



Breaking ground for an expanded YMCA and new Howard County Public School along Route 103 in Ellicott City were (from left) Don Hutchinson, board chair, YMCA of Central Maryland; Lawrence Buehler, post commander, Yungling-Ridgely VFW Post 7472; Dr. Sydney Cousin, superintendent of Howard County Public School System; Lee Jensen, president & CEO, YMCA of Central Maryland; Jim Robey, Howard County executive; Courtney Watson, chair, Howard County Board of Education; Alec Moomaw, future student; Troy Weaver, executive director, Howard County Family Branch YMCA; Chris Merdon, Howard County Council.

YMCA of Central Maryland, Howard Board of Ed Celebrate Groundbreaking

The YMCA of Central Maryland and the Board of Education of Howard County broke ground on May 16 for the Howard County Family YMCA and the new northeastern elementary school.

The YMCA of Central Maryland approved the sale of the back eight acres of its property to be used as field space for a new elementary school. Proceeds from the sale, in turn, will establish the base of the YMCA's capital campaign for a larger facility, along with a \$1.5 million state bond bill.

Field space for programming will be shared by the school and the YMCA. Other infrastructure will also be shared, such as overflow parking, a private road and the storm water waste management system.

Working Together

The two organizations entered into negotiations when the school board identified the need for a new elementary school in the northern section of the county. The purchase from the YMCA and a sale by the VFW were the two key land acquisitions. The Board of Education negotiations continue with several property owners for smaller parcels at the site entrance.

For the last five years, the YMCA's executives and board of managers have sought a land deal that would generate enough funds to enable them to move forward with a capital project expanding the 38-year-old facility's capacity.

According to Lee Jensen, president and

CEO of the YMCA of Central Maryland, said, "We've been looking for an organization that would complement our mission of serving kids and families in Howard County. The resulting campus will provide for the growing needs of Ellicott City and the surrounding areas."

Sydney Cousin, superintendent of schools for the Board of Education of Howard County, said, "The need for another school in the northeast is critical and we are thankful to both organizations for stepping forward. We are looking forward to August 2007 when the school will open its doors for students."

Community Building

The proposed new YMCA facility is a 54,000-square-foot building that will offer modern amenities such as an additional swimming pool, a gymnasium and a climbing wall. The state-of-the-art health and wellness center will more than double the square footage of the current facility. There will also be separate women's, men's, boy's and girl's locker rooms, in addition to a family locker room.

Chris Young, immediate past chair of the Howard County Board of Managers, said, "Many people have worked for years to bring about the right development for our campus. We are extremely pleased to have found such a natural fit with the public schools. Now we begin the work of raising the remainder of the capital to move forward with a new facility."