

Yale Divinity School receives largest donation in school history for green building project

by [Dawn Araujo-Hawkins](#) in the [March 11, 2020](#) issue



Living Village view from the south (courtesy photo)

Last month, Yale Divinity School received the largest gift commitment in the institution's history when George and Carol Bauer pledged \$15 million toward the construction of what is believed to be the world's largest sustainable residential complex.

Neither George, a former IBM executive, nor Carol, a hospital chaplain, attended Yale Divinity School, although George serves on the dean's advisory council.

In a statement published to the divinity school website, Dean Greg Sterling called the couple "visionaries who embody Christianity."

The Living Village, as the construction project is called, will provide housing for 155 divinity school students at below-market rental rates. All the buildings will be solar powered, and they will capture and treat their own water and waste.

In designing the village, the school has worked closely with Jason McLennan, founder of the Living Building Challenge green certification. The core premise behind the certification is that buildings should function as cleanly and efficiently as a flower. When it's completed, the Living Village will be the first project both in the state of Connecticut and in the Ivy League to earn a Living Building Challenge certification.

"The Village will send a powerful message to churches and society—the message that it is both imperative and feasible to live sustainably in a world threatened by climate change and other environmental challenges," Sterling wrote in his statement. "We believe that through this project we will have an exponential impact, by inspiring other individuals and institutions and by sending out alumni who will have a transformed understanding of sustainable living and standards."