

This is an excerpt from:

Creative Community Building: 2003 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence

Bruner Foundation, Inc.

Jay Farbstein FAIA, PhD

with

Emily Axelrod, MCP; Robert Shibley, AIA, AICP; and Richard Wener, PhD

2003 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence

Graphic Design
CDG Caronchi Design Group
27500 Riverview Center 202
Bonita Springs, FL 34135
www.caronchi.com or cdg@caronchi.com

Library of Congress Control Number: 2002104398
ISBN: 1-890286-05-2

© Copyright 2004 by the Bruner Foundation
130 Prospect Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without the written permission from the publisher.

CONTENTS

PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

1	CAMINO NUEVO CHARTER ACADEMY	1
	GOLD MEDAL WINNER	
	At a Glance	3
	Project Description	5
	Assessing Project Success	27
2	BRIDGEMARKET	31
	SILVER MEDAL WINNER	
	At a Glance	33
	Project Description	38
	Assessing Project Success	53
3	COLORADO COURT	57
	SILVER MEDAL WINNER	
	At a Glance	59
	Project Description	61
	Assessing Project Success	79
4	PROVIDENCE RIVER RELOCATION	83
	SILVER MEDAL WINNER	
	At a Glance	85
	Project Description	91
	Assessing Project Success	116
5	RED HOOK COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER	121
	SILVER MEDAL WINNER	
	At a Glance	123
	Project Description	126
	Assessing Project Success	147
6	LEARNING ABOUT URBAN EXCELLENCE	151

PREFACE

We at the Bruner Foundation play a silent role in the award selection. Not that we're not interested; to the contrary. As professionals in the field, we have chosen to remove our own voices from the selection process. Our concern is that the selection would become all too predictable. Bringing together a changing group of urban experts for each Award cycle, we expand the breadth of our perspective.

How lucky we are to witness the Selection Committee meetings at each award cycle! We always learn about excellence we ourselves might not have seen. We have given up trying to predict the winners — and we are (hopefully) the wiser for it! So, aside from the obvious issues, what led the Selection Committee to this particular group of winners? What were the issues that were premiated in the selection process, and what do these winners have in common?

We all know that effective placemaking is not just about building design, or about program, or about urban context, or about timing. It is a creative synthesis of all of these factors brought to bear at the moment in time that can achieve maximum physical and social results. So, the search for communality in the 2003 Rudy Bruner Award winners led me to think about the *Critical Point of Impact*; those elusive tipping points where timely and strategic intervention can have maximum impact. The 2003 RBA winners have fascinating insights into the urban social fabric, and have found new points of intervention, all at the *Critical Point of Impact!*

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy and Red Hook Community Justice Center, radically different in their approaches, have found new ways to involve their constituents, creating opportunity for those traditionally denied accesses to opportunity. At Camino Nuevo immigrant families are learning to achieve economic independence through education and economic development in a framework set around their children's school. At Red Hook, a timely intervention within the repetitive cycle of petty crime offers the opportunity to break that cycle. Offenders – at their most vulnerable hour – are offered an opportunity to rehabilitate themselves through a variety of supportive social programs, to break the cycle of recidivism.

Providence River Relocation found that moment in time where the will and funding were available to uncover a unique natural resource, setting the stage for the reawakening of a beleaguered city. The River Relocation has transformed the city—reawakening a pride in the historic downtown, re-connecting parts of the city, and making Providence's rivers accessible once again. WaterFire is the star player on this urban stage, radically changing the perception of Providence. New pride and investment abound.

At **Colorado Court**, working under a court mandate, a creative community development agency and a determined architect worked together to demonstrate that well- designed affordable housing can be a good neighbor; can benefit the entire community; can be

effectively combined with sustainable energy systems to positively impact the natural environment; and can develop a strong aesthetic identity — mitigating the ubiquitous NIMBY response to affordable housing in a wealthy community.

