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The Library Expansion Project Is Complete At Parkland Community Library

The Parkland Community Library is excited to announce our renovation is completed and we are open to the public.

To continue in their efforts to serve a growing community, the Parkland Community Library underwent a major overhaul that began in the spring of 2020 under the expertise of Boyle Construction. The interior construction was completed in April 2021. Paving and landscaping is expected to finish up this summer. The new floor plan reflects the evolving nature of 21st-century libraries by focusing on flexible public use spaces. To meet the goals of the new renovation and remain open to the community, the Parkland Community Library set up a temporary location at the Roma Corporate Center until the project was near its completion. PCL's virtual library, digital databases, and e-materials were increased to meet the needs of the community during the renovation and the COVID-19 pandemic.

South Whitehall Township Board of Commissioners approved the expansion of the library's 5,400 square feet to 11,420 square feet. Expansion features include enlarged programming space to serve more families at storytime and providing space for adult workshops and groups that can occur at the same time.

The redesign contained five key elements. The first was to change the current space's overall layout for housing books that were in storage. Patrons will be able to browse our full collection and check out items immediately without waiting.

The second was to dedicate additional and improved space for library programs, to create separate event spaces for children, teens, and adults, with the capabilities to enlarge meeting rooms to comfortably fit all of our attendees. PCL's old layout consisted of one small program room. We wanted to create a hub for collaboration, entertainment, workshops, seminars, and lectures. The new Carol and Perry Zirkel Meeting Rooms can be divided into two rooms for smaller crowds or run two programs at once. The sound-dampening folding divider allows us to make the space more intimate or open up to accommodate a larger gathering. This space invites library users to engage their neighbors with common interests in this up-to-date destination.

The third element was expanding the newly named Barclay Family Children's Wing, and reconfiguring the layout for the Karen Tamerler Children's Meeting Room. The expansion incorporated the addition of an onsite storage area and shifting the children's department into the former staff office area. We were able to gain an additional amount of space in the Karen Tamerler Children's Meeting Room. We have added interactive wall-mounted STEM stations for youngsters to explore. Our patrons enjoy the natural light from the new bump-out. Comfortable bench seating was added for reading and play.

The fourth was to add more parking and design a welcoming exterior. We encourage the Parkland Community to relax and study under the extended porch. Bring your laptop and connect to our free WiFi.

Lastly, Parkland Community Library will increase customer service efficiency by introducing the first public library self-checkout systems in the Lehigh Valley.

In an ever-changing world of information, the Parkland Community Library plays an increasingly vital role in the lives of those who live and work in the community. Library usage has been growing and changing

significantly in recent years. People visit the library for meeting space and collaborative work as much as they do for access to materials. This project aims to reinvent what a public library can aspire to be.

More than the renovation of outdated and underutilized spaces, the project will adapt physical areas in the library to the changing needs of users including better seating, new carpeting and paint, and access to technology throughout.

Teens will enjoy additional quiet study areas and comfortable lounge furniture to hang out with friends or classmates.

Executive director Debbie Jack of the Parkland Community Library, “This project will allow us to serve Parkland residents in a manner in which they deserve. We are responding to changes in technology and culture that affect how we connect, discover and grow,” said Jack. “We gathered the community’s input to build our strategic plan highlighting our physical space as a key asset. We listened. These improved spaces will enhance our ability to deliver better experiences for visitors of all ages. Although we have made positive changes to our existing space in the past, Parkland Community Library required more space. We had over 9,000 items in storage and limited parking. This renovation will create an improved experience for our community, but a larger space was necessary to best serve all 54,000 residents,” says Jack.

The Parkland Community Library Board of Directors is thrilled that the library renovation and expansion have been completed and the library is now open. “Twenty plus years in the making, the project more than doubles the square footage of the library and will enable us to much better serve the needs of the Parkland Community. We invite community members to visit the new library and see for themselves. We have a new community resource of which we can all be proud. We also want to thank South Whitehall Commissioners and staff for working with us collaboratively to make this a reality,” Dr. Barry G. Cohen, President.

For more information about the Library’s expansion project, visit the Library’s website at parklandlibrary.org.

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