



AP+I Project Abstract

ID4-ME | Interior Design for Me: an after-school interior design program for communities of color.

PURPOSE

Diversity and inclusion in the Interior Design profession has been sorely lacking since its existence. Given the circumstances of society today, where communities are rising up to fight for equity and change, we feel we must do the same. As creatives, we value different perspectives and backgrounds, as a catalyst for innovative design and see the impact of design for all communities when our teams are made up of people from diverse communities. It helps us create and build spaces, where our designs can be made for all, by all and the experiences we create in these built spaces are as diverse as the people who created them.

Like many programs within K-12 schools, we know that the creative fields are often the first to lose funding, and as such, the exposure to opportunities in our field is rare, and even more so for communities of color from disadvantaged regions. This is happening with students in the lower grades, and particularly in high school, when students are beginning to formulate their ideas and desires around career choices.

For these reasons, we have developed an after-school program called ID4-ME, Interior Design for Me, with the goal of diversifying our profession by sharing knowledge and expertise about the practice of Interior Design as a career option to young students, specifically to students of color within disadvantaged communities. The program engages high school students at Title 1 school to learn about the field through an 8-week program. We have taken the students on a journey to explore the design of various spaces and the impact design has on the way we live, learn, work, and play.

THE PROCESS

Before we began the program, we had to find the right high school and the right students who would benefit and be excited about this opportunity. We looked within our community and discovered an enthusiastic principal at East Palo Alto Academy, EPAA, a Title 1 school.

Through engagement with EPAA, Sequoia Union High School District, administrators and with adherence to county guidelines, we embarked on our journey to define how we would deliver our after-school program. We prepared tools and documents to communicate our program goals. We developed a strong relationship with EPAA which gave us the insight and direction needed to meet the criteria, schedule and overarching needs of the students.



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THE PROGRAM

On January 15, 2021 we began our program with 6 high school students at the East Palo Alto Academy, a small public charter high school. Due to the pandemic, the weekly sessions have pivoted to be a virtual learning experience. Two Interior Designers from AP+I Design, Cindy Mallay and Khaing Sabe, lead the weekly sessions with a curated lesson plan that exposes students to the field of Interior Design. Students have explored the basics of design and engaged in interactive conversations about color, light, form, and function. We have been fortunate to be working with an inspiring and motivated group of high school students.

DIVERSIFYING OUR PROFESSION

Upon the completion of the formal program, one student will be selected for a paid summer internship with AP+I Design. The hope is that through this internship, the student will be able to further connect with other designers in our firm and the industry, in addition to learning more about the field of Interior Design.

Now that we have developed and implemented this program, our hope is that other firms in the design community can join us, either in helping to teach the curriculum we develop or to take the bones of our program and begin their own outreach.

About the ONEder Grant Program

One Workplace, the largest workplace solutions company on the West Coast, launched the ONEder grant program in 2019 to support and celebrate thought leadership in the architecture and design community. As forward-thinking thought leaders in their own right, One Workplace strives to elevate the roles of architects & designers in the constantly-changing landscape of the modern workplace.

A new round of grants is currently open for applications. In 2021, One Workplace will award grants of \$20,000 each to firms in the Bay Area and Sacramento. For more information, please visit: <https://go.oneworkplace.com/oneder-grant-application>.