

PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, 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.

Project Name St. Joseph Rebuild Center Location New Orleans, LA

Owner Father Harry Tompson Center

Project Use(s) Homeless Day Center providing job services, food distribution, health services, and personal

Project Size 1/3 City Block: 6 Trailers, Urban Plaza, Total Development Cost \$1,070,000

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) N/A

Date Initiated February 2006 Percent Completed by December 1, 2008 100%

Project Completion Date (if appropriate) Opening August 2007 (Free standing Medical Clinic completed in August 2008)

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

Application submitted by:

Name Dan Pitera Title Executive Director

Organization Detroit Collaborative Design Center, at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture

Address 4001 W. McNichols Road City/State/Zip Detroit, MI 48221

Telephone (313) 993-1037 Fax (313) 993-1512

E-mail piteradw@udmercy.edu Weekend Contact Number (for notification): 248-792-9664

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization	Key Participant	Telephone/e-mail
--------------	-----------------	------------------

Public Agencies

Architect/Designer	<u>Wayne Troyer Architect</u>	<u>Wayne Troyer</u>	<u>504-593-9074</u>
--------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------	---------------------

Developer	<u>Harry Tompson Center</u>	<u>Don Thompson</u>	<u>504-273-5547 x-135 dthompson@jesuitchurch.net</u>
-----------	-----------------------------	---------------------	--

Professional Consultant	<u>UNITY of Greater New Orleans; Vicki Judice;</u>	<u>504-821-4496 x-105 vjudice@unitygno.org</u>
-------------------------	--	--

Community Group	<u>Homeless People</u>	<u>Spencer Foster</u>	<u>504-273-5547 x-134</u>
-----------------	------------------------	-----------------------	---------------------------

Other Jesuits of New Orleans Province; Mary Ann Baudouin 504-571-1055 mbaudouin@norprov.org

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

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Mailing | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine Advertisement | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Previous RBA entrant | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Organization | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Previous Selection Committee member | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine Calendar | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Notice | |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bruner/Loeb Forum | |

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, and to post on the Bruner Foundation web sites, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature 

2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
ABSTRACT



ABSTRACT

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, 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.

Project Name **St. Joseph Rebuild Center**

Address **1802 Tulane Avenue** City/State/ZIP **New Orleans, LA 70112**

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

This homeless day center is the outcome of a unique collaboration between four independent nonprofit service providers local to New Orleans and two religious institutions. Their “post-Katrina” union establishes a more comprehensive approach of providing care and support to the homeless population of New Orleans.

The resulting design offers an example of a more humane way of using “trailers” in disaster situations not specified by FEMA plans. Urban Design & Architecture should always celebrate the human person. This project shows that it can be done even if the site is a parking lot and the main interior spaces are trailers. The design creates the master plan as a “campus” of 6 trailers. An urban outdoor plaza used for gathering and events weaves around the trailers incorporating them as integral parts of the design. An urban street wall that contains the main entry is formed along Gravier Street.

Within this campus organization, there are four spaces not housed in trailers. They are a food distribution center, a meeting space for 200-300 people, an information kiosk, and a small freestanding office. These project elements were constructed by the Detroit Collaborative Design Center and second year University of Detroit Mercy architecture students.

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.)

As you will hear throughout this application Collaboration is one of the key aspects to the success of this project as a meaningful urban space and architecture for all people. Though the Detroit Collaborative Design Center was the lead in consultant services, it was not a traditional hierarchical approach. There were two universities involved, two architects and urban designers, very active public agencies and two types of construction services. This is on top of the collaboration form by the union of four independent nonprofit providers. and two religious institutions. They provide job skills and services, food distribution, health, wellness, and legal services, and day-to-day personal care and hygiene.

As alluded in the Overview this project attempts to find a more innovative approach in semi-permanent disaster relief services. The design response considers the urban fabric and gives back to the community and its people through developing a private parking lot into an public urban daytime refuge. As a way to make a playful reference to the sites history, the parking space striping was not removed.

2009

**RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DESCRIPTION**



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, 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?

