

City of Philadelphia
Application for the
2011 Rudy Bruner Award for
Urban Excellence



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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MICHAEL A. NUTTER
Mayor

December 10, 2010

The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence
Bruner Foundation, Inc.
130 Prospect Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

To Whom It May Concern:

We are excited to submit our application for the 2011 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence on behalf of the City of Philadelphia's Shissler Recreation Center Revitalization Project. The Shissler Recreation Center, a model for community involvement and environmental responsibility, exemplifies the Rudy Bruner Award's ethos of the successful interplay of processes, places and values.

Our application is divided into the following sections:

1. Project Data
2. Project At-A-Glance
3. Project Description
4. Public Agency Perspective Sheet: Mike DiBerardinis
5. Community Representative Perspective Sheet: A.J. Thompson
6. Consultant Perspective Sheet: Sandy Salzman
7. Designer Perspective Sheet: David Elliott
8. Visual Representation of the Project
 - o Big Green Block: Shissler Master Plan
 - o Green Connection: Shissler to the River
 - o Before and After Photographs
9. Award Use

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mayor Michael A. Nutter
City of Philadelphia

2011 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DATA



PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

NOTE: This sheet and a selected image will be sent to the Committee in advance.

Project Name Shissler Recreation Center Location 1800 Blair St, Philadelphia, PA 19125
Owner City of Philadelphia, Parks and Recreation Department
Project Use(s) Recreational Park
Project Size 5.6 acres Total Development Cost \$1.2 million
Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) \$253,000
Date Initiated 7/1/2009 Percent Completed by December 1, 2010 100%
Project Completion Date (if appropriate) 6/24/2010
Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates _____

Application submitted by:

Name The Honorable Michael A. Nutter Title The Mayor of the City of Philadelphia
Organization City of Philadelphia
Address 225 City Hall City/State/Zip Philadelphia, PA 19107
Telephone (215) 686-2181 Fax (215) 686-2555
E-mail suzanne.beimiller@phila.gov Weekend Contact Number (for notification): 215-300-2270

Perspective Sheets:

Organization	Name	Telephone/e-mail
Public Agencies	<u>Department of Parks and Recreation, Michael DiBerardinis, 215-683-3666/Michael.DiBerardinis@phila.gov</u>	
Architect/Designer	<u>Philadelphia Horticultural Society, Brian Cox, 267-270-2269/bcox@Pennhort.org</u>	
Developer	_____	
Professional Consultant	<u>New Kensington Community Development Corporation, Shanta Schachter, 215-427-0350/SSchachter@nkcddc.org</u>	
Community Group	<u>Fishtown Athletic Club, Dave Dougherty, 215-423-1659/dave@fishtownac.org</u>	
Other	_____	

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

- Direct Mailing Magazine Announcement Previous Selection Committee member Other (please specify)
 Professional Organization Previous RBA entrant Online Notice
 Bruner/Loeb Forum

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Signature _____

Date 12/10/10

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT
AT-A-GLANCE



PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

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Project Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

1. Give a brief overview of the project.

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DESCRIPTION



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please answer questions in space provided. Answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

2. Briefly describe the project's urban context. How has the project impacted the local community? Who does the project serve? How many people are served by the project?

2011 RUDY BRUNER AWARD AWARD USE



AWARD USE

Please answer questions in space provided. Answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided.

Please separate this page from the rest of the application. Award Use should be submitted in a sealed envelope along with the application materials. It will not be used in judging entries or be seen by members of the Selection Committee.

Please describe how *Award* monies will be used to benefit the project. (The *Award* check will be made out to the Applicant unless otherwise specified.)

** This statement should be signed by the applicant. Photocopies or facsimile copies of the statement with original signature is acceptable. Award Use statement should be submitted in a sealed envelope along with the application materials.

Name and Title

Date

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
ARCHITECT
OR DESIGNER
PERSPECTIVE



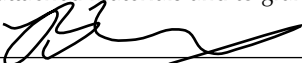
ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services.

