Design is Education

This issue of Blueprints departs from the usual exhibition-oriented themes to focus on the Museum’s education programs and related topics. Highlights include articles exploring general developments in design-based education, a “focus” on the Museum’s acclaimed photography-based outreach program for teens, and an interview with a leader of the effort to establish a new National Academy to promote research and effective advocacy on architecture and design.

from the executive director

You Are What You Teach

Among the most enthusiastic friends of the National Building Museum are the parents of children who have participated in our youth education programs. Through a variety of hands-on activities, the Museum uses the design process as a vehicle for teaching kids skills in problem-solving, abstract thinking, and communication, along with specific mathematical and scientific principles. I am frequently reminded of the transformative power of our programming when I introduce myself to Washingtonians with children. For example, when I met Robert J. Lamb, executive director of the Friends of the National Zoo, he eagerly explained that his son’s experiences at the Museum served as perfect preparation for the work he is now doing. His career since leaving the Museum is distinctive from academically oriented courses of study—a strategy that often marginalized vocational students. According to D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee, Phelps High School represents a new educational model in which academic and vocational tracks will be co- mingled, thereby offering graduates more career options. And the design process is the foundation for this comprehensive curriculum.

Our education programs have reached hundreds of thousands of youngsters, and while our goal is not to turn each one into an architect or engineer, we do expect all of them to emerge with a clearer understanding of the value of good design and the many ways in which they can positively influence the world around them. We believe that design education is an excellent platform for broader learning, and are actively expanding the reach of our popular programs such as Bridge Basics by making self-contained educational activity kits available to schools across the country.

The value of design-based education is gaining broader acceptance. I recently attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Phelps High School here in Washington, a former vocational school that has been re-conceived as a comprehensive public school with a focus on architecture, construction, and engineering. In the past, it was common for school systems to treat vocational education as a discrete path, distinct from academically oriented courses of study—a strategy that often marginalized vocational students. According to D.C. Public Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee, Phelps High School represents a new educational model in which academic and vocational tracks will be co- mingled, thereby offering graduates more career options. And the design process is the foundation for this comprehensive curriculum.

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Chase W. Rynd
President and Executive Director

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Design Education Within Reach

In October 2005, the American Architectural Foundation (AAF) and the Chicago Architecture Foundation (CAF) established A+DEN, the Architecture + Design Education Network, a collaborative association of organizations committed to promoting architecture and design education in grades K-12. Jennifer Massengale, an education specialist at CAF, describes A+DEN as a resource for educators looking for information and design curricula.

“We are not asking teachers to do all the research or develop the lesson plans; instead, we are showing them how the design process can be used to teach core academic subjects like math, science, social sciences, language arts, fine and visual arts. We want to help them do what they do, only better.” Organizations like A+DEN and design education teacher manuals like the National Building Museum’s Bridge Basics Program Kit and CAF’s Schoolyards to Skylines are helping to bring design education into the classroom.

The most compelling proof of design education’s increased popularity is the growing number of U.S. high schools offering a specialized education in architecture and design. Two of the forerunners of this movement are the Design and Architecture Senior High School (DASH) in Miami, Florida, and the Charter High School for Architecture and Design (CHAD) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. These high schools offer design-centric curricula and programming and use the design process to teach across subjects.

What is the design process? At its core it is a method for solving problems. The design process includes identifying and defining problems, gathering and analyzing information, determining performance criteria, evaluating and selecting appropriate solutions, generating alternative solutions, implementing choices, and evaluating outcomes. When used as a teaching methodology, the design process deemphasizes the notion that there is one answer and instead encourages the investigation of multiple solutions to any given problem.

“Design education encourages children to come up with their own answers rather than having them memorize information. It does not teach to the test. Instead, it takes a problem and applies various lenses to it,” explains Sarah Rice, director of Youth Education at the National Building Museum.

The design process is the cornerstone of the National Building Museum’s youth education program. The Museum has taught thousands of design-related school programs and has developed a self-contained kit—Bridge Basics—that teachers can use to teach math and physics through design. The versatility and flexibility of the design process seem to be contributing to its increased popularity as a vehicle for teaching. “There is a growing consensus among educators that design education is the future of early education because it is increasingly being linked to standards of learning and it allows teachers to teach across disciplines,” notes Rice. This “future” can be seen nationwide in both elementary and secondary education.

Design Appeal

In Florida’s Miami-Dade County, DASH has provided an integrated liberal and applied arts education to artistically talented students since 1990. A public, magnet, design-focused high school—one of the oldest in the nation—DASH’s stated mission is “to educate talented students to become confident and innovative thinkers through interdisciplinary challenges in the visual arts in preparation for college and a career in the design world.” In order to achieve this mission, DASH has created a learning environment with a professional atmosphere, where students are inspired to be active in their own education. DASH calls this approach “Education by Design.”

Last year, not only did 100 percent of seniors graduate, but all of them went on to college, with between 80 and 82 percent of those students entering design and art programs. “To really complete our programs, the students have to go on to a four-year college,” says Dr. Stacey Mancuso, principal of DASH. “We have had great success in the past few years with college admittance and scholarships. Last year 118 seniors were accepted to colleges and received $3.6 million in scholarships.”

