

Front Porch

A publication of Forest City Stapleton, Inc.

STAPLETON

DENVER, COLORADO

JAN/FEB 2004



The East 29th Avenue Town Center is the heart of the first pedestrian-friendly neighborhood at Stapleton.

Stapleton is Focus of Active Living Study

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has awarded a local non-profit organization a \$200,000 grant to demonstrate that the design of walkable neighborhoods such as Stapleton's can lead to more active and healthier lifestyles.

The Friends of the Center for Human Nutrition, a Colorado based nonprofit organization, said the grant will fund The Active Living Partnership at Stapleton (ALPS), an initiative that is part of Active Living by Design, a \$16.5 million national program the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation established to create, enhance and promote environments that make it safe and convenient for people to be more physically active. Based in Princeton, N.J., the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the nation's largest philanthropic organization devoted exclusively to health and health care.

"We expect that Active Living by Design

community projects will demonstrate to communities across the country how feasible it is to use the design of parks, trails, and walking paths to create and promote better health," said Katherine Kraft, senior program officer for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. "These small changes promise to improve the health of our children for years to come."



Stapleton resident Anna Noble tries to keep up with her two children Aiden 4, (left front) and Ella 3, and their friend Nik Geoly, 4.

Helen Thompson, chair of the ALPS project, said the Stapleton program is one of 25 partnerships across the country selected to make active living a priority. With the five-year grant, the ALPS project will focus on transportation, land use and street design. Other key areas will include expanding active living in schools and increasing recreational opportunities. The study will provide an opportunity for metro Denver leaders from the public, private and non-profit sectors to observe how community design, land use, transportation, architecture, trails and parks can influ-

ence healthier lifestyles.

Recent studies have suggested that poor community design and a lack of options for transportation may contribute to obesity and inactivity. National statistics show that nearly one in four American adults is sedentary, and the number of overweight children has doubled since 1980. According to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), over 50 percent of Colorado residents are overweight and nearly 15 percent are obese. Studies have shown that more people will exercise regularly if physical activity can be designed into everyday activities, and if their community is pedestrian-friendly and provides convenient and safe walkable destinations and recreational opportunities.

Current ALPS partners include University of Colorado Health Sciences Center's (UCHSC) Stapleton Center for Healthy Living, the UCHSC's Center for Human Nutrition, Forest City Stapleton, the City and County of Denver, the Stapleton Foundation for Sustainable Urban Communities, the Livable Communities Support Center, Feet First, Denver Healthy People 2010 and the Greater Park Hill Neighborhood Alliance, as well as more than a dozen other organizations from the non-profit, public and private sectors.

More information about Active Living by Design can be found at www.activelivingbydesign.org.

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Denver Public Schools Share Stapleton's Spotlight

by John Lehigh

For several years now, and with increasing frequency, Stapleton has been drawing visitors from across the nation and around the world who are coming to Denver to learn more about one of the premier new urban communities in the United States. Those visitors have included eight members of the British Parliament, a delegation of business leaders from Moscow and regional governors from the Czech Republic. Other visits have come from a planning official from the Beijing government, the mayor of Belfast, Ireland and civic leaders from Mongolia. While each group or individual has specific interests that have drawn them to Stapleton, they all invariably ask about the quality of our schools.

When the discussions with our national and international visitors turn to the quality of schools at Stapleton and in the surrounding neighborhoods, we are quick to cite Forest City's philosophy that a great urban neighborhood deserves great urban schools. We describe the innovative progress that is being made by The Denver Public Schools (DPS) with the support of an impressive array of community partners involved with the redevelopment of Stapleton. Those partners include The Stapleton Foundation, The Stapleton Development Corporation and its



John Lehigh, chief operating officer, Forest City Stapleton

Citizens Advisory Board, The City of Denver, and citizens from throughout our civic and business sectors who are working with Forest City to make Stapleton and the surrounding neighborhoods a community that places a priority on the quality of its schools.

