UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
348 GOULD HALL
BOX 355734
SEATTLE, WA 98195-5734
COLLEGE OF BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

Executive Committee
Board of Trustees
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street
Washington, DC 20001

ASLA Design Medal Nomination Letter for Mikyoung Kim, FASLA

Dear Executive Committee and Board of Trustees,

It is with great pleasure and pride that I nominate Mikyoung Kim, FASLA, for the ASLA Design Medal. Mikyoung is an extraordinarily gifted landscape architect and artist who has brought our profession to the attention of many, both young and old, locally and globally. Mikyoung Kim Design has shaped a remarkable body of work in a broad range of contexts in the United States, East Asia and the Middle East. Her work is recognized for culturally significant design work shaping the public realm. It is for these reasons that I nominate her for this prestigious award.

Mikyoung Kim graduated from Oberlin College and Conservatory in 1989 with a B.S. Major in Sculpture/Art History and Minor in Piano Performance. With this background she enrolled at the Harvard Graduate School of Design graduating with a MLA in 1992. Since that time she has built her work as a designer, artist, teacher, mentor, and advocate for our profession. Drawing on her background in both design and music, Mikyoung has shaped new forms of interactive landscape in the urban public realm. Her work spans the intersections of landscape architecture and environmental art to create memorable places that capture the public imagination.

For over 20 years, Mikyoung's work has explored how the design of on-the-ground experiences can weave the community voice with site history and ecology to create places that are both new and familiar. She describes her work as storytelling and each project is an opportunity to heal the ecology of the landscape and uncovers narratives embedded in the site. Drawing from ecological systems as inspiration, she finds design solutions that are environmentally and aesthetically rich and rewarding. She works with the elements of natural systems such as wind, light and water to create landscapes that inspire lucky visitors to more fully engage and understand the changing nature of landscapes. From metal sculptures to custom wood seating, her vision is of an artist drawing upon the spatial narratives of place and culture. She invents new uses for materials that are whimsical to offer a fresh perspective on how landscape architecture can create places of identity and shared values for the communities and clients with whom she partners.

Mikyoung's work has contributed significantly to the public realm of cities where we increasingly face the realities of denser and more chaotic urban landscapes. She has brought the eye and hand of an artist and the insights of a designer to the pressing ecological issues that face every project. On multiple projects, she has developed stormwater management systems that not only mitigate intense flooding conditions but celebrate fluctuating conditions. In downtown Seoul at the Chongae River Restoration Project, she designed a solution that manages 22,000 tons of surficial and subsurface runoff from the city. And, building on local narratives, she utilized stone from the various provinces of North and South Korea to tell a cultural story about shared interests, as well as to allow for the whole city to safely re-engage with the river.

larch.be.washington.edu
T 206 543 9240
F 206 685 4486

In a different but equally compelling way, Mikyoung has harnessed critical research to develop approaches grounded in evidence-based design, particularly in healthcare where the environment can aide in recovery and improve patient outcomes. Her healing gardens are found at the Lurie Children's Hospital in Chicago, Boston Children's Hospital and smaller regional hospitals, such as the Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami. The designed gardnens seek to heal the rifts between nature and humans, suggesting the power of finding balance in the inner well-being, while capturing the human imagination.

Mikyoung has been, furthermore, an inspiration in her designs focused on the needs and dreams of children and families including those from underserved populations in Hartford, Connecticut to the regional learning center at the Chicago Botanic Garden. Her designs offer playful environments that encourage young minds to expand their imagination and engage actively in the environment. Her early work in play environments has emphasized the positive impact of open-ended, free play in nature on child development. She has been widely recognized for this work and invited to speak on national public radio and the ASLA on this topic.

While this is award is a design medal, is also important to note Mikyoung's role in shaping and guiding future landscape architects through her teaching and academic leadership. For nearly two decades, she was a full-time faculty member at the Rhode Island School of Design and served as both a faculty member and department head. She has been a professor, guest critic and lecturer at numerous institutions across the country; most recently at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, Yale University, The Art Institute of Chicago, and the Arnold Arboretum. Within her practice, Mikyoung remains a generous leader and mentor cultivating a highly talented group of designers, artists and urban planners that collaborate more like a creative think tank than a traditional landscape architecture firm.

