



*New Police Athletic League Center, South Bronx, Kevin Hom + Andrew Goldman*



*Covenant House Satellite Counseling Center, Terrence O'Neal*

neering. So are parts of the family court buildings and, of course, the Spofford Juvenile Detention Centers in Brooklyn and the Bronx. **Rafael Viñoly Architects**, which built the Bronx Housing Court a few years ago, is now designing the Bronx Criminal Court and its freestanding day-care center next door.

Created in 1996 to undertake building projects previously handled by the departments of General Services, Transportation, and Environmental Protection — all city buildings except hospitals, housing, bridges, and schools — the DDC has 700 projects under way, about \$1 billion worth of construction. Recently, it has been working on repairs of 45 of the most deteriorated public schools. An in-house design for a decorative security gate at P.S. 33 on Ninth Avenue in Clinton by **Kenneth Damally** and **Frederic Bell** even received an Arts Commission award last month. A pattern composed of abstract clocks, set at the times school begins and ends (the schoolchild's obsession), provides a whimsical touch where a roll-down shade used to symbolize danger.

Other winning projects for children were the New York City Parks and Recreation's Mercer Street playground by **Christopher Crowley** and **Samantha Schweitzer** and the Brooklyn Public Library and Horticultural Society's garden at the Saratoga branch library by landscape architect **Donna Gurkin**.

An award-winning DDC day-care center by **Architrope** and **James Harb Architects** (initially Rosenblum Harb) is finally nearing completion in Queens, where its yellow-and-gray checkerboard facade and steel-cage ball court on the roof will be visible for blocks around. The two-story, L-shaped building on a corner site has six classrooms for 115 children surrounding a protected, south-facing playground. Several years ago, Architrope designed one of the city's first day-care centers, inside Cass Gilbert's 1918 Brooklyn Army Terminal in Red Hook, and two commercial indoor playgrounds, Play Space East and Play Space West at 92nd and Broadway, where young children are encouraged to wander through a landscape and engage in fantasy play.

An environment **Lynne Breslin** created for the Costen Collection of children's books at Princeton University (*Oculus*, September 1996, p. 13) directs children's fantasy life even more specifically. Its message, "Read books and go anywhere, be anyone, see anything," is contained in a giant book leading to interactive fantasy worlds inspired by *Charlotte's Web*, *Alice in*

*Wonderland*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

In the real world, another DDC day-care center, by **Buttrick White and Burtis**, attempts to repair the unraveling urban fabric of the Fourth Avenue streetscape in Park Slope. On the inside, however, little gables and dormers and a tiny tower "try to capture the imagination of little kids," Ted Burtis explained.

Also in Brooklyn, **Lynne Funk & Associates** is renovating two privately owned day-care centers, operated by the Agency for Child Services. The Little Sun People at 265 Marcus Garvey Boulevard is a 18,500-square-foot, two-story brick-and-masonry building being gut-renovated. The Bedford Avenue Day Care Center shares space with a social services center at 40 Brevoort Place in a 19,000-square-foot, three-story building with a play roof.

**Kevin Hom + Andrew Goldman Architects** is designing a day-care center for the State University of New York at New Paltz and several more recreation centers for the Police Athletic League with facilities for young children and teenagers at the West Point U.S. Military Academy and in Clinton, Bushwick, Queens, and the South Bronx. Their West Point and New South Bronx recreation centers won *American School and University* magazine 1997 awards for design excellence. The 40,000-square-foot, \$8 million South Bronx center has an outdoor amphitheater, a full gym with bleachers, boxing rings, a fitness center, dining area, performance spaces, and crafts rooms arranged around a three-story atrium. It has become a neighborhood regenerator, a gathering spot for teens as well as the local basketball venue.

The idea behind the Police Athletic League and the New York City Housing Authority community centers (see p. 11) is to redirect youthful energy and prevent the need for facilities like the Covenant House Satellite Counseling Center that **Terrence O'Neal Architect** is building on New York Avenue in Brooklyn. Located and designed for accessibility, the 2,000-square-foot center provides counseling for family, drug, and alcohol problems, and holds pregnancy and child-care classes. Attractive, quiet, and very un-institutional, the interiors have minimalist cutout walls inserted into a romantic industrial space with exposed brick vaults.

Looking at the projects for children currently being designed in New York wipes away illusions about the easy innocence of youth. **Richard Dattner** is designing the Cystic Fibrosis