

Construction begins at Golden Door Charter School's new building

Former Catholic School construction maintains historical and architectural features

JERSEY CITY (April 2011)- Construction began at Jersey City Golden Door Charter School in December to renovate the stately St. John the Baptist School and Convent buildings at 3026 John F. Kennedy Boulevard in Jersey City.

The first three months of construction has focused on interior work such as demolition, framing of the new space, and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work. READS is working to renovate the school building and the adjacent convent, eventually tying the two buildings together with an exterior courtyard. Now that warmer weather is in sight, work will begin on the façade such as masonry restoration and window replacement.

Meeta Kalawadia, School Business Administrator for Golden Door Charter School said, “The construction is moving along great. Every time we visit the site we get more excited about moving into our new home! The added classroom space this project is providing is going to make a huge difference for our staff and students.”

The school construction is scheduled to be complete July 15, 2011 and the adjacent convent has a projected completion date of August 15, 2011. The convent will contain administrative spaces, offices, and a conference room for staff. In the summer months of June and July, the exterior courtyard will be constructed between the two buildings and will create a new entrance, drop-off area, and garden space with benches. KSS Architects is the architect for the project and Tekton Development is the contractor.

“This project will give Golden Door Charter School’s students and teachers a great learning environment, and Journal Square will get a prominent, useful, and rejuvenated building,” said Eric Felczak, Project Manager at READS.

READS secured this as a permanent home for Golden Door Charter School in spring 2010 using an innovative real estate structure. READS negotiated a 40-year lease for the school with the former St. John the Baptist School. The long-term lease was structured such that the owner would retain legal ownership while letting the school secure the financial resources to renovate the building without the cost of buying it. New Markets Tax Credits were utilized for the project with The Reinvestment Fund and Chase providing the financing.

At 72,000 square feet, Golden Door Charter School’s building after renovations will maintain the beautiful historical structure as well as the exceptional architectural detail. The building includes



a 3,900 square foot auditorium complete with a mezzanine and a stained glass skylight that encompasses the entire ceiling and floods the space with natural light.

Golden Door Charter School was founded in 1998 as one of Jersey City's first charter schools. At its current location, 180 Ninth Street, the school educates nearly 500 students in Kindergarten through eighth grade. Even with the added space available at the new facility, there are no plans to increase enrollment at the school.

As a nonprofit, READS is committed to building strong organizations and communities through innovative real estate development. Since its inception in 2003, READS has assisted dozens of nonprofits in developing their facilities to meet their social service needs.

READS provides all phases of real estate development and technical assistance including financial structuring and project management. READS has been recognized by the New Jersey Department of Education with the Corporate Partnership Award for its work with charter schools and by the Federal Department of Education as a promising practice in real estate development.

For more information, contact READS at 732-635-1000.

On the web:

www.readsusa.org

www.goldendoorschool.org