At **BridgeMarket**, derelict space beneath the Queensboro Bridge has been transformed into a mix of uses that glorifies the historic Catalan vaults. The transformation required the right moment in time – and an adventurous developer to rebuild a derelict space into a critical link between two distinct neighborhoods and the nearby East River.

None of these projects were easy to achieve. Both Providence and BridgeMarket have histories going back 30 years. At Colorado Court there was substantial community skepticism about combining affordability, good design, and energy. At Red Hook, it took persistent patterns of crime and a failed judicial history to suggest that new thinking was needed. And in Los Angeles, immigrant parents have tolerated years of failing education for their children.

So how then can we recognize that *Critical Point of Impact*? That, of course, is the question. These placemakers found that time and place. We salute the insight, determination, and creativity of our winners – as we wonder how to follow their examples in our own endeavor.

Simeon Bruner, *Founder*
The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence
August 17, 2004



Simeon Bruner presents Red Hook Community Justice Center with award.

INTRODUCTION

THE RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE

The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence (RBA) is unique among national awards for the urban built environment. The RBA is dedicated to discovering and celebrating places that are distinguished not only by the quality of their design but also by their social, economic, and contextual contributions to our cities. Understanding that every urban place grows out of complex layers of social, economic, aesthetic, and personal interactions, the RBA asks some important questions. What kinds of places make our cities better places to live and work? How do these places enliven and enrich the urban landscape? Do they contribute to or revitalize the local economy? Do they contribute to community pride? Do they build bridges among diverse populations or create beauty where none existed before? And perhaps most important, what can we learn from the creative thinking inherent in RBA winners, and how can the lessons be applied in cities across the country?

The criteria for submitting an application for the RBA are intentionally broad, encouraging applications from a wide variety of projects; in the last two award cycles over 40 states have been represented. It is no surprise, therefore, that RBA winners have made very different kinds of contributions to our nation's cities. Many represent new models of urban placemaking that have successfully challenged conventional wisdom about what is possible. Most are products of hard-won collaborations among

diverse groups of people, often with differing agendas. And all RBA winners have contributed to the vitality of the cities and neighborhoods in which they are located. By celebrating their success, the RBA highlights the intricate and challenging process of urban placemaking, emphasizing the complexity of the processes and values that produce significant urban places. Studying the varied stories of RBA winners, their histories, and their processes of development, we can discover creative ways to respond to some of our cities' most intractable problems.

THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

To ensure lively and informed discussion, inclusive of multiple perspectives, each selection committee is made up of urban experts representing diverse disciplines. Selection committees always include the mayor of a major city as well architects, developers, community organizers, philanthropists, and financiers. As the selection committee members discuss the applications, they consider a wide variety of questions:

- What kinds of places make neighborhoods and cities better places in which to live, work, and play?
- How did these places come into being?
- What visions powered their creation?
- How did these visions become a reality?
- What obstacles had to be overcome?
- What makes these places important in their urban context?

In this way, the selection committee explores the dynamic nature of urban excellence and contributes to a broader understanding of the issues that are currently critical to the urban built environment.

THE 2003 SELECTION COMMITTEE

Alicia Mazur Berg

Commissioner of Planning and Development, Chicago, Illinois

Kofi S. Bonner

Executive Vice President for Business Operations,
Chief Administrative Officer, Cleveland Browns

Gary Hack

Dean, Graduate School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania

Maurice Lim Miller

The Family Independence Initiative, Oakland, California.