This success has made DASH an elite educational option in the Miami-Dade area and has brought the school international recognition, including being listed 8th on U.S. News and World Report’s list of America’s Top 100 High Schools for 2007. DASH has a highly-selective admission process—last year, 700 applicants applied for 120 spaces. Prospective students go through a series of portfolio and transcript reviews and must participate in an audition. Although they are selected based on their visual art abilities rather than academic performance, DASH students excel at core academic subjects, with 95 percent of 10th graders meeting or exceeding state standards in mathematics and 75 percent meeting or exceeding state reading standards.
The Philadelphia Experiment

In 1999, the Philadelphia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects established CHAD as part of its Legacy 2000 project. From a rocky beginning, which included the school’s closing for a short time in its first year, CHAD—the nation’s first charter high school for architecture and design—is now confidently entering its 10th year.

Designing Design Education

Design is the word of the day; every day, at CHAD and DASH. Each school integrates a design program with a standard high school curriculum to prepare students for professional design careers. Kountz explains that “a design-focused education allows [CHAD’s] students to learn in a very different way...[they] learn to see (and assess) things differently. In many respects, CHAD students are generally more alert and more able to manage very complicated learning projects, many of them driven by visual engagement.” By encouraging students to “see things differently,” CHAD and DASH push students to become less focused on the answer and more concerned with the process.

In addition to the design and core curricula, fine arts training is a crucial component of CHAD and DASH’s programs. DASH’s requirements are very rigorous; all students take Advanced Placement (AP) Studio Art in their junior and senior years and must take the AP test. In their sophomore year, DASH students select their design concentrations from five professions: architecture/interior design, fashion design, industrial design, communications design, and entertainment technology. Architecture is the most popular concentration with about a quarter of the student body in the program. CHAD does not offer traditional degrees because of the additional core curriculum requirements.

Seniors in both DASH and CHAD’s programs are placed in local design firms where they experience a real-world application of their education. “We do a lot of critiques where we invite local architects, engineers, and designers. It makes the experience more meaningful,” explains Principal Mancocco.

Implementing the Design Process

Both schools openly embrace the design process in their teaching and approach to learning. For DASH, the integration of the design process is a natural one, according to Principal Mancocco, “not preordained or mandated.” CHAD’s intention is to formalize the use of the design process across the curriculum as a vehicle for creative and analytical thinking.

“We haven’t yet formalized the use of the design process in all subjects, i.e., math, because so many kids are performing below grade level,” explains CHAD’s principal. “[But] everybody uses the design process and the steps, even if they don’t explicitly call it out. Part of it is nomenclature and part of it is usage, but all of our teachers have a basic understanding of the process and [use] it whenever possible.”

This approach to education is crucial to the success of both of these institutions, because the design process encourages active learning and student involvement. More importantly, it results in a flexible institutional structure that embraces change.

The Future of Education?

For CHAD and DASH, using the design process as a mechanism for educating the leaders of tomorrow is not something far off in the future. It is a philosophy that is central to their missions and identity. Over the next few years, both schools will continue to focus on increased student interaction with professional designers. Furthermore, both schools stress the importance of institutional growth without increased enrollment, a goal that will be challenging in light of looming state education budget cuts nationwide.

These two schools recognize that their approach to education is both a success story and a work in progress. As CHAD’s Mancocco notes, “[DASH] curriculum is evolving. There is no book to tell you how to run the school.” Ultimately, CHAD and DASH are practicing what they preach and using the design process to improve their schools and prepare their students for their future careers. Already, the design education model embraced by CHAD and DASH has been replicated at public design high schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Washington, D.C. to name a few. Although DASH and CHAD are “young” in the world of public education, what they strive to be an approach to learning that nurtures inquiry and rewards experimentation; two skills that will be invaluable in today’s increasingly complex world.*

*The Future of Education? By Arrie Hurd

Photo courtesy CHAD.

In three weeks, I will begin studying advertising at Virginia Commonwealth University. Five and a half years ago, I would never have imagined I would be entering into an exciting field of study. The Design Apprenticeship Program (DAP) at the National Building Museum has certainly made a lasting impact on my educational path and personally. I think that over the course of six years, I have certainly changed as an individual. A couple of weeks ago, I placed something as an individual. A couple of weeks ago, I placed something different on the course of my life path and personally.

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A Lens on Design: Investigating Where We Live

by Jamee Telford

Jamee Telford is the outreach programs coordinator at the National Building Museum and has extensive experience working with young people. She has a B.A. in humanities and an M.A.T. in teaching from the George Washington University.

Investigating Where We Live (IWWL) is a four-week summer program developed by the National Building Museum in which students interpret Washington, D.C., neighborhoods through photography and creative writing. Each summer, approximately 15 students spend their Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays exploring selected areas of the city and developing an exhibition of their findings for display at the Museum. Since its inception in 1996, IWWL has encouraged more than 250 students to critically examine the built environment in their communities and to express themselves through creative activities.

