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Somerville Media Center expands at Rafi Properties' Somernova

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Somerville, MA According to Rafi Properties, owner and operator of Somernova, the 7.4-acre innovation campus and community dedicated to helping people and companies iterate and grow faster, Somerville Media Center (SMC) will expand their footprint at the campus, and open a new media center designed to spark creativity and amplify community engagement. SMC is operating in a limited capacity in their current, 2,500 s/f space at 12 Tyler St., and plans to come back and offer all of their services and more in their new space at 29 Properzi Way. Tailor-made for the digital age, the new 5,000 s/f media center, will serve as a nexus of collaboration and exploration designed to inspire the city's next generation of storytellers, innovators, and change-makers.

Established in 1983, the SMC has long been a beacon of connectivity and creativity for the local community. Home to local access channel SCATV, the SMC has hosted nationally recognized programming such as “Dead Air Live,” the longest-running show in US cable access history, and “Let’s Talk About Race,” an award-winning broadcast and podcast program focused on racial dialogues and historical analysis. After the SMC was asked to relocate from the property they were based in for almost 40 years, Rafi Properties offered to rehome the media center in a temporary 2,500 s/f space at Somernova in 2023. The new space further solidifies SMC’s important presence as part of Somernova’s creative and innovative ecosystem and marks the next chapter for the SMC as it continues to grow its multi-media offerings including its radio programming, Boston Free Radio, hyperlocal Somerville news shows and locally produced television programs.

The SMC’s expansion at Somernova will advance its servicing of media and communications needs for local non-profit partners and enhance its youth programming and on-campus partnerships. This summer, SMC will host a five-week Youth Creator Club program in collaboration with The Dojo, Somernova’s youth-driven community center pilot. This transformative program will empower 40 young minds to unleash their creativity, learn media production skills, and craft their own stories, leveraging the SMC’s resources and Somernova’s spirit of innovation.

Through initiatives like the Youth Creator Club, SMC aims to inspire and empower the next generation of media makers, ensuring that youth voices are heard and amplified.

“As the producer of SMC’s ‘Let’s Talk About Race’ since 2017, I’ve facilitated and showcased the vital conversations between the BIPOC and white residents of Somerville,” said Diane Wong, director of the Racial Justice Collaborative. “Our show has always been a space where dialogue about race is open, honest, and transformative. With the move to our new home at 29 Properzi Way, we’re stepping into a realm of even greater possibilities for our show and all of the Somerville Media Center. Together, in this new space, we will explore, learn, and grow, driven by the belief that through meaningful dialogue, we can illuminate the nuanced realities of race and diversity, creating a more inclusive community for everyone.”

“This is a huge step forward for SMC. While the continued transformation of Somerville is bringing a lot of change quickly, our new home at 29 Properzi gives us a chance to leverage our history in this city and rejuvenate our organization,” said Jesse Buckley, president of the Somerville Media Center’s board of directors. “I’m really excited for SMC’s past, present, and future members to rediscover the power of collaboration with new tools, and in a new studio. This is something we will all be building and discovering together, and it is possible in large part thanks to Somernova and the City of Somerville.”

“Somernova values a holistic campus where innovators from all background and industries can collaborate, grow, and give back to the community of Somerville,” said Collin Yip, managing director of Rafi Properties, owner and operator of Somernova. “I have no doubt Somerville Media Center’s next chapter on campus will be synergistic and innovative.”

