



Category: 1 – Contribution to the Community

Specialty Contractor: Weifield Group Contracting and Hensel Phelps

Project Name: Chanda Center for Health Project

Chanda Hinton Leichtle was nine when it happened. A neighbor boy was playing with what he thought was an unloaded gun; the clip was out but a bullet was still in the chamber. The bullet shattered at impact and severed Chanda’s spinal cord between the C5 and C6 vertebrae; she was immediately paralyzed. Over time, Chanda’s pain and secondary conditions caused by her injury surfaced due to immobilization which led her on a downward spiral of overmedication and hopelessness – she was literally dying at age 21 and weighed only 59 pounds when she entered hospice care. It was then when her epiphany occurred.

What if there was a better way for me to manage my body without medication?, she wondered. She obtained a credit card and started adding therapies such as massage, acupuncture, and chiropractic services to her roster of care – and was amazed when her health turned completely around.

Special Needs Met

It was this experience that led Chanda to start a nonprofit, the Chanda Plan Foundation, in 2005, whose mission it is to improve the quality of life and reduce healthcare costs for persons with long-term physical disabilities through direct services and access to integrative therapies such as care coordination, adaptive yoga, behavioral health, massage, acupuncture, and chiropractic. This approach results in substantial benefits, including (on average): 30% pain reduction, 50% reduction in prescription pain medication usage, and 50% reduction in primary care visits for participants. It is a movement that Leichtle hopes will ignite, like a spark, to other states – and eventually, the nation.



Leichtle had previously leased space to serve participants – but all therapies weren’t provided in one location. She dreamt of a bigger facility that could serve as a single point of care while providing participants with a more peaceful and therapeutic environment. Thanks to generous donations – in October, 2015, Leichtle found the perfect 6,100 sq. ft. facility, and planning for its renovation began.

This project for Weifield and Hensel Phelps – the Chanda Center for Health – was so much more than the creation of a building. Weifield’s team of Sam Gluck, Scott Dorn, Sean Schmidt, and Chad Bowman were honored to be a part of this passionate mission to deliver health and hope to those who can’t help themselves.

“Our participants live so much within medical and sterile environments, so we wanted them to know that they could be in a therapeutic environment and still get all the critical care and therapies they need,” said Leichtle.

Planning and Executing the Optimal Facility

ADA code compliance and accessibility were critical to the project – so the team went beyond code-specific requirements to achieve user-specific needs, through installation of air units to make the rooms comfortable to each individual’s heating/cooling preferences, push-button locks on the restroom doors, shells for additional future lifts, etc. With every phase, the team considered accessibility, environment, and current/future needs.

“We came up with many solutions on-the-fly as Chanda would add more components to the project as additional donations came in. We didn’t charge for many of these changes as it was a charitable project,” said Scott Dorn, Weifield Service Electrician. “Weifield worked hard to maintain the schedule set by Hensel Phelps with the additional scope.”



In addition to new internal and external LED lighting, the construction scope included initial demolition, updated panels, new electrical for nine treatment rooms, new lobby/conference areas, and a new fire alarm system.

“With Hensel Phelps as the lead contributor to the project, the relationship between them and Weifield helped spur the project along,” said Leichtle. “The magic of this team was not only the in-kind services they provided but how quickly everyone put this project together.”

She added, “Many times with non-profits, contractors give of their time and service in-kind but then don’t provide the same quality as they would if they were getting paid. I did not experience that, here. Both Weifield and Hensel Phelps worked with us well and went above and beyond to make our requirements happen.”

Company Participation / Donation of Manpower

Leichtle had a prior relationship with Weifield Business Development Officer, Karla Nugent; Hensel Phelps’ Chief Estimator, Ryan Martorano, was introduced to Leichtle through Nugent which resulted in Hensel Phelps choosing the take on the project as General Contractor.

