



Academy Prep Center of Tampa  
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## **Extreme Makeover: Academy Prep Edition Academy Prep Center of Tampa Announces Ribbon-Cutting**

Ybor City, FL – Academy Prep Center of Tampa announces a ribbon-cutting event this Wednesday, August 24 from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on the school campus. The ribbon cutting will celebrate and formally introduce the changes made to the school during July: the installation of a new, state-of-the-art synthetic turf athletic field, the renovations made to the campus library, the addition of an on-campus student recycling center, and the introduction of SMART board technology to the school's academic classes.

The school has long had a need to make the renovations. Community businesses, donors and volunteers partnered with Academy Prep to make the renovations a possibility. In the school's Poe Family and Bill Wilson Library, the unveiling will focus on renovations made possible by a financial contribution from a community donor, as well as in-kind donations made by Academy Prep partners Rooms to Go and the HCC Ybor campus.

“Our library is one of the most unique spaces at Academy Prep. Not only does it serve our students as a classroom and library, but it is also used for Prep Talks and board meetings. We felt that students could benefit from reading areas to encourage them to read as well as student computers for research and writing, said Sharon Joller, Academy Prep community relations coordinator.

The library was repainted, new shelving was installed, two new reading lounge areas have been created, and workstation for computer research has been installed. Rooms To Go supplies the library with new furniture and décor, while HCC Ybor donated wood library shelving it no longer needed.

“The future of Academy Prep is tied to the future of HCC,” explained HCC Ybor President Shawn Robinson, on describing the importance of the partnership between the two entities. President Robinson will be one of many in attendance on Wednesday.

“This small project blossomed into a renovation project and would not have been possible if not for the funds of a donor who is committed to literacy and education. Before we knew it several partners also donated time, materials, and labor to the project. Our phase one step of the library will be completed for the students' return and phase two is in process - we are still searching for funding for a student media center, complete with computers,” said Joller.

Outside on the campus grounds, a group of anonymous donors partnered with Innovative Base Technologies, LLC, to make the new recreation and athletic field a possibility at Academy Prep. Previously, students played and practiced sports on a field so over-used that much of it had turned to



dirt. A durable, long-lasting synthetic turf has long been a dream of the Academy Prep Board of Trustees and staff.

“Synthetic turf entails no maintenance, and we are excited to give our children very safe and beautiful grounds to play on,” said Lincoln Tamayo, Head of School at Academy Prep Center of Tampa.

Academy Prep students, including Boy Scout Troop 100, along with graduates and staff helped install the base system for the new field. It was an opportunity for the students create a lasting legacy for the school – the turf is projected to last for up to 15 years.

“Because of the unique installation methodology we were able to involve the students during certain phases of installation,” said Dave Barlow, president of Innovative Base Technologies. “In essence, UltraBaseSystems allows for community involvement in the construction of the field, creating a real sense of pride by the students in demonstrating the rewards for hard work.”

“I believe this is a perfect message to send to these kids: if you want it, get involved, because with passion and hard work anything is possible,” said Barlow.

Other additions to the campus – including a new student recycling center, and the installation of SMART board technology and whiteboards to the academic classrooms – will also be celebrated at the ribbon cutting on Wednesday.

For more information on the Academy Prep Center of Tampa, please contact Maggie McClelland, Development Manager, at 813.248.5600 (ext 1138) or 813.486.8107 (cell) or [mmcclelland@academyprep.org](mailto:mmcclelland@academyprep.org). Media are invited to attend the ribbon cutting on August 24 – which will last from 9:30am-10:30am. School officials, trustees and students will be available for interviews.

The Academy Prep Center of Tampa is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It is an urban college preparatory middle school whose mission is to inspire and empower students qualifying for need-based scholarships to be future community leaders through a rigorous middle school program coupled with ongoing graduate support. Academy Prep’s main building is housed in the historic former V.M Ybor Grammar School building. This original structure was renovated, new buildings were added to the campus grounds, and Academy Prep officially opened in 2003. To learn more information, please visit: [www.academyprep.org/tampa](http://www.academyprep.org/tampa)

Hillsborough Community College and its Ybor City Campus have had a strong relationship for many years with Academy Prep of Tampa. The college and academy have worked together in the areas of visual and performing arts, film and movie production, international relations, and tutorial services. Additionally, college staff have visited to Academy Prep speak, guest lecture, and participate in various programs. The college has also opened its campuses for tours, film viewings, and moot court.

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