Name	Title
Organization	Telephone ()
Address	City/State/ZIP
Fax ()	E-mail

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Signature 	Date
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1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

4. Describe the ways in which the design relates to its urban context.

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PUBLIC AGENCY
PERSPECTIVE



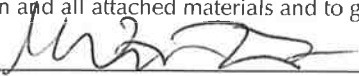
PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a staff representative of a public agency directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name Michael DiBerardinis Title Commissioner of Parks and Recreation
Organization Department of Parks and Recreation Telephone (215) 683-3601
Address 1515 Arch Street, 10th Floor City/State/ZIP Philadelphia, PA, 19102-1587
Fax (215) 683-3599 E-mail Michael.DiBerardinis@phila.gov

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Signature  Date 12/9/10

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

Philadelphia Parks and Recreation was the lead facilitator and manager of the project. Parks and Recreation managed the efforts of various stakeholders, oversaw the process to ensure the project stayed on time and on budget, solicited the participation of the contributing agencies, and communicated with stakeholders and residents to keep all parties informed on the progress of the project. The Department also provided operating and capital improvement funding to the project, and worked with other departments in order to identify funding to keep this project moving forward.

For the project, it was important to us that the center meet the Park & Recreation's standards for facilities to be safe, clean and fully functional. Before the project began, Shissler failed in all three areas.

We also wanted this park to serve as pilot for how we could move forward two different goals that the City had set for itself -- increasing green space in Philadelphia by 500 acres by 2015, and reducing the amount of runoff handled by the sewer systems by 50%.

In addition, we wanted to be sure that there was active public participation in the design and creation of the new space.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

This project was designed to serve as a pilot that shows that neighborhood parks can make a tremendous impact on the local environment and provide a model for how Philadelphia can become the greenest city in America. It would also ensure that the Department was meeting its commitment to provide clean, safe and fully functional facilities that ensure children and adults have the opportunity to be active, healthy and connected to their communities, parks, recreation centers and the natural world.

The toughest trade-off in this economic environment is always centered around money. When the economy is suffering and tax revenues are down, it may be hard to make the case to commit more resources in what are seen as non-essential services such as parks. We did make some strategic decisions on how allocate our resources in this project, concentrating our resources in particular sections of the center and laying the groundwork for future investment in other. In the end, though, this challenge actually became an opportunity, because it meant that we needed work collaboratively with other organizations and residents, and make a very strong case for why this project was so important. The result is that the stakeholders feel a much stronger sense of ownership for the center, which we believe will translate into greater investment in the center by the community going forward.

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible.

The impact on the city is almost immeasurable.

For the neighborhood around the center, this project ensures a safer, cleaner and better functioning recreation center, increased access and connectivity to green space, expanded recreational opportunities, fewer chances of storm runoff ending up flooding their basements, an expanded tree cover that helps to keep the neighborhood cool in the summer, new public art projects and a general increase in the neighborhood amenities that promote positive socialization and economic revitalization.

For the city, it means we now have a proven model for how we can increase green space and reduce stormwater runoff through low-tech solutions. This model will be replicated throughout the city, so that eventually every resident will have access to greenspace within a ten minute walk of their home, there will be more trees, cleaner air and cleaner water. In addition, the City of Philadelphia and by extension the taxpayers will avoid hundreds of millions in costs by not having to rebuild our sewer system infrastructure.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

The project created exciting new partnerships with community organizations and foundations. We tried to think creatively about who should be involved in this effort. Organizations that are not always involved in these types of projects, like the local athletic association, came to the table and became a vital partner.

Perhaps one of the most impactful is the relationship that has been developed between the Water Department and the Department of Parks & Recreation. This project really clarified how the goals of our two organizations are interconnected, and by working together, we can move those goals forward much more effectively. This is a partnership that we will continue to strengthen as we identify more opportunities like this.

