

StudioMLA Architects completes Nurtury learning lab in Bromley-Heath Housing Dev.



StudioMLA Architects completed a new community hub and children's learning lab for early education nonprofit organization Nurtury, formerly known as Associated Early Care and Education. The 22,600 s/f, learning lab in the Bromley-Heath Housing Development in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood will serve as Nurtury's flagship facility in a unique campus of care and education, providing neighborhood residents with access to a network of partner services. Boston mayor Marty Walsh celebrated the opening of the Nurtury learning lab at a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 16.

The project team includes CWC Construction, San Miguel Project Management, Garcia, Galuska, DeSousa Engineering, Nitsch Engineering, and RSE Structural Engineers.

Meeting a need for enhanced community connectivity, access to social, wellness, and educational services, and ample natural outdoor space, the new Learning Lab is situated in the heart of the Bromley-Heath Housing Development and will revitalize the neighborhood with community programming, a architectural presence, and enhanced green spaces.

The building massing acts as a transition between the two-story buildings in the original Heath St. project and the taller buildings to the south, following the existing street edges to create a series of sheltered courtyards for active, outdoor play, learning, and discovery. The exterior brick, natural cedar, and glass create an open, welcoming, and

distinctive architecture that reveals a warm and vibrant interior. To ensure sustainability, energy efficiency, and a healthier climate for children and staff, studioMLA designed the learninglab to achieve LEED Gold certification.

"The development, design, and construction of the Learning Lab at Bromley-Heath represents the single most ambitious project in Nurtury's history, and it will make a lasting, positive impact on the urban fabric of this neighborhood," said Wayne Ysaguirre, president and CEO of Nurtury. "StudioMLA has been a dedicated partner with us through the seven-year process to bring this project to fruition, encouraging creative dialogue and collaborative design to create a center in which the community can take pride and feel welcome."

With the intent to help children, families, teachers, and neighbors feel both comfortable and energized in and around the new building, the Learning Lab is configured to provide a wide variety of interior and exterior spaces that cater to early education, afterschool care and learning for grades K-3, and community activities. Early education-specific classrooms are designed to set a new standard and become a model for how the physical environment can enhance the learning experience while reducing stress. A natural playground with grass, vegetation, and gardens, as well as a greenhouse with a year-round garden, offer children the connection between earth, sun, plants, and the foods they eat. The Lab's teaching kitchen will offer cooking classes and health promotion services emphasizing the importance of cooking healthy, nutritious meals. The multipurpose room will provide an indoor space for gross motor activities, meetings, and training functions, serving as a family support center where partner organizations can offer services and staff face time.

Shown (from left) are: Latoya Taromino, Bromley-Heath resident and Nurtury parent; NaShira Pulley, Bromley-Heath resident and Nurtury alum; State Rep. Jeffrey Sánchez, D-Jamaica Plain; Boston mayor Marty Walsh; Ron Ancrum, VP, Nurtury Learning Lab; Wayne Ysaguirre, Nurtury president and CEO; Matt O'Malley, Boston City councilor; Matt Malone, Mass. Secretary of Education; and Bill McGonagle, administrator of Boston Housing Authority