

Community shows support for children

We did it. Starting at 12:15 p.m. Sunday, the Fort Collins Youth Activity Center has a new home. As Colorado State University had plans for the renovation of the YAC's former facility, the old Fort Collins High School, it looked like the days were numbered for the official center for Fort Collins' youth.

In 2000, more than 140,000 youth and teen participants were recorded at the YAC. It has provided a diverse array of activities and programs for children of all ages, is frequented by many alternative youth programs such as the Jacob Center, AmeriCorps, Remington House and Turning Point, and has offered a safe, supervised environment for hundreds of thousands of kids since 1995. Until recently, no formal plans to relocate the YAC had been made; it was simply through.

Luckily, a number of dedicated community members wouldn't hear of it.

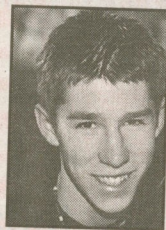
Now we've got a new, and much nicer, YAC. It will be located in the old Healthworks building near the mall, 415 E. Monroe. In addition to the old building's activities, programs and services, the new facility will feature a climbing and bouldering wall, weight lifting and car-

diac machines, a coffee bar, and someday, we hope, a full-size gymnasium.

There is a plethora of amazing individuals who deserve both thanks and congratulations from the youth community. Without

sounding too presumptuous I hope, I am pleased to do this publicly. Thanks to City Council, Mayor Ray Martinez, City Manager John Fischbach, Bob Everitt (who owns the property), the indefatigable YAC Task Force, Karl Carson, Brownie McGraw, Peggy Bowers, and the invincible Roberta Kunze, with whom I pray I never find myself on the opposite end of a political debate. And not least of all, thanks to the hundreds of high school students who rallied behind their respective student councils, signing letters to City Council saying that we deserve a place in this community.

But before we break out the champagne — or maybe, sparkling water — I'd better mention that it's



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not quite over yet. The YAC is still a tad short on bread. There have been many one-time moving expenses and equipment purchases that need support through fundraising. And more significantly, the new YAC still needs a place for kids to play basketball, one of the most popular activities of the old facility.

A fund-raising campaign is now under way. It has been kicked off by a more than generous donation of \$25,000 from former Fort Collins Mayor Karl Carson, for whom I have a great deal of respect. We are hoping that community members, businesses, and possibly schools will join in by either donating or helping with the campaign. Carson is looking to have his \$25,000 matched, but please bear in mind that any contribution is generous. To help, contact Brownie McGraw at 226-6117; Karl Carson at 482-4293; or mail to Fort Collins Community Foundation for the YAC, 420 S. Howes, Suite 101, Fort Collins, CO 80521. Please feel welcome to join us at 12:15 p.m. Sunday as we cut the ribbon.

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