

## **NJIT Architectural Student Wins “Best Project” Award for Habitat Newark Townhouse Design**

*Sustainable and Affordable Design to be Built as Homes for Low Income Families*

**NEWARK, N.J. – December 15, 2009** – Students in Darius Sollohub’s New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) architectural studio had completed and submitted their townhouse designs. While all of them contained excellent learning experiences and many of them included elements that may be used in future Habitat for Humanity homes, only one of them could ultimately be used to build real homes for low income families in Newark.

“This is one of the greatest semesters in my years of teaching architecture at NJIT,” Sollohub said before announcing that the townhouse designed by Alex Merlucci had been picked as the project that would move forward to be built by Habitat for Humanity Newark in the coming year.



“To each of you, our heartfelt thanks for your hard work in designing homes for our Habitat families,” said Jim Corbett, Project Manager for Habitat for Humanity Newark. “There is an open invitation to each and every one of you to grab a hammer and help us build these homes next year.”

The team of fourth-year design students, taught by NJIT Associate Professor Darius Sollohub along with architect and engineer Jak Inglese, began working on their designs in September. They were tasked with designing practical, affordable, energy-efficient townhouses for Habitat Newark. Merlucci and runner-up Cara Constantino will soon begin an internship with Inglese, an expert on affordable housing and LEED design, who will become the architect of record and will complete the plans for the soon-to-be Habitat homes.

Awards were also given to students Katie Cerniglia, Allison Termyna, Anthony Allocca, Edward Lay, Ala Rustom and Joan Luifor research in various methods of sustainable building including geothermal technologies, radiant heat flooring systems, solar elements and rainwater collection.

Once the plans are finished and all needed approvals have been obtained, the building will be completed in the traditional Habitat for Humanity method, using crews that consist primarily of volunteers, including the families who will eventually become the homeowners. All Habitat homeowners contribute 400 hours of “sweat equity” on their homes and make payments on zero interest loans.

“Habitat for Humanity has been an amazing partner to the City of Newark, New Jersey,” said Newark Councilman Donald M. Payne Jr., who attended the award presentation. “It can’t be said enough how important their presence in our community has been. The collaboration with NJIT’s student body to produce fresh ideas, like the one created by Alex Merlucci, is second to none. We, here in the City of Newark, look forward to seeing this project come to fruition and thank NJIT and its student body for its ingenuity and forward thinking.”

For more information about Habitat Newark, call 973-624-3330 or visit them online at [www.habitatnewark.org](http://www.habitatnewark.org). For more information about NJIT, call 973-596-3000 or visit them online at [www.njit.edu](http://www.njit.edu).