

New Haven Register

FOUNDED 1812

Friday, June 16, 2006

Yale, Dixwell meet at new Rose Center

A neglected corner
of New Haven brightens.

What was the back of Yale University — down from Science Hill, behind the Grove Street Cemetery — is being transformed into a new neighborhood, where campus and community have happily met. The centerpiece of this transformation is the Rose Center, formally dedicated in May, but opened since January.

The 34,000-square-foot, open, glass building houses both the 80 member Yale police force and the Dixwell-Yale University Community Learning Center. The center is gearing up for a five-week summer program for neighborhood students entering the fifth through eighth grades. Classes will be taught by Yale students and be covered by a \$25 fee. In addition to a classroom with 16 computer stations, there is a soaring two-story corner meeting room and a warming kitchen.

The community center does not have a gymnasium, but Yale's Payne Whitney Athletic Center is a short walk away.

Already, in addition to daily visits from students who use the computers, 50 adults have attended computer literacy classes and 72 sought help from an income tax assistance tax program there.

The center sits on what was a vacant lot and before that an empty laundry. The land was going to be used by an asbestos removal company before residents asked Yale to proceed with its plan to build there.

Eventually, the university wants to build a health services building on the vacant lot next to the Rose Center, which borders a section of the Farmington Canal trail that walkers can follow to the main Yale campus.

Beyond the Rose Center on Ashmun Street, a city park is expected to be expanded into an overgrown lot now owned by the housing authority and play facilities added to increased its use.

Diagonally opposite the Rose Center, New Haven Reads has occupied a building stuffed with donated books that are given away to anyone who walks in to encourage reading and promote literacy. It has become a community treasure, a library where the books don't have to be returned.

This once neglected corner of the city is being transformed thanks to a cooperative relationship that meets Yale's need to expand and a neighborhood's desire to improve.