



YMCA to begin new era with ribbon-cutting

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ANDOVER — While members have enjoyed the recently renovated and expanded Andover/North Andover YMCA for several months, the updated fitness center has yet to have a formal reopening to the community.

The Y will officially begin its new era on Thursday, when nearly 200 guests are expected to gather at the 165 Haverhill St. facility for a ribbon-cutting ceremony shortly before 10 a.m.

According to Jim Kapelson, vice president of marketing and member development for the Merrimack Valley YMCA, the event will feature speeches from several prominent members of the Y community, including Merrimack Valley YMCA President and CEO Gary Morelli.

"This (ceremony) will be a festive and exciting opportunity to formally welcome our new Y into the community," Kapelson said via telephone Tuesday. "We're hoping a lot of our members can come by for this event."

The \$23 million renovation of the Y, which took roughly two years to complete, upgraded a facility which had not seen many improvements since it first opened in 1974.

In January, the new Y opened to its members for the first time. Since then, members have enjoyed the 109,000 square foot building's various new features, including new swimming pools, workout equipment and studio workout rooms.

But the new Y will formally open with Tuesday's ribbon-cutting, which will kick off at 9:45 a.m. inside the building with a welcoming address from the branch's executive director, Alex Turek.

Turek will then introduce each speaker; in addition to Morelli speakers for the ceremony will include Don Schaalman, a member of the Andover/North Andover Y Building Committee, Dianne Anderson, president and CEO of Lawrence General Hospital, Dr. Kyle McInnis, professor at Merrimack College and Joseph Alwan, chairman of the board for the Andover/North Andover Y.

Both Lawrence General and Merrimack have begun new partnerships with the branch; in the new building, Lawrence General has opened up a physical rehabilitation center and primary care space, while Merrimack will operate an Active Learning Center for third and fourth-grade



students designed to help them improve their Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) scores.

Following each speech, the actual ribbon-cutting will occur across from the entry-level stairwell that connects both standard exercise rooms. Afterward, guided tours will be available and refreshments will be served.

Kapelson said "well over" 150 people have already registered for the event, but he encouraged all members to stop by and here from the people who helped make the dream of a new Y a reality.

Walk-ins are welcome to the event, but those who want to RVSP must do so by Wednesday. Those interested should email Dianne Andriolo at dandriolo@mvyymca.org.

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