

**July-August 2004**

**Kensington Parkwood Elementary School:  
Farewell to the Old Building—Welcome to the New**

**by Sara Phang**

After several years of planning, the Kensington Parkwood Elementary School (KPES) building at 4710 Saul Road will be torn down this summer. The new building, to be constructed on the same 10-acre grounds, will open in January 2006. While it's being built, the school community will relocate to the site of the former Grosvenor Elementary School two miles away on Grosvenor Lane in Bethesda.

The original building opened in 1952 as Parkwood Elementary School. It had 475 students in its first year. However, due to the aging of the Kensington community, the school's population decreased.

The school merged in the early 1980s with nearby Kensington Elementary and was renamed Kensington Parkwood Elementary School.

At a recent civic meeting, some area residents were treated to views of the drawings of the new building and grounds. The hallways have a light-filled design, and the long building will hug the slope along Saul Road in the same way the original school did.

The school's new internal design brings many enhancements. These include the gymnasium that's long been a dream for the school community, plus several extra classrooms in case the school grows beyond the current enrollment projections. The new building will be up-to-date in other ways as well, with a larger library, more electrical outlets for today's technology, and new furniture.

Environmentally aware design firms have submitted plans for the new building, part of the Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) "Green Schools Focus" design, management, and curriculum initiative. The Green Schools Focus seeks to incorporate environmental stewardship into the building and management of MCPS school buildings.

Anja S. Caldwell, Green Schools Program Manager, says, "MCPS's and the County's energy design guidelines for building systems, for example, already exceed national building codes... They need to be easy to maintain and guarantee a healthy and comfortable school environment—an important aspect of sustainability."

She adds, "Other 'green' elements like energy recovery, low emitting materials, Integrated Pest Management (meaning non-toxic), the use of the EPA's 'Tools for Schools Program' for proactive indoor air quality control, energy management, recycling and energy conservation programs are MCPS standard. All of this is of course integrated in the new Kensington Parkwood School."

Green Schools Focus also teaches students about the environment, raising environmental consciousness in school communities through curriculum programs and daily life. Field trips to Rock Creek Park have been among the special experiences that Kensington Parkwood students have enjoyed.

Despite the original KPES building's inconveniences, it is a site of fond memories. Teachers and former students have many sentimental associations with the old KPES, and have collected memorabilia of 52 years at the old building for a time capsule to be prominently displayed at the new building. The capsule features photographs, yearbooks, sample class work, old school T-shirts, and buttons from science fairs.

"It's more than a school, it's our community center and our community park," is how one resident put it.

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Support the Kensington Parkwood Elementary School  
Engraved Bricks Project  
and help enhance the school's modernization.

- You can leave a lasting legacy at Kensington Parkwood by buying an engraved brick.
- All proceeds will enhance Kensington Parkwood's modernization. This effort could raise tens of thousands of dollars for our new building.
- The bricks will be engraved with your name or message and incorporated into the new school grounds.
- The cost of an engraved brick: \$100. Individuals, community groups, and businesses are invited to support this project.
- Your message can be up to 2 lines long, with 18 letters or spaces per line.

If you would like to contribute, or help with any aspect of this project, please contact MaryCassell at [cassellauster@comcast.net](mailto:cassellauster@comcast.net)