

welcome, new hires!



ELENA FADEEVA
Technical Designer

"I love to do pastel hand drawings, take glider flights (with an instructor) and I love racoons."



JEEU KIM
Designer

"I love working with my hands. Outside of work, you can find me either brewing coffee, giving someone a tattoo, or playing pickleball!"



RICK MYERS, AIA, CSI
Senior Project Architect

"As a military child, I attended 11 different schools from 1st grade to High School. There was even an article about me in the school paper as the first student of Asian ancestry at an elementary school in Ohio."



DEANNA CARILLO
Technical Support - Marketing

"I decided to learn more about Korean culture after I was introduced to K-pop. I hope to be able to visit Korea one day soon!"



CHELSEA ASHBURN
Interior Designer

"My taste in music is all over the place. I love 60's country, 90's alternative, and techno. Some of my favorite bands are Beastie Boys."

perspectives

RYSE PROJECT IN WEST O'AHU: A PLACE TO BELONG, A FUTURE TO BUILD

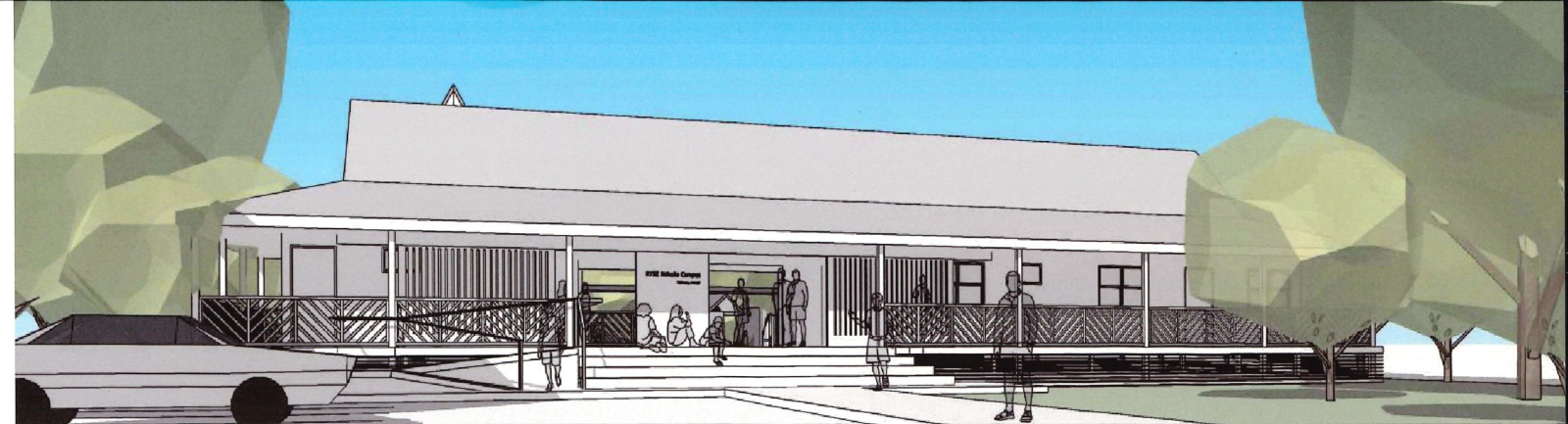
A place to land can change everything. For youth experiencing housing insecurity in Wai'anae or transitioning out of the foster system, that place is taking shape through RYSE (Residential Youth Services & Empowerment), a nonprofit dedicated to providing housing, life skills training, and a pathway toward long-term stability. What began as an emergency shelter quickly revealed the need for more lasting, community-centered solutions. This expansion in Leeward O'ahu responds to that need, addressing one of the highest concentrations of unsheltered youth in Hawai'i.

The project is part of AHL's 1% program, which offers pro-bono design services for nonprofit organizations. AHL assembled a team of consultants who are also offering their services pro-bono: WSP (structural engineering), GOTO Engineering LLC (civil engineering), Engineering Pro Guides LLC (mechanical and plumbing engineering), and Pacific Engineering Consultants LLC (electrical engineering).

When RYSE first introduced its plans, some in the community were unsure about what the project would mean for their neighborhood. Concerns about group living and its impact on the area were raised, but through ongoing conversations and collaboration, support began to follow.

"Finding common ground has been our goal and strategy throughout planning," said Carla Houser, Executive Director of RYSE. "We continue to work with community members to create a solution that benefited everyone. One of the key compromises was incorporating a commercial kitchen that could be used for fundraising and community events, transforming the campus into a shared resource."

Surrounded by agricultural land and single-family homes, the design needed to be contextually relevant to the Hawaiian environment. From the street, the main house presents itself as a large plantation style home, fostering a sense of warmth and inclusion. This creates a familiar and welcoming first impression for youth arriving at a critical moment in their lives. The site will include a drop-in center where young people can access showers, meals, and case management, along with transitional housing where residents can stay until they turn 25.



allow residents to experience having a home of their own while remaining close to staff and peers for support.

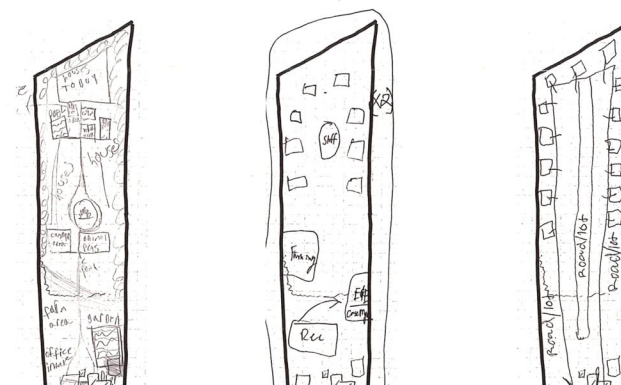
Throughout the campus, indoor and outdoor spaces are thoughtfully connected. Shaded walkways, covered lanai, and breezy gathering areas encourage movement and interaction while making the most of the warm climate. Large doors open up common spaces to fresh air, reducing the need for mechanical cooling on cooler days and reinforcing a deeper connection to the land and the community.

RYSE held design charrettes with young people who had experienced houselessness, including six from Wai'anae. Their input directly shaped the project, allowing the voices of those it will serve to be at the heart of the design.

"They told us what home meant to them," Houser said. "They wanted a place with a basketball court, outdoor spaces, and areas where they could gather but also have privacy. They wanted it to feel like a neighborhood, not an institution."

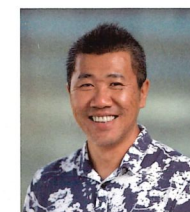
In Wai'anae, kupuna (elders) play an essential role in the community, and youth expressed the desire to have mentors onsite. To support this, the campus includes an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) dedicated to kupuna housing—creating a space where elders can serve as guides and role models, strengthening connections across generations.

The campus also features a cultural center, where youth can engage in hands-on learning. Built with guidance from local builders and volunteers, a traditional hale serves as both a classroom and a connection to cultural roots.



This project represents more than new housing—it marks a shift in how we approach solutions for youth who are at risk. By integrating community input, cultural identity, and pathways for independence, the new RYSE campus is not just meeting an urgent need, but laying the groundwork for lasting change.

For AHL, this project highlights the power of community-driven design—creating opportunities for connection, learning, and stability. Architecture is more than the spaces we shape; it's about the lives we help transform.



LESTER NG
Principal, Director of Design

