

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

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GRAND OPENING



PHOTOS BY BRAD VEST/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL
Paul Haight, vice president for academics and student life with Christian Brothers University, shows off the entrance room of their new space within the Crosstown Concourse on Wednesday.

A day in the life of Crosstown Concourse

Site aims to make tenants, visitors 'better together'

TOM BAILEY

USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

We know, the Crosstown Concourse grand opening is not until Saturday, but at least 23 of the 37 announced tenants are already moved in.

We decided to spend a day there to see what it's like.

Crosstown Concourse is not to be just another mixed-use commercial building, and not just because it's so big at 1.1 million square feet or such a physical improvement over the vacant, blighted hulk that the Sears distribution center had been.

"Better together" is the redevelopment's catch phrase. Crosstown Concourse aspires to create a kind of mojo among tenants and visitors.

The idea is to use art, performances, programming and even the design of the building's public spaces to have tenants and visitors engaging each other, to be in relationship.

They call this 10-story building a "vertical urban village." So we spent a day looking for the glue that makes a village.

It sounds a bit utopian. But E.M. Forster called for this kind



Healthy-bread bakers Sheri McKelvie and Symone Johnson display some of their work inside the Church Health kitchen.

of thing a century ago in his book about human connection, "Howard's End."

"Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die."

5:10 a.m.

The "YOURS" sign on the parking garage is illuminated but static. At some point, they'll have the "Y" turn on and off. A clever way of expressing how inclusive Crosstown Concourse intends to be. This building is both yours and ours.

6:15 a.m.

About 20 people are exercising in the Church Health YMCA, on the third floor off the West Atrium.

The Y's Tisha Schauer works behind the desk. The place already enjoys a sense of community, she says.

"Just the convenience of coming after work, before work, on your lunch break," Schauer says of the residents who get a free Y membership and some Concourse office workers who have corporate memberships.

7:20 a.m.

"It definitely already happens," French Truck Coffee's Jess

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NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM'S FREEDOM AWARDS



Masekela

King

Dees

3 honorees named as focus grows on issues

Recipients have long history in fighting racism around globe

JOHN BEIFUSS

USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

South African jazz artist and freedom fighter Hugh Masekela (who had a No. 1 hit in 1968 with "Grazing in the Grass"), second-generation activist Bernice A. King (youngest of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s four children) and Southern Poverty Law Center co-founder Morris Dees (who won a \$7 million judgment in a lynching case that bankrupted one of America's largest Ku Klux Klan organizations) will be this year's recipients of the National Civil Rights Museum's Freedom Awards.

"When we identified these three honorees, we didn't know what was going to happen last weekend," said civil rights museum president Terri Lee Freeman, referring to the Charlottesville, Virginia, violence, the remarks by President Trump that were praised by neo-Nazis and subsequent calls to remove Confederate monuments. "I don't think we could actually have chosen better honorees for this moment in time."

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Terror attack in Barcelona

Nation/World 5A

FROM THE COVER

Crosstown

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Ajoc says of the “better together” experience among Concourse tenants.

She's retail services manager/head barista for the coffee shop in the Central Atrium.

“We run out of towels all the time, and Farm Burger runs out of towels all the time,” Ajoc says of the new restaurant nearby. “So we share our towels.”

9 a.m.

A Grinder Taber & Grinder construction crew today is putting finishing touches to the 4,000 square foot Christian Brothers University is leasing on the fourth floor, across the Central Atrium from Crosstown High.

Bright yellow wall panels distinguish two of the main rooms: The “living room” work space and back classroom, where huge north-facing windows let sunlight stream in.

The construction company should turn the space over to CBU by the end of the day, says Paul Haught, academic vice president.

It's a safe bet CBU will have strong relationships with its neighbors, not only the high school, but with Church Health Center, Southern College of Optometry and others.

“We got interested in this because of partnerships in particular with educational institutions,” Haught says.

10 a.m.

The tony lobby of Focal Point — the eye clinic where Southern College of Optometry provides care and trains its residents and interns — could easily mesh with Saddle Creek, Germantown's upscale retail center.

Highly designed with sleek furniture and displays, the waiting area and display room even offers free coffee from French Truck Coffee.

You can't tell if the patients are sent over from Church Health — which provides health care to the working poor — or are full-pay clients. And that's just the way Dr. James Venable wants it. He's vice president for clinical programs at Southern College of Optometry.

The college came to Crosstown Concourse because it outgrew its clinical space on its Madison Avenue campus, because of its partnership with Church Health, and to be more convenient for up to 13,000 to 14,000 patients a year who will be served by the clinic.

In turn coming to the Concourse lets the college train its interns and residents in an “inter-professional” setting where there are other health care disciplines being practiced, he says.

