

## Kaplan Construction earns ABC's Excellence in Construction Award for renovation of the Brookline Teen Center



Shown (from left) are: Pamela Volm, ABC's 2015 National chairman; Nate Peck and Jane Kaplan Peck of Kaplan. (Credit: Kevin Dietsch)

According to Kaplan Construction, a WBE general contractor and construction management firm providing comprehensive building programs across Greater Boston, the firm's renovation of the Brookline Teen Center (BTC) has won a National Excellence in Construction Award (EICA) from the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC). Kaplan received a Pyramid Award in the Community/Public Service category from ABC National and an Eagle Award from ABC Mass. for this project. ABC's National Excellence in Construction program has become the premier competition within the construction industry that recognizes outstanding construction projects across the nation. The annual awards were presented at the 25th Annual Excellence in Construction Gala in Fort Lauderdale, FL on March 5.

Architectural design for the BTC was provided by studio MLA Architects and GMI Architects. Additional project team members included GLC Development Resources, Stantec, RSE Associates, Acentech and WSP Flack & Kurtz. Located in a former garage, the 12,000 s/f space underwent extensive renovations to be transformed into a vibrant and modern environment suitable for teens.

"This project is an outstanding example of how teamwork and quality craftsmanship and perseverance can result in a project that we are proud to claim as merit shop," said

ABC's 2015 National chairman Pamela Volm, president of Annapolis Contracting, Inc. in Annapolis, Md. "The project truly shows how being committed to innovation, quality and safety can produce impressive results."

Serving grades 9 through 12, the BTC features a bowling alley, gym, recording studio, lounge, outdoor patio, café, aerobics dance studio, game rooms, and study hall. Kaplan began working with the BTC in 2008 and many meetings were held at the Kaplan office with the team, consisting of architects, engineers, consultants and the teens themselves.

Founded by Paul Epstein, a Brookline High School social worker and graduate, the Brookline Teen Center is the only dedicated facility providing out-of-school activities for teens in grades seven through twelve who attend school or live in Brookline.

"Kaplan Construction was truly our partner in realizing the vision for the Brookline Teen Center," said Matthew Cooney, executive director for the Brookline Teen Center. "Kaplan's deep roots in Brookline and their dedication to our community, combined with the company's tremendous construction expertise, have helped this neighborhood come together to create a place for local youth to learn, grow and have fun."

From the earliest stages of the conceptual design process, the BTC organization was committed to sustainability as a core value. The building will serve as a community resource for youth, who are aware of and committed to the future of their environment. The BTC features many environmentally-responsible elements including the use of sustainable building materials, water-efficient practices, and a green mechanical and electrical system within a more energy-efficient exterior envelope. The project is expected to achieve LEED Silver certification.

Having the input of the teens was an unexpected benefit, particularly with the use and distribution of recycled materials. Kaplan used corrugated metal siding, hardi-panels, and highway guardrails repurposed from a nearby road project for the "skin" of the new elevator tower and canopy additions. Not only did this result in savings, it helped define the "edgy" look requested by the teens.

"Introducing teens to the design, preconstruction and construction processes helps improve our industry and hopefully will encourage them to pursue an education and career in architecture, engineering or construction. The fact that the end product would result in an amazing center for the use and benefit of their peers also played a major role in their participation and overall excitement that helped these students feel more connected to the construction process," said Nate Peck, LEED AP, president of Kaplan Construction. "In our almost 40 years of construction experience, it is not often that you have the privilege of being part of such a broad-based community undertaking. We have been amply rewarded for all of our hard work - both paid and pro bono - by seeing the BTC become an integral part of the Brookline community as soon as it opened. We are honored to see this work recognized by the ABC and the construction industry."

Understandably, the neighborhood had concerns regarding noise from the teen center. One neighbor's bedroom is less than 10 feet away from where bands would perform for parties of up to 450 teens. Working closely with the acoustical consultant Acentech, sound mitigation techniques included isolating the mechanical and electrical systems, double sound isolation walls and the use of sound control windows and doors. Internal sound isolation was also required to allow different activities to occur at the same time, including music rehearsal rooms, recording studio and study areas situated alongside a dance studio, café and bowling alley. At the end of the day, these efforts were successful; numerous dances have taken place with minimal neighborhood complaints.