

Something to Celebrate

Building a bright future for Little Ferry school community

To mark the 100th birthday of Little Ferry's Washington School, Architecture for Humanity and Arcari + Iovino, Architects PC are working to create a healthy and vibrant school environment and a bright future for the school community.

In November of this year, Anthony Iovino and the staff of Arcari + Iovino, Architects PC joined members from the Little Ferry Board of Education, staff of Architecture for Humanity as well as teachers, parents and students from Washington School to kick-start the design phase of the Architecture for Humanity's ReNew Schools Little Ferry project.

Since 1999, Architecture for Humanity has responded to nine major disasters throughout the world. They have spearheaded effective reconstruction programs to support affected communities most in need. Every disaster zone delivers a unique set of challenges and Architecture for Humanity believes that communication, coordination, access to professional design, resources and construction knowledge are the most critical components for successful long-term reconstruction.

Architecture for Humanity is celebrating its 15th year as a nonprofit design services firm dedicated to building a more sustainable future through the power of professional design. With a network of more than 50,000 professionals—architects, designers and



construction development services around the world—they directly help 100,000 each year in the building of structures designed and managed by Architecture for Humanity and design partners.

After the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy in the Northeast, Architecture for Humanity established the Hurricane Sandy Reconstruction Program in response to the needs of homeowners, small business owners and community groups to rebuild in a resilient and sustainable manner.

The Program is run by New York-based full-time professional staff with the support of the international headquarters office in San Francisco, California. As part of the ReNew NJ/NY Schools program, supported by

Nike, Inc., the Architecture for Humanity team surveyed many schools in New York and New Jersey, identifying three New Jersey schools as participants in the program: Toms River High School North, Union Beach, and of course Washington School in Little Ferry.





Images of the charrette are by Jessica Terdeman. Images of the exterior of the building, playground, interior of gymnasium are by Brian Baer.

Little Ferry’s two campuses, across the street from one another, house more than 900 students combined. They were both badly damaged by the storm. The Washington School (serving grades kindergarten to fourth grade) was flooded with more than three feet of water throughout the classrooms, gymnasium and basement areas. The Memorial Middle School (serving grades five through eight) had several inches of water in the gym and nearby classrooms. Fuel contaminated water covered the synthetic playground outside.

The reconstruction process of the school’s damaged athletic spaces, equipment, the playground surfaces, bleachers, gymnasium wall padding and dining tables started in November. The process was kicked off with Community Design Workshop, which took place in the Washington School gymnasium.

Brian Baer, Regional Program Coordinator for the ReNew Schools program led the Workshop with participants who included parents, students, teachers, architects from Arcari + Iovino (the Architect of Record chosen by Architecture for Humanity for this project), and representatives from Architecture for Humanity.

The participants were broken up into groups and engaged in


numerous activities in coordination with the Designed to Move initiative. The participants and facilitators discussed options for building a safe, healthy, energetic community, and ways to encourage movement in the areas of the school that needed rebuilding.

They were asked to draw images that represented their responses, generating ideas for architectural elements such as playground surfaces, bleachers, and wall padding to promote an active learning environment that inspires “movement” and reflects the unique identity of Little Ferry.

In the end, participants had the opportunity to view the work generated from the evening, freely walking around the “gallery” of sketches, words and sculpture on the walls of the gymnasium to see the work of each team.

“We really enjoyed watching the students and their parents eagerly participating in the activities,” said Anthony Iovino of Arcari + Iovino Architects PC. “It is such a great feeling to give back to the community, and Little Ferry really deserves it.”

In the next phase Arcari + Iovino Architects PC will proceed with design incorporating the ideas and feedback from the community—the anticipated completion of construction is June 2014.

How can you get involved? Log on to architectureforhumanity.org to learn more. 

Jennifer Vreeland is a marketing & interior design consultant at Arcari + Iovino, Architects PC which is located in Little Ferry. Please visit www.aiarchs.com for more information about the firm.

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