Teaching young people about photography and exhibition design at the National Building Museum is an active process in which students focus on the proper ways to use digital cameras, explore various photographic techniques, and communicate by presenting their photographs in a Museum exhibition. Each piece of the puzzle is a critical step in a process by which students realize their potential as young photographers and designers.

“Has anyone used a digital camera?”

Ask that question in a room full of middle school students and more than likely all hands will be raised high. Given the technology-based society in which we live, many students are already familiar with the basic operation of a digital camera, but few truly understand its capabilities and potential.

One of the earliest steps of the IWWL program teaches students how to use the functions of the digital camera correctly. With many students relying on the simple “point and shoot” technique, it is important to allow them to explore the camera in more detail. By zooming in close on a subject, changing the color options, selecting when to use flash, and adjusting the scene options, they begin to better understand the many choices they will have as photographers out in the field.

In the classroom, students are encouraged to play with these options through a self-portrait activity. They are challenged to take five photos of themselves in any way they choose, but they must first consider some of the following questions: How can changing the color setting of a photo affect how we interpret it? When is it important to use flash? How can taking a picture on the “portrait” setting differ from using the “sport” setting?

The program allows them to find answers to these questions themselves. Using flash, of course, will affect the focus of the photo; the subject must be still and in close proximity to the camera. You can capture fast-moving action with the “sport” setting, but a “portrait” setting differs from using the “sport” setting.

The program teaches students to critically examine the quality of a photo. Once we capture a photo on a digital camera the image automatically appears on screen and we can immediately judge its quality. Students can quickly see if they captured their subject in the way they intended. One way to help the students understand composition is the “Rule of Thirds,” which divides a photo into three parts horizontally and vertically. Where the dividing lines intersect are ideal spots for the subject of a photo.

“…to capture a photo on a digital camera, the image automatically appears on screen and we can immediately judge its quality.”

Composition refers to the placement of elements in the frame of the photo. Students are encouraged to find answers to these questions: Does the subject of the photo need to be as large as a color photo? If you want to capture an image on the “portrait” setting, how can the details of the photo be altered? Students explore these options through a self-portrait activity. They are able to practice using different photographic techniques to communicate to the viewer.

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“The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera.”

―Dorothea Lange

“…the virtue of the camera is not the power it has to transform the photographer into an artist, but the impulse it gives him to keep on looking.”

―Brooks Atkinson, Once Around the Sun

“…there are many ways to approach the teaching of photographic techniques. If there is an overriding idea that the program tries to impart to the students, however, it is that composition can make or break a photo.”

―IWWL 2007 participant

There are many ways to approach the teaching of photographic techniques. If there is an overriding idea that the program tries to impart to the students, however, it is that composition can make or break a photo. Viewing angles, emotionally charged subjects, and dark/light contrast all contribute to good photography, but it is the quality of the composition that weaves these separate pieces into a whole.

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Students explore these options through a self-portrait activity. They are able to practice using different photographic techniques to communicate to the viewer.

“The camera is an instrument that teaches people how to see without a camera.”

―Dorothea Lange

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“I liked the challenge of taking photos that really reflected Stanton Park and the people who live there.” — IWWL 2008 participant

communicate

IWWL students spend a good portion of the program investigating neighborhoods in Washington. They implement the photography skills learned during the first part of the program as they begin to take photos in their assigned neighborhood. They are challenged to take photographs that best interpret the neighborhood they see.

With a massive volume of photos accumulated the students then use the lens of photography to interpret each neighborhood and select a unifying theme for their student-designed exhibition.

Students answer basic questions about both their own photographs and those of their peers, such as “what do you see in the photo?” and “why do you think this photo was taken?” The answers help students begin to understand that by arranging photos in a group they can communicate a specific message. A collection of well-kept homes and beautiful gardens represents a nice community that evokes pride on the part of its residents and possibly those who view the photos. Photos of construction can represent both positive and negative changes for a community. Photos of commercial signs and other details of the built environment can convey a great deal about the community. Photos of commercial signs and other details of the built environment can convey a great deal about the community. Photos of commercial signs and other details of the built environment can convey a great deal about the community.

As students examine their photographs, they discover new information and possibly hidden treasures. Some students find that a particular neighborhood is not as litte as or as dangerous as they once thought. In one instance, a neighborhood team was shocked to find green space as the subject in so many of their photographs and they used this discovery as the theme of their exhibit wall, communicating a new image of Congress Heights, in Southeast D.C. During the 2007 program, students from the Navy Yard team noticed that almost all of their photographs contained construction fences. Even though they encountered the fences during their site visit, they did not truly acknowledge them until they were seeing through the photographs. One student commented, “Look at all this construction in our pictures. The Navy Yard in our photos will not be around when IWWL starts next year.”

