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2011 RUDY BRUNER AWARD MEDAL RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

The Bridge Homeless Assistance Center honored for innovative program with inspirational design

Cambridge, MA—The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence has named The Bridge Homeless Assistance Center as its 2011 Gold Medal recipient. The prestigious biennial award honors urban places that, through their design and development, have lasting transformative impacts on their urban neighborhoods and communities. The Bridge will receive a \$50,000 prize, and four Silver Medal recipients will receive \$10,000 each.

Established in 1986 and now in its 13th award cycle, the Rudy Bruner Award has recognized more than 65 projects that demonstrate excellence in urban placemaking. Unique for its focus on the interplay of process, place and values in creating enriching urban environments, and its extensive, on-site evaluation process, the award honors projects that, through innovative collaborations, establish new approaches for transforming urban challenges into community opportunities.

“The Bridge and its fellow 2011 winners illustrate the combination of factors that make good design such a valuable agent of positive change,” said Brandy H. M. Brooks, director of the award program. “Beyond achieving aesthetic excellence, these projects demonstrate an intimate understanding of the users’ needs and an imperative to address their broader social, economic and environmental challenges. Each project reflects participation across a wide spectrum of community interests that came together to create beautiful, resourceful and creative urban solutions that serve the future of their neighborhoods and cities.”

The Bridge Homeless Assistance Center harnesses architecture to express an innovative and comprehensive approach to homelessness in Dallas, Texas. Located on the edge of the city’s central business district, the 75,000-square-foot facility supports more than 1,000 homeless guests daily, 24 hours a day, in their quest to achieve self-sufficiency in permanent housing. Through partnerships between a variety of service providers, The Bridge delivers a comprehensive continuum of care that ranges from emergency shelter, meals, medical care and counseling, to employment assistance, training, on-site transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing placement.

The center, designed by architects Overland Partners and CamargoCopeland, occupies a full city block and comprises six buildings, including an existing warehouse converted into an outdoor sleeping pavilion set around a courtyard. Its luminous façade signals the facility’s significance for guests, staff and neighbors: as a beacon of hope for those experiencing homelessness; as a bridge back to long-term stability; and as a demonstration of the city’s civic capacity and commitment to care for all its residents.

The Bridge was funded by a bond measure and led by a Mayor-appointed committee that engaged neighbors, police, city council members, and homeless citizens in a series of collaborative design workshops. The selection committee highlighted the project's unique program and partnerships as an exceptional example for other communities.

Acknowledging the dynamic nature of urban placemaking, the Rudy Bruner Award welcomes a diverse range of applications. This year the selection committee received 49 applications representing a wide scope of project programs, scales, and design challenges. From these applicants, five finalists were selected by a multidisciplinary selection committee and visited by a study team that interviewed project stakeholders, including designers, developers, public officials, and members of the surrounding community. Based on these site visits, the selection committee determined the Gold and Silver Medal recipients.

The 2011 Silver Medal recipients include Brooklyn Bridge Park in New York, a community-initiated, 85-acre park that preserves 1.3 miles of riverfront for public use; Civic Space Park, a vitalizing public space in downtown Phoenix, made possible through an innovative town-and-gown partnership; Gary Comer Youth Center and Gary Comer College Prep, which support education and youth programs that bring new opportunities to Chicago's Grand Crossing neighborhood; and the Sante Fe Railyard Redevelopment, which unified the Santa Fe, New Mexico community around a vision for a mixed-use cultural and commercial district.

"This year's winners reflect two important themes: The desire for communities to shape the future of their important public spaces and the need for local governments, institutions and citizens to join together to take on the pressing social issues confronting our collective future," said architect Simeon Bruner, the award's founder. "In honoring these accomplishments, we hope the Rudy Bruner Award will inspire other communities to take action."

The 2011 Rudy Bruner Award Selection Committee members were Mayor Lisa Wong of Fitchburg, Massachusetts; Randy Gragg, editor-in-chief of Portland, Oregon's Portland Monthly; Dan Pitera, executive director of the Detroit Collaborative Design Center; Renata Simril, managing director at Jones Lang LaSalle in Los Angeles; Edward Uhler, executive director of Chicago's Millennium Park; and Jess Zimbabwe, executive director of the Urban Land Institute's Daniel Rose Center for Public Leadership in Land Use in Washington, DC.

Case studies of the 2011 Rudy Bruner Award Winners will be published this fall. Past publications are available online at www.brunerfoundation.org/rba.

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