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Hi-res photos available online at:

<http://currystonedesignprize.com/press>.

**Transformative Urban Public Works Plan for Medellín,
Colombia Wins 2009 Curry Stone Design Prize for Emerging
Humanitarian Innovation**

**Medellín's Former Urban Projects Director, Alejandro Echeverri, and Former
Mayor Sergio Fajardo to Share \$100,000 Award**

Louisville, KY, September 24, 2009 – A bold and ambitious public works plan for the Colombian city of Medellín that helped revitalize its poorest neighborhoods and transform what was considered the deadliest city in the world into a vibrant, urban hub is the winner of the 2009 Curry Stone Design Prize.

Alejandro Echeverri, Medellín's former director of urban projects, and **Sergio Fajardo**, the city's former mayor, will share the \$100,000 award, announced today at the IdeaFestival in Louisville, Kentucky.

"Our most beautiful buildings," Fajardo has said, "must be in our poorest areas."

Together, in a four-year period, Echeverri and Fajardo mobilized a team of renowned architects to design and build an ambitious series of modern and visually striking libraries, schools, parks, and community centers in the heart of Medellín's most impoverished slums. This unprecedented public works strategy has been credited for contributing to a reduction in crime and an enormous boost in tourism dollars. According to national statistics, the number of homicides dropped from a peak of 381 for every 100,000 inhabitants in 1991 to 29 in 2006.

"The transformation of Medellín is a testament to the power of design to galvanize change in people's perceptions and in the very fiber of their lives," said David Mohny, Prize Secretary.

A number of the public works projects have become landmarks of the city, including the Orquideorama, a 42,200-square-foot structure whose defining feature is a soaring, fractal-like canopy of wood-framed hexagons that shelters the Botanic Garden's orchid collection and houses cultural events. One of Medellín's most visited attractions is the iconic Parque Biblioteca España, which resembles three massive, etched black boulders and is perched in the hilltops of Santo Domingo, a barrio once notorious for drug violence. A plan that extended the city's modern railway system by building an elevated

gondola tramway also connected Medellín's poorest and most isolated neighborhoods to the rest of the city.

Each project was built in consultation with local neighborhood residents, and paired with sweeping social programs, including education and micro-lending to small businesses, to rout the city's deeply entrenched social inequalities. "From the beginning, we involved the people in the activity of using public spaces to solve social problems and to change the lives of the community," said Echeverri.

Two other projects were named finalists for the Curry Stone Design Prize, and the catalysts behind them will each receive a \$10,000 award. They are **Anna Heringer**, the designer of "handmade" village schools and single-family homes in rural Bangladesh that combine traditional craftsmanship with a modern and elegant twist, and **Rob Hopkins**, the co-founder of the Transition Movement, an international, community-led response to global warming and declining oil reserves.

The winner and finalists are selected by a jury from a pool of nominees submitted by leaders from the architecture and design communities. This year's jury was Els van der Plas, Director of Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development; Ravi Naidoo, Managing Director of Interactive Africa; Michael Bierut, Partner at Pentagram; prize founder Clifford Curry; and architect Lindy Roy.

About the Curry Stone Design Prize

The Curry Stone Design Prize is an annual prize that is awarded to an individual or group for developing and implementing a visionary design solution. The Prize, administered by Architecture for Humanity, recognizes projects that address critical issues such as access to clean air, food and water, shelter, health care, energy, education, social justice and the promotion of peace.

For more information visit <http://bit.ly/CSDPF>.

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