Furthermore, Mikyoung is committed to helping young women and minority landscape architects find their way both to and through the profession. She has participated in numerous Women in Architecture symposia with the Boston Society of Architects and received the Women in Design Award of Excellence from the BSA in 2016. Mikyoung has been an active public voice for diversity in the profession and advocates that public environments will better reflect the diverse populations they serve if the design teams that create them reflect that diversity.

But to return to the original nomination, it is for Mikyoung Kim's body of exceptional work that I nominate her. She is a designer to whom my students have consistently looked to as they search for what it means to be a landscape architect in a wickedly complex world. As noted by Sarah Goldhagen in her letter: "Mikyoung Kim shows that landscape design and environmental art can be a public amenity, a social condenser, and a sustainable practice while simultaneously being a poetic art that captures and sustains our all-too-often-distracted attention, confers a graceful sense of play, and instigates deep imaginative thought about the many ways that everyday landscapes can enrich people's individual experience and social congress."

Mikyoung's designs catalyze the best in each of us and for that I seek to recognize her with the ASLA Design Medal for 2018.

Sincerely

Thaisa Way ASLA, FAAR16
Professor, Landscape Architecture
University of Washington

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Mikyoung Kim's awards include:

Individual Awards

2017 Top 100 Influencers in Landscape Architecture

2017 Honor Award for Chicago Botanic Garden

2016 AD Innovator. Architectural Digest

2016 Boston Society of Architects. Women in Design Award of Excellence

2013 Honor Award for Crown Sky Garden

2009 Honor Award for Chongae River Restoration Project

2007 Honor Award for Farrar Pond Project

2000 Honor Award for LG Research Center Garden

Select Other Project Awards

2017 American Architecture Prize. Prudential Plaza in Boston + Chicago Botanic Garden

2014 Architizer A+ Honor Award. 140 West Plaza

2012 American for the Arts. Jackson Healing Garden. Miami, FL

2012 Battersea International Competition. London. Finalist

2011 Veronica Rudge Green Prize for Chongae Restoration Project

2011 Urban Waterfront Commission Honor Award for Chongae Restoration Project

2010 AIA Design Award. Rogers Environmental School

2006 Chongae International Design Competition. First Place

2005 U.S. Federal Courthouse, West Virginia Honor Award

2005 World Technology Award. Chongae Restoration Project

1998 Pan Asian Olympics Competition. First Place

COLLEGE OF BUILT ENVIRONMENTS

CLAUDE CORMIER + ASSOCIÉS INC
ARCHITECTURE DE PAYSAGE ET DESIGN URBAIN

1223 rue des Carrières, Studio A, Montréal
Québec, Canada, H2S 2B1
T 514.849.8262
F 514.279.8040
E info@claudecormier.com

Montreal, January 23, 2018

Object: Nomination of Mikyoung Kim for the ASLA Design Medal

Dear Executive Committee Members and Trustees,

As a fellow of the CSLA, I am writing in full support of Mikyoung Kim to be honored with the prestigious ASLA Design Medal.

I have known and worked with Mikyoung for the last 5 years. We have met through the ASLA convention in 2012. I have lots of respect for her powerful and sensitive work … and I really appreciate Mikyoung insight… Last year we did a presentation together on "Hope in the Design of Public Landscape" at the ASLA… it was a huge success! Last December, I have participated to her GSD final class design review, a beautiful constructive exchange with the students who were so engaged by her teaching!

Her internationally recognized practice has crafted an exceptional body of work, spanning a wide range of landscape typologies in the United States, East Asia and the Middle East. The firm is also very good at bridging the deep commitment they have to their clients with their interest in landscape architecture and the fine arts.
It is a small office with a huge impact! Instead of a huge office with a small impact. Her talent and her determination are truly remarkable.

In addition to being sensitive, hardworking and deeply committed in her projects, Mikyoung showes numerous outstanding professional qualities and a strong sense of judgment when examining the relation between architecture, landscape, urban design and art. Above all Mikyoung is dedicated, professional, generous with her knowledge and ready to share her ideas with others.

I support Mikyoung with great enthusiasm. She deserves this award, not only for the recognition and consistently high quality of work, but for her commitment and participation in academic institutions, professional organizations, botanic gardens, museums, and art institutes lectures.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for further reference.

Yours truly.

