

Tuesday, April 5, 2011

Chartering a new course

Southland College Prep's new building opens for students

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And so a new era began. Up went the colored balloons, and into the ground went the time capsule. The capsule is set to be opened in 2039, when the students doing the burying will be pushing 40 years old.

Today though, they're ecstatic to have moved into the new Southland College Prep Charter High School building in Richton Park. And on Monday, they held a day of opening ceremonies to celebrate the achievement.

When asked about their old home at Huth Middle School, Kayla Boyd said she was ready for the move.

"It was squashed and cramped. I attended middle school there, so I had been there for three years. I'm ready for a change," she said.

Teacher Samantha Nham also shared in the excitement and sees more opportunities for her students.

"They're very excited, very receptive to the new environment," Nham said. "They were begging for a place to call their own."

On hand at the ceremonies was Grammy Award-winning singer Chrisee Micheje. She shared the story of her path to stardom. She related the rules and structure she has had to follow in the music industry with the discipline and challenges of high school.

She also sang "If Nobody Sings Alone" from her most recent album to the rapt student body.

Also, as part of the ceremony, a time capsule was buried. Inside the capsule were letters to the class of '39 from each student outlining the current trends and conditions of the school.

Many of the messages mention hopes of flying cars that run on bubbles, better cafeteria food, less homework, better uniforms and a football team for the future students of Southland College Prep.

Inside, among other contemporary mementos, was a current newspaper, an MP3 player loaded with popular



A new home: Southland College Prep Charter High School students Briana Charrier (center, from left) and Deja Conwell celebrate with other students as balloons are released during the opening ceremony for the new school in Richton Park.

PHOTOS BY BRETT ROSEMAN - SUN-TIMES MEDIA

"They were begging for a place to call their own."

SAMANTHA NHAM, Southland College Prep Charter High School teacher, on her students and their new building

music, a signed piece of the student uniform, and Silly Bandz.

As excited as the kids were to move, the administration was thrilled with the opportunities the state-of-the-art facilities would provide.

Teacher Dan Higgins said, "The move is huge. We're trying to show that everyone can learn. And now we've got this golden opportunity."

Dwayne Bryant, another speaker at the event, concluded, "The technology and the classrooms are first-class. So the administration has done its job. Now it's time for the students to do theirs."



Thinking ahead: Letters and Monday's SouthtownStar are some of the items placed in a time capsule set to be opened in 2039.