



# DETAILS

## **One:**

Message from the President  
Spring Cleaning

## **Three:**

### **Best of Show**

King David High School

## **Seven:**

News from AIBC

## **Nine:**

IDIBC Awards of  
Excellence 2007

## **Seventeen:**

How to become a member  
of IDIBC



# IDIBC STUDENT AWARD

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Wendy Taylor

WENDY TAYLOR, A FOURTH-YEAR student in Kwantlen University College's Interior Design program, is this year's recipient of the IDIBC Student Award. A former helicopter pilot, Wendy drew on her experiences travelling abroad in developing her award-winning design.

The IDIBC Student Award was unveiled at the November 2007 AGM. It recognizes a student in their graduating year who, with his or her final design project, "emulates the mandate of IDIBC and imbues their project with IDIBC's external goals." The award was presented during the recent Design Northwest show in February, at the Scotiabank Centre where the IDIBC Awards event was held.

The objective of Wendy's innovative project was re-purposing an elevated parking structure into permanent housing for homeless people in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. I spoke with Wendy about her project and the inspiration behind her design.

**What was your motivation for re-purposing the chosen space for that specific function?**

I've known for several years what I wanted to do for my final project. After spending 6 months travelling before coming to Vancouver to attend interior design school, I

was more shocked by the conditions people here lived in than I was by the barrios around San Jose, Costa Rica or the shanty towns that line the railroads in northern Bangkok. Maybe it was because it was in my own backyard, or maybe because there was so much wealth nearby.

The idea occurred to me that this should be a facility that could be built anywhere, and every downtown core has a multitude of parkades. Why not turn a portion of one of them into housing for the homeless and perhaps integrate market housing to support the non market housing? Research [has shown] that permanent housing is the long term answer to creating a positive environment for the homeless, located in an area that they consider home. The project would also make a strong statement of the priorities in our social system that I wanted to make visible to our communities.

**Designing spaces for public use, particularly spaces that deal with community housing and homelessness in Vancouver, is a process that is, at its very core, highly political. How would you deal with political or social pressure that may influence your design?**

Like most public issues, if the community is educated on any particular subject they will have a new understanding and opinion

on that subject.

There is a great deal of negative association attached to the population in the DTES and although some of these perceptions are generally accurate, some of them are not. Studies have proven that permanent housing is the only feasible solution for homelessness and is actually more cost effective long term than the alternatives.

**Comment on the importance for interior designers to consider the mandate and goals of IDIBC in their designs and the ability of interior design to influence social change.**

Who better to tackle social change than an interior designer?

Designers have the ability to shape the way we live. We find solutions for achieving a person's daily goals in new and different ways. It's crucial that we do this with the careful consideration of the client and of the user's needs based on extensive research and analysis of the project. We can then begin to determine these needs based on education and experience and then prioritize them for the client.

A client is a client and their social standing within the community is irrelevant to the work interior designers can and should perform. **ID|**

# MALASPINA UNIVERSITY-COLLEGE

**Written by** Katarina Litva, BA BID RID, CEU Chair

MALASPINA UNIVERSITY-COLLEGE in Nanaimo BC now has a four year Bachelor of Interior Design degree program. This will replace the currently successful 2 year diploma program and will allow students additional knowledge of interior design theory and practical experience prior to entering the workforce. This is the only interior design degree program on Vancouver Island and is sure to be as successful as the current diploma program. Upon graduation

of the four year degree program and two years of approved, related work experience, graduates may write the professional exams set by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification in order to become professional registered interior designers.

Curriculum for the new degree program features lecture, studio, critique, and computer lab instruction; independent and collaborative projects; formal and informal presentations; field trips; and a final major project spanning



two semesters. The program includes a paid internship term which is scheduled in the summer between third and fourth year.

The new program will serve students from Victoria to Port Hardy and beyond. The new program is expected to be as popular with young and seasoned aspiring designers alike, and hopes it will attract diploma transferees from other schools on the mainland and across Canada who may apply for advanced standing and admission to third year. **ID|**