



Design a Progressive Environment For
Transitioning Foster Care Adolescents

COMPANY NAME PRESENTS

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Architecture of North Dakota State University

By Samantha Ochs

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the degree of Master of Architecture

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Primary Thesis Advisor

Thesis Committee Chair

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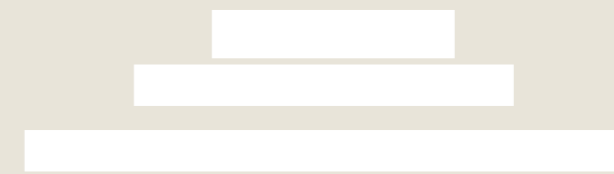
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Thesis Abstract

Thesis Statement: Design a progressive environment for transitioning foster care adolescents.

Inquiry: How to design spaces for healing and personal development for adolescents.

Typology: Residential group A-4 and Civil group A-3

Site: Morgantown, West Virginia

Success: To transition from the foster care system into adult life as emotionally and mentally, stable people. Who are fully independent persons able to care for themselves and others.

Foster care was designed to help support and care for children in dire circumstances. At 18, the young adults are “aged out.” Current data on the aging out process has found poor outcomes for the young adults formerly in foster care which include suffering from mental and behavioral health problems. Many studies on the aging out process point to a lack of social and emotional support systems in place for these young adults.

This social and emotional void forms massive disparities and missed opportunities between these young adults and their peers in the communities. These poor outcomes points to a need for permanency and belonging. Currently, there are not facilities that specifically address this need in our communities. A new typology of building is needed, which can address the mental and behavioral health of these adolescents as well as foster connections to community. My thesis will also explore and seek to address the need for permanency and belonging, as this is shown to be critical to adolescents transitioning into adulthood. This thesis will explore how a new building typology can make an impact on community interaction to help foster belonging in those who have lost many connection points in life's journey. Additionally, this thesis will include elements such as, human scale design, lighting design, connection to nature and color theory which are proven to create a safe, healing environment.

Narrative

Context

Children and adolescents in the foster care system underperform their peers in academics, rates of high school graduation, and rates of attending college by about three to one. They are more likely to suffer with a mental health disorder, anxiety and depression. Children and adolescents in foster care are also three times more likely to be labeled with ADHD and other behavioral problems. These diagnoses are only the symptoms, underlying problems come from the various forms of trauma the adolescents have experienced.

There are many reasons for one to enter into the foster care system. The most common reason being the child or adolescent's parent has been arrested and in jail or receiving treatment for a drug addiction. The adolescents' traumatic past coupled with a constant cycle of change, either in and out of the foster care system or between foster homes creates a great deal of instability. Some experience violence abuse or neglect from their caretaker.

These experiences have a major negative impact on the adolescents who are unable to process and cope with their traumas. Often they will either act out or completely detach themselves. This leads to isolation and the inability to form healthy attachments with other people, especially with adult mentors.

Testimonies from adolescents, aged 12-21, within the foster care system describe the relationship with their foster families and caseworkers as poor, feeling neglected, untrusting, and unable to be understood. For these reasons, many attempted to receive early emancipation and request early admittance into the "aging out" process.

Once the child turns 18, they are "age out" of the foster care system. However, this only means the 18-year-old child is given an apartment, and a small allowance for food. Other than their 6-month mandatory meeting with their case worker, the foster kids are completely alone. These kids are at their most vulnerable. At 18 you are legally an adult, but at 18 you know nothing about being an adult. This leads to swell of problems. Research shows that these adolescents are more likely to use and become dependent on drugs and alcohol. They are more likely to experience higher rates of suicide and depression, and are also more engaged in risk taking behaviors.

From a societal standpoint the foster care provides a short-term safety net. The basic needs of the children and adolescents are being met. However, after the child turns 18 they are thrown out and left in a vulnerable state. They don't have the same resources as they did while in the foster care system. The adolescents don't have any emotional support from mentors or parents, which is crucial for the adolescents as they enter into adulthood

Premise Under Investigation

I would like to propose an alternative to the ageing out program within the foster care system. My project is a place where adolescents within the foster care system can live. The underlying premise of this community is that due to their age range and personal needs the transitioning adolescents will most likely not be adopted. This project aims to give them a second chance, the opportunity to form bonds with mentors, develop relationships with people who are going through similar walks of life as they have and to be empowered. The architectural design which will inform the project will be one which seeks to heal adolescents, who have experienced trauma.

I want to know how I can design and improve mental and behavioral health. My project will investigate how the built environment affects us at the emotional level. The project will investigate major differences between safety awareness and one's behavior between adolescence and the general population.

The project will identify and measure how design elements affect transitioning adolescents who are struggling with mental and behavioral health. The program calls for psychologists on staff to work with adolescents. Over the course of their first year we would track the clients levels of anxiety, depression and other forms of mental and behavioral problems. The clients mental health charts would be compared with those from children in currently a part of the ageing out process within foster care. The adolescents would also be compared at a national level to those within the same age range living in a mental health facility, rehab facility and the general population. We would measure levels of safety within the project by comparing the number of reported accents, arrest, runaways, and of those who are reported missing.

My question asks how design can effect change and promote healing for those formally in the foster care system. A near majority of children placed in foster care are suffering from mental and behavioral health problems. At various times in their lives foster kids have faced loss, separation, abuse, sexual abuse. Left unaddressed this condition will take over the adolescent life and lead them towards chacos. This tends to fully manifest itself when the adolescent is left on their own. This group of adolescents also have a difficult time socializing and forming attachments. The design of this building will seek to address the psychological, emisional, and behavioral health problems currently in the adolescents lives, as well as help them develop the soft skills.

To create a strong and compelling argument for why we need to design for mental health and behavioral health in all our designs. Interviews from and testimonies will drive the narrative and impact my design in ways that formal experimental research would not be able to. It also provides a long-term examination of what has happened, what is happening and how we can change the future. Implementing the research from case studies and articles will show how different design strategies affect the human experience. My goal for this project is to create a design solution which helps to heal the adolescent, from their past traumas while in foster care. This thesis will also design a space which helps create strong connections between the adolescents and the greater community.

Project Typology

My Project Typology: residential/institutional, and civil

Similar to other projects, like an orphanage this project is a space where adolescents without a home can live. Like the progressive juvenile detention center case study, the project aims to improve mental and behavioral health through design. The programs community center's design goals are analogous to the SOS children's Village community center.

The typology of this project is classified as residential/institutional and civil. This typology was chosen because it seeks to address mental health at both the micro and macro levels. This approach was inspired by the finding of Emile Durkheim, who found those with strong ties to their communities had stronger mental health and a greater sense of wellbeing.

In exploring adolescent mental and behavioral health I want to look at how design impacts them on a day to day basis. I want to examine how design affects the communal narrative at large. I want to understand how the theoretical understanding of the family exists within architectural design. How does our environment shape affect our understanding of ourselves, our psychology and how can we heal from past trauma. I want to know how we can design a space which keeps safety in mind and still provides a relaxing environment, where adolescents will want to be.

Classification of the building types USBC West Virginia the community center would be classified as Assembly Group A-3, and as Residential Group R-4

The Thai Red Cross Foundation Children's home



Figure 1 |Thia Red Cross Children's Home, photo credit | Kestiree Wongwan

Home / Plan Architect

Size: 5700 m2

Typology: residential/other facilities

Build:2019

The premise of this children's home was centered around the idea of self-Sustainability. This affected both the layout of the building and theirform. Their use of repetitive shapes allowed the architects to overlap smaller buildings with larger buildings, to increase the cross ventilation as well as help to provide shading. The extended roof line provided greater shade to smaller building and the courtyards inorder to increase the usage of the outdoors.

Social- the design implemented courtyards and outdoor communal spaces. At the micro level the design of the project will encourage greater community for its users. At a macro level the project addresses self-sustaining design. This project challenges architects and designers to think about self-sustaining design and how they can incorporate it into their designs.

This case study focuses on designing housing for youth and adolescents. The scope of this case study focuses on reducing the amount of energy need to run the children's foundation. Respond to the falling Environment- the campus was designed to be self-sustaining which meant they integrated as many passive design systems as possible. By overlapping their buildings they were also able to reduce the amount of land needed for this project.

The materials used in this project where all locally sourced. Kepping it local helps to create a stronger connection to the building.This also ties back into the philosophy used for this design.

Conceptual underpinnings

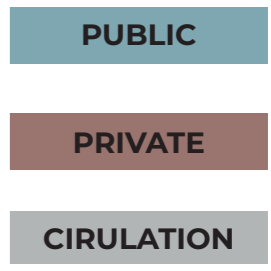
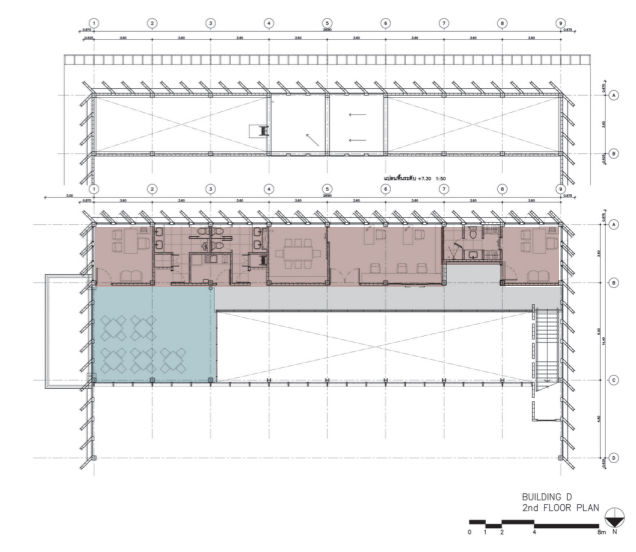
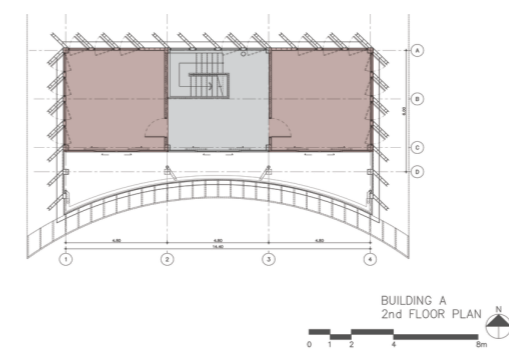
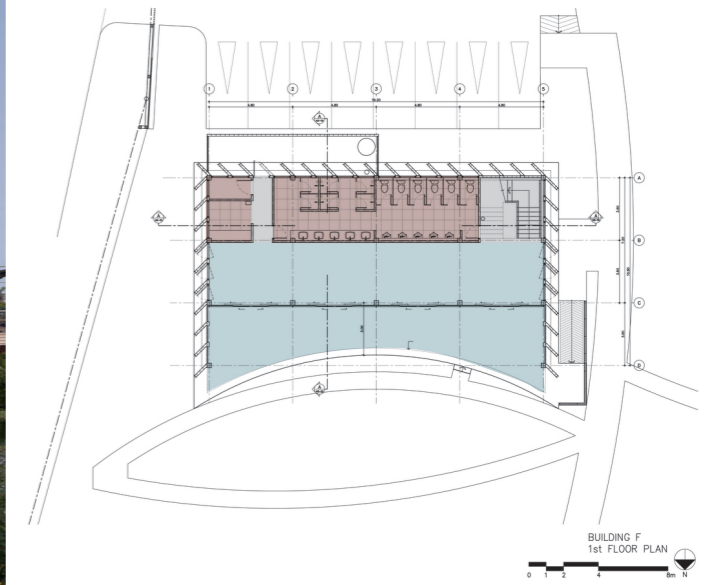
This design looked at sustainability, community, and designing for youth and adolescence. The building's floor plans reveal an open concept layout. The private spaces of the building, such as bathrooms, offices, and classrooms are on the exterior walls.



Figure 1 |Thia Red Cross Children's Home, photo credit | Kestiree Wongwan

The school uses a repetitive form, this helps to cut down on cost of construction. The buildings use a repetitive brick wall facade which is angled outwards and creates a far like effect. The building's form is asymmetrical, the repetition brick walls used as a far create a rhythm and movement. This dynamic feature provides intensest to the building functioning as an economical solution to the physical structure and to provide sun shading to reduce heat gains.

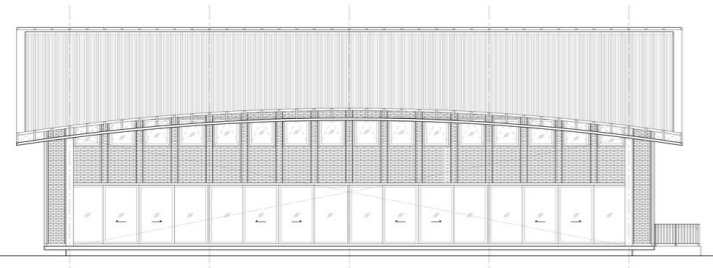
The sustainability of the architecture creates high quality design that will last. Creating building with ample daylighting and open concept layouts make the space inviting and provide people with When I think about how my buildings will layout I want to know that they will relate to each other in a way which fosters community, while still being mindful of the following. Maximize natural daylighting, maximize south exposure, to provide privacy and visual solitude, to create a stress free environment.



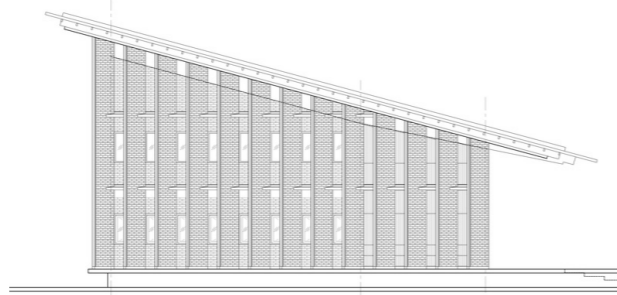
Design for the Foster Care

A courtyard behind the fitness room separates between the water closet zone and service zone and also makes fitness surrounded by view. Besides Thailand's tropical weather, the main pool deck requires a big roof to protect it from rain and sun. The columns are installed as least as possible along with the glass wall dividing space to remain panoramic view for the deck. The main material, lath, blends nature to the house by let the natural light get through the space dimly. The eaves are also translucent and allow natural light to get through the lath ceiling creating transition space itself. The outstanding characteristic shows the simplicity of the building blending nature, existing surrounding together with the architecture.

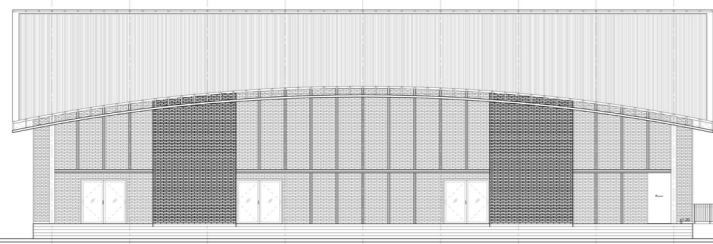
From this case study I was able to learn about self sustaining environments, which engage the community. Circulation and community building seemed important programmatic parts of the building and the site at large. This was most likely a high property because the space was designed for orphaned children to live together. Designing spaces which would encourage community was an important part of the design process. These spaces would, in a sense, act as the capitalize for the deep and meaningful relationships this children would have with one another.



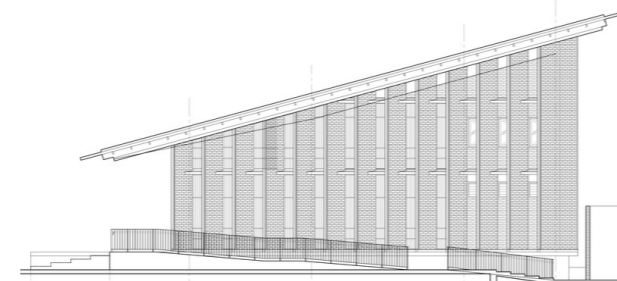
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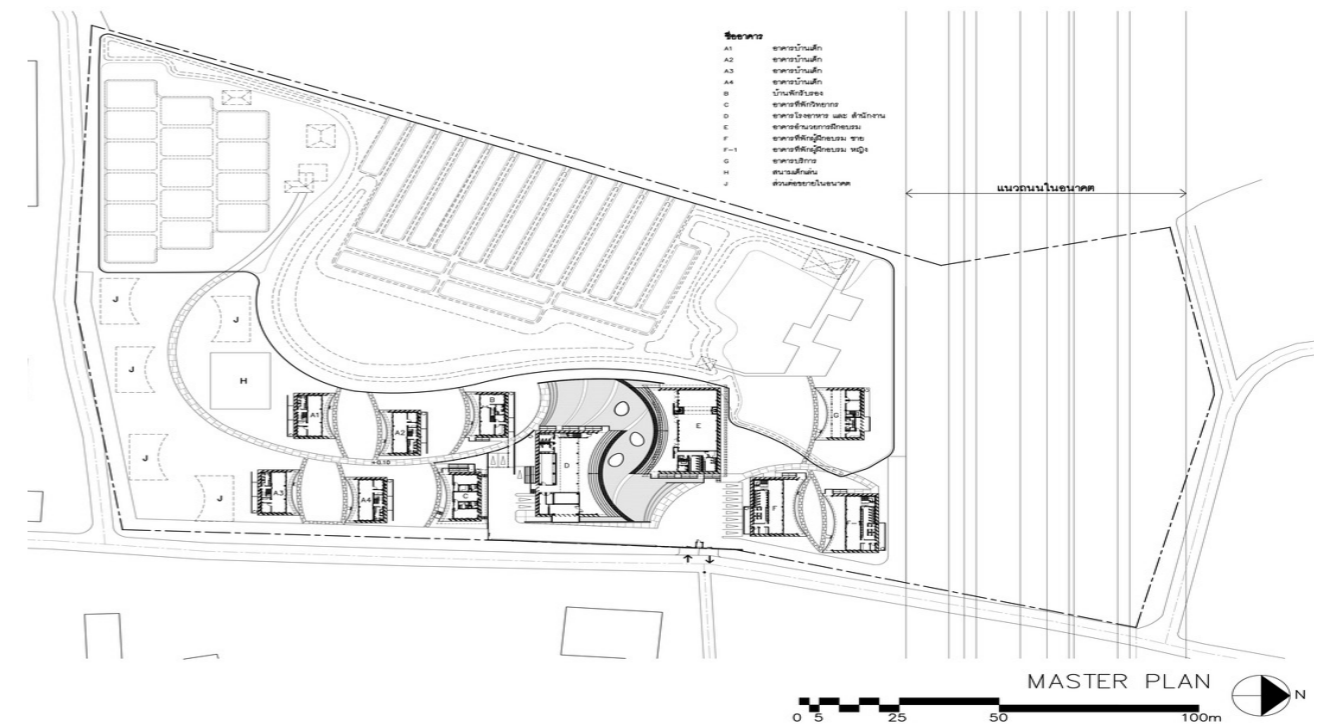


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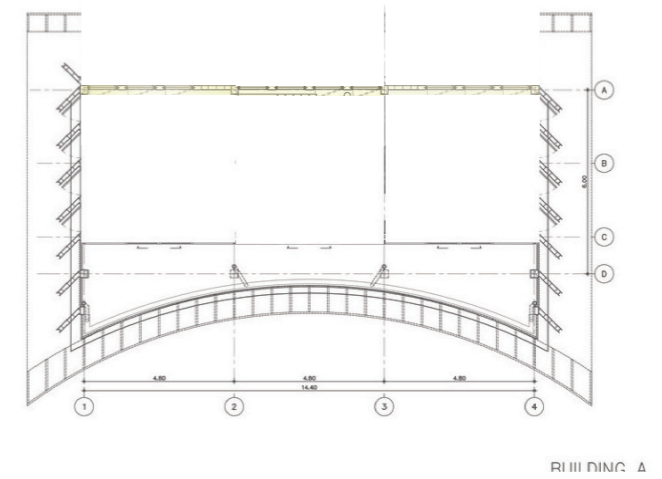
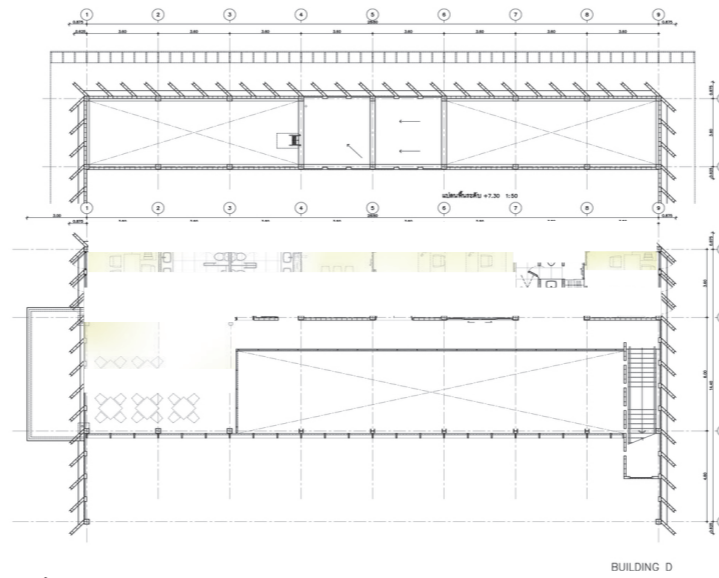
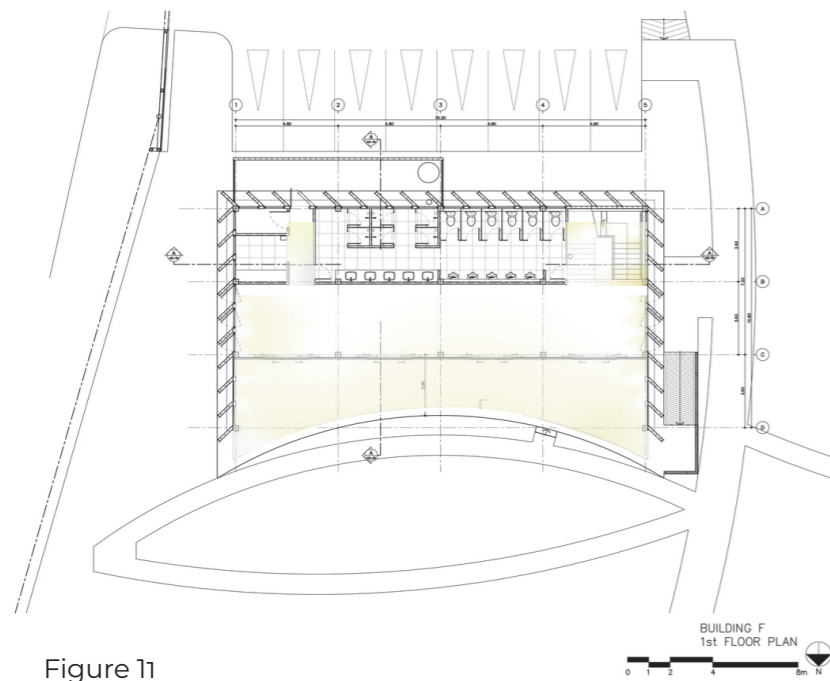
Design for the foster care

The buildings can be thought of as box with a half circle cut out at one side. This form and strategic placement of the building allows for cross ventilation between space to reduce heating loads placed on the buildings. The larger buildings in the center hold classrooms and have the greatest effect on the ventilation of the site.

The buildings were designed to be as flexible as possible. The open spaces inccurage collaboration among the students. The Plan architect talked about zoning the spaces within the building that would allow for both large and small group gatherings. The building's extended roofs and open wall create an extension of the building to the site.



Natural Daylight



Johnson County Youth and Families Center

The Johnson county youth families center is located in the town of Olathe, Kansas. This building includes a courthouse, a detention center, and alternative corrections facility. Construction on this civil building was completed in 2011. The design of this building forced on engaging adolescents. The building also has several passive design systems incorporated in the design. Unlike the other case studies the architects designs focused on creating a stress free environment. The design team focused on systems such as acoustics, lighting, and zoning of spaces. These elements were extremely important in the design. Reducing stressors from our exterior environment essential to designing for those with mental and behavioral problems.

Those who struggle with such problems become overstimulated at a faster rate than is normal. Removing distractions such as sounds from the HVAC system creates an environment that is more tolerable for the juvenile who come to stay at the Johnson County Youth and Family Center. This non hostile environment has shown promising effects on the youth who have been sent to the youth and family center.

This building has made a tremendous impact on the community at large; socially, culturally, politically, facility, and environmentally. The building is located within a neighborhood, and claded with a local stone and wood venner cladding. This draws the visitor in, and creates interest to the building. When looking at the photos one could easily mistake the corrections center with a library, or school.

The correctional facility also implemented several sustainable systems including, clerestory windows, choosing local environmentally friendly materials, and using low VOC materials on the interiors. "The Johnson County Center up to a LEED platinum standard", according to the Je Dunn construction company.

The new correctional facility has challenged people's idea of what justice is, how it is applied, and how delinquents ought to be managed inside of a correctional facility. Sociality has to look at how ad risk adolescents are treated within society. The Johnson county center and the programs currently offered for the adolescents have been effective in reducing the number of repeat offenders. Which allows use to understand how our physical environment

The Johnson's County Correctional Facility's exterior uses stone cladding; this design choice was an owed to the city's origins. The architects wanted the building to fit in with its context, as to help adolosece feel safe while staying at the facility. The corrections facility alternative the traditional corrections facility has made major improvements as the numbers of repeat offenders has dropped significantly since the program has opened. The lowering of repeat offenders thus reduces the cost for the justice system and lightens the county's tax burden. The building has many smart design solutions, such as increased natural daylighting, and zoned in a way which lower overall heating and cooling cost. This case studies is a long term adolescents housing center. It differs from the other case studies because it focuses on mental and behavioral health of the clients.

Design for the Foster Care



Figure 14

Design for the foster care



Figure 15 | JCYFCC, Photo edit|

The building was broken down into three sections. The courts, the detention center, and the alternatives course, which also provides a mix-use space for the community. The court was the anchor point of the building. To the left was the county's alternative youth and families center. The right side of the building housed the juvenile detention center. The design team's intention behind this design choice

was to create a physical example of the holistic approach towards juvenile delinquency. In general the buildings seemed to be centered around public spaces. Public spaces tended to be located in the center of the building, with private spaces such as offices and dorm rooms located off to the exterior. The building used a mix of steel and wood structured for the building. The design of the building uses as much diffuse natural light as possible. Natural warm materials were chosen as part of this design to reduce the reverberation of sound.

This design choice was to create a physical example of the holistic approach towards juvenile delinquency. In general the buildings seemed to be centered around public spaces. Public spaces tended to be located in the center of the building, with private spaces such as offices and dorm rooms located off to the exterior. The building used a mix of steel and wood structured for the building. The design of the building uses as much diffuse natural light as possible. Natural warm materials were chosen as part of this design to reduce the reverberation of sound.

Designing non treating spaces at risk adolescents will be more responsive to the treatment programs that they are a part of. One's environment does affect their mental and behavioral health. Through the implementation of smart design systems. This case study stresses the importance for access to natural daylighting. Using soft materials so the incarcerated don't feel threatened by their environment. Other issues addressed were about private vs public space. To provide a greater sense of autonomy the incarcerated needs to have a space where they are in control, while still maintaining social interactions. Much of our mental and behavioral health is influenced by our environment. Providing those with mental and behavioral health issue with visual access to the outdoors, using soft materials, which absorb sounds

Natural Daylighting

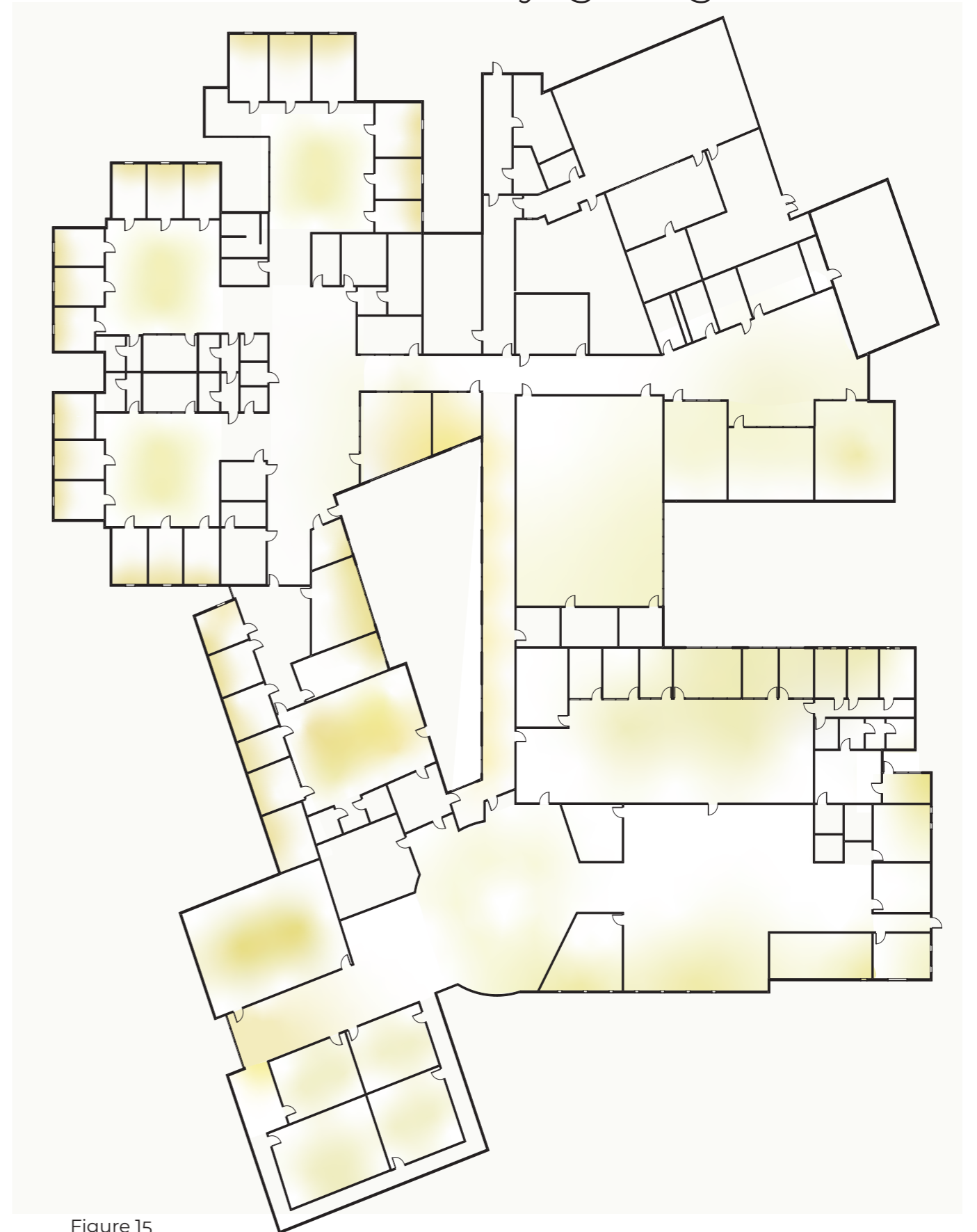


Figure 15

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SOS Children's Villages Lavezzorio Community Center

SOS Children's Villages Lavezzorio Community Center is a 16,00 square foot civic center located on South Parnell Ave in the Auburn- Gresham neighborhood, Chicago Illinois. The community center houses social services, educational spaces, and provides the neighborhood with community spaces. The primary focus of this design was centered around engaging children, as this building functions primarily as a daycare. By intentionally placing the classrooms next to a courtyard the designers were able to fully engage the children. This provides the students with visual access to the outdoors, as well as increases the amount of natural daylighting. Intentionality such as this will provide the students with a better learning experience. Many studies have proven that green space relaxes the mind and allows one to process information more fully.



