



AIA Illinois

A Council of The American Institute of Architects

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lisa Stott, Communications Director, AIA Illinois
217-522-2309 or at lstott@aiaill.org
Rachael Thomson, Board President, Kidzeum
217-725-1247 or at info@kidzeum.org

Illinois Chapters Celebrate National Architecture Week with Gift to Support Kidzeum of Health and Science

(SPRINGFIELD, IL) — Kids and their families will learn about adaptive reuse and sustainability, as well as the role that architects can play in facilitating wellness, when they walk into the soon-to-be-built Kidzeum of Health and Science in Springfield, IL, thanks to gifts from the state and regional American Institute of Architects (AIA) chapters announced during the 2015 National Architecture Week.

Gifts totaling \$32,250 from individual architects and several Illinois AIA chapters will allow the Kidzeum to renovate and showcase the Schnepf and Barnes Building's three-story lightwell atrium, which will be visible from the entrance.

In addition, long-time AIA member and urban design champion Paul O'Shea, FAIA, will specifically be recognized for his contribution through the display of an exterior architectural wall art panel that will draw pedestrians in toward the Kidzeum's entrance.

Contributions came from the AIA Illinois Foundation, the AIA Central Illinois Chapter, and the AIA Springfield Section, after AIA Illinois Past President Larry Quenette, AIA, championed the project at the state board level.

"Our members were excited about this project for its emphasis on building healthy and resilient communities, which architects help to design every day, and for its excellent reuse of a historic property," said Mike Waldinger, Hon. AIA, Executive Vice-President, AIA Illinois. "More discoveries are being made about the inextricable link between human health and the built environment. Ninety-percent of our time is spent indoors, so the places where we live, work and play are a big factor in our wellness. Architecture matters and is part of the story to be told by the Kidzeum."

"BLDD Architects is extremely excited to be a part of the renovation of these historic buildings to house a museum that will inspire and educate children from around this region," said Steve Oliver, President of BLDD and Architect for the Schnepf and Barnes transformation. The Schnepf and Barnes Building was a former hotel, and in modern times, housed a printing company.

Lightwells, an open area or vertical shaft in the center of a building, are often necessary architectural features in older buildings, allowing light and air to reach what would otherwise be a dark and/or unventilated area. Research has found that access to natural light improves student test scores by as much as 25%. Plus, reducing the reliance on artificial lighting lowers energy bills.



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AIA's gift will allow cleaning and restoration of the original 1928 brick masonry on all sides of the three-story atrium, as well as restoration of the historic windows on the atrium's south wall. Visitors will be able to see the atrium as soon as they enter the facility and on every floor, reading about the role architecture plays in creating health and well-being.

The exterior focal wall will be located on the west side of the building, above the planned GRANDGarden of stepping stones, and positioned to beautify Adams Street. It will be created using an extremely colorful, fabric facade panel that will function as an art piece. Originally designed by BLDD Architects, it will be fabricated and installed by Ace Sign Company.

"Studies have shown that there is a correlation between art and learning. The AIA's and local architects' generous support will allow Kidzeum to be a place of beauty, to reflect the rich past and impact of the Schnepf Barnes building in a way that will inspire children and their families to learn about themselves, their community and their world," said Kidzeum Board President, Rachael Thomson.

The Kidzeum of Health & Science will be located in the nationally registered, historic buildings at 412, 414 and 416 East Adams Street. The Kidzeum of Health and Science is being designed with a focus on fun and learning; upon completion of its Vital for Our Youth Campaign, Kidzeum will be a three story, 25,000 square foot children's museum dedicated to teaching children of all abilities about health and science through discovery and play.

The Kidzeum is now within \$500,000 of its goal of \$6 million needed to begin construction, which is expected to start this year. The anticipated opening date is late 2015 or early 2016.

Find out more about the project at <http://www.kidzeum.org>.

The American Institute of Architects is a national organization consisting of local, state and national components. National Architecture Week takes place April 12-17, 2015. More than 4,000 architects in Illinois belong to the AIA. Illinois architects are known around the world for their creativity and delivery of real-world solutions that make our communities better. Visit www.aiaill.org for more information.

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