Martorano was paralyzed himself following a tragic accident after college, so he was immediately on-board with the mission of the Chanda Plan Foundation and the new facility. Subsequently, Hensel Phelps chose Weifield as the electrical contractor for the project. The remodel was to start in June, 2016, but due to the city’s permitting delays, actual construction began in September, 2016.

“We ensured that we built a trusting relationship and kept the owner informed of what is going on, no matter if it was good news or bad news,” said Martorano. “We hosted formal team meetings once per week but informal communication was happening all the time. The mission of the project became greater than the team members’ individual goals and it manifested in the form of exemplary teamwork.”





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Leichtle originally budgeted \$1.7M for the project – and the team worked on the cost model for three months in order to get the project in-budget. Hensel Phelps helped value-engineer the lighting package, and along with Weifield, provided manpower at no cost as an in-kind donation. Hensel Phelps self-performed the concrete and carpentry work and also forgave a large construction bill at project conclusion to benefit the project; additionally, the entire team was able to incorporate over \$150K in project scope at no additional cost to the organization. Weifield and HP helped to recruit other donations from subcontractors and vendors in cash, materials, and in-kind labor; altogether, \$750K was donated in-kind across the team.

“It’s a really good feeling – the facility has doubled the amount of capacity to service more than it was able to provide previously,” said Martorano. “The building’s purchase also resulted in four rental spaces that is now producing income for the organization and the facility can expand to double its size, when the time comes.”

Deep Impact to Chanda Participants

The new Chanda Center for Health currently serves 70 participants, a number Leichtle would like to triple within a short period of time. The facility’s layout offers a multitude of benefits, such as: a west-facing building to facilitate quicker ice melt in winter, high countertops to accommodate wheelchairs, a Zen garden, a tea bar and yoga room, treatment rooms with ceiling lifts, and more.

Anne Patton, Chanda Care Coordinator, said: “This facility, and Chanda’s vision, ensures that wellness and elimination of the daily struggle for participants is the top goal. It allows us to offer a wider range of services and its design fosters collaboration with other care givers to provide better support to participants. So in many more ways, we can meet participants’ needs.”



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Long-Term Community Value: Just the Beginning

The new facility is just the beginning of Leichtle’s plan; in 2009, she lobbied the state to include integrative therapies in Medicaid coverage for people with spinal cord injuries. Now, participants with spinal injuries in five Colorado counties have the Center’s services covered via Medicaid. Big picture-wise, Leichtle would like to create the playbook to replicate this program and her facility in other states -- to achieve true systemic change.

“Through our philanthropic endeavors we are able to serve more people, now, while we’re changing the system,” said Leichtle. “We have proven this approach works and is the model of healthcare that everyone deserves.”

Environmental / Safety:

Altogether, Weifield and Hensel Phelps performed over 20,000 man hours on the project – 1,200 of which were dedicated to safety. The team experienced no accidents, safety incidents, down time or lost time in meeting project deadlines. The companies’ respective safety programs require superintendents to implement effective safety procedures throughout the duration of every project – with the goal of achieving a zero-accident safety culture. The programs outline all safety and health requirements, focusing on relevant issues of the project, and the backbone is a continuous safety presence in the field and regular daily safety audits performed by the jobsite staff.

Overall, it was a seven-month construction process and the team completed the facility on April 27, 2017 – a week ahead of schedule. There were many challenges throughout the process – but the team navigated these hurdles to success through attention to safety, communication, quality, and partnership.

“Everyone is so grateful for this facility; the energy of working here is another byproduct of the generosity that came together to make this work for all,” said Patton.





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Said Martorano: “Personally, I am committed to the future goals of this organization due to my personal interest and my company’s support of the organization. We hope to find avenues to build more of these facilities for the organization in the future.”

Cory Sanger, Chanda participant with Cerebral Palsy who receives massage and acupuncture at the center, said, “The Chanda Plan makes the world seem bigger and more possible while giving me the energy to explore it.”