Figure 16 | SOS Community Center photo edit|



Figure17 | SOS Community Center, photo edit|

This building differs from the other case studies as its typology is a civic building which serves as a community center. The building focuses on improving children's ability to learn and collaborate with one another. A unique feature of the building would be the dynamic use of the enlarged stairs. The stairs primary function is to act as alternative classrooms space, as well as a stage for student performances.

The stairs secondary function then becomes circulation for people as they move through the site.

The Lavezzorio community center has implemented many smart design systems including glazing on the south conqueror of the building. This system provides solar heat and increases natural daylighting during the colder seasons. The increase in natural heating and lighting helps to lower maintenance costs.

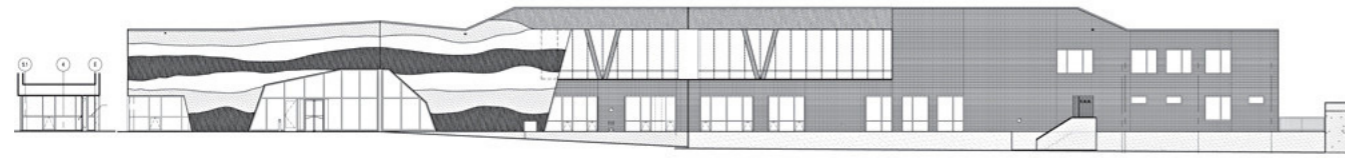
The modern design of this building stands out in its traditional neighborhood. It creates a landmark for the area and helps to pull people in with its unique and playful exterior. The building invokes curiosity and playfulness. These modes of thinking encourage children to play, be creative, and to engage with one another. The playful and inviting nature calls to the values of the community. The auburn gresham neighborhood is a centered neighborhood with The building is designed for the public interest and would be used for the common good. The building acts as a place for people to pose on their busy lives and take part in the major discourse, to engage in community. In this way the people are able to fulfill their civic responsibilities.

This building serves the common good, the SOS children's villages a, which seeks to find alternative forms of foster care. The community is focused on building strong communities within the Chicago land area. They wanted to create spaces not only for their foster children

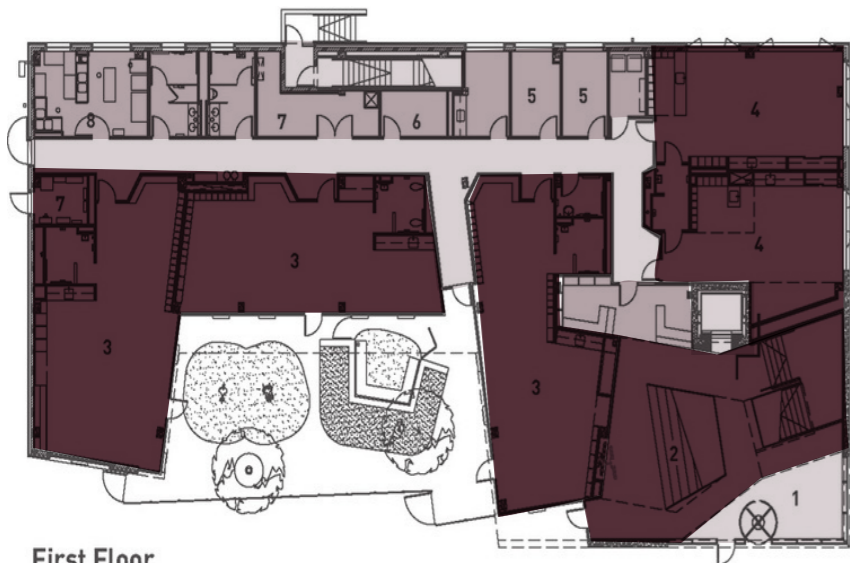


Figure 18 | SOS Community Center, photo edit|

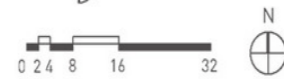
Design for the Foster Care



2.1 UNFOLDED BUILDING ELEVATION @ NORTH, EAST + SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"

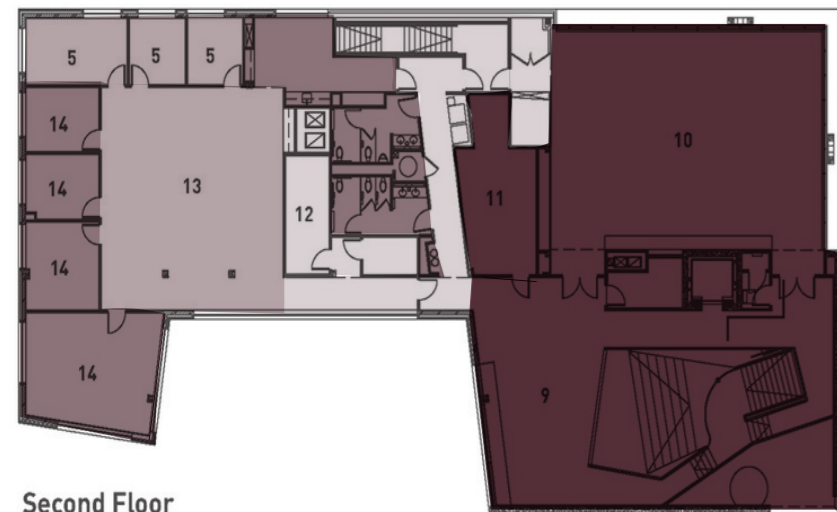


First Floor



KEY:

- 1 Lobby
- 2 Stepped Seating
- 3 Day-Care Classroom
- 4 Infant Day-Care Classroom
- 5 Office
- 6 Sick Room
- 7 Mechanical
- 8 Food Preparation
- 9 Upper Lobby/Children's Computers
- 10 Community Room
- 11 Game Room
- 12 Files
- 13 Caseworker's Open Office
- 14 Counseling



Second Floor



Figure 20.

Design for the foster care

with equal opportunities. In this way they are surviving the common good. The community is affecting the political field through advocacy work for child rights, as well as the incivility of the community center.

By encouraging the public to use their space, they are able build connections and spread awareness and are better serve the needs of their foster children. The building's open concept design provides an economic solution for the various needs of the community as it has multi purpose flex spaces, this reduces the footprint of the building. The operational cost was also lowered through the use of ample daylighting, south facing windows, including natural daylighting.

The design takes advantage of the south facing glazing as well as a center courtyard to provide as much daylighting as possible to the classrooms, which will increase the students ability to grow and develop. Steel was used to create an effective structural system. The structural system in place allowed for the large cutout on the south corner of the building. It also allowed for wider classrooms. The building's overall shape is quite boxy, for this reason the massing of the building can be thought of as a large box that has been subtracted from, at the south corner of the building. This corner is the defined entrance point of the building and creates a sense of arrival.



Figure 21| SOS Community Center photo edit|

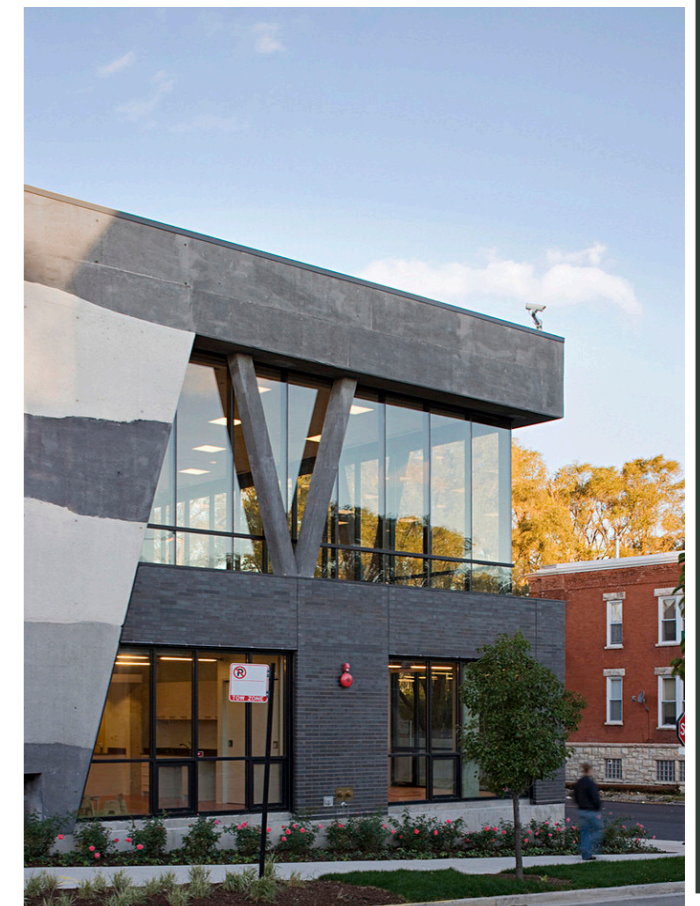


Figure 22| SOS Community Center photo edit|

Design for the Foster Care

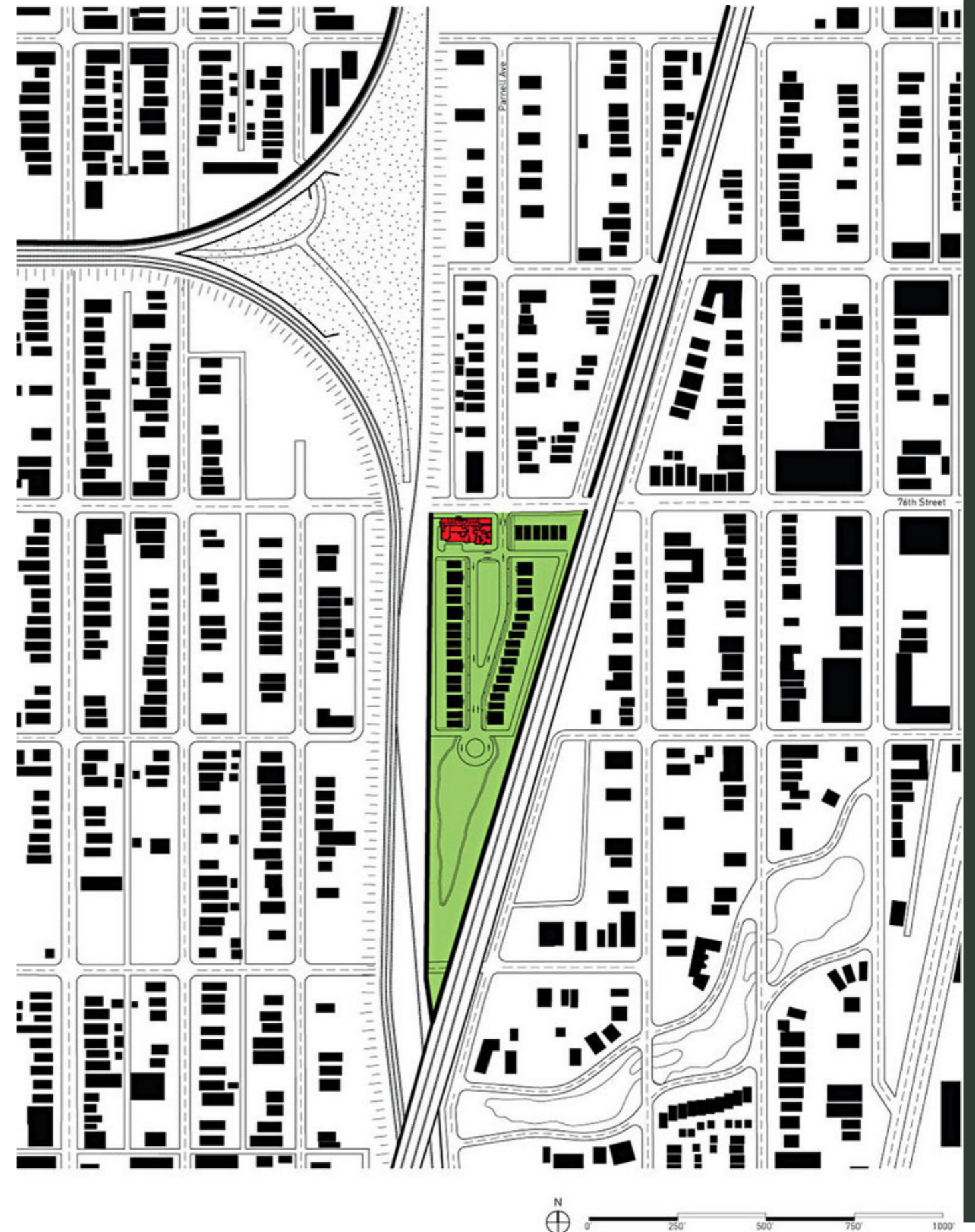
Circulation of buildings between public and private spaces is circular and somewhat fluid. A unique feature of the building would be the connection point between the first and second floors. The stairs, traditionally thought of as circulation space have become a public space for discourse and community engagement. This creates an experience which allows the users to connect with one another and share ideas in a space and in away in which they

Hierarchy the building starts with spaces that are designed for kids. The classrooms, the breakout spaces, all have priority over the general office spaces and circulation spaces. From the floor plans one can tell that the central spaces were put into the center of the building. This allows the classrooms to receive as much natural daylighting as possible. Other private spaces such as restrooms or administrative offices, are the tertiary spaces of the building. They are given greater privacy and less privatization.

The tertiary spaces molds into the background of the space, so that the focus remains on the community. The modern style of the building has a playful dynamic and a symmetrical design it's form can be thought of as a cube, like a block of cheese with the corner torn out. This case study shows how a community's identity can grow by having a building a common space that units everybody together.

The success of this community centre is due to its use of smart design, the implantation of design systems such as natural daylighting, its open concept to allow for the greatest level of versatility and to provide learning environments with outdoors spaces all play important roles into the effectiveness of the design.

Design for the foster care



The Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation

Architects: HGA

Size: 10,000 s.f. Build:2019

Typology: Specialty Care



Figure 24.

The Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation (HBF) located in Plymouth, Minnesota is an addiction-treatment facility for adolescents and young adults. The inpatient care facility can house up to 32 individuals any given time. The HBF center wanted patients to feel a sense of security and safety, which would allow them to heal. The program includes 32 beds as well as recreational areas including; gym music therapy space, an art therapy room, classrooms, mental health services, and dining room.

The center was designed for adolescents who suffer from mental health and drug addiction. The building has a modern sleek low profile look. Couple this with how the building integrates itself in with the surrounding context and it seems that the designers are letting the site take center stage instead of falling to the wayside. The communal spaces in the program also play an important role in the healing component of the facility.

The designers took advantage of views of the nature surrounding the site, as a way to help ground and heal the patients. The building has ample clearstory windows and courtyards to insure as much natural lighting as possible. The building itself seems to be molded to the site. In this way it respects its site. The building is present but it does not overpower the site. This idea is carried through the building design. Balconies which connect to the bed rooms and use of natural materials, create moments of connection between the patients and nature.

The design layout and program focused on community spaces. Former patient testimony reveals the importance of these community spaces as a major component of their healing process. This health facility used wood and stone materials in communal spaces to create a cozy and homelike environment. A unique feature of the Hazelden Betty Ford foundation would be the fireplaces throughout the facility. The fireplaces act as center points within the environment and draw people together to form a community.

Design for the Foster Care



Figure 25 | Gym, photo edit | Hazelden Betty Ford

The rehab center is located in a serene nature preserve in a neighborhood. The location of the health care facility is very important; instead of looking at modernity for healing it turns to nature. The connection to nature can be seen throughout the building. From the soft materials used to the abundance of courtyards and access to outdoor spaces.

The designers were also very intentional in creating a sense of place and community. When guests first walk into the center they are greeted by a fireplace, which evokes a sense of home. It also creates a space for community together.

Conceptual underpinning

The case study's programming, designed for adolescents who struggle with mental and behavioral health. Were very informative and important in my design. Affective designs considerations from this rehab center would be the open and abundant communal spaces, the safety measures, and designing for adolescents. One movement where these design strategies came together was in the gym. This space had several points of interest including a rock climbing wall. The spaces was well lit, and included natural daylighting. The gyms ceiling was also cladded in a wood veneer to create a warm and comfortable environment. This effect would help reduce any anxieties the adolescent may feel.



Figure 26 | Community Space, photo edit | Hazelden Betty Ford

Design for the foster care

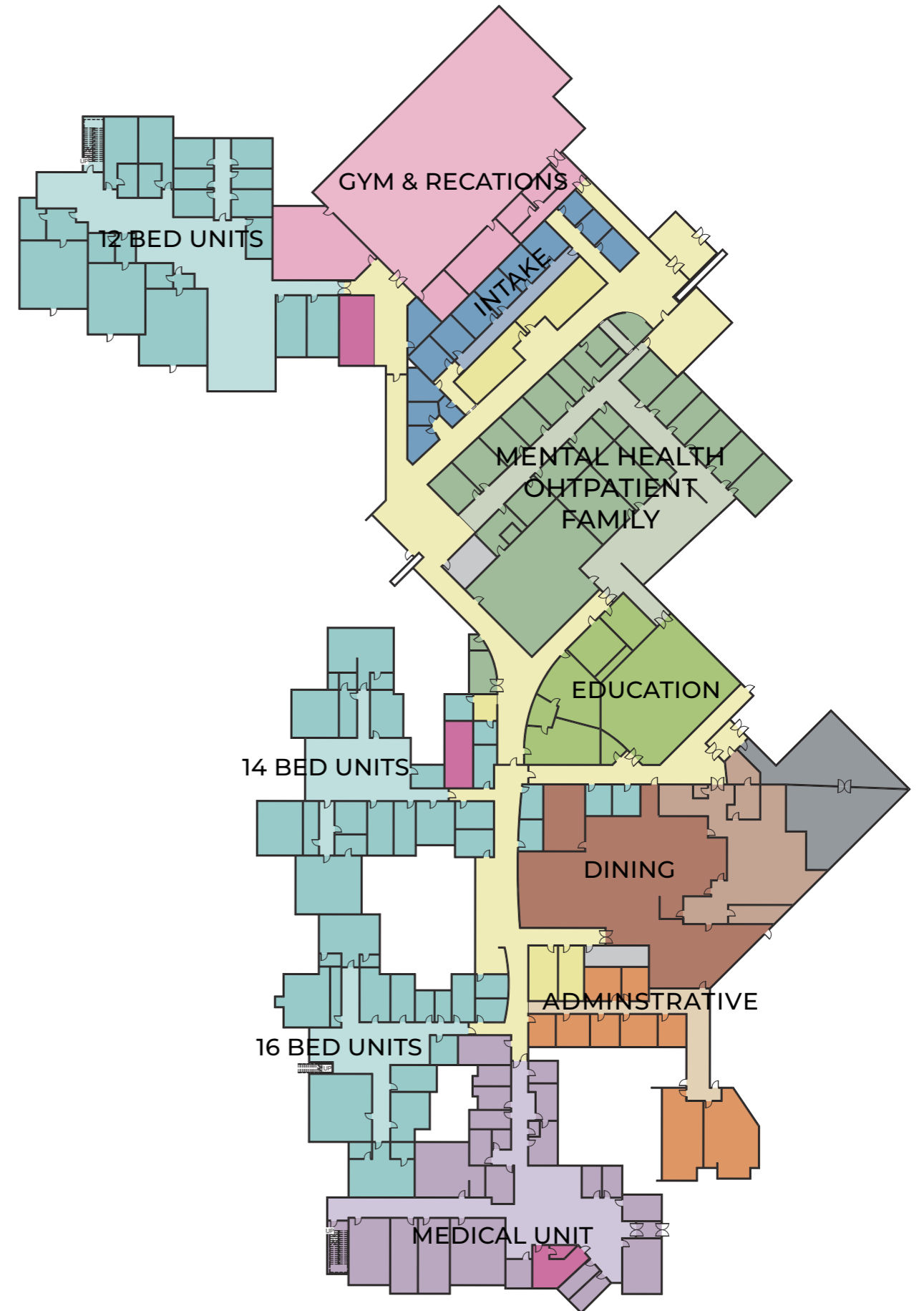


Figure 27

Natural Lighting

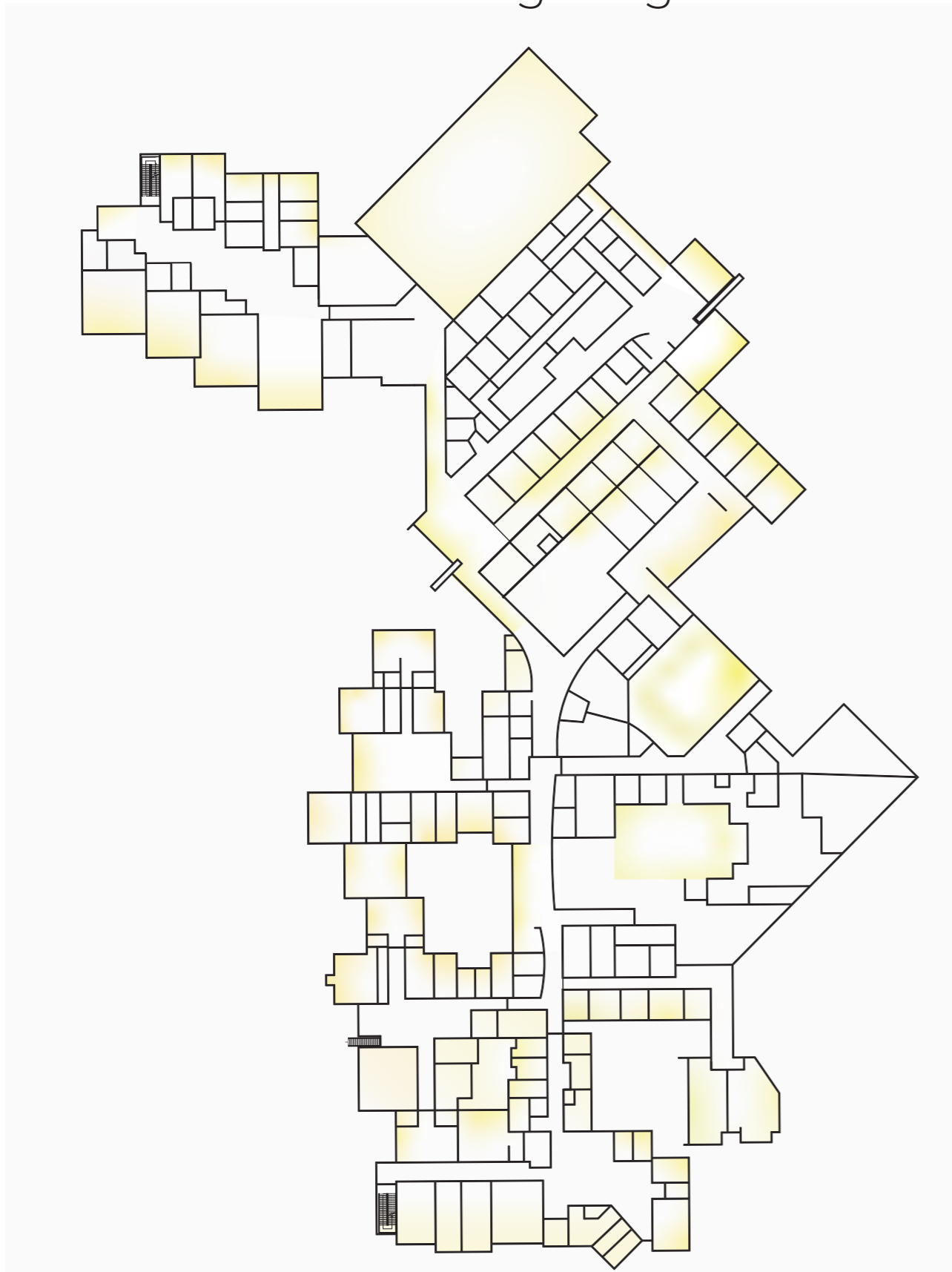


Figure 28

Site lines & Security

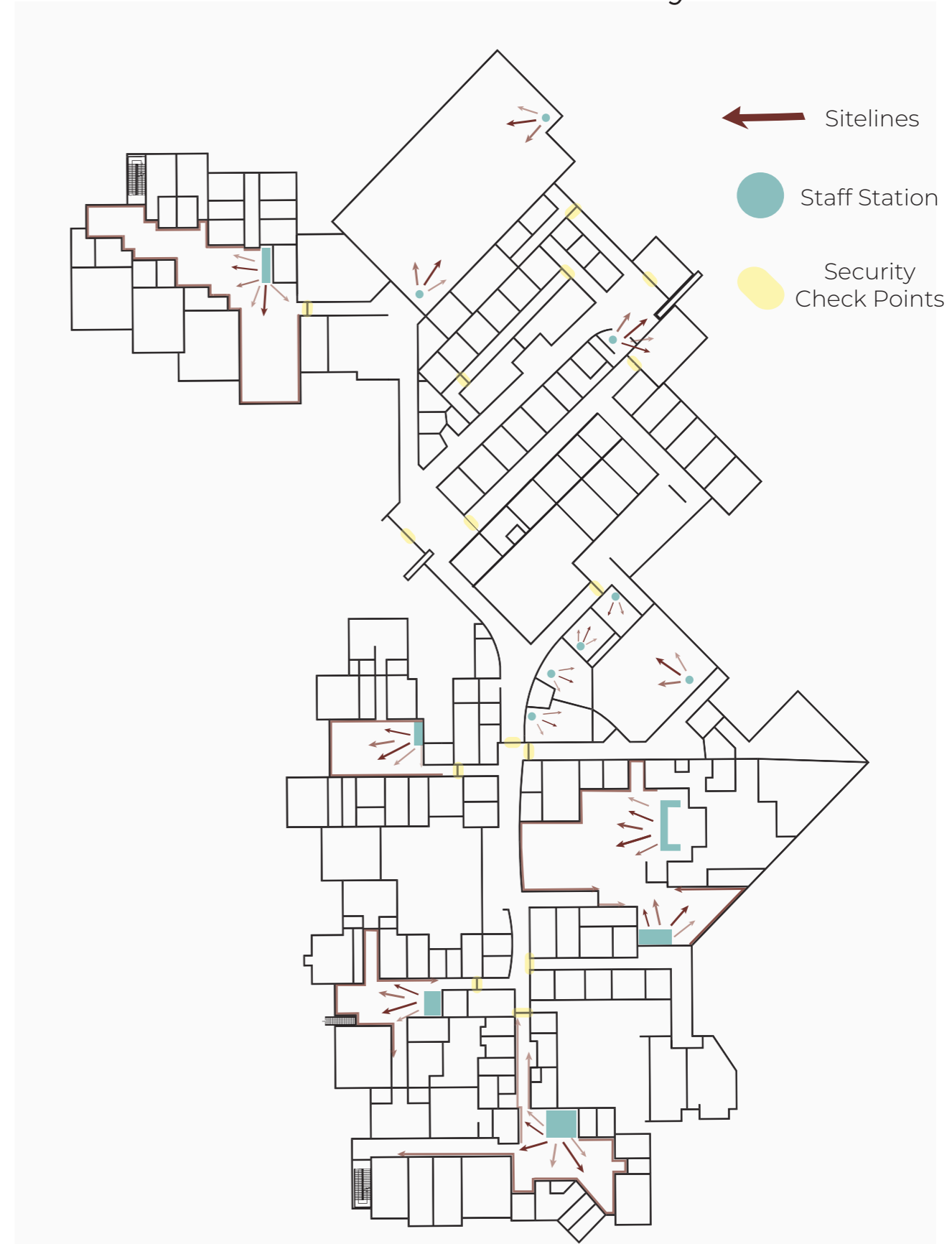


Figure 29

Case Study Summary

The typology (the research was used to support the theoretical premise. The information found supported answered the theoretical question. The unifying idea being we need to create for the mental emotional and physical needs of adolescence, while providing a balance for their safety. The case study look at how buildings affect the mental health of childhood mental health, behavior and development. The case studies analyses and designed spaces as being private or public, with an emphasis on creating public spaces where people can engage in discourse.

General and Specific Analysis

The overarching theme for my reacher was design for the youth and adolescence. Looked at housing, educational facilities, and mental health facilities. A concern that I have on my research would be the lack of research which I have found in design for adolescents (12-21) this is important because adolescents' brains are separate from both child and adult brains. Other research I am exploring is the metaphor of family and the sense of belonging.

Common characteristics from the cast studies include intentional designs that would accomodate for future growth. The design flexes this idea by providing as much flexibility within the design as possible. All of the causes studies sought to promote community, and mental health to be a long lasting spaces.

The principles of the designs of the individual case studies were very similar. The approach, or emphasis of the design was what was varied. Some focused on self sustainability, others on multi-purpose use, and others on improving mental health by creating a stress free environment. The design outcomes were similarity, meaning well intended architecture is that which uses simplicity and starts with the feeling of the space first.

Effects of underlying conceptual ideas. The case studies all designed for the future and for the user. Design strategies aimed to create friendly and inviting spaces. Strategies included increasing natural daylighting. Being mindful of materiality used. In all of the case studies the materiality was carefully chosen for the following reason: an economical, mindful, or sustainable. For mental health design often the materials were chosen to create sound reduction spaces, to create a calmer environment for those who are neurotic.



Figure 30 |Thia Red Cross Children's Home, photo credit | Kestiree Wongwan



Figure 31 | SOS Community Center, photo edit|



Figure 32 | Hillsdale, photo edit|



Effect of site and project types. This case study had a variety of sites, dealing with wetlands and others with designing in the context of cities, suburban and rural areas. The architects in all of the case studies addressed the site's and project type concepts in very different ways.

The Thai children's house used a repetitive building within a more rural setting, which provided the architects with greater flexibility for their site layout. This freedom enabled the project to be as self-sustaining as possible. The community center was located within a dense neighborhood of Chicago.

Figure 33| Hazelden Rehab Center photo edit| HBF

The functional relationship of the part of the buildings. The case studies focus on public vs private spaces. And would organize their buildings so that large public spaces were a central part of the building or in the center of the site in order to encourage large group gatherings. But one needs to sculpt these large flexible spaces when designing. Layering large open spaces into zones helps to break down the open spaces into free standing areas where people gather together and places where people will move between the gathering space.

Uncommon characteristics

Effects underlying conceptual idea on theoretical premise. The underlying ideas of the case studies was that one's environment affects their behavior. This is a reinforcing idea for the theoretical premise as the proposal states that adolescents transitioning out of the foster care system will find healing, recover from their past experiences, and grow into the men and women they were meant to be.

Functional relationship

The Thai children center, the building type was broken up into classroom and housing units. The classrooms were at the center of campus to ensure equal access to the buildings. Within the building the design focused on natural ventilation and spaced the rooms along the back walls of the buildings to allow for as much cross ventilation between buildings which faced one another. The functional relationship in the Johnson County Center divided the floor into zones, these zones were organized based on private vs public spaces. Where public spaces were along the walls and public spaces in the center of the building so that adolescents could interact with one another but if they needed still have quick access to a private space for both their mental and behavioral health needs.

Spatial relationship

The building spatial relationships focused on circulation. Private spaces, such as bedrooms, classrooms, offices and bathrooms would be considered private and were placed online the exterior walls of the buildings so that communal spaces could be placed in the center. This design enlarged the communal spaces and provided the occupants with greater flexibility. This also influenced the circulation of paths within the spaces. Circulation of the buildings created a road like system where people travel from location to location in between the public and private spaces.

The Sites and Project Tops

The sites differ from my proposed site in Morgantown West Virginia. The town is located in the Appalachian mountains and has a different set of conditions for building. I did however find a case study of a building located at the University of West Virginia. This building was similar to the community center in that this was a space for the university students together. The building was much taller than the other case study. This due to the creators of the buildings, but also main buildings in Appalachia are designed on sites with tight constraints as to how wide the buildings can be. Most of the buildings in Appalachia build upwards as they are limited on the horizontal plane. The main case studies I found were in areas with relatively small or granular elevation change.

