



Half Hollow Hills Community Library celebrates grand reopening



NICHOLAS GRASSO | MAY 5, 2022



Hundreds of community members attended the Half Hollow Hills Community Library's grand reopening over the weekend.

As elected officials, library staff and the library's board of trustees stood before the crowd, the Sound of Long Island chorus sang, a food truck served ice cream and pretzels and Spiderman drew the attention of knee-high attendees.

“It is very very important to know that the library respects the past, the present, and the future,” library Director Helen Crosson said. “This library is here for whatever your needs are, our staff is ready to get to ‘Yes.’ By respecting our mission..., we get to imagine the possibilities for our future together.”

The new building — with a \$24.7 million price tag — was five years in the making. In 2017, the community voted to approve a \$14.5 million bond to rebuild the library.

Some \$500,000 in New York State Construction grant money, together with the library’s capital reserves, provided the remaining funding.

The original structure — about 60 years old — flooded during heavy rains and did not comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Its doors shuttered on Halloween in 2018, and the library staff and collection sought temporary refuge at the Chestnut Hill Elementary School.



A wealth of new features

The new future-forward library at 55 Vanderbilt Motor Pkwy. includes such green energy initiatives as solar panels, GeoCool underground air conditioning and an electric car charging station.

Outside, next to its book return drop, the library unveiled a new Island Harvest drop box for food donations. Crosson said during the COVID-19 pandemic, the public donated over 3,000 pounds of food to the library for Island Harvest.



On the sloped grassy terrain before the library's entryway, the Dix Hills Garden Club installed the Blue Star Memorial By-Way. The monument honors past, present and future service members of the nations armed forces.

Perhaps most exciting are all the new technological and educational spaces and services the library included in its renovation.



“The teaching kitchen is definitely a highlight,” Crosson said. “The café to serve the public, the sewing machines, ... the 3D printers, all new. The meeting rooms, the live streaming, the sprung wood floor to do fitness, the auditorium with over 100 seats [and movie screen], all new.

“I would say 10% of this building existed before, and that would be our amazing book collection,” she added.

In the basement, guests can access the rotating art gallery. Its first installation is a photographic timeline of the new library’s buildout. The second, Crosson said, will highlight “the best of the best” student artwork throughout the Half Hollow Hills School District. She projected the new exhibit’s installation will occur early June.











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