We are proud to share Stapleton's spotlight with a school system in which DPS Superintendent Jerry Wartgow and the Board of Education

are delivering new public schools with innovative designs and programs. For example:

- **Smaller schools:** Stapleton's neighborhood public schools are generally designed for 500 students or less. A growing body of research suggests that, all else being equal, small schools have better attendance and academic achievement, lower dropout rates, less vandalism and less violence than large, regional schools.
- **Smaller sites:** Stapleton's school sites of 10 to 12 acres fit nicely into our compact, walkable, urban neighborhoods. The shared use of parks and athletic fields provides ample space for team sports.
- **"Greener" schools:** Stapleton's schools are designed to conserve energy and other resources. Much is being achieved by "day lighting" – the capture of natural light to supplement electric lighting. "Day lighting"

also improves the learning environment. A recent California study analyzing 21,000 test scores concluded that students in classrooms with the most natural light scored 20 percent higher on math tests and 26 percent higher on reading tests.

Stapleton's school program is based on The Stapleton Education Master Plan, which was produced by the Stapleton Foundation in cooperation with Denver Public Schools (DPS) and many educators and community leaders. The Stapleton Education Master Plan promotes "Lifelong Learning" – based in part on the concept that public schools should be community centers offering everything from early childhood education to vocational training to classes for seniors.

Last August, these efforts began to bear fruit with the opening of Stapleton's first school, the \$10.7 million Westerly Creek Campus at 8800 East 28th Avenue. Designed by Anderson Mason Dale Architects, Westerly Creek is a new type of DPS facility. The 80,000 square-foot building houses two schools. The 350-student DPS Westerly Creek Elementary School, featuring a "core knowledge" curriculum, shares the building with the 220-student Odyssey Charter School, a public school with a curriculum based on principles of the Outward Bound program. Each school has its own wing but shares a central library, gym and cafeteria.

In the coming months and years, more public schools will debut at Stapleton:

In the fall of this year, (*continued on page 8*)

The Board of Trustees of the Denver School of Science and Technology has selected William "Bill" Kurtz to be its first Head of School. The Denver Public Schools charter high school will open at

Stapleton with its first class in the fall of this year. When fully enrolled, the school is projected to have 425 students.

Mr. Kurtz currently serves as the Principal of Link Community School, an independent middle school serving 125 African-American seventh and eighth graders located in Newark's Central Ward. Before joining Link in August 1998, he served as an Assistant Principal at

Kurtz to Head Denver School of Science and Technology at Stapleton



Courtesy of New Schools Development Corp

Holy Cross School, a grammar school serving 540 children enrolled in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade in the Southeast Bronx. Prior to his work at Holy Cross, he worked in the healthcare investment banking group and the corporate finance advisory division for The Chase Manhattan Bank for four years.

A graduate of Phillips Exeter Academy in 1987, Mr. Kurtz was awarded the Wyzanski

Prize for leadership in the community and the Francke Art Prize for Architecture.

He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Princeton University with a B.A. in political science and received the senior prize for the best political science thesis. In 1998, he earned an M.A. from Columbia University's Teachers College in educational administration and leadership.

Mr. Kurtz was among more than one hundred and twenty applicants for the position at Science & Tech. The search team reviewing applications included members of the school's board of directors and representatives from the Public Education & Business Coalition, the Rose Foundation and the Small Schools Initiative.

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Community Built the Foundation for the Redevelopment of Stapleton

By Greg Vilkin

With the 9th anniversary of the closing of Stapleton International Airport fast approaching in February, it seems appropriate to look back and give credit to those who had the vision, the energy and the tenacity to create the redevelopment plan for Denver’s former airport.

First and foremost, credit should go to the citizens and their elected officials in Denver, Aurora and Commerce City for recognizing the tremendous potential to transform Stapleton into a series of urban neighborhoods. Stapleton is bringing housing affordable to a range of incomes, jobs, retail and 1,100 acres of new parks and open space to the metropolitan area. Many other communities across the nation would not have attempted such a bold and ambitious plan.

