

## **Frank Architects Inc. Background and Contact Information**

Founded in 1996 as Frank Architects Inc.(FAI Architects), FAI is a multi-disciplinary, full service practice that focuses on community facilities, institutional and commercial design, historic preservation/ restoration work, planning, site and landscape design. Additional services include site evaluations, needs assessment, site locating, project cost estimating, project management, historical preservation/ restoration survey's, master planning and feasibility studies. FAI springboards all of its projects from sixteen years of formal analysis of South Texas and the Borderlands. Our formal knowledge of the border is distilled from studies of structure, spatial relationships, and arrangements of elements, of the fabric of these cities as it exists in its historical and cultural contexts. Our projects when complete are programmatically well sighted within a layered yet unrealized blueprint of future growth. FAI practices within a system whereby excellence in architecture is achieved by the economy of ideas. All aspects of a design are from investigations into the site, programmatic requirements and continuous dialogue with our clients during the design process

In 1999 FAI Inc. became a certified minority – owned HUB (Historically Underutilized Business) and is a member of the U.S. Green Building Council. Sustainable design is the key to the success in the operation and maintenance of our building designs. Over the past 16 years our firm has been involved in projects totaling over \$ 375,000,000.00 (construction cost).

FAI members work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally, including exhibitions in Texas, New York, as well as the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C., the Venice Biennale and the Veronafiere International Marble exhibition in Italy. In 2005, the firm was presented the Texas Historical Commission Award of Excellence in Historic Architecture and has received numerous design awards from the American Institute of Architects (RVG Chapter), the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the American Institute of Interior Design, the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB/ TASA), the Webb County Heritage Foundation and the Austin Business Journal.

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## **Project Explanation and the Intended Use**

The James and Maria Luisa Haynes Health and Wellness Center is a recreational activity center designed to enhance the relationship between the environment, recreation, health, and the community, and we are proud to credit ourselves with the first green roof in Laredo.

The facility was planned as a multiuse activity center designed around the idea that recreation and environment go hand in hand in the health of an individual and a community. The project is a response to a new precedent set by the City of Laredo (Open Space Master Plan Indoor Recreational Priorities), and to meet the standards and further raise the bar, the building includes ecosystem restoration and xeriscaping; rainwater-collection systems, daylight harvesting, solar technology; and a community garden, which provides individual plots for seasonal planting of fruits and vegetables by individuals, families, or clubs. The composting center recycles plant material for use in the garden, greenhouse, and landscaping of the park.

The James and Maria Luisa Haynes Health and Wellness Center sits on a 9 acre site, and it is the trail head for the newly developed Chacon Creek Hike and Bike Trail System. The 56,000 square foot complex includes a special needs program, the first of its kind for the City of Laredo, which fills a gap in recreational activity providing special attention to people with disabilities. Inside is a double gymnasium; cardio-fitness and weight-training area; a dance studio, media room, lounge, and health-food concession stand; an upper-level walking and jogging track; locker rooms, and special need rooms. Outside: a swimming pool, community garden, jogging track, racquetball and tennis courts, bathroom facilities, and a recycling and composting center.

## **How the entry exhibits excellence in sustainability and environmental responsibility**

The elements of the architecture in this project were designed with sustainable building practices in mind. All components of the project, including the user, participate in the ecology of the site in that there is a relationship between the building, the user, and the environment. Educational features reinforce the concept that individual health is connected logically to the environment. Conservation techniques include ecosystem restoration and xeriscaping, rain and condensate water collection systems for irrigation, vegetative/white roof systems, daylight harvesting, solar technology and sustainable building materials including stonework quarried from the Rio Grande.