Claude Cormier
Claude Cormier et Associés inc.

GGN

January 29, 2018

Executive Committee
Board of Trustees
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street
Washington, DC 20001

ASLA Design Medal Nomination Letter for Mikyoung Kim, FASLA

Dear Executive Committee and Board of Trustees,

My time spent working with Mikyoung Kim stands out in my memory as being an extraordinary exchange of design ideas. Mikyoung is a preeminent practitioner of landscape Architecture as cultural expression. In her work, the function of each piece creates the space, both physically and emotionally. With her background in both design and music, Mikyoung has brought a new kind of interactive landscape to the urban realm, often highlighting natural systems such as wind, light and water in ways that allow the public to understand the changing nature of the landscape.

Mikyoung blurs the boundaries between landscape architecture and environmental art. Her deep commitment to expressing all that is important within a space allows her to create foundational spaces for the public's imagination and memories.

From a technical standpoint, nobody builds the way Mikyoung does. There is an extraordinary excellence of craft that should be heralded as an example for everyone in this field of work. Her breadth of knowledge about materials – water, stone, metal – allows her to create tailored, astounding, and surprisingly beautiful forms. From metal sculptures to custom wood seating, her artistic vision creates spatial narratives that encourage public interaction. Her work has reshaped the urban landscape, bringing a unique, artistic vision to the pressing ecological issues that are part of each project. She has a sensitivity that is rare in the quality of its depth and sophistication.

Bestowing the ASLA Design Medal to Mikyoung Kim would acknowledge the significance of her visionary contributions to the field of landscape architecture at this important moment in time.

Best regards,

Kathryn Gustafson, FASLA, PLA

Founding Principal
Gustafson Guthrie Nichol

Seattle & Washington, DC
206.903.6802
www.ggnltd.com

1932 First Avenue
Suite 700
Seattle, WA 98101

1054 31st Street NW
Suite 210
Washington, DC 20007

Agency
Landscape + Planning

45 Lawn Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
info@agencylp.com
www.agencylp.com

American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20001-3736

January 29, 2018

Subject: Support for Mikyoung Kim's Nomination for the ASLA Design Medal

Dear Esteemed Jury:

As a landscape architect who is passionate about our profession and about the power of design to address the greatest challenges of our time, I am thrilled to offer my support for the nomination of Mikyoung Kim to receive the ASLA's Design Medal. I would like to speak about a few of the realms of design leadership that I have come to know Mikyoung and her work: as a teacher/critic, as an artist/designer and as a person/mentor.

Teacher/Critic. Mikyoung often sat on my reviews when I was in graduate school at Harvard. I remember the ways she would explain ideas – describing the shifting of the groundplane by flexing her wrist or digging deeply into a word and its conjured imagery. She used tangible language and simple visual cues to help clarify ideas. She would look patiently, intently, offering illumination over bravado.

I had the pleasure also, years later, to sit on the ASLA Student Awards Jury that Mikyoung chaired. She and I got into a tussle over one particular submission – Mikyoung arguing fiercely for physical form-making as an often missing skillset in student work today. Simplicity and beauty – like the flexing of a wrist or a deeply explored idea – she argued, is as essential as large-scale environmental problem-solving. It is this commitment to design – and her advocacy for design – that made her an invaluable critic and led the program at the Rhode Island School of Design into many notable years of award-winning and groundbreaking work.

Designer/Artist. Well beyond her ability to talk about or teach the art of design, Mikyoung is a true maker, landscape architect and artist. Her work, which has been awarded and acknowledged at the highest levels of our profession, does this truly amazing slight of hand: it effortlessly captures the emphemeral in solid and lasting form. From the exploration of light, wind and sound at her recent work at the Plaza at Boston's Prudential Center to the Fluid Light installation at

the Wheeling Federal Courthouse, Mikyoung's work combines technology and techtonic to inspired end.

Even without the magic of lighting or high-tech digital projection, her form-making is suggestive of technological innovation. At the Farrar Residence, for instance, both the sculptural fence element and the planted paving systems create an intricate and geometrically complex, layered and ever-shifting set of patterns. Her fluid form-making – like the paving at Pier 4 Plaza or the walls at the Alexander Art Plaza – betrays the solidity of the granite or stone, making it almost feel in motion. The wave-like monoliths at the ChonGae Canal Restoration project seem to both capture and hold the water while also almost dissolving into its texture. This magic in her work cannot be undersold. It always inspires me. It often makes me gasp.

