



Entire School/
Campus Building
New Construction

**USA ARCHITECTS PLANNERS
+ INTERIOR DESIGNERS**

20 N. Doughty Ave.
Somerville, NJ 08876
www.usaarchitects.com

Debbie Koehler
908/722-2300

DESIGN TEAM

Arnaldo Untoria, AIA, PA,
Principal-in-Charge

Peter C. Campisano, AIA,
Project Manager

Daniel Fortunato, AIA,
Construction Administrator

French & Parrello & Associates,
Civil Engineer

O'Donnell & Naccarato,
Structural Engineer

Water Technology, Aquatic
Engineer

OWNER/CLIENT

Morris-Union Jointure
Commission
New Providence, NJ

Dr. Kim Coleman,
Superintendent
908/464-7625, ext. 1114

Type of School and
Grades Served:
Specialized Educational
Facility, Ages 3–21

Capacity: 250 students

Size of Site: 18 acres

Area of Building:
168,000 square feet

Volume of Building:
2.9 million cubic feet

Space per Student:
840 square feet

Square Foot Cost: \$208

Cost of Construction:
\$42.2 million

Total Project Cost: \$45 million

Contract Date: Nov. 2004

Completion Date: May 2007

Percent of Completion: 100%

SPECIALIZED EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Developmental Learning Center

Warren, New Jersey

USA Architects Planners + Interior Designers



EXTERIOR PANORAMIC

This new learning center for educating students with autism is a self-contained facility with the look and feel of a full community, that helps its students develop physically, socially, and emotionally toward gaining independence and transitioning as seamlessly as possible to real-world experiences.

Main Street—a 30-foot-wide, sky-lit, central corridor—is the heart and soul of the facility. Along this path students see what is typically common on real main streets, like storefronts, complete with canopies, that include a working bank, supermarket, and home-improvement center. Here, students receive hands-on training for everyday life skills. Other learning labs include a working greenhouse, laundry facility, arts and craft center, and food merchandising and manufacturing labs. Another distinctive feature is the inclusion of a diner as opposed to a traditional cafeteria. The diner, complete with checkerboard finishes and 1950s-style booths, helps develop social skills. The facility also contains a gymnasium with an elevated indoor track,



POOLS

health and fitness center, and two swimming pools for aquatic therapy.

This three-story facility demands a strong sensitivity to the attributes of the student body. Autistic children feel safer in a home-like setting, which is also most conducive to learning. The students are a sensory-sensitive population; therefore careful consideration was given to placement of natural and artificial light sources,

acoustic control, and thermal comfort. Pleasing exterior and interior colors, as well as tactile surfaces, are used throughout the design. Spaces have logical adjacencies and flexible configurations to minimize travel. Navigating is simple and easy with strategic placement of wayfinding elements throughout the facility that visually guide children to their proper place.

The building's design and

PHOTOS: ROBERT J. FAULKNER



MAIN STREET

orientation on a steeply sloped site allows for capturing roof runoff to recharge the existing pond. Other environmentally friendly features include the use of low-emitting building materials and low VOC paints, recycled products for interior

finishes, water-efficient plumbing fixtures, and a geothermal system that allows the extreme temperatures of the building to work with the earth's constant temperature which eliminated the need for boilers, chillers, and cooling towers.



SECOND-FLOOR ENTRANCE BRIDGE



TOWNE DELI DINER



LEARNING CLASSROOM—APARTMENT

The site's difficult terrain required the structure to be built into the existing hillside using concrete retaining walls. (A 180-foot elevation difference exists between the lowest and highest parts of the site.) Construction of the building

consists of steel frame with concrete-poured floors and metal deck roofing with insulated metal panels that allow ventilation. The pool/gym wing of the building was constructed with a heavy timber-wood truss system. ■