“We kind of call it a walls-down clinic. You're not quite sure where Southern College of Optometry begins or ends and Church Health begins or ends, and that's exactly what we wanted,” Venable says.

11 a.m.

Healthy-bread bakers Sheri McKelvie and Symone Johnson are helping to straighten up the Church Health kitchen, and later will make a supply run to Kroger and Lit, then prepare the bread starter — flour, water and yeast — for the next day's baking.

They'll bake from 6:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

They bake mostly whole wheat bread twice a week. “It is healthier,” McKelvie says. “The mission of Church Health is to live a healthier life. Instead of eating white flour you're eating whole wheat, which is better for you.”

11:30 a.m.

The tour doesn't take long — the fourth-floor space for Temple Israel Crosstown is just 1,200 square feet — but it's meaningful.

The rectangular area is a comfortable, sunny, living room-type space with a view looking south, a TV, tables and chairs, and a smaller, private room for counseling and meetings.

Associate Rabbi Katie Bauman of Temple Israel points to the wall with a white-stone veneer near the entrance.

“This wall of Jerusalem stone is a vis-



PHOTOS BY BRAD VEST/THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

French Truck Coffee's Jess Ajoc pours an iced coffee inside the shop's Crosstown Concourse location on Wednesday. The Crosstown Concourse's opening is not until Saturday, but at least 23 of the 37 announced tenants have already moved in.

ible and tangible connection to our Temple Israel location (in East Memphis),” she says, referring to the main synagogue. “We have the same wall in our entryway when people walk into Temple Israel. It's a reminder this is a Jewish space and we're grounded in our tradition.”

Noon

Seven people from across the Concourse filter into the Church Health chapel for an unusual faith experience with senior pastor Byron Fitchpatric of the new Crosstown Church.

He's leading a 30-minute Bible study titled “Walking with Paul” before they head outside to talk further about the topic while walking about a mile together. But before he starts the lesson, Fitchpatric tells the group that the weekly Bible study is designed for both spiritual and physical health.

He urges them to increase their vegetable consumption by three servings a day and the water they drink by 24 ounces.

12:30 p.m.

Philipp von Holtzendorff-Fehling is outside his organic, vegetarian restaurant, Mama Gaia, sitting at a picnic table and eating a copita pita with oven-roasted vegetables.

Mama Gaia helps other tenants, and other tenants help Mama Gaia, he says.

For example his restaurant held a fundraiser for Church Health, and Church Health helps him get the word out about the nutritional value of his food. He and Jimmy Lewis, owner of French Truck Coffee, have been talking recently about how they can work together to support both businesses.

“You try to move the needle together,” he says. “We're in this together. It's very unique. I don't think if you're in some mall somewhere that you get too close to people who have a shop next to you, or other tenants. This is really a bigger family in a way.”

1 p.m.

Dr. Scott Morris, founder and head of Church Health, went with young doctors in training this morning to assess the development of 3-year-olds at Church Health's Perea Preschool.

Now he has just eaten lunch outside at Mama Gaia with the new rector for Calvary Episcopal, the Rev. J. Scott Walters, and is about to lead the monthly staff meeting that starts at 2 p.m. and will end with all 200-plus staffers singing together.

Crosstown Concourse's “better together” approach stems from the belief that isolated people do not feel closer to

God or grow in faith, but through relationships with others, Morris says.

“I'm also certain that's true about health. Nobody's health is made better by being on stair-stepper with headphones. That in and of itself is not enough. I also think now that is true about any type of corporation, any type of organization. You can't fulfill your mission alone,” Morris says, sitting in his small, third-floor office.

3 p.m.

Scott Tashie, who on Monday opened the I Love Juice Bar in the Concourse, already has been trading his branded T-shirts for those of other businesses in the building.

“The idea of bringing all the different businesses like a burger place, juice bar, a healthy restaurant, a grocery store, a dentist office, a gym, and living quarters — all this in one — it felt like we were getting an opportunity to be part of something innovative, new, kind of futuristic,” he says. “Sign us up.”

4:15 p.m.

Some jokingly call Bradley Wilford the mayor of Crosstown Concourse. The Commercial Advisors executive works full-time as the building's property manager. Today, he's overseeing about 100 people who make the place run and prepare the property for the grand opening.

They include 50 on the janitorial staff, 25 full-time security guards, a once-a-week landscaping crew, 10 maintenance workers, as well as vendors that provide services.

On Wednesday the staff is in full-swing readying for Saturday's ceremony. Everything from completing security plans to finishing landscaping, and touching up paint to cleaning windows, all while helping more tenants move in before the big ceremony.

“We have a dentist upstairs that's coming on board, a dermatology clinic that's trying to get opened up, restaurants that are trying to get opened up, all at the same time,” Wilford says.

“It's like an aircraft carrier. Our dock is very active.”

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