Social Learning Center opens to smiles

Ray Romanczyk smiled as he watched dozens of children playing outdoors at the Institute for Child Development’s new Social Learning Center during its Nov. 1 grand opening.

“You look at every single piece of apparatus and every area: someone is doing something,” said the ICD director. “It is just great. It’s worked out really well.”

More than 200 parents, children, teachers, supporters and University officials took part in the celebration of the ICD’s Shamrock Five Social Learning Center. “This is such a joyous occasion for the institute, the University and all of the supporters who worked so hard to make this day possible,” President Lois B. DeFleur said.

Designed to enrich the lives of children challenged by autism spectrum disorder, the Social Learning Center provides a year-round, safe place for children to play outdoors. A grand entrance gate contains the Gaelic greeting, “Cead Mile Failte” (“A Hundred Thousand Welcomes”) and leads to a soft, all-weather, high-tech safety surface; a mounted traffic light; a playhouse; a basketball court; and a variety of playground equipment approved by the National Program of Playground Safety.

Romanczyk said the $655,000 project became a reality thanks to a diverse group of supporters, including philanthropists Tim and Kim Myers of Vestal.

“The day Tim quietly announced that he and his family would make the lead gift to the Social Learning Center’s fundraising initiative was the day I knew that this day would come,” said Mary Woolson, assistant vice president of alumni and constituent relations and chair of the ICD Social Learning Center Project Committee. “Their commitment gave me and the committee the courage and confidence to proceed.”

Maureen Yacynych, a parent and member of the project committee, delivered an emotional thank you to the supporters. “You may think you’ve given the children the gift of play,” she said. “But to us, you’ve given them the gift of learning. . . . and for that we will be forever grateful.”

TO CONTRIBUTE: Funds to support the Social Learning Center’s maintenance endowment are being raised through a host of activities and events. For more information about the buy-a-brick campaign, contact Rebecca Benner at 607-777-7322 or rbenner@binghamton.edu. To view or purchase photos from the grand opening celebration, visit www.binghamton.edu/giving.
A $1.5 million gift from the Dr. G. Clifford and Florence B. Decker Foundation will fund renovations and upgrades to Binghamton University’s Health Service, enhancing healthcare services to students and strengthening relationships with local health-care agencies.

The building will maintain its current footprint, but once renovations are complete, the Decker Student Health Services Center at Binghamton University will serve students more efficiently.

“The Decker Foundation has been a strong supporter of Binghamton University for many years as we developed our outstanding nursing programs,” President Lois B. DeFleur said. “This gift is another example of Decker’s commitment to the University and the entire community. These funds will enable our University Health Service to provide more efficient and comprehensive programs and we are grateful to the Decker Foundation.”

“This gift exemplifies the mission of our foundation,” said Gerald E. Putman, executive director of the Decker Foundation. “Dr. Decker had a passion for health care and higher education — what a fitting way to combine the two.

“The renovations and upgrades will provide additional clinical sites for Decker School of Nursing students as well as resident physicians from local hospitals,” added Putman. Renovations will be phased in so service to students will always be available, according to Johann Flore-Gonte, administrative director. “Our building was constructed decades ago to provide care very differently from the way we do now,” she said. “We’ll have a larger waiting room with a learning kiosk for students, more examining rooms and new diagnostic equipment.”

“Our mission is to teach students not only about their academic disciplines, but also to give them the tools to lead healthy lifestyles beyond graduation,” said Brian Rose, vice president for student affairs. “This gift is in keeping with our true educational role.

“The gift will also support creation of a smart classroom in the facility, the conversion to an electronic medical record system and an up-to-date practice-management system. Working with the Health Service and a contractor, the University will now begin the design process for the renovations that will ‘modernize our facility to deliver essential services to our students and the community,” Rose said.

“The bottom line is that it’s a perfect fit of what we can accomplish in numbers versus individually,” said Hollander. “We saw this as a unique opportunity to do something positive in the name of Tau by giving to our alma mater and simultaneously getting recognition for our group. It helps us keep the fraternity together. We truly love the school and have warm memories and are looking to financially assist the school and improve its academic and athletic standing.”

“The guys’ reaction to this has been great because it actually results in the perfect combination of supporting athletics and scholarship.”

