

TMS kicks off massive renovations at Richmond Hill campus



By Jake Courtepatte

The foundation of a good education comes from both the people involved and the facilities in which to receive it. Both aspects came together in an assembly last week at Richmond Hill's TMS School, where the school's 'Building Our Significance' campaign was officially launched: an immense project to renovate both the Upper and Lower Schools of the campus. Classes of all ages took turns adding signed stones to a wheelbarrow, in a symbolic gesture that will see each added to the foundation of the new building.

'We wanted to put the children's names into the actual foundations of the new building,' said Head of School David Young. 'It reminds us that the purpose behind this endeavor is our children.'

'One of the things that happens when a building is complete, is you can't see the foundations,' added Young. 'You forget about the foundation. But the foundation is essential for a good school, to grow.'

Massive construction is underway on the campuses to meet the needs of both students and parents, with a new gymnasium having broken ground at the Lower School.

With athletics as one of the four pillars of the school, the new gymnasium will not only provide a venue for the school's various house league and varsity teams, but a 'community hub' for all.

Set for the fall of 2019, the facility will include a new entrance as well as a new atrium, a space for student learning, parent engagements, and even hosting community events to further engage the school with the York Region community.

'These are spaces that we know will meet the needs of our students,' said Kirsten Eastwood, the Executive Director of Community Development at TMS. 'Space does matter. We did a lot of work to figure out, what do we really need to help our students thrive?'

Plans for the current gym on campus is for it to be transitioned to a performance space, which can be used for school productions, presentations, guest speakers, and the like, repurposing the smaller gym into something that has great value for the students.

Once the lower school construction is complete, renovations will begin on the upper school to advance the needs of the students, including a standalone dining hall and student commons for collaborative purposes.

The capital campaign for the project began in 2017, a special appeal to the families and funders of the school to raise large donations for long-term plans. An overwhelming response allowed for ground to be broken on Phase 1 this past June.

'We have had some wonderful moms and dads, and some other people, who have helped us with amazing generosity,' said Young. 'They are the foundation that no one sees. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge their profound help in allowing us to do this.'