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### Introduction

Thank you for your interest in "First Step Housing," an open competition hosted during the Summer of 2003 for a new form of prefabricated individualized dwelling unit, sponsored by **Common Ground Community** and **The Architectural League of New York**. Common Ground Community is a non profit organization whose mission is to solve homelessness through innovative programs that transform people, buildings, and communities.

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## Common Ground and The Architectural League Announce Winners of the First Step Housing Design Competition

*180 Submitted Designs for "First Step Housing" Competition*

*Exhibition Featuring Entries and Winning Designs Opens November 12th*

*Design Jury included Michael Bell, Julie Eizenberg, Andrew Freear, Steven Holl and Toshiko Mori*

Exhibit runs Nov 12-Dec 12

Hours: Wed-Sat, 4pm to 7pm  
For more info, please call  
212-389-9300

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Release](#)

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## News Release

**COMMON GROUND AND THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE  
OF NEW YORK ANNOUNCE WINNERS  
OF OPEN DESIGN COMPETITION****180 Submitted Designs for "First Step Housing" Competition****Exhibition Featuring Entries and Winning Designs Opens November 12th****Design Jury included Michael Bell, Julie Eizenberg, Andrew Freear, Steven Holl and Toshiko Mori**

October 28, 2003, New York – Common Ground Community and The Architectural League of New York's First Step Housing design competition ended this week with five entries sharing top honors.

Competitors were asked to design a prototypical individualized dwelling unit and the layout of 19 such units on a typical floor of The Andrews – Common Ground's lodging house on the Bowery - which will shortly be renovated to house the First Step Housing Program. First Step will offer private, safe, clean and affordable short-term accommodations to individuals who are transitioning to housing, facing homelessness, or who have rejected or failed in other programs.

"First Step Housing will reach out to homeless individuals who do not access the City's shelters by reinventing the traditional lodging house and offering private, safe, clean and affordable short-term accommodations," said Rosanne Haggerty, president and founder of Common Ground Community. "We're overwhelmed not only by the response to our competition but how each entry reflected the importance of addressing the needs of these individuals with well-designed living spaces that are attractive, functional, and cost effective to build."

180 entries were received from 13 countries, ranging from individual applicants to school groups to design firms. Jurors for the competition included Steven Holl, Architect and Professor of Architecture, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University; Michael Bell, Associate Professor of Architecture, Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University; Julie Eizenberg, Koning Eizenberg Architecture; Andrew Freear, Director, Rural Studio, Auburn University; Toshiko Mori, Professor in Practice and Chair, Harvard Design School; Rosalie Genevro, Executive Director of the Architectural League and Ms. Haggerty.

"There were a number of interesting submissions for this extremely constrained problem," said Mr. Holl. "Five submissions stood out for different reasons, including material invention in one, concept in another, etc. I look forward to the individual development and realization by each talented young team. It will be a challenge for certain but we hope the problem of these minimal rooms can be invigorated by the inspirations of young architects."

Said Ms. Genevro, "we were extremely impressed with the thoughtfulness many of the competitors brought to the challenge of creating comfort and accommodation in these very small spaces, and with the ingenuity, skill, and attention to detail they brought to issues of replicability and cost. The economic and technical pressures that constrain this housing are fierce, but we believe these fresh ideas can help open a new realm of possibility for First Step housing."

Ms. Mori felt "the winners embodied five essential practical issues in addition to conceptual strength in their design: units designed as a kit of parts; material innovation; spatial unity; the need for improved common spaces for community interaction, and the pre-fab and modular construction necessary for phasing the project. They gave their units a sense of individuality and privacy at the same time."

An exhibition featuring the 180 entries from the competition as well as the winning designs will open in The Ballroom at The Prince George on Wednesday, November 12th and will run through December 12th. The Prince George is located at 14 East 28th Street. For more information on exhibition hours and how to get to The Prince George please call 212-389-9300 or visit Common Ground's website at [www.commonground.org](http://www.commonground.org).

The winners of the First Step Housing Competition are:

**"Soft House"**

Forsythe + MacAllen Design, Vancouver British Columbia  
Stephanie Forsythe and Todd MacAllen

**"Nesting"**

Harvard Design School, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Students David Gwinn, Basil Lee and Tom McMahon

**"Kit of Parts"**

LifeForm, New York, New York  
Rafi Elbaz, Nanna Wulffing and Julia Tate

**"The Ordering of Things"**

New York, New York  
Katherine Chang and Aaron Gabriel

**"Cocoon"**

Brooklyn, New York  
Daniela Fabricius

Each team will receive a \$2,000 cash prize. The winners whose final designs are manufactured and installed at The Andrews House will also be paid a design fee.

The Architectural League is one of the country's leading forums for the presentation and discussion of important work and ideas in contemporary architecture and design. Through exhibitions, lectures, competitions, publications and special events, the League helps architects, designers and the public enrich their understanding of architecture and its critical contributions to public life.

Common Ground Community is a non-profit housing and community development organization whose mission is to end homelessness through innovative programs that transform people, buildings and communities.

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