Tau Alpha Upsilon gives back to the University, again

In 2005, the TAU Bearcat Clubroom in the Events Center was named by Tau Alpha Upsilon, the oldest fraternity on campus, established in 1961. A second, major fundraising effort by TAU brothers will culminate in the naming of the Tau Alpha Upsilon Alumni Press Box and Scoreboard at the Bearcats Sports Complex. The dedication will take place prior to the men’s lacrosse game against Albany on Saturday, March 28, 2009.

“This is truly a partnership,” said Michael Marcus ’87, who, along with Larry Hollander ’78, has spearheaded the fundraising activities.

“Our latest fundraising initiative continues TAU’s partnership with the school to accomplish its mission: providing the best education at a fair price.”

The group’s efforts have paid off. By surpassing their original $150,000 goal by more than $30,000, the TAU brothers are also establishing an endowed scholarship — the TAU Athletics Scholarship, the second scholarship endowed by TAU. “We’re thrilled,” said Hollander. “The guys’ reaction to this has been great because it actually results in the perfect combination of supporting athletics and scholarship.”

The fraternity also takes pride in maintaining its strong network across the decades. “We want our brothers, alumni and active members to know there is a vibrant community outside of Binghamton,” said Marcus. “We have the common bond of the skills we gained through being in the fraternity — how to run a meeting, how to be humble, when to speak and when to listen — and we try to make those skills and teachings available to the brothers who are still in Binghamton.”

“We really hope that other fraternities and organizations will band together to support the school the way we have,” said Marcus. “We hope to inspire them to give to the school or an organization that meant something to them when they were at school.”
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Family Weekend

Freshman Rachel Rosen, left, her father, Mark Rosen ’83 of South Brunswick, N.J., and Steve Herzberg ’83 of New Rochelle, N.Y., enjoyed the Legacy Family Reception on Saturday.

Briloff Lecture
Nov. 12, 2008

Judge Stanley Sporkin, right, and Abraham J. Briloff met with the media prior to the 22nd annual Abraham J. Briloff Lecture Series on Accountability and Society, held Wednesday, Nov. 12. Sporkin, a retired federal district court judge and director of enforcement at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, delivered a lecture titled “On the Road to Financial Shangri-La: What Happened?”

Homecoming Weekend
Oct. 17–19, 2008

Mary Pat and Frank Gawors of Middletown, N.Y., with their son Matthew, a junior studying business administration, at the Division of Student Affairs Jazz Brunch on Sunday.

Left to right: Aixa Moran ’00, Kim King ’99, Tamiko (Shook) Hubbard ’98, Tiffany Duncan ’00 and Toi Rogers ’99 got together during the alumni luncheon on Saturday.

The first Homecoming Weekend Tailgate Party was held after the Brain Train Parade in the Events Center parking lot on Saturday. Bradley Small, Exemplary Student Award winner, left, and runner-up Molly Ariotti accepted their accolades from President Lois B. DeFleur.

Ralph Silverman of Vestal, N.Y., observes the art on display during the Alumni Art Show at the University Art Museum on Friday.

Bearcat spirit was everywhere, as Baxter the Bearcat repelled from above during Late Nite Madness in the Events Center on Friday night. The event featured introductions of the men’s and women’s basketball teams, Bearcat spirit squad and pep band performances, contests, raffles, prizes and free food.
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MEDIA COVERAGE

For the 12th consecutive year, Binghamton University is ranked among the nation’s top 50 public universities, according to the 2009 edition of “America’s Best Colleges” by U.S. News & World Report. Binghamton University ranks 34th among public uni-versities and colleges on the list, up from 37th last year, and 77th among all public and private universities. Last year, Binghamton ranked 82nd overall and is the top-ranked public school in New York state.

Lois B. DeFleur was featured recently in The New York Times, Business Week and numerous other publications regarding the 50 percent increase in applications Binghamton University has seen since the onset of the financial crisis. “The University had seen a steady increase in applications even before the fiscal crisis, but it looks this year like it’s going to be a quantum leap,” she said. “People want value. They always want value. But in this environment, they’re even more concerned with value.”

