

Beacon Hill Community Garden pavilion design/build



Last fall, twenty students in **Darryl Ohlenbusch's** Senior Architecture Studio participated in bringing a shade structure to the community garden in the Beacon Hill area of San Antonio. Located at the corner of West Gramercy Place and Capitol Street, the Beacon Hill Community Garden is managed by the **Beacon Hill Area Neighborhood Association**. It received a grant in September 2008 from **Green Spaces Alliance** and began gardening immediately. One third of the garden consists of harvestable vegetables that are available to the community while the remaining two thirds are native plants (including a wildflower garden, butterfly garden, and cactus garden).

Shortly after the garden opened, **Tenna Florian**, the garden representative as well as architect, approached Professor Darryl Ohlenbusch about an idea to bring a unique design-build project to the College of Architecture that could later be donated back to the garden. After deciding on a pavilion, the class was divided into five groups and each group designed a shade and rain-catchment structure for the garden. Only one of the five would be chosen to go in the garden.

Simultaneous to approaching Ohlenbusch, Tenna also contacted **Green Spaces Alliance** who were willing to fund the project as a part of its Community Garden Program. Green Spaces Alliance of South Texas, established in 2004, is a local land trust dedicated to the preservation of open spaces. Their mission is to protect land in and around Bexar County by preserving large parcels of land, fostering community gardens, and educating the public. In 2005, their Community Garden Program began with the mission to *"improve the health of our citizens and environment, beautify neighborhoods, and strengthen the community by providing a place for people to meet and bond."* They have now funded nineteen gardens in the San Antonio area, including the **Beacon Hill Community Garden**.

Approaching the end of the semester, the one group design was chosen and work began on building the pavilion. **Robert Alverado**, a local contractor with South Antonio Builders, was brought on board to provide technical support and tools. **Larry Rickels**, a structural engineer at Jaster-Quintanilla Structural Engineers was also hired to consult the students, as the city required a structural engineer for the structure in order to obtain a permit. The team worked hard to meet the \$1300 grant from Green Space Alliance.

On January 16th, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to present the pavilion to the community. Council woman **Mary Alice Cisneros**, Green Spaces Alliance representative **Linda Hardberger**, CoA Dean **John Murphy**, Associate Dean for Outreach **Taeg Nishimoto**, students, and members of the community all attended while the Beacon Hill Area Neighborhood Association provided food directly harvested from the garden. Garden Representative, Tenna Florian, had this to say on dedication day, "the process the students used went well and they had a lot of great ideas. It was hard to pick just one but once we did all of the students helped to build it. The design of the structure was a perfect solution and great addition to the garden."

