



Case Study:
DePaul RVA

SWBR

Rochester View Apartments celebrates Deaf culture and provides Deaf people an environment of community, safety, and opportunity.

Rochester, NY has the nation's largest per capita population of Deaf and hard-of-hearing. The designer worked closely with the Deaf community to learn about the challenges of living without hearing.

Located along a busy arterial, this apartment community presents a dynamic face to a world racing by. ***The front elevation's playful shifts in color and material evoke the graceful movements of American Sign Language (ASL).***

The roofline is just as dynamic, with a central volume leaping above the building to provide a strong visual signifier of the main entrance. Within this volume, the lobby and community room are filled with soft daylight by shaded clerestories above. ***The ample lighting and bright color pallet serve to enhance ASL communication.***



Without sound to catch someone's attention or converse, line-of-sight is a critical design consideration. Community spaces are designed to allow users to be aware of adjacent circulation. Wide corridors allow two residents to walk while signing. ***Apartment plans have an open design, with clear sight lines from the kitchen to the bedroom and bathroom doors, the entrance, and the living room.***

Technology solutions are also leveraged. Every apartment has a system of strobe lights to signal the apartment doorbell, the fire and CO alarms, and the video phone, which is connected to the vestibule intercom. Wi-Fi is provided throughout the building to allow use of smartphone communication apps.

The project strives for energy efficiency, ***scoring 37% better than the median building.*** LED lighting, energy efficient appliances, a tightly sealed building envelope, and a roof mounted photovoltaic system are just a few examples of the project's commitment to sustainability.

Building Area: (sf)
70,000 sf

Cost per Square Foot:
\$172

Construction Cost:
\$17.6 million

Date of Substantial Completion:
October 2015

Location of Project:
Rochester, NY

Type of Project:
**New Construction
Multi-Family Residential
Affordable Housing**

Construction materials, mechanical systems or other pertinent information:

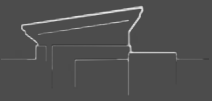
- **Exterior Cladding: fiber cement, brick, metal panel**
- **Roof-mounted PV system**
- **Enhanced visual notification system in apartments**

