Students’ project takes them on a journey ‘back to the future’

Do you remember when Muhammad Ali Boulevard was Walnut Street? The area was once home to the Grand and Lyric theaters, restaurants, and gathering places of all kinds. Old Walnut Street rocked, literally. A year ago, Sam Watkins, Executive Director of the Louisville Central Community Center (LCCC) and his wife, Judy, had a dream to recreate the energy of that earlier Walnut Street era. They purchased a building and land at 1300 West Muhammad Ali Boulevard and wanted to develop the property as the Center’s new facility.

Great student service project

Interior Design student Pam King, president of the Sullivan College of Technology and Design’s local student chapters of the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) and International Interior Design Association (IIADA), made the initial contact with the Watkins’ team. She and Judy Watkins felt that Interior Design students could play a major role in making the community center a reality.

Pam presented the possible project to Carla Wallace, Interior Design instructor and faculty advisor to the ASID and IIDA student chapters. Pam, student Darcy Maddox, Carla, and Nancy Menz, instructor and co-advisor, met with Mr. Watkins to tour the existing three-story building. Watkins hoped the building would become the focal point of the community center, magnetic and vital in its utilization. The first floor will house local entrepreneurs and various community businesses. The second floor will be a training facility to prepare individuals with the entry-level skills necessary to obtain jobs. The third floor will be devoted to career services to assist people with resume preparation, development of interview skills, and job search techniques.

Multi-purpose design

SCTD’s Interior Design team listened to Mr. Watkins’ plans, asked questions, and took notes. Watkins envisioned a vibrant community center, one that featured a sunlit atrium with a café, a gallery, and flexible park-like pathways and seating. He also wanted to include a movie theater for the performing arts, aptly named the Grand-Lyric, approached through the atrium. The atrium presented some unique challenges. The furniture needed to be easily moved. The single solid wall of the space also had to be designed to move, although the plan was to use it as the backdrop for the café. Added to all of these guidelines, the Watkins plan included the design of the better part of the atrium as a park-like setting with benches, street lamp lighting, paths, and even grass.

Plans will become reality

On his own time, student Matt Rumnowe immersed himself in historical research and located numerous photographs of the thriving Old Walnut Street area. With the support of students Lauren Higdon and Rick Werzel, Pam and Darcy went to work. They developed multiple concept boards, presented building elevations, showcased rendered hand drawings and planned finances that would complement each other throughout the project. They also created the theater entrance design. Students provided several options for developing the site as planned, including the potential budget for each option. Pam and Darcy met with the Watkins team and building architects, presenting their ideas and supporting materials that displayed their ideas. How exciting that the architects accepted one of the students’ plans for implementation! The architects described the students’ work as “practical, well-conceived, and suitable for making the vision a reality.” While work on the center is slow, SCTD students can take pride as they watch their design decisions take shape.

Newest board member

Interior Design bachelor’s degree student Anthony (Tony) Jackson is certainly networking and getting a jump start on a promising career. He was recently selected as the student representative to the local American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) Chapter Board. As a Board member, he will be required (pardon the pun, Tony) to attend the Chapter Leadership Conference in Cincinnati this summer at no cost to himself. The Board selected Mr. Jackson because he can provide insight and leadership with respect to student needs as they relate to ASID.

Atlanta Study Tour

Not all knowledge is gained in a classroom as 19 Interior Design students recently discovered on their study tour to Atlanta, Georgia.

Students win regional award

SCTD’s Interior Design students were winners of the Judges’ Favorite in the 2009 Can-struction competition. Can-struction, sponsored by Yum! Brands, is a biennial competition held throughout the United States. During the competition, teams from architectural, engineering, construction and interior design firms build sculptures out of cans of food. This year the SCTD display was a furnished living room with accessories. Titled “No Hungry Homes,” the design utilized 1,833 cans of food as well as non-perishables such as flour sacks. After the sculptures were judged and displayed for public viewing, all the food items and canned goods went to the Dare to Care Food Bank to feed the hungry in our community. Students participating in the event were Anthony (Tony) Jackson, Sharon Stubbins, Pam King, LaToya Allen and Liz Nicholson. Drafting student Mark Weichselbeck also assisted. Interior Design instructors Carla Wallace and Wayne Whitson completed the team.

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