

MAKING AN IMPACT

Evidence of Cotter Ryan's commitment to the local community was made apparent in April 2007 when the firm donated its time and resources to revitalize the New Image Youth Center (NIYC). Located on South Parramore Avenue in one of Orlando's toughest neighborhoods, the NIYC is an after-school and summer program for kids living in the at-risk area.

The center was founded in 2004 by Shantae Stubbs when she began renting a building for students using her personal funds. "Rent was high, and it was the only thing that I could afford, so it was very basic," Stubbs recalls.

The aged building had begun to decay, and costly repair fees prevented Stubbs from renovating. "We had mold in the bathrooms, ceiling problems with a lot of drainage from the upstairs apartments, insect problems and the walls were dry rotted," she notes. "Things were working, but they just weren't decent."

Cotter Ryan connected with the youth center when it hosted a Christmas event for the organization.

So, late last year, when the company heard that the Orlando Magic of the National Basketball Association had donated \$10,000 to NIYC for new technology and a library, Cotter Ryan decided that the space needed a major overhaul to accommodate the new equipment.

"We donated our time and some \$5,000 worth of material, but our biggest contribution was coordinating the resources from the subcontractors," Turner notes.



The new facade of the New Image Youth Center in Parramore, Fla.

Over the course of five days, the company and 24 subcontractors replaced the structural framing, windows, front and rear doors, refinished the facade stucco, placed security bars on the windows, installed a barbed-wire fence, repainted the walls, installed air conditioning and heating and installed a new alarm system and a new playground.

Stubbs says she appreciated Cotter Ryan's no-pressure approach when doing the renovation. "I was busy, and they didn't pressure me to do anything," she recalls. "Most of the time people ask me to write proposals or coordinate the work. It didn't require any of that. They took the whole load and I concentrated on paying the bills and taking care of the kids." "Everyone is just in awe," Stubbs says about the updated building. "It's so inviting on the outside that people are just stopping in to ask about the center and the police are monitoring it to make sure people are not hanging around on the sidewalks outside."

"Our lives here were what we could make of it, but we didn't really know it was that bad until we did our renovation project; we couldn't really see what other people saw because it was all we had," she continues.

"They have changed our lives here, and I am thankful for that. The project fits with the name now. It gave us a totally new image – it was like a chance for some to start their life all over again."

suppliers. The company isn't always driven by the almighty dollar, and instead prefers to form relationships with new subcontractors based on quality of service.

"We don't look for low numbers; we look for responsible proposals," Ryan maintains.

"With roughly 80 percent of construction performed by subcontractors and third-party vendors, the company communicates regularly with each through weekly job site meetings.

New Projects

In the first quarter of 2009, Cotter Ryan will relocate its headquarters to Heathrow, Fla.-based Savannah Park Town Center – a 34-acre mix of professional office, retail and second-level apartments. Construction services will be provided by Cotter Ryan through sister company Kilcarraig Services.

Office space will feature traditional and southern architectural details; build-to-suit capabilities; flexible suite sizes ranging from 1,500 to 5,000 square feet and more.

Savannah Park Town Center is located less than a mile from I-4 and the 417 Expressway in the heart of northwest Seminole County's hot zone, near International Parkway between County Road 46-A and State Road 46.

Kilcarraig purchased sites on which to build two 20,000-square-foot office buildings in the office park, which will house the company's new headquarters, according to Director of Operations Will Turner. Kilcarraig will design, develop, lease and manage the property, while Cotter Ryan builds the units.

About 40 subcontractors will be on-site working on the buildings. Site preparation is underway and Turner estimates construction will begin on the buildings in early November. Construction cost of the buildings has been estimated at \$1.6 million each.

Other projects Cotter Ryan has been involved with in Florida include:

- The Sports Medicine Institute in Clermont;
- Maitland Oaks Medical Center in Maitland;
- Rhoka Retail Center in Kissimmee;
- AmericanFirst Bank in Clermont; and
- Sandy Lake Towers in Orlando. ■