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Green Design and the City

Educating the Public

Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition

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The Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition offers a vast array of services to the general public as well as to civic, business and building industry leaders. Their purpose is to inform these groups about the economic, health and aesthetic benefits of green building.

The Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition uses 5 main resources to educate the public about green design. These consist of speaker series, workshops, green bags, greening your home and other special events. (Greater) In April of 2004 the GCGBC brought in Thomas Zung to speak about "The Sustainable Legacy of Buckminster Fuller - Doing More with Less," (Greater). This event was free to the public and consisted of a networking reception, a presentation by Thomas Zung followed by a reception. (Greater) This one of many of the speaker series that GCGBC holds to keep the public informed about the many aspects of green design. One of the workshops offered in July of 2005 was lead by Marcia Wolff of Design Council introducing the topic of natural plasters and finishes. This two hour workshop was also free to the public. (Greater)

Green Bag events are a bit different from the speakers and workshops in that they give the public people an opportunity to participate in a discussion on a green building

issue. In May of 2005 one of the green bags was focused on the topic of fair trade, an “alternative economic model which ensures that the producers of goods receive a fair price for their wares,” ([Greater](#)).

Greening your home is a series of sessions which introduce and educate people about such green ideas as greening electrical service, green daylighting, green heating and cooling, green water usage, green ventilation and green roofs. This specific series was held every Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 PM October 6th through November 10th. On November 14th of this year GCGBC held a special event to teach the public how they could green their homes for the winter. ([Greater](#))

The Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition offers its members many benefits. These benefits include free meetings, free tours, participation at Cleveland GBC member only events, regular newsletters on Cleveland GBC activities, regular announcements as well as a Cleveland GBC membership card. There is also an option which allows a company to get the benefits of membership for all their employees and have their company name listed on the GCGBC Corporate Members page. ([Greater](#))

The Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition has been recognized by several institutions for its efforts to educate the public about green design and its accomplishments in implementing green design throughout the state. In 2003 the Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition, with a special recognition of its founder Sadhu Johnston, received the Governor's Award for Excellence in Energy Efficiency. In addition, Sadhu Johnston was appointed by Governor Taft to the Ohio Public Benefits Advisory board and served on the Mayor-appointed Cleveland Air Committee. (“Office”)

In 2003 the George Gund Foundation gave 107 grants in order “to launch the new Health Policy Institute of Ohio, insure better legal representation for Ohio’s juvenile

offenders and continue efforts to promote green building standards in Greater Cleveland,” (“Recent”). They gave a total of \$3,391,750 to organizations in varying fields from the arts, environment, human services, and civic affairs to education, economic and community development. They granted the Cleveland Green Building Coalition a two-year \$120,000 grant in order to keep up their efforts to promote green standards in renovation and new construction projects throughout their community. (“Recent”)

In 2003 the George Gund Foundation commissioned a survey of the organizations to whom they gave grants for the purpose of obtaining “a candid assessment of its charitable efforts,” (Wilhelm). In general the Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition received good marks, it did lack in several areas. For one, they assessors determined that the Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition had ambiguous goals and confusing guidelines. (Wilhelm)

In 2004 Deal 7 Trends Team did a study about current environmental issues and how they are being addressed within Ohio, which included an assessment of the Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition. (Allison) Their mission was to “identify and document a selection of emerging societal and environmental trends for which Ohio EPA should be preparing, discuss the implications associated with those trends, and develop written recommendations, to the extent feasible, to address those trends,” (Allison). Their main complaint about the Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition was that it did not make enough of an effort to collaborate and coordinate their activities with similar organizations in the state of Ohio. (Allison)

I believe that the Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition has several other issues that they need to work on. I feel that although they have many opportunities for the community to learn about green design, they do not offer enough opportunities to

engage the public in the innovative designs they discuss. Most of their educational programs consist of a guest lecturer coming in and talking about a certain aspect of green design. The green bag program at least allows the people to participate in a discussion about a green topic. I also feel that the Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition is more involved with their own projects to help make their area more green and sustainable without enough focus on educating the public. Although I did not touch on this organization's projects, it is evident that their main focus is not the general public for they put a lot of effort into the civic, business and building industry leaders as well. They have done a lot of good spreading the word and increasing the amount of green design present in Ohio, but they do not focus enough on educating the general public about green design.

However, this organization should not be overlooked merely because its main focus is not to educate the public about green design. It does offer many opportunities for the community to learn about a vast amount of aspects of green design. They have so many things going on all the time with their speaker series, workshops, green bags, greening your home and special events which are incredibly informative. Also, it can not be overlooked that the Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition gives its members so many benefits. I believe that it is worth the money for one to become a member of the Greater Cleveland Green Building Coalition because of the amount of knowledge about green design one can gain from attending their diverse events.

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