

Case Study: Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix

Fortifying Learning Spaces with the Aspiro® Series Defendr Door System™

FORTE
OPENING SOLUTIONS



Door Solutions in Education / Institution

INDUSTRY

Education / Institution

LOCATION

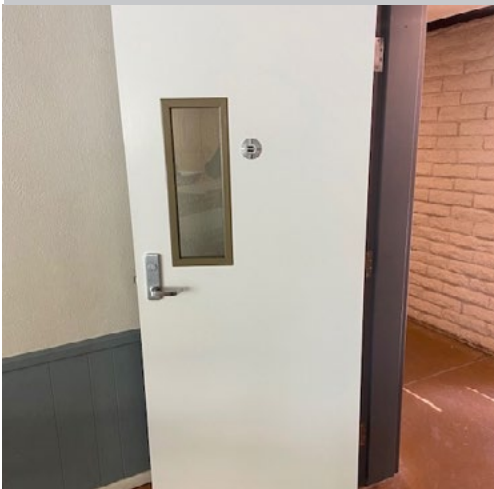
Phoenix, AZ

PROJECT PARTNERS

Twin City Hardware (TCH)

tchco.com**About UUCP**

Nestled in scenic Paradise Valley, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix (UUCP) fosters an inclusive, welcoming community where people of all backgrounds are valued and supported. Known for its uplifting services and longstanding commitment to social justice, UUCP offers programs for children, youth, and adults that encourage reflection, learning, and connection. The congregation is deeply engaged in community outreach and advocacy across the greater Phoenix area, creating opportunities for members to live out their values in meaningful ways. A beacon of hope and belonging, UUCP provides families and individuals with a judgment-free space to explore their beliefs, build community, and grow together.

www.phoenixuu.org**Project Background**

Strengthening Safety Without Sacrificing the Learning Experience

When the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Phoenix (UUCP) received a school security grant, they set out to strengthen classroom safety with a high-performance door system that would enhance protection without disrupting the learning environment.

After researching available options, the school identified the [Aspiro® Series Defendr Door System™](#) from Forte Opening Solutions as the optimal choice to meet their security and visibility needs. Designed for high-threat environments, the Aspiro® Series Defendr Door System™ offers attack-resistance, fire-rated performance, and design flexibility, making it ideal for educational settings seeking both safety and aesthetics.

Partnering with Twin City Hardware (TCH), a Forte distributor partner, the project team developed a tailored solution that improved both security and peace of mind across the campus.

The Challenge

Modern Security Needs in an Aging Facility

The existing facility presented several site-specific challenges common to older educational buildings. Many of the original openings were built into non-standard block walls, requiring customized hollow metal frames engineered to fit irregular wall conditions.

At the same time, the school wanted to integrate attack-resistant protection that could add layers of protection while preserving natural sightlines while maintaining compliance with safety codes. This included a fully-tested door system that met FTD-SA Shooter Attack Test Method Level 3 and included:

- Solid-core wood door
- Attack-resistant glazing and metal vision frame that offered transparency with protection
- ANSI/Grade 1 Tested Hardware with lockdown functionality allowing staff to quickly secure rooms while maintaining outside visibility

Sourcing qualified local installers also posed a hurdle, as did managing longer post-COVID lead times for custom-engineered products. Despite these constraints, the goal remained clear: provide a system that blends security, functionality, and long-term durability.

The Solution

A Fully Engineered Door System Built for Protection and Performance

Working together, Forte and TCH Aftermarket Team delivered a fully integrated Aspiro® Series Defendr Door System™ package engineered for security, precision, and code compliance.