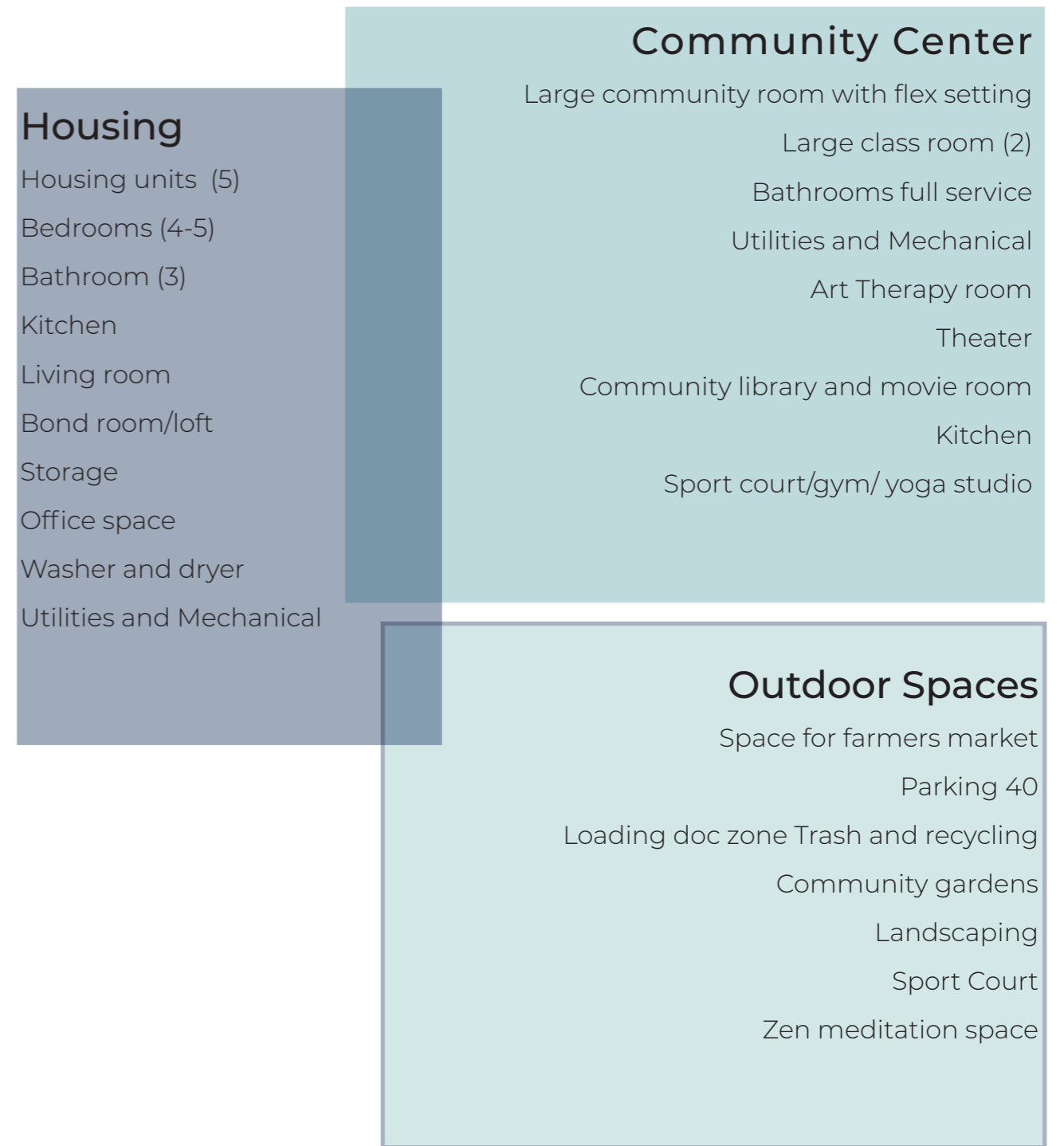
Cultural, political, and social effect from the projects

These projects have all made a positive impact on the cultures around foster care, correctional facilities, and communal engagement. Much of the programs success will depend on my ability to create an environment which has strong ties back to the community.

Technical issues

Many of the case studies implemented passive design solutions in the buildings. The case studies have a low to mid level of technology implemented into their designs. The juvenile detention center has security measures. The juvenile correction center's top priority was to create a stress free environment. This required a great detail of planning and prioritizing to insure that spaces were sound proofed, zoned properly, and the materials chosen throughout the building would absorb sound, or at the very least not intensify the sounds.

Major Elements of the Project



User /Client Description

The user client description was created using a combination of research from the foster care system, the demographics of West Virginia as well as information gathered from interviews.

The Client

The client for my project will be adolescents who come from the foster care system. These kids have suffered a great deal of trauma over the course of their lives. According to Foster Care-KVC West Virginia, the client would most likely be an 18-year-old boy. He will have some form of behavioral disorder and or ADHD. The boy will have been placed in the foster care system when he was nine years old, due to his parents' arrest or for rehab. The client will have lived with several family members including mother, aunt, or uncle, and possibly a grandparent. He has seen his father seldom since his parents divorced when he was three years old. His father is a quiet man who has worked in the coal mines since he was 17 years old. Neither of his parents finished high school. Instead, they got pregnant with his oldest sister when they were 16 years old. At the same time, they were completely dependent on opioids.

The client spent most of his life neglected and unsupervised. At 18 years old, he feels like there is no need to have close relationships. When he was 15 years old, he realized this a year after he was put into the foster care system for the third time, and his aunt never came for him. Even though she said she would, she had made a promise. At 15, our client would have felt this betrayal by his family and become more withdrawn. He wasn't grown close with anyone at his latest foster care. Increasing his isolation, he would most likely spend his time online. This level of isolation would most likely cause him to slip into a depression. Like his father, our client started to take antidepressants.

The client has little interest in school. He sits in the back of the class doodling or staring off into space. He was diagnosed with ADHD in the second grade and since then his teachers have given up on him and just passed him on to the next teacher year after year. His foster families haven't paid much attention toward him. He is the 13th foster child they've had. The foster family is a good family but both of the parents work full time. On top of that they have six other foster children to look after. Our client has always felt alone, unnoticed and unloved. He decided to file for an early emancipation, and that is where our story begins.

The day of the emancipation trial the judge offered an alternative opportunity. To come to this transitional home where he could stay with other adolescence and receive help and healing.

THE STAFF

There will be multiple staff members involved in this project including mentors, psychologists, general social workers, case managers, and administration team. They are very compassionate people who want to help the young adults succeed. These people will need to have time and space for themselves. They are people who have a big heart for children. They find meaning in what they do and they enjoy their jobs. It will be important to have a high retention rate, for this reason the staff working in the group homes will have a private suite where they can work and relax.

COMMUNITY USER

All community members from the Morgantown area will be welcomed to use the community center. The average user from this demographic will be a middle aged woman, she will come for yoga classes. She will take her children to visit the library, and visit the craft festivals. The community user comes in anywhere from once a month to once a week. Her time at the community center has increased her awareness of the foster community. Stigmas which she previously held about foster children have vanished as she gets to know them and has more in depth conversations with the adolescents who were previously in foster care.



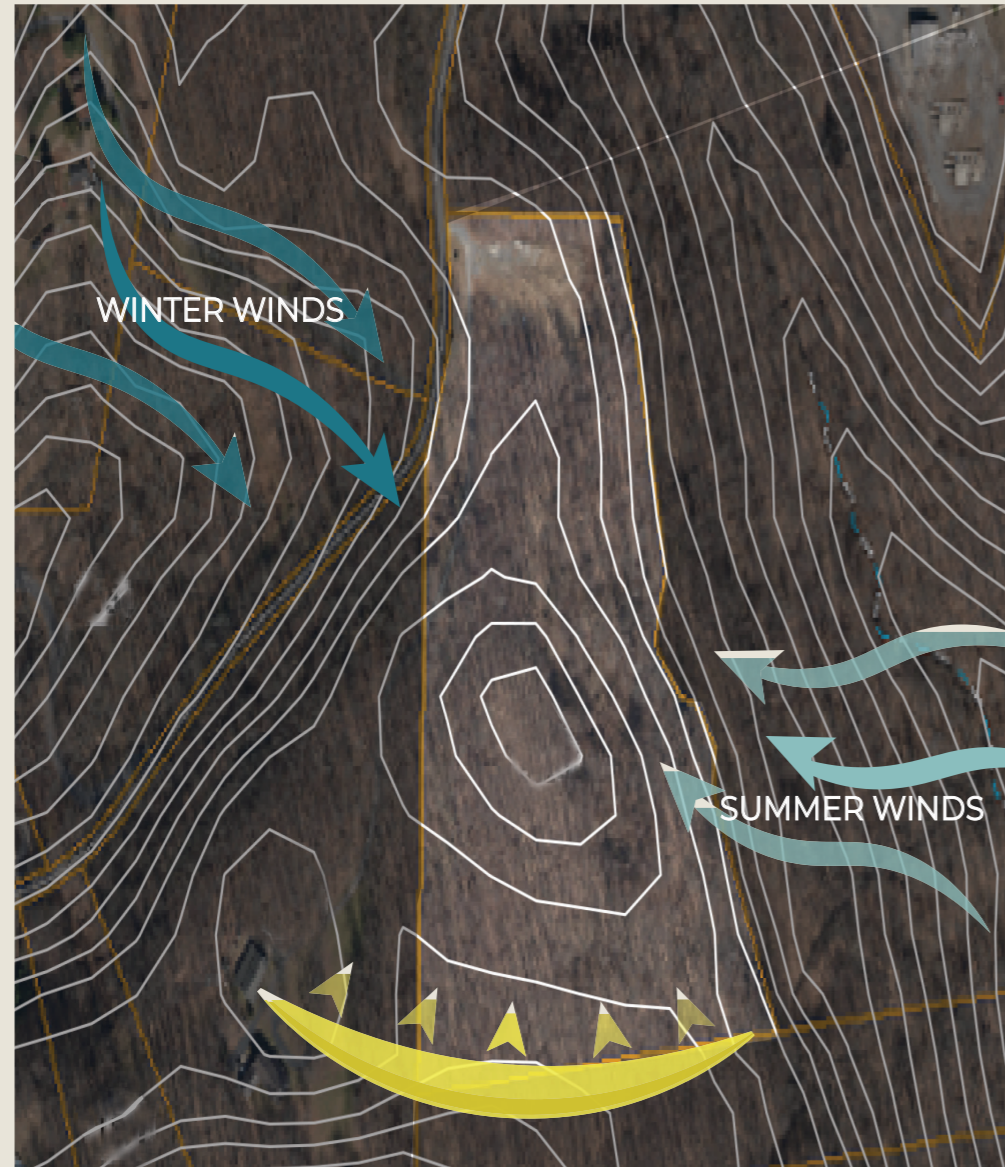


Figure 38



Figure 39 | Site, photo edit| Google map

Project Emphasis

MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

The emphasis of my project will focus on improving mental and behavioral health through smart design systems. The project will emphasize the safety of the adolescents while still maintaining a peaceful and relaxing environment.

AUTONOMY

To achieve this goal the project will create an environment that allows the adolescent to have privacy, to be in spaces they feel free.

STABILITY

From my research I have found that many foster kids have talked about how important it is to have an established relationship with an adult mentor or someone to talk with.

BELONGING

I would like to emphasize the family unit and sense of permanency throughout the design of the building and the site. The adolescent age range is a very important time in one's life, of then that is when we "find ourselves" we grow in our understanding of ourselves. The family often provides the individual with stability and emotional support, this allows the adolescent to grow and murer into themselves.

Goals of the Thesis Project

1. Design a transitional home for adolescents as an alternative option to the "aging out" process or who are applying for emancipation from foster care.
2. Design a space which improves mental health through such means as increasing natural daylight, acoustical control, color, and warm materials.
3. Reduce stress level by providing both visual and physical access to the outdoors.
4. Tie the design of the community center and houses back to the history of Morgane's town.
5. Implement safety measures that will ensure the child is unable to harm themselves or others.
6. Design a community center which engages the public and provides opportunities for the young adolescents to connect with their community at large.
7. Provide flexibility of space within the community center to optimize the usage and longevity of the building.
8. Provide counseling and theory spaces within the community center. The clients will be provided with multiple forms of theory such as one on one sections, group theory, and art therapy.
9. Use architectural design as a means of providing playful experiences within the design of the community center. This will create an organic bonding experience between individuals.

10. Provide year rounds spaces for physical activity.
11. Provide those who have gone through the transitional home program with a place to stay after they have gone through the program. Ensuring these adolescents they will always have a place to come home to will help to build trust as well as create a family.

Goals for Thesis Project

Academic

Learning more about psychology and how we interact with our built environment. Design for safety, mental health, and adolescents. This project will allow those in academia to better understand the relationship between psychology, sociology, culture, and architecture. This project looks at designing for the adolescent age range. It will also look at how a better design environment can help mitigate the high levels of stress associated with trauma.

Professional

This project will help the architectural profession better understand the links between designing for the mental health of adolescents and the effect their environments play on their behavior.

Personal

I've had many opportunities to work with many kids who were living in lower income neighborhoods, and or in poverty. I have seen how early childhood trauma stunts people's personal, developmental, and emotional growth. I had an eye-opening experience when I was volunteering at an after school community center. The building had been around since the late 60's and she showed her age. Massive overhead lights hung from the ceiling. Yellow stains splattered on the bottom walls. Hand prints were everywhere. While I was examining a corridor I saw a bright pink sheet of paper in the middle of the wall with a red crooked letter that read, "HOW TO GREET PEOPLE". The four part instructions following read, " look them in the eye, give them a firm handshake while saying hello, tell them your name, and do not run away". My first thought was, "what?" I thought how you can not know something so simple has to properly greet people. As my year went on and I became closer with a lot of kids there I quickly realized how different our lives were. From these people I was able to learn just how important having a stable family life is. Being in a strongly connected family means the child is able to grow and develop to their full potential.

Project Typology

The project typology will address my theoretical question through civil, residential, and institutional design. This multifaceted typology will bridge together the components of the human experience. This typology will address the emotional, physical, and psychological needs of the youth exiting foster care.

Theoretical Premise

The theoretical premises examine society and how we take care of one another. The thesis presupposes the poor outcomes for those in the foster care system seem from a lack of social and emotional support.

Historical context

The historical context of my thesis will look at the history of the foster care system. I will look into what current policies and programs are in place within the foster care system. I will also look into the history of the site and the history of Morgantown.

Design Methodology

What design methodology will focus on the implementation of my program and goals for the overall design. This design methodology is an amalgamation of design principles and strategies. This will create a holistic human centered design response to the needs of the adolescents. Meaning I will design spaces to make the clients and other users feel comfortable. In creating a stress free environment I may want to use the normative based approach for design.

Plan for Moving Forward

The design solution will implement a human centered approach. The design will meet the needs of the client and users. The design principles such as increasing the amount of natural daylight and using being mindful of the materials used, to ensure the acoustics of a space are soft. Research for the design thesis will aid in informing the design solution space locations and how the research I've gathered has impacted my design mind has consistently evolved. I started pulling research that would impact my site in a direct and somewhat normal way. Current research findings have concluded that the history of the site strongly influences the design. How well one is able to relate their design back to the site and its context, the community, affects the success of the outcome of the project. Working the design for my research I will be relying heavily on a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative analysis that will comprise case study from multiple disciplines within academia and from case studies from the real world. I also plan to do a series of interviews. This interview will help me to understand the day to day of the foster care system and what it's like to live in West Virginia. To understand how public distress affects one's perception of themselves.

The focus of my design will examine how space affects behavioral and mental health of adolescents who are transitioning out of foster care. My research will develop an understanding of the transitioning adolescents who feel displaced. The research will examine how spaces make us feel, to learn about how design solutions impact our perspective of a space and those change our behavior. The research will also dive into the role of community in one's life. How community affects a person's understanding of themselves.

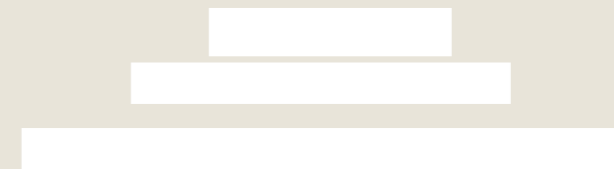
The implementation of my research will be to design spaces which create the sense of relaxation and tranquility. My goal will be to design housing to create spaces which reduce stress and provide opportunities for people to engage in community. In providing the adolescence with a place where they can start to heal from their past traumas I will also design a community center where they can receive counseling and therapy. The community center will play a crucial role in the development and growth of the adolescence. The community center will be a warm and inviting space where people can come and interact with one another. In using the community center as part of the program we are able to create connections between the adolescents and their community. They will also be asked to take care of the community center, this will give them a sense of responsibility and ownership. They will be able to see how their work affects and improves the lives of others.

Concurrent Transformative Strategies

Implementation

I will start by investigating case studies that design mental and behavioral health facilities for adolescents. Other case studies in my research will include transitional homes and studies that focus on building community. This information will be coupled with research from academic fields such as psychology, socially, education, and public health. I will also conduct interviews with other design proposal how work design for juvenile detention centers.

My research will rely heavily on case studies and interviews, from those in the design field, as well as mental health and education fields. My plan is to analyze the information from the case studies then compare the data from the case studies to data collected from all of the interviews. This will create a strong case for the design solutions implemented in the project. Requirements of examination of theoretical premise Analyzing interpreting and reporting of results through research process Approaching the research as a process will involve continuous reexamination, comparing and contrasting the information. I well test my design by culsting with foster care and health care professioals

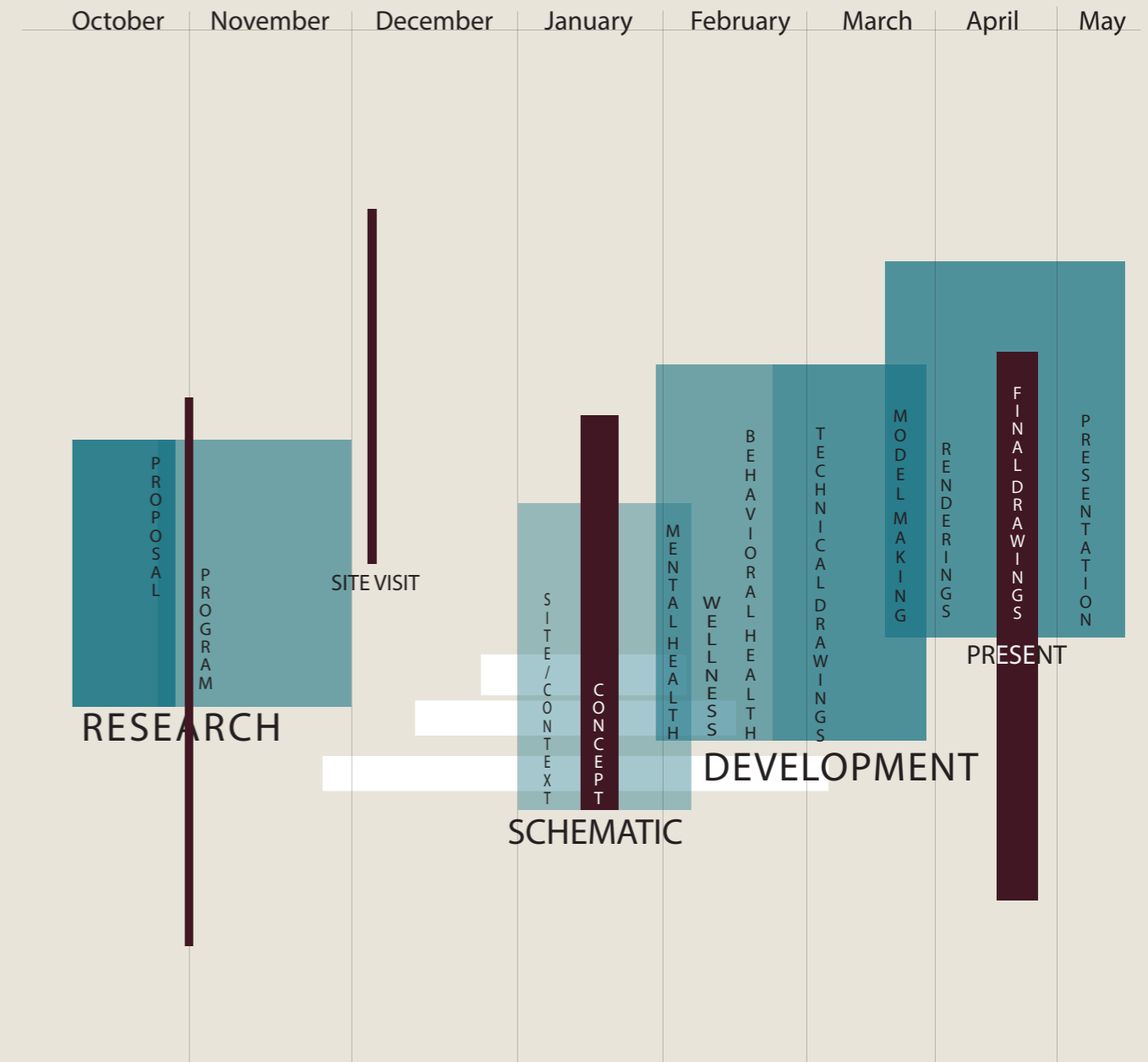


Documentation Design Process

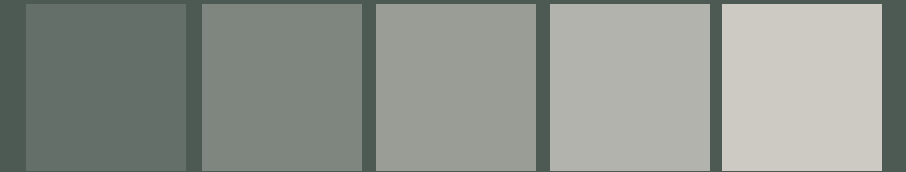
To document the design process my plan is to have a central document and folder for my thesis book. I will be gathering case studies and research for a variety of areas and topics. The note phase of the process will be taken by category. I will create an analysis of all of the information I've gathered using spreadsheets and graphics. For the interview portion of my research I will. recordings of all interviews , both in detail and manuscript format. All information will be preserved using google docs. Any physical documentation will be filed both digitally and physically.

I will be using APA citation when presenting the information in this book. The Thesis book will then be documented for future use. The presentation will include a book composed of the research and design solution. I plan on presenting this information using a board, a site model, and movie to show the narrative.

The research for my design solution will compose mental and behavioral health, the community of morganstown, the policies and programs currently offered for children who are aging out within the foster care system. I will use these four categories at starting off points to categorize my project.

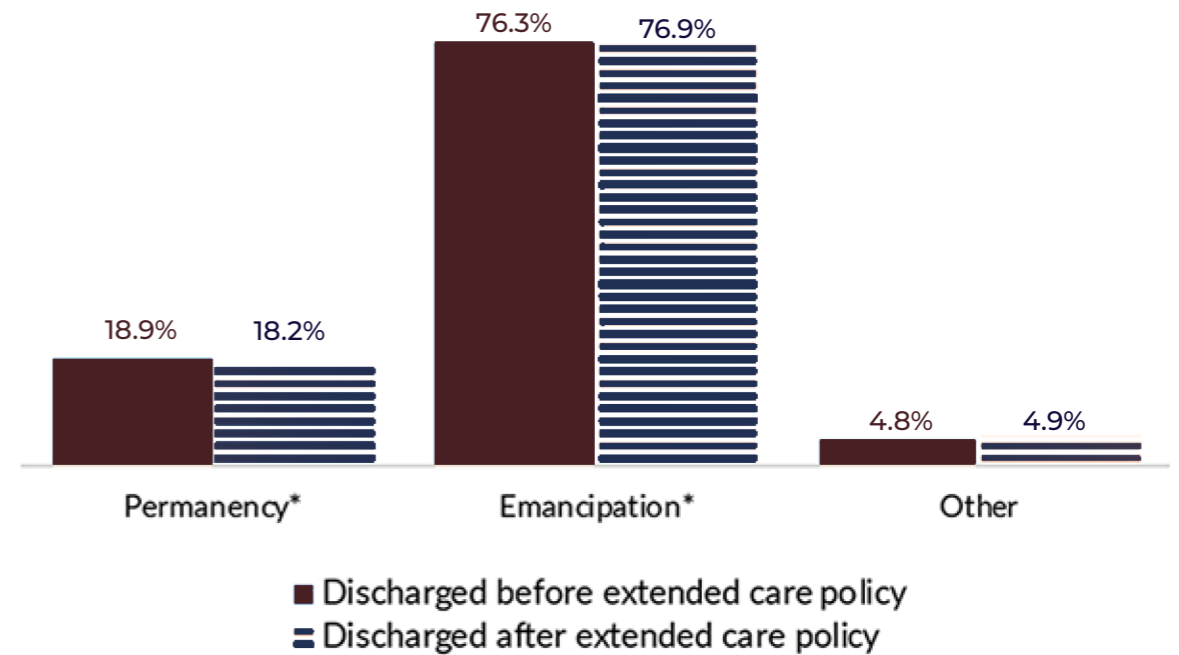


Research



Project Justification

Figure 51| Discharge reasons before and after the implementation of extended care (ages 18-21)



*statistically significant at p<.05

“The deeper kids are confined the more they rebel”- Youth Advocacy Program

As previously stated in the abstract. Those who have gone through the aging out process are more likely to end up in jail and or on the welfare system. They suffer with mental health problems, higher rates of suicide, and are more likely to fall into abject poverty. There is a void in our system, which needs to be addressed. If we meet these individuals emotional, psychological, and physical needs during adolescents, which is a pinical point of their development. As this is when teenagers are to able see farther into there future. If we care a system which provides, acommunity to sport this young adults we will be able to effect change in their lives.

Historical Context

Morgantown is located on the Monongahela river in West Virginia. The town was established in 1785, by fur traders and in 1896 the train was brought to the town. This drove people to the part of the state, and the town doubled in population by 1900. Today the town has around 30,000 people and is where the West Virginia University is located. The university gives this town a young and vibrant feel.

In the 1800s the industrial revolution was in full swing and cities were expanding at a rapid pace. An epidemic known as typhoid fever. This influence swept through large cities such as New York. Slums and impoverished areas of these cities were the hardest hit. Many families living in the slums were torn apart by this outbreak. Oftentimes children were left orphaned. A minister named Charles Loring Brace founded the “Children’s Aid Society”. This society focused on providing a basic level of education for children. It was a boarding school for the orphaned. (Ashika Sethi, A. (2019, May 23). A Brief History of Foster Care in the United States). This helped to keep the children off the streets, but Brace believed they would have better lives if the children were given a family setting. In 1854, he was about to orange for 45 children to be taken in by families throughout the midwest. These children were sent out to their new homes via the train system. For the next 25 years over 3,000 children were adopted via the Orphan Train (Ashika Sethi, A.).

The next big development in foster care wasn’t until 1885 in Pennsylvania, which was the first state to formalize the adoption process, with the intention of protecting the children (Ashika Sethi, A.). The United States allowed local state authorities to remove children from their homes if there was suspected abuse or neglect in the 1900s. Through the next seventy years, the Federal government created child welfare services. It wasn’t until the 1980’s that the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act was created. The bill was designed to create permanent funding (Ashika Sethi, A.).

The federal government has been increasing the level of support foster children receive. Making sure to provide resources for teens in the program. The Chafee bill was designed specifically to help youth transition out of foster care and was passed in 1993. Finally, the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) was established in 1997. This bill enforced stricter limits on the number of times a child could be placed in and out of foster care (Ashika Sethi, A.).

Since these major changes to our governmental structure there have been several studies conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of this bill and the subsequent programs which have emerged from the new laws. The study, Planning a Next-Generation Evaluation Agenda for the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program. Provided updated information on the success of children who have gone through the Chafee programs.

They found, “the evaluability assessment conducted...many developers and operators of independent living services did not have well-developed conceptual models informing their programs, and they often had

poor understanding of key characteristics of the populations they served”. (Courtney and Dworsky 2006; Courtney et al. 2007).

Provided updated information on the success of children who have gone through the Chafee programs. They found, “the evaluability assessment conducted...many developers and operators of independent living services did not have well-developed conceptual models informing their programs, and they often had a poor understanding of key characteristics of the populations they served”. (Courtney and Dworsky 2006; Courtney et al. 2007).

The study broke down their findings into ten services needed for a health and successful transition, this included; education, employment, mentoring, housing, behavioral health, permanency, pregnancy prevention, parenting support, asset development, multicomponent services. The study found that developmental programs, for at risk youth were effective in areas such as; developing social skills, and reducing aggression. However the study warns these services, though helpful do not lead directly to self-sufficiency.



Figure 53 | bridge, photo edit|

Figure 52 | train photo edit|

Site Analysis

Region: Appalachian Mountains

City: Morgantown

Site: Bakers Ridge Rd



Morgantown West Virginia has around 30,000 residents and is currently the third largest town in all of West Virginia. Living in a town with a strong economy will be very important for the adolescence once they graduate from the program. Once they finish the program they will not only have the life skills needed to succeed but also a job opportunity. This site was chosen due to its proximity to the university High school, and its quick and easy access to downtown. The location of the site is set in a quiet neighborhood full of trees. The site located on the top of a ridge, which is a relatively flat location which will make design a community center and house unit possible.

Other important considerations for choosing this site would be the distance from the highway and other major roads, which will help to reduce traffic sounds. The site is surrounded by trees which give it a secluded feel while still being ten minutes from downtown. There are several landmarks in Morgantown, including core arboretum park, the Morgantown history museum, and Dorsey's Knob park.

The site is surrounded by a thickly covered wooded area. This will help to provide my clients with a strong connection to nature. University High School is also located a mile north of the site. This location will provide easy access to any clients who go to school.

