

ST. MATTHEW PARISH BREAKS GROUND FOR RECREATION CENTER

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NORWALK—St. Matthew Parish celebrated groundbreaking for an 18,000-square-foot two-story Recreation Center. Designed by the architectural firm Doyle Coffin, the center will feature a basketball court, indoor walking/running track and college lounge for a Catholic Newman Center Club.

“This is really an historic moment in the life of a remarkable parish,” said Bishop



Frank J. Caggiano, who offered the blessing and addressed the crowd including Norwalk Mayor Harry W. Rilling and former State Representative Larry Cafero.

“The church is its people—each of us a living stone of a living edifice, which is the mystical Body of Christ that expands time and space. We ask that the undertaking we begin this day for His glory and our well-being may progress day-by-day to its successful completion.”

Msgr. Walter C. Orlowski, pastor of St. Matthew, thanked supporters for making a multi-generational recreation center a reality. “As a pastor who comes from the old CYO leagues, I’m delighted to create a place for busy families to come together, to have fun, to offer basketball tournaments, soccer, volleyball, martial arts and boot camps.”

Using golden shovels, the groundbreakers ranged in age from eight to 90 years. “These groundbreakers represent all generations, which is Msgr. Walter’s vision for the Rec Center—that all ages will enjoy this facility together,” said Larry Cafero.



“We’re building on what we already have, to give people the training space and programs they need to encourage health in body, mind and spirit,” offered Msgr. Orlowski. “It’s all about creating a parish even more

welcoming than ever before – one that can be the center of people’s lives. It’s all for the good, all for God’s people.”

Proposed wellness programs include individualized and group sports training, meditation, mindfulness, Tai Chi, parent education and support, alcohol and drug prevention programs, and recovery support.

St. Matthew is partnering with Norwalk Community College for the development of a Catholic Newman Club to serve the 40 percent Catholic student population at the college. The Club will be based at the St. Matthew Recreational Center and open to all NCC students. Newman Centers focus on strengthening today's Catholic Young Adults in the faith during their college years.

Reflecting on Msgr. Walter's vision and leadership, Bishop Caggiano said, "You, my friends, are absolutely blessed to have a true spiritual father who has been here nearly a quarter of a century. One who has guided, laughed with you, cried with you, walked with you, has come to love you – probably more than he could love anything or anyone else. You have responded to his vision because you have seen the genuineness of Msgr. Walter and what he wants: the best for you and for the Church. So I would be neglectful, if I did not say, on behalf of everyone here, thank you, Monsignor, for everything you have done all these years, thank you for this vision, and thank you for great leadership."



The new \$2.9 million facility will be built to the west of the Parish Center. Developer Carl Lecher of Lecher Development estimates that construction will take 9-12 months.

(For more information, visit www.StMatthewNorwalk.org.)

By Ann Yannetti