

# ACE in Action

2011 WINNERS

June 2011

## Designs for a Health Clinic, High School, and Military Retirement Community Take Top Honors at Fifth Annual CIRT-ACE National Design Competition

In early May ACE teams from New York City, Frederick, Maryland, and Palo Alto, California squared off in front of construction and design industry CEOs at the finals of the 2011 Construction Industry Round Table-ACE Mentor Program National Design Competition.

Competition was especially intense in the contest's fifth year. Out of a record 37 entries (double the previous record) from 21 ACE affiliates, three finalists were invited to present their projects during the Construction Industry Round Table's (CIRT) spring meeting in Washington, DC. For the first time, all three finalists were from affiliates which had produced past national winners.

A team from the Frederick, Maryland affiliate repeated its first place win from 2008, the first time this has happened in competition history. Its project, *Serenity Health Care*, incorporated design strategies to help calm patients at the treatment clinic. A very green-oriented redesign of

Mountain View High School in California earned the Palo Alto team second place. The New York City team took third place with an innovative military retirement community situated in Waco, TX.

"Students in the National Design Competition impress our members with their dedication and talent," said Mark Casso, CIRT president. "In many ways, the competition reminds CIRT members why they first entered the industry, renewing their enthusiasm for their own work."

For ACE, the competition is an annual highlight. "It affords the best teams from across the country an opportunity to test themselves against each other," said Pamela Mullender, ACE president and CEO.

The Frederick, Maryland team won for its affiliate a prize of \$3,000. Second- and third-place teams took home \$2,000 and \$1,000 prizes, respectively. CIRT sponsored all three prizes.



**Left to Right:** Charlie H. Thornton, Chairman/Founder of ACE, along with the presenters for the three winning teams; Joseph Chang (Peninsula Team 1, Palo Alto, CA), Malini Nambiar (Frederick, MD), and Shanna Ramsmoor (Team 8, New York, NY). Followed by Mark Casso, CIRT President.





## Jurors' Praise for Student Projects

Judges gave high marks for the scope of creativity shown by each team

**R**epresentatives from the three finalist teams presented their projects to a seven-person jury. Linda Figg, CEO of Figg Engineering Group and 2011 CIRT chair, lavished high praise on the students and their projects.

"The National Design Competition demonstrates the incredible talent, creativity and passion of students who will design and construct tomorrow's built environment," she said. "It is inspiring to see the knowledge they gained from this experience."

Other jury members were CEOs of top design and construction firms – Robert Alger, Chairman, President and CEO, The Lane Construction Corp.; Mark Casso, President, CIRT; Blake Murillo, CEO, PSOMAS; Ross Myers, CEO, American Infrastructure; Gilberto Neves, CEO, Odebrecht Construction; Charles Thornton, Founder and CEO, Charles H. Thornton & Co.; and, Matthew Walsh, CEO, The Walsh Group.

Blake Murillo observed, "The breadth and depth of the ideas that each team wove together were impressive. Students had to think from so many different perspectives – a planner, designer, and builder – and also had to consider the needs of the project's end user. What they came up with and were able to convey was absolutely terrific!"

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*Left to Right: Charles Thornton, Founder and CEO, Charles H. Thornton & Co. (Easton, MD); Linda Figg, CEO, Figg Engineering Group (Tallahassee, FL); Blake Murillo, CEO, Psomas (Los Angeles, CA); Gilberto Neves, CEO, Odebrecht Construction, Inc. (Coral Gables, FL); Bob Alger (Robert E. Alger), CEO & President, The Lane Construction Corp. (Cheshire, CT).*



**Winning Projects** Design competition teams could choose one of three projects: **1.** the “ideal” school which creates an optimal learning environment; **2.** a retirement village for military families, including a master plan and designs for structures; **3.** a health clinic which minimizes patients’ anxieties and boredom.

**F**inalists’ projects were selected on overall excellence, regardless of the design category. Images of their project boards can be viewed at <http://www.acementor.org/817>.

Eight students from five different Frederick, Maryland high schools, all in their second year of the ACE program, made up the first-place team. Savannah Krause, a senior at Urbana High School, organized the team’s work flow in her capacity as project manager. The team selected Malini Nambiar, a Tuscarora High School senior, to present their project at the competition.

The Frederick team designed the 35,000 square-foot, three-story Serenity Health Clinic located in Baltimore so as to be near the world-class medical facilities at Johns Hopkins University. The students estimated that the clinic would qualify for a LEED Gold rating. To ease patients’ anxieties, the interior space uses warm, calming colors and is filled with art works by local artists. The waiting rooms have both interactive and passive entertainment options such as computer games and music stations.

