

A Vision Becomes Reality: Sally's Y Open in Denver

February 3, 2011



It's been a long time coming, but East Lincoln's YMCA is now officially open.

Now open at 1601 Forney Creek Parkway off Optimist Club Road, Sally's Y is a dream, come true for all those who have worked so hard to see this opening. Last Saturday's grand opening celebration for the 23,000 square-foot facility, attracted a large crowd that turned out for the festivities including speeches, a free lunch and tours of the facility.

What began as a vision of Sally's parents Jo and David Clark has become part of the YMCA of Greater Charlotte, and is now providing services to young and old alike.

Sally's Y joins the CMC-East Lincoln medical facility in the 150-acre Forney Creek Park development. Visible from the new Highway 16 near Optimist Club Road, Sally's Y was named for the late Sally McKenzie Clark who was killed in a car accident in 2004 at the age of 19, along with her cousin, Anna Grace Jordan.

It took a five-year capital fundraising campaign that started out with a bang but hit a snag when the economy hit a downturn. Finally, the campaign generated \$7 million in pledges for the construction to begin. Unfortunately, the facility was reduced from the initial 38,000 phase master plan to 23,000 square feet, and the indoor pool was put on hold. The Y facility will bring an array of special programs and support to East Lincoln County. The unique facility offers outdoor hiking, walking, jogging and biking trails as well as wellness opportunities like group exercise classes and a gymnasium.

"The financial and emotional support of the community has been incredibly overwhelming," said Jo Clark, Sally's mom. "I am incredibly thankful that Sally's gentle spirit and unwavering faith will continue to live on through a YMCA built and named in her honor."

The facility includes cardiovascular and strength training equipment, group exercise classes, a gym, children's activities including summer camps and special needs programs. And just outside is eight miles of biking, walking and jogging trails protected by the Catawba Lands Conservancy.

"The original construction plan for Sally's Y was developed during a time of growth, coupled with anticipated future development in east Lincoln County," said Ron Johnston, YMCA Operational Vice President.

A study in 2009 found the expected growth did not happen in the areas and said the community could not support the original planned 38,000 sq. ft. facility. While the indoor pool got the ax in the plan, Johnston explained that the indoor pool would be very expensive to operate.

"You look to build a facility you can afford," Johnston explained when the facility was downsized. They have planned ahead, however, and have the pool in the expansion phase.

Johnston says as the area grows, the YMCA will expand. He says the YMCA must see that the area can support and sustain the size of the YMCA. The YMCA calls this current plan the "responsible phased approach" making it more appropriate for what the community can support.

Memberships are available and financial assistance is offered for those who qualify. For more information, go to www.sallysY.org.

"We've been having a wonderful time getting to know our neighbors and can't wait to invite the entire community to visit our new home," said Sally's YMCA Operations Director Terry Matthews. "Our true passion is serving and strengthening the community so opening our doors to everyone, sitting down to lunch with them and hosting family activities is really exciting for our staff."

Families will have an array of activities to choose from including summer day camp and an outdoor water park opening this summer. The community can now register for spring sports including soccer leagues and clinics and Girls on the Run.

<http://newsatnorman.com/a-vision-becomes-reality-sallys-y-open-in-denver-p3031-1.htm>