

Category 9: Best Building Project – General Contractor (\$10 - \$40 Million)

Contractor: Saunders Construction

Project: The Colorado Health Foundation

Start: November 2015

Completion: December 2016

Turning Vision into Reality

The Denver metropolitan area ranks no. 7 in the nation for green building according to the 2017 National Green Building Adoption Index, with nearly one in eight buildings maintaining some sort of sustainable certification. And while Saunders Construction has been a part of the green building initiative for years, its Colorado Health Foundation (TCHF) project was a first in many ways, including WELL certification* — a first for the State of Colorado.

Its purpose is emulated in every corner of the building — from its 120 linear feet of potted planters, both inside and out, to its hands-on health and wellness education of the construction team who built it.

TCHF features health-positive design and development standards that aim to improve the health of both staff and visitors. The three-story building, with approximately 32,500 sq. ft., offers direct access to outdoor areas via rooftop decks and gardens. Green wasn't just a token phrase for TCHF, it's literally a way of life. So much so, they broke the mold of client/contractor relationship to ensure its vision was brought to life.

The building stands three stories tall and includes one level of below grade parking, with charging stations for electric vehicles. Healthy building attributes include active stairways, oxygen-producing interior plantings, careful attention to room acoustics, an employee café offering healthy food and rooms for privacy.

The third floor offers employees access to two terraces, which feature mature trees craned in near the completion of the project. An on-site gym, demonstration kitchen and dedicated bike rack room promote employees to stay active, even while on the job.

The location was selected because of its centralized proximity and easy accessibility to a vast array of transportation options.

Taking Client Relations to the Next Level

The process of achieving TCHF's vision was full of firsts, but the Saunders project team showed its ability to adapt and provide true value along the way. In part, it was thanks to the team's solid experience that they were able to think outside the box when it came to construction practices, ultimately leading to one-of-a-kind finished product and a satisfied client.

On THCF project, Saunders worked very closely with KL&A and Davis Partnership. Their weekly meetings did not go to waste, and were often cost productive for the owner.

In one of these meetings, our team challenged the overall length of the third level canopies due to the size and cost of the steel beams. This was a very important design feature to Davis Partnership and TCHF; therefore, it was important that everyone clearly understood the potential cost impact this change would have on the project. Davis Partnership and KL&A worked in the meeting to sketch up the new detail, while our team provided an order of magnitude price of \$750,000 to justify fine tuning the detail for the construction documents.

"The Colorado Health Foundation had a large vision for the new headquarters. We sought to build a facility that promotes the health of both employees and visitors and is a model for health-centered workplace design. Saunders delivered a project that was not only on time and within budget, but truly embraces our vision," said Rahn Porter, CFO of The Colorado Health Foundation. "Additionally, the Saunders team adopted our health-centered approach by promoting better food choices, hosting a step challenge and providing education to their employees and subcontractors. Saunders is truly a partner and not just another contractor."

The Saunders project team took the vision of the project one step further — no pun intended — creating a challenge for their construction field crews to "Walk Around the World." Each crewmember was given a pedometer to keep track of their progress and, at project completion,

totaled 35 million steps to combat the health problems that often plague the construction industry.

Going Beyond the Norms of Innovation

This one-of-a-kind project is seeking LEED Gold Certification under Version 4 and WELL Certification. TCHF will be the first building in the State of Colorado to hold such designation when the certifications are achieved.

Coined biophilia, bringing the outdoors in (and back out again) plays a large part in the aesthetic of the building. Starting with a floor-to-ceiling living wall, the tallest in Colorado, that is home to hundreds of plants, this distinctive feature transitions seamlessly into a large ground floor water feature.

Instead of forced air, it features an energy-efficient Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) system and access to operable windows that provide greater occupant comfort, all while reducing overall carbon emissions. Cubicle and office electrical outlets were also set up to power down at 5 p.m. every day to promote a healthy work/life balance for employees.

A Far Cry from Cookie Cutter

Although small in footprint, TCHF packs a punch with numerous materials that make up the 14 corners with CIP concrete, precast, zinc metal panels, aluminum composite panels and wood siding. This type of diversity in material usually equates to challenges, but the team's pre-planning and ultimate execution showed true quality. The craftsmanship to create a smooth transition between these to different materials took an incredible amount of coordination and attention to detail, but resulted in a stunning finished product.

Saunders also sought subcontractor buy-in to eliminate risk in the schedule. The team utilized the Lean Last Planner Pull Plan system for each milestone. Committed dates were tracked weekly, that way any deviation from the schedule was apparent and corrected accordingly — this combated any potential delays in schedule. This approach secured subcontractor accountability,

but also created a teamwork environment where Saunders alone wasn't shouldering the communication and coordination responsibilities.

