

# Prize-Winning Architect Builds Shelters From Cardboard

 teachingkidsnews.com/2014/04/02/3-pritzker-architecture-prize-2014/

By Nancy Miller

One of architecture's most important prizes has gone to a man who builds low-cost, recyclable buildings and structures.

Shigeru Ban is the winner of the 2014 Pritzker Architecture Prize.

For more than 20 years, Ban has been travelling to parts of the world where buildings have been destroyed by war or natural disasters like hurricanes.

Ban works “with local citizens, volunteers and students to design and construct simple, dignified, low-cost, recyclable shelters and community buildings for the disaster victims,” according to the Pritzker Architecture Prize website.



Paper Log House, 2001, Bhuj, India. Image: Kartikeya Shodhan

One of Ban's works is a cathedral (large church) in New Zealand made of cardboard tubes. An earthquake destroyed the original church a few years ago.

The cardboard cathedral is designed to last 50 years.

Ban began this kind of work during the war in Rwanda in 1994. Millions of people lost their homes and Ban suggested shelters made of paper tubes for the war's refugees.

The United Nations High Commission for Refugees hired him as an advisor to work on shelters.

Ban says the structures for refugees and others without homes must be easy to transport, easy to put up and take down, and able to withstand rain and fire.

In 1995, Ban founded an organization called VAN: Voluntary Architects' Network.

“With VAN, following earthquakes, tsunami, hurricanes, and war, Ban has conducted his shelter work in Japan, Turkey, India, Sri Lanka, China, Haiti, Italy, New Zealand, and currently, the Philippines,” the Pritzker website says.



Cardboard Cathedral, 2013, Christchurch, New Zealand. Image: Stephen Goodenough

Ban has also created offices and buildings for wealthy companies and individuals. However, his love of re-using and recycling materials comes from his childhood in Japan where nothing was wasted. A school project put him on the path to architecture.

The annual Pritzker Prize is given by the Pritzker family and recognizes living architects with talent, vision and commitment. Each winner receives a bronze medal and \$100,000.

In the formal announcement about the winner Tom Pritzker, son of the prize's founder, said that Ban's work is an example for all, and has made the world a better place.

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

By Kathleen Tilly

**Writing/Discussion Prompt**

Design your own structure. It could be a shelter for people or animals, a school, a store, or anything else you can imagine. The only challenge is that, like Ban, your structure has to be made out of recycled materials.

**Reading Prompt: Making Meaning/Interpreting Texts**

Why do you think Ban chose to use tubes made out of cardboard instead of any other 3D shape?

*Intermediate*

Develop and explain interpretations of increasingly complex or difficult texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts to support their interpretations (OME, Reading: 1.5).

**Grammar Feature: Proper and Common Nouns**

A noun is a person, place or thing. This article contains many common nouns that don't refer to specific people, places or things. Common nouns begin with a lower case letter.

Proper nouns, on the other hand, refer to specific people, places and things and they always begin with an upper case letter.

Circle all of the proper nouns and underline all of the common nouns in the article.

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