

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Non-Profit Organizations to Receive Free Design Assistance at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Search For Shelter Design Charrette, February 17-19, 2017

The American Institute of Architects

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MINNEAPOLIS, MN – AIA Minnesota’s Housing Advocacy Committee, which focuses on issues of affordable housing in Minnesota, will host the Search for Shelter Design Charrette this February 17-19, at Rapson Hall, College of Design, University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Nearly 60 volunteer architects, landscape architects, interior designers, and students, will spend the weekend creating pro bono, design solutions for up to ten projects submitted by Minnesota non-profit organizations that focus on issues of affordable housing and/or homelessness.

“It’s a weekend of collaboration between agencies in need of design assistance and designers of all disciplines and levels. It’s truly impressive what we can accomplish together and turn over to organizations as tools to move their projects forward,” said AIA MN Housing Advocacy Committee Co-chair, Claire Lonsbury, Assoc. AIA, architectural designer at DLRGroup.

Design volunteers work in teams to create viable, graphic solutions and plans, to serve as visual tools for Minnesota agencies to use to: 1) obtain further project funding, 2) promote their organization, and 3) serve as preliminary development/building plans.

“As the charrette has evolved over the past 31 years, we’ve been responsive to the needs of agencies submitting projects,” noted AIA MN Housing Advocacy Committee Co-chair, Corey Mollet, AIA, Senior Project Architect at HDR. “This year, we have transit-oriented projects, urban farming and landscape architecture included in our mix as well as a project in Mankato, MN.”

The agencies that will receive assistance include:

- Alliance Housing Inc.
- Catholic Charities of St.Paul and Minneapolis
- Friends of Farview
- Midtown Greenway Coalition
- Northside Residents Redevelopment Council
- Partners for Affordable Housing
- People Serving People

## Search for Shelter Schedule

### **Friday, February 17:**

The opening-program kicks-off at 6:00pm with a welcome from AIA Minnesota President, Meredith-Hayes Gordon, AIA. Team leaders and volunteers will provide inspirational instruction through a discussion of past successful projects and key aspects of teamwork, timing and expected outcomes. The agencies will also present their projects to the teams and begin working on a design solution.

### **Saturday, February 18:**

At 8:00 am, the design teams visit their project sites if they are in close proximity of the Twin Cities and available for touring. This helps them in gaining an understanding of the site and environs and often highlights challenges and opportunities that might not have been conveyed on paper.

By late morning, teams return to Rapson Hall and continue to refine their designs throughout the afternoon. Before teams head home for the night, charrette and committee leaders will visit with the teams to check-in on their progress and offer feedback to ensure they're tracking to meet the project presentation deadline.

### **Sunday, February 19:**

The program concludes at 12:00 on Sunday, when teams present design solutions to the non-profit agencies and agencies are able to ask questions about the pro bono designs.

Media and public are welcome to attend the opening program on Friday at 6:00 pm and closing presentations at 12:00pm on Sunday. Media may observe teams on Saturday with pre-approval. Media should email Jennifer Gilhoi at [jennifer@sparktrackconsulting.com](mailto:jennifer@sparktrackconsulting.com) to attend.

### **Search for Shelter**

Learn more about the charrette at [bit.ly/aiamnsfs](http://bit.ly/aiamnsfs); watch the 2016 Affordable Housing Design Award (AHDA) video on the Schmidt Artist Lofts for background on exemplary affordable housing at <https://vimeo.com/196006882>; and view the Search for Shelter video to hear about the three-day weekend design charrette history, process and outcomes at <http://www.aia-mn.org/searchshelter-charrette/>.

Follow @aiamn on Twitter, #SearchForShelter

### **AIA Minnesota**

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 <http://www.aia-mn.org>.

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