Morgantown



Figure 36 | Morgantown, photo edit| Google map

Site Information

Site: 4550 Bakers Ridge RD

Acreage: 9.23 acres

Site Typology: Residential group A-4 and Civil group A-3

Currently this site is zoned for residential, the site will be rezoned for light commercial



Figure 37 | Site, photo edit| Google map

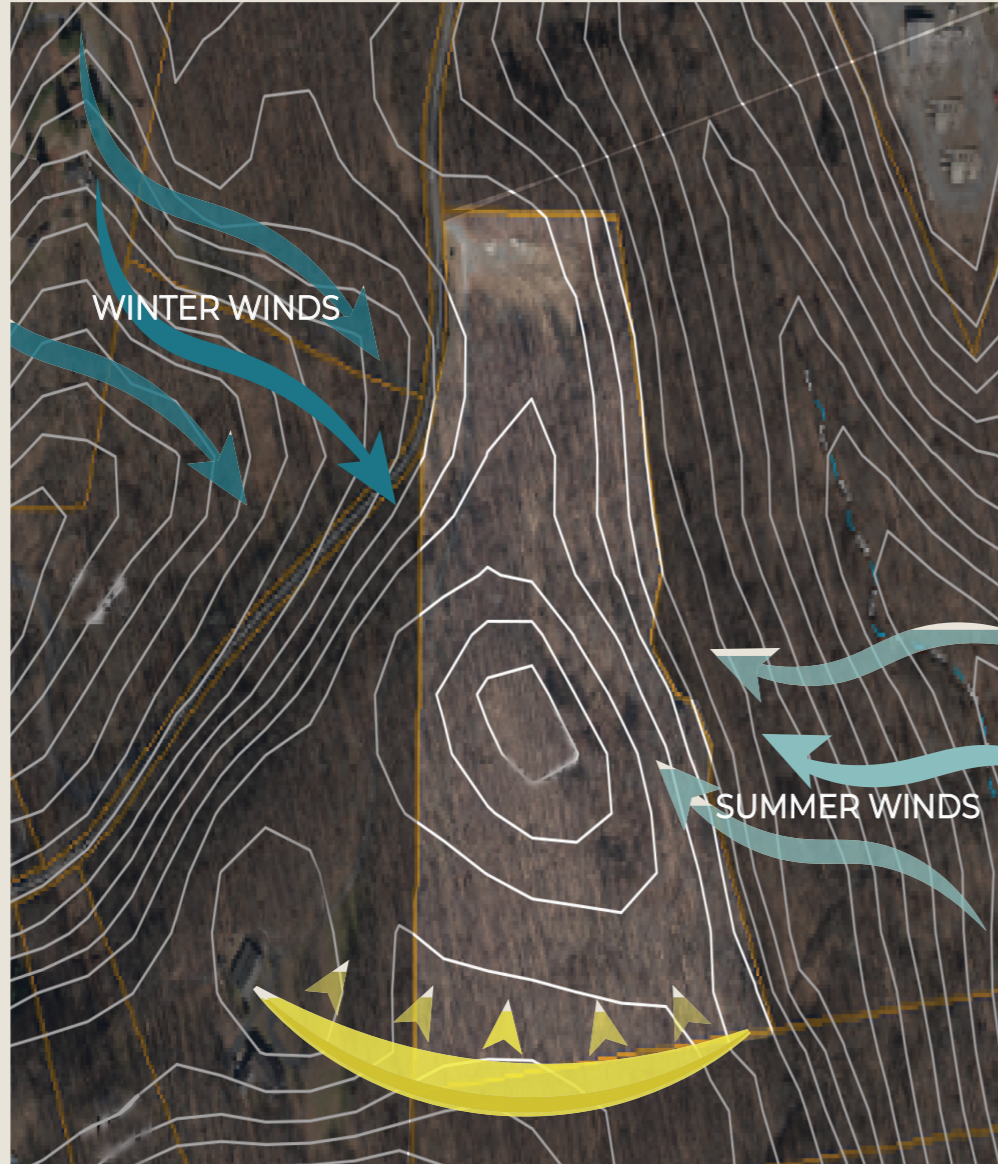


Figure 38



Figure 39 | Site, photo edit| Google map

Soil Type

The most common top soil in Morgantown West Virginia would be Monogahel, which is a type of sediment. This soil is consider prime for framing. It is also non-hydric, mean the soil allows for drainage, and westland do not form. (Natural Resources Conservation Service) The soil type for morgantown is clasified as, A17/ A18 Culleoka and Mongahela which are both cilty form of soil. This means the frist 8 to 20 inches of has low berring pressure. The land has been discribed as, "steep or very steep" the elevation changes will effect the form of the buidlings on site.

(Library of Congress)

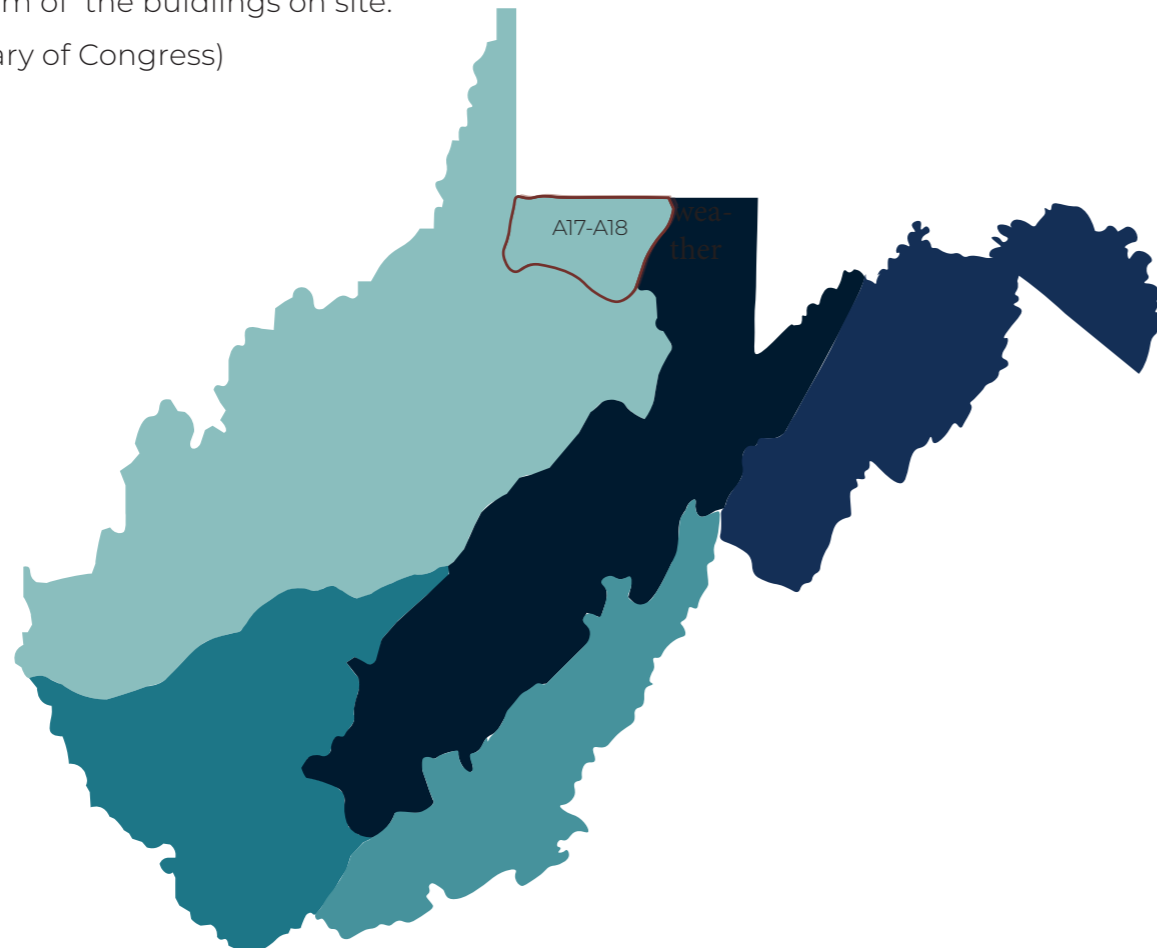


Figure 40

The average high in July is (84-62)oF

The average lows Jan (39-21)oF

June 21st is the longest day of the year with aproxomently 15 hours.

The shortest day of the year is december 21st with aproxomently 9 hours of sunlight

The wettest season of the year lasts is from March 23 to August 19,

The drier seasonof the year lasts from August 19 to March 23.

Weather

Temperature - Morgantown, West VA

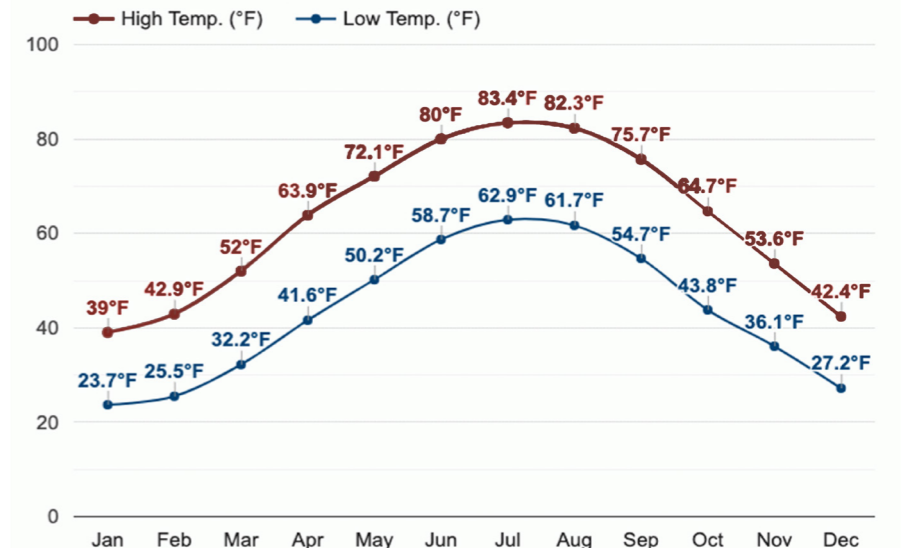


Figure 41

Daylight hours - Morgantown, West VA

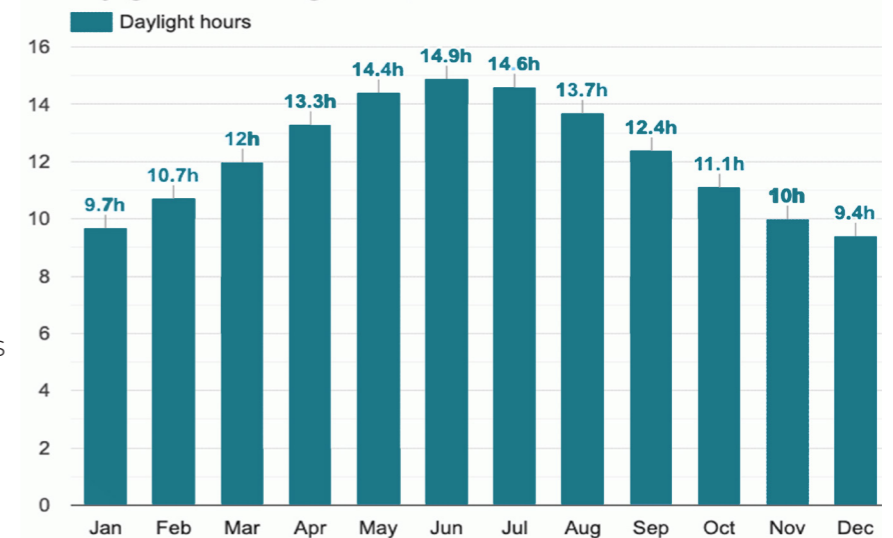


Figure 42

Rainfall - Morgantown, West VA

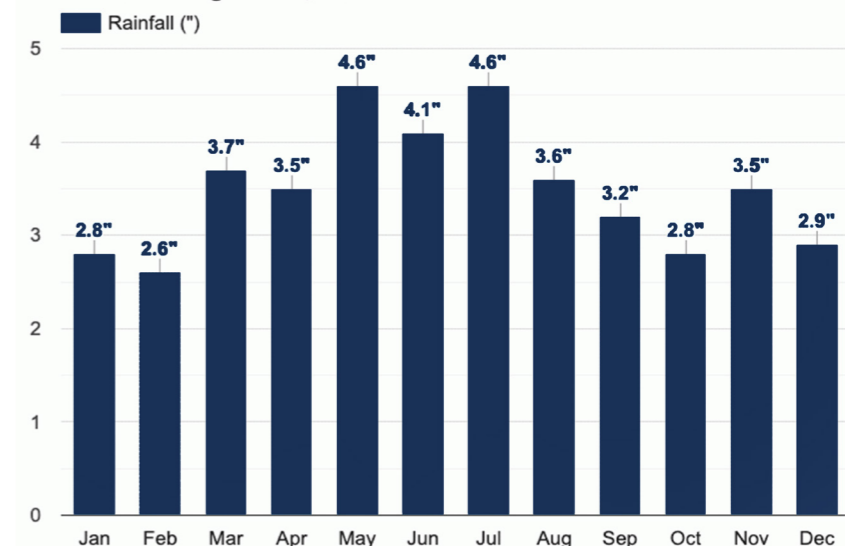


Figure 43

Demographics

Figure 46. Trends in Young Women's Educational Attainment

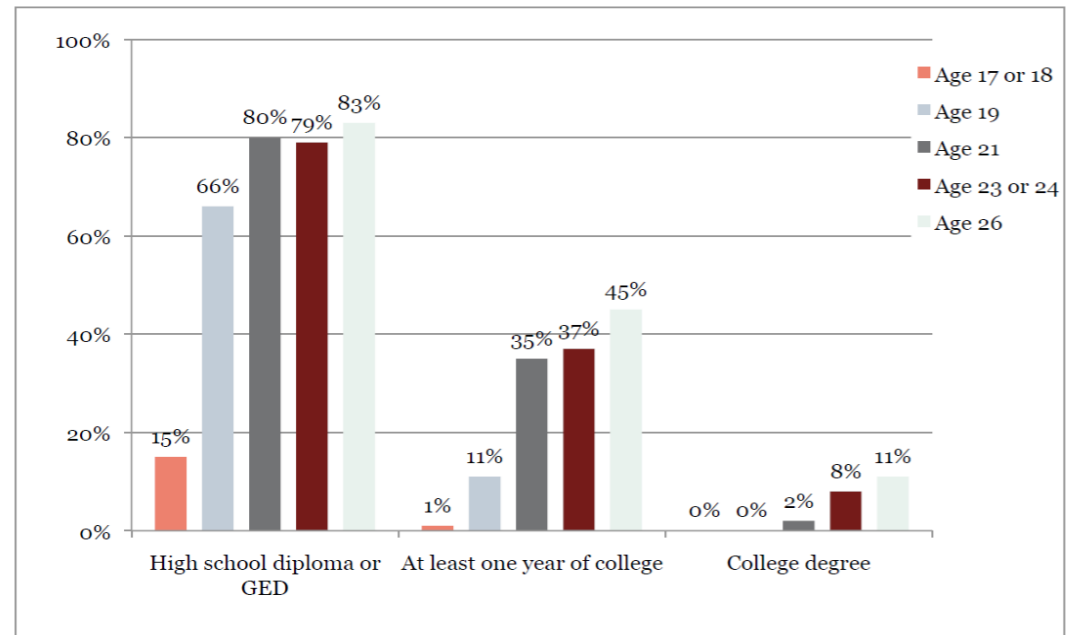


Figure 47. Trends in Young Men's Educational Attainment

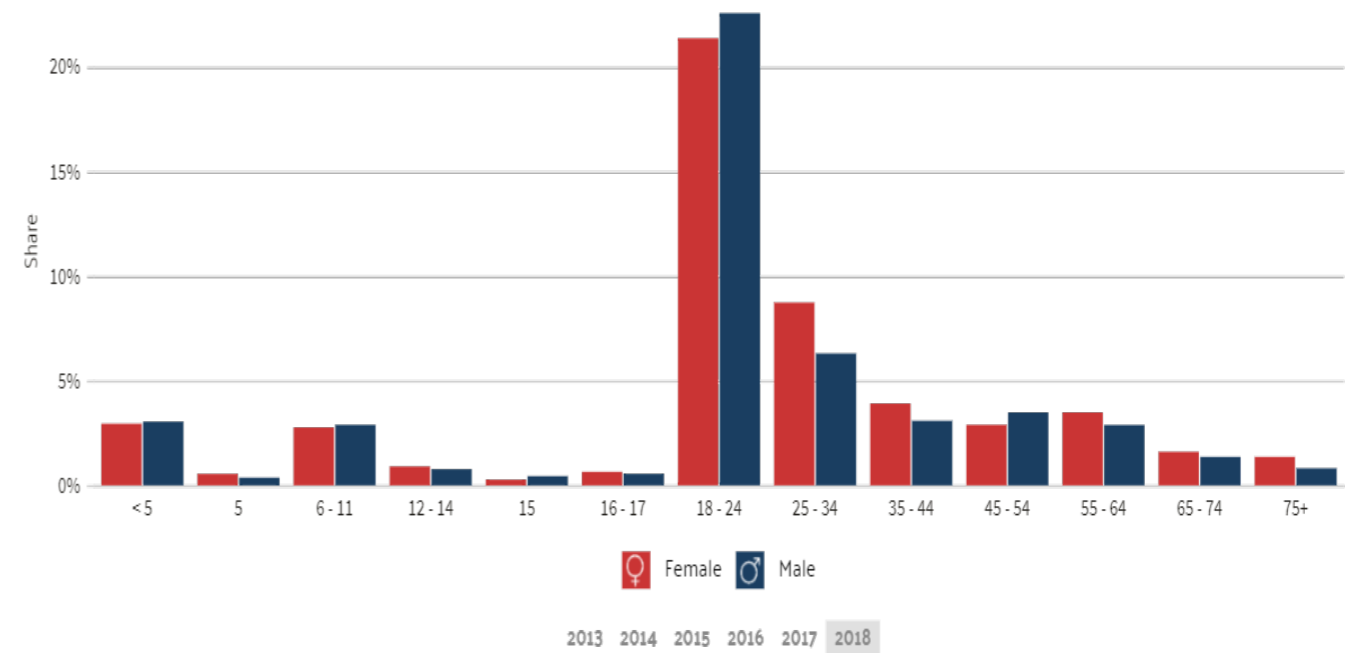
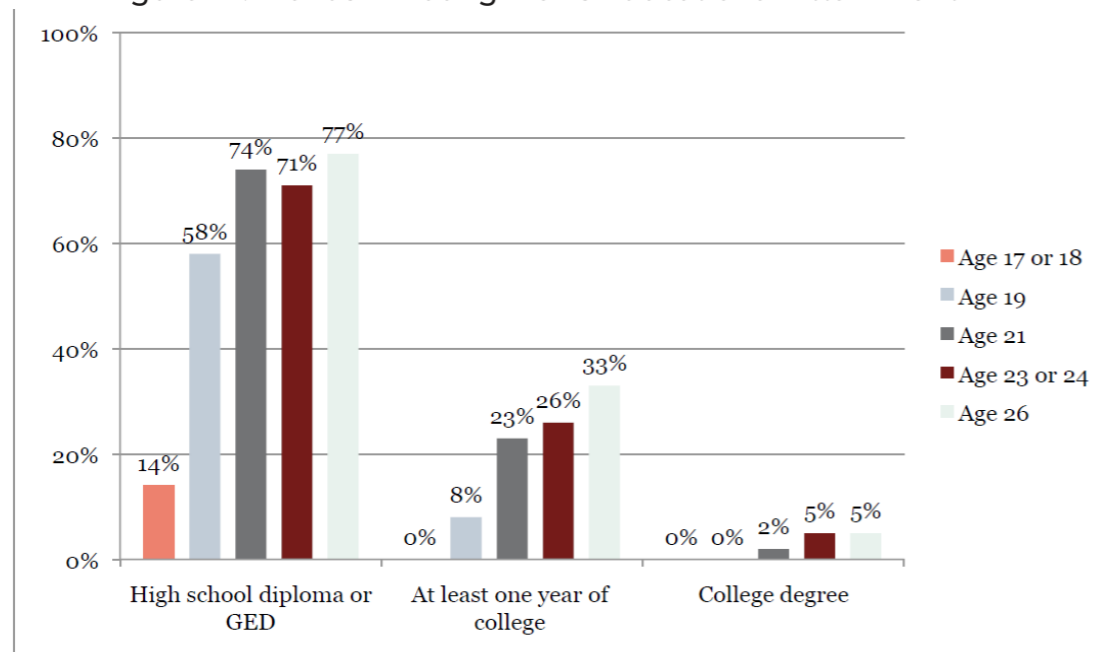


Figure 48. Poverty trends broken down by age groups and sex in West Virginia, 2018.

Youth, Ages 14+, in Foster Care by Age UNITED STATES

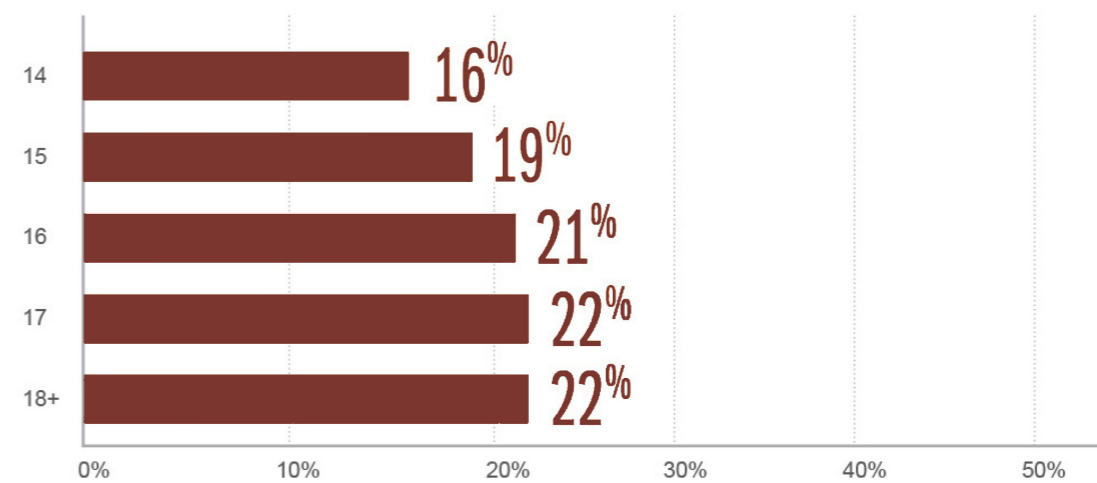


Figure 49. 2018, Percentages of young adults currently in foster care

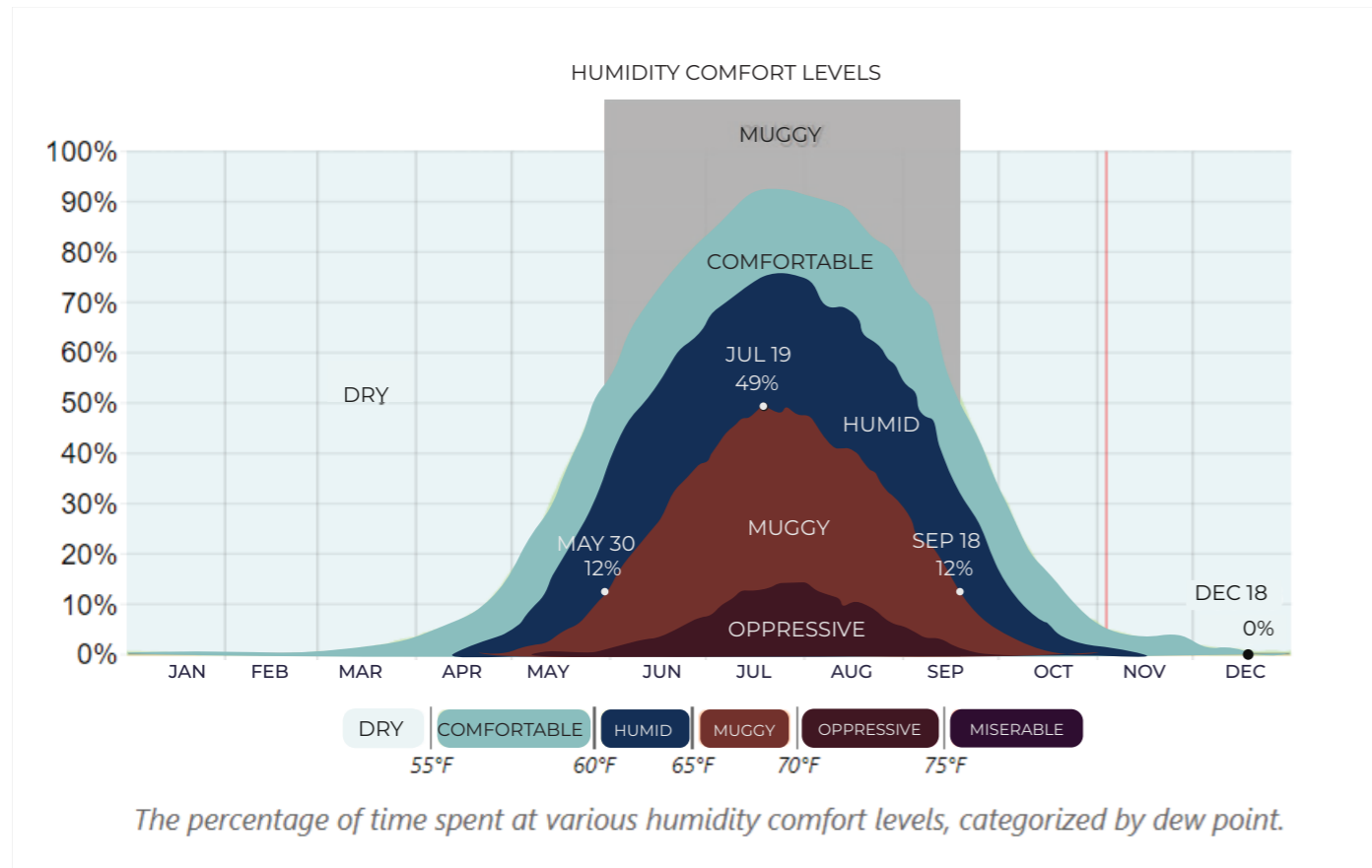


Figure 44

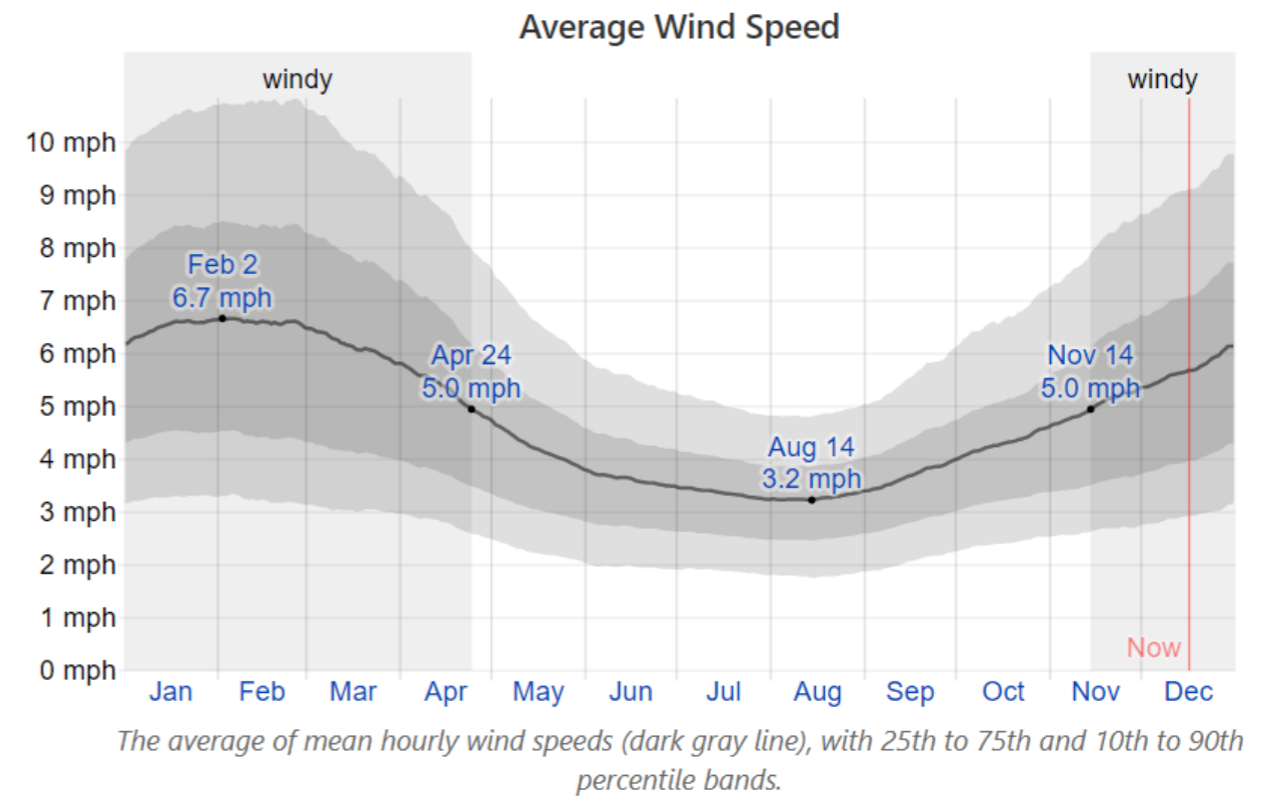
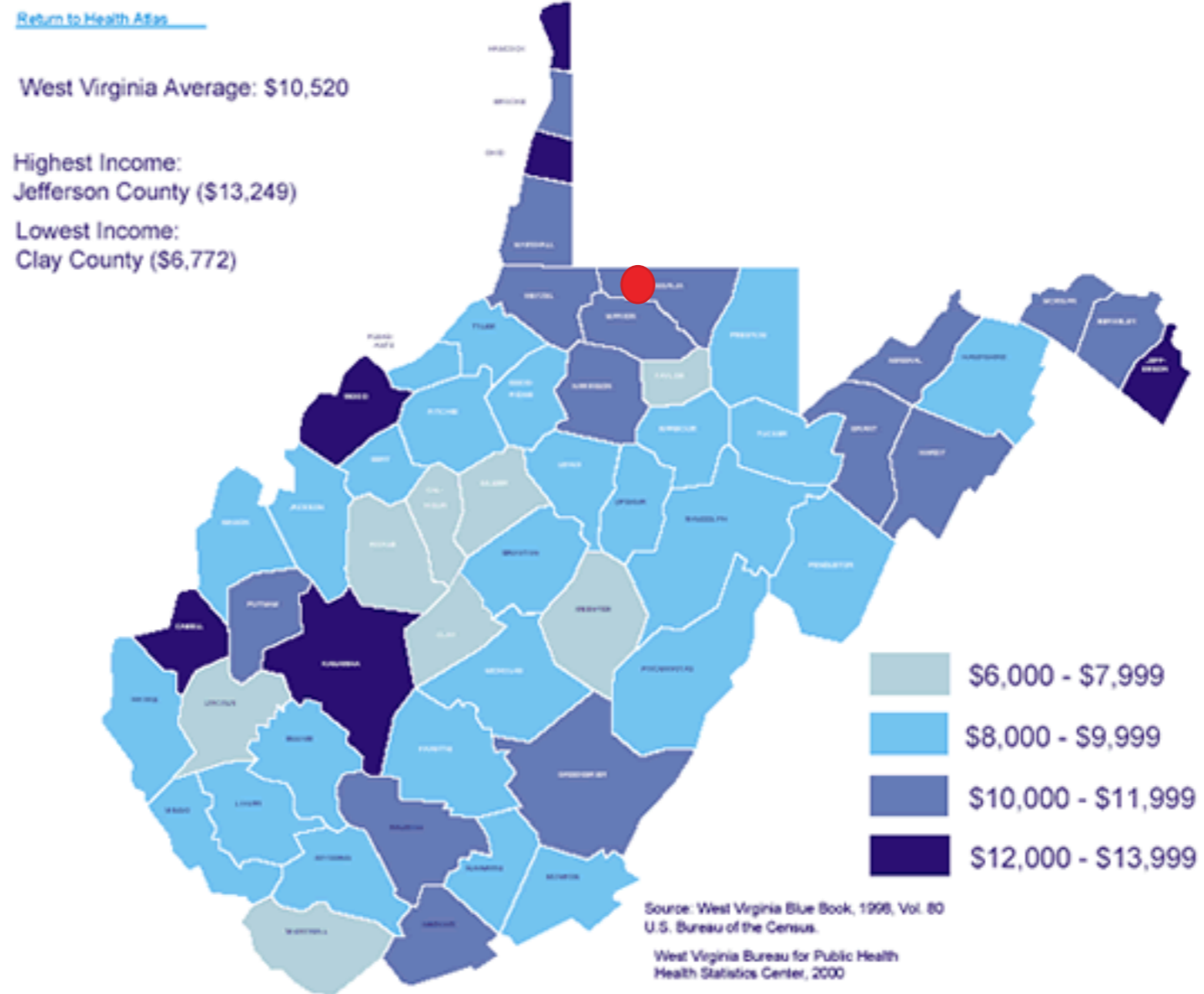


Figure 45

Figure 50. Breakdown of income per capita by county in West Virginia



Morgantown is located in one of the more well off counties of West Virginia. This is due to the diversity of industry within the town. The town also had greater mobility and access to information since its home to West Virginia University.

Interviews

The interview portion of this thesis is comprised of interviews from social workers, a young adult formerly in foster care, people from West Virginia, and interviews with architects who specialize in designing for the mental and behavioral health of adolescents. Given the variety of interviews I have broken them down into three separate categories; designing for mental and behavioral health, West Virginia culture, and the foster care system.

The foster care system interviews reflected on the treatment of the child while in foster care, as well as the social workers personal experiences. A recurring theme from these interviews would be the high turnover rates within the foster care system.

