



mobilereach: autism institute mobile unit

MOBILEREACH is a mobile assessment unit, for under served communities designed by Drexel Faculty and Staff from the Antoinette Westphal College of Media Arts and Design, in collaboration with the AJ Drexel Autism Institute. **The AJ Drexel Autism Institute** is a Drexel University research institute directed by Dr. Craig Newschaffer that focuses on public health science. It's mission is to discover, develop and disseminate population-level and community based approaches that will prevent autism associated morbidity and disability and address the needs of, and improve the quality of life for individuals with autism of all ages and their families.

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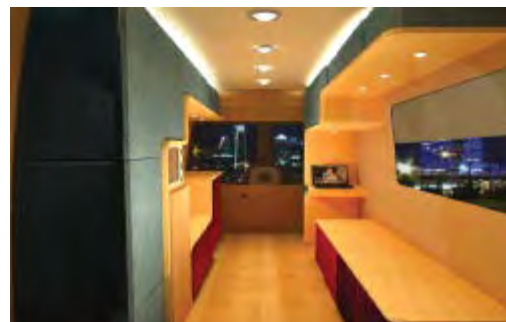
Instructed by Diana Nicholas, the AJ Drexel Autism Institute course provided an opportunity for students to engage in research of Autism and then apply it to the practice of design. The course offered the opportunity for the students to collaborate in groups, learn about universal design, explore graphic design and branding, and apply what they learned to real life projects. The course included a competition to design

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mobile assessment units: vans that allow for clinical assessment teams to visit locations and complete clinical testing or consultations. The goals of these units are to increase awareness of the Autism Institute, to promote engagement with different communities, and to create a useful and welcoming space with an atmosphere geared towards children under the age of 12.

Specifications offered by the institute involved both interior and exterior considerations. The interior space had to be large enough to accommodate movement, consultation and assessment, with seating for the assessor, parent and child. Neutral tones and textures, dimmable lights and minimization of noise from the exterior were also necessary. Requisite features included storage space, a lab area with a small fridge, a video monitor, clear floor space for play, and videotaping equipment. The exterior of the van needed a flexible design with a removable autism logo that was approachable, and provided wheelchair accessibility.



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The class of 13 interior design and architecture students, divided into four groups, each developed their own designs for the vans. The winning design theme of individual life-journeys drew inspiration from a team member's own experience with autism. Other design themes were sensory integration, adaptable submersion, and metamorphosis. All groups researched extensively in order to gain an understanding about the common needs of people with autism. From their research they were able to make design decisions to fully address these needs and provide a comfortable and safe space for assessment.

CONTACT US:

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Press + Publicity

RECENT POSTS

About Rudolph

The Philadelphia Tribune "Drexel Autism Institute Going Mobile" by Angela Haskell. – <http://bit.ly/17wJiwt>
Metro. US "Drexel Autism Institute Goes Mobile" by Judy Weightman. – <http://bit.ly/1f2BE1L>

Blankenburg
Schoolyard
Morton McMichael
Schoolyard
MOBILEREACH:
Autism Institute
Mobile Unit
Mantua Design
Build

Healing Thresholds “News: Autism Clinic Takes to the Road in Philadelphia Area” –
<http://bit.ly/16Isx3V>

Participants:

Faculty:

D.S. Nicholas RA, AIA, NCARB: Project Director, Lead Faculty

Autism Institute:

Craig Newschaffer, PhD AI Founder; James Connell, PhD; Lindsay Shea, MS; Jennifer Plumb, PhD

Students:

Arzayus, Blanca; Bakhit, Hattan; Leff, Fay E. ; McMenamin, Maureen P. ; Prutzman, Shannon N.; Siriani, Alexis; Takeo, Yoshie; Young, Lauren M.; Heucke, Stephanie L. ; Lam, Grace; McLean, Ilana A. ; Vargas, Miguel A. ; Webb, Christine C.

Student researcher:

Jessica Neilsen

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