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EF Education First holds ribbon cutting at new \$125 million headquarters

November 28, 2014 - Front Section

EF Education First, the world leader in international education, held ribbon cutting for its new \$125 million North American headquarters facility at an event with governor Deval Patrick, U.S. senator Elizabeth Warren, renowned Swedish architect Gert Wingardh, EF's founding family, the Hults, and 2,000 EF staff, students and guests. At 300,000 s/f, 8 Education St. is the largest entirely open-plan workspace in the commonwealth, designed to capitalize on the facility's unbelievable 360-degree views of Greater Boston, while inspiring collaboration and creativity among the EF team.

The 10-story EF headquarters includes up to 16 different flexible workspaces on every floor. 8 Education St. also features 31,000 s/f of public space on the ground and mezzanine floors; a 14,000 s/f restaurant with outdoor seating; staff amenities including a bike room, Hubway Station, private showers, a salon, and fitness center (opening in 2015); and sustainable design elements including rain gardens, gray water recycling, and light harvesting.

Wingardh's building design features a striking glass "waterfall" cascading down the facade, which reflects the facility's close proximity to the Charles River. The white and glass striped exterior is intended to riff off the aesthetic of surrounding landmarks including the lines of the Zakim Bridge and the turrets on the Museum of Science. The Glass Waterfall presented a number of interesting engineering challenges, and was ultimately built as a stand-alone structure with former NASA engineers guiding the precise placement of all 4,000 panes of glass. Skanska USA served as the construction contractor for the project, and Zen Associates designed the building's breathtaking landscape architecture.

"Skanska is honored to have partnered with such an extraordinary organization like EF to build its new North American headquarters," said Paul Hewins, co-chief operating officer of Skanska. "We are thrilled to bring our extensive experience in state-of-the-art office construction to make EF's forward-thinking office design a reality."

The building opening event paid homage to the history and rebirth of Cambridge's North Point neighborhood, showcasing the public-private partnerships that have made the transformation possible. Headlining the event was a performance by Paraguay's Recycled Orchestra of Cateura, a children's orchestra who use instruments made of recycled trash, reflecting EF's mission to open the world through education as well as the EF parcel's former use as a trash transfer station.

During his remarks, Dr. Edward Hult, CEO North America, announced that EF had already filled 200 of the 400 new jobs EF committed to creating following the 2012 groundbreaking.

"We are honored to have played a small part in the remarkable public-private partnership that has transformed North Point into a vibrant place to live, work, and play," said Hult. "With new public parks, pedestrian connectivity, and billions of dollars in development activity happening on both sides of the River, it's clear that what was once referred to as 'the lost ½-mile of the Charles' has

been found."

"Our Administration's commitment to education, innovation and infrastructure are the keys to our continued economic success in Massachusetts," said governor Patrick. "EF Education First understands the importance of this successful strategy, and I am thrilled they have chosen the Commonwealth as the place for their continued expansion.Â»

EF Education First was established in 1965 with the mission to open the world through education. With 500 schools and offices in more than 50 countries, EF offers every imaginable way to see the world, experience another culture, learn a language, or earn an academic degree.

Â¿rdh; mayor of Cambridge David Maher; state representative Timothy Toomey, Jr.; Dr. Edward Hult, CEO North America of EF Education First; and Paul Hewins, co-chief operating officer of Skanska USA Building.

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