

For Immediate Release

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Check it out! Children's Library coming to NorthPark in '07

The Dallas Public Library will open a "limited edition" facility for ages birth to 14

DALLAS, TX – The Dallas Public Library will open a children's library in NorthPark Center, the largest shopping center in North Texas. This prototype, or "limited edition" site, will have materials geared specifically for children ages birth to 14, and a parenting collection. The pilot library, set to open in Spring 2007, will serve as a testing ground for future locations in non-traditional settings.

In partnership with the Dallas Public Library, NorthPark has agreed to provide the space and build-out, including signs, lighting, electrical, artwork and other financial/in-kind project support. The library will provide the materials, furniture, fixtures, equipment and staffing and will operate this facility using currently budgeted city resources.

While operating hours are still being discussed, NorthPark's Director of Marketing and Tourism Christine Szalay said the center will work to raise funds that would allow the library to be open extended hours and provide additional programs.

"We couldn't be happier that NorthPark Center has made this very generous offer to the Dallas Public Library," said Laurie Evans, Director of Libraries. "It's perfectly in line with our goal of finding alternative outlets and co-locations to make library programs and services accessible to more of the community." Evans said the success of the children's prototype will be evaluated after a year, and if successful, could result in other non-traditional locations in the future.

The NorthPark location will offer a three to five thousand item rotating collection of books, CD's and DVD's for children up to 8th grade. The site will also have free wireless internet access and public computers.

The library's master plan calls for "alternative site considerations," which will provide opportunities for the library to reach out to the community. Evans believes non-traditional locations such as NorthPark will increase visibility for the library and other city services, while creating new users of library services and programs. She added that making the NorthPark location a children's library was a reflection of the center's family-oriented atmosphere.

"The joy of sharing books is a gift you can give children from the time they are born," Szalay said. "Listening to language lays the groundwork for reading throughout a child's life and the availability of books is a key factor for high achievement in reading and literacy. NorthPark Center is proud to support literacy by becoming the first location for this pilot library concept." NorthPark is the largest shopping center in North Texas, and is projected to be one of the top five shopping destinations in the country. The Center is located at the intersection of North Central Expressway and Northwest Highway.

The Dallas Public Library operates the J. Erik Jonsson Central Library, 1515 Young St., and 23 branch locations. A library card is free for any Dallas resident. For information on the many free programs and services available at the Dallas Public Library, go to: <http://dallaslibrary.org/home.htm>.