All photography by Park Avenue Photography

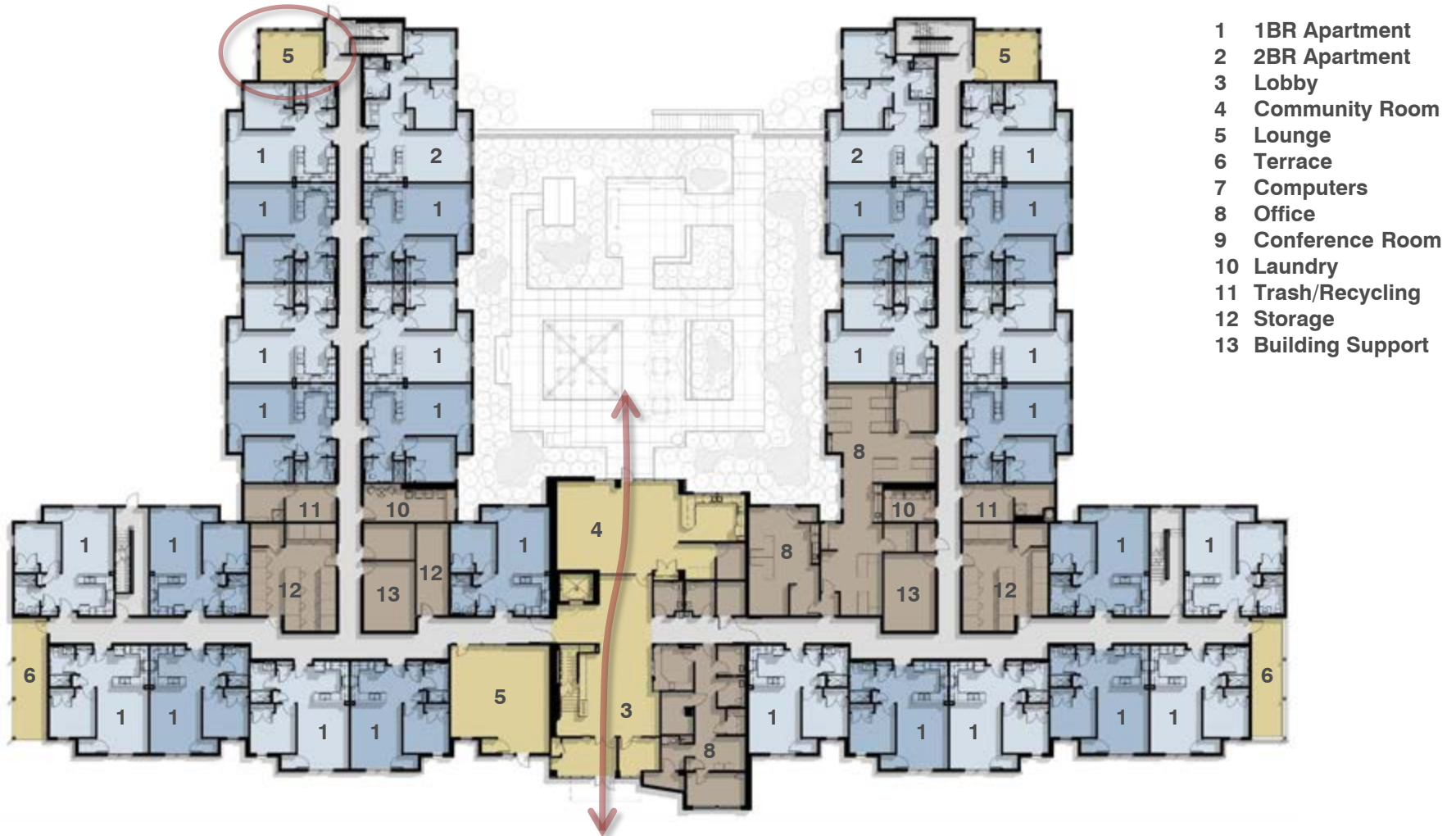


The front elevation's playful shifts in color and material evoke the graceful movements of American Sign Language.





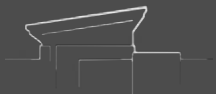
Multiple lounges and terraces are placed within the building where small groups can gather and enjoy different perspectives throughout the year.