Thomas M. Menino

Mayor of Boston, Massachusetts

Gail Thompson

Project Director, Performing Arts Center of Greater Miami, FL

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Since the RBA seeks excellence in places where it may not be expected, eligibility criteria are intentionally few. First, the project must be a real place, not a plan. It must be sufficiently complete to demonstrate its excellence to a team of site visitors from the Bruner Foundation. And the project must be located in the continental United States - site visits are integral to the award process, and it is not feasible to conduct visits to international locations.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

A new selection committee is appointed for each award cycle. The committee meets twice: first to select the five finalists from a field of about 100 applicants, and then to select the gold medal winner. Between these two meetings, Bruner Foundation staff research the finalists and visit each site for two or three days, exploring the projects and pursuing questions raised by the Selection Committee. The team



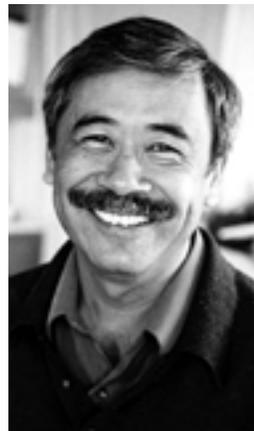
Alicia Mazur Berg



Kofi S. Bonner



Gary Hack



Maurice Lim Miller



Thomas M. Menino



Gail Thompson

members tour the projects, interview 15 to 25 or more project participants (including community participants), take photographs, and observe patterns of use. This year's site visit team was led by Jay Farbstein, Ph.D., FAIA, president of Jay Farbstein & Associates. The teams included Emily Axelrod, director of the Rudy Bruner Award; Robert Shibley, professor of urban design at the State University of New York at Buffalo; and Richard E. Wener, Ph.D.; associate professor of environmental psychology at Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, NY.

After the site visits, the team prepares a written report and a PowerPoint presentation that is presented to the selection committee at its second meeting in April or May. With the site visit team on hand to answer questions, the committee debates the merits of each project to decide upon a winner. In this discussion process the committee explores the issues facing urban areas, comes to a deeper agreement about the kinds of processes and places that embody urban excellence, and identifies seminal and innovative ideas in urban placemaking.

2003 WINNERS

The 2003 Rudy Bruner Award winners were selected from a field of 136 entries from over 30 states. The applicants included a rich diversity of projects that are contributing to their respective communities in a variety of ways. The excellence of the applicant pool resulted in the selection of five winners and, for the first time in award history, the addition of seven projects designated to receive honorable mention. The winners include:

GOLD MEDAL:

CAMINO NUEVO CHARTER ACADEMY

Los Angeles, California

Camino Nuevo is a new elementary school located in a formerly vacant mini-mall in inner-city Los Angeles. Camino Nuevo was built by a community development corporation working with the Los Angeles Unified School District to create a new model for a community-based school. It exemplifies reuse of a commonplace urban resource, a new model of public-private partnership, and an innovative approach to building community, through public education.

SILVER MEDALS:

BRIDGEMARKET

New York, New York

Exemplifying imaginative adaptive reuse of landmark space beneath the Queensboro Bridge in Manhattan, BridgeMarket is a contemporary urban marketplace with a combination of retail and public space, serving as a vital community resource and as a bridge between adjacent neighborhoods.

COLORADO COURT

Santa Monica, California

A 44-unit SRO affordable housing facility, Colorado Court combines "green building" technology with affordable housing to create an environmentally, socially and economically responsible housing development in the heart of downtown Santa Monica.

PROVIDENCE RIVER RELOCATION

Providence, Rhode Island

Through the reclamation and re-directing of an urban river system, Providence River Relocation has created a new urban amenity and has transformed a formerly blighted downtown. The river relocation has been a key factor in the revitalization of Providence, has re-knit adjacent neighborhoods, and has created a setting for arts programming (WaterFire) and water access that attracts workers, students, residents and visitors to this historic waterfront.

RED HOOK COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER

Brooklyn, New York

A multi-jurisdictional community court, Red Hook brings together the community justice system with an unconventional and comprehensive group of social service and educational programs. The Red Hook model is designed to engage offenders in remedial programs aimed at reducing recidivism and stabilizing the community.



