

# Orphan Grain Train

## CASE STUDY



Orphan Grain Train (OGT), a nonprofit faith-based volunteer network headquartered in Norfolk, Nebraska, provides donated food, clothing, medical supplies, and essential items to people in need across 71 countries, including the United States. To support its growing mission, Davis Design was commissioned in 2023 to design a 21,000+ square-foot Servant Center Addition at its national office.

As a full-service design firm based in Lincoln, Nebraska, Davis Design specializes in architecture, engineering, interior design—including contract furnishings—and construction administration. Serving clients across the Midwest, the firm brings decades of expertise to projects that enhance functionality and community impact.

Integrated with the existing warehouse, the Orphan Grain Train expansion adds important infrastructure, including increased donation space, streamlined sorting areas, modern office facilities, and a multipurpose room for events and volunteer activities.

When it was time to address interior design, Dayna Hoch, an architectural designer with Davis Design, says that for this brand-new addition, OGT wanted a clean look to help the busy space run smoothly for its many volunteers.



This new aesthetically functional design direction included replacing the outdated pegboard maps used to track OGT's distribution locations.

Over time, these maps became cluttered with pushpin-mounted photographs and string that were moved as needed, distorting the images and significantly reducing their functionality. Integral to the OGT mission and volunteer work, it was essential to reproduce the maps using a durable material that would allow the flexibility to draw, write, and withstand repeated revisions without compromising the surface performance.

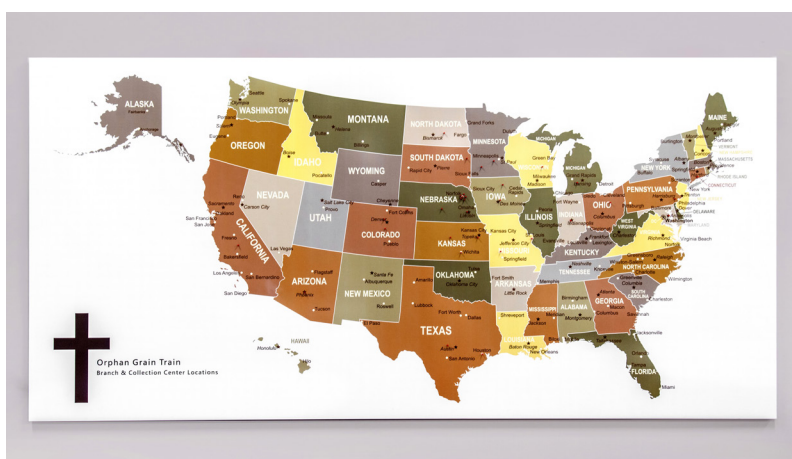
That's when Lexi Grobel, Interior Designer at Davis Design, stepped in and suggested Polyvision CeramicSteel enhanced with digital printing. Polyvision's innovative product presented an ideal, design-savvy solution, customized with subtly colored imagery to support the design scheme and contribute to efficient volunteer work and information sharing within the organization.



The power of tangible visual materials should not be underestimated—especially when it comes to information recall and collaboration. When people hear information, they remember only 10% of what they heard three days later. However, if a picture is paired with that same information, people will retain 65% of the info three days later.<sup>1</sup>

Polyvision's revolutionary digital print technology provides accurate image reproduction using specialized ceramic ink that becomes permanently fused into the surface through a high-temperature firing process. Like its close relative, the traditional CeramicSteel whiteboard found in schools and universities worldwide, this unique material also functions as an eco-friendly, sustainable dry-erase surface but with the element of custom artwork.

The inherent magnetic feature of CeramicSteel was also appealing to OGT in that magnets could be used to mark locations and be easily moved around as necessary without compromising the integrity of the surface. There is even extra unprinted space around the maps for future planning or brainstorming sessions.



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**The board is customizable and will change as they grow and expand. It's a great addition to their new space.”**

**Lexi Grobel, Davis Design**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.spiceworks.com/collaboration/team-collaboration/guest-article/do-not-erase-how-to-whiteboard-your-way-to-more-productivity/>

These days, most people are aware that art in the workplace contributes toward emotional wellbeing and productivity. Research shows that “well-curated art is especially effective at deepening workers’ sense of community... [there are] many benefits including site-specificity, tactile immediacy, and an opportunity for embodied interpersonal connection...fostering a sense of community and shared purpose within an organization.”<sup>2</sup>

In an article titled “The Motivational Benefits of Art in the Workplace”, the author describes an additional point-of-view that he calls “Return on Environment.” He suggests that “having art in the workplace is less about aesthetics and more about pride in one’s environment. It shows management cares enough about the employee experience—and the customer experience—to have a thoughtfully maintained facility that people feel good about working in.”<sup>3</sup>



## With Polyvision printed CeramicSteel,

it’s possible to harness these wellness benefits while also embracing the material’s scientifically proven health advantages. CeramicSteel’s built-in features address universal concerns typically considered by designers when selecting materials for heavily used public spaces: sanitation and indoor air quality. The porcelain enamel surface is nonporous, so microorganisms like bacteria can’t reproduce and form larger colonies that would contribute to the spread of illnesses. In places where many people pass through daily, the importance of cleanliness can’t be overstated, and when needed, CeramicSteel can be cleaned with rigorous disinfectants like bleach and quaternary agents without damage. The surface is also resistant to staining, scratching, fire, and chemicals, additional bonuses to a high-quality, long-lasting product. To assist with maintaining indoor air quality, Polyvision CeramicSteel surfaces emit no harmful VOCs and are Indoor Advantage Gold and Cradle-to-Cradle Bronze Certified.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.workdesign.com/2024/04/art-at-work/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2014/07/31/the-motivational-benefits-of-art-in-the-workplace/>

Polyvision takes its ecological footprint seriously, and our CeramicSteel products are part of an expanding corporate sustainability story that includes a usable lifecycle of 25+ years plus US-based production that in turn minimizes transportation requirements. Pairing those positive traits with efficient project management allows clients to create their own striking custom-printed panels with print-ready artwork and a simple 2-step approval process to ensure satisfaction.

The digitally printed CeramicSteel maps at OGT provide additional benefits, too. One could easily view the panels as a form of tangible, tactile “social media” that encourages community “IRL” as opposed to on-screen. The maps furnish an interactive space where ideas are developed, conversations flourish, and new friends are made; an analog experience that can be all too infrequent in today’s screen-based world. They’re also a permanent and colorful visual that illustrate the global reach of the many volunteers at OGT, promoting a sense of accomplishment for the greater good.

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**The map is a wonderful addition as it brings awareness to the location of our deliveries around the world. For volunteers and visitors to our Servant Center it is one of the first things that they notice and are drawn to.”**

**Grant Schmidt, Vice President of OGT**



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