This is a model that can be easily replicated anywhere, but it perhaps would be most useful to cities with aging infrastructure.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspects of this project were creating a successful collaboration, providing community residents with tangible improvements, and creating an integrated system involving street improvements, bike trails, and parks that models green innovations.

In creating a successful collaboration, the Department provided a model of how community engagement can improve the outcome of a project. This project did not just meet one group's goals but the goals of a diverse range of stakeholders, each who brought different skills and strengths to the design and execution of the project.

In providing community residents with tangible improvements, the Department proved that it is possible to be "green" and future-focused while maintaining a mission centered on improving residents' lives. The Department never forgot what it is supposed to do, which is provide parks and recreation.

Unfortunately, the least successful aspect is that the Department could not fully engage the Philadelphia School District (PSD) in the vision of the project. The New Kensington High School sits on the North side of the recreation center, and we had hope to involve them in the planning process. Since the success of this project, we have been able to better engage PSD and expect them to become more active partners going forward.

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATIVE
PERSPECTIVE



COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or who represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name	Dave Dougherty	Title	President
Organization	Fishtown Athletic Club	Telephone	(215) 423-1659
Address	Berks & Blair Streets	City/State/ZIP	Philadelphia, PA 19125
Fax (NA)		E-mail	dave@fishtownac.com

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Signature Dave Dougherty Date 12/11/10

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

The Fishtown Athletic Club has worked to improve the Shissler Recreation Center for a number of years, and has partnered with the City of Philadelphia's Department of Park and Recreation to figure out a way to move the project forward.

We led many of the efforts to involve the community in this project by encouraging neighbors to attend planning discussions with City representatives, and to become part of the improvement project through participation in neighborhood tree planting and helping to design and create a new mural that is part of the park.

We also organized extensive lobbying efforts to encourage City Councilmembers Darrell Clarke and Maria Quinones-Sanchez to understand the value of this effort and invest in this project, which is vital to the neighborhoods that they represent. They each contributed \$150,000 to the project.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

Shissler Rec center is an important asset to the neighborhood that is heavily used for sports and other community building activities. Unfortunately, the upkeep of the facility did not keep pace with community needs and the assets at the rec center were rundown. The athletic field was made of cinders, the play equipment needed repair, the parking lot was adjacent to a dumping ground, there was no grass and few trees. Shissler Recreation Center did not come near to the Philadelphia Park & Recreation's newly adopted standards for facilities to be safe, clean and fully functional. Something had to change -- the neighborhood deserved better.

Our rec center ties the community together and it was important to us that it be a place that people wanted to be. We wanted to improve the center to make it a place where families and neighbors could spend time and feel safe letting their kids play there. We wanted our neighbors to feel just as proud of the rec center as they do about their homes and neighborhood. That is why we thought it was so important to involve people in the design process and get them excited about the changes coming to Shissler.

One of the biggest challenges for this project was finding funding. This is a tough time to be looking for money, especially from the government, when improving a recreation center might seem like a luxury no one can afford. The City worked with us to build this project to their broader goals, and we worked with a number of organizations in the neighborhood and across the City that understood the impact of this work and were able to make an investment in this project.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

This is one of the most transformative things I have ever seen.

Our kids can now play sports on a safe, natural grass field and keep cool in the renovated spray park during the summer. The trash dump adjacent to the parking lot has been permanently removed and the space was converted to a new lawn and pathway connecting the site to adjacent street. New paths were added that create more access to the rec center and also opens up the park so it is more enjoyable for everyone. It is much more inviting and nicer to be in. It is a clean and safe place to spend time and relax. People are proud of this rec center and have even greater pride in the neighborhood.

It makes our neighbors feel a stronger connection to each other and to this area.

4. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

The only thing I would change is that I wish we could have done it sooner.

2011
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROFESSIONAL
CONSULTANT
PERSPECTIVE



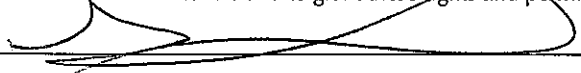
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project providing services other than physical design or planning (e.g., legal services).

