



Architects

**Justice, Equity, Diversity  
& Inclusion (JEDI)  
Committee Newsletter**

***MARCH - APRIL***

Brittany Hodge & Janelle Wilkening



As we reflect on the past months, March and April were filled with empowering events and mentorship opportunities in the JEDI sphere. Among the highlights was a special visit from Dominique Anderson, whose insights on affordable housing deepened our understanding and commitment to this vital aspect of our community. We also celebrated Women's History Month and took time to honor the remarkable women of EOA. Among our favorite events was the HBCU lunch & learn where our committee was able to shed light on the significance of HBCUs and understand their importance in our architecture profession and education. We are excited to share all the details with you!

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## **JEDI Team' Activities**

### **Women's History Month**

For Women's History Month, we celebrated the amazing women at EOA, as well as our fearless female leaders. Being a majority women-owned business, EOA strives to be a model for how we can create meaningful change for women in the design industry. According to AIA's Firm Survey Report, in 2021 architectural firms on average had 36% female staff and only 23% of firms have female principals or partners. In 2024, EOA's staff is 55% female. Through the celebration of Women's History Month, we reflected on the continued mentorship and support that has helped our community flourish and hope to pass this along to the women who come after us.

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### **March 1 – Populace: Affordable Housing**

Dominique Anderson, a seasoned advocate for equitable housing solutions, shared her expertise with EOA during a recent lunch and learn session. As a leading figure at Populace Community Strategy in Nashville, Dominique brings a wealth of experience in community development and urban planning to the table. Her

dedication to fostering inclusive spaces and affordable housing solutions has made her a respected voice in the field.

During the session, Dominique highlighted the transformative potential of Positive Gentrification through strategies such as community land trusts and mutual gardens, emphasizing the importance of equitable access to spaces for all community members. She underscored the role of community benefit agreements in preserving community values over time, stressing the need for coordinated efforts within individual communities to ensure lasting impact.

Dominique also shed light on the financial incentives of affordable housing for developers, while acknowledging the complexities of balancing profitability with community interests. She explored innovative solutions like pocket communities and modular construction as means to maximize space and foster a sense of neighborhood within limited footprints.

Dominique posed thought-provoking questions to developers, encouraging them to consider their fears, engage with professional liaisons, and find interest in socially impactful investments. The session sparked lively discussions among EOA attendees, empowering them to become advocates for affordable housing and agents of positive change in our community.

Learn more about Populace Community Strategy [[Link](#)]

Learn more about Dominique Anderson [[Link](#)]

Empower Build Thrive Podcast [[Link](#)]



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## March 12 – Preston Taylor Ministries Shadowing

In March, EOA had a visit from Preston Taylor Ministries as part of their Spring Break in the Marketplace program. Eleven students came by, and we showed them around the office, chatting about different EOA projects and how they come together



from start to finish. The visit was full of fun moments, like Brandon sharing his cool Parking Day project from 2023, and Hope giving a peek into her school projects through her portfolio. The kids had a blast and appreciated getting a taste of architecture and interior design.

Learn more about Preston Taylor Ministries [\[Link\]](#)

Reach out about Volunteer Opportunities [\[Link\]](#)



### **March 23 – TSU Portfolio Workshop**

In March, EOA's JEDI committee organized a portfolio workshop tailored for interior design students at Tennessee State University (TSU). Guided by Hannah, the session focused on crafting a compelling portfolio, and insights into layout, graphic design, content selection, and invaluable job search strategies.



TSU, a prominent HBCU in Nashville, has programs in interior design and architectural engineering. Our JEDI Committee is actively engaging with these programs, seeking to establish lasting mentorship relationships and cultivate a steady pipeline of talent for our industry.

Learn more about TSU's Interior Design Program [[Link](#)]



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### **April 9 – Elevating Education: The 7 HBCUs of Architecture**

EOA's internal JEDI Committee researched, compiled, and presented "Elevating Education: The 7 HBCUs of Architecture,". This presentation was all about shedding light on the significance of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in shaping architectural education. Our JEDI committee is on a mission to foster a more inclusive community, and this presentation was a key part of that journey.

EOA proudly supports the NOMA HBCU Professional Development Program, and this research was our way of digging deeper into the world of HBCUs. We wanted to understand why they matter for the architecture profession and how they provide accessible education for Black and African American students. We delved into what HBCUs are, how they were formed, where they are located, and how they contribute to architectural education.

