Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Living WELL in Affordable Housing

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• Abstract (300 words):

During the Post-World War II construction boom homes in the United States began considering durability, energy conservation, comfort, security, and aesthetics in housing design. These factors, within the residential sector, did not include improving the health, wellness, and well-being of occupants affected by the physical housing changes. Housing materials and conditions were not deemed as issues that would affect the health and well-being of residents in the past, and this remains the same in today’s modern built housing sector. In 2017, there were 136.57 million housing units in the United States, with an approximate 325 million people with a projected rise to 352 million in ten years (Yun, 2017). Additionally, research indicates that the average person in the US spends 90 percent of their time indoors (Klepeis, 2001). A person’s well-being is affected by their physical surroundings such as building construction, the layout of rooms and circulation spaces and the selection of furniture, fixtures, and finish materials all play roles in a person’s interior environment.
This study explored residential housing, specifically low-income housing, and how it can benefit from the application of current initiatives that address the health, safety, and welfare of its occupants. The goal of this research was to develop a set of guidelines by using the WELL Building Standard and Universal Design to improve the physical and mental health of residents in low-income housing. Data was collected through online surveys and interviews targeting residential designers, architects, and builders who have worked on low-income housing projects.

The results of this study were translated into programmatic and spatial recommendations for designing residential environments, specifically low-income housing, in suburban metropolitan areas that apply WELL Building Standards and Universal Design to accommodate health, wellness, and well-being of residents. Designers can shape the built environment, allowing it to become a healing aspect for people experiencing a wide range of impairments (Smith, 2015). To create a better design, we must design with psychology in mind and understand how we are affected by the built environment to reach a surrounding that supports our human behavior and how we experience it. Focusing on well-being in residential environments provides users with an overall improving life outside of the workplace or any other setting they might be occupying (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018).

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Arely Cavazos is a Master of Fine Arts candidate in the Department of Interior Architecture and Design at Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida. She is currently finishing up the early stages of her thesis, which focuses on applying WELL Building Standards to impact human behavior relating to health, wellness, and well-being in low-income housing.

Arely has been lucky enough to grow throughout her design studies, with each year providing a deeper and more meaningful understanding behind the importance of our interior surroundings. She has learned to emphasize human psychological responses through the use of both functional and visual design aspects. Her future career goals include pursuing a doctoral degree that will allow her to expand her research with WELL application into low-income housing to determine its building performance.

Arely is originally from Belle Glade, FL and comes from a family of crop farmers. She enjoys exploring local farmer’s markets with her dog, Louie, and her boyfriend, Ivan. She also enjoys relaxing at the beaches around Florida. When she wants to expand her architectural and design knowledge, Arely enjoys traveling abroad.
for inspiration on future design solutions. She has recently made a month-long trip starting from Paris going through Italy and finishing at Amsterdam.