

September 19-21, 2016
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Featured Article:

What's Next???: The New Future of Healthcare Design

By Dr. Wayne Ruga, FAIA, FIIDA, Hon. FASID

What first brought you to the Symposium? There are almost as many different answers to this question as there are stars in the cosmos. However, some of the more frequently heard responses to this question, are:

to find out new..... (where the filling in of the dots could be – trends, ideas, products or industry leaders – for example).

Throughout its history, the Symposium has distinguished itself as being 'the place' where a dynamic cross-section of industry stakeholders can learn from each other and share new resources – all in the service of working, together, toward creating a new and better future for the overall healthcare industry. At the most basic level, one very



tangible outcome that the Symposium can be credited for, is its being the platform that consistently informs future improvements in healthcare design – from healing environments, to research-based design, to generative space design.

Of course, the universe of healthcare design spans a vast spectrum of separate, parallel, diverse strands of interest areas. Also, of course, each one of these areas is important in its ability to contribute towards improvements in the entire industry. The Symposium, in supporting its stakeholders in improving the overall healthcare industry, offers an extremely diverse mix of resources – including most of these diverse strands - in continuing its commitment to inform future improvements.

However, when you more closely examine the specific DNA of the Symposium – its unique selling point – beyond what has been commonly described as its distinguishing characteristics, one very unusual quality becomes apparent; a quality that the Symposium introduced, has consistently advocated for, and one that is as embedded in – both - the culture of the Symposium event experience as it also is in the history of its programs – the quality of ‘caring’.

To be certain – one of the interest area strands in healthcare design that is increasingly blipping on the radar screens of leading healthcare provider organizations is learning how to provide a more ‘caring’ environment. Not only just what had previously been called a ‘healing environment’, and – now – beyond what has become obvious as the limitations of ‘evidence-based design’, and – indeed – these are both important contributors to more caring environments, but progressing into the ‘beyond’ is what this new future is calling for.

It's obvious, really. If the work of the healthcare industry is to provide healthcare delivery, then we need to find a way to deliver as much of a meaningful ‘caring’ experience, as well as we do provide proficiency in the provision of diagnostic and treatment services. Additionally, one of the characteristics of this new future is in understanding how to deliver a seamless ‘caring’ experience not just for the patients – this ‘caring’ experience must be one that is delivered by the provider organization for all of its stakeholders – the patients and their families, the organizational staff, the visitors, and the overall community within which the organization is situated. This is the ‘caring’ environment of the new future.

How, exactly, do we design one of these new-future ‘caring’ environments? The answer to that question, brings us back to where we began...Come, again – this year, to the Symposium to find the next, new future - - - and the resources that you will need to bring back home with you to create it in your own community.

Wayne Ruga is the Founder and President of The CARITAS Project, a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing more CARITAS – or caring – into our lives, organizations, and communities. He is both the founder of the Healthcare Facilities Symposium and the Special Advisor to it. Additionally, Wayne organizes the Generative Space Track at the HFSE – please see: www.hcarefacilities.com/generativespace.asp .

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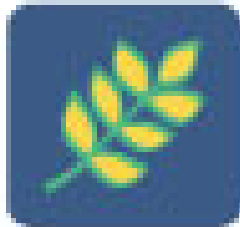
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