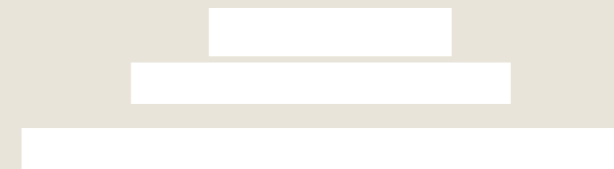
There are many reasons for the high turnover rates, but I've learnt that many staffers have poorly designed working environments. They sat in small cubicles or offices without windows. Given that one's environment affects their mental health and well being the staff's space will be of high priority going forward on this project. I plan on using LEED standards for the office portion to improve the staffer's environment, and possibly reduce turnover rates.

The designing for mental and behavioral health interviews. This group of interviews was extremely helpful in two ways, one I was able to learn that people want choices. Choices help provide them with a greater sense of control and personal agency. Two the design of my thesis should relate back to the community.

Cultural interviews, these interviews allowed me to learn more about the values and beliefs of the people of West Virginia. I was able to learn more about the history of the state, why certain regions of the state have greater opportunities than others. I was able to learn about how important community is to these people. It seems no matter where you were from, people always look out for each other. These interviews also showed me how active the people of West Virginia are. The interviewees both spent much of their time traveling and exploring the outdoors.

Methodology

I took a qualitative approach towards the interviews to learn more about first hand experiences of my client user group. Questions were prepared prior to the interviews, these questions were used more as guidelines for our conversation. I also added further questions during the interviews as seemed appropriate during the interviews. My goal with this interview was to make the interviewee as comfortable as possible. The interviews were recorded for record keeping, and transcript where also written.



Foster Care

Social Workers

These interviews were very powerful. Talking with both social workers I learned about the importance of having a strong foundation and a strong community to support the foster children. Both spoke about the wounds children placed in foster care have experiences and how belonging was so important to these kids. I learned further about behavioral patterns and problems that are common among adolescents in foster care. I was also able to create design strategies such as providing adolescence with their own private bedrooms.

Allowing adolescents to have their own space would be extremely beneficial. One of the social workers explained, "these kids come from nothing, so to have a room all to themselves, it's a point of pride. They take great pride in having their own room". According to Osmand's studies on mental health facilities, the ability to clean and decorate one's own space, provided patients with a greater sense of control. Designing for communal spaces was another topic which I asked about. Both talked about adolescents needing to have more space around them as outbursts where accomon recurrence. another design considerations and takeaways from these interviews would be the importance of self-expression.

Allowing adolescents to express their emotions in a constructive and healthy way. Amy spoke about her company having an art therapist on staff. The therapist would paint with the foster kids and ask them to speak about their art. The art often represented past traumas and any other problems which may be going on. This form of therapy can be very effective for those who are unable to verbally express themselves. I would like to implement this form of therapy in my program, as I believe it would be effective for those who are unable to talk about past events from the traditional first person perspective.

I also see it as a way for these kids to create community with one another through their art and stories. These stories are an important part of their identity. Many of the adolescence in foster care feel unnoticed or believe they don't belong. Most of these kids have experienced trauma and a great loss. These moments are moments of a loss of control and order.

Often these moments stunt the child's brain development, because they don't know how to cope with the trauma. Some will act out, making it impossible to work with. Others will go inside themselves, completely disconnecting from the world. These unhealthy forms of coping make it impossible to work with or form any meaningful relationships with. Staffers are either forced to talk to a brick wall, or they are given someone who is verbally abusive and prone to outburst.

Staff, admittedly this was a group I had overlooked previously. From these interviews I learned that burnout is a serious problem among social workers. Amy described her offices as not having any windows, nor was the lighting appropriate for the office space. What if their environments could reduce burnout? Smart design strategies such as access to natural lighting and visible green space. Providing forms of self expression also reinforces the individual staffer's importances and commitment to the foster kids

Foster Child

Johnny was placed in a home foster care from ages three to five. He reported having a good foster home. Both of the foster parents truly cared about him, and the other foster kids they were taking care of. The important takeaways from the interview would be that he wanted to belong to someone, he talked about wanting a mom. Forunately for Johnny, he would end up with two moms. When he transitioned into his new family his foster parents give his new family bedsheets to help with the transition. These sheets smelled like his old home and helped with his transitioning process.

Key Takeaways

Outdoor space is very important

Provide oportunities for play

Criaqsimy is apart of our growth and developement

Children need to feel like they're incontrol

Ones physcial environment effects their emisions

Provide spaces where kids impact on the program

Included oportunities for self expression

Design for mental and behavioral health

Much to my surprise I was able to interview two of the leading architectural firms in mental and behavioral health. The first an interview with TreanorHL, a leading firm in design for criminal justice. We discussed their design for the Johnson Douglas county juvenile detention center, in Olathe Kansas. The juvenile detention center also called the Youth Family Service Center was designed to rethink the criminal justice system.

Mark, a principle of TreanorHL, said it best, “when you tell people they are criminals, they become criminals”. Meaning people become what they are told to believe. This same logic holds true in design. If you live in a space which was poorly designed, you’re constantly being told that you’re not enough, or that you are worthless. If you tell someone they were worthless or a criminal, while they’re teenagers, you’ve effectively lost the battle. For the rest of their lives they’ll believe they are criminals, and so they’ll act like criminals. But, Mark explained,encouraging good behavior, and reminding these kids that they are good. Allows them to open up and then you can create actual change in their lives. I used the Johnson Douglas county juvenile detention center as one of my case studies, because it was a tangible example of how impactful our environment truly is. What these architects called, “normative design” has created a major impact on criminal justice reform.

Through normative design we are able to approach the justice system with the intention of reform instead of punishment. I learned that many of the counties which have taken this approach to reforming their criminal justice system have seen major decline in their juvenile detention centers and prisons. Another key to their designs would be the reliability of the building. The ability to make your building feel like it belongs within its communities is extremely important.

The Johnson Douglas county juvenile detention center was an atypical detention center, it looked like another civic building. Instead of the standard missionary facade the building was clad in stone. This stone came from the local quarry and was used throughout the city. Driving past the detention center, felt like driving past a library.

The TreanorHL group was able to demystify the juvenile detention center and make it feel relatable. They were able to include the building into its landscape instead of drawing a hardline of diction with the traditional chain linked fence. Not only did the architects successfully design a building which fit into its neighborhood but they included the neighborhood in the facility itself. Part of the reason this detention center was so large was because the team was able to sell the county on the idea of the center also acting as a space for the community. Bringing individual members to the space for social events, and meetings demystifies the space, and it demystifies the adolescents who are receiving help.



Figure 54 |Entrance, photo edit| Johnson Duglas County Services Center



Figure 55| Hazelden Betty Ford Center

My second interview was with HGA, a leading firm in health care facilities. During this interview we discussed key design features of the Hazelden Betty Ford's addiction and abuse center, for adolescents, (age 12-25). I also used this health facility as one of my case studies, from which I learned about designing for adolescents struggling with mental health and addiction. They explain that providing the adolescents with choices, places to sit, stand, or hang out was crucial to the design. Choices provided the youth with opportunities to explore the environment. Large communal areas were set up with multiple different seating arrangements. The furniture arrangement was done in a way that allowed staffers to watch what was going on at the workstation, without being obtrusive. I learned that all of the patients felt that these community spaces were crucial to their recovery, sense that was where the community happened.

Natural daylight is also important for healing. (I will be covering this topic at greater length in the literature reviews). To increase daylighting as possible the center included several courtyards and use clear story windows whenever possible. Another component of the design, which was very effective would be the views of the natural environment surrounding it. The design brings in as much of the natural environment as possible through color schemes and choices of materiality. All of these components came together to create a serene and relaxing environment. To add to this environment the designers focused on ways of designing for adolescents.

When designing for adolescents, Rebecca, a principal of HGA's, said play was extremely important. The design team included a gym and rock climbing wall. An even stronger example of designing for the kids would be several moments of playfulness throughout the building. Moments such as adding colored glass for the adolescents to draw on. As well as allowing the youth to decorate their bedrooms. Both architects stressed the importance of designing in the vernacular. As Rebecca put it, "you want the spaces to feel as normal as possible while these kids are going through treatment". The normative design needs to be carried out throughout the entire building. Joe explained that this meant everything. From the choice of floor tile to lighting fixtures in the bathrooms, it all needed to feel familiar.

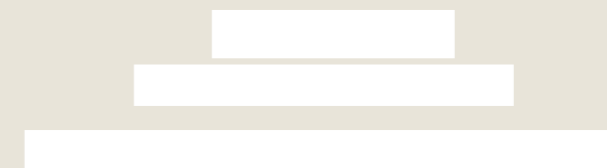
Key Takeaways

Human scale is extremely important

Normative architecture

How to help children succeed

The importance of common vernacular plays an important role in design and space.



The Culture of West Virginia

Wanting to better understand the day to day lives of the people from West Virginia I was able to connect with long lost cousins, who willingly shared their stories with me. These interviews were extremely beneficial for my understanding of West Virginia's culture. I learned how mountainous terrain effective settlement, and community life. I was able to learn more about the history of the various cultural groups, who settle in the state. I was able to learn more about the education system, about what works and what doesn't. About ways of helping young adolescents, who are transitioning from foster care.

West Virginia is a patchwork of small towns, rivers and mountain tops. It's a place where family is essential to one's identity. The beautiful state parks and nature preserves are space where exploration and independence can be found. Through the exploration of nature you find new sides of yourself. You discover yourself. From my research into mental and behavioral health conditions I've learned that independence (self-actualization, personal agency) are important skills to develop and grow to overcoming past traumas.

From my interviews I've learned that the history of West Virginia, and how various regions of the state were developed can be broken down into North, South, and East. Northern West Virginia has always had a great deal of natural resources, which created the base of their economy. Also the northern half of the state is closer to larger cities, like Pittsburgh. This created more opportunities for trade and thus greater wealth. The northern part of the state. While still on the Appalachian mountains it's less mountainous than the southern half, which improves their ability to trade and grow.

The southern half of the state has terrain that is far more rugged. This made it much more difficult to settle the southern half of the state. The southern half of the state held the largest coal deposits. When the Scotch and Irish immigrated to America, they relocated to West Virginia, to work the coal mines. They brought with them the cultural practices and traditions from Ireland and Scotland. Their traditions diffused into the newly built mining towns. These mining towns were owned by the mining companies. There was no diverse economy for the minors. The few stores located in the town would have been run by or supported by the mining companies.

As history progressed the coal mines dried up. The towns began to shrink and shrivel away, until all that was left were an unforgotten few, steeped in poverty. Given that these towns had no diversity in their local economies. The immigrants who stayed were driven into poverty. For this reason drugs and addiction became a large problem in the southern half of the state, comparatively speaking. There are a multitude of reasons for these people to participate in drug culture. Many of the adolescents who will come to stay at the group housing facility will be from this portion of the state. It's important to note this to better understand where they're coming from.

The Eastern side of West Virginia can best be described as the "commuter's neighborhood". Karen explained, "the people livin' on the east side, they work in D.C. and live in west virginia, so they don't really associate with the state". Meaning these people don't share the same history as the rest of West Virginia. These distinctions, the differences between how each part of the state was established, and their economic modality affect the "regional cultures of the state". I've come to analogy the culture of West Virginia to be like a tost salad inside of a melting pot. The interviewee told me that these cultural differences were most evident in the Hollow's.

The Hollow is the lowest part of the valley. It's typically where the river bed is located, and when roads were first being built they were built along the hollow. This provided greater access to trade. Small groups of people, around fifty to sixty, would settle in communities. Today these groups of communities are referred to as hollows. These groups of fifty to sixty people share their lives with one another. These communities are very very close, and suspicious of outsiders. They often do subsistence farming, since they are more isolated from larger towns within the state.

Compare this simple way of life to the northern portion of the state, which developed on trading. Their ways of life looked completely different. Someone from a city in the north could be doing business transactions all day, whereas someone from the south could go weeks at home just working on their farm. The culture of West Virginia is that of community, and togetherness. Which creates pride and patriotism. Karen told me she was once in Milan Italy, wearing a West Virginia University sweatshirt. Woman walking past here called out "go yellow jackets!" This sparked an hour long conversation between the two. She concluded with "people in West Virginia, we lookout for one another". Again reinforcing their identities



Both of the interviewee's spend their free time in the mountains. Skiing, hiking, or camping. The mountains were where everyone one would go to escape. From our conversations it seemed both Anna and Karen were involved in their communities. Anna worked as a special ed teacher and Karen an occupational therapist. They both had strong relationships with their children. One thing that I thought was interesting would be that all of their kids moved out of state at some point but then all came back, because they missed their homes and wanted their children to have more freedom and independence.

Anna shared with me stories about her time teaching, and about the lives of the foster children in her class. Many of these children do have some form of ADHD or some behavioral disorder. This puts them at a disadvantage when it comes to learning and making friends. She spoke about how these kids felt so isolated and had a hard time expressing their frustrations. From her I learned when the adolescent in foster care turns eighteen most, will experience homelessness. There are many contributing factors for homelessness. One of the main reasons was the delay between the court's decision to grant emancipation and time it took social services to provide aid to these youth. Fortunately many of the youth had friends who were willing to let them couch surf, but this problem seemed to be quite common. Most of the children in her special ed class came from lower income families. The disparities between those with material wealth as having better control over their environment.

Key Takeaways

- High moral value
- West Virginia embraces nature
- Respect is important
- Close Community feel
- People from West Virginia are proud of their state

Site Analysis



Figure 57 | Morgantown photo credit | Google Maps

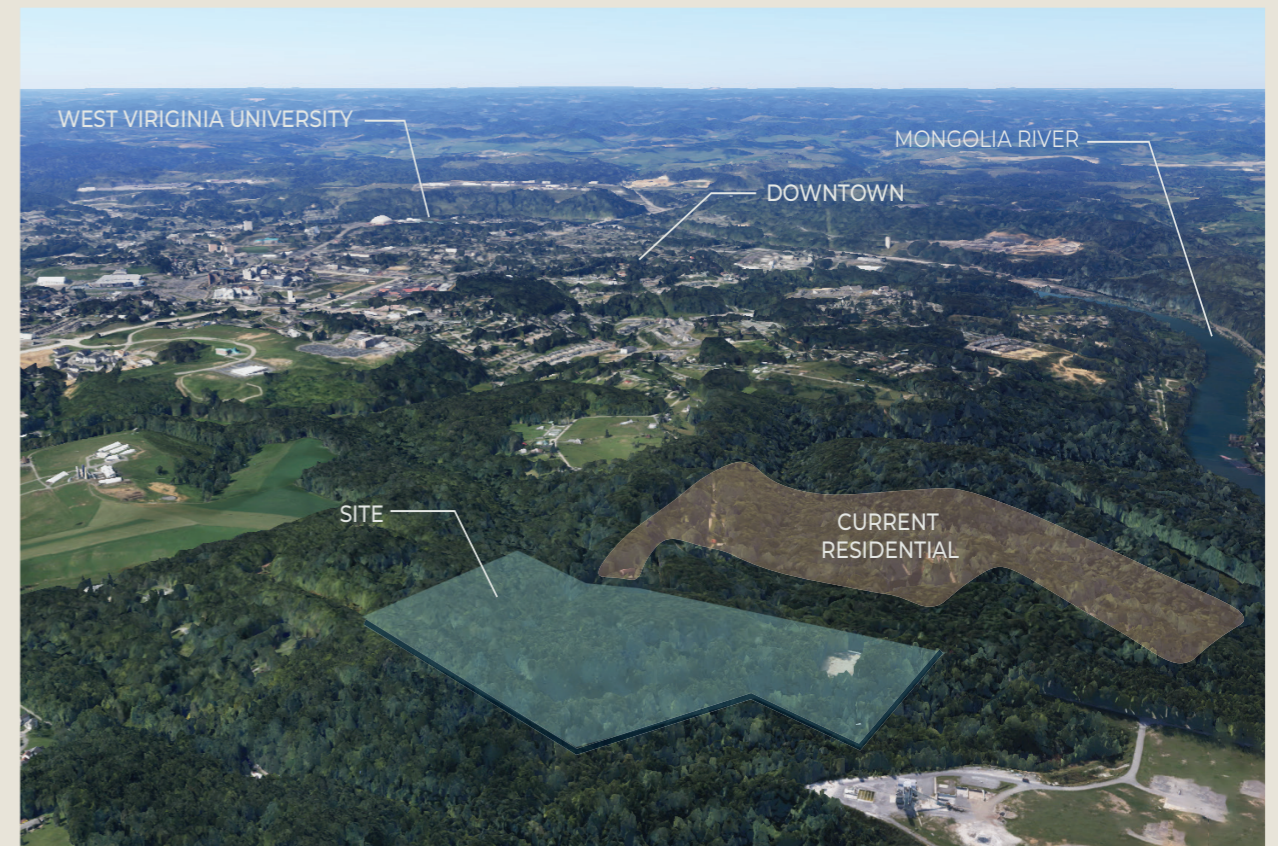


Figure 58 | Proposed Site, photo credit | Google Maps

Site Analysis

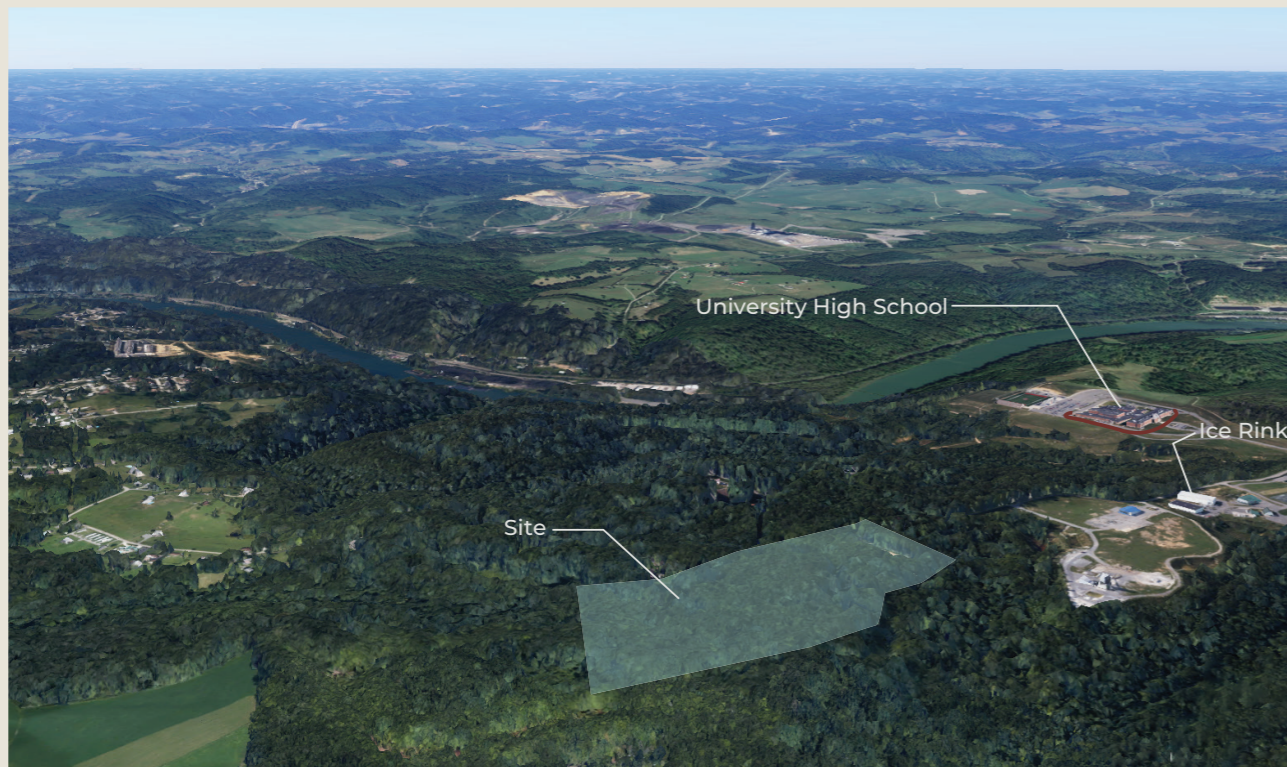


Figure 59 | Proposed Site, photo credit | Google Maps



Figure 60 | Proposed Site | CAD Mapper

Site Analysis

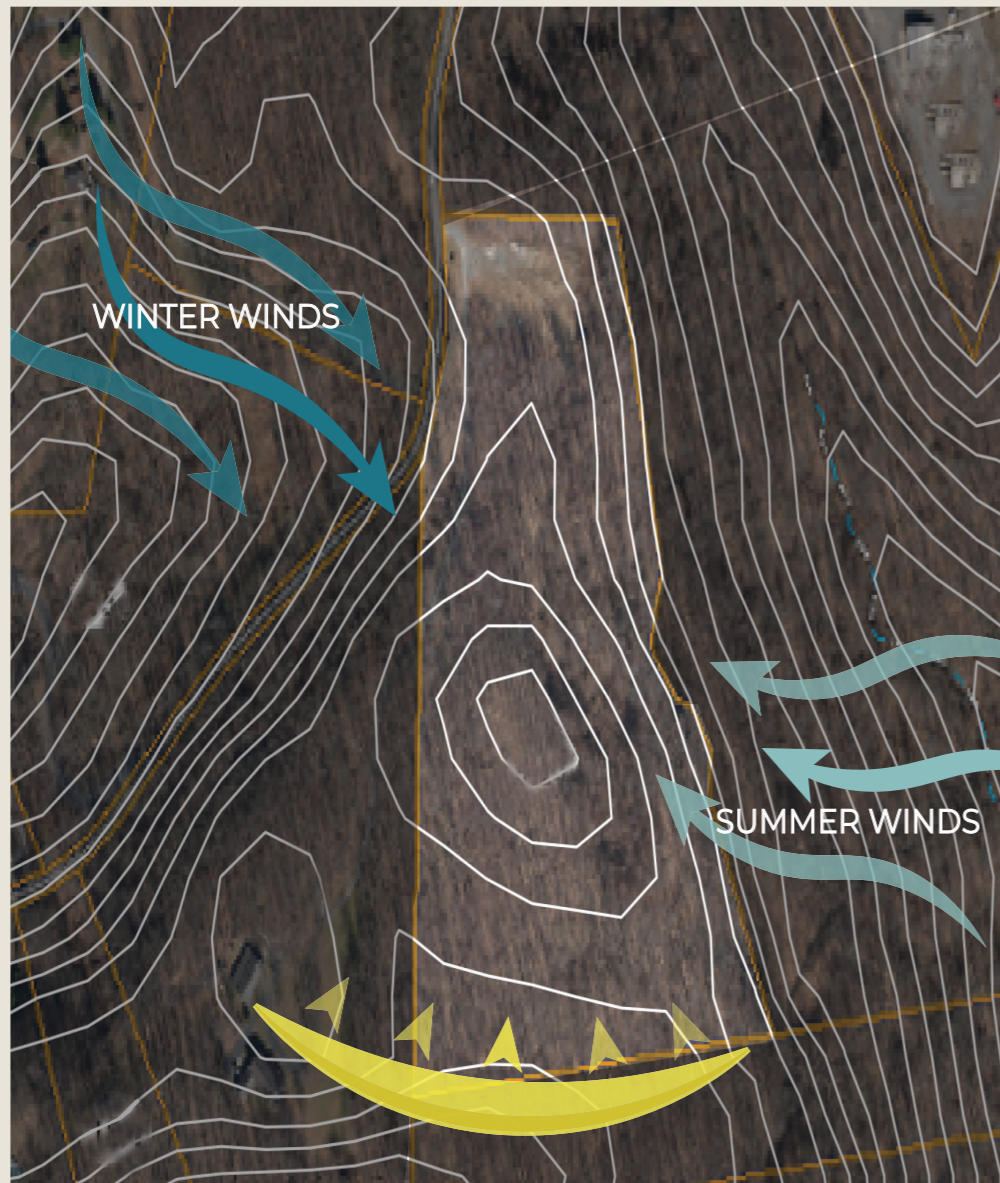


Figure 61 | Sun & Wind Studies, photo credit | Google Maps

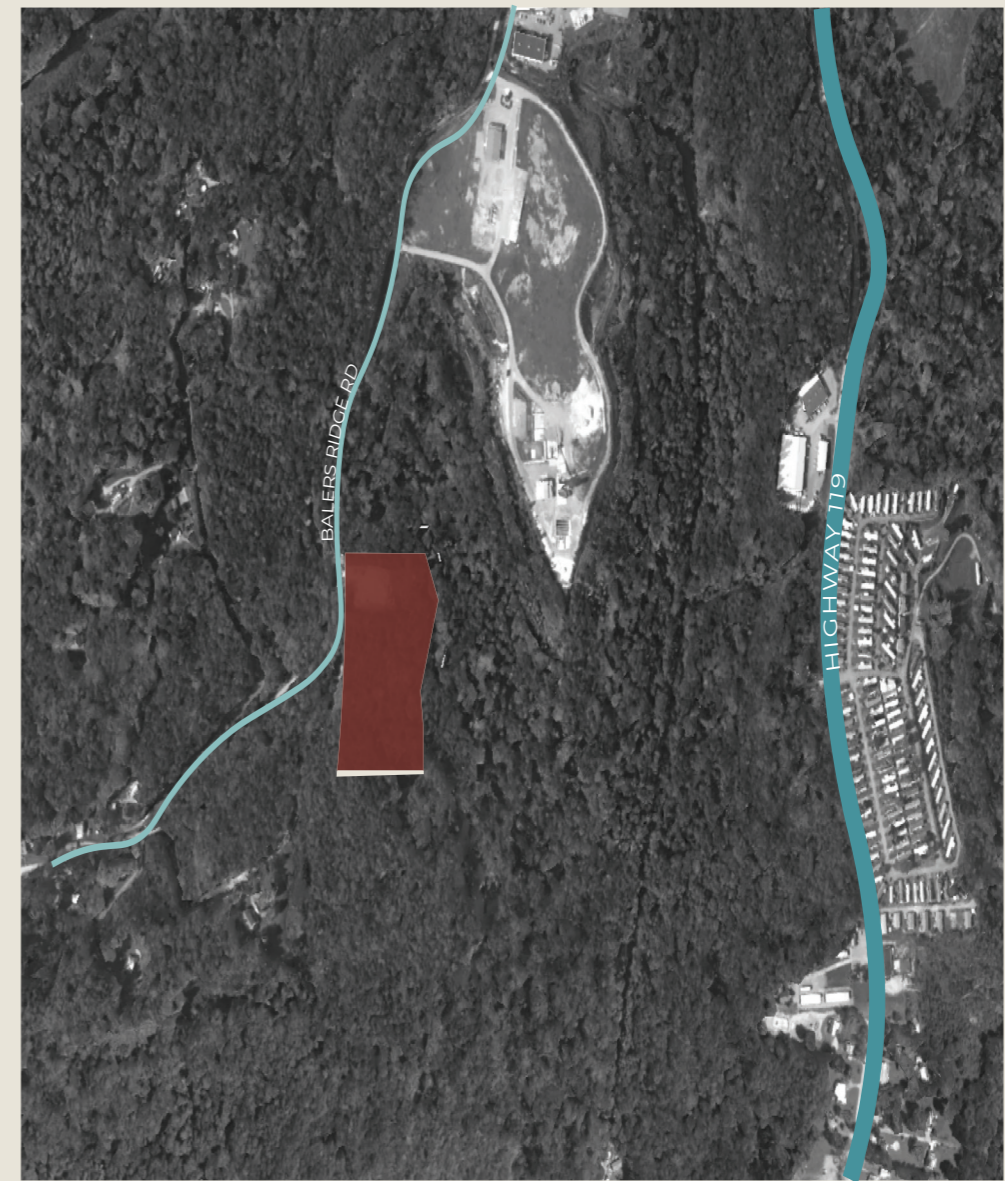


Figure 62 | Major and Minor Roads, photo credit | Google Maps

Space Allocation

Both the community center and housing units will be measure based on the number of spaces allocated for the program and the total square footage. I will compare the total with the number of people using the center on a daily basis. This number will determine if the spaces were effectively designed. Units for this will be percentage base in square feet. I will determine the effectiveness of this project at the end by adding up the program square footages, then comparing these numbers to the actual number from the project. It will be important to make the buildings as efficient and economical as possible while still following occupancy loads.

To determine the performance analysis, I will compare the percentages of each program type to the actual percentages. This will be done using floorplans to find square footage and percentages. Then I will compare and contrast how the building's spatial organization affects the maximum occupancy of a given space. If the building's actual spaces accommodate expected occupant loads while being as efficient as possible, i.g. reducing ancillary space, this will have been successful.

Energy Consumption

The energy performance of the project will comply with local energy codes. I will also implement passive strategies such as natural daylighting through windows in order to reduce the building's consumption of energy

Environmental Performance

Both the housing and community center portions of this project will meet the minimum standards for energy and environmental code. I will measure the local standard using their review standards and systems. I will compare the performance of the building to the local standard at the end of the project. I will use the caterpillar tool, which measures building performance. This program uses Kwhr. If my building meets local minimum standards for energy efficiency and environmental codes, I will have created a successful project. If the project does not meet minimal standards, it will have failed.

Behavioral Performance

The behavioral performance will be judged based on case studies. It will be important that the designs accomode community spaces with setting options, spaces for individuals to calm down, as well as more private spaces for greater healing and reflection. **Psychological impact** The campus will feel welcoming and calming. The project will reflect the values of the community through its design. The campus will feel welcoming and calming. I want the user to feel comfortable and relaxed while they heal and recover from their traumas. The design will use tons of natural materials and an open, comfortable space. All of this will create an environment that is suitable for the adolescents staying on site.

Environmental Impact

This project will reduce its environmental impact through passive design. I plan on implementing natural daylighting system and solar heat gain strategies through a double envelope system on the part of the community center. I will also be sourcing natural and local materials. These efforts will help to reduce the environmental impact of the project.

Code Compliance

All designs will comply with IBC and local codes/ regulations.

Cost

Mygoalforthisprojectistoreduceoveralloperationscosts.Thiswillbeactivethroughpassivedesign strategiesand reducing staff turnover rate. This project's cost comes from the site's cost, the housing units, and community centers. The sum total of the project is currently around 3 million dollars.

