Life Skills Center
Phillips and Powderhorn Park
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Arch 772 Design Thesis | Spring Semester 2012
Jeremiah Simones | Professor David Crutchfield
SketchUp | V-Ray | Photoshop | Illustrator | InDesign
Problem Statement

How can architecture influence the education of our youth while inspiring and reviving an inner city community?
The American pre-college education system is flawed. It has not changed and adapted to the world we live in today.

Claim
The current system places far too much emphasis on a single pathway to success: attending and graduating from a four-year college after completing an academic program of study in high school. Yet, as we’ve seen, only 30% of young adults successfully complete this preferred pathway despite decades of efforts to raise the numbers (Harvard, 2011).
Most studies have shown that up to 80% of students entering college admit that they’re not certain what they really want to major in, even if they’ve initially declared a major. In addition, up to 50% of college students change their majors at least once before graduation, and some change their major several times (Temple University, 2011).
“Eighty-one percent of ... [high school dropouts]... said that if schools provided opportunities for real-world learning (internships, service learning projects, and other opportunities), it would have improved the students’ chances of graduating from high school” (Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006).
Statistics show 88% of those students had passing grades. Furthermore, 62% of them had a C average or higher. With these surprising numbers it can be realized that most of these students are not unintelligent by society’s standards and are not failing in school.
- Opportunities for real-world learning (internships, service learning, etc.) to make classrooms more relevant (81%).
- Better teachers who keep classes interesting (81%).
- Smaller classes with more individual instruction (75%).
- Better communication between parents and school (71%).
A refocused education system to better prepare society’s youth is needed.
In order to search for the answer to the problem statement these key components must be considered and investigated...

**Active Learning**
Encourage youth to learn by doing by making their education an activity they can enjoy. The more interested in something a person is the more likely they are to do it and do it well.

**Mentoring and Belonging**
Essential for the growth and development of the child that society pays attention to the type of feedback it is giving him or her. Mentoring enhances both the child’s and the mentor’s sense of belonging and connection.

**Community Support**
Communities that engage in a multitude of activities, organizations, and functions succeed better than those communities that sit by idle in reference to community participation.

**Reinforcement and Guidance**
It is important for children to have a strong sense of independence and social belonging. Mentorship, activity, encouragement, guidance, and the evidence of success as a result of these positive influences are of great importance.

**Life Long Value**
Lasting life lessons and values can be sometimes overlooked or forgotten in today’s fast-paced society. Life skills have the ability to improve each student on an individual level as well as a community level.
Project Goals

Connection/Belonging
Open
Inviting
Free Flowing
Multiple Experiences
Blurring Formal and Informal
Community Involvement
Iconic to the Neighborhoods
Minneapolis, MN

Phillips and Powderhorn Park Communities

South of Downtown
families with children under 18 is 69%
lower income
25-44 or 5-17 years of age

ethnically diverse
economically diverse
immigration hub of Minneapolis

midtown greenway bike/walking path
E Lake St. business and activity
new high school (little diversity)
open lot near parking ramp
future light rail along midtown greenway
four building Wells Fargo complex
I-35W on off ramp future
existing soccer fields
In the beginning...
Statistical Information Used to Generate the Typical Fictional Characters

- 22k/year (16k below Minneapolis avg)
- 2.9/house (.6 above Minneapolis avg)
- Most age 25-44 or 5-17
- Black, white, and Hispanic are the most prominent in are in that order
- Unemployment rate is 13% (Minneapolis avg 5.8%)
- 69% of families have a child under 18 (Minneapolis avg 50%)
- Labor force at 54% (Minneapolis avg 72%)
- About 4 to 1 renters over owners
- Median household value 74k (Minneapolis avg 113.5k)
- Median housing cost as a percentage of median household income 43% (mpls 30%)
- Median gross rent as a percentage of median household income 25% (mpls 18%)
- Population change 114% (mpls 103%)
- Percentage of people below poverty level 34% (mpls 17%)
- Percentage of people 65 and older below poverty level 27% (mpls 11%)
- Percentage of families below poverty level 32% (mpls 12%)
- Percentage of families with children under 18 below poverty level 38% (mpls 19%)
Student #1 (Abigail “Gabby” Diaz)
- Goes to Cristo Rey Jesuit High School (funded by Jesuits)
- Works at Wells Fargo Bank as part of the in school work program
- Lives slightly above average income house for area at $32K (both parents working)
- Household includes 2 parents and 3 children between 5 and 17
- Hispanic
- Family moved into area 15 years ago from Latin America
- Abigail (Gabby) Diaz; female; age 12; first year at Cristo Rey

