

Green Visionary Scholarship

I believe the next innovative, energy-saving approach to home building is a change in mind-set about the structure that are currently standing. Our attitude and approaches to anything new to us is very important. It takes a lot more work to turn something green, then it does to just start fresh with a green idea. Instead of looking at homes and focusing on all the issue they may have, or maybe even focusing on a “not so perfect” neighborhood, we should make up our minds that we are going to make it better. It would be great to salvage an existing house, and I don’t mean take it apart and use those pieces in a new home. I mean really look at a home and try to envision it when it was first built, bring the structure back to its original beauty but with green products. If we start with just one person committing to salvaging a home, that could multiply to two people. That can catch on like wild fire, from two to four, and then four to eight. Before you know it, whole neighborhoods will have gone green and added value not just to an industry but to the life around us. Phil Knight, co-founder of Nike Inc. said, “Without a revolution in thinking nothing of magnitude is ever achieved.” Let’s start a *green revolution*, and take what we already have and make it green.

We are blessed that we live in a country with so many freedoms. We are free to make wise choices, and so long as we don’t cause harm to anyone, we are also free to make questionable choices. I think that most of the time when these questionable choices are made it’s because there was a lack of knowledge. I don’t think I’ve ever met a person, or heard of anyone that made a bad choice and then said, “yeah I’d do it again and in exactly the same way”. Everyone wants to improve and make their world a better place, but sometimes people don’t know where to start or where to get the help and direction they need. What if businesses in the construction industry played a more hands-on roll? It could be somewhat like that Adopt-a-

Highway program, instead the focus would be on educating our neighbors on the benefits of going green, and more importantly, showing them how easy it would be to update their homes with energy-saving products. Helping them to be mindful to the point that we inspire them to take action. Mahatma Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” If green is what we want, then we have to make sure that everyone is seeing and thinking green.

We know that formed habits, or thought patterns, are hard to break. But it can be done, and that in fact, people do it all the time. Sometimes it's just a matter of knowing that someone else is doing it and that it's working for them. What better way to lead than by example. If we go to our neighbors to tell them that green is the way to go, they may not want to hear it, but what if we showed them? What if we brought them examples of what's working and being practiced in our place of business or home? By the time you get to that second and third neighbor you can add the previous success stories to your own. There is no better evidence than seeing something with your own eyes. A person that sees green living surrounding them is going to want to be green also. No one wants to have the ugly home or building on the block or community – and no one has to. Part of the job of the leaders in the construction industry that practice energy-saving and sustainable building and manufacturing is to inspire the people around to follow their lead. What an awesome responsibility, to make the world around us not just nicer looking, but to ensure that it's well built. So well-built that it doesn't just save us energy today but that it will continue to do that well into the future.

Good changes are not just going to happen. Forward thinking must be done on purpose. It's ultimately up to us to change things. Thomas Edison said, “there is always a way to do better – find it.” Find a way to show how it could be done in an energy-savings way. Let's be determined to get the people around us on board and to achieve this even if it seems difficult at

first. Sometimes the hardest thing is just getting started, but once we're on the way, there will be no stopping us. Many know the story in the Bible of the Tower of Babel. In the New Living Translation version, in Genesis 11:6 it says "Look! He said. The people are united, and they all speak the same language. After this, nothing they set out to do will be impossible for them!" Now, I'm pretty sure the language the Bible refers to in this verse is Hebrew, but we are all united in a language also. It's a language of energy-savings, sustainable development and green materials. If our mind-set is changed so that we're all thinking the same then there wouldn't be anything that we cannot accomplish. We can bring about this changed mind-set by helping the people closest to us to increasing their knowledge of what's available and what can work in their current environment. Energy-saving isn't just about paying less in utilities. It's also conserving our energy – it's hot in Florida! Living in an energy efficient home will also improve your comfort and quality of life. There is no better way to change a person's mind than in showing them that you've already done it. Leading by example and showing how cutting-edge technology meets an unwavering commitment to energy conservation. Les Brown said, "Change your thinking. Change your life! Your thoughts create your reality...". Let's create a reality in which energy-saving is second nature.

Marisol Meléndez



Email: 