“Children who grow up in stressful environments generally find it harder to concentrate, harder to sit still, harder to rebound from disappointment, and harder to follow directions. And that has a direct effect on their performance in school” - How children Success (17)

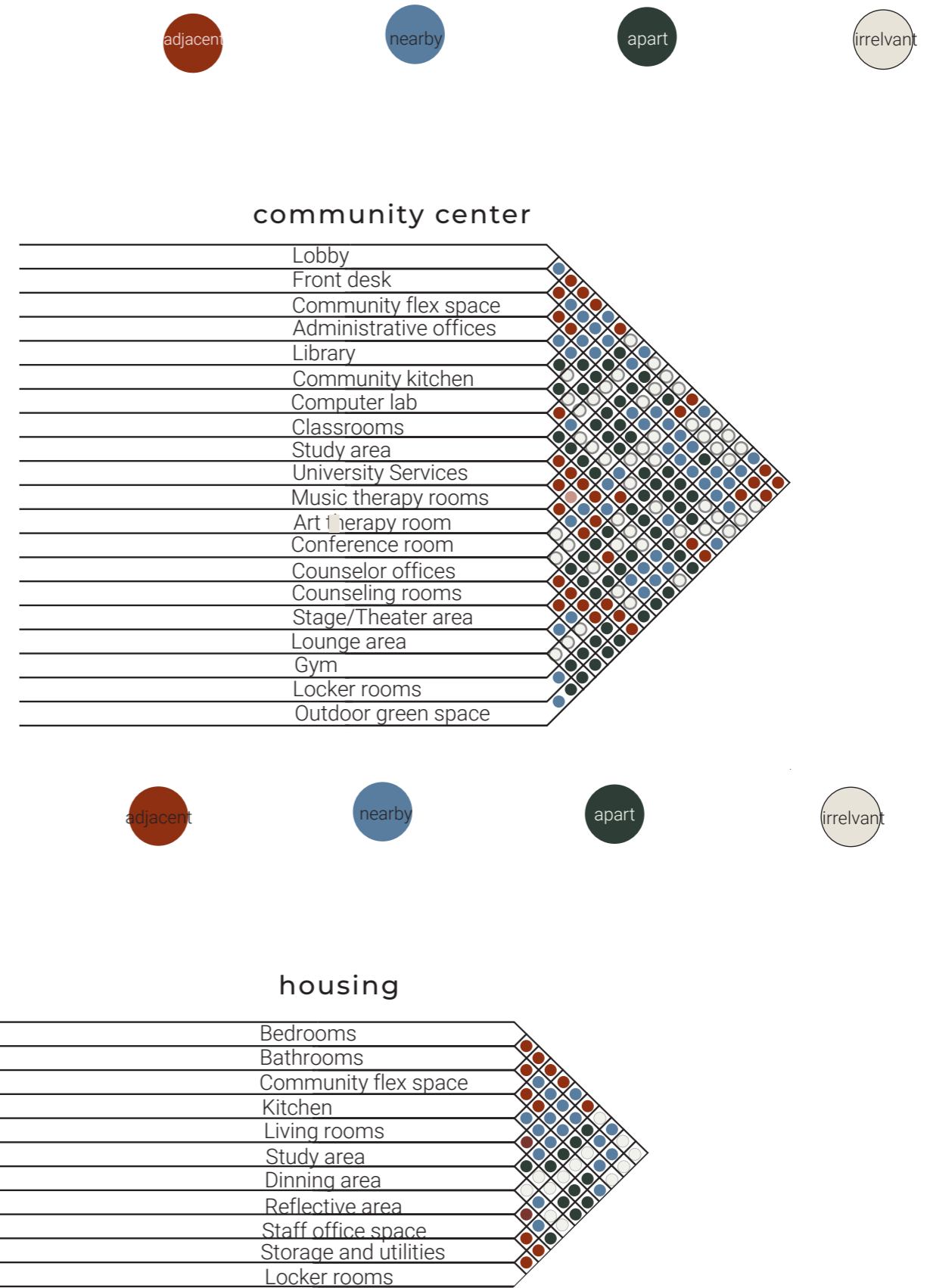


Figure 63

Design for the Foster Care

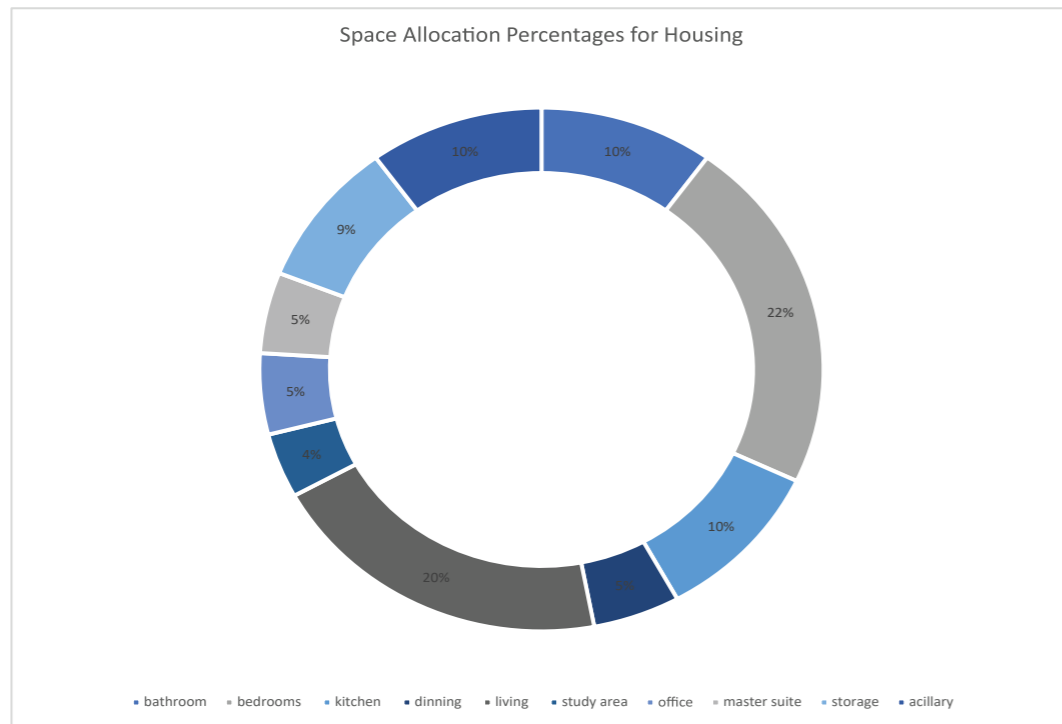


Figure 64

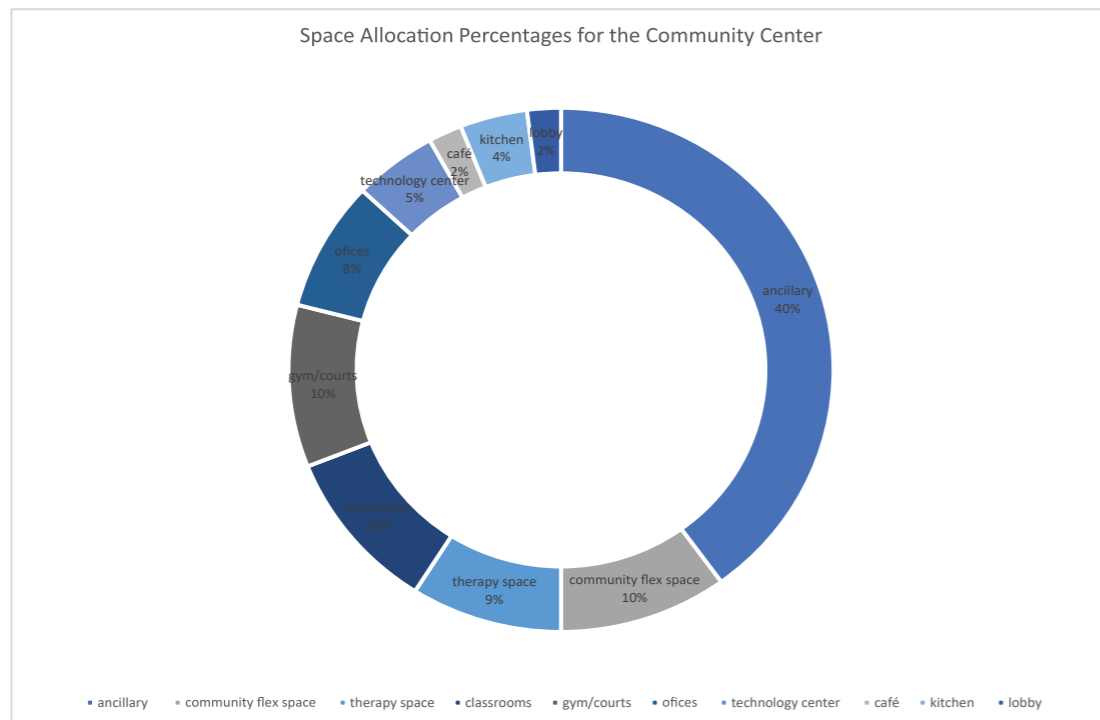
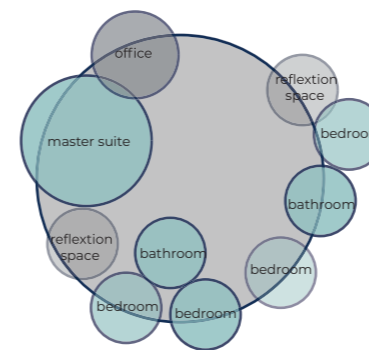


Figure 65

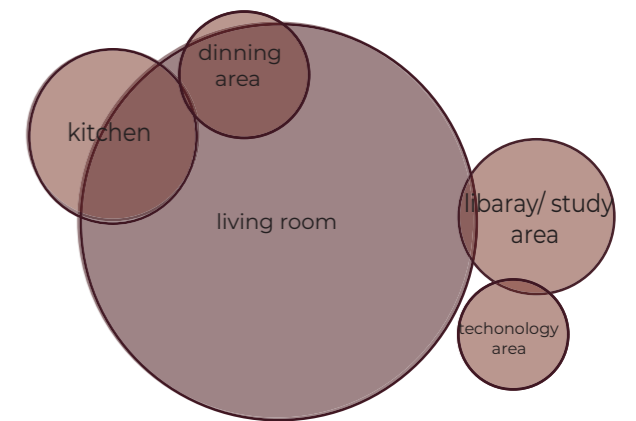
Design for the foster care

space interaction net for housing

private space

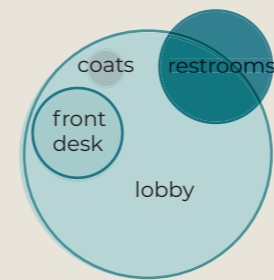


community spaces

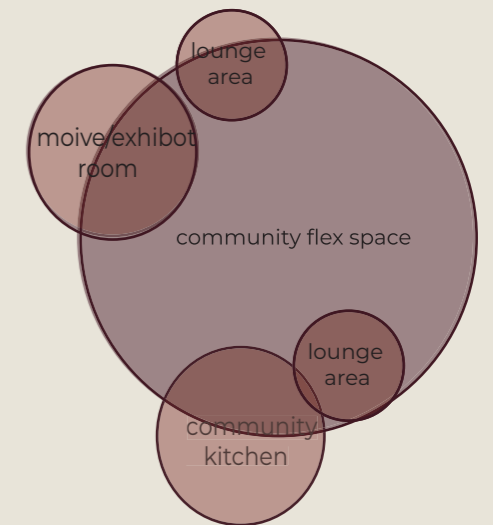


space interaction net for the community center

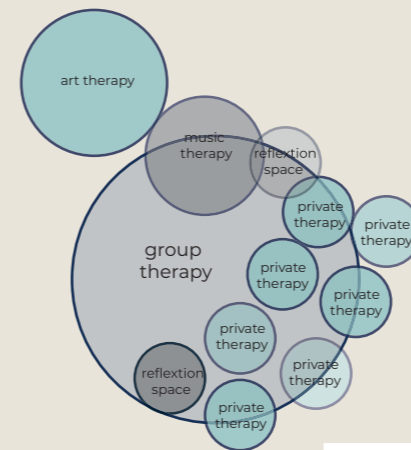
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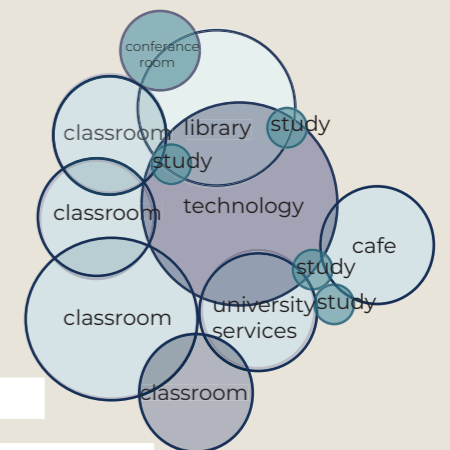
community space



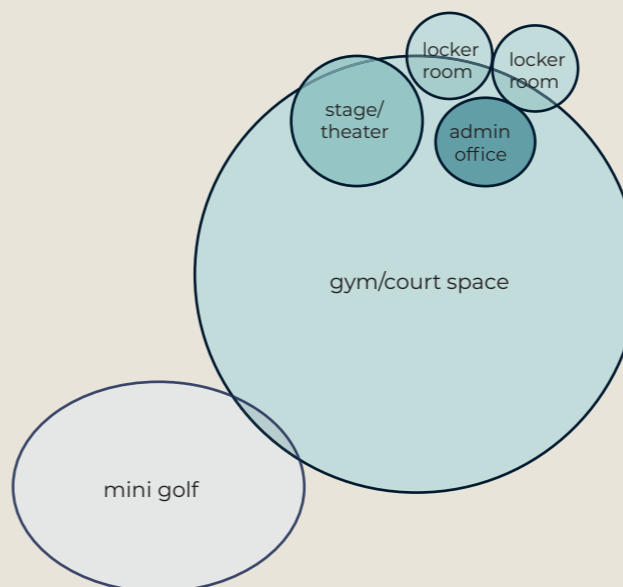
therapy space



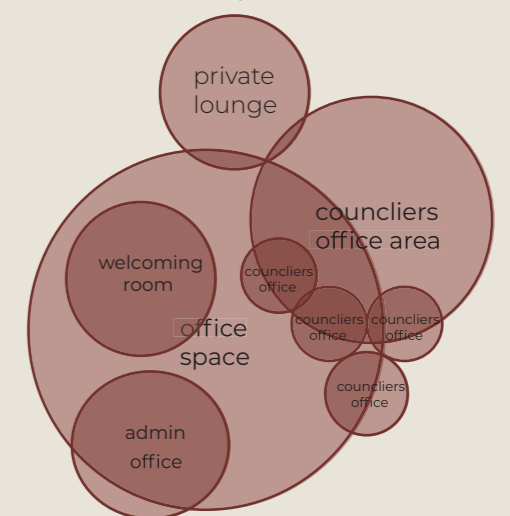
education



recreational



office space



Literature Review

Conclusion

When kids feel a sense of belonging at school when they receive compassion and respect they are more likely to show up and stick with their work." (Tough, P. 16) This quote summarizes the book's many messages. The only way children can succeed is if they are given the right environment to do so. What Paul found was that the more traditional forms of discipline and punishment were less effective than rewarding good behavior alone. It essentially reframes their understanding of themselves.

So how does this relate back to design? Well, positive reinforcement, and rewards are key factors for good behavior. An Environment which evokes positive emotions, and design which promotes a sense of belonging will also promote good behavior. When working with young adults who have experienced trauma it is important to learn about the multiple spheres of their lives that affect the level of success. This book provides an understanding of how to design spaces, which provide healing of the core wounds this kid experancts.

Tough found that environmental stressors and trauma were common among low-income children. These stressors affect their focus, self regulation, and self-control. The brain becomes overwhelmed with neurological impulses and emotions which overwhelm the child. If these signals don't stop the nervous system becomes overworked and will eventually destroy the child's ability to self regulate (Tough(43)). Knowing that this adolescent experience has some form of sensory overload is important to note as this information brings a new set of priorities to the design and program of both the community center and housing components of the design. Concerns such as sound, materiality, access to private spaces and natural views will be crucial for the success of this project. The design should provide a clean and calming environment to help these adolescents with self-regulation.

The book discussed this in its chapter on early intervention in childcare facilities and found that, "child care spaces where clean, bright and organized" (Tough(48.)) were important for the child's development as clean and organized spaces brough order into their lives. Clean and organized environments bring order into the child's life.

If stress is chaos, a loss of control, then its opposite would be order, that which is predictable. Most people need a balance between the two in order to grow and develop into themselves. But those in the lower-income brackets have more uncertainty in their lives. They tend to experience a greater degree of trauma, and suffer from higher rates of mental health problems. I believe these disparities can be remedied, impart, through communal interventions. The sociologist Emile Durkhiem's study on suicide in 1897, found that people who had strong ties in their communities were less likely to committe suicide than those who where socially isolated.

Social isolation, or the feeling of being alone is a common experience among those who have experienced trauma. I have found constant reports of trauma patients feeling that they could not share their experiences with other people, because the experience was unrelatable. This idea correlates with findings from the book, Trauma, the Body Keeps Soccer, which talked about group therapy being more effective than individual therapy section alone.(SITE)

The book discussed how feeling a sense of community and relatability built strong relationships among the vets who were suffering from PTSD . Group therapy was shown to help the VETS feel a sense of belonging. The book found that this sense of belonging and having a community which one could relate to helped to build a more positive mindset among the VETS in this study. Belonging and community also provide people with a greater sense of agency and purpose for their life.

Agency and having a life's purpose were also found to be key indicators for success, according to Tough. He explains "teenagers . . . have the ability — or at least the potential — to rethink and remake their lives" (48). The new found optimism in an adolescents life is important because it acts as a catalyst for their future. Their outlook on life determines whether or not they believe they can turn in their homework assignments, or try out for the soccer team. Developing the non-cognitive skills is crucial for success. This ought to be the primes of our approach towards intervention programs and child rearing as a whole.

Stressed Spaces: Mental Health and Architecture

Overview

“There are several design interventions or various approaches to design which, when implemented properly can improve patients responsiveness to treatments, and recovery time”(Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe). The intent behind this study was to provide architects, and hospital/client administrators with studies of affective designing strategies for mental health care facilities. This study also discussed design strategies which would better engage adolescents.

Review

This study reviews the most up-to-date literature on designing for mental health care facilities. The study synthesizes this information, drawing out the common and most effective design elements. The researchers provided a brief explanation for why certain design systems were more effective than others. Design considerations I will address from this research included: security, lighting, therapeutic milieu, gardens, impact of architecture on mental health outcomes, interiors, nursing stations, model of care, art, designing for the adolescent, and forensic psychiatric facilities.



Adoptability



Creative Problem Solving



Emotional Intelligence



Teamwork

Lighting

Natural lighting is a ubiquitous feature of design as it's synced to our circadian rhythm. The circadian rhythm effects and “regulates melatonin production, influencing biochemical and hormonal body rhythms”. Mental health diseases/ disorders such as “eating disorders, depression, Alzheimer’s disease, and sensory stimulation” are all influenced by lighting (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe). Levels of lighting also affect mood and perception. Many of the studies found a correlation between a patient’s mental health and the patient’s exposure to daylight, via proximity to windows (Connellan). The research also found that the intensity of light correlated with rates of improvements.

Applying these findings to my project will involve strategic placement of windows. To achieve this goal, I will need to be intentional with my building layout. The site is located in a heavily wooded area, which will block sunlight. Starting with the placement of the community center and housing units will be the first priority. Second, implementation of natural lighting. The study found several successful ways of implementing daylighting through courtyards. Other ideas include clearstory windows, skylights, windows, and the use of other translucent materials.

Therapeutic Milieu

This category focused on human comfort. Using the five senses; sight, touch, taste, sound, smell. They found, “sound and sight had a heavy impact on the patient’s level of comfort” (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe). Their sense of wellbeing. Other considerations for patients’ comfort would be the feeling of familiarity and belonging. Researchers discussed, “the need to reduce stigma through new spatial design”. The design most effective is that which reflects one’s community, the community which they came from. This creates a normal environment for the patient. They feel like they belong. This portion of the study also addressed, “the importance of balance between patient freedoms and the needs of staffers” (Connellan). The balance being restricted staff areas that are out of the way enough as to fade into the background. Staff turnover is extremely high in the mental health and caretaker fields. So much so that around, “70% of juvenile detention centers’ costs come from replacing staffers”, according to the TreanorHL architect group.

When I originally started on this project, staff considerations and comfort did not seem to be a significant factor in the design program. However, a sufficient amount of studies and interviews have shown me that staff burn out in the mental health fields tends to be very high. This raises significant concerns for the program. First the ability for the adolescent to form strong healthy relationships with the staffers. Second, the cost of replacing the staffers.

Looking further at comfortable spaces, the “safe and cozy home” was considered the most comfortable (Connellan). I believe this finding relates, impart, to people’s need to belong. When we come to spaces that remind us of home, we feel we can relax and being aged more fully in the present. Other reasons why the home environment was considered the most comfortable, would be the “gentleness” of the environment (Connellan). This is an environment which invites one in with its comfortable textures, furniture and furniture arrangement. It doesn’t feel overpowering. Also, the home molds naturally to the human scale and provides people with a greater sense of control over their environment.

Views were also shown to have an effect on human comfort. Participants with views of nature reported feeling more comfortable than those who were surrounded by streetscapes. The therapeutic milieu also looked at privacy, as it correlates to comfort and found that people reported higher levels of comfort when they had private and adequately sized bed and bathrooms (Connellan). These findings were consistent with another research. I believe our connection to nature relates back to our primal brain which understood nature to be less a space where they we’re safe.

This logic also applies to the need for private bedrooms. To meet the needs of my clients providing them with private bedrooms and spaces where they feel comfortable and in control will be an important part of their healing process. Placement of bedrooms on the outside of the building or using a central courtyard could help patients in their recovery as they are able to have their own space and would be surrounded by nature.

Other design considerations include, “using natural earthy and calming colors such as blues and greens are effective at lowering cortisol levels, and participants reported feeling more relaxed in rooms of these colors”. The researchers looked at architectural.

Humanistic architecture, “was brought forth from the stem fields and for research on how the body reacts to its environment”. Estimably this form of design quantifies the emotional response one has when walking into a room. “visual monotony can contribute to physiological and emotional stress” (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe).

Until reading the research “visual monotony” was not on my mind. I had an idea to incorporate as many scenic views as possible. After reading this section I became more aware of the importance of curiosity and adventure. It will be important to balance the human need for curiosity with the need for safety and predictability. Two ideas which are strongly desired by those suffering from PTSD. The article mentioned using art to improve and add interest to a space.

This portion of the study was very helpful in informing the programmatic portion of my design. Knowing that privacy and vegetation play important roles in therapeutic milieu has helped to inform the programmatic layout and special design of my buildings. I have also been able to dive into alternative ways of incorporating nature into my designs.

Impact of architecture on mental health outcomes

Single bedrooms, natural and appropriate lighting, and views of nature are the three most significant design factors that contribute to positive health outcomes. Several studies found that these factors help to improve or revamp what is called “emotional mapping” (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe). This theory examines how emotions are stored in the body, and how they are retrieved from the mind. Emotional triggers, such as colors, smells, images affect not only one’s memory recall but also the emotional weight they care about. When participants were calm and in pleasant moods their memories of past traumatic events were more subdued.

The trauma was not felt as intensely, compared to those who talk about their past trauma in rooms which felt uncomfortable. This idea is best stated by Golem-biewski, “perception is a complex neuro-chemical process that is highly reactive to the surrounding environment and yet it is the only channel for receiving new information of any sort” (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe p. 103) . Again, these studies reiterate the idea that space and one’s environment affect one’s mental state and therefore contribute to one’s actions.

Other effects of architectural design on mental health found architectural design plays a ubiquitous role in one’s personal autonomy. Patients’ access to, “personal spaces” such as private rooms and bathrooms, gave them a greater sense of control and independence” (Connellan). This leads to an increase in patient satisfaction. A study by Kaldenberg, pointed out that patients’ ability to control, “lighting, temperature, noise, levels of cleanliness, and decor” dramatically improved patients’ sense of wellbeing and personal agency (citing Kaldenberg, 1999). The theme of personal autonomy, agency, or independence were also reflected in various articles which tell the stories of foster kids transitioning out of the program. This need for independence was even more prevalent in those who wanted early emancipation.

Many of the problems that exist within the foster care system, according to (Johanna K. P. Greeson) foster kids, who were seeking emancipation. These adolescents had a strong desire to be able to make their own choices. (Johanna K. P. Greeson) found the foster system was very formulaic and required adolescents to ask adults for everything from medication to new jeans. After speaking with a social worker on the matter I came to realize that adolescents weren’t struggling against the help. They were struggling with the stigma of being seen as “incapable”, which is an isolating experience. This study reported that any stigma formed on patents negatively impacted their mental health and behavior (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe).

Interiors Design

This portion of the study found that zoning of large spaces was proven to have one of the most affective outcomes. Just like design for a city, the use of nodes, landmarks, distinctive features of a space where sound helps organize a building approved of a better sense of space. Signage and separate distinct colors were also found to be effective in helping people find their way around. For example, signage which is clearly written, properly designed and well-placed was found to be very beneficial for users of hospitals and health care facilities, according to (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe). It is also worth remembering that signage needs to be placed in an area that is also accessible for those who are wheelchair bound to see. It was reamend to, “incorporating large text and high contrast with the background” (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe). In short signage should be places, clearly written and simple.

Nursing Stations

The effectiveness of the nursing station is addressed by the literature, with nurse-only and patient only spaces found to be beneficial to both groups (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe). Closed nursing stations often convey an image of staff inaccessibility to patients and visitors (Andes & Shattell, 2006). This article found that patients and staff need and want to have visible connections.

The study found improvements from patients who were able to interact with the nurses and staff. However mental health occupations tend to have a high burnout rate. For this reason designers should take a balanced approach to designing for staffers. Providing private spaces for staff to relax and work was found to improve moods of the staffers and provide greater stability.

From all of my interviews I found that staff burnout rate was extremely high. There are many reasons for the burnout to occur, but one thing that was common among the social workers offices was the low quality of design. This position of the article served as a helpful reminder that there is no one single client. While the needs of the patients are important, so too are the needs of their caretakers. When designing health care facilities, group homes, etc. good design will meet the needs of both those use and work at said facility.

Art

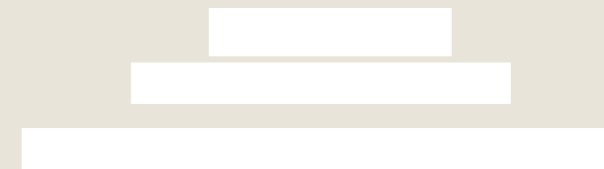
“The role and importance of art, not only as an activity but also as an aesthetic therapy” Daykin et al. (2008). What was interesting about the art position of the study was that art was really only effective as it served as a substitute for nature. The article found that, “depression and anxiety were lowered by 34% and 20% respectively, when patients were exposed to art” Daykin et al. (2008). Relating these findings back to an interview for the foster care system. I learned that art therapy was extremely effective in helping foster kids work through past traumas. Through their painting kids were able to express themselves. They were able to talk about traumatic events through their art.

Designing for the Adolescent

Unique design features which had a significant impact on behavior and mental health of adolescents included access to private spaces, soft and cool colors, art, daylighting, and freedom of movement. These design features will be incorporated in the design of the future housing units and community center, in order to engage adolescents as much as possible.

Researchers used “evidence-based design” (EBD) and applied the principles of design to “sculpt the space within long-term facilities to better meet the needs of adolescents” (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe p. 33). It was recommended that designers include private “calm down” spaces with in-depth lifelike imagery; the use of cool colors such as blue and purple, rooms with increased daylight; and varied seating options (Connellan, Kathleen & Gaardboe).

Findings from this portion of the article also stressed the importance of privacy. This finding was believed to correlate to adolescents’ developmental stage and increasing need for autonomy. Including private bathrooms and single rooms were seen as ideal as they provided spaces for greater self expression. Self-expression coming from the individual’s personal decor, and ability to control the level of cleanliness” (Connellan p. 315).



Awe in Nature Heals: Evidence From Military Veterans, At-Risk Youth, and College Students

Overview

Researchers set out to see if the experience of “awe” would lead to positive mental effects and overall well-being. This study confirmed the link between experiencing “awe” in nature and overall well-being.

Review

The experience of, “awe in nature has shown a correlation between increased momentary life satisfaction while also lowering stress and inflammation”(Anderson, Monroy). The study well looked at self reports from VET’s, at risk youth, and college students who all participated in studies that asked them to report the emotions they experienced during their time outdoors. The study also used previous studies which discussed mental health and being in nature.

Summary

The study concluded that, a sense of “awe” which could have also been described as; peace, graduate, amusement, contentment, laxed, thankful, pride, excited, enthusiastic, successful, sense of accomplishment, amazed, wonder. The study found an improvement in the mental health and wellbeing of participants. All participls recorded experiencing “awe” (excitement, joy, gratefulness, pride, happy) within their first journal entry. Adolescents reported significantly higher rates of wellbeing and positive emotions compared to the vets. The longitudinal position of the study concluded that all participants reported significantly greater levels of satisfaction with life, and overall well-being. These two factors are strong indicators of positive mental health. The study started with a baseline assessment of the individual’s moods, stress levels, and overall wellbeing. For the next two weeks participants went outside in nature and recorded what they were feeling. The study found that over an extended period of time college age students who intentionally went outside reported, “higher levels of positive emotions and overall wellbeing”. This supported the hypothesis that experiencing awe in nature would promote overall wellbeing.

Conclusion

From the science behind awe, I learn that nature has a major influence on our moods and psychology. Thus, affecting our behavior, but we can’t simply build glass boxes for people to dwell in. In this regard the science behind “awe” is an art, which balances human emotion. Our need for privacy and community, and our need to experience nature while still not feeling exposed. Good design is able to take these needs and scale the project to address them in a way that provides a greater experience to the user, and in a way which creates a connection, a permanency between the people and the building.

My hope for this project is to carry the idea of “awe” as described by the literature throughout the site, and buildings on the site. The challenge will be to translate “awe” as a natural experience. The feeling of awe can also be experience in the build environment. Places such as the Louvre in Paris, or the capitol building all have created a sense of awe and connection. This experience is created through scale. The oversized rooms and open ceiling create humility in us. However, this experience speaks to us in a different way. I will need to extract what elements of nature inform the experience of awe. The artist James Turrell has successfully taken this idea of awe and create a new experanical form of art. His work is simplistic, it focuses on a signal moment in space, such as light or color. Challenging our attention through these alternative mediums of art creates a unique mediation ones experience in the present. His work will often play with perception. Turrells intention behind distorting light was to morefully understand its essence.

Overall Summary

In summary, all of the research I've done in regards to human development, and psychology is greatly affected by the scale of a space. Lighting, views, scale of room, and building layout all affect our psychological development, moods, and sense of well being. Designing for adolescents. It seemed that adolescents are best served by space which provides them with views of nature, cool colors, such as blues and purples. Colors such as these were considered relaxing and helped adolescents calm down. I found it interesting that adolescence preferred, "spaces with in-depth, lifelike imagery" since this contrasting with findings from adults, "who typically prefer rooms which are shallow and wide". This finding suggest that adolescents are extremely curious.

This ideal design was consistent with findings from my case studies and interviews. Creating zones within large rooms was shown to be an effective way of using large flexible spaces while ensuring occupants would feel safe and more comfortable. Simple and intentional ways of creating separate spaces within a large open room included; change of materials, lighting, furniture arrangement, and change in ceiling height.

How these articles have informed design and programmatic considerations

Zoning of spaces

To insure the maximum potential for the community center the design will focus on creating as many flexible and multi purpose spaces as possible. Large open spaces would also maximize the longevity of the building. It will be important to scale this space into "bit sized" areas of speech which make the users feel comfortable.

The same design principles can be applied to the housing portion of the project. Communal spaces such as the kitchen, dining area, and living room can all context with one another. Using the aforementioned zoning techniques, such as a change in flooring or wall materials will help to create separate spaces. Again having an open floor plan for these communal spaces will allow for greater flexibility and security of the space.

Staff consideration

Designing for the staff will be an important part of the program. Both articles stressed the importance of seeing nature and long term well being. Combining the nature and need for some separation for staff offices may include design stages as courtyards, which create a great barrier between the staff only spaces and the communal spaces. In the housing units staffers should have a sufficient amount of space which is well designed and able to meet their individual needs. However it will be equally important to design space where staffers and the adolescents can connect.

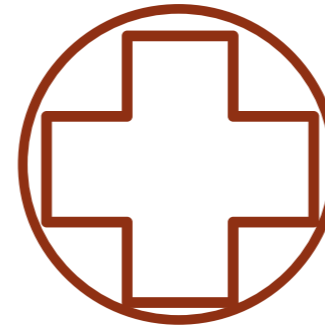
The literature suggests providing outdoor spaces where both adolescents and adults would want to be will be extremely beneficial. Providing sport courts, trails, and gardens are a few ways which staffers and adolescents can come together and form deep relationships.

Design Goals

my goal is to create a friendly and welcoming environment where adolescence are able to grow and develop their non cognitive skills.

