Megan Hoover, a native Memphian and second-year Master of Architecture student at the University of Memphis, knows that her city is a great place that faces many problems. She hopes to alleviate some of those challenges by designing a much-needed rape crisis center. Her thesis project, entitled “Redefining the Process: Overcoming Architectural Nihiliphobia and Inspiring the Creation of Place” is an important one for the Memphis area, as it creates “a new Rape Crisis Center for the Memphis area. The visitors to this center represent a dramatically underserved population not only in Memphis, but within our larger culture. A traumatic event, such as a sexual assault, often leaves the survivor without a voice. The exploration of this thesis project seeks to give the survivors a voice through the design of spaces, allowing them to find new meaning in place through the process of healing.” The idea for this project grew out of the recent tragic stories about discoveries of many untested rape kits. Megan’s work unites compassion and understanding to give survivors of trauma a voice and a place of their own.

While graduate study is often characterized as isolated from the world in the academic ivory tower, which is simply not the case anymore, especially for Megan. She explains that “The University of Memphis Department of Architecture works extremely closely with the community (each studio has a real community partner) and this experience has given me the opportunity to build and learn in the community I love, while pursuing my passion of Architecture and Design.” These close community relationships were an important factor in Megan’s decision to study at the University of Memphis, as they will provide important connections in the professional community in Memphis and opportunities for her to improve the city she loves—both as a student and after graduation.

Megan is passionate about Memphis. She says, “I have lived in Memphis my whole life, and I have come to know it as a vibrant, diverse, and thriving community, which is an image that is often not portrayed through the media, or to outsiders. I believe Memphis holds great potential, it just needs the right people with passion to make great things happen, and I want to be a part of that process.” Like the city she loves, Megan has vibrant academic history, having been awarded numerous scholarships, including a First Generation PhD/M.Arch/MFA Fellowship, the LRK Architects Endowed Scholarship, the Van Walton Memorial Scholarship, and a University of Memphis Provost’s Scholarship. Megan is also the winner of several competitions and the recipient of the AIA Memphis President’s Award, and was the first student to ever receive this award. With such a prestigious record, Megan is poised to make a significant impact in her field and in the Memphis community.