

FOUND: An Adolescent and Young Adult Cultural and Wellness Center

Seattle, Washington

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Intent/Purpose:

FOUND is an adolescent and young adult Cultural and Wellness Center whose program is designed to assist and support patients and survivors (before, during and after treatment) who find themselves caught in a two fold circumstance; (1) a life of continued involvement with the medical community due to cancer and/or other life-limiting illnesses and (2) the need for an age appropriate environment providing support, care and hope while transitioning into the adult phase of medicine.

This design intent is a new building typology for those caught between the Pediatric and Adult environment in treatments, innovative solutions and holistic/respice care, the AYA's find themselves, lost within the health system. The current medical environment fragments and splits the AYA group during treatment and healing, causing them to feel alone and isolated. While attempting to adapt, heal and /or recover they have little chance for peer support, age appropriate education, social interaction and practical information while coping with their medical challenges. The unique characteristics of this population and their special health needs require a greater investment in quality of care and survival support. The FOUND Center provides a central place of wellness,

hope, education, growth, respite care and gathering space for peer involvement and support for the AYA facing life-limiting illnesses.

It is meant for those who have been recently diagnosed and/or for those who have been sick for some time. However, It is not meant as a "end of life" care center. This center would be for low acuity patients. My intent is that the individuals would be able to stay for up to a month at a time, gaining education, allowing family members and friends to visit the overnight care center in a low-stress environment that could care for patients who would need minimal nursing care.

The basis of the design is to facilitate relationships and friendships to decrease the amount of "alone" these patients feel. Since the Cultural wellness center is meant to house all of the social activity, the overnight care center is meant to be a platform for those in Seattle or across the country to come, stay and interact with those who share a similar situation.

The rest of the program, Cultural wellness Center and Chapel are meant for anyone affected by such illnesses, directly or indirectly. These spaces are meant for those looking for guidance, education, and or social support. The rooms are designed for specific educational needs and built in such a way as to again, facilitate discussion and a lack of "alone".

The FOUND Center will finally provide a sense of place for the AYA's. It will be a place of celebration and remembrance and the foundation for growth, knowledge and understanding for those who must cross the bridge between childhood and adulthood ~ life and death. It is a physical environment for this particular group to find advice, education, and social support, for each other and from one another.

It is hoped that the architecture and the program design of the FOUND Center will provide structure, support, a healing environment and a vision for those Adolescents and Young Adults courageously traveling from childhood into adulthood.