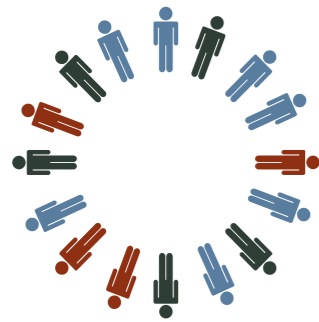
Safety

Designing open rooms that allow for view to insure staff are able to motore spaces. Choosing materiality, such as opaque glass will allow adolescents the feeling of privacy.



Community

By designing in the vernacular the community more easily relates to the building. One challenge I set for myself when designing using local red brick. By design in the way that can create a sense of familiarity. When people are in familiar environments they are better able to open themselves up to the healing process.



Connection to Nature

Provide access and views to nature. This will help with mental and behavioral health. It also speaks to the community of West Virginia, who have a strong connection to the natural environment.



Scale & Materiality

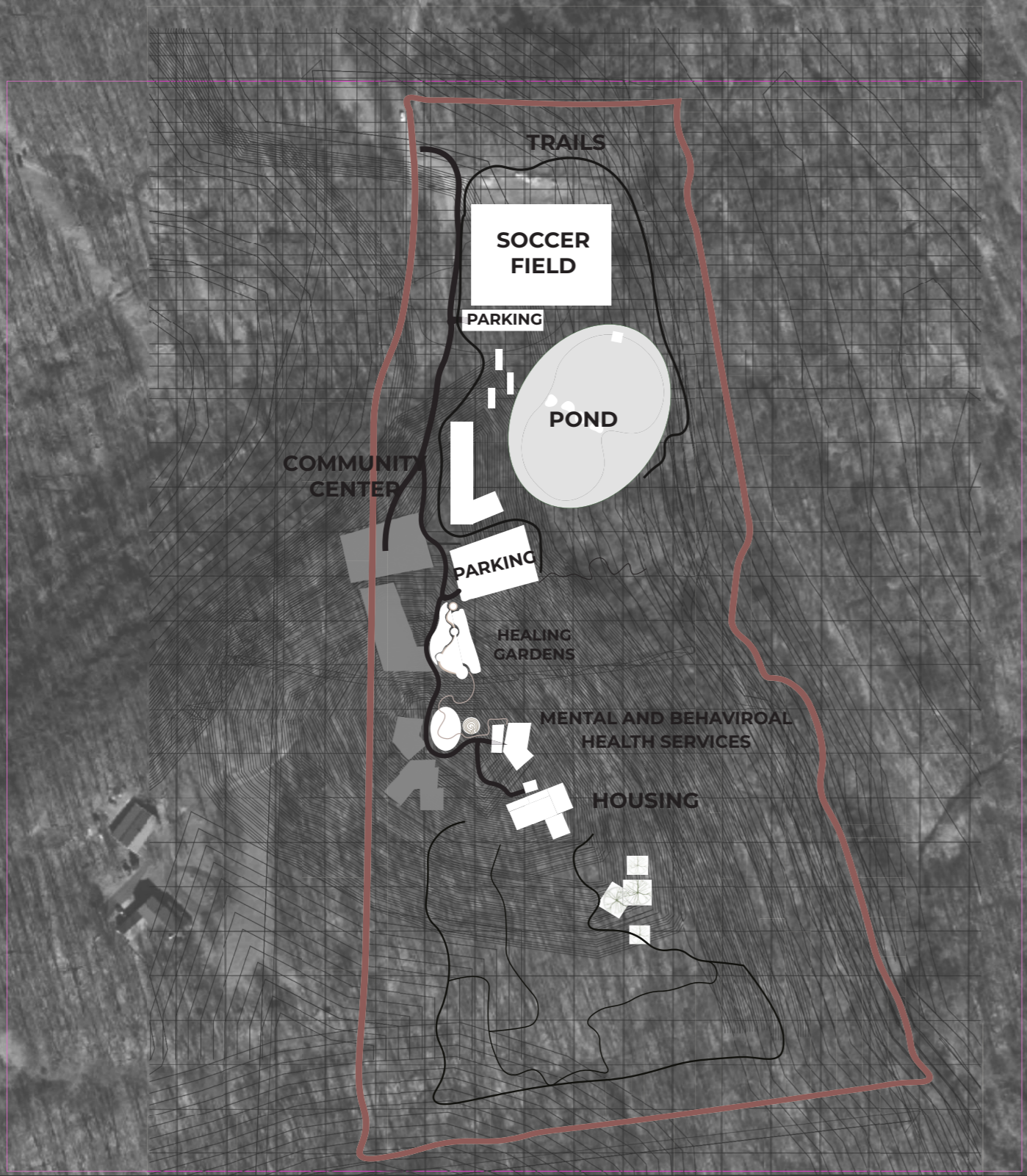
Many studies on designing for mental and behavioral health found that large open rooms broken into different scales, or zoned into different locations allowed patients to feel a greater sense of autonomy and control over their environment. When looking at various materials the Saskatchewan studies found that natural materials were preferred to plastics or hard and cold materials.



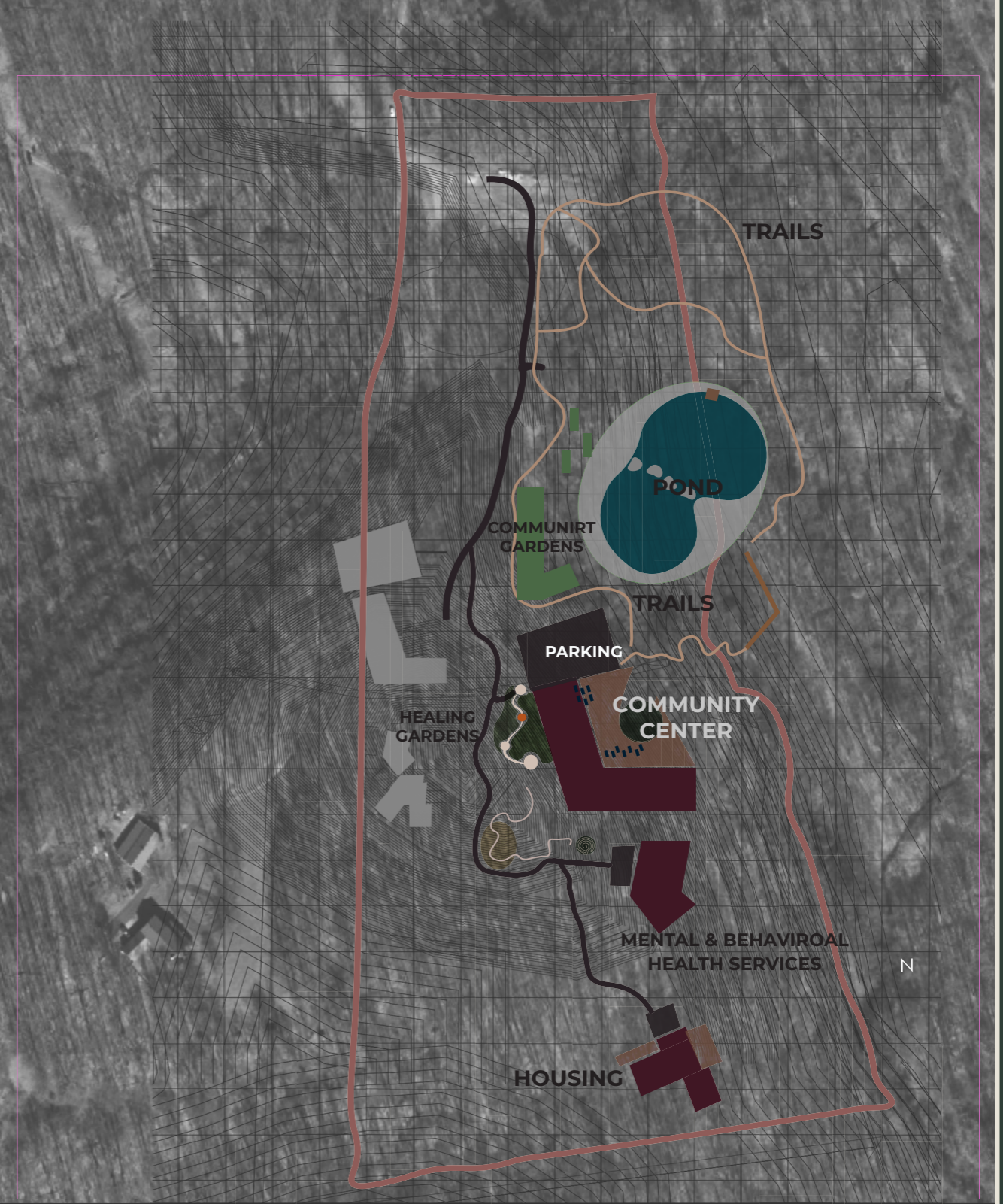
Healing and Wellbeing

Provide spaces which promote physical activity and health habits. Provide the community with mental health resources. Create spaces for reflection and meditation, as well as provide spaces for creativity and self expression.

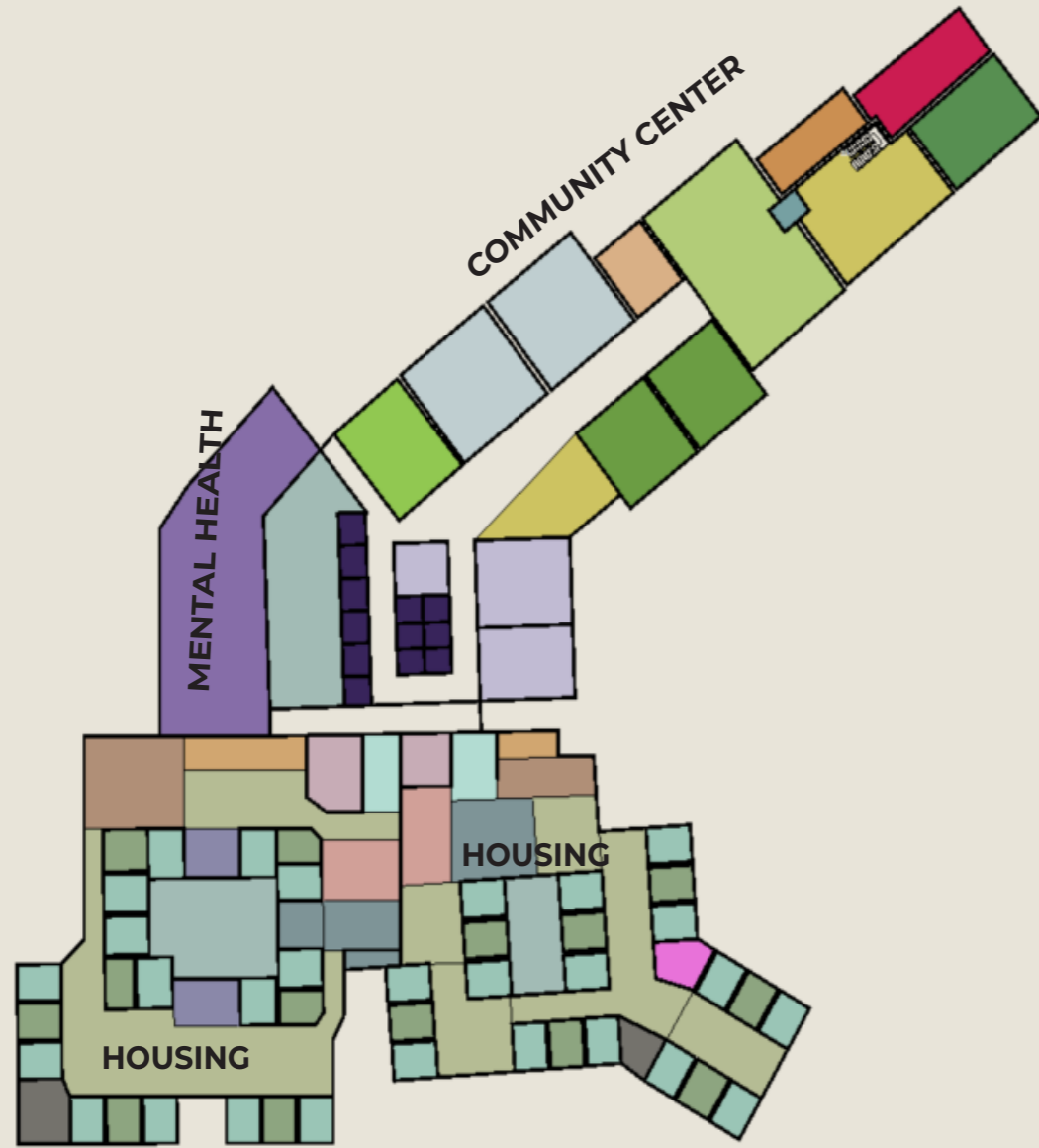




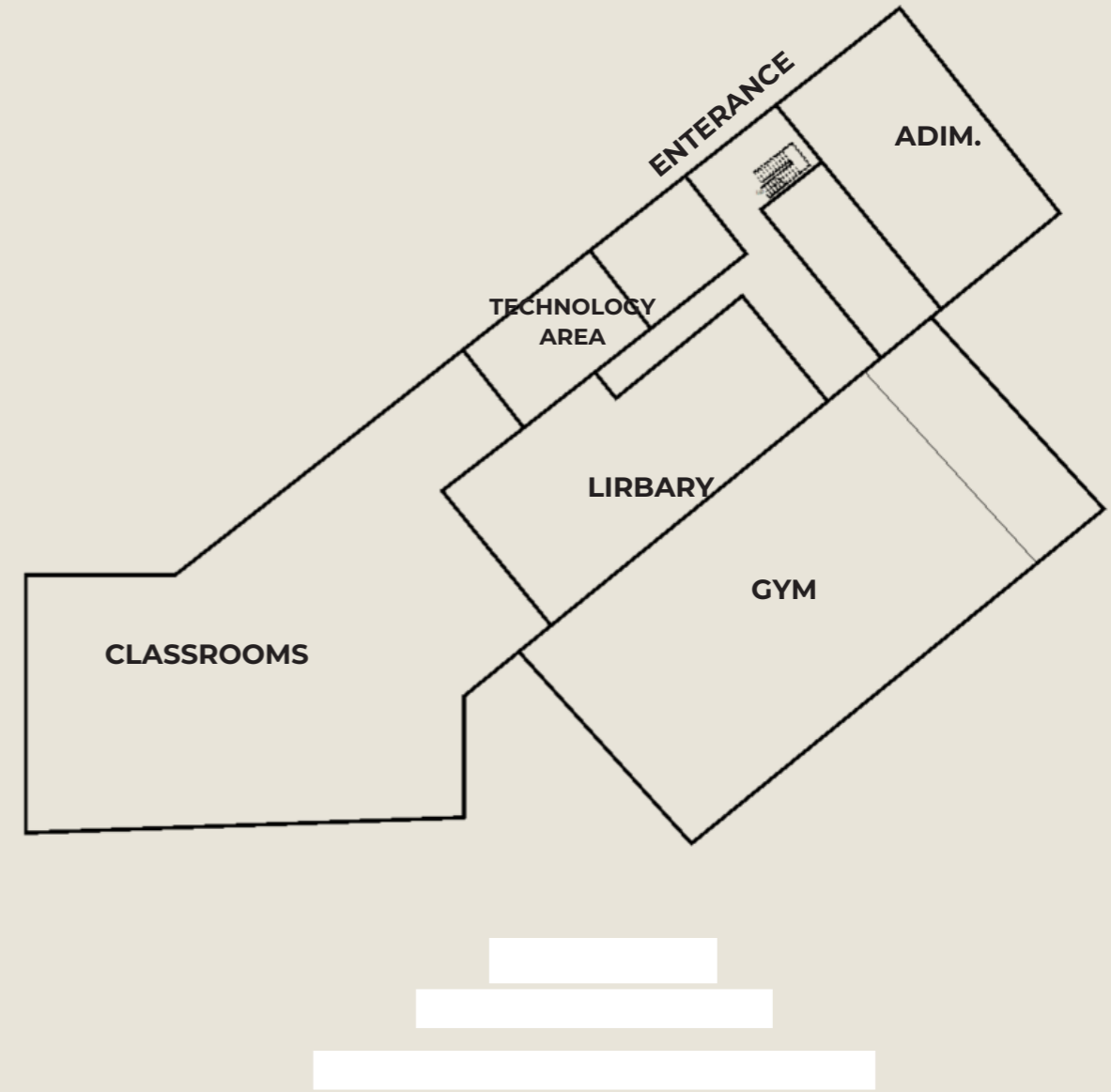
SITE AND PROGRAMING ITERATION



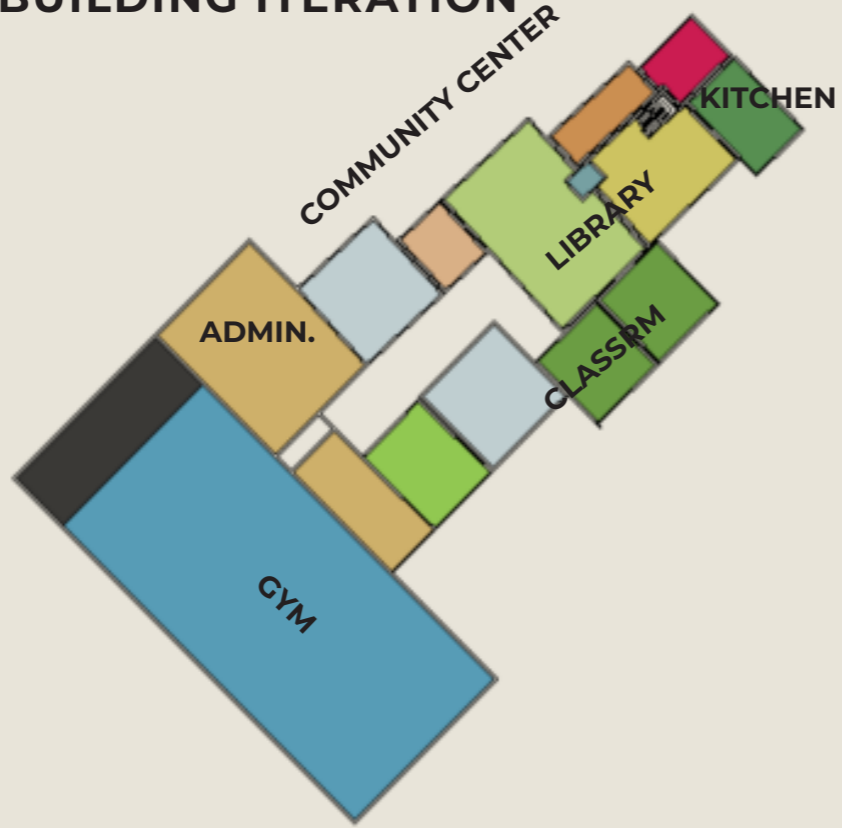
BUILDING ITERATION



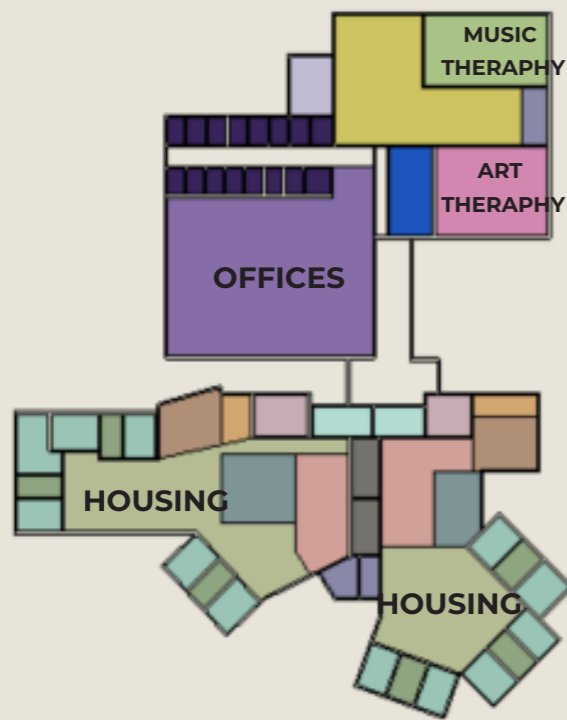
BUILDING ITERATION COMMUNITY CENTER



BUILDING ITERATION



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



Foster Care

To the east is a large raven with breathtaking views. This reaven played an important role in my design

Much of my design and building Layout the building in a way which would take advantage of the views to break down the barrier between the build and natural environment.

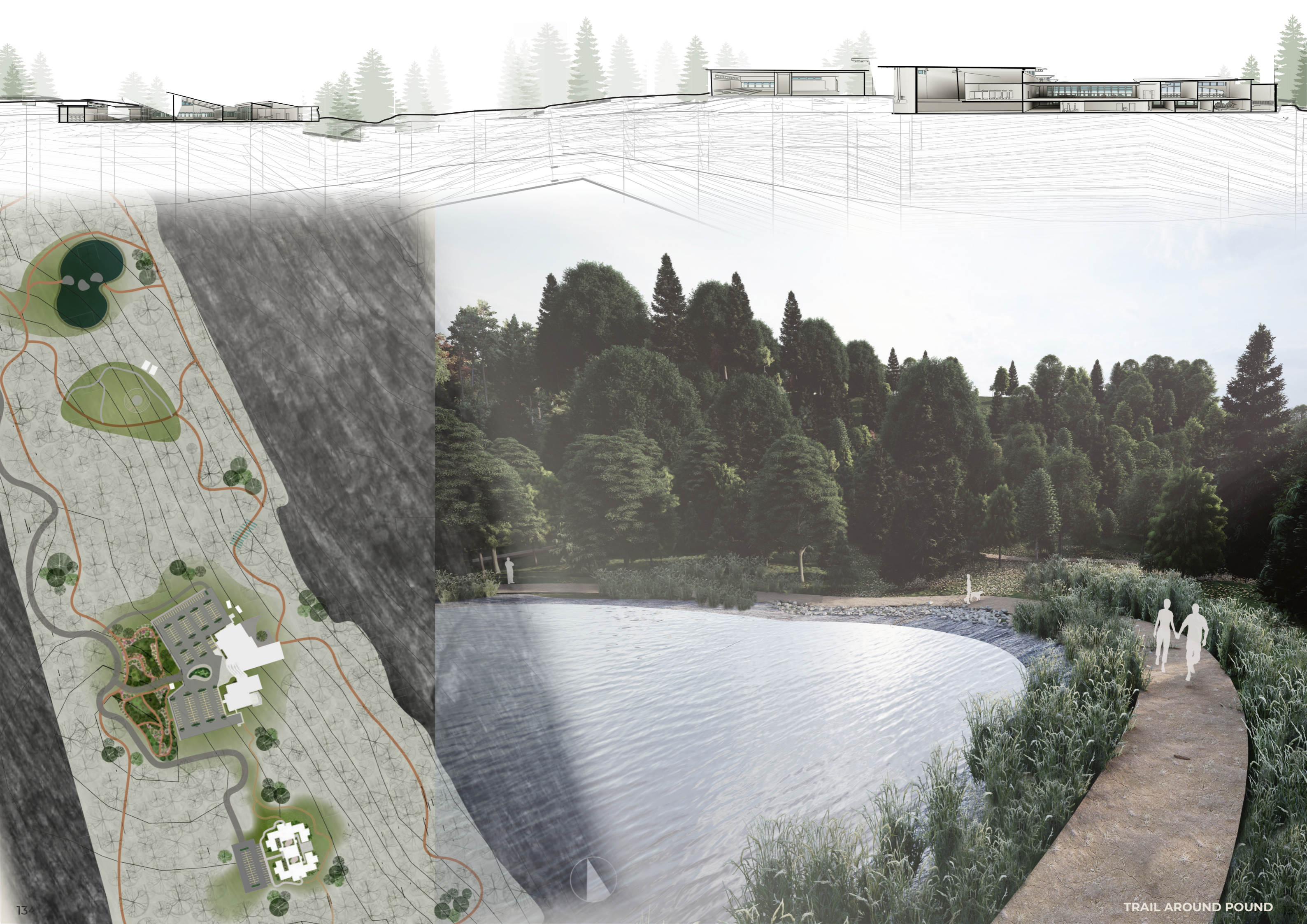
My intention for the overall campus was to create a space of healing and refuge, a place where anyone could find their sense of peace and belonging.

Design for the Foster Care

KEY

- A** ENTRANCE
- B** POND
- C** LEARNING GARDENS
- D** OUTHOUSES
- E** TRAILS





TRAIL AROUND POND



SITE PLAN



KEY

- A** COMMUNITY CENTER
- B** MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
- C** COMMUNITY GARDEN SHED
- D** COMMUNITY GARDENS
- E** TRAILS
- F** MAINTENANCE SHED





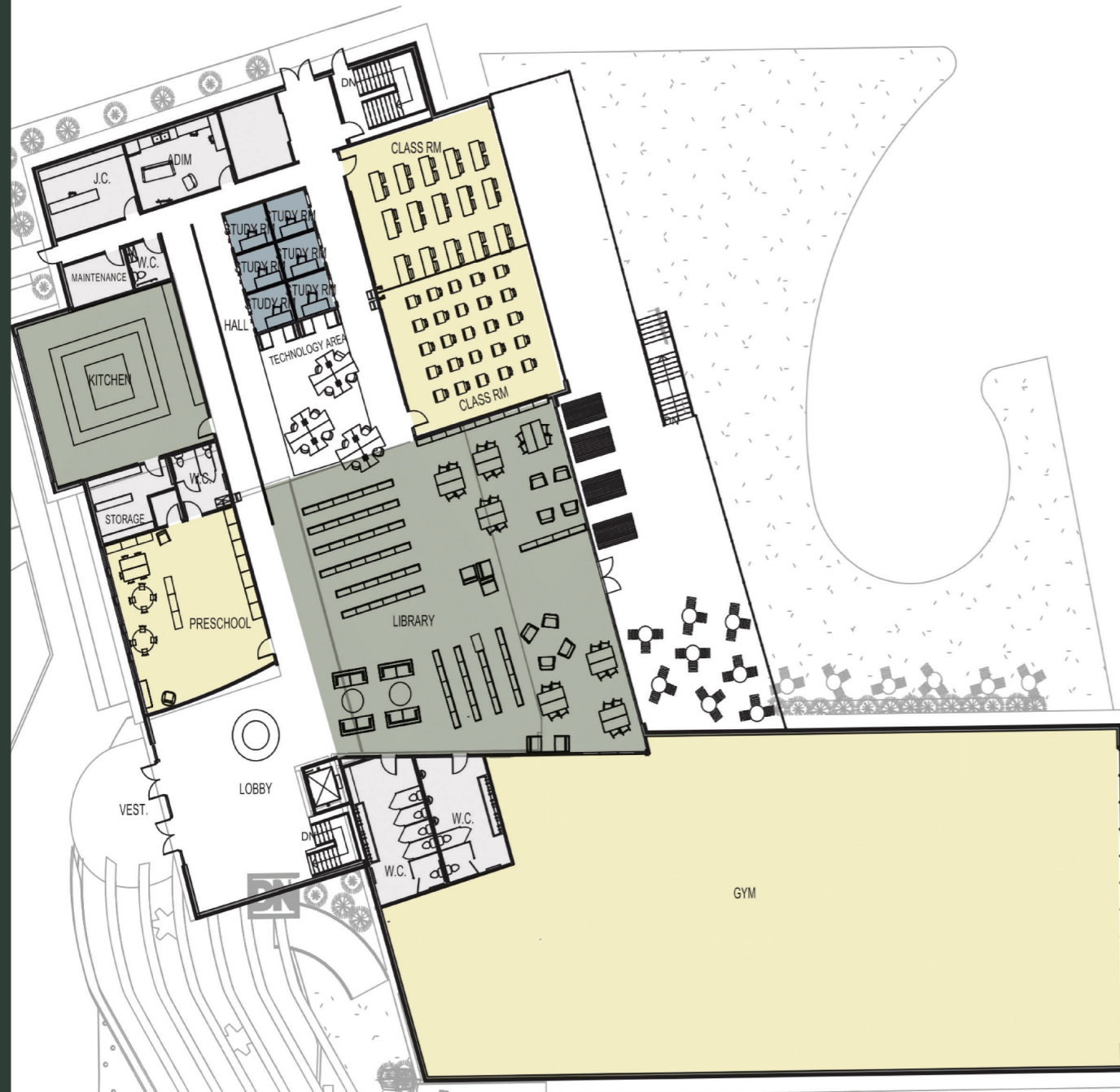
The community and mental health services center, which were designed to be spaces where people could foster connections and build lasting relationships with one another. Circulation of the community center starts with this central hub. The entrance was designed to be an axis point where everyone would draw together. This space achieves community connection to nature and safety. Through its open and welcoming layout, the lighting features, and framed views. This space acts as the a literal and metaphorical linkage the self and the community through the trelles





