

PNC Bank Welcomes Community Leaders And Guests To Celebrate Opening Of 'PNC Fairfax Connection'

Innovative resource center uses unique collaborative approach to achieve community revitalization



PNC Fairfax Connection

CLEVELAND, Sept. 27, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- The [PNC Fairfax Connection](#) – a new community resource center in Cleveland's historic eastside community – will be officially dedicated today by PNC Bank to the residents and businesses of Fairfax. Representing a bold new strategy for community engagement, the PNC Fairfax Connection will feature a variety of programs designed to foster community empowerment and revitalization.

Opening events include remarks by James E. Rohr, PNC chairman and chief executive officer; Paul Clark, regional president for PNC Bank; Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson; and Vickie Johnson, executive director of the Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation. Dozens of guests from community organizations, non-profit groups, churches, cultural institutions and businesses have been invited to attend the special dedication ceremony and preview tour.

"We celebrate the opening of the PNC Fairfax Connection as a demonstration of what it truly means to work together to create a new relationship and a new bond between a bank and its community," said Rohr, who grew up in Cleveland. "PNC closely collaborated with the Fairfax community at every step to ensure the center's design and its programs meet the interests and needs of this proud and historic community."

The \$5 million project features a newly constructed center that anticipates achieving LEED-certification, a dynamic physical space and the latest technology to connect the community with a variety of educational, employment and cultural resources. The 6,400-square-foot facility, located west of University Circle at the intersection of East 83rd and Carnegie, replaced a nearly vacant, neglected building and included environmental clean up of the site.

The physical spaces and digital tools are open, flexible and evolutionary to ensure the design supports many different types of programs and audiences – from early childhood education classes for toddlers and caregivers, to media training for teens, to financial education and job skill assistance for adults, and a historic preservation project for seniors.

"The PNC Fairfax Connection is a perfect example of what a public-private partnership can accomplish," said Mayor Jackson. "PNC took the time to connect with the community - to understand its needs and address them while creating new opportunities for residents and businesses."

Designed with the Community

One of the most unique aspects of the PNC Fairfax Connection was the collaboration to ensure the final design supported the needs, interests, history, and hopes of the people who live and work there.

Community partners, such as Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation, Langston Hughes Center, Karamu House, Fairfax Business Association, neighborhood churches and many others, worked with PNC and ESI Design, an innovative design consultancy. The facility design was further supported by noted

Cleveland architect Richard Fleischman.

From those discussions about a year and a half prior to the center's opening, the array of programming options was conceived and prototyped with community groups. Leading the programs are the center's full-time coordinators, Susan Blasko and Brandon Lipford.

"This new community center operates with the promise to empower individuals with the ability to learn and grow, to help businesses and local organizations succeed and to showcase the wonderful heritage and culture of Fairfax," said Johnson. "We are deeply committed to the success of Fairfax, and this new resource provides another step forward in the evolution of our community."

Open House Set for Saturday, Sept. 29

Fairfax residents and business community members are invited to see the new community resource center during an open house on Saturday, Sept. 29, from 10 a.m. to noon.

Activities include tours of the center showcasing the design, technology and upcoming programs, as well as an opportunity to meet the center's staff.

During the open house, younger visitors can make crafts and meet special guest Cookie Monster from Sesame Street™, as parents and caregivers will be offered more information about the early childhood education program, *PNC Grow Up Great*, a \$350 million, multi-year initiative that began in 2004 to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life.

"We are all drawn to innovative ideas and opportunities that enable us to overcome challenges and thrive," said Clark. "We invite every member of the Fairfax community to serve as an ambassador to help us generate awareness about this new community resource and encourage their friends and neighbors to explore PNC Fairfax Connection and its remarkable offerings."

The center operates programs on Tuesdays through Saturdays. The schedule of activities is available at the facility and will be printed in community publications, posted on activity boards at area organizations and listed on its web site at www.pncfairfaxconnection.com.

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