A grassroots effort known as “Stapleton Tomorrow” began the planning for the redevelopment of the former airport in 1989 after the decision was made to build Denver International Airport and close Stapleton. A group of civic leaders brought together by Denver businessman Sam Gary formed the non-profit Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation to tap the energy and vision of thousands of citizens throughout our community who later attended more than one hundred public meetings to plan for the transformation of Stapleton. The Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation raised more than \$4 million in private sector funds to create the Stapleton Development Plan (often referred to as “The Green Book”) and begin the planning process to transform Stapleton into an extension of the traditional urban neighborhoods surrounding the former airport. Today, The Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation is known as The Stapleton Foundation for Sustainable Urban Communities.

The citizens’ plan for the redevelopment of Stapleton was formally adopted by The Denver City Council as an amendment to Denver’s



Greg Vilkin, president of Forest City Stapleton, Inc.

Comprehensive Plan in 1995. Among the recommendations of “The Green Book” was the establishment of a non-profit entity to be created by The City and County of Denver to manage the assets at Stapleton until the land could be sold at full market value to a developer who had the experience and the commitment to deliver on the vision for Stapleton. That non-profit entity is The Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC), which is

governed by a board of directors comprised of business and civic leaders (see box at left) who convene monthly in meetings open to the public on the fourth Thursday morning of each month. An active Citizens Advisory Board also meets monthly as it and its subcommittees work with SDC to ensure that the redevelopment of Stapleton continues to be shaped by the principles of The Stapleton Development Plan. Forest City is honored to be the master developer SDC chose to carry out that plan.

Future editions of The Front Porch will carry columns by representatives of The Stapleton Foundation and The Stapleton Development Corporation as they discuss issues of importance to the successful redevelopment of Stapleton. Forest City has established an excellent working relationship with The Stapleton Foundation, The Stapleton Development Corporation and the community since beginning our development activities in May of 2001. We look forward to building on that relationship over the next twenty years as we develop the former airport to its full potential and achieve the vision of the citizens who created The Stapleton Development Plan.

Greg Vilkin is the president of Forest City Stapleton, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Forest City Enterprises. For more information, visit www.stapletondenver.com or www.fceinc.com. For information about the meetings of The Stapleton Development Corporation and its Citizens Advisory Board, call (303) 393-7700.

Advertise in the Front Porch

Call Julie Picha at 303-382-1800 for information on advertising rates and to reserve space for your ad.

Deadlines for the March/April 2004 Edition of the Front Porch:

Reserve space by February 2
 Submit ads by February 9



Bocaza Mexican Grille/Big Bubba's BBQ
What could be better than a restaurant that serves great Mexican dishes and mouth-watering barbecue in one location? That description fits Bocaza Mexican Grille/Big Bubba's BBQ in Quebec Square. Shift Manager Luis Rivera and

Juana Hernandez are available to help hungry customers make the difficult choice between tasty burritos, fajitas, tacos and quesadillas or a selection of meaty ribs, sandwiches and briskets that are designed to appeal to any appetite. Bocaza Mexican Grille/Big Bubba's BBQ is open from 10:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday - Saturday and 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Sundays. It is located on the east side of Quebec Square across from Sam's Club.

Doctor's Vision Works
Chris Wilson, general manager of Doctor's VisionWorks on the west side of Quebec Square, estimates he carries "over one thousand" different frames that include a full range of designer names, including Guess, Chaps, Tommy Hilfiger and many others. Doctor's VisionWorks has two optometrists on staff to ensure that most glasses made on site are ready in about one hour to meet the needs of adults and children. Contact lenses are also available from the store that is open 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays - Fridays, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, and from noon to 5 p.m. on Sundays.



