

## *How were the design consultants, architects, construction company and trades people chosen to accomplish the vision?*

The IHM community issued its requirements, with detailed specifications, to those who wished to submit qualifications to the selection committee. The Request for Qualifications asked companies to demonstrate clearly, through their own vision and experience, their understanding of sustainable values and their ability and willingness to practice the 3 R's—reduce, reuse, recycle—on the project.

## *What is the geothermal well system?*

Geothermal energy uses the Earth's temperature for heating and cooling. The 240-hole, closed-loop system will provide efficient, renewable, and lower cost heating and cooling to the Motherhouse. The system takes advantage of the Earth's steady 55-degree underground temperature. Water that is constantly circulated through the 54 miles of pipe will be warmed or cooled by the Earth. In essence, the Earth is being utilized as a large radiator.

## *What is a graywater system, and why was this chosen?*

Water is a non-renewable resource that is becoming scarcer in our world. The installed graywater system will reduce water consumption by 6,200 gallons per day. The system will retrieve used water from sinks and showers in the Motherhouse via a separate graywater piping system routed to a constructed wetland. The wetland will filter the water in a way similar to the Earth's natural cleansing process, and the water will then be returned to the building for flushing toilets.

## *How else has environmentally responsive sustainable design been utilized in the building renovation?*

Each product and building system was selected based on the criteria of least negative impact on the environment during the manufacturing process and use of renewable sources of materials and energy. Sustainable elements chosen include cork flooring, low-voc paint, mineral wool insulation, managed forest wood products, retrofitted light fixtures and gypsum wallboard, which utilizes recycled materials. Additionally, every effort has been made to salvage, reuse and/or recycle materials. More than 800 existing wood windows were restored and hundreds of existing doors were reused.

## *How has the landscape been altered?*

Diverse elements in the site design look to our geographical area, the Maumee Lake Plain Bioregion, for cues. The Monroe Campus lies within the River Raisin watershed, a regional water system that extends westward to Jackson and eastward to Lake Erie. The bioregion, in its natural state, was a deciduous swamp rich with northern hardwoods, prairie, savanna, red maple, emergent marshes and wet meadows. Nature itself provided a sustainable balance. The site restoration will return areas to meadow savanna planted with seasonal grasses and wildflowers. As non-native trees die, they will be replaced with young, regionally appropriate species. An endangered oak savanna ecosystem near the cemetery will be restored. Swales in parking lots will capture storm water runoff and relieve the city drainage system. Motorized traffic will be diverted to the property's perimeter to allow for contemplative pathways and spaces, easily accessed by wheelchairs.

## *What has the IHM community learned through this renovation and restoration process?*

The IHM community has learned that transformation requires a change of heart. A commitment to the Gospel's transforming mission has called the IHM community to recognize that the Earth has suffered abandonment in many ways. Through this process the IHM community has become aware that the poor suffer disproportionately from natural disasters due to environmental devastation. The IHM community, the architects, the construction company and its subcontractors have learned together much more about how sustainable renovation and restoration can have a beneficial environmental impact. This has led to a transformation of professional construction and renovation approaches and practices. The contractors and subcontractors who worked on this project are now, in turn, implementing earth-friendly practices on other projects, thus changing the marketplace of the future.

Restoring and transforming this bit of Earth and developing it into a center for sustainable living and learning will impact systems and the lives of all people touched by the IHM community and its colleagues. In this 21st century, as it has since 1845, the IHM community will "risk deeds our own hearts could never dream."