

project profile: case study

ywca regina

LOCATION	INDUSTRY	DESIGNER	DEALER	PRODUCTS FEATURED
Regina, Saskatchewan Canada	Not-for-profit	1080 Architecture Planning + Interiors Number TEN Architecture	Concept3 Business Interiors	Tek Vue Expansion Cityline Tone Routes Kiosk Collaborative Ottomans hiSpace Infinity screens Swerv monitor arms Variable Expansion training Zones Kupp Expansion Casegoods Havn Fractals Petal Pico Nexus (Gus Modern)



the challenge:

Creating a space to provide care for the local community.

The YWCA of Regina needed to build a new space that could support a range of needs and services including a domestic violence and homeless shelter for women and children, as well as a community hub with outreach, childcare and other community services. With over 90% of women and children the YWCA Regina serve being members of the Indigenous community, it was vital that the new space design was respectful of Indigenous needs and values—and not reinforce traditional colonial and institutional approaches to providing services.



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the solution:

A place where everyone feels safe and included.

The YWCA Kikaskihtânaw Centre for Women and Families mission is to provide community, kinship, hope and healing to the community it serves. Kikaskihtânaw is a Cree word that translates to ‘the place we all succeed.’ To support this message, the design team employed a trauma-informed design approach that focused on inclusion, accessibility and safety. Says Melissa Coomber-Bendtsen, CEO, YWCA Regina, “It was important for everyone involved in the project to understand how to take a large institutional building and make it feel homey, soft and safe.”

Explains design team lead, LeeAnn Croft, Principal, 1080 Architecture Planning + Interiors, “To avoid having it feel like a very regimented, rectangular space typically seen in institutional buildings, a lot of attention was paid to transparency, visibility, and sight lines so you never feel like you’re in a corner.” Mimicking a horseshoe shape, the building features a curved walkway that connects all areas and brings natural light into every part of the building. The focal point of the building is the sweat lodge, which can be seen from everywhere to reinforce the healing nature of the building. A single, main entrance naturally encourages people to cross paths and connect. From the entrance, the atrium offers a café and storefronts that include a thrift shop. The building also contains a resident area with three storeys of housing and services for women at risk. Other areas include childcare, youth and community hubs along with staff and administrative spaces.

It is important the space demonstrates the YWCA values their clients. Furniture is used as a de-escalation tool to evoke a sense of calm, comfort and safety. Explains Coomber-Bendtsen “If people feel they are walking into an institution, it lays the framework for an explosion. By choosing to use our budget more on client spaces rather than executive areas, we were able to get high quality furniture where you feel you are being hugged and embraced—that doesn’t feel like you’re in a psych ward.” She adds “We wanted them to think ‘You’ve seen my worth, so I’ve started seeing my worth.’”

A mixture of soft colors and textures like vinyl that feels like velvet provides the durability needed for a shelter setting without looking institutional. A diversity of furniture pieces extends to all areas to create a residential feel and enhance the feeling of choice. Furniture was selected not simply for application but how it could promote collaboration. Adds Coomber-Bendtsen, “When I saw how Teknion’s furniture brought people together in a way that honors relationships first, I knew it was the right choice for our space.” Not only has the building been embraced by the larger community to create a vibrant hub, it has also been effective in reducing the number of crisis incidents occurring on-site. Coomber-Bendtsen concludes “We are proud to have become a trusted place for the community to gather. To have created a space where people feel they belong, is proof positive that we’ve succeeded.”

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