

Making New Memories: Expansion Begins At Stamford Museum & Nature Center

STAMFORD, Conn. — The Stamford Museum & Nature Center, which broke ground Monday on its first major addition in 50 years, has a special place in Mayor David Martin’s heart.



Photo: Karen Tensa

The Groundbreaking Monday at the Stamford Museum & Nature Center for the new Environmental Education Farmhouse

As state and local officials gathered for the groundbreaking for the Environmental Education Farmhouse, they shared their memories of the special 118-acre site in North Stamford. But Martin stole the show with a story about his daughter, Rachel.

It was nearly three decades ago, when his daughter was in kindergarten, that she decided to enter the annual pumpkin-carving contest there, he said. Working mostly on her own, Rachel carved out her pumpkin,



Painted the seeds black and decorated her pumpkin with them.

He remembers that Rachel was “completely downcast” when she didn’t win a ribbon in her age group. But as the judges finished up with the adult awards, where there were some pretty elaborate pumpkins, Rachel Martin was named as the winner of “best in show” with her pumpkin.

“I will never forget the joy on her face,” Martin said, “and the joy in my heart. I can’t ever forget it.”

Martin called the SM&NC “a gem” for Stamford as they celebrated on another “joyous day” for him with the groundbreaking for a \$5 million Environmental Education Farmhouse.

Also in attendance was Gov. Dannel Malloy, a Stamford native who also grabbed the spotlight by announcing the birth of his first grandchild — a girl named Grace — early Monday at Stamford Hospital.

SM&NC Executive Director Melissa Mulrooney also took part with Michael and Carol Fedele, co-chairs of the Campaign for Future Generations.

Overlooking the pastures of Heckscher Farm, the 4,000-square-foot Environmental Education Farmhouse will serve the SM&NC’s Aligned-with-the-Schools curriculum as well as provide space for programs and special events for families, campers and adults.

The cost of the farmhouse will be covered with \$2.5 million from the state, \$300,000 from the city and more from private dona-

tions. It is expected to be completed in 18 months.

The Stamford Museum & Nature Center is popular regional tourist attraction, drawing more than 200,000 visitors a year from.

It includes Heckscher Farm, Overbook Nature Center, an observatory and planetarium, and the Bendel Mansion Museum.

The SM&NC is also looking to raise another \$10 million for the second phase of an expansion: an 8,000-square-foot astronomy and physical science center.

1. The new maple sugar house will be among the first additions at the Stamford Museum & Nature Center in 50 years. 2 & 3. The Environmental Education Farmhouse at the Stamford Museum & Nature Center will be used for programs for students, scouts, families and other visitors.



Governor Dannel Malloy at the groundbreaking for the expansion at the Stamford Museum & Nature Center