsburgh's industrial prowess, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens has evolved from the nation's first teaching conservatory to a distinguished eco-champion among America's 500 public gardens.

Phipps' mission is to inspire and educate visitors with the beauty and importance of plants; to advance sustainability and worldwide biodiversity through action and research; and to celebrate its historic glasshouse.

Phipps is open daily from 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Fridays until 10 p.m. Adults, \$12; Seniors 62 and older and students with valid ID, \$11; children 2-18, \$9; children under 2, free.

For more information, call 412/622-6914 or visit hipps.conservatory.org.

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