

PRESS RELEASE

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***Building Dignity: Design Strategies for Domestic Violence Shelter* chosen for Smithsonian exhibition**

Unique partnership of architects and domestic violence advocates to be featured at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum has announced that *Building Dignity: Design Strategies for Domestic Violence Shelter* will be featured in their exhibition of socially responsible design “By the People: Designing a Better America.” Launched in 2012 to critical acclaim, *Building Dignity* is a web-based tool kit for improving shelter spaces.

The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) and Mahlum (an architecture firm with offices in Seattle and Portland) partnered to bring advocates and architects together to identify how emergency shelters can be designed to best meet the needs of survivors of abuse and their children.

“Domestic violence shelters provide residents with physical safety,” said Margaret Hobart, lead author on the project. “But they also give survivors the opportunity to reclaim their independence, focus on their relationships with their children, and reconnect with their community to end the isolation imposed by the abuser. We wanted to explore how shelter design could support those goals.”

Some of the key themes of *Building Dignity* are the need for security, privacy, and quiet spaces where survivors can heal and parents can spend time with their children. “Design strategies that support shelter residents simply have not been considered by design professionals in a systematic way—making *Building Dignity* a valuable tool for any shelter seeking to make a positive change,” said Corrie Rosen, Mahlum project lead.

Organized by Cynthia E. Smith, Cooper Hewitt's curator of socially responsible design, the "By the People" exhibition highlights design solutions that expand access to education, food, health care and affordable housing; increase social and economic inclusion; offer improved alternative transportation options; and provide a balanced approach to land use between the built and natural environment.

"As America's design museum, Cooper Hewitt empowers visitors to see themselves as designers—not just of objects, but also of ideas, strategies and solutions that improve our daily lives," said Director Caroline Baumann. "'By the People' will showcase the innovative and impactful actions generated through design, and inspire creative problem-solving at local, regional, national and even international levels."

"We are honored that Cooper Hewitt has chosen to highlight the groundbreaking and transformative ideas and solutions of *Building Dignity*," said Nan Stoops, Executive Director of WSCADV. "We are thrilled with how domestic violence programs have been using these tools in their ongoing efforts to create spaces that best support their agency's work, values, and mission."

About the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Founded in 1990 by survivors of domestic violence and their allies, the Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a non-profit network of over 70 domestic violence advocacy programs across the state of Washington. We improve how communities respond to domestic violence and work to create a social intolerance for abuse. Our work includes research, training and technical assistance, producing educational tools, promoting domestic violence awareness, and public policy advocacy. To learn more, please visit wscadv.org.

About Mahlum

Established in 1938, Mahlum is one of the most long-lived architecture and design firms in the Pacific Northwest. Mahlum is committed to creating healthy and enduring communities to support the lives of future generations. Our staff of 70 is focused in three primary market sectors: healthcare, education and student housing. Our services encompass architectural design, interior design and master planning. In 2014 Mahlum was recognized with the Firm Award by the AIA Northwest and Pacific Region. To learn more, please visit mahlum.com. Follow us on Twitter @MahlumArch

About Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum

Founded in 1897, Cooper Hewitt is the only museum in the United States devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. Currently on view are 9 exhibitions and installations featuring hundreds of objects housed in the renovated and restored Carnegie Mansion. Visitors can experience a full range of new interactive capabilities, including the opportunity to explore the collection digitally on ultra-high-definition touch-screen tables, draw and project their own wallpaper designs in the Immersion Room and address design problems in the Process Lab. To learn more, please visit cooperhewitt.org.

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