Teaching middle school students the importance of visual communication and creative expression is a rewarding experience that demands a wide range of instructional techniques. It is important to introduce a variety of photography tools, explain key digital camera techniques, and most importantly, encourage the students to explore the myriad possibilities for capturing high-quality, intriguing images. From this perspective, students are now equipped to communicate their feelings and observations through their photographs and to express themselves in new ways. Ultimately, IWWL enables students to see a new world with or without a camera.
The National Academies consist of four agencies—the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), the National Research Council (NRC), the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), and the Institute of Medicine (IOM)—whose collective mission is to advise the government and the public on scientific and technical issues. Recently, a coalition of nonprofit organizations representing various architecture and design disciplines formally proposed the creation of a fifth academy—a National Academy of Environmental Design (NAED).

Under the leadership of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), the coalition is working to build support for the new agency among design professionals, educators, and members of the existing National Academies.

Following is an edited transcription of an interview with Michael Monti, Ph.D., executive director of ACSA, about the proposed new academy.

Martin Moeller: When were the National Academies established, and how do they operate?

Monti: The existing National Academies were established in times of crisis for the country: the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) was created in 1863 during the Civil War; the National Research Council (NRC) was created in 1916, during the First World War; the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) was created in 1964, amid the Space Race; and the Institute of Medicine (IOM) was created in 1970 at the height of the public health movement and the growing war against cancer. These were particular times when the nation needed coordinated efforts on challenging issues, so each academy was created and then expanded as the need for its area of expertise grew.

The academies are private, nonprofit organizations, though most of the research they conduct is done at the request of the government. Each does its own work, although the National Research Council is the operating arm—it gets grants and contracts from the government to do research and produce reports, while members of the other branches serve as expert resources for the NRC.

Moeller: How did the idea for a National Academy for Environmental Design arise?

Monti: It was Kim Tanzer [an architect and professor at the University of Florida] who initiated it as she was assuming the presidency of ACSA in 2007. She took the idea to various architectural organizations, and they gave it their support, so then we approached organizations representing other, related disciplines, and their responses were also enthusiastic.

The rationale for the initiative was two-fold. First, there was a desire to compensate for the absence of the environmental design disciplines from the current National Academies; second, there was a perceived need for a multi-disciplinary effort to address climate-change issues.

Moeller: So is it fair to say that the environmental crisis is the root of this initiative?

Monti: We do have to make it clear that this is not only about sustainability, but it is the hook, if you will, to demonstrate the serious need for this effort. Only the design professions provide a valued service to society. That is what makes them professions. The NAED will allow an even higher level of contribution. This initiative is a response to the ethical imperative that comes with the professions.

But yes, it’s fair to say that the concern about the ongoing health of our planet served as the immediate impetus. The built environment produces nearly 75 percent of greenhouse gases; buildings are responsible for nearly 50 percent of all energy consumption. The various environmental design disciplines are all committed to sustainability issues, but there hasn’t been one overarching organization capable of coordinating efforts in that regard. NAED will fill that need.

Another argument we have made about the need for the NAED is that the research and knowledge base for environmental design disciplines is still at an early stage of development. We are in the same position that the engineering disciplines were at the time of the formation of the National Academy of Engineering. Now engineering’s knowledge...
**Museum news**

(continued from page 11)

base has greatly expanded. We think architecture and related disciplines are making progress in developing knowledge-based design. There are great opportunities for growth and improvement.

**Moeller:** In what ways might the NAED differ from the other academies?

**Monti:** We will strive to be more nimble than the existing National Academies. I don’t mean that as a criticism of the other groups—just that there is a need for more immediate solutions on environmental issues. We have heard complaints that many things in the existing academies are held up by peer review. We are going to try to have a sleek operating structure and to focus our efforts on providing unbiased, accurate recommendations on policy issues and professional practice issues—things that governments can use and things that our constituents in the design disciplines can use.

**Moeller:** Why an academy of environmental design, rather than just architecture?

**Monti:** I think it reflects a trend happening in academic and professional circles. No single discipline “owns” the complete knowledge base to support the kinds of solutions that are needed to stem global warming and address similar challenges. Greenhouse gas issues and sustainable development problems are increasingly complex. We need good thinkers from various areas of expertise to solve them.

**Moeller:** What direct benefits might the NAED offer to the design and construction industries?

**Monti:** Over a period of five to ten years, we hope to develop a knowledge base similar to that used by medicine or engineering—a base that design professionals can draw from as they implement their projects. Design professionals and firms can look to the NAED for summary reports and analytic assessments of the latest research and knowledge that is already out there, making it available for their use.

**Moeller:** What steps is the group taking now to ensure steady progress toward the formal establishment of the NAED?

**Monti:** We are in the process of incorporating as a non-profit organization and starting our work. One of our first tasks is to create a set of research sections, organized by subject area rather than by discipline.

We are also putting together five research symposia this fall and related outreach programs. This fall, we are gathering people working at the highest levels of research across disciplines. We have also begun work on an advocacy agenda, that is, putting together a list of priorities related to environmental issues that we will take to key decision-makers and strategic thinkers at the Library of Congress, the National Archives and Records Administration, and numerous entities within the Smithsonian Institution. No doubt the extraordinary access they have been granted will enhance their research for years to come. The tenure of each fellow culminated in a presentation of their work to Museum staff and invited guests. We congratulate the first alumni of the National Museum of American Design Apprenticeship Program, Amelia Wong and Fallon Samuel, on their success.

