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Columbia holds beam signing for Special Olympics Mass. headquarters

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Columbia Construction Co. and Special Olympics Massachusetts (SOMA) held a beam signing ceremony at the construction site of SOMA's new \$7.5 million, 25,000 s/f Yawkey Sports Training Center. Special Olympics athletes and others celebrated by signing a ceremonial beam that will be placed permanently in the lobby of their new building. The team also includes DiGiorgio Associates Inc., Project Architect; B.R.T. Management and Consulting, Owner's Representative; Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Civil Engineer; and Engineers Design Group, Structural Engineer. Construction is scheduled to be complete this fall.

Guests at the ceremony were addressed by Bob Johnson, president & CEO of SOMA; mayor Nancy Stevens; Arthur Pappas, M.D. vice chancellor for Clinical Affairs at the University of Mass. Medical School; Robert Gobrecht, managing director of Special Olympics North America, and other SOMA officials. Denise Carriere, a SOMA Hall of Fame athlete and board member, served as emcee of the ceremony.

"It is truly a pleasure to work with such a great team of professionals who genuinely CARE about the project and the people it will serve," said Bob Johnson. "Thank you to Columbia Construction for all you are doing to help make our dream-building a reality."

The gymnasium, where the ceremony took place, was built using an insulated concrete form technology (ICFs) to construct a Reward Wall System. This method enabled the team to build the concrete gym during the winter months, which would not have been possible otherwise.

Using the Reward ICFs also allowed for an energy-efficient, environmentally-friendly, sustainable, and quiet gymnasium. The insulated concrete will reduce operating costs by reducing heating and cooling costs. Produced from recycled materials, Reward's ICFs begin their life as an environmentally friendly product.

"This beam signifies not only progress on our new home but better health and healthcare on the horizon for individuals with intellectual disabilities," said Robert Johnson, president and CEO of SOMA. "Along with providing state-of-the-art space for educating and training coaches and volunteers to work closely with our athletes in their chosen sport, this building will serve as a catalyst for better health for the people we serve and beyond."

The new facility will be the site of a medical education program for treating patients with intellectual disabilities, through a partnership that SOMA has formed with the University of Mass. Medical School. The training partnership addresses a long-standing, and recently documented, problem facing people with intellectual disabilities â€” poor access to medical care and poor quality medical care.

"It is such a privilege to be a part of the construction team for SOMA's new headquarters", said Jim

Kolb, vice president and principal-in-charge for Columbia Const. "This beam signing ceremony gave SOMA athletes, employees and Board Members an opportunity to be a part of the construction of their new home. The publicly displayed beam donning several hundred signatures will always be a reminder of this special day and it's been a powerful personal experience to witness firsthand the phenomenal impact that this facility will have on SOMA and their newly formed partnership with the University of Massachusetts Medical School."

Drawing on over 80 years of experience, Columbia Construction Co. provides construction management services throughout New England. Our primary goal is to serve as a construction partner to our clients and to provide them with innovative solutions. Our work is focused within the academic, life sciences, commercial, corporate, healthcare, and housing/hospitality market sectors.

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