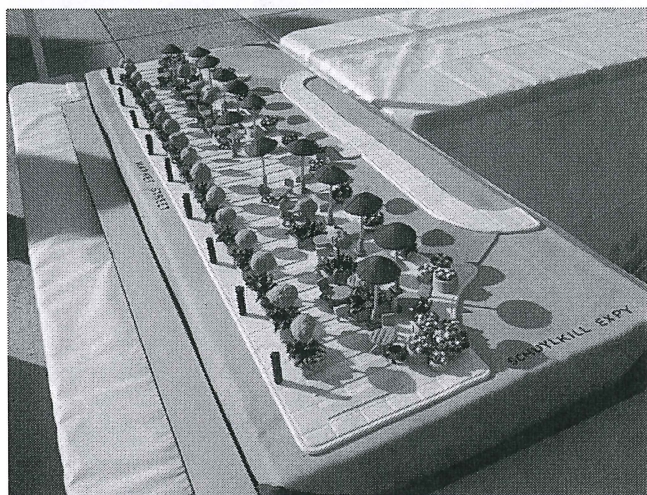


The Porch at 30th Street Station: An Animated Urban Gateway

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The large sheet cake (above) by Charm City Cakes, was a replica of The Porch at 30th Street Station.

On an especially summery day earlier this month, the University City District (UCD) led the celebration of the opening of the newly named area outside 30th Street Station. The Porch at 30th Street Station is a transformative urban open space for Philadelphia. UCD envisions it as a place of activity, respite, and social interaction with pedestrian amenities as well as being a welcoming gateway for travelers emerging from the adjacent station, one of the nation's busiest.

UCD's executive director Matt Bergheiser described the space as "a small oasis at one of the city's busiest and most critical crossroads."

He credited UCD's director of planning and economic development Prema Gupta who led the effort "with vision and passion" with helping them to understand that they could do this quickly and creatively, in a way that had not been tried in a space that size.

Bounded by monumental historic buildings—the Station and the old Post Office building, that Penn

bought several years ago (*Almanac* April 6, 2004)—the new public space at the heart of University City's eastern end, provides views of the Schuylkill River to the east, and the Center City skyline across the nearby bridges. The way Amtrak envisions the new space is as "a dynamic anteroom to the Station."

To create the Porch, UCD piggybacked on a larger PennDOT project to rehabilitate six bridges adjacent to 30th Street Station. The project was a public-private partnership in conception and implementation between a number of institutions, individuals, public officials, businesses and community members including Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, the Streets Department, Amtrak, Brandywine Realty Trust, the Schuylkill River Development Corporation, along with UCD whose board is chaired by Penn's EVP Craig Carnaroli.

Where there was once an outdoor parking lane parallel to Market Street, there is now a 50' wide sidewalk that runs 565' creating an inviting, vibrant space, while keeping to a modest construction budget. The William Penn Foundation provided some of the funding for the space that was transformed by Lager Raabe Skafte Landscape Architects. LRSLA divided the space into a series of outdoor rooms, punctuated by trees and umbrellas to bring a sense of human scale to the large space. UCD and LRSLA agreed that movable tables and chairs would allow users maximum flexibility in choosing where to sit in relation to the space, other people and the sun.

LRSLA worked with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to fill the site with high quality seasonal plantings. LRSLA repurposed agricultural feeding troughs with green roof technology to create large, economical planters with trees that filter traffic noise levels from six lanes of Market Street and foster a hospitable pedestrian environment.

UCD plans to enliven The Porch through activities and events (*see below*). Citizens Bank Foundation has provided support for a slate of events planned for the spring. UCD has been inspired by new public spaces in other cities that have been developed by taking small, iterative and experimental steps to determine what works best, rather than starting with large capital expenses. Future design changes will be informed by a rigorous study of site usage patterns.

Fall Festival

Saturday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., November 19

Experience a little country in the heart of the city. University City District is excited to welcome autumn with the first official festival at

The Porch at 30th Street Station. Fun for the entire family, the Fall Festival celebrates the season with food, music and more.

Milk & Honey presents West Philly honey tasting with Urban Apiaries cooking demonstration and tasting by
The Restaurant School at Walnut Hill College

Street Puppetry from Geppetta

Homespun Merry-Go-Round

Taste of Apple Cider History with Bartram's Garden

Bluegrass and Country music from West Philly's Citywide Specials

Give & Take Little Circus

Free S'mores kits to the first 100 people

Weekly Programming at The Porch

Lunchtime Serenade

*Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.,
November 15-December 6*

French Swing accordion music by Dallas Vietty

The Porch Farmers' Market

Wednesdays, 3-7 p.m., November 16-23

Farm to City Market featuring: Frecon Orchards: bagged apples, cider and fruit by the pound

FreshaPeel Hummus: all-natural hummus infused with unique flavors

Sounds to Transport

*Thursdays, 4-6 p.m., November 10-December 6**

Traditional and original Eastern European and Balkan music by West Philadelphia Orchestra

** no program on Thanksgiving*

Fitness Fridays

Fridays, 12:30-1:30 p.m., November 18-December 16

Put your lunch break to work for you with fitness programming by Drexel University's Recreational Athletics staff.

No equipment or experience needed. Don't forget to bring your water bottle and wear workout clothes and sneakers!



November 18 & December 16—Boot Camp

This 60-minute drill class will have you pushing yourself to the max. Class consists of strength, cardio and agility drills.

December 2 & 9—Kickboxing

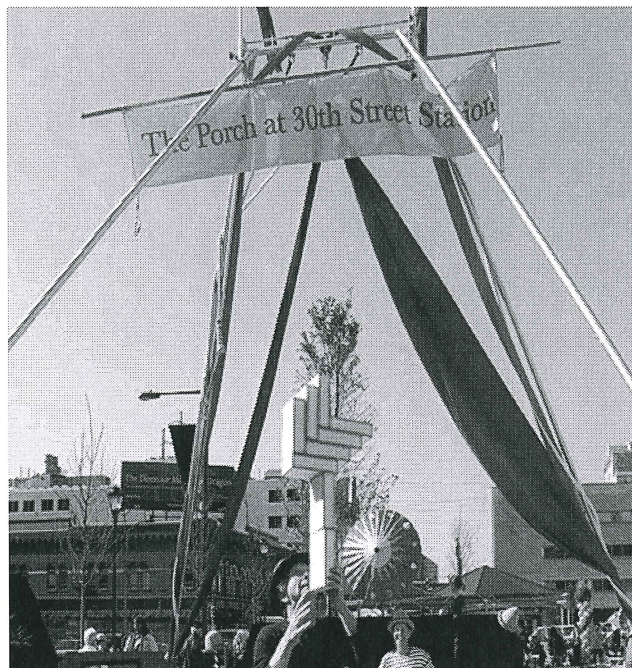
Backed by high-energy music, this cardio kickboxing workout incorporates kicks, punches, elbows and knees.

You'll use movements from martial arts and boxing as well as effective athletic drills to burn calories and relieve stress.

Circus Fridays

Fridays, 4-6 p.m., November 18-December 9

The Give & Take Jugglers and their Little Circus will surprise and delight. Using juggling, comedy and audience involvement, they use traditions from vaudeville, circus arts, and theater to create a lively and contemporary show.



Photos by Marguerite F. Miller

The Give & Take Little Circus (above) helped with the unveiling of the outdoor space's new name.

