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ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Orange County Public Schools announces new Downtown PS8 School to be built in Parramore neighborhood

Collaboration with the Rosen Foundation, UCF, Valencia College, the Boys & Girls Club to create first-of-its-kind pre-school through 8 facility

Jan. 24, 2015 - Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) announced a first-of-its-kind school to be built in the Parramore neighborhood of downtown Orlando. OCPS and community partners will collaborate on the Downtown PS8 School that addresses the needs of preschool to middle school students at one campus.

The yet unnamed school, to be built in the southwest quadrant of the Parramore Avenue and Amelia Street intersection, combines the enriching talents and treasures of OCPS, the Rosen Foundation, University of Central Florida, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida, Valencia College, and the City of Orlando.

“This unique partnership will transform the lives of hundreds of children attending the new Preschool K8 each year,” said Orange County Public Schools Chairman Bill Sublette. “The involvement of these community and education institutions demonstrates their commitment to the children and families of the Parramore neighborhood. We expect real change in children’s lives as a result.”

The school will provide a quality preschool program for two to four-year-old children funded by hotelier Harris Rosen’s Rosen Foundation. The foundation will also send to college any Jones High School graduate living in the Parramore neighborhood and meeting the necessary requirements. This mirrors the successful program Rosen started in the Tangelo Park neighborhood more than 20 years ago where 280 students have received scholarships to college and technical or career training schools.

“We’ve seen young lives changed as a result of our program in Tangelo Park,” stated hotelier Harris Rosen. “We’re excited about duplicating it in Parramore and getting great results. This is something that should be happening across our country to make education equality a reality.”

“What an incredible blessing for the children and families of Parramore,” declared Orange County School Board Vice Chair and District 5 School Board Member Kathleen “Kat” Gordon, whose district encompasses the Parramore neighborhood. “Having the school right in the

neighborhood increases the opportunity for parents to be involved in their children's education. I'm thrilled for these families and can't wait for the first day of school," said Gordon.

The University of Central Florida and Valencia College plan a teacher internship program for their education students, but there's more. UCF will provide tuition and fees for a four-year scholarship to the UCF Medical School to any Jones High School graduate who grows up in the Parramore area and meets criteria, including admission to the medical school.

"This groundbreaking for a national model school signifies a landmark event for Parramore, for Orlando, and for public education in Orange County," said UCF President John C. Hitt. "As UCF fashions a new downtown campus with Valencia College and the City of Orlando, we look forward to engaging with the Parramore community, Orange County Public Schools, and philanthropist Harris Rosen to foster a dynamic new partnership for student success."

In addition to the kindergarten through middle school curriculum, an on-site Boys & Girls Club program for six to 18-year-olds will provide children with after-school youth development programs.

"This partnership with OCPS, the Hughes family, our donors, and the funding community will provide great futures for thousands of youth in the area who may never have had the opportunity to reach their full potential," said Gary Cain, president of Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida. "Evidence clearly demonstrates that when children have a safe place like a Boys & Girls Club, their academics improve, they avoid risky behaviors, and they grow up to become productive and caring citizens. We're excited about this partnership and look forward to this new club positively impacting young lives for years to come."

Additionally, OCPS and the City of Orlando are discussing other services that could be provided to community members on-site after school hours.

"We are grateful to the community for making this a reality," said Dr. Barbara Jenkins, OCPS Superintendent. "From the voters who approved the half-cent sales tax to build this school, to the community philanthropists whose donations will provide valuable experiences on this campus, we are so lucky to live in a community that truly values and supports public education."

While the school design is in preliminary stages, the vision is to have a separate wing for the preschool and prekindergarten programs, dedicated office and activity space for the Boys & Girls Club, and outdoor space suitable for community events.

The approved budget is \$41.3 million. The architecture team is Baker Barrios and HKS Architects. The school is scheduled to open in August 2017.

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