Person/Mentor. Lastly, Mikyoung is a delightful person, friend and mentor. She has nurtured countless generations of talent in her roles at the Rhode Island School of Design, as a practitioner running a practice and as a visible and as a constantly present force at our professional assemblies and conferences. Despite this multiplicity of responsibilities, she is accessible and generous with her time.

When I started my own practice this year, I hung a work of hers over my desk – a holographic piece that shifts between images of ground and sky. It serves as a constant reminder that beauty is meaningful, that women are leaders and that inspiration should always be present in our work. It is for all these reasons – for her poetry, for her passion and for her person – that Mikyoung Kim is an exceptional candidate for recipient of this honor. I do hope she will be granted this recognition and feel there is no person as worthy.

Very truly yours,

Gina Ford, FASLA
Principal, Agency Landscape + Planning, LLC

ASLA Board of Trustees
American Society of Landscape Architecture
c/o Thaisa Way, FAAR, ASLA
Professor, College of Built Environments
University of Washington

28 January 2018

To the ASLA Board of Trustees:

It is with utmost pleasure and the enthusiasm that I write to urge you to award the ASLA's esteemed annual design award to Mikyoung Kim. I can think of no more deserving recipient.

I have been following Mikyoung Kim's work since her early, extraordinary Farrar Pond project, a place I know intimately and have revisited many times over the years. In Farrar Pond and her nearly contemporaneous landmark Chongae Restoration Project in Seoul, Mikyoung Kim – working at completely different scales and in completely different contexts -- staked out a position at once singular and new as to what the practice of landscape architecture could be. Mikyoung Kim shows that landscape design and environmental art can be a public amenity, a social condenser, and a sustainable practice while simultaneously being a poetic art that captures and sustains our all-too-often-distracted attention, confers a graceful sense of play, and instigates deep imaginative thought about the many ways that everyday landscapes can enrich people's individual experience and social congress.

Following these two pathbreaking projects, Mikyoung Kim has strengthened and refined her distinctive vision, concretizing it in multiple projects ranging from master plans to landscape designs to environmental art in work in the United States and abroad. With this work, along with her ongoing participation in the academy through lectures and teaching, Mikyoung Kim has established herself as a thought leader who consistently delivers, staking out a critically important position in the field of landscape and, even more broadly, of the built environment. Again and again, her projects create memorable experiences of place that continue to entice users and deliver meaning over time. Her work is the best manifestation I know of the (not always recognized) verity that big data; large, singular iconic gestures; skillful management of sequence in sweeping terrains; and sustainable practices comprise an incomplete tool kit when it comes to the challenge of making resonant landscapes and public places. For that, you also need the kind of cutting edge sensibility and training that she brings to her designs.

All Mikyoung Kim's projects display a multisensory, experiential approach to design. All her work exhibits an exquisite sense of the intimacy of human scale, and an understanding of the many dimensions of multisensory experience. Not just vision, but touch. Not just vision and touch, but musicality. Not just vision, touch, and rhythm, but also movement, and changeability with regard to time of day and season. Mikyoung Kim is one of the few landscape architects I know who consistently, and successfully works with color, which research psychologists have revealed profoundly influence mood, internal affect, and sense of place. Nearly all her projects, invite us to interact with them, thereby enhancing the probability that they will become memorable places where people have memorable experiences.

Mikyoung Kim's distinctive voice originates in her native sensibility and unusual training. As a child she was a piano-playing prodigy who won numerous awards; classical music, with its sense of rhythm, its layered complexity, its imaginative deployment of theme and variation, informs he multilayered and multisensory approach to landscape design. When a hand injury prevented her pursing a musical career, Mikyoung Kim switched to sculpture, in which she majored in Oberlin; even today, she is a discriminating consumer of contemporary art.

Eventually, though, Mikyoung Kim concluded art to be a less overtly social pursuit than she wanted, which was to improve the world we inhabit, in the specific sense of it becoming a better place to be. Hence her embrace of landscape architecture and environmental art. When Mikyoung Kim discovered research on the salutary effects of nature—if well-designed, it promotes well-being and healing in the sick-- she delved into the research and designed the spectacular Crown Sky Garden in Chicago and Jackson Healing Garden in Miami.

