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Phipps Executive Director Richard V. Piacentini Receives Carnegie Science Award

Sustainability leader honored with Catalyst Award for innovations in green building and operations.

Pittsburgh, Pa.— As the visionary behind [Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens'](#) innovative [Center for Sustainable Landscapes](#) (CSL), Executive Director Richard V. Piacentini has been named as the recipient of a Catalyst Award — one of more than 20 honors bestowed upon individuals and organizations in western Pa. who have distinguished themselves by making unparalleled contributions to science and technology in various disciplines through the [2014 Carnegie Science Awards](#).

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 a global model of sustainability with the building of the first LEED®-certified visitor center in a public garden, the first LEED-certified greenhouses, and the Tropical Forest Conservatory, the most energy-efficient structure of its kind in the world when it opened in 2006. Phipps' latest accomplishment under his leadership is the CSL, a net-zero energy and net-zero water facility that has been designed to meet the progressive Living Building Challenge™. Already a recipient of LEED Platinum and Four Stars SITES™ certification from the Sustainable Sites Initiative™, it is also expected to be the first building anywhere to achieve all three of these rigorous standards.

“In a time when many of the environmental problems we face can be attributed to the fact that we are not only disconnected from nature but also live in a society that values the importance of ‘me’ over ‘we,’ it is not enough to simply build greener,” says Piacentini. “With the CSL, we hope to push the envelope even further, inspiring transformative experiences in the space as we celebrate our innate bonds to nature, and illuminate the many possibilities of sustainable building and landscaping. I am truly honored to have received the Catalyst Award in recognition of this work, which will benefit generations to come.”

To be presented to Piacentini at a ceremony held at the Carnegie Music Hall in Oakland on May 9, the Catalyst Award recognizes individuals or organizations who have come to exemplify an area of science because of the actions that they have taken to create public awareness over a broad swath of society, pioneered by people like Rachel Carson in the environment, Red Whittaker in robotics, and Alan Russell in regenerative medicine. Now in its 18th year, the Carnegie Science Awards have honored the accomplishments of 400 plus awardees who have improved the lives of others through their work.

About Phipps: Founded in 1893, Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens in Pittsburgh, Pa. is a green leader among public gardens with a mission to inspire and educate all with the beauty and importance of plants; to advance sustainability and promote human and environmental well-being through action and research; and to celebrate its historic glasshouse. Learn more: phipps.conservatory.org.

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