

For Immediate Release



Architects Without Borders Design GOCARE Learning Campus in El Madrono, Nicaragua

[August 1, 2016] Architects Without Borders is providing pro-bono design services to GOCARE, Inc. for a new Learning Campus in El Madrono, Nicaragua. Brooklyn-based architect Lynn Gaffney and Seattle-based architect Sheri Olson are co-leads for the 7,100-square-foot project. When it opens in 2017, the campus will allow the non-profit organization to expand its core mission to enable children and young adults to live a self-empowered life through the power of education.

GOCARE is a non-governmental organization recognized by the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education as an exemplary model for youth and adult education courses. To date, the organization has graduated more than 3,800 students from its programs. Its "Come Back To Give Back" philosophy encourages college students to become mentors and leaders within their own Nicaraguan community and help give back by helping people move out of extreme poverty and into a successful future.

The El Madrono facility offers a new opportunity for the organization to offer certified programs. "Previously we leased space from the government and we were not allowed to charge for our programs. GOCARE purchased this site so that we can offer vocational and advanced programs where the students will earn INATEC (Innovation y Prestigio Tecnológico Nacional) certification," says Michelle Cekov, GOCARE's President and CEO. "We will continue to offer the free programs as well as re-open our preschool. The certified programs will allow us to charge for our services on a sliding scale, depending on the students' ability to pay. This will help immensely with our ability to hire certified instructors and the sustainability of our programs."

The campus will be composed of seven buildings with four classrooms for children, three classrooms for adults, a computer center, a library and administrative offices. The buildings will surround a central open courtyard. A plaza and amphitheater steps at the front of the building have access to a kitchen in the vocational classroom and can be used for community gatherings or rented for weddings and other occasions.

Architects Gaffney and Olson's design creates a series of platforms and structures that step up the hillside. A covered arcade links the separate buildings and engages both the courtyard and sheltered outdoor classrooms. The spaces between classroom buildings allow views and ventilation into the courtyard, hold accessible ramps and are secured with custom wrought iron screens.

"We were lucky to receive such clear requirements and feedback along the way from GOCARE. Their daily experience at their current learning centers has informed all aspects of our design. The topography of the site inspired a dynamic campus that will offer varied spatial experiences and social interaction each time you move through its bounded space," says Lynn Gaffney, AIA.

The project incorporates local building materials and construction methods. The exterior walls will be striated brick with a concrete bond beam. In some areas a random, open-brick arrangement will provide ventilation. Corrugated metal-clad clerestory roofs allow daylight to penetrate the center of the classrooms and cane ceilings will absorb sound.

"We wanted to find ways to involve local craftspeople and realized that the wrought-iron screens between the buildings are a great opportunity for a variety of artisans to contribute their own designs," says Sheri Olson, FAIA, "Accent colors on the doors and other elements are drawn from Nicaraguan folk paintings."

"We are so thankful for this partnership with Architect Without Borders in helping to make our dream facility a reality," says Cekov.

ABOUT GOCARE:

GOCARE Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charity headquartered in Ventura, Calif. Throughout its tenure, GOCARE Inc. has worked closely with local residents and communities to create and integrate educational, health and economic development programs into its curriculum, including adult education through reading and math, pre-school, day care, computer instruction, English instruction and vocational training.

GOCARE Inc. is a legal non-governmental organization that has been recognized by the Nicaragua Ministry of Education as an exemplary model for adult education courses. To date, GOCARE Inc. has helped more than 3,800 students graduate from its programs with the core philosophy of the "Come Back To Give Back" mentorship and leadership. While pursuing college degrees, students become mentors and leaders within their Nicaraguan communities and help "give back" by teaching others the skills needed to move out of extreme poverty into a bright, successful future.

For more information about GOCARE Inc. or to make a donation, please call 805-275-4366
Or visit www.gocarekids.org.

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ABOUT ARCHITECTS WITHOUT BORDERS:

Architects Without Borders-Seattle volunteers collaborate with underserved communities to design and implement ecologically sensitive, culturally appropriate, life-changing projects. Our core values are: effective and appropriate design is vital to improving communities and the environment; collaborative long-term relationships with communities are essential to providing effective design assistance; exchange of knowledge and skills empowers both communities and designers; and interdisciplinary integrated design solutions maximize the positive impact of our projects. Volunteers are fundamental to our work. We believe thoughtfully built infrastructure can help address root causes of poor health and economic development, but communities around the world lack access to architecture and design services.

For more information about Architects Without Borders or to make a donation, please visit www.awb-seattle.org/.

ABOUT LYNN GAFFNEY ARCHITECT, PLLC

Based in Brooklyn and founded in 1997, Lynn Gaffney Architect, PLLC is a full-service architecture firm published nationally (i.e. Dwell, Metropolitan Home, and New York Times). Lynn Gaffney Architect's

projects are diverse in scale, spatial qualities, and style. Current projects include restaurants, educational complexes, multi-family housing, and single family residential. www.lynncaffney.com

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ABOUT SHERI OLSON ARCHITECTURE, PLLC

Sheri Olson, FAIA, founded her Seattle-based architecture practice in 2004 specializing in residential design. Her work is featured in the *Seattle Times Pacific Northwest Magazine*, *Inhabit*, *Seattle Homes and Lifestyles* and on *Houzz*. She is active in many aspects of the design field, architectural education and the community, including serving as an appointee by the mayor on Seattle's Design Commission and the Design Review Board. www.sheriolson.com

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