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CONTACT

Mary Larkin, AIA Minnesota,
Communications Director, larkin@aia-mn.org
Tim Hanrahan, McKnight Foundation
Communications Director, thanrahan@mcknight.org



AIA Minnesota and the McKnight Foundation Announce that **Cermak Rhoades Architects Receives the Affordable Housing Design Award for the Higher Ground Homeless Shelter**

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA - At a reception held at the McKnight Foundation on Wednesday, August 15, AIA Minnesota and the McKnight Foundation announced that **Cermak Rhoades Architects, architects for the Higher Ground - Homeless Shelter & Permanent Housing Project, located at 165 Glenwood Avenue N. in Minneapolis, was selected as the 2012 AIA Minnesota/McKnight Foundation Affordable Housing Design Award Recipient.**

Todd Rhoades, AIA, principal at Cermak Rhoades Architects, was recognized at the reception. The Higher Ground affordable housing project was selected from 20 award submissions made by 13 Minnesota architectural firms.

"AIA Minnesota architects have a rich history of creating quality design," says AIA Minnesota President, Jon Buggy, AIA. "We believe excellent design should be accessible to all. Through this first affordable housing design award, we demonstrate that belief and commitment. The recipient chosen to receive this inaugural award clearly reflects the impact that design has on a quality affordable housing project."

"The McKnight Foundation supports a range of affordable housing strategies and systems to increase family stability and link families to opportunities," explains Kate Wolford, McKnight's president. "Within that work, the Affordable Housing Design Award will help highlight the crucial role of design and architecture in the creation of affordable housing that is good both for people and for place — a critically important community asset."

All of the award entries were reviewed by an esteemed panel of three nationally recognized jurors, including architects, Julie Eizenberg, AIA - principal, Koning/Eizenberg, Santa Monica, California and Peter Landon, FAIA - principal, Landon Bone Baker, Chicago, Illinois, and community designer, Brandy H. M. Brooks - Director of Community Programs, The Food Project, Boston, Massachusetts.

Jurors remarked that the Higher Ground project "shows a balance between program and architecture that makes you take notice. It has a spirit that takes it beyond most affordable housing projects, all while staying within a low cost-per-square-foot budget."



This new annual architectural design award recognizes innovative, high-quality designs for affordable housing, including single-family homes, transitional housing, affordable apartment buildings, and more. It was created to:

- 1) Reward architecture and development teams that craft affordable housing design projects;
- 2) Improve the visibility and stature of affordable housing design;
- 3) Showcase great design in order to increase public support of affordable housing; and
- 4) Encourage a broad understanding of how financing mechanisms, cost, diverse client populations, and community-based design processes contribute to a completed work of architecture.

The award jurors were instructed to evaluate award submissions using the following criteria:

- **Responsiveness.** How creatively and successfully has the project responded to the needs of the client and the population served? How responsive is the project to demographic shifts and regional housing needs for affordable housing?
- **Community connection.** Was the project developed through a strong, collaborative project team? Did it show participation from the larger public, including neighbors, future users of the building, or citizens at large?
- **Long-term asset.** Did the project provide a long-term asset to the client, occupants, and the community? How did design contribute to the project's long-term financial and social viability? Did design choices support community interaction and enhance community networks?
- **Excellent design quality.** Did the project demonstrate exceptional design quality - responsive to physical and social contexts as well as to any constraints imposed by funding and regulatory agencies?

The award recipients, Cermak Rhoades Architects and the Higher Ground, will be honored throughout the following year. They will receive their physical award at the November 30, Annual AIA Minnesota Awards Celebration, and be included in an AIA Minnesota's Housing Advocacy Committee event. The project will be prominently displayed at AIA Minnesota's 2012 Convention in November and a feature article with photographs will be written, to include award juror responses, for the January/February issue of AIA Minnesota's magazine *Architecture Minnesota*. Lastly, a short video will be created describing the winning project's design creation.

To learn more about the award program, visit http://www.aia-mn.org/int_committees/awards.cfm.

*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, visit www.facebook.com/aia-minnesota, and pick up a copy of *Architecture Minnesota*, the award-winning architectural magazine of the Midwest.*

The McKnight Foundation seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations through grantmaking, collaboration, and encouragement of strategic policy reform. Founded in 1953 and independently endowed by William and Maude McKnight, the Minnesota-based family Foundation had assets of approximately \$1.9 billion and granted about \$91 million in 2011. Of the total, about 10 percent went to support affordable housing strategies and systems that increase family stability and link families to opportunities through transportation-oriented development, locational and energy efficiency, expanded diversity of choice, and increased access to education and employment. Learn more at mcknight.org, and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.