

## **SUSTAINABILITY HOUSE: A LIVING-LEARNING LABORATORY**

By Kimberly Reeves

Sunlight in every room, direct access to our Greenhouse neighbors, a place to display sustainable practices, and a welcoming environment - These are just a few of the highlights of the Office of Sustainability's new space. At the start of the Spring 2015 semester, the Office of Sustainability moved into what was once the Patterson House at 12 Cragmor Village Drive.

"The building is well suited to accommodate our office staff and students, as well as provide space for sustainability student groups such as the Green Action Fund and Students for Environmental Awareness and Sustainability. We plan to utilize the house to pilot and showcase sustainable strategies such as xeriscape, energy efficiency, solar and more" said sustainability director Linda Kogan.

There are already several new sustainable demonstrations in the building including solar film on the windows to reduce glare and heat entering the southern windows; a refrigerator that meets the latest stringent Energy Star efficiency requirements; and a Nest thermostat which is programmable and activates features to save additional energy based on occupant habits. The windows provide ample daylighting such that lights are mostly not needed.

Student employees enjoy the new space. Rachel Shaffer, who has worked in the office for the past two years, states, "[the] wilderness area surrounding the Patterson house creates a space that is ideal for peaceful contemplation and reflection. This connection to sense of place directly ties our initiatives to what we're trying to protect."

An example of one sustainability strategy already installed is Interface carpet tile that was donated to the office. The Net Effect carpet tile collection is designed to create a sense of the ocean with its color and texture and the materials comes from discarded fishing nets that are collected while cleaning up the beaches in the Philippines. Positive impacts include protection of the double barrier reef off the shores of the Philippines and proceeds are sent back to these communities to help with disaster relief.

Where traditional carpets use immense amounts of petroleum and are often installed with toxic adhesive glues, Interface tiles are made from recycled materials and use very small adhesive squares to link the tiles together. Tiles can be changed out in 30 seconds when necessary from wear and tear. [You can read more about how Interface has reached an 80% diversion rate and their many design collections here.](#)

Future plans for the office include completing an energy audit to determine other energy saving strategies, designing a xeriscape garden, and creating a self-guided tour. The first tour of the building will be at Sustainnovation on April 10 from 3:30 - 4:30. On Earth Day, April 22, there will be an open house from 4-6 p.m.

Our blue house sits at the end of Cragmor Village Road, past the Forester and Ulrich Houses, past a few residential houses and next to the Greenhouse and lot 103. Please feel free to drop by and say hello! We'd love to welcome you to our space.