



EDUCATION

Earth Day Outreach

Inspires Middle Schoolers to Learn About Architecture

On Earth Day, April 22, 2022, Kelsey Greenleaf, Assoc. AIA and Guilherme Pinho, Assoc. AIA of Hoffman Architects visited The Independent Day School in Middlefield CT to teach about the importance of sustainable architecture. As part of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee at Hoffmann Architects, one of the committees goals is to participate in community outreach, specifically with local schoolchildren. It is important that students know all their options when it comes to future careers, and many do not know about all the different fields within the construction industry, which may contribute a lack of diversity in the profession. By educating young students about different types of architecture and engineering, the DEI Committee at Hoffmann Architects hopes to inspire the next generation of design professionals.

The presentation, delivered to a group of about 60 middle school students, talked about the importance of not only creating new green buildings, but bringing existing buildings up

to higher sustainability standards. The built environment currently contributes about 39% of the world's CO2 emissions, and Greenleaf and Pinho talked about how architects can help lower that number through design. The students learned the importance of selecting materials that are made sustainably and how the materials are transported to job sites.

They also talked about what Hoffmann Architects does as building envelope rehabilitation specialists, and how updating existing buildings can help reduce our carbon footprint. Adding insulation, replacing windows, sealing leaky buildings, increasing roof solar reflectance, and installing green roofs are all ways to help reduce the carbon footprint of our buildings. Inviting students to envision how architecture impacts climate change, public health, and other issues affecting their lives encouraged participants to explore the possible influence they might have as architects.

While at the Independent Day School, Kelsey and Guilherme were able to interact one-on-one with the students while helping with a challenge where the students had to build a table strong enough to hold a large textbook; the materials the students were given were twelve sheets of newspaper, five feet of masking tape, and a small piece of cardboard. This personal interaction allowed Hoffman Architects to engage with the students and answer questions not only related to the challenge, but also about architecture and their careers in general.

For many students learning about career options, architecture can seem abstract and inaccessible. The Hoffmann Architects DEI Committee hopes to visit other schools in the community to share what excites them about their work and encourage students from diverse backgrounds to consider the possibilities of architecture.



KELSEY GREENLEAF, Assoc. AIA is a Project Coordinator at Hoffmann Architects, Inc. in Hamden, Connecticut. Kelsey is an active member of Hoffman's DEI Committee and helped pilot the program, leading to the AIA Connecticut JEDI Award in 2021. Kelsey has been a member of NOMA Connecticut since 2021 and holds a Bachelors of Science in Architecture from Keene State College.