Student #2 (Jason Green)
- Goes to Augsburg Fairview Academy
- School focused on health and medical careers
- Very diverse public school
- Lives with mother and sister (25)
- Mother unemployed; Sister working part time
- Household income $19K (below area average)
- Jason Green; male; white; 18; about to graduate HS

Maintenance Worker (James Douglas)
- African American male age 27
- Wife and 3 year old daughter
- Household income of 19k wife not working part time
- James Douglas works full time at after school program
- Works the Morning shifts
- Rents home, taking up about a third of their income
- Below poverty line

individual experiences in regards to...
community
users of the building
needs and accommodations
movement to site
movement through building
interaction within building
general lifestyle of area residents
**Teacher/Coach (Jenny Bly)**

- Native American ancestry
- 35 lives with husband and 2 children ages 12 and 9
- Both parents working; family income 60k
- Works full time at ASP and husband works at bakery
- Lives in Powderhorn Park area, south of Phillips
- Own their home
- Moved to southern Minneapolis because of job openings

**Parent of Student (Mary Thomas)**

- 36 year old white female
- Single mother of 2 (16 and 12)
- 25k/year works full time
- Rents an apartment
- Trying to pick up a second part time job since laid off of last part time job
- 16 year old boy in ASP after school sports and learning
- 14 year old girl on middle school basketball team but goes to ASP after that

**General Public (Richard Burns)**

- 66 year old African American Male
- Lives alone in Phillips
- Rents an apartment
- Works part time 18k/year
- Moved to area when wife died a few years ago because of cheap housing
- Has a son who lives out of state
- Doesn’t get to see his grandkids very often because of distance

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**individual experiences in regards to...**

- spaces
- spacial relations
- organization
- activities
- private vs public
- security
- access
• Open to all teenage youth attending public or private schools in the surrounding community.
• Primarily an after school program.
• Allows for community events and gatherings.
• Teaching basic life skills that will last a life time.
• Flexible, adaptable, and allow students to grow in an open, positive, and structured environment.
• Use education as a medium to inspire and revive the youth as well as the community of this diverse area in Minneapolis.

Life Skills = “Abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (WHO World Health Organization 1999).
Two Steps Forward...
open plan
flexible
inviting for kids
promote user interaction
open site with easy access
developing life skills
community
many views
spacial sizing

boxes

just fitting it in

rigid
protection

iconic

“saving” the form
One Step Back...
| **Problem Statement** | How can architecture influence the education of our youth while inspiring and reviving an inner city community? |
Connection/Belonging
Open
Inviting
Free Flowing
Multiple Experiences
Blurring Formal and Informal
Community Involvement
Iconic to the Neighborhoods
case studies of Henning Larson Architects

Jatta vocational School in Stavanger, Norway
Reykjavik University in Reykjavik, Iceland
Campus Roskilde in Roskilde, Denmark
Kolding Campus in Kolding Denmark
Moving Forward Again...
Connection/Belonging
Open
Inviting
Free Flowing
Multiple Experiences
Blurring Formal and Informal
Community Involvement
Iconic to the Neighborhoods

= DYNAMIC
How can architecture influence the education of our youth while inspiring and reviving an inner city community?
Solution...
1 Life Skills Center
2 Midtown Greenway
3 Future Light Rail
4 Kix Field
5 Honeywell Home Field
6 E Lake St.
7 Cristo Rey Jesuit High School
8 Wells Fargo South Building
9 Wells Fargo Parking Ramp
10 Wells Fargo Parking Lot
11 Shamrock Group
12 I-35W
Site Animation
Light shelves

Kalwall

Trippe pane argon filled glazing

Reinforced concrete construction
Construction Animation
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[Image of a detailed architectural plan with various labeled areas]
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Interior Walkthrough Animation
2nd floor roof garden

3rd floor flexible green roofs

Green roofs
The use of a split package VAV (variable air volume) Reheat System allows for multiple zoning control as well as reducing the amount of space for equipment on the inside. The system is aided by a vertical geo exchange system as well as an air exchange system for the fresh air intake.
Plumbing walls

Dry standpipes

Plumbing and sprinkler system
Direct sun exposure

- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening
Structural systems

- Steel warren trusses
- Drop caps
- Post-tensioned concrete floor plates
- Reinforced concrete columns
- Steel warren trusses

Structural systems
Blurring the lines between formal and informal.

Circulation

Socialization

Leisure

Formal and informal presentations
Interior Wall Animation
Maintaining a free and open connection throughout the design amplifies the sense of belonging.
Conclusion...
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Results

= DYNAMIC