



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 30, 2013

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MAYOR EMANUEL BREAKS GROUND FOR NEW ALBANY PARK LIBRARY BRANCH

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Commissioner Brian Bannon and local officials broke ground today on the new Albany Park library. The 16,300-square-foot branch will be nearly 6,000 square feet larger than the previous library, which served the community for 50 years.

"While the Albany Park Branch Library worked well for 50 years, it no longer fulfilled the 21st century service needs of a community that is home to thousands of residents," said Mayor Emanuel. "The new library represents an investment in the future of this community—its children. It will provide the necessary resources for children to be successful in school and for neighborhood residents to look forward to another 50 years of library services."

The branch will have an open floor plan designed for maximum natural light, with floors and ceilings that absorb noise. It will include a reading room, a multipurpose room, a separate teen space and an attractively landscaped reading garden on the west side of the building. The public technology will increase from 10 computers to 38. As with all CPL public computers, these will offer patrons access to the Internet, as well as Microsoft Office suite of productivity software, allowing them to write resumes, do homework, create spreadsheets, PowerPoint presentations and more. The \$15 million project is funded through the Lawrence-Kedzie TIF District.

"We are excited to be able to provide the Albany Park community a state-of-the-art library in order to better serve the needs of patrons in this diverse community," said Library Commissioner Brian Bannon. "I am sure they will appreciate all this new library offers - not only a larger building, but a larger collection, more meeting spaces, more access to technology and a focus on providing the children and teens of the neighborhood with the latest digital tools needed to be successful."

The new teen digital learning center reflects a growing trend of libraries dedicating space to nurturing teens' values, identity, and the new skills necessary to grow and thrive. Teens will be

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offered a variety of STEM-based and financial literacy programs, as well as book clubs, Teen Tech Week and Teen Read Week.

“I am very excited about construction starting on the new library for Albany Park,” said Alderman Margaret Laurino (39th Ward). “I have many fond memories of studying at the old branch. A library is now more than a place to shelve books, and the old building wasn’t designed to serve our community the way we need today.”

The new branch will continue to offer collections in Korean, Spanish, and Arabic as well as host a bilingual Korean/English adult book discussion and weekly Neighborhood Writing Alliance workshops.

Residents of the community will not be without programs and services during construction. The Chicago Public Library (CPL) recently located its Bookmobile in the North Park University parking lot, across the street from the branch, providing patrons with a browsing collection and holds pickup location. Northeastern Illinois University has committed to providing borrowing privileges for Albany Park branch users and a room for meetings of the adult reading group. The branch’s Teacher in the Library program has been relocated to the North Park Covenant Church.

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