Simeon Bruner presents Rudy Bruner Award at Red Hook Community Justice Center. L-to-R: Hon. Alex Calabrese, Hon. Juanita Bing Newton, Ann Swern, Robert Feldstein, Alta Indelman, Jerry Amer

HONORABLE MENTIONS:

The City Repair Project

Portland, OR

The intersection repair project involves a prototype for transforming neighborhood street intersections into public squares that become focal points for community interaction. The prototype involves installations at key corners which may include public art, information kiosks, benches, memorials, fountains, and other amenities. Each intersection repair is developed through a series of community led design charrettes and meetings.

Crissy Field

San Francisco, CA

Crissy Field entails the conversion of a 100 acre asphalt-laden industrial storage yard and air strip, formerly in military use, into a vibrant waterfront park and wetland ecosystem. The project includes a tidal marsh, beach, a 1.3 mile public promenade, picnic areas, and two rehabilitated historic buildings at the foot of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Job Link, Bay Area Video Coalition

San Francisco, CA

Job Link provides an advanced technology training and media access center, combining the potential of cutting-edge technology and media arts to serve low-income communities and nonprofit organizations. It focuses on training, access, and development of technical expertise in video technologies for people whose access to those technologies would otherwise be limited.

Mill Creek Housing and Park Development**Cleveland, OH**

Located in the Slavic Village neighborhood on the southeast side of Cleveland, Mill Creek involves the redevelopment of a formerly vacant 100 acre state mental institution. The project has transformed the site into a 35 acre park, and a new racially- and culturally-diverse single family housing community that is attracting middle income families back to the neighborhood while bridging the racial divide between two formerly segregated inner-city neighborhoods.

National Hispanic Cultural Center**Albuquerque, NM**

A division of the Office of Cultural Affairs of the State of New Mexico, NHCC promotes and preserves Hispanic culture in New Mexico by showcasing, promoting and preserving art, history and cultural achievement.

University Park at MIT**Cambridge, MA**

University Park is a mixed-use development, adjacent to the MIT campus, containing office, research and development space for the biotechnology industry. The mix of uses also includes hotel, retail, and residential space, as well as a supermarket. Developed in close collaboration with MIT and the City of Cambridge, University Park was recognized for a creative mix of uses serving both the university and the residential community.

2003 AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Because the Rudy Bruner Award is intended to stimulate a national discussion on the nature of urban excellence, award presentations offer an important opportunity to raise awareness of the issues addressed by each winning project. Past awards have been presented at the US Conference of Mayors, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and in many of the cities in which winning projects are located. At the presentations, planners, community organizers, architects, and developers speak about their projects, and mayors are often present to recognize the contributions these projects have made to their respective communities.

This year's gold medal award of \$50,000 was presented to Camino Nuevo Charter Academy in Los Angeles. The presentation was made at Camino Nuevo, and was attended by Los Angeles City Council members, neighborhood residents and many of the individuals who have been involved in the project over its history. Silver medal winners were each awarded \$10,000 at events in their respective cities, with local press and elected officials present to recognize their achievement.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

As part of an ongoing effort to facilitate a national dialogue on the meaning and nature of urban excellence and to promote important new ideas about urban placemaking, at the conclusion of each award cycle the Bruner Foundation publishes a book containing case studies of the winners. Each book recounts the story of the

winning projects, and the dialogue and debate among selection committee members. Each project case study is prefaced by a “project at a glance” section that briefly summarizes the project and the selection committee discussion. This overview is followed by detailed accounts of the history, character, financing, and operation of each winning project. In addition to describing the five winners, a concluding chapter identifies the most important themes recognized by the selection committee.

BRUNER FOUNDATION PUBLICATIONS

Bruner Foundation books are currently in use in graduate and undergraduate programs in universities across the country. The work of the Rudy Bruner Award and its winners has been recognized by the US Conference of Mayors, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Design Research Association. Recent articles on the RBA have appeared in *Foundation News*, *New Village Journal*, *Architectural Record*, *Design Book Review*, and *Architecture* magazine. See also the chapter on the RBA in Schneekloth and Shibley’s *Placemaking: The Art and Practice of Building Community* (John Wiley and Sons, 1995).

