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NEWS

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Nonprofit school brightens classrooms and its bottom line *Childswork Learning Center invests in lighting efficiency to reduce energy consumption*

PORTLAND, Ore – January 4, 2012 – Childswork Learning Center, a nonprofit early childhood education school located at 4235 SE Salmon Street, was consuming more energy than necessary thanks to an outdated and inefficient 50-year-old school building. With guidance and incentives from Energy Trust of Oregon, the 29-year-old school was able to upgrade its lighting and improve the classroom experience, while lowering operating costs and saving \$7,300 in annual utility costs.

Like many nonprofits, Childswork is doing everything it can to minimize operating costs to maximize dollars invested in its programs. The building's older windows, dated lighting and ancient heating system motivated the school's board of directors to investigate ways to reduce energy consumption. School administrators turned to Energy Trust for help in finding energy-efficiency solutions that could deliver a short-term payback and long-term cost savings. An energy audit concluded that the school's inefficient lighting was the best and easiest first project and could deliver immediate savings.

"Our energy costs were high," said Kim Hill, executive director. "The energy audit was clear that if we tackled the lighting first, we could do our part to use less energy and save a lot of money pretty quickly. Plus we could pay for the project with the help of the incentives and improve the light quality in the classrooms."

Childswork upgraded from inefficient T12 lighting to energy-efficient T8 lighting, installed occupancy sensors and modernized the light fixture lenses throughout its 20 classrooms and offices, as well as hallways.

"I'm guessing that we replaced more than 1,000 light bulbs," Hill continued. "The light quality in the classrooms is so much better in fact, that we can actually turn off unneeded light, which helps us save even more energy."

Energy Trust provided cash incentives of \$15,600 toward the cost of Childswork's energy-efficiency improvements, which are estimated to save 88,438 kilowatt hours of electricity or \$7,300 in utility costs annually.

“The project has been completed just a short while, but in the first month I saw a 25 to 30 percent decrease in our monthly bill,” Hill said. “As a nonprofit, we operate on a tight budget. Any expenditure we don’t have to make is allocated toward enhancing our program, more scholarships to kids in need, better pay for teachers or more materials and supplies. We look to invest our resources in the best way possible to make sure we fulfill our mission and put those savings right back into our school.”

Thanks in part to the lighting upgrade and other efforts, recently Childsworld was designated an Eco-Healthy Child Care facility by the national Children’s Environmental Health Network for using best practices to reduce children’s exposure to environmental health hazards.

Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping utility customers benefit from saving energy and tapping renewable resources. Our services, cash incentives and energy solutions have helped participating customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural and Cascade Natural Gas save more than \$1 billion on energy bills. Our work helps keep energy costs as low as possible, creates jobs and builds a sustainable energy future. Learn more at www.energytrust.org or call 1-866-368-7878.

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