

Community, Placemaking & Peace

Registration open for Renaissance Kids architecture camp

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Mark Moreno, Renaissance Kids coordinator and director, works with one of the younger groups of architecture camp attendees.(Photo by Christa McConnell)

By: Becky St. Clair

Andrews University School of Architecture & Interior Design invites the community to register soon for its annual Renaissance Kids. This unique day-camp style architecture program gives kids ages 5-16 the opportunity to engage with fun, creative and educational hands-on activities relating to architecture. Space is limited and the first session begins Monday, June 12. The program has partnered this year to have some sessions be held at Krasl Art Center and Box Factory for the Arts. This summer's theme is "Community, Placemaking, & Peace."

Renaissance Kids participants are encouraged to use their imagination to problem-solve, draw and build throughout the program. The schedule, size, and location of the main project will shape with a lot of input from the kids. Their works will help shape the public presentations necessary for funding and any necessary municipal approvals.

"This project is meaningful on many levels, but personal for two reasons," explains Mark Moreno, associate professor of architecture, and developer/director of Renaissance Kids.

“First, it is inspired by Ibrahim Parlak, a Kurdish immigrant of 25 years. He is a friend of many years; our daughters went to school together. His story is complex and he finds himself caught politically as a stateless person, but he’s been here peacefully contributing to his community since 1991 when he was granted asylum in the U.S.”

Attendees will do a variety of design-related activities and be involved in the design of a Peace Garden inspired by Ibrahim Parlak and any other immigrants who struggle with difficult circumstances. Moreno encourages those who do not know Ibrahim already to read some of his story through links provided on the Renaissance Kids website, andrews.edu/go/renaissancekids.

“Second, my brother, Paul, was a committed community gardener who passed away in August 2016,” Moreno adds. “He was a supporter of Renaissance Kids and sympathetic to Ibrahim’s struggle to stay in the U.S. Paul’s will gifted \$1,000 to the camp and so it seems fitting to kick off a fundraising campaign with his generous gift.”

All activities in Renaissance Kids center on gaining understanding of people, history, culture, sustainability, design concepts, the architect’s tools, construction, materials and more.

“Community, placemaking and peace are all important themes for any time and place, as each is rooted in making the world more sustainable, beautiful and peaceful,” Moreno says. “All studio projects this year are immersed in the ideas of peace and human connection, and they culminate in a powerfully meaningful end result. At the end of the process, every young person will be able to proudly say, ‘I helped make that.’”

Camp session locations vary this year; most will be held at the University’s architecture building, located at 8435 E. Campus Circle Drive in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Other locations include Krasl Art Center in St. Joseph, Box Factory for the Arts in Benton Harbor, and Café Gulistan in Harbert. The program schedule is as follows:

Session A1: June 12–16, 8:30 a.m.–12 p.m., ages 5–7, \$165 (Andrews University)

Session B1: June 19-23, 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m., ages 7-9, \$165 (Andrews University)

Session C1: June 12-16, 1:45-5:15 p.m., ages 10-12, \$165 (Krasl Art Center)

Session D1: July 17-21 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.. ages 13-16, \$390 (Andrews University)
and

July 24-28 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.. ages 13-16, (Location TBD)

Session A2: June 26-30, 1:45–5:15 p.m., ages 5-7, \$165 (Andrews University)

Session B2: June 19-23, 1:45-5:15 p.m., ages 7-9, \$165 (Andrews University)

Session C2: June 26-30, 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m., ages 10-12, \$165 (Andrews University)

Session B3: June 19-23, 8:30 a.m.–5:15 p.m. (FULL DAY), ages 7–9, \$340 (Andrews University)

Session C3: July 10-14, 1:45-5:15 p.m., ages 10-12, \$165 (Box Factory for the Arts)

Session B4: July 10-14, 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m., ages 7–9, \$165 (Box Factory for the Arts)

Please note that session D1 is a two-week session.

“Renaissance Kids is an absolute joy to operate,” says Moreno. “We are building kids up by building with them. My staff and I get to watch the kids imaginatively create designs per specific educational challenges all while having fun. The kids will design, draw, and build in a creative friendly environment. Together, we get to produce artifacts that plant lasting memories in the community landscape that will remain for generations.”

Visit andrews.edu/go/renaissancekids to register, find more information about the camp, or to learn about Ibrahim Parlak’s story. If you have questions, contact Mark Moreno at mmoreno@andrews.edu or 269-932-5055.

Related Links

- [Register for Renaissance Kids](#)
- [Who is Ibrahim Parlak?](#)
- [Renaissance Kids 2016](#)
- [School of Architecture & Interior Design](#)
- [Krasl Art Center](#)
- [Box Factory for the Arts](#)
- [Cafe Gulistan](#)

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