First and primary value of the project is clearly stated by the community representative who is a homeless man: "This project has made all the difference in the world to us. We now have a place to go to care for our physical needs in a dignified manner. No more brushing teeth in fountains, going to the bathroom in bushes. With this facility, we now have a place that is for us, a place that welcomes us and gives us refuge, a place that builds up our self-esteem and gives us a sense of worth. We are truly blessed by this project."

The design of this urban refuge assists in accomplishing the statement above. It dignifies and celebrates all people.

As stated in the Abstract: The resulting design offers an example of a more humane way of using "trailers" in disaster situations not specified by FEMA plans. Urban Design & Architecture should always celebrate the human person. This project shows that it can be done even if the site is a parking lot and the main interior spaces are trailers. The design creates the master plan as a "campus" of 6 trailers. An urban outdoor plaza used for gathering and events weaves around the trailers incorporating them as integral parts of the design. An urban street wall that contains the main entry is formed along Gravier Street.

2. How has the project impacted the local community?

To quote Mary Ann Baudouin from the Other Perspective section of this application: "The St. Joseph Rebuild Center has provided a "one-stop-shop" where homeless people can come to get their most basic needs for showers, bathrooms, laundry, a meal, identification, and initial information and referral to other services. More importantly, it is a dignified daytime respite from the streets and harassment where homeless people feel safe and respected. Additionally, volunteer lawyers and medical personnel provide much needed (and free!) legal and medical services most days of the week. This type of coordinated service has NEVER been available in New Orleans, and it is now being done not by government agencies or larger social service organizations, but by an effective collaboration of several very small but very effective faith-based organizations. In the 15 months since opening, thousands of homeless people have visited the Rebuild Center.

As soon as one walks into the center, it is clear that it was designed with the homeless population in mind. It is functional yet beautiful, and even though it is built on blacktop, it gives you the feeling that you are in a country campsite. It provides the homeless guests with a sense of openness, yet there are still areas available for much coveted privacy and space. Just the fact that the Center was built specifically FOR homeless people is a statement of respect for this population. I think an incident described to me by one of the sisters working with Lantern Light describes the ultimate value of The Rebuild Center. When it was being built, a homeless man asked her "Who is that place for?" and she replied "That is for you." He began crying and said, "Nobody ever built a place just for us. We must be something." He was right."

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

The development process can be defined through two forms of collaboration.

Agency Collaboration. It was not enough to have a center to provide the essential needs and services for the homeless. It was to occur through a collaboration between six organizations (St. Joseph Church, Lantern Light / Presentation Sisters, Catholic Charities Hispanic Apostolate, and the Harry Tompson Center / New Orleans Province of the Jesuits). Thus, the development process included the process of agency negotiation.

Design Collaboration. They were two participatory design sessions that included a varied set of stakeholders important to the success of the project. Also, with regard to the design process between offices, there was not a design architect and an architect of record. We truly shared during the entire design process. We worked together with a transparent roles.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The project was financed through a combination of grants and donations from foundations and charitable organizations. Even this aspect was collaborative in nature. The Jesuits donated a large sum of money, as did the Vincentians. Donations were also made by Catholic Charities and the Presentation Sisters. In some instances money was raised for specific items by approaching specific donors to ask for funds to purchase shower trailers, or construct the kitchen, or design landscaping beds based on the donor's philosophical orientation. Other donors were approached to support an effort that was in line with the donor's particular mission, such as feeding the poor, or providing medical care, or assisting people with mental illnesses. This targeted approach allowed us to access donors who may have gone unnoticed in a general capital campaign. The research done by the development people who assisted the partner agencies, such as the development office for the Jesuits, was critical to the success of this capital campaign.

Final development costs were approximately \$1,070,000 (Though the costs may seem high for a semi-permanent facility, it is a fraction of what it would cost to house these services in new construction that had a similar footprint of 1/3 city Block.

Trailers:	\$230,000
Construction:	\$510,000
FFE:	\$50,000
Site Work:	\$50,000
Soft Costs:	\$130,000

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

Before Hurricane Katrina, there were two "drop-in centers" for the homeless: the Harry Tompson Center and the Multi-Service Center for the Homeless. Now there is just one – the Harry Tompson Center and its work is absolutely critical in the work of ending homelessness in New Orleans. Its urban contribution is that it does not attempt to hide itself behind "close doors." It is a project that sits on the corner of two streets one block off a major road: Tulane Avenue. Its design celebrates the human person and gives back to the urban setting by turning a once private parking lot into an open public daytime space.