Chipotle
Manager Mark Gordon and his Assistant Manager, Adolfo Silva, direct a staff of 16 employees at the new Chipotle in the East 29th Avenue Town Center at Stapleton where the menu invites diners to savor an experience described temptingly as: "The food is fresh and hot. The atmosphere is cool." While the focus of the Chipotle menu is burritos and tacos, it is also accurate to say that the choices are "endless." Among the other favorites are carnitas that include "naturally raised Niman Ranch free-range pork" which is seasoned with a delightful variety of spices, seared and then braised for hours. Vegetarian fajitas are also available. Chipotle is open everyday from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Orders can be faxed to (303) 316-0755 and should be confirmed at (303) 316-0469. Patio seating is available.

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A Day Spa
Looking for just the right gift for Valentine's Day or another special occasion? Karin Ward, operations manager of A Day Spa in Quebec Square, suggests a gift certificate that is certain to please any lucky recipient. Owner Anita Zimmerman has a talented staff of cosmetologists, massage therapists, nail technicians and other specialists who provide a relaxing and rejuvenating experience for anyone who visits their shop. A Day Spa is open on the southern edge of Quebec Square at 7505 E. 35th Avenue daily except Mondays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Call (303) 780-9000 for more information. (See ad on page 7.)



Town Center Dentistry
When Dr. Brett Kessler, DDS and his wife Dr. Gina Kessler, DDS, MS moved to Stapleton, they hoped to become "the neighborhood dentists." Now that they have opened Town Center Dentistry in the East 29th Avenue Town Center, the two dentists who have more than eighteen years of combined experience are realizing their dream. Brett Kessler specializes in cosmetic and restorative dentistry for adults, while Gina Kessler practices orthodontics for adults and children. Their high tech office uses digital x-ray techniques that have better diagnostic quality than film while reducing radiation by over 50 percent, and their "whisper quiet" dental equipment is designed to put every patient at ease. Appointments are available on Mondays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Tuesdays through Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. by calling 303-321-4445. (See ad on page 7.)

Just for Feet

Store Director Dean McCormick has the energy and enthusiasm of an athlete when he describes the full range of athletic shoes and sports paraphernalia his store sells at Just For Feet on the west side of Quebec Square. A five-year veteran with the company, Dean says his store has had tremendous support from the community since it opened eighteen months ago. With young, active families moving in to Stapleton at a rate of nearly 40 families each month and adjacent neighborhoods that have been waiting many years for new retail such as Just for Feet, it is not surprising that Dean’s enthusiasm has also infected his staff of 25 young employees who provide knowledgeable and pleasant assistance to anyone looking for just the right footwear. Just For Feet is open from 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, and 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays.



Amore Fiori

A visit last year to the famous Campo de Fiori floral market on a cobblestone street in Rome inspired Michelle Stefanon to pursue her passion for flowers. On January 12th the rest becomes history as Michelle and her husband Casey Carey open Amore Fiori Flowers and Gifts in the East 29th Avenue Town Center at Stapleton.



Michelle says the name of her small, custom shop translates loosely as “To Love Flowers.” Visitors to Amore Fiori will experience “the feeling of an outdoor Italian flower market” and find unique gifts, seasonal décor, plants and a vibrant array of the freshest flowers from growers around the world for special occasions or to make any day a special occasion. Corporate services that include standing orders for offices, lobbies, parties and banquets are also available. Amore Fiori will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays. To arrange for delivery of flowers, call (303) 333-3848. More information is available at michelle@amore-fiori.com. (See ad on page 7.)

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Office Depot

Susan Woodcock, store manager of the Office Depot in Quebec Square, is confident her nineteen employees are ready to assist customers with all of their software and office needs for the upcoming tax preparation season. She also points out that her store’s office planning advice and full line of copying services that are in demand every day of the year have drawn a “wonderful business clientele” who have been steady customers since her store opened in August of 2002. Susan also says that this year’s “back-to-school” business from families who live at Stapleton and the surrounding neighborhoods was nothing short of “tremendous.” Office Depot is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays.



