



## The Veteran Project at Sugar Hill

### Trauma-Informed Design to Promote Health and Healing for Veterans

#### Sugar Hill Project Partners

Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc (POAH)  
Volunteers of America Michigan  
Develop Detroit  
Value City Furniture  
Vasundhara Toila (local artist)

#### Partnering Organizations

Interior Designers Coalition For Change (IDCFC)  
AIA Detroit  
International Interior Design Association (IIDA)  
American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)

#### NORR Project Team Sponsors

NBS Commercial Interiors  
Steelcase  
Rulon International  
EF Contract

NBS and Steelcase were pleased to collaborate with NORR Architects and other partners to furnish apartment units for veterans in Detroit. The project was guided by the principles of trauma-informed design, which uses design and furnishing elements to create spaces that promote safety, wellbeing, and comfort.

NBS and Steelcase donated furniture and installation services to support the project. Lori Powe, an NBS Principal and Chief Client Officer, says, "NBS was honored to partner with NORR on this impactful community project supporting our American Veterans. It was wonderful to see how so many industry organizations and sponsors came together to support this worthy cause."

The veteran initiative is part of the Sugar Hill Mixed-Use Development project, led by the Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc. (POAH) in collaboration with the City of Detroit and nonprofit Develop Detroit. Of the 68 new apartments, 25% have been designated as affordable housing, including 14 units for veterans.

Many of our veterans suffer from lifelong physical and mental trauma, which not only impacts them but the success of their communities as well. Trauma-informed design can help build resilience and be an effective way to help veterans recover and heal. It has been tested and proven to strengthen outcomes in healthcare and education, but it has not been fully embraced in affordable rental housing...until now.



#### NORR Design Team

Alex Froehlich  
 Carla Cacilhas  
 Chad Menard  
 Claudia Padilla  
 Larry Kowalski  
 Maria Leon-Walter  
 Nicole Gerou  
 Scott Catallo



The Veterans Project at Sugar Hill was a true industry collaboration. Teams of volunteers, including architects, interior designers, and even students, were assigned to each apartment to put their creativity, mindshare, and hearts together to design and furnish these safe havens for veterans transitioning into permanent housing.

NORR Architects is one of many design firms who jumped at the opportunity to participate. Carla Cacilhas, NORR Senior Interior Designer, shares, “The team saw this opportunity to give back to the community while utilizing our skills and talents.” They took into consideration everything a veteran suffering from trauma would need in a space to feel more comfortable – from the lighting choices to colors, acoustics, and furniture selection. The vision for the apartment was to be a calming, comfortable, and soothing environment. The team’s design maximized natural daylight and infused wood tones, filling the apartment with homey touches such as plants, artwork from a local artist, and lots of textures.

NORR’s approach to the design of the apartment’s interior started with a focus on three major elements: functionality, comfort, and tranquility. NORR chose supporting partners—including NBS—to donate products, materials and installation services to address these elements. Functionality included addressing the acoustics in the open studio apartment. Unique wood-tone acoustic wall panels from Rulon International add a touch of warmth in the space while dampening sound. To address comfort, NBS and Steelcase contributed cozy lounge furniture and an inviting dining table. The intentionally curated furniture and material palette of light neutrals, rich woods, and a calming blue accent color is seen throughout. Other partners included EF Contract, who donated carpet tiles to create area rugs for comfort underfoot.

NBS was honored and proud to be a part of this amazing project that will leave a lasting positive impact on our community. The initiative was a powerful way to bring together so many industry volunteers to design for a very special segment of our population, our American Vets.

To learn more about this community project, visit <https://lnkd.in/gGStRx4W>

