IN SEARCH OF INDEPENDENCE

PROGRESSION FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS


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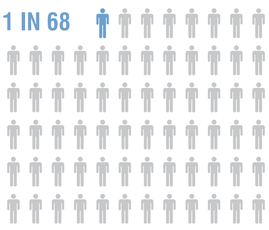
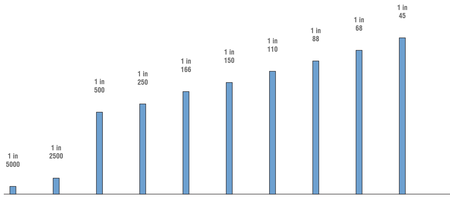
"INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM DESERVE A POSITIVE DESIGN APPROACH NOT BECAUSE OF THEIR AUTISM, BUT BECAUSE THAT IS HOW EVERYONE SHOULD BE TREATED."

- Christopher N. Henry

WHAT ARE AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS?

Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) affect an estimated 1.5 million people in the United States, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officially estimating that **ASD affects 1 in 68** children, a number that has tripled over the last decade. However, recent government surveys of parents suggest that this number might be closer to **1 in 50**, a result from a 2013 study. The two most common conditions of ASD include autistic disorder, the most severe and known form, and Asperger Syndrome, a developmental disability that affects social interactions and communication skills. ASD varies depending on the person, with some instances being more severe than others, but **people with the disorder normally show signs of impaired social interaction, difficulty in communication skills, and repetitive, restricted behavioral patterns**. It is important to understand and note that no two people diagnosed share the exact same symptoms or disorder patterns.





PREVALENCE OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN CHILDREN OVER THE LAST FOUR DECADES

INCORPORATING THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Most architecture built today fails to respond to or even acknowledge the many needs of people with autism spectrum disorder, let alone people with general special needs. Through studies and continued research within the last decade, architects now have a better understanding of how to design for people with ASD. As a pioneer in the field through conducting some of the first major research into this issue, architect Magda ww outlines seven issues that she found affect positive behavior and skill development in users with autism and ASD:

1. ACOUSTICS
2. SPATIAL SEQUENCING
3. ESCAPE SPACES
4. COMPARTMENTALIZATION
5. TRANSITION SPACES
6. SENSORY ZONING
7. SAFETY

By responding to the sensory environment, architecture can change and improve the lives of people with ASD. In a life where many every day moments may be painful or overwhelming, architecture can provide opportunities in its design where one becomes free from this outpouring and overloading of sensory information. It is in these moments where we find the ability to teach skills and create meaningful experiences without the struggles, challenges, or distractions within the built environment.

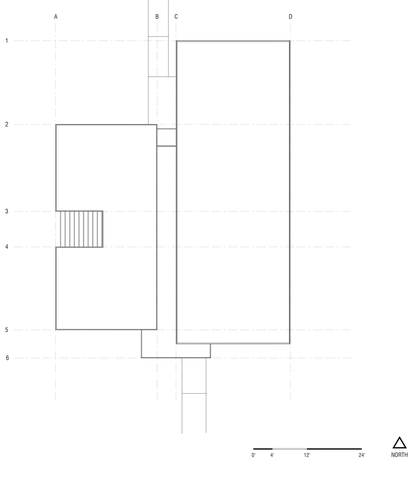
DESIGN LAYOUT

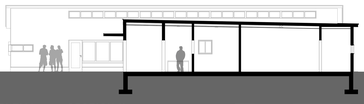
The layout of the residential building focused around a spatial organization that divided the spaces accordingly to sensory activity and use. By locating the bedroom units along the east, residents are able to create a routine by waking up with the morning sun and establishing a natural, daily pattern. The western side relates to activities that residents would carry out throughout the day, such as preparing meals, studying and socializing. The elongated hallway provides a moment of privacy before the transition outside or into the high activity spaces, such as the kitchen and common space. The staff office, mechanical, and laundry spaces were located in the middle of the design to help mitigate noise and distractions . It is not unrealistic to believe that the location and environment that adults with ASD live impacts their overall quality of life. Therefore, it is critical to provide the best options available that not only cater to their disabilities, but enable them to live better.

RESIDENTIAL FLOOR PLAN 3244 SQ. FT.

RESIDENTIAL - SECTION I

RESIDENTIAL ROOF PLAN





RESIDENTIAL - SECTION II

ARCH 772 - DESIGN THESIS
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