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Dallas' Klyde Warren deck park will be activity hub with packed schedule



David Woo/Staff Photographer

Sergey Korshunov (right) and Michelle Hafle, co-owners of Studio 22 in Dallas, demonstrated ballroom dancing for guests Monday at the Dallas Museum of Art, where officials announced the programming roster for the new Klyde Warren Park. Studio 22 will offer ballroom dancing classes in the park.

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Dallas' newest park won't be a sleepy neighborhood square.

When Klyde Warren Park opens in three months, construction signs and hard hats will give way to jazz bands, chess games, ballroom dance lessons, yoga and fitness boot camps.

"There will always be something going on, day after day, week after week," park president Mark Banta said Monday while announcing partnerships with 31 organizations that will host some of the activities. "The idea is that a highly programmed park is going to be a successful one."

Banta said there will be an average of four or five events each day, which will help keep the park beautiful and safe.

The 5.2-acre deck park, which will open with a two-day celebration Oct. 27 and 28, spans across Woodall Rodgers Freeway to connect the Dallas Arts District to Uptown. It will include a performance stage, shaded walkways, fountains, a children's garden and a dog park. A restaurant will open in spring or summer of 2013.

The \$110 million park was funded through a combination of city bond money, state highway funds, federal funds and private donations.

It will have a staff of about 25 to 30 people to oversee programming and security, Banta said. Their salaries will be funded by the Woodall Rodgers Park Foundation.

Banta and the foundation announced the programming partnerships Monday at the Dallas Museum of Art, where some of the partners had live demonstrations to show how they might bring the park to life.

A saxophone player played a jazz tune. A yoga instructor led a group of children in a stretch. Art museum employees handed out pipe cleaners, stickers and other art supplies.

Kathy Everitt of North Dallas watched her 12-year-old daughter, Sophie, perform in the yoga demonstration. Yoginos, a yoga program for kids at the Crow Collection of Asian Art, will be offered in the park.

Everitt said she's looking forward to the new outdoor space. She and her family often travel 20 minutes down the Dallas North Tollway to visit the neighborhood.

"We love the Arts District," she said. "It's very exciting the way it's progressed to be the true center of the city."

Veletta Forsythe Lill, executive director of the Arts District, said she is confident the new park will become a "village square."

"When this building [the Dallas Museum of Art] opened in 1984, we could not have envisioned what we see today," she said. "I think all of this area will exceed our expectations."

Before moving to Dallas in March, Banta helped plan and develop the 21-acre Centennial Olympic Park in a run-down part of downtown Atlanta. He said he saw how the "magic of green space" attracted people and economic development.

"People have always wanted to have a place where they can gather," Banta said. "And that's what this park will be for Dallas."

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