SportClips

It is a “family affair” at the new SportClips next to Panera Bread in Quebec Square where owners Doug and Vickie Groetken describe themselves as “Team Leaders” but readily admit the “real boss” is their infant daughter Ainsley. Customers are entertained with sports on the Big Screen television as five “Guy-Smart” stylists cut hair in a locker room atmosphere where “Guys Win.” SportClips at Quebec Square is open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sundays. No appointments are needed but call (303) 399-8200 for information on such special events as an appearance by Rocky and the Denver Nuggets dancers in February. (See ad on page 7.)

Noodles and Company

When Jeff Rains talks about his delicious menu of fresh salads, and pasta and noodle dishes that include Mushroom Stroganoff, Penne Rosa and Pasta Fresca, he also adds that the chicken noodle soup and the Wisconsin Mac & Cheese are among the early favorites that are bringing new customers to enjoy lunch and dinner at his establishment in the East 29th Avenue Town Center at Stapleton. A beer and wine selection is also available. Noodles and Company is open 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sundays through Wednesdays, and 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Call ahead to place orders by phone at (303) 780-0044 or by fax at (303) 780-0055. Patio seating is available.



Traffic Problems and Other Useful Ways to Build Community

By Bill Fulton

The last SUN traffic committee meeting was not exactly a bonding experience at the outset. On December 2, a group of residents came to express their deep concerns over the impact that the closure of 26th Avenue at Central Park Boulevard has had on their street traffic. Put on the defensive, members of the Forest City traffic team tried to explain the rationale behind the traffic plans, but with limited success. The room did not feel particularly warm and fuzzy.

Once it became clear, however, that solutions people were proposing would simply push the problem onto someone else's street, the conversation changed. Instead of each person trying to address his or her own private concerns, the group needed to think collectively and take on the problem together—even for those not at the meeting. With this turn in the conversation, Forest City shared that it had learned new information and would take steps to address the issue. Residents expressed gratitude for being heard and



a willingness to get more involved in the future to promote better communication. What began as a divisive session of neighbors against developers ended as a group solving a problem together.

This meeting, and previous ones like it, illustrates and underscores the importance of SUN's mission of trying to foster constructive conversations that help move Stapleton from a neighborhood to a community. It will take time to create a system of communication that keeps everyone informed, and a style of communicating that respects everyone's views. But it seems to be working, in small steps at least, and the results are encouraging.

Our next step down that road will be

a community-wide meeting on **Tuesday, February 3 at 6:30 p.m. at Westerly Creek School**. In the spirit of proactive communication, Forest City will provide an update of the next phases of build out in the development, and explain the time line for important milestones in the process. We will also hear about an exciting partnership to promote active living at Stapleton, and continue our efforts to build a system of block captains. Finally, we will lay out the plans for formal SUN elections in April. And of course, we would like to hear what is on people's minds for future meetings.

As one of SUN's organizers, Greg Diggs, remarked at the last meeting, traffic is proving to be our best tool for getting people engaged and organized in the neighborhood. Let's hope we can continue to turn problems into problem-solving opportunities. Contact us at stapletonneighbors@msn.com if you would like to help.

Bill Fulton is a member of S.U.N.

Mercy Housing Scheduled for Occupancy in Early 2005



Rendering courtesy of Mercy Housing

Above: An artist's rendering of the Parkside Apartments at Stapleton that will be developed by Denver-based Mercy Housing at 23rd and Syracuse Street. The 68 rental homes will be ready for occupancy in early 2005, and are designed to be affordable to incomes earned by retail workers, entry-level professionals, day-care providers, and others earning 30 to 60 percent of the area median income. For more information, call Mercy Housing at 303-830-3300.

Right: Representatives from The City of Denver, The Stapleton Development Corporation and Forest City join Mercy Housing officials in the groundbreaking ceremony.



