# The LiRo Group wins five ENR New York magazine awards at 2018 Regional Best Projects Awards for N.Y./N.J. region

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Shown (from left) are: LiRo landscape architect Jonathan Grubman, senior associate VP James Eckhoff, associate VP Stephen Burke, senior project manager Andrew Schuler, VP Frank Franco, and CTA Architects principal Daniel Allen.

Manhattan, NY The LiRo Group (LiRo) has won five of ENR New York magazine's 2018 Regional Best Projects Awards for the New York/New Jersey region. The awards are given in 16 separate categories for area projects. Each year, the publication assembles a panel of six illustrious independent judges to review the numerous submissions and choose each category's winners. LiRo and the other honorees were recognized at the publication's awards breakfast held in midtown the Edison Ballroom.

Specifically, LiRo won Best Project in the Renovation/Restoration category for its Niagara Falls State Park Rehabilitation, and Awards of Merit in the Culture/Worship, Higher Education/Research, Landscape/Urban Development, and Excellence in Safety categories for the Irish Hunger Memorial renovation, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo, Phase II of Hunter's Point South Infrastructure and Waterfront Park, and Medical & Research Translational (MART) building and Hospital Pavilion at The State University of New York at Stony Brook. The award for the Irish Hunger Memorial renovation was won jointly by CTA Architects and LiRo.

Luis Tormenta, PE, LiRo's CEO and vice chairman, said, "The LiRo Group strives on all of our projects, especially those that are very technically challenging, to provide our clients and the end-users with high-quality structures and facilities they can count on to serve them well for decades to come. While the contentment of clients and work well done is its own reward, it is gratifying – and humbling – to be acknowledged by the industry in this way."

LiRo served as construction manager for this comprehensive, five-year-long, $70 million renovation and landscape rehabilitation. This 400-acre park, founded in 1885, is the country's oldest state park, with nine million sightseers visiting its historic waterfalls each year. In fact, it is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

The client, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) had initially awarded LiRo with a single Niagara Falls contract in June 2013, to build the limestone-clad concrete retaining walls directly at the Niagara River edge and the Gorge rim. Impressed with the firm's handling of the project, OPRHP increased LiRo's work in the Park. By the end, LiRo had

vastly refined the Park's wayfinding and signage; greatly improved access to the Park's overlooks and vistas, making them ADA-compliant; rehabilitated park roadways, walking paths, utility infrastructure, and landscaping; and built an all-new Cave of the Winds Pavilion from an old historic stone structure, creating an interactive museum and visitor center that serves as the entrance to the Gorge Experience and the Hurricane Deck, which is directly beneath Niagara Falls. LiRo vice president and project executive for the Niagara Falls rehabilitation, Frank Franco, AIA, stated, "Working in a park full of visitors – and doing so adjacent to the rushing waters of the Falls – was quite the challenge. However, our engineers devised stringent fall-protection measures and safety plans."

As construction manager for the Battery Park City Authority (BPCA), LiRo oversaw the $5.3 million renovation and waterproofing of this poignant Battery Park City memorial and contemplative space meant to honor the Great Irish Hunger and Migration of 1845-1852 – as well as encourage visitors to contemplate present-day hunger worldwide. CTA Architects served as the lead architect for the renovation.

Originally opened in 2002, the half-acre memorial overlooking the Hudson River had, over the years, succumbed to water infiltration and subsequent water damage. Visitors wind through a rural Irish landscape, with paths carved into a hill thickly lined with native Irish plants and stones imported from each of Ireland's 32 counties. The paths lead to a breathtaking viewing point 25 feet above street level, which boasts views of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. The memorial's original artist, Brian Tolle, had embedded an authentic Irish Famine-era stone cottage that was donated to the Memorial by his extended family and was brought over from Ireland and was reconstructed on-site. The cottage and plant-filled pathways are cantilevered over a layered base of glass and black Connemara limestone from Ireland. Shadowy text that relates to both the Famine and reports of contemporary hunger form upon the frosted glass panels, wrapping around the exterior of the Memorial and into the passageway leading to the cottage. Visitors hear about accounts of world hunger through a system of speakers installed above.

LiRo worked with Tolle and CTA Architects, carefully removing the landscaping and cottage, removing a previously applied (and ineffective) waterproofing system, and performed some slab repairs and patching. The team then installed a liquid cold-applied waterproofing membrane, cleaned the base's glass and limestone, then put the monument back together. According to LiRo Vice President and Senior Project Manager Frank S. Franco, AIA, "We performed a photographic survey of every inch of every element of the Memorial. Every single stone was numbered and then removed and catalogued, stored in containers on site during the renovation. This ensured that each piece was put back in its correct place." In addition, thousands of new contract-grown plants – all indigenous to Ireland – were grown off-site and replanted.

As construction manager, LiRo completed the new, ultra-modern, $375 million Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at the University at Buffalo (UB), for the State University Construction Fund (SUCF). At 628,000 square feet, it is the largest recently constructed medical education building in the United States, and the largest new building to have been erected in downtown Buffalo in decades. The eight-story structure with two basement levels was designed and

built using sustainable materials and methods, with the goal of obtaining LEED Gold certification. This building is allowing UB to expand the size of each of its classes by a full 25 percent. The Jacobs building was erected over the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority (NFTA) Allen/Medical Campus Metro station, the first time a subway station has been located under a building in Buffalo. As part of the project scope, LiRo managed the renovation of the NFTA station and built covered walkway bridges to the Jacobs School and adjacent buildings. An elevated pedestrian walkway spanning from Allen Street to Washington Street was also added.

