



Affiliate Connection

Member Spotlight



**Shari Stein, MS, IIDA Associate, IDEC, ISPI,
Principal Interior Designer, DesignTeam Plus**

Briefly, describe your current role.

I am Principal Interior Designer at DesignTeam Plus, a woman-owned firm in Birmingham, MI. With more than 30 years of experience, I run the day-to-day operations of a full-service architectural and design firm where I am responsible for marketing and managing client relations from start to finish.

How long have you been affiliated with The Center?

Early in my career, as an employee at Beaumont Health in Royal Oak, MI, I started a networking group of interior designers who were affiliated with healthcare facilities to share best practices. In the 1980s I spoke at a panel on healthcare design and this is how I became familiar with The Center's CEO, Debra Levin. I have long respected and admired her and the global organization that she's created. It grew from a seed to a tree, with a community that is now composed not only of designers but of healthcare practitioners, and supported by evidence that shows mindful, patient-centered design results in better outcomes.

What led you to become a member?

The wealth of knowledge and expertise within the organization and in the community at large makes The Center the go-to resource for healthcare design. Everything they set out to create has manifested, and then some.

How did you get started in the industry?

As a student at the University of Michigan, I enrolled in an independent study with an instructor who was an expert in designing for the elderly. Around the same time, I remember visiting an aunt in a nursing home in New York and wanting to change the environment as soon as I saw how dreary and uninspiring her surroundings were. "Senior living" wasn't yet part of the vernacular, but I knew instinctively I wanted to change those environments for the better. When I started working at Beaumont, The

Center gave me a way to network with like-minded professionals; it was a way to bounce ideas off people long before the invention of the Internet!

Are you involved in any volunteer efforts?

Yad Ezra, a food pantry in Berkley, MI, is an anchor in the metropolitan Detroit community, distributing one million pounds of food per year. The addition of the Giving Gardens greenhouse, designed by DesignTeam Plus, combines the mission of providing hunger relief with social justice around food insecurity and education, and has had a ripple effect on the community, teaching people to grow, cook, and can their own food. As a company, we donate our time to Yad Ezra, and to other food pantries such as Gleaners. We also worked with Habitat for Humanity to construct a women-built house in the City of Pontiac.

What have you liked the most about being part of The Center for Health Design community?

At any time, The Center affords opportunities to professionals to share our expertise with one another, and this strength of the organization has become even more apparent during COVID. Healthcare design is specific, but in all areas of design in a (hopefully) post-pandemic world, we will have to think like healthcare designers. We already have to be more mindful than ever before about spacing, materials, and cleanliness. There are new standards that are not going away soon and The Center is an amazing resource for today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.

Is there someone who has inspired your work?

I had the great pleasure of working with Detroit-based architect Ken Neuman. He was an amazing individual, he was a creative genius who treated everyone with respect, whether you were the janitor or the CEO. He also had a sense of humor and a passion for his work. At the same time, he was involved in the larger community and in education, and thus he served as a good example to me of a business person who is committed to helping the community while pursuing a career. You don't have to forsake one for the other.

What is one of your favorite professional accomplishments?

Back in 2010 I started volunteering for Yad Ezra when I was an Instructor at Lawrence Technological University. The Interior Design & Architecture students designed the offices, and then students wanted to continue to volunteer by designing produce gardens and an exterior wall mural. Out of these efforts, a working relationship formed. Today the 1,400 square-foot Giving Gardens greenhouse at Yad Ezra attracts first-time, young volunteers to the food pantry and brings countless new clients to its doors to learn about urban farming, gardening, hunger, and food sustainability. For me, it is a labor of love.