Name	Shanta Schachter	Title	Deputy Director
Organization	New Kensington CDC	Telephone	(215) 427-0350
Address	2515 Frankford Avenue	City/State/ZIP	Philadelphia, PA 19125
Fax	(215) 427-1302	E-mail	sschachter@nkcdc.org

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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

Sustainable 19125 is a broad and innovative partnership among community residents, businesses, and numerous government, nonprofit, and for profit partners to make 19125 the most sustainable zip code in the city. This community-driven initiative is led by NKCDC with support from PHS. Sustainable 19125 follows the examples of innovative local residents, businesses, organizations, and city agencies who for years have been at the cutting edge of sustainable action. Established in early 2008, the initiative was made up of three community-driven priorities: Green Blocks: focusing on simple, resident-driven actions that make the neighborhood a healthier, greener place to live, work, and play; Walk, Bike, Ride: a non-car focused transportation campaign and The Big Green Block: building green infrastructure in the community.

In early 2008, NKCDC, PHS and the Office of Sustainability identified Shissler Rec as an ideal location for sustainable infrastructure and educational opportunities to provide capital improvements funded by a grant by the William Penn Foundation. Adjacent to a new \$35 million LEED Gold High School, the idea was to leverage these existing city investments and exponentially increase its positive impact on the community. Coined 'The Big Green Block', NKCDC began working with PHS and the Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) to develop a master plan for the block identifying more than 16 locations and \$2,000,000 in green infrastructure actions. NKCDC, PWD, and PHS met regularly to identify community priorities, narrow the scope, identify potential partners and develop an implementation strategy through a community-driven process. This plan set the direction for additional funding and partnerships.

2. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

Beyond the physical and monetary investments, the primary impact has been on increased neighborhood pride. Shissler Recreation sits on a side street off of Frankford Avenue, hidden from visibility. In the past it has been the site of nuisance activity including short dumping and vandalism. Cleanups in past years have collected more than 200 bags of debris at a time. The new site improvements include additional pathways to increase the number of eyes on the street, reducing these activities. It has also garnered a new level of respect. Once an old cinder field and a chaotic parking lot of broken concrete and Jersey barriers, the new grass field and stormwater managed parking lot greatly improve the public's treatment of the space.

Furthermore, community participation at each step in the process from site identification to implementation has created a project that is fully embraced by the public and has broken down both physical and social barriers among adjacent neighborhoods.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

This project is a great example of partnership and collaboration. By 2010, more than 20 public, private and nonprofit agencies brought their resources and skills and resources to the project, leveraging individual investments and creating a huge impact on the community environment that all could be proud of. Some of the key factors of its success were:

- casting a wide net for partners
- building on existing or planned community assets
- community engagement
- thoughtful, strategic, community-driven planning
- physical planning
- leveraging resources

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

While great gains have been made to address the site conditions through continued partnership negotiations, the wall between Shissler Recreation Center and the adjacent high school limits the ability of the plan to be fully integrated among the two publicly owned sites. Historically, this wall has been a physical, social and mental barrier among neighborhoods divided. In 2009, after many negotiations, the community voted to allow removal of the wall. Unfortunately, school site plans were already too far underway and could not be fully removed without major engineering challenges and expense. Instead, a smaller break in the wall was negotiated to allow pedestrian access. Community priorities during this process were (1) to fully remove the wall, (2) provide sight lines from Frankford Avenue to Front Street to increase safety and reduce nuisance activity, (3) ensure direct pathway access to the Market-Frankford EL, (4) share resources with the rather than duplicate by combining parking and building complimentary use recreational fields. With the exception of the pathway, public resources were duplicated and security remains a concern given the continued barrier of the wall.









