



For Immediate Release

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## **FIRST PHASE OF THE VILLAGES NEWEST NEIGHBORHOOD AT MIDDLETON OPENS WITH THE COMPLETION OF WORLD-CLASS SCHOOLS DESIGNED BY SCHENKELSHULTZ**

**The Villages, FL, September 25, 2023** – After three years of planning, design and construction, SchenkelShultz Architecture celebrates the opening of the new Early Childhood Center, K8 School and High School at The Villages. A desire to attract and retain a world-class workforce inspired The Villages to develop a distinct, multi-generational community that caters to the unique needs of employees and their families. Designed by SchenkelShultz, Middleton is a thoughtfully planned lifestyle community that provides residents with access to education, retail, sports and recreation. The first projects to come online were designed to reflect the local ecology and legacy of The Villages, while looking to the future with progressive, modern, community-focused facilities.

The Villages Early Childhood Center creates a nurturing environment for students aged 12 months – preK4. The school is a celebration of Florida's agricultural heritage incorporating elements such as grain silos and quonset huts that have been reimaged in classrooms and play spaces. Utilizing natural light, playful, oversized kaleidoscopes, and murals, the bright and airy atmosphere of the Early Childhood Center accommodates more than 300 students. The enriching academic environment exemplifies the community's long-term vision for an inclusive educational experience that provides high-quality early childhood education to all.

The Villages Charter K-8 School embraces the character of the local context with a contemporary, coastal village aesthetic. Programmatically the school is designed for adaptability and futureproofing to accommodate the evolving needs of students from kindergarten to 8th grade. The campus is divided into distinct zones: the elementary wing and the middle school wing, which flank centralized shared elements, including the media center, gymnasium and cafeteria, providing easy access to all grade levels. The school fosters an engaging and inspiring environment where students flourish academically, socially, and emotionally.

The Villages Charter High School is a modern interpretation of traditional Jeffersonian architecture creating a vibrant and dynamic learning environment that connects students, educators and the community. The high school administration and library defines the axial connection to the town's urban 'marketplace', a connection that is maintained through the configuration of the campus's secure courtyard. This configuration creates a sense of openness and transparency, allowing the school to be flexible as a community hub. The campus also boasts a state-of-the-art sports complex poised to become a destination for competitive sports, furthering the school's role as a significant regional asset.

“The campuses draw inspiration from a fictional historic town, successfully integrating rustic design elements with modern components, said Ekta Desai, AIA, Partner / Design Lead with SchenkelShultz “The campuses align with the broader Middleton Town Center master plan that embraces Florida's undeveloped heritage while serving as a family friendly community where residents can live, learn and play.”

### **About SchenkelShultz Architecture**

As a member of the Central Florida community for 40 years and headquartered in Downtown Orlando, SchenkelShultz is committed to inspiring the community through impactful design. The architecture and interior design firm has built a legacy of success through a continued focus on design excellence that responds to the distinct needs of each client. Rooted in critical thinking, research, collaboration, and personal experiences, the firm is passionate about design and creating meaningful community partnerships.