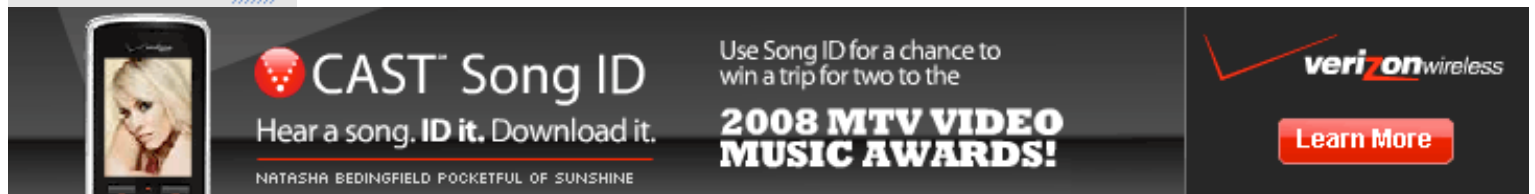


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Jesuits break ground in heart of campus

By: [Alexandra Gross](#)

Issue date: 4/24/08 **Section:** [News](#)

Tuesday signified more than the commemoration of Earth Day for

Tuesday signified more than the commemoration of Earth Day for members of the Fairfield community as they gathered at Bellarmine Hall to break ground on the new, environmentally friendly Jesuit residence.

"Let me welcome you to what will be a momentous occasion for the University community," said University President Fr. Jeffrey von Arx in the opening remarks of the ceremony.

The proposed two-story Jesuit Community Center, located near the south end of campus off Barlow Road, will house 12 Jesuits and will also act as a central gathering, meeting and reflection space to reinforce the notion of living and learning at Fairfield.

"The Jesuits have been in the education business for over 400 years," said von Arx. "Jesuits traditionally were not far from the heart of campus."

While the primary goal of the new residence is to give Jesuits as more prominent place on campus, the building will also be an experiment in sustainable living, a "long, very thoughtful process" that took root in 2005, according to Fr. Walter Conlan, S.J., rector of the Jesuit community at Fairfield.

The \$7.5 million building - a collaboration of University officials and architects Elizabeth Gray and Alan Organschi from Gray Organschi Architecture in New Haven, Conn. - will also boast geothermal heating and cooling capacities, bamboo flooring and recycled industrial materials and carpeting.

Utilization of this technology will also "encourage being good stewards of the land," said Fr. Gilbert Sunghera, S.J., a consultant on the project and assistant professor of architecture at the University of Detroit Mercy.

A rooftop garden of grass and wildflowers will not only be visually pleasing, but it will also protect against harmful ultraviolet rays, absorb upwards of 95 percent of rainwater and capture run-off during heavy rains.

Apart from a diseased beech tree, which will be used to build furniture in the new facility, no additional surrounding trees will be harmed in the building, which will begin in June.

As part of the ceremony, a St. Ignatius medallion was buried next to one of the beech trees to commemorate the site and will be removed upon completion in 10 to 12 months.

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Digging in: from left, University President Fr. Jeffrey von Arx, Board of Trustee member Kevin M. Conlisk '66, architect Alan Organschi and Fr. Walter Conlan take the first step toward a new Jesuit residence.

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Viewing Comments 1 - 1 of 1**mariannregan****Mariann Regan****posted 4/26/08 @ 12:08 PM EST**

Congratulations and thanks to the Jesuit community for pioneering sustainable living on campus. We look forward to the progress of the many additional environmental projects underway at this university. ([Continued...](#))

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