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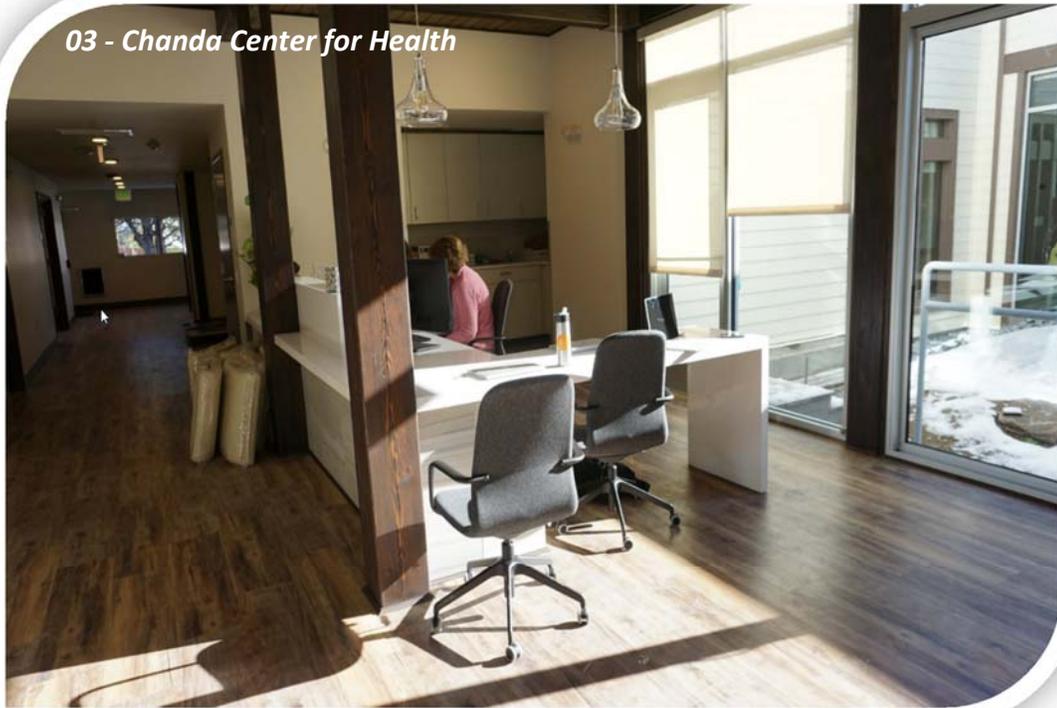


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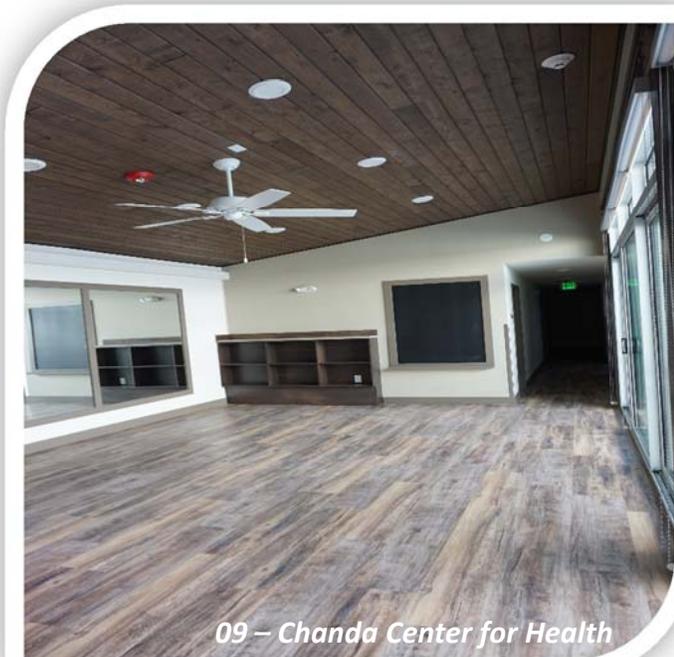




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