There are 59 cities in the USA that have lost significant population between 1950 and 2000. Cities like St. Louis, Detroit, Youngstown and Buffalo have had urban and economic issues way before the current economic crisis. Projects like this could enhance the urban environment while serving an essential human need.

And how about other disaster situations? Though this model is not about a quick response into an area. It is the glue between the immediate short term responses and the permanent long term development. Though the trailers will begin to show wear, they can be exchanged without any major construction issues.

2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
ARCHITECT
OR DESIGNER
PERSPECTIVE



ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, 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. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name	Dan Pitera	Title	Executive Director
Organization	Detroit Collaborative Design Center	Telephone	(313) 993-1037
Address	4001 W. McNichols Road	City/State/ZIP	Detroit, MI 48221
Fax	(313) 993-1512	E-mail	piteradw@udmercy.edu

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature

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

There are three major intentions that could be identified here.

Bring back a pedestrian friendly urban street wall. The project is built to the lot line on its two frontage streets. At the same time this urban wall is both transparent and translucent allowing glimpses into the open courtyard. The trailers are organized on the perimeter forming the outdoor courtyard.

Hide and Seek. The trailers are not hidden from view. They are nestle within "bays" framed in wood. Sometimes this provides a "second skin" to the trailer hiding them slightly from view. But the trailers poke through this wrapping not covering them entirely. This can be seen in some of the images submitted in this application (particularly the facade images along Gravier Street).

Trace of the hand. The design, construction, and use of the spaces are conceived to celebrate the activities of the human person. It is truly built and crafted by hand. It can be noticed in the submitted images that even the shutters and the doors were not bought but crafted and constructed by hand. The materiality of the project acts as a visual texture but also receives the touch of the hand—petting the architecture. The users actively engage the spaces through things like sliding barn doors and opening shutters.

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

The project does not have a front door or entry gate. There are three center-rotating panels that remain open all day to allow a sense of openness to the street.

The trailers house laundry services, bathrooms, showers, offices, and food storage. There are four spaces not housed in trailers. They are a food distribution center, a meeting space for 200-300 people, an information kiosk, and a small freestanding office.

The exterior space is the dominant space in the project. It is designed to allow people to feel comfortable to linger, play cards or have a conversation.

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.

First and foremost the main challenge was to balance the inherent contradictions associated with this type of project. For example, 1. The imperative need for it to be finished yesterday and the desire to have a more comprehensive and permanent solution. 2. The continual shifting financial implications that surround New Orleans. 3. The comprehensive nature of the design to enhance the physical reality of the trailers and opportunities this opens in the minds of all involved bringing us back to the first contradiction on this short list. These and others are discussed throughout the perspectives that follow in this application.

The second challenge would be its urban context which is primarily a series of surface parking lots. This is discussed in a bit more detail below. It is not a context that has celebrated the pedestrian.

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

It can be partially noticed by the aerial images submitted in this application that the context on this project is dominated by three things. 1. The adjacent church. 2. Several surface parking lots. 3. Office buildings/LSU Medical Center. In other words the scale of the surrounding area is either midrise or flat. The inherent nature of this Rebuild Center is in between these two scales. There is also a pedestrian bridge along Gravier Street that begins to frame that facade. As alluded to in the answer to the first question the design of this project tries to bring a pedestrian scale in intimacy that is missing due to the many surface lots.