The final solution included:



Project Overview

- **Complete attack-resistant door solution for education:** The Aspiro® Series Defendr Door System™ delivered a full-tested solution, attack-resistant glazing, and pre-installed hardware—enhancing classroom safety without compromising functionality or aesthetics.
- **Custom-engineered frames for non-standard walls:** Precision-fabricated hollow metal frames ensured secure anchorage and code compliance for the school's unique block-wall construction
- **Smart security and privacy integration:** Door scopes and roll-down interior screens provided clear visibility during normal operation and discreet coverage during lockdowns—balancing safety, awareness, and peace of mind.
- **Collaboration that delivered results:** Forte and TCH worked together from design to delivery to overcome complex field conditions and extended lead times, completing the project on schedule and to expectations.

- Nine (9) Aspiro® Series Defendr Door System™ openings built to meet FTD-SA Shooter Attack tested assemblies including solid-core wood doors, reinforced hinge and lock stiles, and factory-installed attack-resistant glass with metal vision frames.
- Custom hollow metal frames fabricated to accommodate the building's non-standard block construction.
- ANSI/BHMA Grade 1 BEST mortise locksets, a Dormakaba brand, pre-installed to ensure consistency and simplify field coordination.
- A door viewer (scope) integrated alongside the vision lite, providing discreet hallway visibility during lockdown scenarios.

Each door assembly was pre-installed and tested in a controlled environment before shipment, ensuring accurate alignment, proper hardware fit, and a consistent aesthetic finish. The design also incorporated a roll-down privacy screen, allowing teachers to instantly cover the glass from inside the room while retaining outward vision through the viewer.

Combined, these features provide a layered security approach that delays forced entry, strengthens situational awareness, and maintains the desired classroom aesthetic.

"Forte was invaluable and accommodating," shared the TCH project team. "The Aspiro® Series Defendr Door System™ was one of the easiest parts of this project—everything arrived complete and ready to install."

The Result

A Safer, More Confident Learning Environment

The installation delivered measurable improvements in classroom and office security, helping the school achieve its grant-funded goal of building a safer learning environment.

The Aspiro® Series Defendr Door System™ enhanced protection through fully



These doors have completely transformed our classroom security. The Aspiro® Series Defendr Door System™ provides peace of mind—strong, reliable, and thoughtfully engineered. TCH's coordination and expertise made the entire process seamless from start to finish."

School Facilities Manager
Unitarian Universalist
Congregation of Phoenix

tested cores and glazing, while maintaining a clean, consistent look across the facility. The addition of the door scope and privacy screen gave staff practical lockdown control without compromising natural light or visibility.

The project also demonstrated the value of pre-engineered integration—from frames to hardware to glazing—reducing on-site errors and ensuring a faster, smoother installation despite the building's unique wall conditions.

"These doors have completely transformed our classroom security," said the School Facilities Manager. "The Aspiro® Series Defendr Door System™ provides peace of mind—strong, reliable, and thoughtfully engineered. TCH's coordination and expertise made the entire process seamless from start to finish."

The Project Team

Collaboration That Delivered Precision, Protection, and Peace of Mind

This project was delivered through a collaboration between Forte Opening Solutions and Twin City Hardware (TCH).

[Forte Opening Solutions](#) delivers a full range of commercial door systems and components designed to meet performance needs and design priorities across education, healthcare, hospitality, and office spaces. Previously known as Masonite Architectural, Forte Opening Solutions is backed by a legacy of trusted brands, including Marshfield DoorSystems, Algoma Hardwoods, Mohawk Doors, Baillargeon, and Haring. Forte is committed to making every door, every interaction, and every opening unforgettable.

[Twin City Hardware \(TCH\)](#), with headquarters in Oakdale, Minnesota, is a family-owned distributor and integrator of commercial hardware and security systems. Serving sectors like commercial, healthcare, and multifamily, TCH specializes in doors, frames, access control, and surveillance, offering innovative solutions such as their "Door-in-a-Box" program. Through nine strategic locations nationwide, TCH combines broad market coverage with deep expertise in both new construction and retrofit projects. They deliver streamlined, high-quality hardware and security solutions that contractors and building owners can rely on.

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2025-FOS-CSD-102-1212