**Supporting Scholarship in the Building Arts**

by Chrysanthe B. Brokos, Curator

This summer, for the first time in the Museum’s history, the institution hosted two graduate fellow conducting advanced research in fields relating to the built environment. This extraordinary development was the result of the long-standing vision and efforts of two of the Museum’s founding trustees, Beverly A. Willis, FAIA, and Cynthia R. Field, Ph.D., along with support from the American Institute of Architects.

In March, the Museum opened the Beverly Willis Library, which includes a resource center for outside scholars. This dedicated space provides researchers with study carrels and direct access to the library, meeting space, and the Museum’s curatorial staff. With the opening of the renovated library, the Museum invited local universities to nominate promising candidates for the Field Visiting Scholar program. Made possible through the leadership and generosity of Dn. Cynthia and Charles Field, this fellowship promotes scholarship related to the disciplines within the building arts. Nearly simultaneously, and in partnership with the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Museum announced the AIA Visiting Scholar program, designed to encourage study of the profession of architecture.

Amelia S. Wong, a doctoral student in American Studies at the University of Maryland, is the 2008 Field Visiting Scholar. Amanda majoring in history/art history at the University of California, Los Angeles, and worked at the Getty Center and in the film industry before embarking on her graduate studies. Her dissertation will examine how museums are using Web 2.0 technologies to create and communicate with various physical and online communities. During her fellowship, Amanda has been exploring how the Collections Department might leverage new technologies to facilitate the ongoing cataloguing of the Museum’s permanent collection.

For more information, visit NAEDonline.org.

Museum’s Design Apprenticeship Program Honored by Peers

by Sarah P. Rice, Director of Youth Education

The Design Apprenticeship Program (DAP), a cornerstone of the National Building Museum’s outreach efforts, has won the 2008 Excellence in Programming Award from the American Association of Museums (AAM). The award was presented during the association’s annual conference in Denver this past April.

For 25 years, the AAM’s Committee on Education has recognized “outstanding contributions to museum education by individual practitioners, by museums offering distinguished programs, and by individuals whose leadership at the national level has impacted the public dimension of the museum.” The Excellence in Programming Award honors exemplary creativity and innovation in museum educational programming. Past winners include the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1998) and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York (2004).

DAP offers teen participants or students with a demonstrated interest in art or design the opportunity to work under the guidance of Museum educators and design professionals to complete design challenges. In this short-term program, offered each school semester on seven consecutive Saturdays, participants design and construct full-scale projects that they control from concept to completion. At the end of the program, their work is exhibited in the Museum and, where possible, other venues. Offered since 2000, DAP has served more than 450 teenagers, introducing them to the world of design and construction and potential career opportunities available to them.

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2008 Turner Prize Awarded to Dr. Charles H. Thornton

by Scott Kratz, Vice President for Education

The 2008 Turner Prize, established by Turner Construction Company, carries a cash award of $25,000 from an endowment endowed by Frank Gehry and Gehry Technologies. The prize is awarded in recognition of Dr. Thornton’s work on the ACE Mentor Program of America, a nonprofit organization that offers guidance and training in building careers. The program provides mentoring models, ACE was formed when 17 firms banded together into three teams, each organized like a typical design and construction team, and “adopted” about 90 students from local high schools. Volunteers from each of the firms, serving as mentors, worked directly with the students to introduce them to the broad range of people and projects within the construction industry.

Recognizing Dr. Thornton’s work on the ACE Mentor program, the National Building Museum presented him with the Henry C. Turner Prize for Innovation in Construction Technology during a public reception on September 9 in the Museum’s Great Hall. Named in honor of the founder of Turner Construction Company, the Turner Prize recognizes an invention, an innovative methodology, and/or exceptional leadership by an individual or team of individuals in construction technology. After the award ceremony, Dr. Thornton, Turner Construction Company president and CEO Peter Davoren, and architect Jon Pickard participated in a panel discussion about the future of the field. The program was moderated by Turner Prize jury chair Norbert Young, president of McGraw-Hill Construction.

Since its inception in 2002, the Turner Prize has been awarded to structural engineer Leslie E. Robertson, architect I.M. Pei, engineer and builder Charles A. DeBenedittis, the U.S. Green Building Council, Stanford professor Paul Tedolski, and the offices of Frank Gehry and Gehry Technologies. The prize carries a cash award of $25,000 from an endowment established by Turner Construction Company.

ACE Mentor Program of America

After several years of experimenting with various mentoring models, ACE was formed when 17 firms banded together into three teams, each organized like a typical design and construction team, and “adopted” about 90 students from local high schools. Volunteers from each of the firms, serving as mentors, worked directly with the students to introduce them to the broad range of people and projects within the construction industry.

Through ACE, students are introduced to a variety of design professions and the role that each performs in planning, designing, and constructing a project. Students also gain first-hand insight into the design industry by visiting project offices and touring active construction sites. Students work closely with their mentors to solve challenging “real-world” projects.