The Jacobs building supports active learning, where learning takes place in small groups, with a focus on discussions versus lectures. The interior's main feature is the centrally located atrium rising from the second floor to the skylighted roof placed at the midpoint of the eighth floor. Within the atrium, some floors have balconies on them, while other floors (such as those with labs) overlook the atrium windows. Similarly, some of the floors feature steel bridges with glazed railings that traverse the atrium. Overall, the building was designed so that the various functional spaces that ring the atrium gain shared sunlight and visual access to both the atrium and the surrounding areas. According to LiRo's Associate Vice President and Project Executive on the project, Stephen Burke, "We oversaw the creation of a two-story-high, 32-foot-tall light tower built from a steel skeleton clad in opaque curtain wall-type glass panels. The tower has an internal LED-based lighting system that has the ability to change colors, showcasing UB's blue or other colors, depending on the program. We coordinated closely with the trades to mount LED lights on white Plexiglas panels that were then sandwiched between the LED lights on one side of the panel and the electronics and controls on the other side. By using special holders, our team ensured that the panels would be easy to remove and replace."

Of the building's eight above-grade floors, seven are for programming and the top-most floor is a mechanical penthouse. The first floor serves as the building's main access point. There are five general entries (including the main entrance and the Metro entrance) and one back-of-house entry/loading dock on the first floor. Three main service elevators serve the building.

The building includes classrooms and other teaching spaces, auditoriums with tiered seating, a faculty lounge, a student lounge, student meeting and team rooms, a bank branch with an ATM, and a casual café. Modern, light-filled research laboratories were also included, as well as private offices for senior staff and cubicles for junior researchers and administrative staff. One specialized learning space enables students to train using lifelike mannequins in realistic emergency medical scenarios, while another allows students to interact with volunteer "patients" to simulate real-world doctor-patient interactions. Surgical suites and robotics suites with specialty lighting and multiple operating tables are also located in the building, as is a gross anatomy lab, a pharmacy, computer lab, home healthcare class, and a disabled-care training room.

The two below-grade basement floors feature a vivarium for live-animal research, an aquatic section, two laboratories, and service spaces, with an interstitial floor for the vivarium's mechanical equipment. The vivarium was designed as a series of animal holding rooms with masonry divider walls. One of the laboratories was specified to conform to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Biological Safety Level (BSL) 3, while the second laboratory is rated ABSL-3 (Animal

Biological Safety Level 3).

LiRo Program and Construction Management, PE P.C. completed Phase II of Hunter's Point South Infrastructure and Waterfront Park, a $78 million project along the eastern shore of the East River for the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC). The team transformed 30 acres of wetlands into an area now poised to become an urban, middle-income, mixed-use community with residential, commercial, and recreational areas, including 5,000 units of residential housing. As construction manager, LiRo oversaw extensive infrastructure work on the approximately 15-acre southern portion of the site, including a five-and-a-half acre green, resilient waterfront park. Work included the addition of bicycle pathways; a playground; picnic terraces; wooden seating areas; areas with fitness equipment for adults; a kayak launch; and a curved, 30-foot-high pedestrian platform that provides spectacular views of Manhattan. The scope of work also included the restoration of one-and-a-half acres of wetlands. To support the housing that will be developed in this area, the team oversaw the completion of significant infrastructure work, which created 3,400 linear feet of new roadways with street lighting, as well as storm sewers, sanitary sewers, water mains, and utilities. Work was finished on budget and a full six months ahead of schedule.

James Eckhoff, PE, LiRo senior associate vice president and project manager on Hunter's Point Phase II, noted that LiRo anticipated there would be a great deal of detritus to remove, a large amount of soil to eliminate, and much grading work to be done, due to LiRo's having been involved in Phase I. "However, the amount of work we wound up facing was quite a bit more than we had ever suspected," he explained. "The site itself was all silt and we uncovered vast amounts of debris and old foundations. However, we managed to clean up the site extremely well. We also oversaw the bolstering of the shoreline by three full blocks. Although it had been filled in previously, we saw that the filled area was unstable. Our contractors removed the detritus and installed clean fill in order to provide an appropriate base and to create a much more resilient shoreline," Eckhoff said.

LiRo served as construction manager, along with E.W. Howell Co. as the general contractor, on this new 528,000-square foot, 10-story Medical & Research Translational (MART) building and Hospital Pavilion at the SUNY Stony Brook University for the New York State University Construction Fund. The new, L-shaped structure houses the 240,000-square foot MART wing; the 10-story, 225,000-square foot Hospital Pavilion to open in the early 2019; and the 58,000 s/f medical education section. The recently opened complex will be dedicated to imaging, neurosciences, cancer care, and cancer research, enabling physicians and scientists to work together to advance both cancer research and imaging diagnostics.

The MART includes wet laboratories for cell, tissue, and other cancer biology research; dry laboratories for statistical research, biomedical informatics, and clinical study; and is the home of the new, outpatient Cancer Center.

Meanwhile, the team created an educational section between the MART and the Hospital Pavilion wings. It features chemistry research labs, a 300-seat auditorium for live and distance learning, a conference center with breakout rooms, and educational spaces. The site plan also included a new loading dock, a cafeteria expansion, and site improvements that included new access roadways.

LiRo's Associate Vice President and Project Executive on the project, Stephen Burke, discussed the challenging site conditions. "It had low-bearing soil, existing adjacent medical buildings that could not be subject to construction vibrations, a utility tunnel that ran underneath the new buildings, and a significant 33-foot elevation difference," he stated. "Instead of the typical process of pounding piles into the ground, which causes significant vibrations, we employed an auger process that involves drilling holes in the ground, in which rebar cages are installed and then concrete is poured into them," he continued. In addition, the team used capped piles and mat-slab spanning across the building's footprint in order to support the steel-framed structure above it.

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