

RECOGNIZING POTENTIAL & SUPPORTING AMBITION: THE HITCHCOCK CENTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

In 2016 The Hitchcock Center for the Environment opened a one-of-a-kind “Living Building” in Amherst, one of only a handful in the country. The net zero energy, water and waste facility meets the highest standard of sustainable building and is a tool for the Center’s environmental education programs, providing participants the opportunity to engage with ecological principles throughout the building and beyond.

The vision for this multi-million dollar building was an ambitious one, particularly for an organization whose operating annual budget hovered under \$500,000 until 2013. CFWM’s Distribution Committee, well-versed in the challenges of small and mid-size nonprofits, understood the difficulty of achieving this goal. Yet we also recognized the innovation, leadership and experience that could create a new model for environmental education which would bring national attention to our region.

As a result, CFWM has assisted Hitchcock at each stage of the Living Building project over the last 10 years. Five grants totaling \$135,000 supported fundraising feasibility, campaign planning, architectural design, construction and, most recently, a grant to fund the building in action: a program to train teachers and introduce elementary students to biomimicry, ecological design, and sustainable technologies.

“The Community Foundation’s continued philanthropic support has been a critical partnership,” said Julie Johnson, executive director of the Hitchcock Center. “The Foundation believed in us early on and saw us through, from conception to realization.”



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