2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
DEVELOPER
PERSPECTIVE



DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

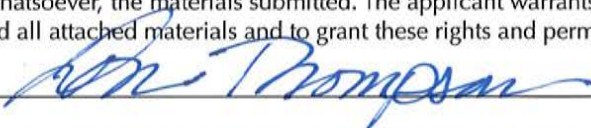
Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be 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 the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name	Don Thompson	Title	Executive Director
Organization	Harry Tompson Center	Telephone (504)	273-5547 x-135
Address	130 Baronne Street	City/State/ZIP	New Orleans, LA 70112
Fax (504)	273-5521	E-mail	dthompson@harrytompsoncenter.org

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature



1. What role did you or your company play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

I was designated by the collaborating agencies of the Rebuild Center (St. Joseph Church, Lantern Light / Presentation Sisters, Catholic Charities Hispanic Apostolate, and the Harry Tompson Center / New Orleans Province of the Jesuits) to serve as the project manager for this endeavor. In this capacity I served as the liaison between the partner agencies and all entities involved in the planning and construction of the Rebuild Center. This meant that I worked closely with the architects and builders on design and construction issues, as well as working with various sub-contractors and vendors involved in the project. I also had to coordinate the build with archdiocesan officials and governmental agencies who had appropriate oversight of our project.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

The best way to describe the process of development would be that it was fluid. It was only fitting that a project that was going to be a collaborative endeavor was developed collaboratively between the architects, builders and partner agencies. The tradeoffs and compromises that were required were driven, not by differences in vision or personalities, but by finances and time frames. The final result was the product of ongoing planning between all parties that frequently called for unanticipated adjustments due to financial considerations, as well as practical ones. This project required everyone to be flexible and willing to adapt. The remarkable aspect of this approach is that the new reality frequently turned out to be an improvement over the original plans.

DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

The project was financed through a combination of grants and donations from foundations and charitable organizations. Even this aspect was collaborative in nature. The Jesuits donated a large sum of money, as did the Vincentians. Donations were also made by Catholic Charities and the Presentation Sisters. In some instances money was raised for specific items by approaching specific donors to ask for funds to purchase shower trailers, or construct the kitchen, or design landscaping beds based on the donor's philosophical orientation. Other donors were approached to support an effort that was in line with the donor's particular mission, such as feeding the poor, or providing medical care, or assisting people with mental illnesses. This targeted approach allowed us to access donors who may have gone unnoticed in a general capital campaign. The research done by the development people who assisted the partner agencies, such as the development office for the Jesuits, was critical to the success of this capital campaign.

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

The most successful aspect of the project was the collaborative approach, both in design and implementation. There is such energy that flows from working closely together and designing, or implementing, a shared vision. A project like this is transformative, both for those who create it and for those who experience it.

The least successful aspect just had to do with the hard limits we were up against. We had limited funds, limited space, limited time to design and construct a facility that was needed yesterday. While the designers did the best they could with what they had to work with, there are built in undesirables, such as it is outdoor, which can be problematic in cold weather or during a driving rain storm.

2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATIVE
PERSPECTIVE



COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, 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 someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name	Spencer Foster	Title	Homeless Man
Organization	N/A	Telephone (504)	273-5547 x-134
Address	N/A	City/State/ZIP	N/A
Fax ()	N/A	E-mail	N/A

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature Spencer Foster

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

I had no specific role to play in the development of this project. But as a homeless person in New Orleans, I had everything to gain from the planning and development of the project.

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

As far as the homeless are concerned, the major issue was that there was no place for us to go to take care of our physical needs. There were places that offer lunch, but no place to go to use the restroom, make telephone calls, take a shower, wash our clothes, or to just rest in peace without worrying about being hassled by anyone. We had no place to hang out during the day, let alone have a place where we could actually take care of business. Developing such a place was critical to us.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

For us there were no trade-offs, but we did have to be patient as all the pieces came together to bring this project to life. It was frustrating for us because once we knew what was planned we could not wait for it to be finished so we could access the resources.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

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

This project has made all the difference in the world to us. We now have a place to go to care for our physical needs in a dignified manner. No more brushing teeth in fountains, going to the bathroom in bushes. With this facility, we now have a place that is for us, a place that welcomes us and gives us refuge, a place that builds up our self-esteem and gives us a sense of worth. We are truly blessed by this project.

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

Everything about this project is just what we need: a place to handle our business and to rest in a calm and caring environment. We never feel thrown out of here, even when it is time to close. We would change absolutely nothing.

