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Mercer Island celebrates PEAK groundbreaking



Children from the Mercer Island Boys & Girls Club clamber up a mountain of dirt to plant their flags during the groundbreaking ceremony for the soon-to-be PEAK facility on Monday morning, June 29.
Elizabeth Celms/Mercer Island Reporter

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City officials, School Board members and representatives of the community gathered around a giant mound of dirt to celebrate the birth of PEAK on Monday morning. The June 29 groundbreaking ceremony was attended by a healthy crowd, including those who spear-headed the six-year project, steering committee members, individual donors and children with the Boys & Girls Club.

Daniel Johnson, president of the Boys & Girls Club of King County, spoke first and thanked all of those who made PEAK possible over the past years. The list was long. Johnson expressed extra gratitude to Mercer Island Boys & Girls Club Director Blair Rasmussen, who he said "has done the heavy lifting of this project."

"PEAK has had its ups and downs, and it's been a long time in the making. But there was one defining moment — when Blair agreed to lead the charge in this

campaign," Johnson said.

At his turn to speak, Rasmussen described the cumulative effort that went into planning the PEAK facility, expressing his joy that the project has finally come to fruition.

He thanked the School Board and City Councilmembers for their honest "and at times blunt" opinions on the proposed Boys & Girls Club project — the biggest in Island history. He reflected on his own personal investment into the project.

"This is the most important thing I've done in my working life," Rasmussen said.

After his speech, dozens of children wearing bright yellow Boys & Girls Club T-shirts and hard-hats climbed atop the symbolic mound of dirt to place flags into its PEAK.

Those who were pivotal in the creation of the Boys & Girls Club project followed the children with shovels. The group of City Council and School Board members, Boys & Girls Club representatives, PEAK steering-committee members and others officially commenced the groundbreaking with triumphant shovels.

The PEAK project, which began approximately six years ago, will now enter its construction phase. All \$15 million necessary for the project has been either raised or promised through pledges and grants. The youth and teen sports and activities center is scheduled to open in the summer of 2010.

For PEAK details, visit: www.mipositiveplace.org.

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