ACSA Collaborative Practice Award

2016-2017 Winner: Submission Materials

Dotte Agency

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Background

Wyandotte County, Kansas is home to one of the most racially diverse counties in the country. However, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings, Wyandotte County also ranks last among counties in Kansas for both health behaviors and for social and economic factors of health.¹ The principle city in the county is Kansas City, KS (KCK).

This distinction prompted the launch of Healthy Communities Wyandotte (HCW) in 2011. By adopting a theory of Collective Action, HCW began convening multidisciplinary stakeholders into action teams focused on key health issues: Education,

Infrastructure, Nutrition, Communication, Fetal Infant Mortality, Health Services, Tobacco, and Policy. Dotte Agency works as a key collaborator with the Nutrition Action Team and the Infrastructure Action Team to support community-led initiatives.

Through funding from diverse non-profits and the public health department, Dotte Agency works with interdisciplinary partners to utilize design as a tool to improve access to fresh food in food deserts and increase safe and walkable places in KCK. Over the last two years, Dotte Agency has brought resources to these issues by connecting students and faculty from the University’s School of Architecture, Design, and Planning; the School of Medicine; the School of Business; and the Department of Applied Behavioral Sciences. These courses are typically available to students on an ad hoc basis, relating to the changing needs of our community partners for specific resources to take on original projects.

**Community Engagement**

Dotte Agency adheres to principles of community engagement on a spectrum of empowerment, with Citizen Control on one end, and Manipulation on the other. The goal is to first build trust within the community, and then seek to elevate the community’s aspirations for a higher quality of life through their participation in any intervention. In our work we strive to adhere to NIH’s Nine Principles of Community Engagement:

1. Be clear about the goals with the population and communities that are being engaged.
2. Know the community, including its norms, history, and experience with engagement.
3. Build trust and relationships. Get commitments from formal and informal leadership.
4. Collective self-determination is the right and the responsibility of all community members.
5. Partnering with the community is necessary to create change and improve health.
6. Recognize and respect community cultures and other factors of diversity when designing implementation approaches.
7. Sustainability results from mobilizing community assets and developing capacities and resources.
8. Be prepared to release control to the community, and be flexible enough to meet its changing needs.

**Engagement Tools**

We have developed a series of engagement tools and strategies for building citizen participation. From pop-up panels, that allow us to take presentations on the road (or in the field); to a modified airstream trailer for mobile exhibitions and events; to a donated storefront for physical presence in the community, all of these tools allow us to make connections where the people are and where we can draw them in.
We renovated an airstream trailer into a “Mobile Collaboratory,” that we used as an engagement tool for public exhibitions and events. The renovation took place in a third-year, undergraduate design-build studio project. For this event, a community health fair and 5k run, we were using it to exhibit and solicit feedback on some park bench/fitness station prototypes that were done in a different design-build studio.

Mobile Collaboratory in use at the site of a future hike/bike trail on the Kaw River levee, soliciting opinions from citizens active in the biking community.

Mobile Collaboratory in use as a “Story Catcher,” with an oral historian collecting personal stories of citizens at a similar event.

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**Spatial Agency through Evidence-Based Design**

Rather than simply mimicking the existing pro bono model for design, Dotte Agency is seeking to develop a sense of 'spatial agency' within its students, where their skills and capacities can be used to co-develop systems that are healthy and equitable. From the initial phases of ideation and research to the development of new prototypes and policies, design thinking skills can afford interprofessional teams innovative new ways to address the public health issues of today and for tomorrow.

"Acting for and on behalf of others, spatial agency necessarily provides a planning process that is equal and open to anyone. But to achieve this we need a twofold shift, not just on the side of the architectural profession but also in those who commission architecture: on the one hand an explicit call for architects to face up to their political and ethical responsibility, on the other hand a call for all those involved in the production of the built environment to engage with the precepts of spatial agency." - Jeremy Till

We strive to make decisions about the what, how and where of our work based on rigorous analysis of demographics and geospatial relationships. By making data visual we allow analysis to speak for itself in conversations with students, citizens and policy-makers.
¡VAMOS A CAMINAR JUNTOS!
U nase al grupo de caminata de Bethany Park

¡MANTENGASE SALUDABLE!
Para mas informacion, llame a Susana de CABA al (913) 708-5046.

¡CONOZCA VECINOS!
Para recibir recordatorios, mandé un texto a BETHANY PARK al 41411.

DISTANCIA:
1 Milla= 3 Vueltas

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Frontera Super Market
"Corner stores have the potential to be important access points in low-income neighborhoods for fresh produce and other foods. It would stand to reason if these stores could sell a wide selection of healthy foods."
O’Meara, Quartz, Rice, Johnson

Located at the rear of Central and 23RD Str (formerly City Gardens), Frontera Super Market is a small neighborhood grocery store. The store occupies 900 square feet and consists of two rooms, one for food and one for non-food products. The store is operated by a family that has owned and operated it for several generations. They have 8 employees and the store is open Monday through Saturday from 9am to 7pm.

There are empty shelves in the back of the store, and the front of the store is much emptier than the back. After speaking with residents, it seemed that the majority of residents did not pay much attention to the produce area. This is because they did not have a specific interest in produce and did not want to spend more money on something unhealthy like soda.

For customers, the atmosphere of the store is crowded and the produce is at the rear of the store. There are only two employees in the store. The store owner also lives in the area and is often at the store.

A joint course was taught by a professor of Public Health and a professor of Architecture to students of both disciplines, to investigate ways to improve health outcomes and equity. Some

| Drinks from concentrate | Contains mostly soda and juice. | Any | Rear of the store. | There are only two employees in the store. The store owner also lives in the area and is often at the store. |

Located in a newly constructed building on the 10th street, Frontera Super Market is a small neighborhood grocery store. The store occupies 900 square feet and consists of two rooms, one for food and one for non-food products. The store is operated by a family that has owned and operated it for several generations. They have 8 employees and the store is open Monday through Saturday from 9am to 7pm.

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Prototyping

Our M.Arch curriculum has a required "materials and tectonics" studio built into it. This requires some level of investigation in a project with real materials at actual size. And this leads to design-build projects in some of those studios. At Dotte Agency we use the materials and tectonics studio to develop physical prototypes that can be tested in community and sometimes installed for longer term evaluation in the environment.

Below and left: Signage prototype that started as a student project and then developed further after the student’s graduation. Five of these are in current production for installation in five parks.

Exploring letter size and perforation patterns in laser-cut chipboard.

Fabrication of final signage system. Letters were plasma cut from solid and perforated metal sheets. CNC-cut MDF templates were produced to guide plasma cutting.

Prototypical mock up of a single letter for proof of concept and client approval.

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Prototypical mock up of a single letter for proof of concept and client approval.
These images represent the development of a set of hybrid fitness station/bench/bike rack units. From initial sketches to digital modeling, to technical drawing, to physical prototype, the students were hired after the semester concluded to produce five different units for installation in Jersey Creek Park. They were installed in Summer 2016.