Subcontractor involvement was key on the project for many reasons, but one of the most important being the sheer number of subs contracted. With specialty materials and state-of-the-art advancements being installed daily, Saunders knew our relationship with the subcontractors on the project could make or break the overall success.

A constraints board was created for the job site trailer. Each worker was first encouraged to solve the constraint presented in the field prior to writing it on the board. If this was not successful, the item was written on the board and Saunders would ensure the constraint was resolved. This encourage subcontractors to complete the work as a team. The project team thrived on the idea that they were all building blocks. If one fails, we all fail - thus the need to watch out for one another.

Fulfilling a Client's Vision

The design goal was to integrate architectural, landscape, interiors, lighting and signage to create a high-performance building that promotes an active, healthy workplace.

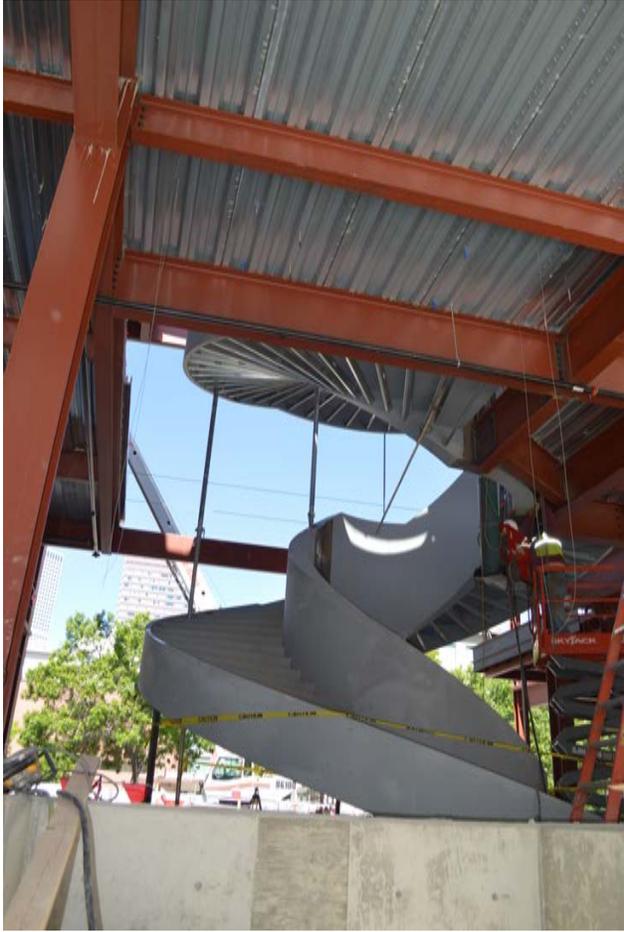
Careful attention has been paid to interior layouts that encourage collaboration and communication while still affording opportunities for privacy and focused work. This also included the amount of sunlight each employee would get throughout the day — a key component of TCHF's vision for its work environment. The glass partitions separating the offices from cubicles are demountable, so the area can theoretically be re-designed if the client so chooses to do so at a later time.

Constructed from steel, a curved staircase acts as the heart of the building. Delivered on five over-sized loads from Minnesota, the steel pieces came already curved, but were welded and assembled on site.

Every aspect of the project emphasizes the concept of “replicability,” letting the Foundation show other companies that they too can create a workplace that supports health and wellness for employees and visitors.

**Pending final review.*









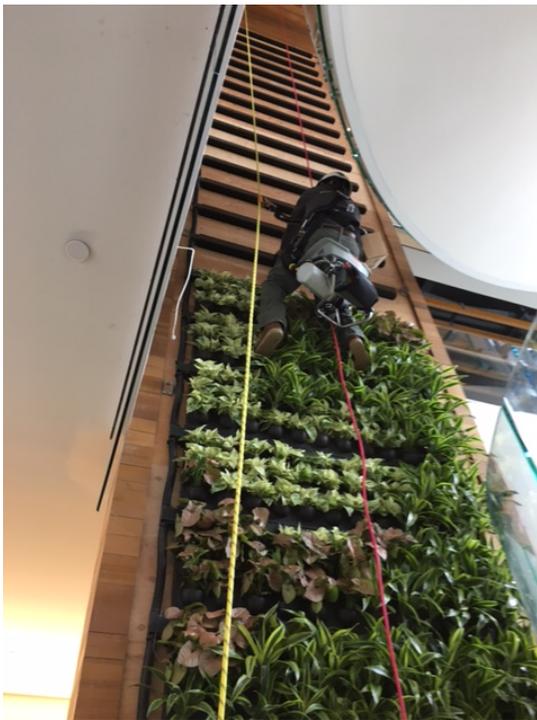
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