2009

**RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROFESSIONAL
CONSULTANT
PERSPECTIVE**



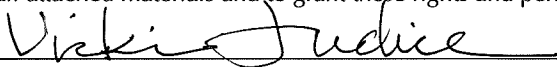
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, 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 professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name	Vicki Judice	Title	Director of Programs
Organization	UNITY of Greater New Orleans	Telephone	(504) 821-4496 x-105
Address	2475 Canal Street; Suite 300	City/State/ZIP	New Orleans, LA 70119
Fax	(504) 821-4704	E-mail	vjudice@unitygno.org

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature 

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

The Harry Tompson Center and St. Joseph's Church have been long time members of the homeless Continuum of Care led by UNITY of GNO. Most organizations working with the homeless are members of UNITY which applies for HUD McKinney Vento funding on behalf of 60 organizations. The Harry Tompson Center has received HUD Supportive Funds through UNITY since 2005. After Hurricane Katrina, I helped the Harry Tompson Center to apply for and receive the HUD SHP funds which have been used to assist homeless persons with mental health concerns. I also consulted with Sr. Vera Butler regarding moving the Harry Tompson Center to the St. Joseph site.

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

Before Hurricane Katrina, there were two "drop-in centers" for the homeless: the Harry Tompson Center and the Multi-Service Center for the Homeless. Now there is just one – the Harry Tompson Center and its work is absolutely critical in the work of ending homelessness in New Orleans. UNITY and its partners share in our mission which is to "to coordinate community partnerships to prevent, reduce, and end homelessness." When the Rebuild Center joined the forces of the HTC, the Presentation Sisters, the Hispanic Apostolate and St. Joseph Church, a creative energy emerged which enabled homeless people to gather in an inviting, unimposing, nurturing space where they could access not only basic services but other services which can aid in ending their homelessness. The collaborative has already accomplished so much and I see that its work is just beginning. Now that the 3,000 Permanent Supportive Housing vouchers are about to be implemented in Louisiana (with around 2,000 going to New Orleans), it is imperative that the Rebuild Center continue and expand its ministry so that the poorest of the poor can access these vouchers.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

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

It is a wonderful example of how a well-run collaborative can impact people's lives in a constructive way. It is also a space where other non-profits can "set up shop" even if for one day a week to provide outreach to those who need their services. Others can learn from the Rebuild collaborative especially regarding:

- o Working with the university community to build new facilities using state of the art architectural design
- o Working with volunteers
- o Working with the faith-based community
- o Working with organizations that utilize public funds such as UNITY

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

Most successful aspects of the project:

- o Creation of a wholesome, positive space for homeless persons to gather and access services
- o Energetic, life-giving staff
- o Willingness to work collaboratively with other organizations to serve the same target population

Least successful aspects of the project:

- o Needs more funding
- o Needs more space so more non-profits can provide outreach at center

2009
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
OTHER
PERSPECTIVE



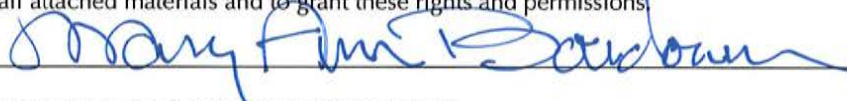
OTHER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, 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.

Name	Mary Ann Baudouin	Title	Assistant for Social Ministry
Organization	Jesuits of the New Orleans Province	Telephone (504)	571-1055
Address	710 Baronne Street; Suite B	City/State/ZIP	New Orleans, LA 70113
Fax (504)	571-1744	E-mail	mbaudouin@norprov.org

The undersigned grants the Bruner Foundation permission to use, reproduce, or make available for reproduction or use by others, for any purpose whatsoever, the materials submitted. The applicant warrants that the applicant has full power and authority to submit the application and all attached materials and to grant these rights and permissions.

Signature



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

At the time that New Orleans flooded after Hurricane Katrina, I was secretary of the board of The Harry Tompson Center, a day shelter for homeless people sponsored by Immaculate Conception, the downtown New Orleans Jesuit parish. Along with 80% of the buildings in New Orleans, the Harry Tompson Center flooded, and it was determined shortly after the flood that the Center could not be re-opened in that location. In the absence of CEO Don Thompson, who evacuated New Orleans with his family for 10 months, and the pastor and board president Fr. Tom Stahel, SJ, who was undergoing cancer treatment, from September 2005 until May 2006 I was the primary person left in New Orleans to help negotiate the post-Katrina future of the Harry Tompson Center.

