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In Focus: Dan Rothschild

By Abbey Reighard

American Institute of Architects presented **Daniel Rothschild**, Sunnyhill Drive, with the Honor Award in Architecture during its national convention in Atlanta. Rothschild's firm, Rothschild Doyno Collaborative, partnered with World Vision on the project they call Sant Lespwa, Center of Hope, a resource center in Haiti that provides support, education and skill-building opportunities for locals.

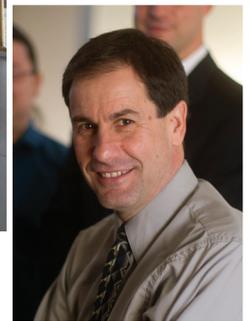
"In many respects the project is very humble in scale," says Rothschild. "But its power on a humanitarian level was huge. It was empowering that the jury was looking at multimillion dollar projects from all over the country and selected our project for recognition."

Leaders at World Vision, a humanitarian organization that works with children and families who live in poverty and oppression, approached Rothschild about the project about three years ago. Rothschild, in practice for more than 20 years, redesigned and restored Mt. Lebanon's art deco municipal building in 2003-04. He had worked with World Vision in the past, and found it to be a good fit.

World Vision had a very general plan: Help the community. It was up to the team, including the residents, to flesh out that goal with concrete plans. They decided to build a community center.



Architect Dan Rothschild's work in Haiti earned him an award from the American Institute of Architects. *Photos © Rothschild Doyno Collaborative*



Haitian locals helped with the construction of the building. "Everyone had to put on a yellow vest for safety," Rothschild says. "We looked like a bunch of bumblebees working together."

The location of the center is isolated, which meant Rothschild had to carefully plan the building's design so it could be self-sustaining. "People use the phrase 'off the grid,'" he says. "This project had no grid to be off of."

Rothschild designed a "net zero" building that doesn't require connections to utilities. For example, the center has a lot of openings for natural light to fill the space, requiring very little additional sources. The little electricity that is needed at night

comes from solar panels.

The same openings used for lighting form an airy slanted breezeway between the building's administrative offices and library. As the wind blows through the breezeway, the hot air rises up and out, while the cool air stays within the building. Steel chains collect rainwater from the roof into cisterns. The water is used for hand washing and the building's restrooms.

Rothschild hopes that recognition of the project through the award will inspire others to pursue humanitarian goals. "It was very rewarding because we felt the message of helping others and making the world a better place was recognized."