Case studies contained in Bruner Foundation books are now also available on the Foundation’s web site, www.brunerfoundation.org, and will soon be available, together with images of each winner, in a CD format.

Bruner Foundation books, some of which are available from the Foundation, include:

- Philip Langdon with Robert Shibley and Polly Welch, *Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1990).
- Neal Peirce and Robert Guskind, *Breakthroughs: Re-creating the American City* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers, State University of NJ, 1993).
- Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Connections: Creating Urban Excellence; 1991 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1992).
- Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Rebuilding Communities: Re-creating Urban Excellence; 1993 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1993).
- Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Building Coalitions for Urban Excellence; 1995 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1996).
- Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Visions of Urban Excellence; 1997 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc. 1998)
- Robert Shibley with Emily Axelrod, Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Commitment to Place: Urban Excellence and Community* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1999)
- Richard Wener, PhD with Emily Axelrod, MCP; Jay Farbstein FAIA, PhD; Robert Shibley, AIA, AICP; and Polly Welch,

Placemaking for Change: 2001 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence (Bruner Foundation, 2002)

An earlier Bruner Foundation endeavor revisited the winners and finalists from the first four cycles of the RBA to learn how the projects have fared over time. The book asks which places have continued to thrive and which have struggled, and why? Partially funded by a grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, teams of Foundation staff and consultants, HUD regional staff, and past Selection Committee members revisited 21 projects. The conclusions these observers reached can be found in:

- Jay Farbstein, Robert Shibley, Polly Welch and Richard Wener, *Sustaining Urban Excellence: Learning from the Rudy Bruner Award, 1987-1993* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1998). This book is available through the Bruner Foundation or through the HUD User web site.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Emily Axelrod, MCP, is the director of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. She holds a masters degree in city planning from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and has worked in urban planning in both the public and private sectors in San Francisco and Boston.

Jay Farbstein, PhD, FAIA, is an architect by training. He leads a consulting practice in Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo, CA, specializing in helping public sector and private clients develop and document their requirements for building projects as well as in

evaluating the degree to which their completed buildings meet those requirements.

Robert Shibley, AIA, AICP, is a professor at the School of Architecture and Planning at the State University of New York, Buffalo. He is also the founding partner of Caucus Partnership, a consulting practice on environmental and organizational change. At the University at Buffalo, he is a former chairman of the Department of Architecture and now serves as the director of the Urban Design Project, a center in the school devoted to the study and practice of urban design.

Richard Wener, PhD is associate professor of environmental psychology in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, New York. He has done extensive research on the effects of built environments on individuals and communities.

ACCESS TO RUDY BRUNER AWARD MATERIALS

All RBA applications through 1999 have been recorded on microfiche and are accessible through:

Interlibrary Loan Department
Lockwood Memorial Library
State University of New York at Buffalo
Amherst, NY 14260
Phone: 716-636-2816
Fax: 716-636-3721



An abstract and keyword identification has been prepared for each application and can be accessed through two major databases: RLIN/Research Library Information Network and OCLC/First Search.

In addition, the State University of New York at Buffalo maintains a Web site with complete winner applications for all Rudy Bruner Award winners. The Web site address is:

<http://wings.buffalo.edu/libraries/projects/digital/bruner>

The Bruner Foundation also maintains a Web site on the RBA. The site contains an overview of the RBA, visual images and summary information on all past winners, recent case studies, a list of past Selection Committee members, publications, information on how to apply for the RBA, and brief profiles of each of the 1999 winners. The Web site address is:

<http://www.brunerfoundation.org>

For more information, please contact:

Bruner Foundation
130 Prospect Street
Cambridge, MA 02139
Phone: 617-492-8404
Fax: 617-876-4002
Email: **info@brunerfoundation.org**