

Contact: Pamela Mullender (ACE) 203-323-0020
Mark Casso (CIRT) 202-466-6777

High School Teams from Colorado and Connecticut Take Top Honors in National Design Competition

Two seniors from Green Mountain High School in Lakewood, Colorado, a suburb of Denver, won first place in the Fourth Annual National Design Competition for their design of a new high school that maximizes a spectacular view of Denver's skyline. Teams from New Haven and Bridgeport, Connecticut placed second and third, respectively, with designs of a green row house project and an arts and cultural center.

Organized by the Construction Industry Round Table (CIRT) and the Architecture Construction and Engineering (ACE) Mentor Program, the competition pitted 19 teams of students participating in the ACE program. With 72 affiliates nationwide, ACE recruits practicing architects, engineers and construction professionals to mentor high school students in an after school program that teaches them about the design and construction industry.

The top three National Design Competition teams were invited to Washington, D.C. on April 26 to present their projects to a jury of seven CEOs of leading design and construction industry companies.

"I had heard that the ACE students in the national design competition were good, but I didn't realize how good. I was blown away!" said Randy Larson, President, Environment, Energy and Construction Group, PBS&J Corporation. "These kids and their projects demonstrated incredible intuitive thought and abilities."

Ross Myers, CEO of American Infrastructure, also praised the quality of the student presentations. "I thought the creativity of the projects and the maturity of the presenters was at the level of college juniors and seniors, not high school juniors and seniors."

The first-place team won for its ACE affiliate a prize of \$3,000 sponsored by CIRT. The affiliates of the second- and third-place teams received \$2,000 and \$1,000 prizes, respectively. The Lane Construction Corporation and Day & Zimmerman, Inc. underwrote the second-place prize, and Odebrecht Construction donated the third-place prize.

After the competition, the three teams visited Capitol Hill to present their projects to senators and congressmen from their respective districts.

"I am so proud to see students from Connecticut competing and winning competitions at the national level," said Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro of New Haven. "The students

and mentors should be very proud of their accomplishments. The hard work and dedication of both the mentors and students resulted in an innovative design for a sustainable housing complex in a part of East Haven in need of revitalization. I commend their innovative vision for our communities.”

Winning Projects

Design competition teams could choose one of four projects: 1) the “ideal” school that stimulates students to achieve their best; 2) a row of three different green houses, each of which should serve as a laboratory for building techniques, sizes, and energy efficiency; 3) an arts center/theater offering culture in every form; and 4) a parking garage “outside the box,” challenging current perceptions of urban parking facilities. Sustainable design features were required of each project.

With their first-place project, a redesigned Green Mountain High School, seniors Lane Brugman and Kristin Bayley wanted to increase students’ pride in their school and to motivate them to remain on campus more. Their design’s focal point was a commons and cafeteria with an expansive glass curtain wall affording views of Denver. The curtain walls, ample windows, and skylights, reduced the need for artificial light. Other sustainable features of the school included xeriscaped landscaping and geothermal HVAC systems.

Kathleen Meriano, a senior at Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden, Connecticut, presented to the jury the second-place Green Housing Row project designed by New Haven Team Number One. Ten students drawn from several schools designed three prototypes for green row houses on a largely abandoned city block in East Haven. To meet different community needs, one house was completely handicap-accessible; another was envisioned for a couple working from home; and the third unit, with an in-law suite, was intended for a multigenerational family. Nineteen units would be built on three sides of the site, leaving a large open community green space under which was a geothermal heat pump.

The third-place project, designed by a five-person team from the Bridgeport and Stratford, Connecticut ACE affiliate, was a multipurpose arts and cultural center. Ryan DeSilva, a senior at Stratford High School, explained that the 21,000-square-foot facility was situated in a brownfield site along the Housatonic River in Stratford. It included exhibition space, modular classrooms, and an unusual theater arrangement whereby an outdoor amphitheater and an indoor theater shared a common stage.

Honorable Mentions

Three teams received recognition as Honorable Mention/First Runner-Ups – Providence, Rhode Island team for its ideal school design; Kansas City, Missouri team which submitted a project in the parking garage category; and the Wheaton High School team from the Greater Washington, D.C. Affiliate, for its design of an arts center/theater

building. Team Four from the Nashville Affiliate was named Honorable Mention/Second Runner-Up for its design of parking garage “outside the box.”

##

About the ACE Mentor Program

The ACE Mentor Program was founded in 1995 by the principals of leading design and construction firms. Its mission is to engage, excite and enlighten high school students to careers in the integrated construction industry through mentoring; and, provide a mechanism for their continued advancement in the industry through scholarships and grants. ACE’s 72 affiliates in 36 states organize 1,800 mentors to deliver the program to almost 8,000 students.

About the Construction Industry Round Table

The Construction Industry Round Table (CIRT) is exclusively composed of approximately 100 CEOs from the leading architectural, engineering and construction firms doing business in the United States. CIRT is the only organization positioned to express in a singular voice the views of the richly diverse and dynamic design/construction community. First organized in 1987 as the Construction Industry President’s Forum, the Forum has since been incorporated as a not-for-profit association with the mission "to be a leading force for positive change in the design / construction industry while helping members improve the overall performance of their individual companies."