



From Health Clinic to Neighborhood Library

Laurel, MD

Project Name / Location

Savage Branch + STEM Education Center / Laurel, MD

Project Category

Interior Architecture

Program

24,000 sf, 1-story library renovation.

Project Synopsis Site

• Scope included the demolition of an existing 15,000 sf library with structural steel framing, and 9' ceilings, and the demolition of an adjacent health clinic / senior center with load bearing walls,

clusters of small exam rooms and low ceilings – barely reaching 8" high.

Solution

- The old, dark facility is now a new light-filled, technological-equipped center for toddlers, teenagers, seniors and scholars, and a vibrant hub for 21st Century Learning and STEM Education.
- The new design improves sight-lines, lighting, HVAC systems, and opens the floor plan – expanding the library into preexisting clinic / senior center spaces.

Key Design Features

- A media lab, and a cyber café demonstrate sustainable principles with large rays of natural light illuminating those spaces.
- Salvaged resources and efficient systems provide an invigorating design for the community to enjoy.

Social / Environmental / Other Benefits

- An open, transparent, and sustainable environment echoes community culture, values, and an educational mission to support local schools and economic development.

- Sustainable features include large window openings and a skylight for daylighting, efficient systems, and certified sustainable materials and resources.
- The repurposed and revitalized local library symbolizes community aspirations and reflects a commitment to education from Howard County Library System (2013's Library System of the Year).



Skylight Computer Zone



Before

A Community Hub for STEM Education

The transformed Savage Branch Library is now the community hub for STEM education resources, providing hi-tech specialty classrooms, professional sound engineering studios, hi-tech science laboratories, over 50 public access computers, and a coveted laptop “bar” with courtyard views.



Exterior view of building and courtyard (designed by others).



Former Space Plan

- A Existing Library
- B Health Clinic
- C Senior Center

Expansion of Library into former Health Clinic and Senior Center

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Existing Courtyard | 6 Skylight / Stack Area | 11 Meeting Room * |
| 2 Main Entrance / New Vestibule | 7 Computers | 12 Audio Room * |
| 3 Lobby | 8 Laptop Bar | 13 Hi-Tech Classroom * |
| 4 Service Desk | 9 Café / Entrance to Expansion * | 14 Study Rooms * |
| 5 Children's Area | 10 Teen Area * | 15 Staff Area * |

* Expansion into health clinic.



Cyber Cafe with seating areas for peer-to-peer teaching and exploration.

Amenities — Cyber Cafe

Former exam rooms were demolished to create a cyber café amenity with soft seating, vending machines and dedicated “teen booths” supporting and motivating peer-to-peer teaching and exploration.



New light-filled interior space.



Before — Dark spaces with dim Kalwall skylights.

New Refreshed, Light-Filled Space

An increase in natural and artificial light levels was achieved with new, energy efficient skylights, 20 new window openings, Solatube lighting, and playful rows of energy efficient light fixtures.

The new open, airy, light-filled space is a significant upgrade from the dark “bunker-like” former space, with failing, dim Kalwall skylights.



Updated Workstations



Professional Sound Engineering Studio

Amenities — Learning Spaces, High-Tech Lab, and Sound Lab

New, expansive openings replaced former load bearing walls to create visual connections between learning environments. The new spaces including a state-of-the-art, professional sound engineering studio supporting emerging musicians – the first such amenity of any library in the Howard County System.

A former windowless, abandoned room is now a specialized hi-tech lab that supports robust technology and digital connectivity. Purposeful new interior glazing visually connects the space to the sound lab.



Amenities — Laptop Bar

A contemporary laptop bar offers courtyard views along the new path leading into the café and expansion. Patrons enjoy large window openings pouring natural light into the new facility's open and airy interior space — while visitors outside the explore the new courtyard and “storm planters”.

Laptop bar with courtyard views.



Children's Area



New light-filled interior space.