

Philanthropy: Each donation can make a difference



The new physics building HPQ on the Höggerberg campus is set to be built between 2022 and 2029.

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This philanthropy column by Donald Tillman was first published in ETH Zurich's Globe Magazine in December 2022.

ETH recently held a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the start of construction of the new HPQ physics building on the Höggerberg campus. With its highly sophisticated, world-leading facilities, this new laboratory building may well make the crucial difference as the next generation of researchers strives to reach new levels of excellence in the field of quantum technology and to foster new innovations that will benefit Switzerland and the rest of the world.

The mood at the ceremony was correspondingly upbeat – yet anyone who has been following this project will know that, for a long time, it was unclear whether it would ever see the light of day.

ETH spent years mustering its financial resources, but it was never enough to get the project off the ground; however crucial it was to the future of ETH quantum research, it seemed destined to remain on the shelf. But fortune intervened, and along came a donor to give the final push to get construction underway.

It's a useful lesson in how a single donation can sometimes be the decisive factor in taking a university to the next level in a particular field. In other words, philanthropy can indeed make a real difference!

Globe Magazine

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