In projects ranging from the public installation and environmental art of the Exhale in Chapel Hill (light, color, water) to the Plaza at Boston's Prudential Center (color, wind, plantings), Mikyoung Kim has identified critical components in the practice of landscape architecture that are all too often not discussed. Her impressive body of work illustrates why we must all listen carefully to her voice, and take great heed of how that voice has been musically, artfully, and socially concretized in her work to create among the most enriching environments of our time.

The ASLA could do no better that to award Mikyoung Kim the profession's highest honor, as we all look forward to the work and the pleasures her practice brings next, as it grows, and to the ways it will and should influence the entire fields of landscape architecture and built environmental design.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Williams Goldhagen

Author, Consultant, Architecture Critic
www.sarahwilliamsgoldhagen.com

Children's National

111 Michigan Ave NW
Washington, DC 20010-2916
ChildrensNational.org

The American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20001-3736

As a client of Mikyoung Kim for the past decade, I write in support of ASLA's consideration of her work, as meriting special consideration and acknowledgment, hopefully by way of the ASLA's Design Medal for 2018. From 2003-2016, I was the honored to be the Vice President for Real Estate, Planning and Development at Boston Children's Hospital ("BCH"), and since that time, I have served as Executive Vice President and Chief Real Estate Officer at Children's National Medical Center ("CNMC")in Washington, DC. During the entirety of this period, Mikyoung has been my landscape architect *of choice* on all capital projects that I have supervised for both institutions.

Mikyoung first came to my attention through the praise of others in health care and early on, I visited the wonderful Crown Sky Garden project at Lurie Children's in Chicago, to see for myself, both her creativity and sensitivity in specifically designing vibrant spaces for children whose immune systems were suppressed and who did not have the ability to 'visit' a landscaped environment filled with the elements of our planet. She carefully managed to design viewing portals for these young patients, so that they too could enjoy the wonders of nature. I saw that same creativity in several of our Boston Children's projects, where a dreary front entrance filled with concrete and asphalt, was magically transformed into animal and flowery-etched granite walls and beautiful foliage placed alongside of the colorful pavers, marking the arrival point for all of our patients, families and staff. The complete transformation of the point of arrival because of Mikyoung's work was nothing less than spectacular.

BCH's main clinical project of the last decade was the removal of four (4) old buildings on its Longwood Medical Area campus, which would be replaced by a $1B Inpatient clinical building. The major point of contention around this project was the re-landscaping of a replacement on-ground garden and the construction of a new Roof Garden, to serve the patients and families. Through her tireless work with the Family Advisory Council (whose membership included some very vocal opponents), Mikyoung's soothing presentation skills brought renewed interest to the design process, as she carefully was able to weave many of the FAC's concerns and needs into the final designs for those two construction projects. Further, another challenging project in the nearby Town of Brookline, helped to beautify a 40-year old medical office building and 'tired' outdoor garden, into a state-of-the-art ambulatory clinical building, an ancillary 800-car garage and public garden for the residents of Brookline, filled with many unique and colorful 'rooms' that she designed.

Her primary focus for CNMC will be to lead the landscaping architecture effort, as we redevelop a 12-acre US Army facility at The Walter Reed Army Medical Center in D.C., into the country's first pediatric research and innovation campus and to restore the lost beauty of the site's historic Japanese Cherry Blossom trees and to amplify the grand architecture of the facility, with a child-friendly redesign of the entire 12-acre site. Mikyoung is the only landscape architect I would trust to meet the surrounding residential community and have them participate with her creation of the final plan for "Walter Reed".

I wholeheartedly support her nomination for the ASLA Design Medal for 2018 and would be pleased to answer any follow-up questions the Committee might have. Thank you for this opportunity.

