



UNITED
SCHOOLS NETWORK

COLUMBUS COLLEGIATE ACADEMY

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United Schools Network Announces August 12th Green Space Groundbreaking

Columbus, Ohio – United Schools Network’s flagship middle school, Columbus Collegiate Academy will break ground on a much needed green space in its Near East neighborhood on August 12th, 2013 at 9:00 am. The event will be held at 1469 E. Main Street Columbus, Ohio 43205 and includes a reception following the ceremony.

This project represents a partnership of CCA students, athletic professionals, The Columbus Foundation, local corporations, individual donors and a culmination of two years of planning to create a green space which will serve as an anchor for athletic and recreational events, education programs, and neighborhood activities for the students of Columbus Collegiate Academy and the entire Near East Area.

Many CCA families have limited finances and transportation options. Students will no longer have to choose between finding transportation to other locations for practices or games and not participating in athletics. After school enrichment activities provided by After-School All-Stars Columbus help students have a safe and healthy after-school option and often include activities like soccer, rugby, flag football, and martial arts; all activities which are more safely played on grass rather than asphalt.

USN CEO and founder Andrew Boy states “We first identified this project as a need when our soccer balls began to deflate rapidly; just from playing on this lot. Imagine what it would do to a child’s knees. The more we looked into this project we realized just how far reaching the benefits of this green space could be. Not only are there safety, physical health and mental health benefits for our students, but it means great things for neighborhood residents and local businesses, too. We are thankful that the Joseph A. Jeffrey Fund at The Columbus Foundation and Boss Excavating and Grading felt this was important, too. This project would not have wings without them.”

Anticipated benefits of the new Main Street green space include:

- 1) **Health:** Both physical and mental health increase, especially in children, when there are greater amounts of green space available within a close distance; incidences of ADHD, depression, anxiety, cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and childhood obesity are greatly decreased. *BMI results at CCA-Main indicate a large percentage of overweight and/or obese students; similar to neighborhood health reports.*
- 2) **Property Value:** There is a significant link between the value of a property and its proximity to parks, greenbelts and other green spaces.
- 3) **Economic Growth:** Studies have proven that greenery and flowers attract shoppers and residents to urban areas...spurring economic growth.
- 4) **New business:** Small businesses choosing a new business location rank the amount of open space and proximity to parks and recreation as the number-one priority in site selection.
- 5) **Community Safety:** Studies conducted by the Human Environment Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign indicate that “Green spaces are gathering places that create close-knit communities and improve well-being—and in doing so, they increase safety.”

The groundbreaking ceremony held on August the 12th will be attended by CCA student-athletes, USN staff, USN and CCA Board of Trustees, Columbus Crew star Frankie Hedjuk, donors, and local civic and foundation leaders. Tickets can be reserved at <http://usnccagreenspace.eventbrite.com/>.

Additional information about United Schools Network can be found at www.unitedschoolsnetwork.org.