Today, the ACE Mentor Program has a presence in more than 80 cities—all from New York to Los Angeles, Seattle to Miami, and Chicago to Washington, D.C.—and is still growing. Thanks to the dedication of ACE’s mentors and staff, and the support of local schools, more than 40,000 students, many of whom are economically challenged, have had an opportunity to explore the design and construction industry.

For more information, visit ACEmentor.org.

Bridge Basics Goes National

by Tim Wright, National Curricula Coordinator

Philadelphia, PA: Thirty minutes of cutting, measuring, folding, and measuring had culminated in a contest of sorts. Four teams of teachers, each convinced that its model bridge was the strongest in the room, were about to put their structures to the test. The Philadelphia teachers had constructed their model arch bridges out of playing cards during an educator workshop, Bridge Basics: Engineering Fundamentals Through Bridge Design and Construction, conducted by the National Building Museum.

The workshop marked the Museum’s first effort to make its award-winning school programs and curricula available to teachers across the country. Previously offered at the Museum as a school program, the Bridge Basics Program Kit is designed to increase understanding of how bridges are engineered, demonstrate their importance to the built environment, and expose students to new problem-solving methods through hands-on design activities. The kit was conceived with national learning standards in math and science in mind.

Barry Ratmansky, an eighth-grade science teacher at Woodrow Wilson Middle School in Philadelphia, was among those attending the workshop. He learned about Bridge Basics when he received a colorful Museum–designed poster featuring Philadelphia’s own Walt Whitman Bridge, which was mailed to teachers throughout the Philadelphia Unified School District. Because one of his goals as an educator is to get his students interested in architecture, and in particular the physical forces that are involved in building projects, Ratmansky was strongly interested in the kit. “I can use [Bridge Basics] with the forces and motion curriculum,” he said. “I thought the idea of building bridges would interest the students.”

The Turner Construction Company has partnered with the National Building Museum to distribute Bridge Basics Program KIts free to Philadelphia teachers like Ratmansky. To support teachers who have received the kit, Turner plans to bring company and industry representatives into classrooms to encourage students to consider careers in the built environment. In a letter to participating teachers, Michael Kuntz of Turner Construction emphasized that “Turner is focused on preparing children for the workforce to address the needs of the construction industry… therefore, Turner Construction is proud to add the sponsorship of Bridge Basics to the list of programs we support.”

Back at the educator workshop, Barry Ratmansky beamed. His team finished first. Barry considered their arch bridge the most aesthetically pleasing of the three, although all were similar. In the end, each one of the bridges stood up to some gentle testing and the teachers left with a fun and functional souvenir to use in the classroom with their Bridge Basics Program Kit.

To learn more about the Bridge Basics Program Kit and other design-related school programs and curricula, visit the Museum’s web site at www.nbm.org.

Bridge Basics in Philadelphia is sponsored by Turner Construction Company. The program was developed with support from the Construction Industry Round Table.

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—Barry Ratmansky
**New Trustee**

The Board of Trustees recently elected Edward J. Newbery, deputy managing partner of Patton Boggs LLP, as a trustee of the Museum. A graduate of George Mason University’s Center for Government Law Center, Newbery served as chief acquisitions staff and press secretary to Virginia Congressman Frank Wolf and associate staff member on the House Appropriations Committee. He joined Patton Boggs in 1991, and now represents municipal governments, colleges and universities, and other organizations on matters of public policy and funding. He also represents corporations on issues relating to energy, infrastructure, and transportation. 

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**D.C. Government Supports Education Programming**

In April, National Building Museum teachers presented two of the Museum’s award-winning school programs, Patterns: Here, There and Everywhere and City by Design, to first and second graders at the Walker-Jones Elementary School in Ward 6 of Washington, D.C. In the past, these programs were offered only on-site at the Museum, often excluding students unable to take field trips due to economic or logistical reasons. With the support of Councilmember Tommy Wells and organizations like the D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation, these programs are now coming to schools across the District.

“We take our commitment to the community very seriously,” notes the Museum’s president and executive director, Chase Rypel, “and seeing the Museum’s programs offered in local schools is tremendously exciting for us and renews us that our work has a positive impact on D.C.’s youth.”

During the 2007–08 school year, the Museum provided 194 free school programs to D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) classes, serving 4,409 students; a 25% increase over last year. In addition, by the end fiscal year 2008, the Museum will have provided Bridge Basics Program kits to 50 DCPS and DC charter school teachers. With funding from the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development in place for school year 2008–09, the Museum is pleased to be able to continue to offer these free programs to DCPS students and their teachers.

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**Clark Charitable Foundation Funds Museum Endowment**

by Shar Taylor, Vice President for Development

Every year, the Museum seeks support from a range of donors for its award-winning youth education programs in the Washington metropolitan area. In 2007, the Clark Charitable Foundation took the exceptional step of establishing an endowment for the Museum to support outreach to youth for years to come with a leadership gift of $100,000.