Hiroki Sayama, assistant professor of bioengineering, and Shelly Dionne, associate professor in the School of Management, were featured in Relate Plant magazine in October regarding a three-year $550,000 grant their research team received from the National Science Foundation. The grant will support a project focused on an evolutionary perspective on decision making. Dionne said, “When you bring people with different backgrounds together, you sometimes get better decisions.”

Binghamton University was highlighted in the “green college spotlight” featured in the journal Earthfirst this fall. Binghamton was chosen in part because of a recent study, conducted by the Princeton Review, which ranked the University as one of 21 U.S. colleges to receive the highest score on its “green rating” system. Chuan-Jian Zhong, professor of chemistry, was also mentioned for leading a research project that aims to lower the cost of manufacturing fuel cells.

Binghamton’s Center for Autonomous Solar Power (CASP) was featured on PVTech.org (a London-based news source) and in The Empire State News regarding the $4 million in funding the center received from the state. Seshu Desu, dean of the Thomas J. Watson School of Engineering and Applied Science, said “Our faculty and students are working on addressing the greatest challenges of our technology-intensive society, and harnessing low-cost alternative energy sources is at the forefront of our priorities.”

FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

Bruce Burton, associate professor of music, received one of three Broome County Arts Council’s Heart of the Arts awards for 2008. The awards, presented annually, recognize those who have made significant, recent contributions to the arts in Broome County.

Gisela Brinker-Gahler, chair and professor of comparative literature, has been included with her biography in 2000 Outstanding Intellectuals of the 21st Century, published by the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge England (2008). She also is listed as “noted and eminent professional in the field of education” in the IBC’s publication, Leading Educators of the World (2008).

Miguel A. Arcones, professor of mathematical sciences, has been named Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics (IMS) for his contributions to probability and mathematical statistics.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Sean Cunningham, a cinema graduate, won the “I Love NY Short Film Competition.” Films were judged on their ability to creatively portray the beauty of New York state. His film “Discover a Different N.Y.” made its debut during the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. In addition, Justin Hartough, a senior majoring in cinema, won the Student Filmmaker Award for his film titled, “Crap Meadow.”

The “A” List

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THE “A” LIST

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SPRING 2008

GIFT HIGHLIGHTS

Gifts and Pledges of $25,000+

Christian Appalachian Project — Gift in kind (books)

CIT Group Inc. on behalf of Mr. Mark L. Deutsch ’81 — The Binghamton Fund for School of Management

Mr. Joel M. Cohen ’83 and Mrs. Stacey B. Cohen ’84 — Harpur Law Alumni Fund

The Community Foundation for South Central New York on behalf of Mr. Lawrence J. Schorr ’75, MA ’77 and Mrs. Jennifer Brink Schoer, MBA ’81 — The Institute for Child Development Social Learning Center

Dr. G. Clifford & Florence B. Decker Foundation — Decker Student Health Services Center

Mr. Carl T. Ernststrom ’61 and Mrs. Rita Ernststrom — Deferred gift

Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund on behalf of Mr. Howard D. Unger ’82 and Mrs. Mindy S. Unger ’82 — SOM Dean’s Excellence Endowment

Dr. Byrne Fone ’58 — Gift in kind (artwork and books)

Helene Fuld Health Trust — Helene Fuld Health Trust Scholarship—Bacalarurate Nursing

Edwin E. Hatch Foundation — Edwin E. Hatch Foundation Scholarship Fund

The A. Lindsay & Olive B. O’Connor Foundation, Inc. — O’Connor Scholarships and O’Connor Foundation Nursing Scholarship

Mr. Terry Peet and Mr. Peter Bridge — Bridge-Peet University Art Museum Endowment

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP — PricewaterhouseCoopers Minority Recruitment Initiative and PricewaterhouseCoopers Honors Program

Mr. Stanley J. Reifer ’65 and Mrs. Susan M. Reifer ’65 — Gift in kind (artwork)

Siemens — Gift in kind (software)

Mr. Jonathan Sloan ’94, MS ’96 and Ms. Jennifer Shmulewitz ’96 — Sloan/Shmulewitz Family Scholarship

Dr. Hugo Uytenhove, MS ’75, PhD ’79 — Klar Scholarship for Graduate Excellence in Systems Science

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