

# 'The Porch' opens by 30th Street Station

Officials hope that students will use the green space to eat and do homework

BY DIANA GONIMAH  
Staff Writer

A circus act composed of jugglers and tightrope walkers greeted over 200 locals early Wednesday afternoon at the opening celebration of the new green space adjacent to 30th Street Station.

The West Philadelphia Orchestra and The Give and Take Jugglers entertained the audience as they came to see the transformation of a formerly congested parking lane into what Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, a 1979 Wharton graduate, described as "a fine example of public service."

Executive Director of the University City District Matt Bergheiser introduced several officials before unconventionally revealing the name of this new public place: he directed the audience to a tightrope walker who climbed onto a rope and unveiled a banner which read "The Porch at 30th Street Station."

An independent jury combined different name suggestions into one after a naming contest garnered over 500 responses.

Bergheiser said this name was "welcoming, low-key and unpretentious," therefore reflecting the true spirit of the city.

Nutter delivered the concluding speech in the ceremony saying he had been "waiting for this his entire life." He commended the public and private entities which partook in The Porch's realization, including Drexel University and Penn — with a personal thank you for Penn President Amy Gutmann — and numerous other city organizations including the William Penn Foundation.

Nutter said he believes this project exemplifies what "an investment in our streetscape" can do for the community.



Maegan Cadet/DP Staff Photographer

University City District Executive Director Matt Bergheiser, Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell and Mayor Michael Nutter cut the ribbon for "The Porch."

"This is infrastructure," he said, adding that thousands will use the new space. "Here in Philadelphia, we know how to get things done."

"We need less politics ... and more productivity," he added.

Babette Pace, House Manager at the Annenberg Center for Performing Arts, was excited to see that the space had outdoor seating, but "would like to see more stationary rather than seasonal, removable objects. Will these chairs still be around when it rains

or snows?"

UCD Director of Planning and Economic Development

► Photo gallery of the ribbon-cutting event at [theDP.com/gallery](http://theDP.com/gallery)

Prema Gupta said she does not believe the weather will be a problem, as this space was essentially inspired by Bryant Park in New York. She explained that the mobility of the chairs demonstrates how this area is open to "flexibility, experimentation and even yoga."

Philadelphia locals Betty Loev and Betty O'Malley are pleased to have a new space to relax between their commute to and from University City and North Philadelphia. Loev added that "now people will be enticed to walk across the bridge and take a look."

Students from Drexel's Recreational Center led a hip-hop and yoga class at the celebration. Ari Melman, a Drexel junior, was happy to see this formerly "empty and aggravating two-foot strip of land transform into a useful public space."



THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2011

# The Daily Pennsylvanian

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

online at [theDP.com](http://theDP.com)