The Museum’s history with the Clark family, including the foundation and the corporation, stretches back to its earliest days in the 1980s, when A. James Clark served as treasurer. In 2006, the Clark Construction Group LLC accepted the Honorary Award on the occasion of its centenary and the company has been a regular participant in Museum events such as the Festival of the Building Arts, providing heavy equipment for the popular “construction petting zoo” where children can sit in the driving seat of earth movers and skid-steer loaders. The Clark Charitable Foundation has long supported the Museum’s programs for disadvantaged students, providing them with insight into opportunities in the construction industry.

The endowment is an important step for the Museum, a private, nonprofit institution, in planning for its long-term financial security, and ensuring the continuation of its acclaimed youth education outreach. The Museum reaches 25,600 students in the Washington metropolitan area each year and is grateful for this visionary gift.

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**IN MEMORIAM: Alfred T. McNeill**

Alfred T. McNeill, a long-time supporter of the National Building Museum and former member of the jury for the Museum’s Henry C. Turner Prize for Innovation in Construction Technology, died in March at the age of 71.

McNeill had served as chairman and CEO of The Turner Corporation from 1989 to 1996. McNeill joined Turner in 1958 as an architect engineer. During his tenure with the company, he served as vice president of operations for New York; vice president and general manager of Turner’s Philadelphia office, and senior vice president for Turner’s Northeast Region. McNeill was also actively involved with a number of industry associations and served as a national director of the Associated General Contractors of America. The Museum’s board and staff extend condolences to McNeill’s family and colleagues.

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**Robert A.M. Stern: Tenth Vincent Scully Prize Recipient**

by Sara Kabakkoff, Marketing and Communications Associate

On November 12 and 13, 2008, Robert A.M. Stern, dean of the Yale School of Architecture, celebrated author, and founder and senior partner of Robert A.M. Stern Architects, will be honored as the tenth laureate of the Museum’s Vincent Scully Prize. The prize jury selected Stern for his years of influential teaching at Columbia and Yale Universities; his leadership as the dean of the Yale School of Architecture; and his seminal publications reflecting on the history of architecture in New York.

The Vincent Scully Prize and the endowment that supports it were established by the National Building Museum in 1999 to recognize exemplary practice, scholarship, or criticism in architecture, historic preservation, and urban design.

Named after Professor Vincent Scully to honor his work and extend his legacy, the prize has since become known as one of the most prestigious awards in the field, recognizing the importance of ideas and scholarship that lead to the design of the built environment. Scully is the Sterling Professor Emeritus of the History of Art at Yale University and Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Miami. For more than four decades his teaching and scholarly work have profoundly influenced prominent architects and urban planners, including Stern.

Since being named dean of the Yale School of Architecture in 1998, Stern has created a learning environment that encourages multiple viewpoints and experimentation. As senior partner of Robert A.M. Stern Architects, he personally directs the design of each of his firm’s diverse projects, including the Museum’s recent new exhibit, “City by Design.”

The building has received multiple awards, including the American Institute of Architects 2007 Honor Award and the 2008 Citation for Design Excellence from theHUDAIA. The new exhibit celebrates the spectrum of architectural endeavors and celebrates the contributions that architects make to the betterment of society.

In the past year, the Museum’s annual endowment received a $5 million gift from the Clark Charitable Foundation. The gift established a new endowment to support the Museum’s School of Architecture, celebrated the Museum’s 25th anniversary and the School of Architecture’s 125 years, and provided a significant injection of cash flow into the foundation and the corporation, stretching back to 1980. The Clark Charitable Foundation has long supported the Museum’s programs in the Washington metropolitan area. In 2007, the Clark Charitable Foundation provided 194 free school programs to D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) classes, serving 4,409 students; a 25% increase over last year. In addition, by the end fiscal year 2008, the Museum will have provided Bridge Basics Program kits to 50 DCPS and DC charter school teachers. With funding from the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development in place for school year 2008–09, the Museum is pleased to be able to continue to offer these free programs to DCPS students and their teachers.

The Museum offers 4,518 programs to D.C. Public Schools and other educational institutions each year, serving a remarkable 25,600 students in the District. The 2007–08 school year marked the Museum’s 25th year as an independent, not-for-profit institution that serves the public through a wide range of educational programming. With funding from the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development in place for school year 2008–09, the Museum is pleased to be able to continue to offer these free programs to DCPS students and their teachers.

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**Tenth Vincent Scully Prize Recipient**

Robert A.M. Stern, Courtesy Robert A.M. Stern Architects

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**D.C. Government Supports Education Programming**

by Amanda Lewis, Corporate and Association Relations Manager

The National Building Museum is proud to announce an exciting new partnership with Discovery Communications. Since its first gift to the Honor Award in 2000, Discovery Communications has continued its support of the Museum by becoming not only a major sponsor of the upcoming exhibition Greenspan Community but also a member of the Museum’s Industry Partners, an elite group of corporate and association donors.

Discovery Communications is the world’s premier nonfiction media company, reaching more than 1 billion cumulative subscribers in more than 200 countries. Discovery empowers people to explore their world through more than 200 worldwide networks, led by Discovery Channel, TLC, Animal Planet, Science Channel, Investigation Discovery and HD Theater, as well as leading consumer and educational products and services, and a diversified portfolio of digital media services.