Bryan Burke, owner of Millennium Resource Engineering, served as lead mentor. Three other mentors assisted him.

“The team basically met as a group with mentors once a month, except at the start and finish of the program when meetings occurred twice a month,” explained Burke. “At many other times the students themselves gathered at the public library or a Starbucks.”

Second-place winners were the Peninsula Team 1 from the San Francisco Bay Area affiliate. This same team, but

comprised of different students, earned second-place honors in the 2008 competition.

The seven team members all attend Mountain View High School near Palo Alto. With the exception of Joseph Chang, a senior who presented the team’s project to the competition jury, all team members were first-timers in the ACE program.

The Palo Alto students’ project was a total re-conception of their high school. The campus centerpiece is the academic wing with 34 classrooms. The inspiration for its design and eco-friendly features came from trees and nature. The structure’s tiered roofs are glass so that natural light will fill classrooms and are slanted toward the building’s center in order to capture rainwater which is diverted to cisterns and recycled for toilets and irrigation.

Veteran mentor Aimée Lopez with O’Connor Construction Management led three other ACE mentors on the Palo Alto team. “The students had different interests and personalities and so offered a very interesting dynamic,” she observed. “However, all encouraged each other to become one body of exceptional students.”

Team 8 of the Greater New York City ACE affiliate took third place. Seven of the ten students on the team had been part of the team that placed first in the 2008 National Design Competition. Five mentors worked with the team, including lead mentor Miguel Cedeño, an architect with the New York City Department of Design and Construction.

“This year’s project was a true team effort,” Cedeño explained. “The scale and complexity of the project dictated that each student had to put on several different hats and take on several roles.

The New York team named its military retirement village Aquila Village. Shanna Ramsmoor, a senior at the High School for Construction Trade, Engineering and Architecture, explained in her presentation to the jury that *aquila* is Latin for eagle. The eagle symbolizes all branches of the military. The shape of the eagle also inspired the design of the project’s master plan. Situated in the eagle’s head is commercial space. Both wings are set aside for residences, and common space is located in the bird’s torso.

Throughout their work on the project, the New York team maintained an active blog. It can be viewed at [2011aceteam8.blogspot.com](http://2011aceteam8.blogspot.com).

#### **Frederick Team Members**

**Front row from left to right:** Savannah Krause, Jeffery Bowersox, Malini Nambiar, Alex Chepkoit, Marcus Printz, Electra Sherlock  
**Back row:** Jeffery Bowersox and Marcus Printz



# ACE in Action

## CIRT

ACE is grateful to the Construction Industry Round Table for its continuing sponsorship of the National Design Competition. CIRT—an exclusive organization of approximately 100 CEO's from America's top architecture, engineering, and construction firms— established the competition in 2007. It underwrites the travel and lodging expenses of one student and one mentor from each of the three finalist teams as well as the top three prize stipends. CIRT develops the different project options for each competition and draws judges from its membership. The final judging coincides with CIRT's spring meeting.



**NYC Team 8 Members**

*Second row left to right: Jeffrey Smithline (Mentor -*

*Sam Schwartz Engineering), Aseer Intiser, Shamanie Wilson, Raphael Guida, Marilyn Lopez, Jackie Ye and Miguel Cedeño (Mentor - NYC Department of Design and Construction).*

*First row left to right: Iman Louis-Jeune, Nataly Bautista, Jessica Santiago, Ellen Lei and Shanna Ramsamooj.*

*Not pictured: Student Kevin Lei, Cassandra Wetzel (Mentor-GZA Geo Environmental),*

*Ruby Saake (Mentor - NYC School Construction Authority), Dennis Murray (Mentor - Structure Tone).*

## Runners-Up

**Competition runners-up in each of the three design topics received cash prizes for the first time this year—\$500 for 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up and \$250 for 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up.**

### Ideal School

ACE Nashville/Team 5 (1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up)

ACE Chicago/Team 1 (2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up)

### Military Retirement Village

ACE Washington, DC/Washington-Lee HS Team (1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up)

ACE Connecticut/Greater Bridgeport (2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up)

### Health Clinic

ACE Connecticut/New Haven, Team 1 (1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up)

ACE San Diego/Southwest HS Team (2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up)

ACE Rhode Island received a special award given to a non-winning team for the Best Presentation Boards. This team won \$250 for its "Quonset Military Retirement Village" boards.

## 2012 COMPETITION

**Stay tuned for details of the 2012 competition.**

They will be announced early this fall so that ACE teams wishing to enter the competition can develop their projects throughout the year.