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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Volunteer Organizations Connect with Architects at the Launch of "Citizen Architect" at the AIA Minnesota Convention



Minneapolis, Minnesota - In the current economy, volunteer organizations have an even greater need for services and volunteers. AIA Minnesota plans to use its annual convention and exhibit hall that attracts 1,500 people, as a platform to tell attendees the stories of these volunteer organizations and gain new volunteers for them. This new concept being launched, "Citizen Architect," aims to connect architects to their community through encouraging and recognizing volunteer efforts and raising awareness among volunteer organizations that architects are an available, reliable and knowledgeable volunteer resource for them.

AIA Minnesota Citizen Architect Committee Co-Chairs, Matt Johnson, AIA, and Jon Crump, AIA, said, "At past conventions we've always highlighted volunteerism in the architectural profession through the Louis Lundgren Award that recognizes individual architects as volunteers. With this year being AIA Minnesota's 75th convention, it was time to try to do more."

The Citizen Architect effort by AIA Minnesota will be launched at the exhibit hall with displays and representatives (opening night only) from 16 different organizations including Big Brothers, Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities; Bolder Options, Bridging, Clare Housing, Habitat for Humanity, Hands on Twin Cities, Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest, Metro Meals on Wheels, Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce, Northern Star Council: Boy Scouts of America & Exploring Program, Only One Foundation, People Serving People, Rebuilding Together Twin Cities, Risen Christ School, Simpson Housing Services and Yinghua Academy.

These organizations' missions range from those that are in direct need of an architect's skill set, to those that simply need more helping hands. Only One Foundation, for example, provides professional architectural and structural engineering design services to a diverse group including single mothers, under-employed people, communities in crisis and other non-profit organizations. Habitat for Humanity and housing-related service organizations can also benefit from architects as volunteers. Johnson said, "Whatever the opportunity, we want to heighten awareness of the need and motivate and activate architects to respond."

"We are trying to send the message that volunteering is important, necessary and critical for the architectural profession," says Crump. "We looked to AIA national's Citizen Architect Resolution that states: 'The American Institute of Architects commends all Citizen Architects for your dedication and service to your community, the profession, and our country with the hope that your good work will inspire and motivate other members to serve in the civic realm.' to create our own local initiative."



The Louis Lundgren Award is named for its first recipient who inspired the creation of the award in 1994. This award recognizes individuals for their dedication to the profession of architecture through their volunteer activities in our communities and with the AIA. Since the award's inception Thomas H. Sopoci, AIA, Ronald Krank, AIA, Charles D. Liddy, AIA, William E. Rust, AIA, Eldon Morrison,* AIA, Charles Huntley, AIA, Dennis Grebner, FAIA, Elizabeth Thompson,* AIA, Richard T. Faricy, FAIA, Keith Sjoquist, AIA, Vicki Hooper, AIA, Michael Schrock,* AIA, John Cuningham, FAIA and Charles Sullivan, AIA, have received this award (*denotes deceased). All of the work of these individuals will be on display in the Citizen Architect Lounge and many of them will be there on opening night, Tuesday, November 10, 4:30-7:00p.m.

The Exhibit Hall is a lively place that's only open specific hours that offset the programs, hosting well over 200 product lines and a variety of professional services. The hall, which requires no registration and is free to the public, features displays of awards and themed projects from AIA Minnesota, its chapters and its 22 committees. Highlights include VJAA, recipient of the 2009 AIA Minnesota Firm Award, the 2008 AIA Minnesota Honor Awards and Citizen Architect.

Exhibit Hall Hours:

Tuesday, November 10: 4:30p.m.-7:00p.m.

Wednesday, November 11: 11:15a.m. -2:30p.m. and 3:45 - 6:00p.m.

Thursday, November 12: 11:30a.m. - 2:00p.m.

For more information, to see the full program descriptions and to register, go to www.aia-mn.org/convention

The American Institute of Architects Minnesota, founded in 1892, is dedicated to strengthening our communities, improving our built environment and providing exceptional design. For more information on the organization and Minnesota architectural firms, reference our Web site at www.aia-mn.org and pick up a copy of Architecture Minnesota, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.