Library kicks off Northern Lights Branch renovation and expansion

COLUMBUS—Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) has kicked off the renovation and expansion of its Northern Lights Branch with a “wallbreaking” ceremony.

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Wallbreakers, from left to right:
Douglas Kridler, President & CEO, The Columbus Foundation
Jennifer Adair, Chair, North Linden Area Commission
Rick Catrone, Northern Lights Branch Manager, Columbus Metropolitan Library
Jennifer Hadden, President, Friends of the Columbus Metropolitan Library Board
Erika Clark Jones, Member, Columbus Metropolitan Library Board of Trustees
The Honorable David Leland, State Representative
The Honorable Eileen Paley, Member, Columbus City Council
Patrick Losinski, CEO, Columbus Metropolitan Library
Brian Moran, Project Executive, Turner Construction Company
The Honorable Jaiza Page, Member, Columbus City Council
Lynne Redgrave, President, Columbus Metropolitan Library Foundation Board
Emmanuel Remy, President, Northland Community Council
Jack Hedge, Principal, DesignGroup
Roger Sugarman, President, Columbus Metropolitan Library Board of Trustees
James Russell, Executive Vice President & COO, Pizzuti Companies

The Northern Lights Branch was originally built in 1993 and is one of the most heavily used locations in CML's 22-library system. The upcoming renovation and expansion will more than double the size of the branch from 11,881 square feet to more than 26,000, increase parking and offer more room for programs and services.

The Northern Lights Branch renovation and expansion is part of CML’s 10-project aspirational building program. The new Driving Park Branch opened on July 12, 2014, renovations formally began on Main Library in February and the new Whitehall Branch opened to the public on April 11. Additionally, CML plans to break ground on its Parsons, Northside and Shepard projects this year.

To prepare for construction, the Northern Lights Branch closed to the public beginning Sunday, April 19, and reopened on Monday, May 4 at its temporary location in the former Brookhaven High School (4077 Karl Rd.) less than two miles away. Hours of operation at the temporary location are the same as branch hours, and the collection size has been reduced with a focus on high-interest titles. When the Northern Lights Branch reopens in its expanded space in 2016, the collection will return to its previous size.

CML leased the 12,000-square-foot temporary space – within the school’s former library and computer lab – from Columbus City Schools for $1 a year for two years.

CML understands that great libraries create stronger communities, and each branch is an essential hub that reflects the unique needs of the neighborhood it serves. Some of CML's 22 locations are 40 to 50 years old and inadequate to meet the demands of a growing 21st century community. Demands and expectations will continue to grow, along with the population of Franklin County.

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CML’s aspirational building program is the result of a community-wide process that will continue to serve the needs of Franklin County well into the future. The plan is a multi-phased comprehensive blueprint that reinvents and revitalizes the entire 600,000 square feet maintained by the library.

In addition to being a vital community asset, Columbus Metropolitan Library strives to minimize its environmental footprint. With each new building or renovation project, CML plans to use sustainable building materials, incorporate glass for natural light to reduce energy costs and introduce other design and building elements friendly to the natural environment.

Phase one of CML’s aspirational building program is transforming and significantly upgrading seven urban branches (Driving Park, Whitehall, Parsons, Martin Luther King, Northside, Northern Lights, Shepard) and two suburban branches (Hilliard and Dublin). In addition, changes to Main Library represent a major investment in downtown Columbus and the Discovery District.

Visit columbuslibrary.org for more information and to track progress of CML’s ambitious building program.

Columbus Metropolitan Library has served the people of Franklin County, Ohio for 142 years. With its Main Library and 21 branches, CML is well known for signature services and programs like Homework Help Centers, Reading Buddies, Summer Reading Club and the Ready to Read Corps. The library’s Strategic Plan supports the vision of “a thriving community where wisdom prevails,” which positions CML to respond to areas of urgent need: kids unprepared for kindergarten, third grade reading proficiency, high school graduation, college readiness and employment resources.

CML was named a 2011 National Medal Winner by the Institute for Museum and Library Services for work in community service, the highest honor for libraries and museums. In 2014, Columbus Metropolitan Library became the only large public library in the country to be rated a 5-Star Library for all seven years of Library Journal’s industry standards rating program.

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