

HOK Volunteers Helping USGBC Rebuild Orphanage in Haiti

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HOK is USGBC's official design partner for Project Haiti

In January 2010, a devastating earthquake shattered the island country of Haiti. One of the countless destroyed buildings was that of Fondation Enfant Jesus, a non-profit, non-denominational orphanage and children's center that cares for more than 250 children per year. A few months ago, the U.S. Green Building Council invited HOK to join a partnership to design a replacement facility on the same site. The project is now a Clinton Global Initiative commitment, an honor that will help provide support for this effort.

The redesign effort began at Greenbuild 2010, where a 35-person charrette generated ideas and preliminary drawings for the super-sustainable project. Now, as Greenbuild 2011 approaches, a dedicated, all-volunteer team of HOK architects, engineers and designers is working to create the pro bono design that will come to life on the currently condemned site on Port au Prince's Rue Fernand de Baudiere.

The challenge goes far beyond a small site requiring a multitude of uses. Haiti's fractured (and, in some ways, nonexistent) infrastructure presents obstacles for providing basic needs such as electricity and running water. Environmental and cultural circumstances influence many aspects of the design, creating a steep learning curve for the team.

Paramount among the challenges is that the building is to be LEED certified. The project will serve as a sustainable showcase for local architecture and construction professionals, hopefully influencing the future of sustainable design in Haiti.

HOK's role in the process began with a weekend design charrette in June. Since then, the team has worked nights and weekends to develop a design. They have researched everything from potable water options to how the nation's Voudou heritage impacts culturally acceptable design and construction methods.

The project team is currently working on the schematic design phase of the process. Stay tuned as we bring you the stories behind the evolution of Project Haiti – the team members, the designs, the charrettes and even an emotional visit to the site in Port au Prince.

USGBC expects to complete construction by March 2013.

[Click here](#) to visit the Project Haiti homepage to learn more about the project and donate to the effort.

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