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As primary care providers for adults, Drs. Gordon and Sieja are pleased to announce the opening of their new Internal Medicine practice at Rose Medical Center. Internal Medicine focuses on health promotion and disease prevention in individuals age 13 and up. Dr. David Gordon graduated from and completed his residency at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Dr. Amber Sieja graduated from Northwestern University Medical School and completed her residency at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. For an appointment, please call.

Stapleton Christmas Lights Winner



This home in the 2700 block of Uinta Street was rated “Best Overall” for its holiday decorations. The first place prize was a “Stapleton Cruiser” bicycle.

Stapleton Builder Honored

Professional Builder Magazine has named Stapleton builder John Laing Homes its “2004 Builder of the Year.” The award, which has been in existence since 1966, recognizes the one homebuilder that rates the highest in three areas: overall excellence, innovation, and reputation. According to Heather McCune, editor-in-chief of Professional Builder, John Laing Homes was deemed the most deserving nominee from a list of finalists that included large publicly owned, national builders as well as smaller, “niche” builders.

“The leadership at John Laing Homes dedicates itself to hiring the talent and building the processes that lead to a home buying experience that delights buyers,” said McCune. “John Laing Homes is different – by design – than other new home builders and it is these differences we celebrate in naming it our Builder of the Year.” “Our company culture is based on values we all share, and on creating a learning organization,” said Larry Webb, CEO of John Laing Homes. “It is through this that we are able to stay focused on constantly improving the way we build homes and the experience we provide our customers.”

Mortenson Wins Construction Award for Stapleton

M.A. Mortenson, the contractor managing more than \$300 million in roads, utilities and other infrastructure construction for The Park Creek Metropolitan District at Stapleton, has been honored by the Rocky Mountain Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors with its “Excellence in Construction Awards.”

Mortenson received the honor after a panel of six distinguished judges reviewed the award submissions for the competition. Criteria considered during the judging included such factors as complexity, unusual challenges or problems overcome, innovative techniques or programs, value engineering, safety record, and owner satisfaction. Mortenson also received an award for its work on the Pepsi Center in the category involving commercial work in the range of \$5 million to \$10 million. Among other notable projects, M.A. Mortenson has served as the general contractor for the construction of Coors Field.

DPS Schools at Stapleton

(continued from page 2) the Denver School of Science and Technology, a \$15 million, 65,000 square-foot DPS charter high school created by New Schools Development Corporation, is scheduled to open on Montview Boulevard east of Syracuse Street. This effort has received strong support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Hewlett Packard and other national and local foundations. Forest City, Stapleton, Inc. has committed \$3.5 million in land and construction assistance to the school. This past November, Denver voters passed a school bond that included \$5 million for construction. The design by KCJD Architects has earned a “Design Concepts” award from the Council of Education Facilities Planners International (CEFPI).

In 2006, Stapleton’s first K-8 school is scheduled to open in a \$14 million, 100,000 square-foot building at the corner of Montview Boulevard and Central Park Boulevard. Designed by M+O+A Architectural Partnership, the Stapleton K-8 school will pioneer environmentally progressive architecture featuring geothermal heat pumps, which save thousands of dollars annually on heating and cooling.



Stapleton’s first DPS campus, Westerly Creek, opened last August

As early as 2008, a public high school campus is projected to open east of 53rd Avenue and Quebec Street consisting of three small schools of approximately 450 students. The schools on that campus will share common facilities such as a library, auditorium and gymnasium.

The emphasis on the quality of our schools is already showing results. Drawn by the prospect and reality of innovative public schools within a short walk or bike ride, families with children have purchased nearly half of the first 750 homes now occupied at Stapleton. Thanks to the Denver Public Schools and a community that cares about the education it provides its children, Stapleton’s national and international spotlight is now shining brightest on the quality of our schools.

John S. Lehigh is the Chief Operating Officer for Forest City Stapleton, Inc.