



Renovation Celebration, July 16, 2017

Remarks on the Completion of the 2016-2017 Interior Renovation

Sandy Whitmer, Library Director

30 years ago, on a Sunday afternoon in May, the residents of Warrenville gathered on this spot to celebrate the opening of a brand new library building. I suspect some of you were here that day and can probably find your signature on the poster that hangs just inside of the entrance behind me. Sixteen years after the building opened, the community gathered again to celebrate the completion of an expansion and remodeling that tripled the size of the original building.

Today we celebrate another re-imagining of the Warrenville Library.

There will be many "thank-yous" in my remarks today, and I'm sorry that, unlike the Oscars, there is no music to play me off. The success of this project is truly the result of a group effort requiring the recognition of many!

My first thanks goes to you, our community, for being patient and more importantly enthusiastic, about this project. The construction period was definitely a "Who Moved My Cheese" moment in the life of Warrenville Library ... and we all survived!! You made it a pleasure to serve you during what was certainly one of the most chaotic 7 months this library has ever seen.

My second expression of gratitude goes to the people lined up along the back edges of the crowd – the staff of the Library. Faced with unconventional working spaces and challenges too numerous to name, these dedicated people rose to the occasion and continued to maintain the welcoming environment that is the hallmark of our Library. Without the staff, this building is just bricks and mortar. Their work is what makes this building a library. I'm so glad that each of them is a part of our team. They deserve to be celebrated even more than our new spaces.

When we began the journey (about 5 years ago) to re-imagine the Library's spaces, we had several goals in mind. We wanted to continue the tradition of the Library as a

place for learning, a place where individuals could come to investigate and explore, to expand upon their knowledge and improve their lives and the world around them.

In order to accomplish this goal, we spent time observing how people were using the Library.

- In addition to *individuals* visiting the library, we saw an increased need for rooms and spaces where collaboration and discussion could occur.
- We saw the need for children to have a place to interact with their surroundings.
- We needed infrastructure upgrades to support the changes in technology – so many people were carrying in their own devices and needed a place to plug in.
- The world of work had changed and telecommuting meant some people no longer reported to an office. We knew the Library could be a workspace free from the distractions of working at home.

Two years ago, we began earnestly exploring what it would take to renovate the library's interior. We want to thank the people and organizations who were especially helpful during the planning stages including:

- those of you who responded to surveys and gave feedback on our early ideas and plans;
- our attorney Roger Ritzman, for making sure all of our legal obligations made sense for the Library and the community;
- our financial team at Ehlers Inc – Steve, John and Adrienne – who took a detailed look into our financial future to ensure we could accomplish what we set out to achieve by using a combination of reserves and existing revenue streams;
- We thank Chase Bank for financing a significant portion of the project;
- We also want to give a shout out to Community Unit School District 200 for openly sharing research and information about best practices for today's learning environments and the skills today's students will need to be successful in tomorrow's world;

When it came time to bring in the heavy hitters we found a wonderful partner in Product Architecture & Design. From the outset, these designers listened carefully to our goals and somehow found a way to accomplish everything. When we look back to our old floor plans (and there is one inside so you can do the same) – it's amazing to see what they accomplished. Thank you Tiffany, Dan and Jim for bringing our vision to life.

The City of Warrentville and the Warrentville Fire Protection District conducted diligent inspections during construction and waived permit fees, saving the Library thousands of dollars that were instead invested in the project

Many of you know that during construction we found new friends at the Warrentville V.F.W. and Trinity Lutheran Church who generously opened their spaces to us for programs.

Then, there's our construction management team from Shales McNutt. Josh, our project manager, oversaw contracts and kept the communication flowing between architects, contractors and the Library. Mark was the Library's #1 advocate throughout the project. Being on site for a full seven months, he became part of our staff. With the right blend of know-how and tenacity Mark's diligent efforts made sure our project came in on time and under budget.

The craftsmen and women who brought our plans off the paper and into reality also deserve our thanks.

And finally a special thank you to our friends at MB Financial Bank for their generous contribution to today's event.

Warrentville, you have a lot to celebrate!

- Today, we celebrate some amazing new spaces.
- We celebrate vibrant collections, amazing programs and an abundance of free information and resources
- We celebrate a destination where the community can gather
- But most of all we celebrate YOU, our residents, for your patience, support and enthusiasm. Consider this renovation a gift you've given to yourselves and to your community.