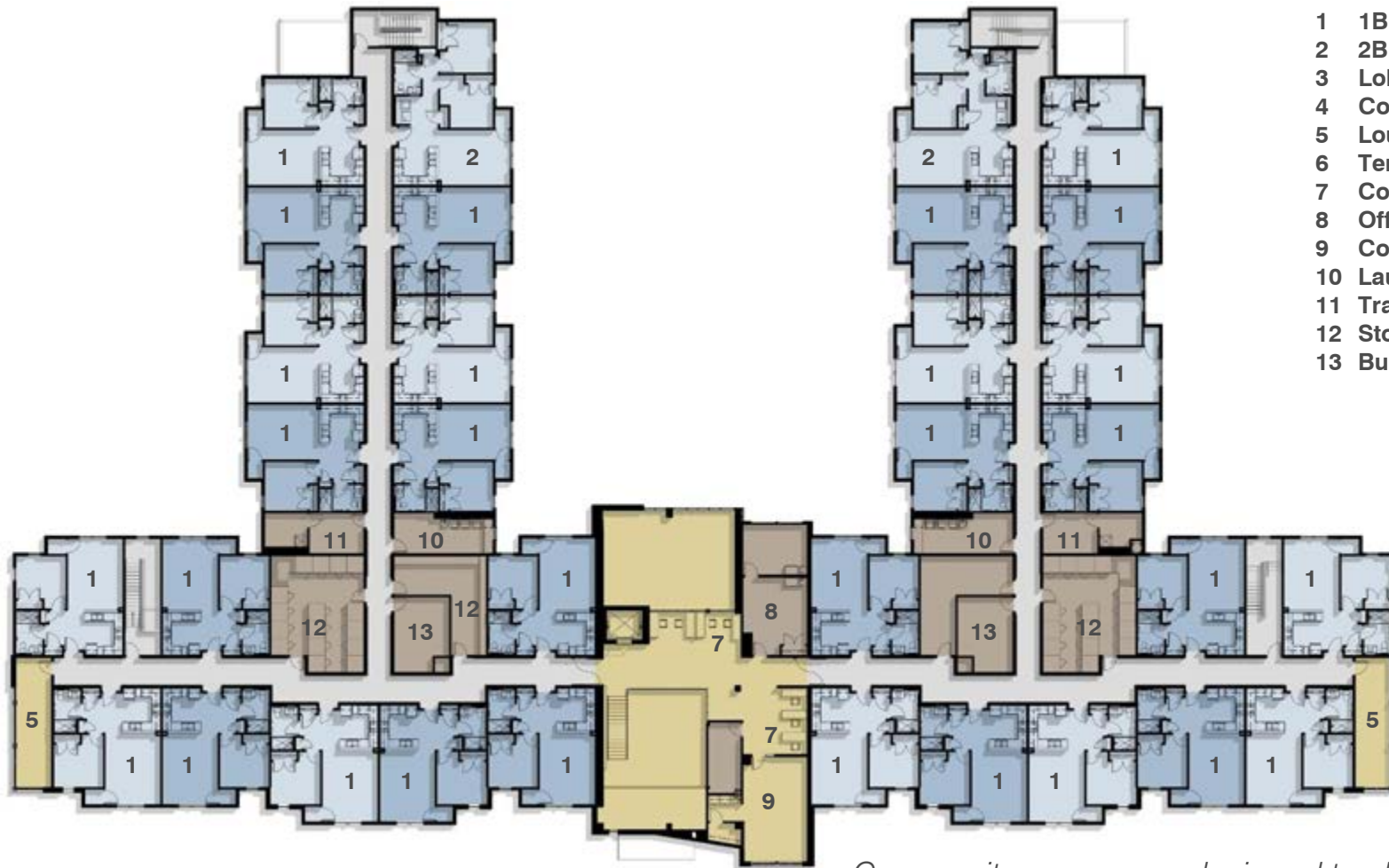


- 1 1BR Apartment
- 2 2BR Apartment
- 3 Lobby
- 4 Community Room
- 5 Lounge
- 6 Terrace
- 7 Computers
- 8 Office
- 9 Conference Room
- 10 Laundry
- 11 Trash/Recycling
- 12 Storage
- 13 Building Support

First Floor

The core of the building is the heart of the community, connecting the front entrance with the community room and the courtyard beyond.





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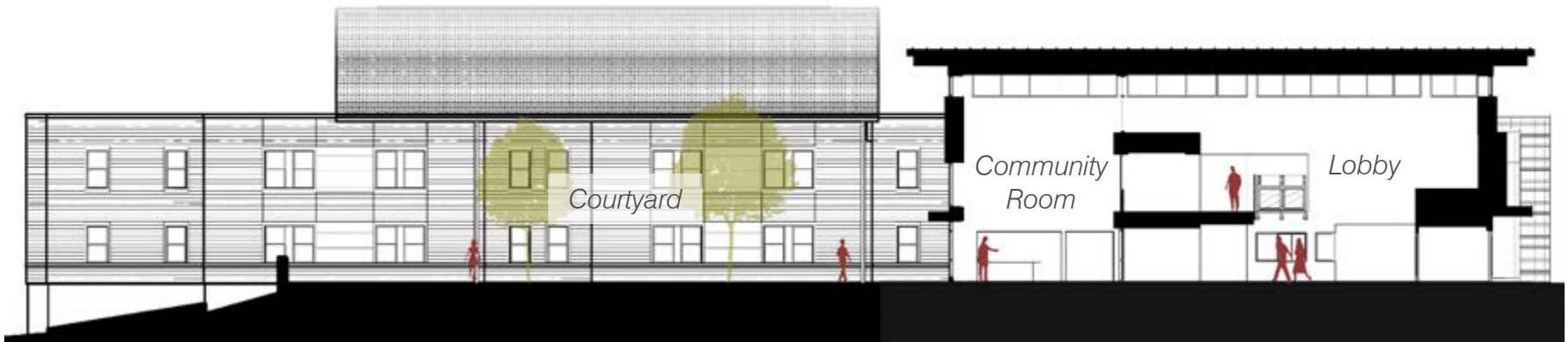
Community spaces are designed to allow users to be aware of adjacent circulation.

