Innovation in Urban Agriculture: Compost System Design
The Archeworks team partnered with Chicago International Charter School—Irving Park to design and build a compost system that processes their organic food waste and paper scraps. The tumbler system, which we installed in the school courtyard, is now managed by 7th and 8th graders, who will also develop a microenterprise to sell or donate surplus compost to the community. Additionally, we worked with students and teachers to develop a compost-related curriculum and school awareness campaign to promote the school’s zero waste goals, and prepare students to become lifelong ecological stewards.

INSPIRE! Gardens for All
Following our collaboration on a native seed farm in 2010, we continued to partner with the Chicago Botanic Garden on an inclusive garden design initiative that created an array of therapeutic and educational programs for disabled and senior gardeners. These included a ‘Gardening with Aphasia’ program and ‘Grow it Yourself,’ an interactive kit with program and site design ideas for gardeners of all abilities. Our team’s innovative work was informed by discussions with seniors at Provident Hospital and Montgomery Place, and disabled patients and therapists at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Our team also collaborated with engineering students at Northwestern University’s Segal Design Institute to prototype adaptive gardening tools.

Green Youth Farm: Design-Build in Washington Park
Over the summer, our team continued their work with the Chicago Botanic Garden and Dyett High School students to design and build a barrier-free outdoor classroom at the Green Youth Farm in Washington Park. The multifunctional furniture, constructed almost entirely from salvaged materials, includes a 28-foot long poured concrete harvest table covered by a shade canopy that repurposes billboard tarps. We also renewed our collaboration with Architecture for Humanity-Chicago on a national design competition that promotes creative approaches to reclaiming neighborhood open space. Our team built and installed the winning design, Grow-Quet, at the Green Youth Farm.

Book Release, Art Institute of Chicago, and other Honors
Bringing People to the Table, our newly released publication, tells the story of the collaborative design process that launched Archeworks’ Mobile Food Collective and traces our journey to the 2010 Venice Biennale. We are thrilled to announce that this book, along with other pieces featured in our Biennale exhibit, is now part of the Art Institute of Chicago’s permanent Architecture and Design collection. Among these pieces is our short animated film, Gather Give Grow, which will be screened at the Architecture and Design Film Festival in New York and Chicago. Additionally, we showcased the Mobile Food Collective in Critical Infrastructures, an exhibition at London’s Architecture Foundation in Spring 2011.

Sustainable Food + Design Lecture Series
This year’s public lecture series explores how design can play a greater role supporting sustainable, equitable food systems and promoting a healthy food culture. We are bringing together designers, ecologists, urban farmers, activists, and artists who are pioneering new practices in urban growing and local food system education. The series kicked off with Erika Allen, director of Growing Power’s Chicago operations, and Nancy Klehm, a nationally renowned urban forager and landscape designer. Winter 2012 will feature talks by Emmanuel Pratt, head of Milwaukee’s Sweet Water Foundation, and John Edel, founder of The Plant and the Chicago Sustainable Manufacturing Center.
Focus on Universal Design: Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago

Archeworks’ commitment to inclusive design—designing with rather than for others—remains central to our mission. Now in our fifth year of partnership with the Stroke Research and Training Center at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, we continue to benefit from the insight of stroke survivors and staff therapists enrolled in our 8-month Sustainable Urban Design program. Recently, three of our RIC design team members presented their adaptive gardening program at a Living with Aphasia conference, co-sponsored by the RIC and National Aphasia Association.

Cermak Creative Industries District + Incubator

We are collaborating with the City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events to lay the foundation for a new cultural economic development initiative that creates jobs and transforms an isolated industrial area on the near Southside into a vibrant district for Chicago’s creative enterprises. The Archeworks team is exploring new concepts for a creative business incubator to help start-up enterprises grow and thrive within this hub for cultural and community activities. Our team will also propose urban design and placemaking strategies to improve access and participation by entrepreneurs, artists, and visitors—setting a new standard for a barrier-free district.

Supporting Sustainable Food through Innovative Design: Growing Power

We are partnering with Growing Power—a nationally recognized urban farming pioneer—to create a healthier and more equitable food system in Chicago. Our designers are helping to develop Iron Street Urban Farm, Growing Power’s new seven-acre commercial farm and educational campus on the site of an abandoned trucking depot in Bridgeport. Working with community residents and teens taking part in Growing Power’s Youth Corps, our team is developing concepts for a neighborhood microenterprise that trains and employs local youth. We will also propose design strategies for improved wayfinding, pedestrian safety, and ecological infrastructure within the industrial area surrounding the farm.

Mobile Food Collective at Iron Street Urban Farm

After making its debut on the global stage at the 2010 Venice Biennale, our Mobile Food Collective returned home to spread its message about healthy food culture at neighborhood events, farmer’s markets, and moveable feasts across Chicago. In Summer 2011, the MFC became an integral part of Growing Power’s year-round urban agriculture education programs in Chicago. The MFC’s ‘mothership’ trailer and bike fleet are based at Iron Street Farm, and will also travel to Growing Power’s satellite farm sites across the city. We are especially excited that teens participating in their entrepreneurial Youth Corps program will use the MFC in their role as ambassadors for healthy eating.

Garlic & Greens: Accessible Soul Food Stories

Our 2011-12 Archeworks Fellow, Fereshteh Toosi, continues work on a multidisciplinary public program series and oral history project exploring the intersections between migration history, culinary heritage, healthy eating, and blindness in the African-American community. The program began in Summer 2010 with panel discussions hosted in partnership with Access Living and the DuSable Museum of African American History. Garlic & Greens continued this fall with a 6-week tactile graphics workshop that prototyped a soul food recipe and culinary heritage publication designed for vision-impaired audiences.

Archeworks is a multidisciplinary design school dedicated to envisioning and advancing a better quality of life for communities through socially responsible and environmentally conscious design solutions that address our greatest urban challenges.

Archeworks envisions future communities. We drive dialogue, policy, and city design. We inspire a collaborative process. We invent and test innovative prototypes that shape healthy, beautiful, sustainable cities and places.

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