Charles Weinstein, Esq.
Executive Vice President and Chief Real Estate Officer Children's National Medical Center
111 Michigan Avenue - West 5 - 301
Washington, DC 20010
Phone: 202.476.6375
Cell: 617.918.3734
Charles.Weinstein@childrensnational.org

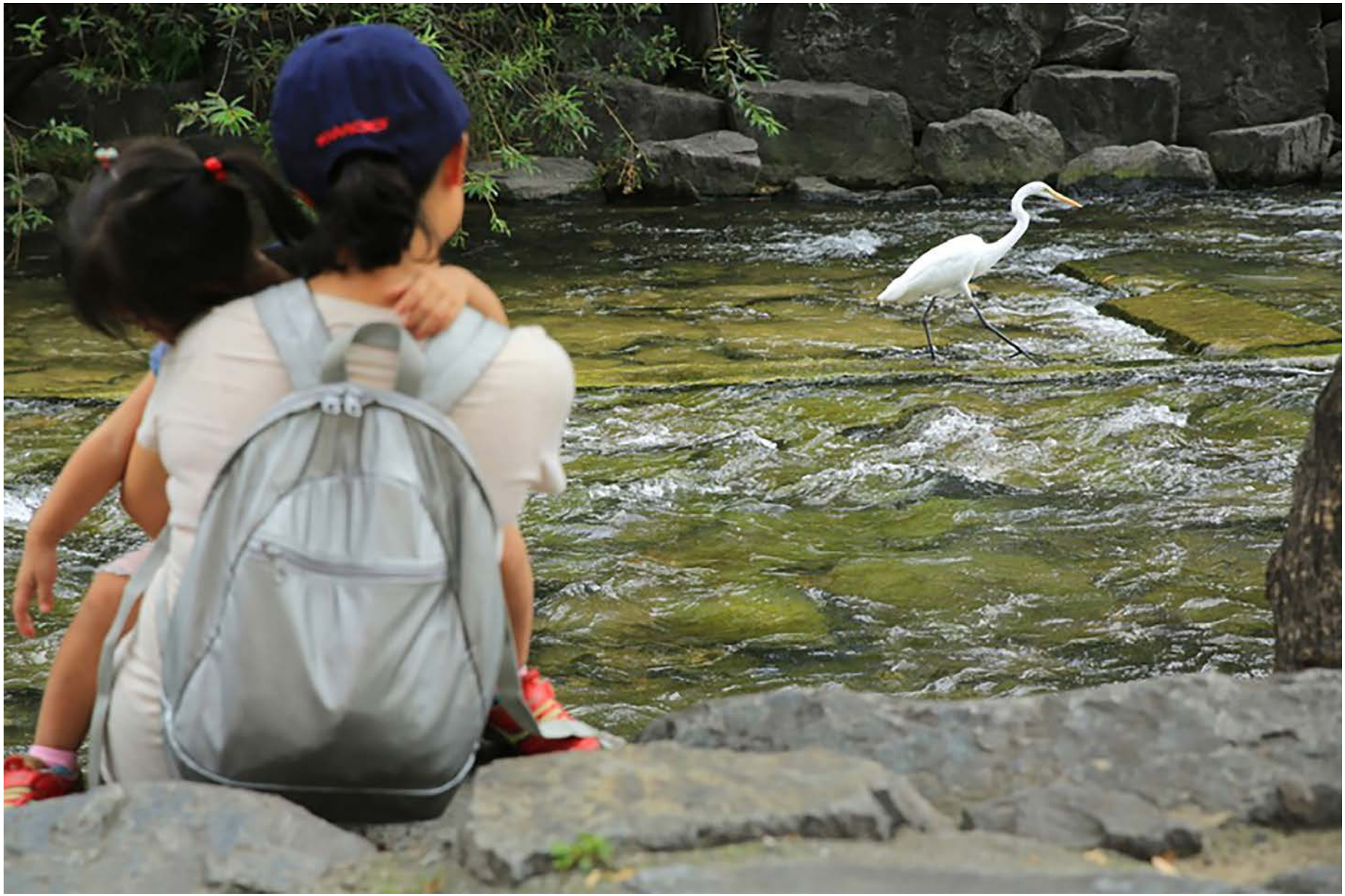
mikyoung kim design

Farrar Pond Garden

Farrar Pond Garden

Chicago Botanic Garden: Regenstein Learning Campus

Chongae River Restoration Project



Chongae River Restoration Project

Chongae River Restoration Project

Rogers Environmental School

Rogers Environmental School

Prudential Plaza at 888 Boylston

Prudential Plaza at 888 Boylston

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital: Crown Sky Garden

Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital
Crown Sky Garden

140 West Plaza

LG Research Center: Contemplation Garden