Throughout the presentation, we celebrated the unique culture and sense of belonging that HBCUs offer. Participants heard about the history, degree programs, and notable alumni from each of the 7 HBCUs we covered, including Howard and Tuskegee University. At the end, participants were ready to take action. We discussed how to stay connected with each HBCU, mentor students, and support recruitment efforts. Plus, we highlighted National HBCU Week in September as a time to celebrate these incredible institutions.



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## April 26 – Re:Form TN: Season 2, Episode 1: Workplace Culture

In this opening episode of Re:Form TN's second season, the podcast explores workplace culture within architecture, guided by the AIA's Guides for Equitable Practice. Brittany, EOA's very own, co-hosts the season with Lauren White, both leaders through AIA Middle Tennessee's Emerging Professionals Committee.

Tonya Spry, HR Director at Gresham Smith, and Rachel Gresham, Senior Director of Professional Practice Programs at AIA, join as guests, offering a wealth of experience and insights. Tonya's extensive leadership in HR, spanning over two decades, pairs with Rachel's unique journey from architect to industry advocate.

The conversation revolves around workplace culture, tackling stereotypes and sharing strategies for cultivating inclusivity. Both guests emphasize the pivotal role of communication, mentorship, and proactive initiatives in fostering positive environments. They highlight the importance of addressing shortcomings and implementing programs to drive cultural transformation.

Throughout the episode, practical advice intertwines with personal narratives, creating a dynamic dialogue that resonates with emerging and seasoned architects alike. Tonya and Rachel's passion for equity, inclusion, and mentorship shines through as they advocate for a more supportive and diverse architectural community.

By dissecting workplace dynamics and advocating for change, the episode sets a compelling tone for the season ahead, promising further exploration of resilience and progress within the profession.

Listen here [\[Link\]](#)

AIA Guides for Equitable Practice [\[Link\]](#)





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## April 20 - Creative Girls Rock

In April, EOA teamed up with Creative Girls Rock® and NOMAnash to host an Architecture Camp titled "Building Dreams through Creativity" as part of their Master Class Series. Geared towards girls aged 12-17, the camp aimed to ignite passion for architecture while fostering creativity, critical thinking, and leadership skills. EOA presented sustainable concepts, like LEED, through multiple current projects, and emphasized the importance of eco-friendly design practices. Adding an interactive twist, the girls engaged in Mytopia, a green city builder game, where they could implement sustainable strategies for their city. The camp's culminating project, over the whole month of April, involves the design of a playground for the Bordeaux Collaboration, set to break ground in Spring of 2024. We had a blast engaging with the girls and relished the opportunity to empower them to envision a greener, more sustainable future through architecture.

To learn more about Creative Girls Rock [\[Link\]](#)

CGR Master Class Series: Architecture Camp for Girls [\[Link\]](#)

Mytopia: The Green City Builder [\[Link\]](#)



A CGR MASTER CLASS SERIES

# ARCHITECTURE CAMP

April 2024

Unlock Your Creative Blueprint  
FOR TEEN GIRLS, AGES 12-17

**Workshop Highlights:**

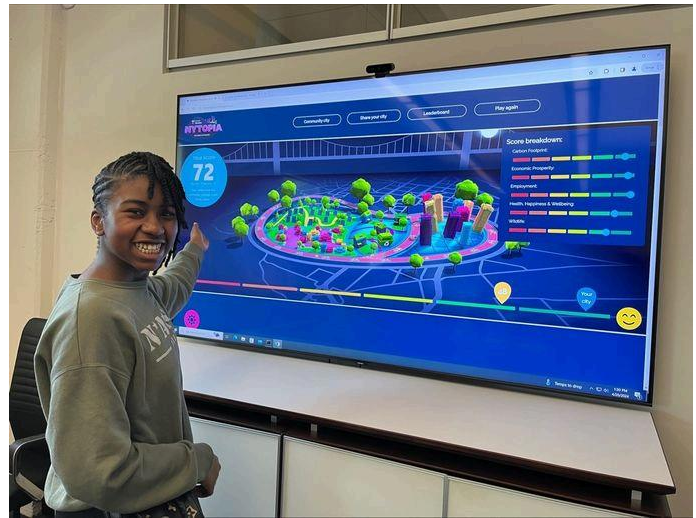
- Master the art of architectural design.
- Learn from industry experts and architects.
- Hands-on experience with the latest tools.
- Collaborate with like-minded enthusiasts.

Registration Required  
LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE

Moody Nolan

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