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The Porch at 30th Street Station

BY JEANNE LEONG

WHAT: The new pedestrian-friendly plaza on the Market Street side of 30th Street Station with café style seating for 200 and shade provided by decorative plants and umbrellas. It's an inviting spot to grab a bite to eat, meet a friend or indulge in a few minutes of rest before or after taking the train.

THE NAME: The Porch at 30th Street Station, which officially opened on Nov. 2, got its name from a contest run by the University City District (UCD), which created and maintains the plaza. There were more than 500 submissions from the general public suggesting names for the 40-foot-wide stretch of sidewalk that was constructed as part of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's multi-million dollar renovation of the elevated road structures near the train lines along the Schuylkill River.

OUT AND ABOUT



Tanya Barrientos

MEET ME AT THE PLAZA: It's a welcoming spot for daily commuters, nearby workers, and first-time and returning visitors to Philadelphia. Because of the plaza's location outside the train station and proximity to Penn, Drexel and many companies, it's bound to become a landmark and a popular meeting spot outside the bustling station, which is one of the busiest in the nation.

BRIGHTENING UP MARKET STREET: New lighting fixtures are being installed along the Market Street sidewalk across from The Porch. The sidewalk is also being reconstructed to match the style of the train station plaza.

LUNCHTIME WORKOUT: Visitors from Penn can get a double dose of exercise by walking to 30th Street Station and then taking a fitness class at The Porch. As part of Drexel Fitness Fridays, a fitness instructor will lead "boot camp" exercise classes on Nov. 18 and Dec. 16 from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. There will be kickboxing classes on Dec. 2 and 9.

COMMUTER FUN: Instead of stopping by the supermarket on your way home, drop by the plaza's farmers' market featuring locally produced hummus, apples and other goodies on Wednesdays from 3 to 7 p.m. The West Philadelphia Orchestra presents "Sounds to Transport," a program of Eastern European and Balkan music, on Thursday afternoons from 4 to 6 p.m. through Dec. 6. On Circus Fridays, the "Give and Take Jugglers & Little Circus" performs every week from 4 to 6 p.m. through Dec. 9. Go to www.universitycity.org for the full schedule of events.

ROOM TO GROW: UCD plans to gauge pedestrians' reaction to the space, how they use the space, and make improvements to meet their needs.