



WAMC NORTHEAST PUBLIC RADIO

Library Named In Honor Of Berkshire Student

By JIM LEVULIS · JUN 13, 2016



A new library and learning center at Berkshire Country Day School in Stockbridge is being named in honor of a former student.

Kevin Hirt's generosity exceeded his age and likely that of most people.

"At the end of his life when he knew he only had a short time to live, he asked what we were going to do with the money we had put aside for his college education," Campana said. "We said 'Well, what would you like us to do with that money?' He said 'BCD really needs a new library and you know how much that would mean to me.'"

Hirt's mother Lynn Campana says her son loved books and reading. Hirt died in 2001 after battling neuroblastoma, an aggressive pediatric cancer. He was 10 years old. For the last 15 years, his parents and the Berkshire Country Day School have held onto the goal of a new library. Come January the Kevin Hirt Library and Learning Commons will be ready for use. Head of School Paul Lindenmaier recently celebrated the start of renovation work at what used to be a cow barn.

"It will allow students to engage in cross-grade collaborations, attend webinars in classes around the world and interact with technology and learning in a very 21st century way," Lindenmaier said. "It will push forward how we think about teaching and how we create different kinds of learning experiences for students."

Hirt impacted the 150-student, preschool through grade 9 school during his short life, which continues to be celebrated. A big fan of winter and The Last Frontier, Hirt inspired the annual Alaska Day.

“We take a whole day when our youngest students do nothing but celebrate winter,” Lindenmaier said. “They study Alaska, build snowmen, ice skate on the pond and they have sled dog races. It’s a whole day to have a winter carnival. It’s allowed us to continue to tell Kevin’s story to our students. He’s truly been inspiring not just to the generation that knew him personally, but to our generations today.”

The learning commons will be connected to a new performance and music room named for James and Kim Taylor, whose sons attended BCD.

“It will bring us a state-of-the-art music classroom, but the thing we are most excited about is how we’ll have a space that we can offer to community organizations,” Lindenmaier said. “Our relationships and friendships with the area are critical to us. We envision hosting parent seminars, parenting workshops and small performances. The piece that connects these two spaces with the floor above is now that the art studios that we have above will be enjoined with the library and learning commons allowing us to have a true makerspace on our campus.”

The renovations are being supported by the school’s fundraising campaign which has nearly met its \$3 million goal.