

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 11, 2021

Ocean Discovery Institute's Living Lab Reaches LEED Platinum Certification

San Diego, California:

The community of City Heights just earned global recognition from the U.S. Green Building Council. Ocean Discovery Institute's Living Lab, in the heart of the City Heights community, was just certified as a [Platinum LEED building](#), the highest sustainability ranking, by the U.S. Green Building Council.

LEED, standing for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, provides a framework for healthy and highly efficient green buildings.

"Ocean Discovery Institute's Living Lab is the embodiment of the promise we make to future generations through education and environmental sustainability. Through the design and construction of this facility, Ocean Discovery Institute has invested in the future to prepare the next generation of leaders and pave the way for tomorrow's innovations," said Douglas Kot, an advisor on the Living Lab and Board Member of the San Diego Green Building Council.

The Living Lab was funded in part with \$10 million from San Diego Unified's voter-approved Proposition Z. Here Ocean Discovery Institute works to create a learning environment where young people who are traditionally excluded from science due to race, income status, and education level have the opportunity to do science and become science leaders who transform their lives, community, and our world.

"This platinum certification is a testament to the hard work of the City Heights community, the Ocean Discovery Institute, and our taxpayers who invested in our children," said Richard Barrera, San Diego Unified Board of Education President.

With the Living Lab as the means for accessing young people from K-career, Ocean Discovery creates access to hands-on ocean science and mentoring during and after school. Students build confidence and skills to overcome barriers created by systemic racism in science. As a result of this work, students increase the belief that they can become scientists, and partnering schools demonstrate statistically significant higher achievement on state standardized tests. Through our most intensive program, 90% of participants earn a college degree within six years. Among these students, 73% earned science/related degrees, and 42% attained science/related careers. Because of this, they received The White House's *Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring*, the highest honor for advancing the participation of underrepresented groups in STEM.

Excitingly the Living Lab is one of only three certified LEED Platinum education sites across San Diego and the only one in City Heights. Achieving this level of certification required significant vision, planning, and implementation and Ocean Discovery worked collaboratively with RWQ Architects, Spurlock Landscape Architects, Stok energy consultants, and many others who supported the vision and effort over the past ten years.

###

Media Contact: MacKenzie Sandy, (619)248-2300, msandy@oceandi.org