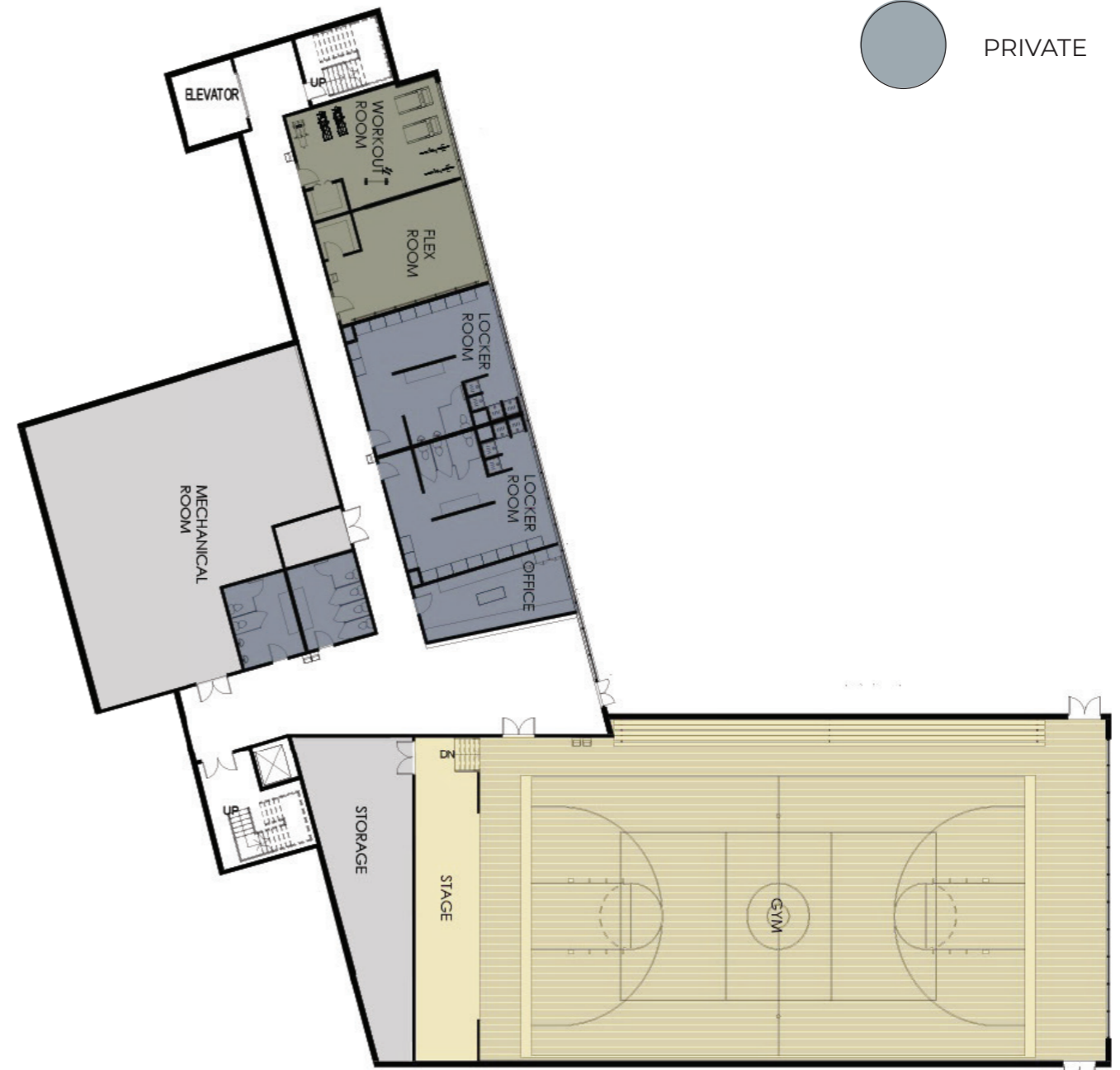
KEY

- COMMUNITY
- HEALING
- PRIVATE



COMMUNITY CENTER

FIRST FLOOR



COMMUNITY CENTER

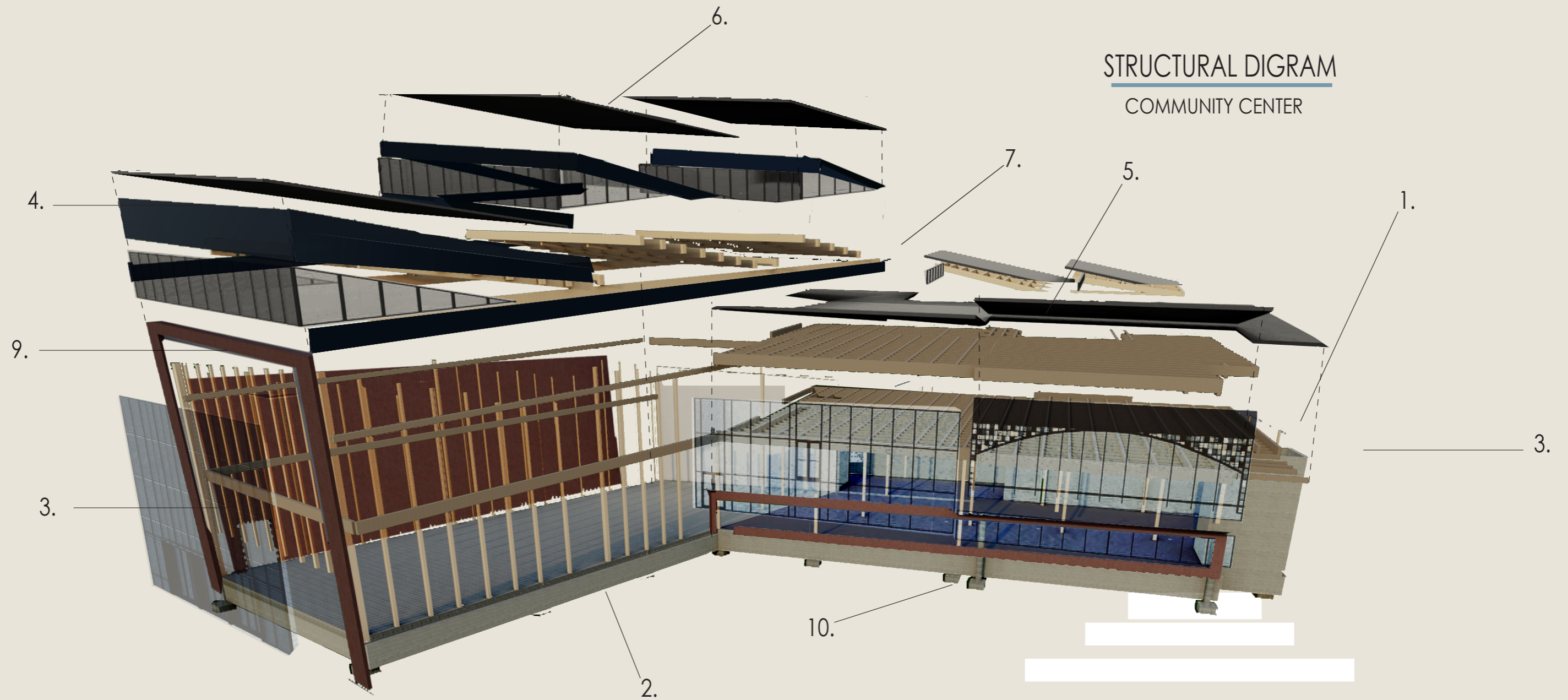
BASEMENT







STRUCTURAL DIGRAM
COMMUNITY CENTER



STRUCTURAL KEY

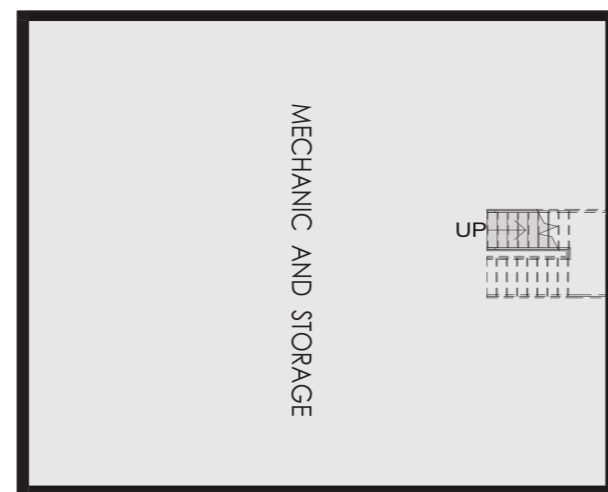
- 1. GLULAM BEAMS
- 2. GLULAM COLUMNS
- 3. GLAZING
- 4. STEEL COLUMNS
- 5. BUILT-UP METAL ROOF
- 6. SKILLION METAL ROOF
- 7. MASS TIMBER TRUSSES
- 9. BRICK WALL
- 10. FSPF FOUNDATION



Design for the Foster Care



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
FIRST FLOOR



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
BASEMENT

Design for the foster care

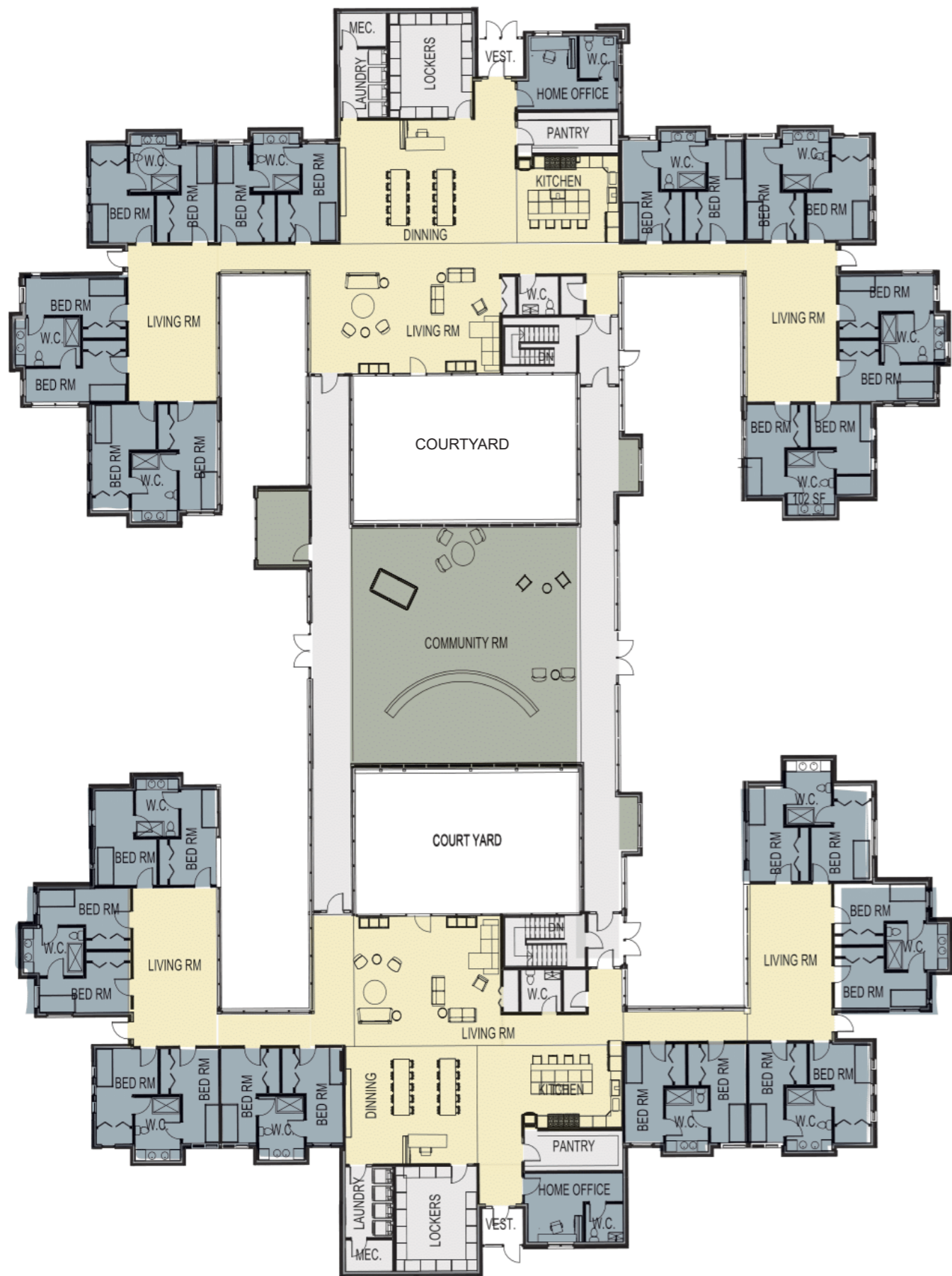




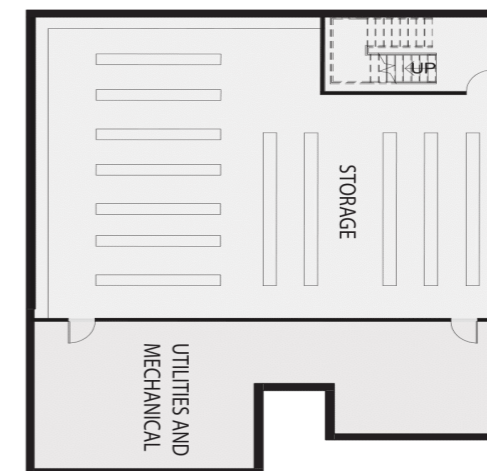
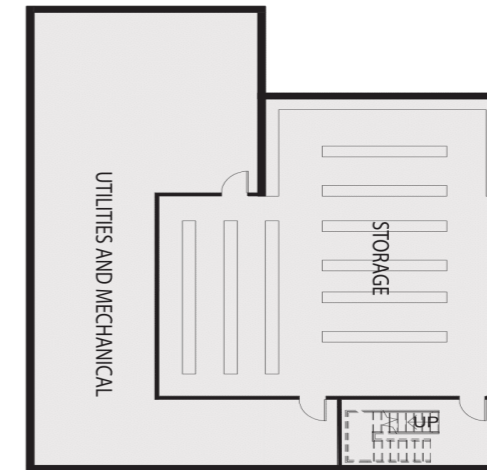
The Paisley House



Design for the Foster Care



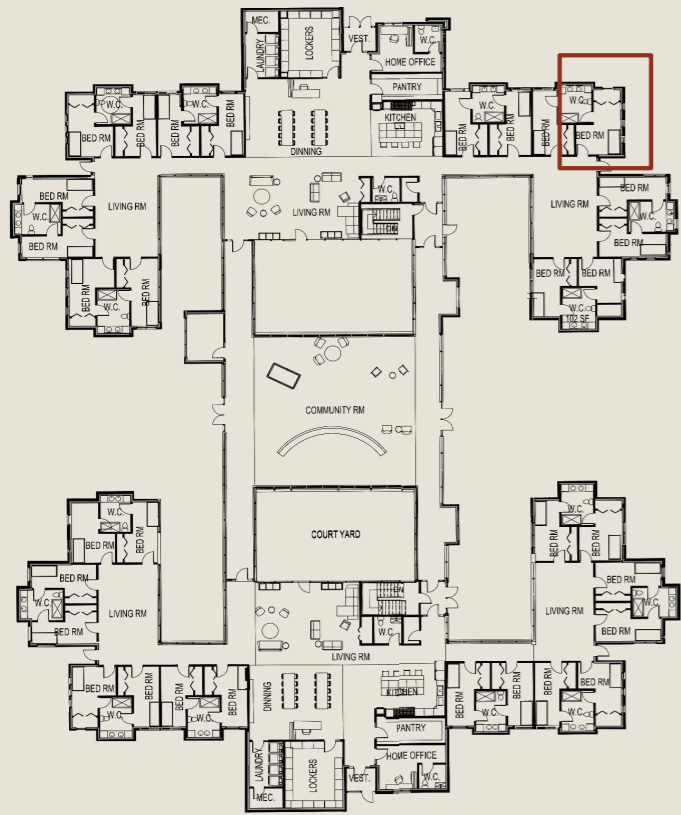
Design for the foster care



Paisley House
Basement

Paisley House
First Floor



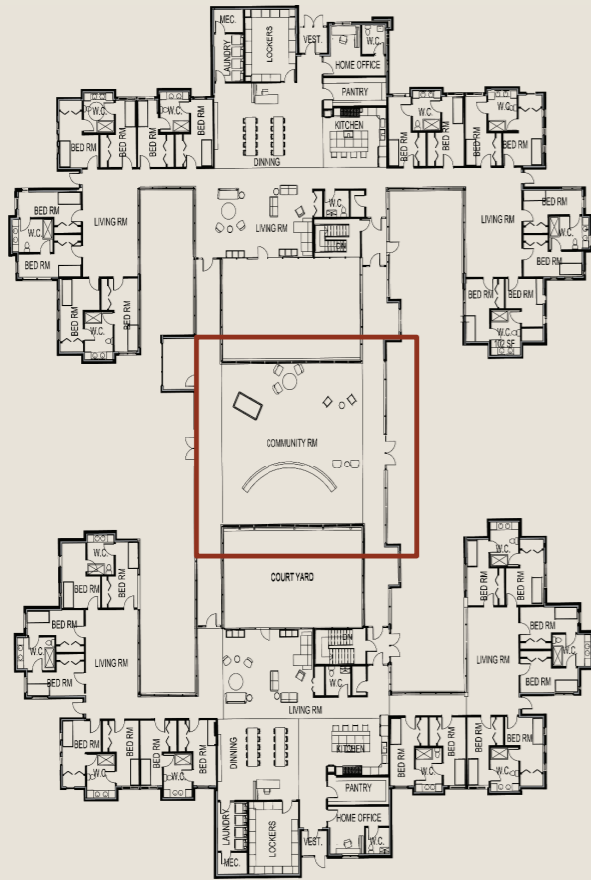


Bedroom

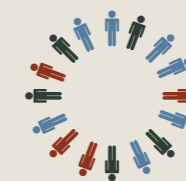
The bedrooms achieve safety connections to nature and wellness through color choices, soft materiality and a sense of privacy. The Saskatchewan studies found that long term hospital patients make quicker recovers when they had their own rooms to rest in. Providing the adolescence with a room all to themselves gives them a place to retreat too. It greater sense of autonomy.



THE PAISLEY HOUSE COMMUNITY ROOM



This space addresses community, scale, connection to nature and safety. This is a large room with excellent site lines which allow for monitoring from staffers with out intruding on the adolescent privacy. The room is zoned in to multiple different areas creates multiple levels of engagement while still providing space for more private conversation.





Appendix

To document the design process my plan is to have a central document and folder for my thesis book. I will be gathering case studies and research for a variety of areas and topics. The note phase of the process will be taken by category. I will create an analysis of all of the information I've gathered using spreadsheets and graphics. For the interview portion of my research I will. recordings of all interviews , both in detail and manuscript format. All information will be preserved using google docs. Any physical documentation will be filed both digitally and physically.

I will be using APA citation when presenting the information in this book. The Thesis book will then be documented for future use. The presentation will include a book composed of the research and design solution. I plan on presenting this information using a board, a site molde, and movie to show the narrative.

The research for my design solution will compose mental and behavioral health, the community of morganstown, the policies and programs currently offered for children who are aging out within the foster care system. I will use these four categories at starting off points to categorize my project.

Johnny Skitmore

09-19-20

Where are you from?

St. Paul Minnesota

Where you ever in foster care?

yes

Where was your frist foster home?

It was in the St. paul area.

How log did you live there?

Three to five so about a year and a half, two years.

Do you have any memories of the house?

Yeah they had this realy big swignset I'd play on. They had a big backyard for me to run around in. I mostly like being outsite and playing.

Do you know why you where placed in foster care?

Yes, my mom's brother overdose and so they (the state) felt the home was unsafe for me so that's why I was placed in foster care.

Do you still have contact or an form of a relationship with your biological parents?

No

How many foster kids where your foster parents raising at the time you where lving there?

I believe there were like six or eight of us. And I always had someone to play with. They had a really big playset I remember I really like playing on that.

While in foster care did you develop a close relationship with either foster parent?

Yeah, they were great. I don't have many memories of them, but they were nice!

Are you still incontact with them?

No, I remember they told me that I could come back anytime, but they were old and so they passed away.

Did you make friends with any of the other foster kids, and If so are you still incontact with any of them?

Yeah, I was friends with a lot of the kids there, they were around my age so that made it easy. But I haven't contacted them since leaving foster care.

Can you tell me about a happy memoir from your time in foster care?

I really like playing in the backyard, on the swing set, and they had a pool we'd go swimming in during the summer.

Design for the Foster Care

Can you tell me about Meeting your parents for the first time?

I just remember being told I was going to have two moms which I thought was really cool, because I always wanted a mom, and so now I was going to have two. Then I think we met once and they took me out to dinner at like Applebee's or something. I just remember being really nervous and not eating any of my food. We meet a few other times. Then one day they came and took me home. And like I said, I was really excited to get two moms because I always wanted a mom.

How did you feel when you first went home with your family?

Well, I was nervous I guess. My parents also adopted my sister on the same day and she was in the care with me so I remember thinking that was pretty cool.

Also, another thing my foster parents gave me a bike and some new bedsheets. They had this trick for helping kids transition into their new homes more easily.

Design for the foster care

Interview Allision Bergman-social worker

11-5-20

Where do you live?

For Collins, CO

What is your current occupation?

Humans serious, for Solutions

Have you worked for the foster care system?

Yes, 6 months.

Why did you want to become a social worker?

I was a soci. major and psych minor in school and I was given the opportunity to work for the corporate side of foster care. I knew I wanted to help people .

What was your roll at your/ job title?

Behavioral health technical

What were your day to day responsibilities?

Would be if it was mornings, you would wake them up.They need to have more time in the more to wake up and get ready, so you would play with them or let them watch TV. Then take them to school. If you worked a night shift you would pick them up from school, you would take them into the community, or they'd have free time at home. Then we'd get dinner.

How would you go out of your way to help?

I worked with autistic kids, so they like having a routine, that was key. Working with non-autistic kids,we would give them rewards for completing a task or for showing good behavior.Your job was to consult and support the kids throughout their day. It was important to try to create a connection between them. [REDACTED]

Hard to build connection with kids, because of turn over, mean at first and establish connection [REDACTED]

What criteria would you use to judge a successful day?

So a good day would be when there weren't any behaviors from the kids.

Based on this standard could you please describe a success full day ?

It was important for the kids to learn to work through their behaviors.They needed to use their coping skills, and if they did this the kids were rewarded.

Design for the Foster Care

Change was difficult. Days where they don't have active goals, they need to do everything on their schedules. Some kids need more time to complete their goals than others, so if they weren't given enough time it would be difficult for them to train. If kids had behaviors in communal spaces we'd take to their room. They had their own rooms and this was their safe space. This was their control, it was their own shuff.

How was your agency financed?

We are a non-profit independent agency. So we run on state grants

Where do think the foster care system is effective?

Solutions was able to provide access to the outside world. These kids had developmental and learning disabilities so these group homes were the best place for them. But we were able to bring the kids to visit their families, and to see people outside of the group home.

How does the school system work with you

Solutionsinpractis.org

Where do think the foster care system is effective

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Where do you think the foster care need more support?

245D minnesota statute -law for system and schedule

Burnout !! for staff staff maintain mental health

Kids = feel support

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Important to take care of people, policies, money, support people better, more that kinda,

Design for the foster care

Interview with Amy Hansen-Social Worker

11-5-20

Where do you live

Traverse City, MI

What is your current occupation?

Social worker at county long term medical care facility.

Have you worked for with or in the foster care agencies at any point.

Yes, I've worked at few foster care agencies. I worked a total of three years for two different agencies. Everything is verstural rn, easter for younger generation, but

Why did you want to become a social worker?

I originally wanted to be an art teacher but this program was cut starting to be from schools, when I started college. I considered art therapy, realized that wasn't what I wanted. More schools and it would be hard to find work, because they're aren't many jobs available.

As a social worker I'm able to help people. I work with kids, we draw or I'll have them rip up something and make a mess, as a form of expression. To let the anger go. Working with kids like this helps them to open up so they can talk about their feelings.

Who did you work for ?

Bethany and Catholic Community Services

How long did you work there?

The first time, when I worked for Bethany, I worked there for a year.

The second foster care agiance I worked for, (catholic community services) was about two years.

What was your roll at your/ job title?

At Bethany's I was a case major - help with kids, and Biological parents (representative)

The second time, at Catholic Community Services, I was a Licensing major. I would "ok" family's who wanted to become foster parents. There was a list of rules and regulations the families had to follow. Like what a bedroom was, it had to have two forms of egress (i.g. adoor and window). I had to see what the home looked like and make sure any prospective children would be living in an environment that was adequate.

When I was training to become a case manjor I was told High turnover right made it a year and half (foster care worker)

Were there any common themes among your case work? What did offices look like?

When I worked at Bethany, our offices were in strip malls. Everyone had their own rooms. And the walls were kinda grey and their large desk filing cabinet and chair. Everyone would decorate their rooms as a form of self expression.

Did your offices have any windows in them?

No, there was no natural light.

I like to decorate my offices with art pieces and loud colors, something fun. But one of my other co-workers decorated her office with every shade of gray. That's what she liked.

The other agency I worked for was the Catholic Community Services. Our offices were in a little hub of cubicles. changed with influx of people and deflux, no windows, visitation room= bought fotong and TV and made art pieces, kids would help with artlight.

Were there any common themes among your case work?

Parents were young, low income, there was no support system and they had no idea how to raise kids. And there usually was some form of substance abuse, but not always. The court system was centered around parental rights. Kids had almost no rights.

One time there was a mom who knew she couldn't take care of her kids and so she placed them up for adoption. She was the first mom I met who could do that, she was so strong, and her heart was in the right place. I ended up placing her boys and I am still into contact with the family today.

What were your day to day responsibilities?

So when you're given a case that means your given a family. This means you could have at a minimum four or five people to work with. Or you could have more like three kids both biological parents and foster parents (seven people in your case work).

What criteria would you use to judge a successful day?

Finding joys in the small things. Like if the kids reunited with their families (reunification is a period for parents to visit their children). I had to go to court hearings a lot. I acted as the foster kids advocate. I was, "the eyes and ears for case reports to court".

How often were these kids able to see their parents?

Reunification depends on age, like two to three times per week. Adolescents choose how often they saw their parents. families would license their

How long were these kids in the foster care system?

The state allows them to be in foster care for up to eighteen months and then the parental rights are either relinquished or your child is removed. Sometimes we'll get repeat offenders. And so you have to flagged and foster kids would group up

What age range did you primarily work with?

I worked best with the younger kids, so anywhere from three months or up to ten years old. I had a few teens, but not many. Teens transferred north and moved to group homes up in north michigan.

Where did they go?

A group home for teens.

What were some reasons a group home or moving the child out of their hometown were important?

Sometimes these kids would come from gangs, and so if they went up north, where it was quieter, it was easier for them.

What was the best way to help these teens?

Letting them be a part of the destination making process. These kids acted like adults, and they wanted to be adults. But they were only thirteen fifteen years old and so, they weren't ready to be adults. A lot of times these kids had been through some form of trauma, and so they were stunted.

How do you give kids agency?

Case depent, in there is the process of ratification(emanicipation) vs adoption. To be ratified means you're legally on your own. Or if you choice adoption, they would find a family for you. was important to inform them about the information present in court, and tell them why!

You would tell them what the consequence would look like if they choices not to participate. Told them about what options they had. It was imporant to create a connection with them. So allways asking the kids if they were ok. You could feel it if they where closed off and alot of times they where. They would tell you the answers they thought you wanted to hear more of ten. Ineeded to get them to open up. So lettting them be apart of the decision making proce

Another way was incentive programs, having them live in apartments where they could connect with other kids. Or some of the kids would tell their stories to the foster parents in training. They liked that, it was a goal for them.

It was improtant to provide them with as many positive life goals as possible. There was one girl who wanted to go to cosmetology school, and when she was total she had to live in a group home, the one thing that got her through was knowing that there was a cosmetology school in the town. So it was like, she wasn't going to the group home, she was going to the cosmetology school and then living at the group home, just for a little while.

How often would you meet with the foster kids?

Time spent with kids, well I would usually have flexible times, so I would check in with them at school, or sometimes I would pick them up from school. Take them to a doctors appointment or I'd talk with them in between classes. So I used to see these kids once a week, once a month at that worst. But I was lucky, because my work caped our case loads at twenty four. I don't think I ever had anymore than twenty. Some agencies down in Grand Rapids or Lansing had their social works on thirty two to thirty six cases.

Work load usually picks up around the start of school and an influx of kids come in, and again at the end of school, because their teachers know some things and they don't want the kids going home for the summer.

Design for the Foster Care

Ownership

Biggest part

Foster parents fight with biological parents (bad mouthing)

See abuse, see lies,

What criteria would you use to judge a unsuccessful day?

There were a few instances where kids were moving at night. The foster parents were of limited means and these kids were out of control. They were runaways. One broke into the neighbor's house and into their liquor cabinet. There was a signal lady, who caused a lot of problems. She did have any boundaries with the teens, and she was signal

Issue with foster parents.

What do you think of the welfare system?

It's hard to work with courts. The policies in place make it difficult to advocate for what's best for the kids. (policies are state and federally mandated. Child care is run by the department of health and human services), The amount of time kids spend in foster care makes it more and more difficult for them, emotionally. Most of the time the kids end up back with their parents, and this takes a bit of adjustment for them. It's common for parents to miss court dates. More so for older kids. These kids don't want their parents to be involved. The older kids usually want adoption, emancipation or some form of independent living. Most of these kids still wanted a sense of connection, someone to call home, family.

How does the school system work with you?

Depends on the district, some are open and welcoming. Some discriminating towards kids, and social workers. Some have been really great to work with, they'll look out for these kids. They do check-ins and call us if somethings up. Others would discriminate against the family.

Why would some schools discriminate against these kids?

They'd call for dirty fingernails, or if their shoes were dirty. They didn't want kids because of emotional developmental delay. But Their foster mom transferred to another school district. And that was so good for those kids.

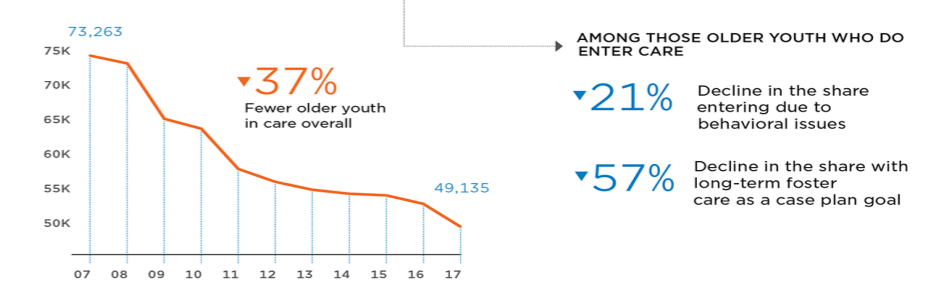
And there was a teenager who went to a smaller school. They were always checking in on him. They'd tell me if they thought he needed new jeans or boots. These teens did well with the younger kids in foster care. Had siblings (non-biological) and he was always checking on them. He would look out for them and keep an eye on them in high school.

Older Youth Need Support Transitioning from Foster Care to Adulthood

The 1999 John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee) expanded a federal funding stream for independent living/transition services offered to older youth (ages 14+) in and transitioning from foster care. Aging out occurs when young people reach the age of majority (18 in most states) without a permanent legal family. Chafee was one of the first large pieces of legislation to focus on older youth in care.

Since Chafee, a lot has changed for older youth.¹

THE NUMBER OF OLDER YOUTH ENTERING FOSTER CARE HAS DECREASED FROM 2007 TO 2017



Extended foster care helps in the transition to adulthood.²

COMPARED TO OLDER YOUTH WHO EXITED CARE AFTER AGE 18, THOSE IN EXTENDED FOSTER CARE AT AGES 19 AND 21 ARE MORE LIKELY TO:

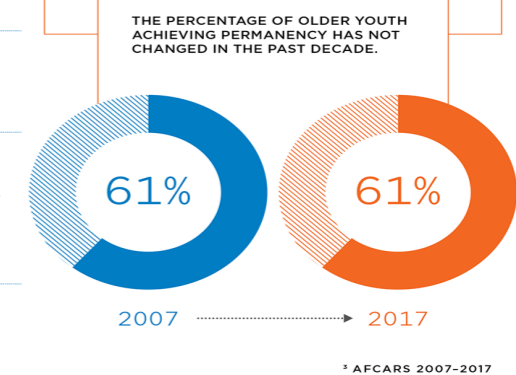
- Be employed
- Be in school
- Receive educational aid
- Avoid homelessness
- Avoid disconnection from work and school
- Delay parenthood

Key legislation involving older youth in foster care

- 1997** **Adoption and Safe Families Act** modifies child welfare policy to reduce time in care and increase adoptions.
- 1999** **John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (Chafee)** provides federal funding for independent living and transition services for older youth.
- 2001** **Education and Training Voucher Program** provides federal funding for young people in foster care to promote post-secondary or vocational programs.
- 2008** **Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act** provides federal funds for voluntary extended foster care after age 18. This policy aims to allow young people more time to prepare for adulthood with support from the child welfare system.
- 2014** **Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act** promotes access to everyday activities by allowing caregivers more leeway to make decisions about extracurricular and social activities for young people in foster care.
- 2015** **Every Student Succeeds Act** aims to prevent unnecessary school transfers for young people during their involvement in foster care.
- 2018** **Family First Prevention Services Act** provides additional funding for prevention services, and expands Chafee eligibility to all youth ages 14-23 and education training voucher eligibility to age 26.

There are still opportunities for improvement.³

Older youth achieve permanency when they exit care to a safe and stable family setting. When the child welfare system cannot achieve permanency for youth (a process called emancipation), older youth often struggle in their transition to adulthood.



¹ Based on Child Trends analysis of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data, 2007-2017.
² Based on Child Trends analysis of the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Outcomes data, Cohort 1, 2015; Cohort 2, 2016.

Citation

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PREVIOUS STUDIO EXPERIENCE

Tea House	2nd year	Fall: Scarlett Gurple: 2017
Boat House	2nd year	Fall: Scarlett Gurple: 2017
Crippled Creek Tiny house	2nd year	Spring: Cindy: 2018
Mixed Use Apartments	2nd year	Spring: Cindy: 2018
Fargo Welcoming Center	3rd year	Fall: Paul Gley: 2018
Mixed-Use Building	3rd year	Fall: Paule Gley: 2018
Consulate center	3rd year	Spring: Ramesay: 2019
Native American Cultural Center	3rd year	Spring: Ramsay: 2019
Miami high rise	4th year	Fall: Amar: 2019
Marvin windows composition	4th year	Spring: Crutchfield: 2020
Recontextualizing Main Ave.	4th year	Spring: Crutchfield: 2020

Thank You!



Samantha Ochs

