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Urfer Family Park earns stop on Green Homes Tour

Sarasota County's newest park is also the county's first park to be nominated for LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council. That distinction has earned Urfer Family Park, 4000 Honore Ave., Sarasota, a spot on the new Green Homes Tour.

The Myakka River Branch of the U.S. Green Building Council and the Home Builders Association Manatee-Sarasota, in collaboration with Sarasota County, is sponsoring the Green Homes Tour from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 21. The tour will introduce the home-buying public to the enhanced comfort, quality, safety, durability, and energy performance features that distinguish green homes from conventionally built homes.

Urfer Family Park, which opened to the public on Nov. 14, was constructed with many state-of-the-art sustainable techniques, processes, and materials. Some of the more noteworthy sustainability features of the park include:

- Installing low-flow irrigation systems and Florida friendly plants to reduce water usage by 50 percent
- Diverting 75 percent of construction waste by recycling or reusing materials
- Using recycled content in about 15 percent of the construction materials
- Implementing measures to control soil erosion, waterway sedimentation and airborne dust pollution
- Increasing on-site infiltration and removing pollutants from stormwater runoff
- Building the park in accordance with the Florida Water Star Gold criteria
- Building the park to standards for Florida Yards and Neighborhoods certification
- Installing roofing materials with exorbitant reflectivity to keep buildings cool
- Using sustainably harvested wood for about one-third of the wood materials

While there are many sustainable environmental features built into Urfer Family Park, the focus on the environment was not the only sustainable approach.

"Urfer Family Park was an excellent opportunity to showcase many sustainable green development practices," said Rob LaDue, Sarasota County Parks and Recreation project manager. "We believe that this new addition to our parks is something that our community can be very proud of."

Tickets for the tour are \$10, with children 18 and under free, and are available online at www.sustainabletampabay.org or at Urfer Family Park, 9 – 11 a.m., on the morning of

the tour. In addition, the sponsors will provide free tours of Urfer Family Park every hour from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask about the Green Homes Tour and Urfer Family Park.

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