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# **Grand Opening of Technology Lab for Teens at Valencia Park/Malcolm X Library**

## **STATE-OF-THE-ART COLLABORATIVE SPACE TO PROVIDE YOUTH WITH 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY JOB SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS**

SAN DIEGO – To help prepare local youth for careers in a digital age, the San Diego Public Library on Friday, Jan. 27, officially opened the Legler Benbough Teen IDEA Lab (IDEA stands for innovation and digital expression activity). This modern technology lab is located inside the Valencia Park/Malcolm X Branch Library, 5148 Market St.

**“Every child in San Diego deserves the opportunity to succeed and there is no better way to provide that opportunity than by giving them the tools and training they need in the heart of their neighborhood,” said Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer. “The IDEA Lab will give young men and women exposure to the skills they need to get good-paying jobs in our innovation economy.”**

The Legler Benbough Teen IDEA Lab is a multimedia center where youth can learn new skills in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) in a safe, welcoming and collaborative environment. During open hours, dedicated staff are available to assist teens using the advanced equipment, including:

- 3D printers, a laser printer and a vinyl cutter;
- a sound recording studio;
- an interactive video wall;
- a video gaming center with Xbox and PlayStation; and
- more than 30 computers, including iMacs and PCs.

In planning for the development of this facility, local teens and students from neighboring schools were invited to provide input during a series of focus groups between 2014 and 2015.

**“The residents wanted an upgrade at this library, something that would better serve the youth, and this is where the idea of the Teen Center came from, the desire to serve the youth in our**

**community,” said Council President Myrtle Cole, District Four. “I am confident that skills learned in this teen IDEA Lab, at this great library, will be used by our youth to change future technology.”**

Educational programs will be offered in collaboration with partners Admit One College Prep, the LEAGUE of Amazing Programmers, FAB LAB, Media Arts Center San Diego and Sally Ride Science at UC San Diego.

For the first time in a San Diego Public Library facility, a Wi-Fi hot spot lending program will be offered through a partnership with Sprint. Using a library card, teens can check out a Wi-Fi hot spot to use outside the library for a period of three months. Fifty hot spots will be available at the Legler Benbough Teen IDEA Lab and borrowers must complete an orientation prior to checking out the devices.

This is only the second teen technology lab of its kind in San Diego, similar to one located on the eighth floor of the San Diego Central Library.

**“Our vision is to be the place for opportunity, discovery and inspiration, and the Legler Benbough Teen IDEA Lab is a perfect example of our vision at work,” said Library Director Misty Jones. “This space is designed to provide every teen in this community with the opportunity to learn, experiment, create and collaborate with other teens, to discover new technology and information so that they can be inspired and, in turn, inspire others.”**

Funding for the project was provided through a combination of private donations and public funding. Working with the San Diego Public Library Foundation, local non-profit the Legler Benbough Foundation invested \$1 million to create the teen technology lab, fitting with the organization’s mission to improve the quality of life for San Diegans.

**“We are very pleased to support this collaborative effort of the library and the teens to be served to create this remarkable learning space,” said Peter K. Ellsworth, President of the Legler Benbough Foundation. “It promises to be game changing for those who take advantage of the opportunities it will create.”**

This project is also funded with \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to the City of San Diego, in addition to PEG (public, educational and governmental) cable television franchise fees.

By providing free access to educational programs and job training, the City of San Diego is working to transform libraries into community hubs for technology and innovation.

**“The Library Foundation is pleased we could bring together the partners who made this community resource possible,” said Jay Hill, CEO of the San Diego Public Library Foundation. “Thank you to the Legler Benbough Foundation for their vision and generosity and thank you to library and city leaders for keeping this amazing lab open beyond library hours. This collaboration helps ensure teens have a safe, welcoming environment and that lab resources are available when teens need them the most.”**

The Legler Benbough Teen IDEA Lab is open seven days per week for young people ages 12 to 18 years old. Teens are welcome to enter the space any time during open hours. A library card is required for equipment use. Lab resources and programs will be offered for adults during specified dates and times.

Photos and video of the grand opening will be available upon request.

**About the San Diego Public Library**

San Diego Public Library, which is the largest library system in the region, serves a population of more than 1.3 million people. Its mission is to inspire lifelong learning through connections to knowledge and each other. Learn about other events at the San Diego Central Library @ Joan A Irwin Jacobs Common and 35 community branch libraries, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library's online catalog at [www.sandiegolibrary.org](http://www.sandiegolibrary.org).

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