Sarah Weissman Dirsa, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, SEED / M.Arch, MUD, 2008

Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts

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Alumnae Biography

Sarah Weissman Dirsa, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, SEED
MArch, MUD | 2008

BIOGRAPHY
I am a Project Designer at HOK, as well as the first ever global Chair of Social Responsibility. I believe that good design has strong ties to the communities in which it is built and should directly address local social, economic and environmental concerns. In 2010 I co-founded HOK IMPACT, our firm-wide approach to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). As the Director of HOK IMPACT, I am working closely with our leadership to strengthen our CSR policies and create a central database for information related to the community-based work we do as a firm. However, what motivates me the most right now is setting a positive example for my two year old son, George.

AWARDS
- BD+C 40 Under 40 2013
- Generation Next, St. Louis Magazine 2013
- Next American Vanguard, Next American City Conference 2012
- AIA St. Louis, Chapter, Leadership Award 2014

PUBLICATIONS
- Prudent Management Digest, Fall 2013, “HOK IMPACT: Design Making a Difference”, The American Institute of Architects Practice Management Knowledge Center
- Metropolis Magazine Blog - Point of View, October 31, 2013, “Recovering a Haiti”, Metropolis Magazine

The William Jefferson Clinton Children’s Center, a partnership between the USGBC and HOK to rebuild a Port au Prince orphanage and children’s center damaged by the January 2010 earthquake, seeks to bring super-sustainable design to people in the developing world. The obstacles in designing this project are many and include an unreliable power grid, a contaminated water source, a limited network of infrastructure and the current lack of governmental organizations to address these issues.

To create safe, reliable access to basic utilities, the design provides resources such as a catch-catch water system and off-grid electricity. The team’s focus on sustainability has played a major role in innovatively addressing many of the issues the situation has presented. By working closely with the clients, this project provides a refuge for the most vulnerable people in the Haitian community — children overcome by starvation, dehydration and illness. In addition to serving as a safe haven for Haitian children and their families, this project is aiming for LEED Platinum certification.

WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON CHILDREN’S CENTER
CORE MEMBER OF DESIGN TEAM
2011-2012

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