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GREEN CONNECTION: SHISSLER TO THE RIVER



Big Green Block
Description: Stormwater management, streetscape improvements, pathways, energy efficiency retrofits, and field improvement in and around Shissler Recreation Center.
Partners: Philadelphia Department of Recreation, Fairmount Park, PHS, NKCDC, PWD, Councilman Clarke, Councilwoman Sanchez and Mural Arts Program
Status: Plans finalized. Phase 1 construction to be completed by September 2010 with field improvements completed in Spring 2011.
Funding: \$950,000 in leveraged capital



CAPA High School
Description: First LEED Platinum High School in the region.
Partners: Philadelphia School District, Youth United for Change, Office of Councilwoman Sanchez, Philadelphia Education Fund, NKCDC, FNA, EKNA, Empowerment Zone
Status: To be completed by August 2010



Palmer Park
Description: Existing park, owned and managed by Fairmount Park. New benches and pedestrian fixtures.
Columbia Ave Tree Plantings
Description: Street Tree Plantings
Partners: PHS, Fairmount Park
Status: Spring 2010 planting



Stormwater Intersection: Columbia and Thompson
Description: Design and build model stormwater intersection at Columbia and Thompson
Partners: NKCDC, PWD, PHS, DEP
Status: Funding approved. Date of completion: 2011
Funding: \$200,000 (\$120,000 capital plus in-kind services)



Corridor Gateway: Columbia and Girard
Description: Streetscape improvements on Girard and a gateway at Girard and Columbia. Gateway designed by Studio Bryan Hanes.
Partners: NKCDC, Neighborhoods Now, Preservation Alliance, Mural Arts, Girard Avenue Coalition, PHS, PWD, Fairmount Park, Department of Recreation, and Studio Bryan Hanes
Status: Funding secured. Construction expected in December 2010
Funding: \$300,000 in capital leveraged



Penn Treaty Park
Description: New master plan for Penn Treaty Park
Partners: Led by Fairmount Park with support from Friends of Penn Treaty Park, PHS, William Penn Foundation, DCNR, FNA, Penn Praxis, NKCDC, and Studio Bryan Hanes



Norris Street Connection
Description: Streetscape improvements to create safer pedestrian environment between the EL and Frankford Ave
Partners: NKCDC, PA Elm Street Program, Mural Arts Program, PHS, Phila Weed and Seed, PIDC, NeighborWorks America and the City of Philadelphia Commerce Department
Status: Mural, garden, and tree trenches completed
Funding: \$213,000 in funding leveraged



Konrad Square
Description: New furniture and plantings and new stormwater management system with stormwater tree trenches.
Partners: Friends of Konrad Square, PHS, PWD, DCED, Office of Councilman DiCiccio
Status: Completed
Funding: \$100,000

Garden Center
Description: NKCDC's Garden Center serves as a neighborhood resource in greening efforts.

Frankford Avenue Streetscapes
Description: Implement streetscape designs and improvements between York and Columbia.
Partners: NKCDC, City of Philadelphia Streets Department, Commerce Department, LISC, Hometown Streets, DVRPC, PennDOT
Status: Ground breaking scheduled for July 2010. Expected completion by December 2010.
Funding: \$3,300,000 in leveraged capital



Hetzel Field
Description: Revitalized playing field for youth, owned by the Department of Recreation
Partners: Fishtown Athletic Club, Dept. of Recreation, School District of Philadelphia
Status: Completed
Funding: \$70,000

Hetzel & Adaire Stormwater Tree Trenches
Description: Stormwater management tree trenches in front of Adaire School and Hetzel Field
Partners: PHS, Dept. of Recreation, School District of Phila
Status: Will be finished by June 2010

Fishtown Recreation Center
Description: Existing recreation center, owned and managed by the Philadelphia Department of Recreation

Art and Intrigue
Description: Artistic interventions to draw people down Girard Ave to the Delaware River. Two murals on Girard will help map the way and temporary art components will follow down Columbia.
Partners: NKCDC, Mural Arts Program, and Fishtown Area Business Association
Status: Temporary 'wheatpaste' mini designs have been distributed to property owners along the route. Full murals to be completed by September 2010.
Funding: \$100,000



BIG GREEN BLOCK: SHISSLER MASTER PLAN

