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Philly Rec Centers Score a Tech First

By Jonathan Takiff | May 11, 2016

There's a stimulating new lure at city recreation centers – 3-D printers – thanks to a \$105,000 donation from Comcast.

Announced Wednesday at the Kingsessing Recreation Center in Southwest Philadelphia and also targeted for installation at Starr Garden (Washington West) and Tustin (Overbrook) centers, the hot plastic object-forming, computer-programmed 3-D printing rigs will be available for visitors' use with support staffing from NextFab, a Philadelphia "for-profit social enterprise" (aka maker space.)

The innovative project represents a national first, believes Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Commissioner Kathryn Ott Lovell. "Philadelphia is now the only municipality in the nation to have three 3-D printers in publicly accessible computing centers. This is a game changer for education, workforce development and hands-on technology training in the City of Philadelphia."

The donation also covers educational software and builds on a citywide digital inclusion effort that touches 19 computer-access "KEYSPOTS" and has enjoyed prior funding support from Philadelphia spawned actor and comedian Kevin Hart, the Mayor's Commission on Literacy and the Office of Innovation & Technology.

"The children who participate in after-school programs as well as adults who use the computer labs will benefit," said Michael Soileau, Vice President of Competitive Planning and Strategy for Comcast. Capable of building everything from toys to tools, jewelry and art works, the "3-D printers will allow them to unleash their imaginations and become part of the maker movement," he added.

Spreading digital skills and technology helps position the city "to create the economy of the future – a future of makers, designers and innovators," commented Mayor Jim Kenney.



A toy-building 3-D printer awes kids at Kingsessing Recreation Center on Wednesday.

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