

THE TAPESTRY HOUSE STORY

Helping others has always been part of NARI Atlanta's focus, but creating an Outreach Committee has allowed this chapter to extend its reach into the community in several different ways.

This special project was initiated by one of NARI's members, Mary Ellen Badger, an Interior Designer. She suggested that students in her profession needed to learn more about remodeling, while getting practical experience in the field and helping people in crisis. This concept, called REACH (**R**enovation and **E**ducation **A**bout **C**risis **H**ousing) resulted in a course designed, taught and juried by NARI Atlanta members, and faculty at American Intercontinental University. This course gave the students the opportunity to interact with professionals, while analyzing, designing, and presenting, a real life project. The subject was Tapestry House, a crisis center for unwed mothers and their babies in Atlanta.

The existing house is over 100 years old, and is located in a residential neighborhood. Outdated plumbing, lack of privacy, and structural issues all required attention. The needs of the girls and their babies had to be balanced with practicality and cost factors.

While learning the principles of construction, the students took field trips to the site to interview the Director about her perception of the needs of the facility, to measure and study the structure, and to make plans for the remodeling. They returned to the classroom, tasked to create a theme and concept for the remodeling which would be theirs alone. The final course requirements included complete story boards with existing and proposed CAD drawings, photographs, furniture space plans, and specifications for all areas. A separate written analysis explaining their concept, and how they applied it to the remodeling plans completed the package.

Following jury review, the students were honored at a special NARI dinner, where the membership was amazed at the work the Interior Design students accomplished. There was a greater awareness of what Interior Design education entails, and how it can interface with remodeling. Students were given awards for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places through member donations.

Later, a request by Tapestry House for a grant from the Woodruff Foundation got NARI members involved in modifying the original student projects to combine the best of each into one viable plan based on the current needs of the Home. NARI contractors completed a cost analysis for the remodeling, delineating each area separately so that they could be built as funds become available. Once projects are approved, NARI contractors will have the opportunity to bid on the remodeling projects.

Reaching out to students (the future of NARI), and touching the lives of those in need makes this a very special project which NARI Atlanta has really enjoyed.