Second Floor

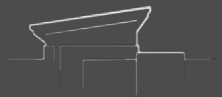


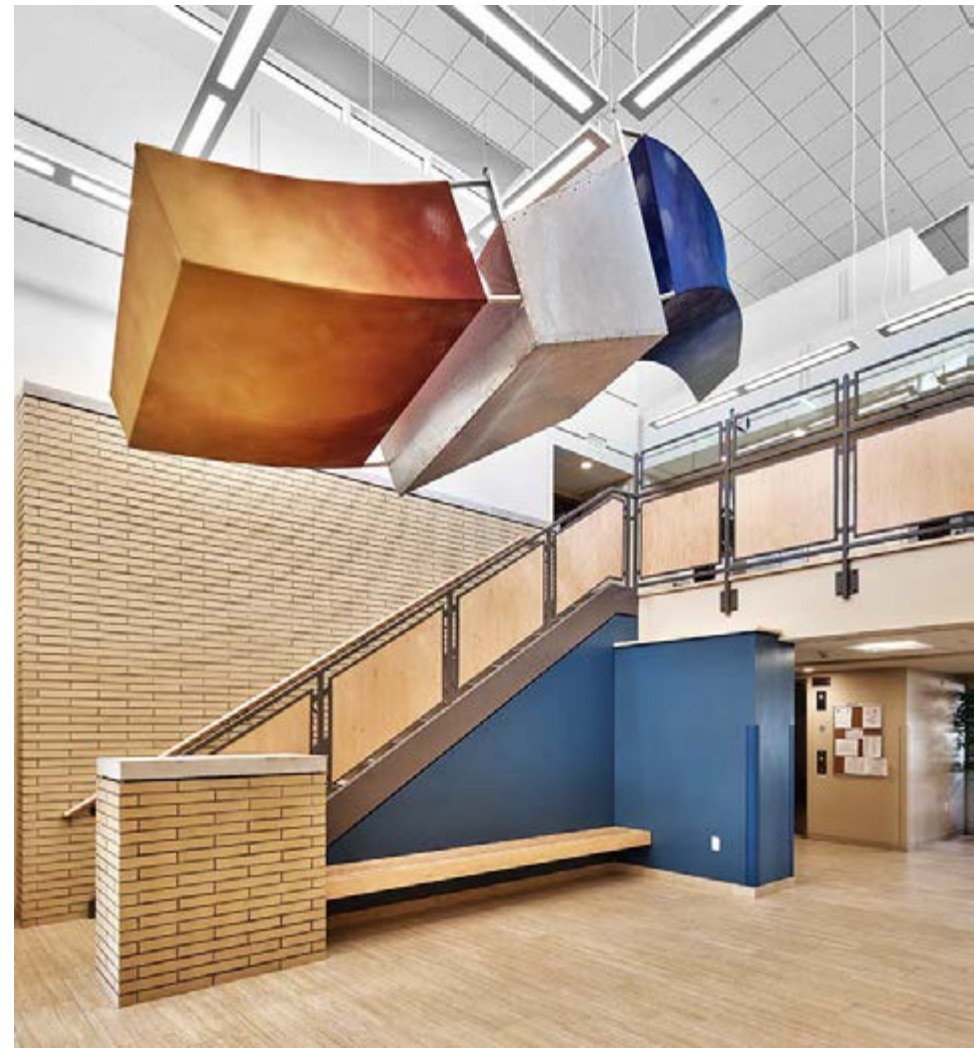


The building core links the front entrance to the community room and courtyard.

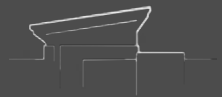


A central volume leaps above the dynamic roofline to provide a strong visual signifier of the main entrance. Within this volume, the lobby and community room are filled with soft daylight by shaded clerestories above.



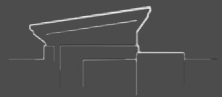


Filled with soft daylight, the lobby includes a sculpture that reveals varying qualities when experienced from different viewpoints, and a prominent stair that encourages physical activity.





With its strong visual connection to the courtyard, the community room expresses the ample lighting and bright color palette that enhances communication with American Sign Language.





Deaf residents express their excitement about being able to freely communicate with others, and report feeling less isolated and disconnected than in previous settings. The project allows residents to build new friendships, socialize, and truly be part of a community.





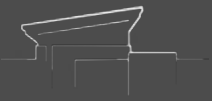
Without sound to catch someone's attention or converse, line-of-sight is a critical design consideration. Community spaces are designed to allow users to be aware of adjacent circulation. Wide corridors allow two residents to walk while signing.



Apartment plans have an open design, with clear sight lines from the kitchen to the bedroom and bathroom doors, the entrance, and the living room.



Every apartment includes a video phone system, which is also connected to the building vestibule intercom. There is also system of strobe visual signals in the living rooms and bedrooms that are linked to the apartment doorbell, the fire and CO alarms, and the video phone. Vent fan switches include an integral light to remind residents that they are on.





Technology enhancements, such as the strobe visual notification system and available bed shakers, help residents feel safe and lets them know that their unique needs were integral to the design process.







Sheltered from the busy street in front of the building, the quiet and peaceful courtyard extends the heart of the community to the outdoors.





The project has a strong commitment to sustainability and good stewardship, starting with a building envelope that exceeds energy code requirements for thermal insulation and air infiltration. With the inclusion of LED lighting, energy efficient appliances, and a roof mounted photovoltaic system, the building scores 37% better than the median project in terms of energy efficiency.





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