In January 2006, I was part of a collaborative team that explored how we could fill the gap in services to homeless people. I informed the group that we had been in contact with the Detroit Collaborative Design Center at the University of Detroit Mercy to be involved in this project. The St. Joseph Rebuild Center was born!

I served as the initial contact with the Design Center. I participated in the participatory collaborative design sessions, as well as in all of the early planning sessions as the representative of the Harry Tompson Center board. I also facilitated some of the early sessions during which the collaborative agreements with the New Orleans participating agencies were developed.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

The St. Joseph Rebuild Center has provided a "one-stop-shop" where homeless people can come to get their most basic needs for showers, bathrooms, laundry, a meal, identification, and initial information and referral to other services. More importantly, it is a dignified daytime respite from the streets and harassment where homeless people feel safe and respected. Additionally, volunteer lawyers and medical personnel provide much needed (and free!) legal and medical services most days of the week. This type of coordinated service has NEVER been available in New Orleans, and it is now being done not by government agencies or larger social service organizations, but by an effective collaboration of several very small but very effective faith-based organizations. In the 15 months since opening, thousands of homeless people have visited the Rebuild Center.

As soon as one walks into the center, it is clear that it was designed with the homeless population in mind. It is functional yet beautiful, and even though it is built on blacktop, it gives you the feeling that you are in a country campsite. It provides the homeless guests with a sense of openness, yet there are still areas available for much coveted privacy and space. Just the fact that the Center was built specifically FOR homeless people is a statement of respect for this population. I think an incident described to me by one of the sisters working with Lantern Light describes the ultimate value of The Rebuild Center. When it was being built, a homeless man asked her "Who is that place for?" and she replied "That is for you." He began crying and said, "Nobody ever built a place just for us. We must be something." He was right.

OTHER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them?

One of the biggest – and most disappointing - compromises was on the building timeline. Initially we wanted to use trailers so that we could get the Center up and running as quickly as possible. We did not anticipate that it would take so long to get the permits, electrical work, plumbing, and even the trailers themselves, so our goal of getting into operation within six months was not met. If we had known that it would take so long, we might have used more permanent and hurricane proof designs that were still less expensive but that could be constructed quickly. Along those same lines, the price of building the Center in the post-Katrina economy was about 4 times what we initially anticipated, even with the volunteer assistance provided by UDM Design Center and other groups. This price seems high for what was designed to be a temporary facility.

I did not have a choice but to participate in those compromises – once we had committed to the project there was no turning back even in the face of rising costs and lengthening timelines.

The other trade-off that we are still trying to deal with is some loss or confusion of identity of The Harry Tompson Center once it became a member of the St. Joseph Rebuild Center. We are now one of the four non-profits operating within the collaborative, but sometimes we are just seen as “The Rebuild Center” as do not get the credit that we need for the work that we do as an individual nonprofit. (This credit is needed for fund development, publicity, and to satisfy donors.)

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

I've described some of this above, but it bears repeating, if in a different way:

MOST SUCCESSFUL: The facility is the perfect setting for providing the services to a very vulnerable population. It is functional yet beautiful, open yet private, a tranquil site in the midst of an urban area. In the initial planning sessions, the UDM Design Center staff really listened to our staff and volunteers about the needs of the homeless population and staff and our dreams for providing a space that met those needs. The space that they designed far exceeded our biggest dreams and hopes, even the ones that we couldn't articulate – they knew what we needed even when we didn't know it!

LEAST SUCCESSFUL: I'm concerned about how long the facility can actually last since it is built around trailers. At the rate that they are being used, the shower, laundry and bathroom trailers could begin to show wear very quickly and we may be left with well-built decks leading to rotting trailer, especially if we have hurricanes in the future. With the amount of money that we spent (and the time that it took to build), I'm left wondering if we should have considered alternatives to trailers, such as the simple buildings (medical and multi-purpose room) designed and built by UDM Design Center.