

# Peninsula News

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## ***Withee Malcolm designs new family resource center***

Harbor Interfaith Services, a non-profit organization serving the harbor area and South Bay communities, is working with Withee Malcolm Architects on its new 15,000-square-foot family resource center, scheduled to be completed in late 2011.

“We got involved early in the process when Harbor Interfaith was trying to determine how best to accommodate a growing demand for [its] services in [its] much smaller existing facility,” says Dan Withee AIA, founding principal of the architectural firm. “Their mission was an inspiration and their need compelling. The much-needed expansion will give them the additional room they need to achieve their mission.”

Donating the services of the firm for the initial phase, the architects saw an opportunity to create a more functional, family centered design by consolidating all the program requirements into a single building. Taking advantage of three contiguous parcels that hosted the existing center, adjacent parking and a separate house, the three-story design provides ample room for a mix of uses, including the resource center, food pantry, nursery and preschool, indoor and outdoor play space, administrative offices and underground parking.

“What the new building will give us is much more than expanded space,” Harbor Interfaith Services Executive Director Tahia Hyslet said, “Our first facility was in the basement of a church, and as we grew we simply made the best of what space we were able to find. Withee Malcolm brought us a vision of what could be, and designed the facility for our specific program with spaces that will allow us to do a better job in all we do.”

“Although the district is commercially zoned, the design is respectful of the residential nature of the neighborhood in its scale, setbacks and architectural vocabulary,” Withee said. “We committed to creating a building that will be comfortable and inviting to parents, children and others who will be using the facility.”

Each year, Harbor Interfaith serves 15,000 homeless and working poor people, offering emergency shelter, transitional housing, food, childcare, after-school care, job placement, advocacy, education and life skills training.