Discovery Communications revolutionized television with the Discovery Channel and is currently transforming classrooms through Discovery Education, which combines scientifically proven, standards-based digital media and a dynamic interactive community in order to empower teachers to improve student achievement. Already, more than half of all U.S. schools access Discovery Education digital services.

For Discovery Communications, supporting the work of the National Building Museum is a natural fit, especially given the Museum’s focus on sustainability. Discovery is actively working to become a greener company—in Silver Spring, Maryland, headquarters is already a USGBC Platinum LEED-Certified building. In June, Discovery launched the new network Planet Green to more than 8 million homes. Planet Green is the first full-time “eco-lifestyle” channel, and encourages viewers to live more sustainable lives.

Discovery Communications is owned by Discovery Holding Company, Advance/Newhouse Communications, and John S. Hendricks, Discovery’s founder and chairman.

The Museum relies on the support of corporations and industry partners like Discovery Communications, and the Board of Trustees and staff are grateful for its generous support.
On June 4, the National Building Museum presented its 22nd Honor Award to The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) and its nationwide network of 96 Chapters. AGC is the largest and oldest national construction trade association in the United States and received the Honor Award in recognition of the 90 years of leadership and vision that it has brought to the construction industry.

The event marked the first time in the Museum’s history that the award was presented to an association. Leaders from the construction, development, architecture, and engineering industries, as well as representatives from both state and federal government, gathered to celebrate this honor and reflect on AGC and its member companies’ impact on the built environment. Nearly 600 guests attended the black-tie gala, which raised more than $2 million for the Museum’s programming and exhibitions.

The Honor Award gala was held in the Museum’s Great Hall and the award was accepted by AGC president Douglas E. Barnhart (chief executive officer, Barnhart Crane & Rigging Co.) and AGC chief executive officer Stephen E. Sandherr. Michael J. Glosserman, chairman of the Museum’s Board of Trustees, led the program and was joined by tribute speaker Norbert W. Young, Jr., president of McGraw-Hill Construction.

The Museum thanks all AGC and everyone who contributed for gifts of $250 or more received from April 1–July 30, 2008. These generous gifts provide essential support for the Museum’s exhibitions, education programs, and endowment funds. Some of the contributions pictured can be viewed in part or full at: blueprints.blueprintmagazine.com on the AGC Honor Award page.
``SlinkY'' Mystery Straightened Out

The elegantly slinky structure featured as the Spring 2008 Mystery Building was the Webb Bridge in Melbourne, Australia. Designed by the architecture firm of Denton Corker Marshall in association with artist Robert Owen and the Arup engineering firm, the pedestrian bridge meanders across the Yarra River, linking the redeveloped docklands on the northern bank with a new residential area on the south. Essentially an enormous piece of public sculpture, the bridge was in fact funded through a one-per-cent-for-art commitment by the design’s builder.

With its open steel lattice, eleven slings (each based) used by Aboriginal peoples in the area centuries ago.

Only one respondent correctly identified the bridge. Congratulations to Suzanne Stephens (deputy editor of Architectural Record), of New York, NY, who received a National Building Museum souvenir mug as a prize.

Back to Shul’ Special

Sharp-eyed readers who notice the Shul of David over the gate in this photo will quickly and correctly deduce that the pictured building is a synagogue. But where is this beautiful structure? ( Hint: It is in the United States.) Can you identify the Mystery Building and its location?

Responses will be accepted by e-mail or regular mail. To be eligible for a prize (reserved for the first correct answers received), send your answer to e-mail to mysterybuilding@nbm.org. You may also respond by regular mail, though you will not be eligible for the prize.

The mailing address is: Mystery Building, National Building Museum, 401 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20004

Only one respondent correctly identified the building. Congratulations to Dr. Leslie C. and Leonard A. Schwenker, of New York, NY, who received a National Building Museum membership gift card.

$mystery building$

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$mystery building$
As interest grows in environmental sustainability, the National Building Museum’s upcoming exhibition, Green Community, will offer an exciting new look at what it means to be green. The first major exhibition in the United States to explore the complex process of creating and sustaining healthy communities, Green Community examines the interrelated decisions and designs that can make our neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions more sustainable. The exhibition looks at how we plan, design, and construct the world between our buildings, profiling an array of communities where citizens, leaders, and planning and design professionals are working together towards a better future.

In a political and social climate that emphasizes the inevitability and urgency of global warming, Green Community presents a positive perspective on places that are already embracing sustainable planning. The exhibition includes a range of visionary designs, from modestly-scaled community projects and adaptations of traditional technologies to ambitious cities of the future, demonstrating that it is possible to find sustainable solutions regardless of community size or geography.

Green Community opens on October 23, 2008 and will be on display through October 25, 2009. Members are invited to celebrate the exhibition’s opening at a special reception on October 21. Look for details in the Museum’s October calendar of events or online at www.nbm.org.