



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

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**MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL AND CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY TO CELEBRATE OPENING OF THE  
WHITNEY YOUNG BRANCH**

*Library in the Chatham neighborhood underwent a \$12 million gut renovation and expansion*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Public Library (CPL) Commissioner Brian Bannon joined 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Roderick Sawyer and community members to celebrate the re-opening of the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Branch Library. Whitney Young, located at 415 East 79<sup>th</sup> Street, underwent a \$12 million gut renovation and 2,800 square foot expansion bringing the library's footprint to nearly 14,000 square feet.

"Whitney Young library branch is now a place where Chatham residents of all ages can expand their imaginations and broaden their intellectual horizons and bridge generational and cultural divides in a shared spirit of civic unity," Mayor Rahm Emanuel said. "The Whitney Young Branch is now fit to serve the Chatham community, and will support its residents with the 21<sup>st</sup> century services needed to succeed for generations to come."

The renovated and expanded library creates a welcoming and flexible space that provides access to library services for residents of all ages. The branch now includes an Early Learning Play Space for children, a YOUmedia digital lab for teens, new equipment and furniture, expanded meeting and study spaces and refreshed collections.

"This library branch was heavily utilized by the Chatham community, and we know its improvements and expansions were highly anticipated," said Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon. "We are thrilled to cut the ribbon on this beautiful new space that will continue to meet the evolving needs of our patrons through innovative programming and 21<sup>st</sup> Century library services."

The branch will be home to one of three Experience Labs announced with Comcast in October 2017 to bring together three CPL programs – YOUmedia, CyberNavigator digital skills tutoring for adults, and Maker Lab – powered by Internet Essentials for residents. CyberNavigators assist with digital skill building and online job searches, and helped 1,000 people find a job each year for the last two years. Whitney Young will be the first branch library to have a dedicated Maker Lab.

"Whitney Young Branch has long provided countless contributions to our residents, our neighborhoods and our shared civic life," said Alderman Roderick Sawyer, 6<sup>th</sup> Ward. "With the expansion and renovations complete, this branch will now be a Chatham anchor for families to

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gather, students to get help with homework and job-seekers to connect with life-changing opportunities.”

The library is ADA accessible throughout the building. The existing building was retrofitted with improved lighting and energy efficient mechanical systems. The expansion also includes an enclosed courtyard.

Development of the project was managed by the Public Building Commission (PBC), while Johnson & Lee, LTD, a full-service Chicago-based Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) architectural firm, served as the Architect of Record. The building was designed by [bKL Architecture LLC](#), with South Side native Danielle Tillman serving as lead project architect.

The Whitney Young branch of Chicago Public Library was formerly named Chatham branch, for the community in which it's located, and opened in 1927. In 1973, the branch moved to a new location at 79<sup>th</sup> and King Drive and was renamed for civil rights and community development leader Whitney Young, Jr. at that time.

This is part of the CPL “Branching Out: Building Libraries, Building Communities” initiative to develop and modernize community libraries throughout the city. Branching Out focuses on investing in key areas of neighborhood libraries including: modern facilities and infrastructure, and high quality programming with librarians and administrators. Since 2011, 6 new libraries have been built, significant updates have been made at 14 branches and more than \$275 million in new investments have been made. By 2019, an additional 5 new libraries will be built, and renovations at 4 libraries will be complete.

The Family Day Celebration for the community will be held at the Whitney Young Branch on Saturday, January 19, 2019.

### **About Chicago Public Library**

Since 1873, Chicago Public Library (CPL) has encouraged lifelong learning by welcoming all people and offering equal access to information, entertainment and knowledge through innovative services and programs, as well as cutting-edge technology. Through its 80 locations, the Library provides free access to a rich collection of materials, both physical and digital, and presents the highest quality author discussions, exhibits and programs for children, teens and adults. CPL received the Social Innovator Award from Chicago Innovation Awards; won a National Medal for Library Services from the Institute for Museum and Library Services; and was ranked number one in the U.S. and third in the world by an international study of major urban libraries conducted by the Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf in Germany. For more information, please call (312) 747-4050 or visit [chipublib.org](http://chipublib.org).