

## Rilke Schule German School of Arts and Sciences Opening Fall 2015



### Contacts:

Amy Slinker, Pfeffer Development, LLC

Email: [aslinker@pfefferdevelopment.com](mailto:aslinker@pfefferdevelopment.com)

Phone: 907.646.4644 Cell: 907.350.3605

Kjerstin Lastufka, Rilke Schule German School of Arts and Sciences

Email: [lastufka\\_kjerstin@asdk12.org](mailto:lastufka_kjerstin@asdk12.org) Phone: 907.242.7618

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Video by Kris Swanson for Nanuaq Development

Aerial Film by Alaska Aerial Media

Link: <https://vimeo.com/130510576>

Password: pfeffer

Photos by Ash Adams for Nanuaq Development

Link: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskdnH2zc>

### Rilke Schule German School of Arts and Sciences Celebrates Traditional German "Richtfest"

*- Ceremony offers thanks to those involved in the construction project -*

**ANCHORAGE, Alaska** – Nearly 200 people celebrated "Richtfest" today in honor of the Rilke Schule German School of Arts and Sciences building currently under construction.

Rilke Schule is a public K-8<sup>th</sup> grade German language immersion charter school in the Anchorage School District. Students, parents, teachers, staff and project team members gathered at the project site at 1846 East 64<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Anchorage to commemorate progress on the project. The new 39,000 sq. ft. building broke ground in February and is scheduled for completion this fall.

"This project is so meaningful, not only to the amazingly dedicated students and staff at Rilke Schule, but also to our community," said Rep. Charisse Millett, R-Anchorage, who serves this district. "We know that learning about new languages and cultures and fostering positive educational environments does wonders for the growth and development of our children and deeply enriches our city and environment. I am so grateful for all of those who have come together to make this happen – you all deserve everyone's most sincere thanks."

“Richtfest” is an old German tradition where people who are building a house give thanks to those involved in the project. Similar to a topping out ceremony, a tree or wreath known as a “Richtbaum” is decorated with ribbons and raised up to the roof. Rilke Schule students and siblings decorated the Richtbaum tree before it was raised. Students and their siblings also imprinted handprints in concrete panels that will be displayed as art at the new school.

Superintendent Ed Graff and senior district administrators have been instrumental in supporting Rilke Schule’s growth and pursuit for a permanent facility. Graff spoke during the ceremony Thursday.

“Rilke provides a great opportunity for students in our community,” said Graff. “It’s wonderful to see the excitement of students and parents who were here today to support the school.”

Guests enjoyed "Rilke Root Beer Floats" that were offered by Rilke Schule student Garrett Graham, who was accepting donations to raise funds for the school’s new library. Graham will be a 4<sup>th</sup> grader at Rilke Schule this upcoming school year. He raised more than \$1,000 that will go towards books, shelving, computers and other items.

“For the first time, we are going to have an official library,” said Graham. “I love to read, so I want the library to be awesome for all kids -- now and in the future.”

In addition to the new library/multi-purpose room, the building will include a gym, standard classrooms, specialty classrooms for art and science, a music room and administrative space.

The building exterior will be clad with insulated metal building panels, providing the school with an efficient envelope that is also extremely durable in the Alaskan climate. The entry canopy will be brightly colored to give the school a playful identity, while the transparent entry allows light to filter into the lobby creating a warm and welcoming feeling for the community. Each classroom and office space has access to natural light that contributes to the energy efficiency of the building, occupant health, and creates an environment where students can succeed.

This solution came together in 2014 after Rilke Schule spent several years looking for a long term home for the school. The governing body of the school partnered with the Anchorage School Board, District leadership and the private sector to establish an unprecedented model to design, build and finance a school. The project will result in a building large enough to house Rilke Schule’s student body of nearly 500 students, which was split between two different locations during the 2014-2015 school year.

“Each of us has a story to tell,” said Principal Dean Ball. “The construction of this building is a pivotal event in the story of Rilke Schule. With this custom-designed facility, members of our community will be better equipped to grow, create, and reach our potential.”

Pfeffer Development and Sitnasuak Native Corporation are developing the project under the joint venture, Nanuaq Development. Pfeffer Development is a multidisciplinary commercial real estate developer based in Anchorage and Sitnasuak Native Corporation is the village corporation for Nome. Criterion General, Inc. is the design-builder for the project and RIM Architects is the designer.

Nanuaq Development has been handling all development requirements to bring this design-build project to fruition. The team secured investors and financing, coordinated legal activity and is managing the overall project. Nanuaq Development’s process results in a predetermined schedule and budget, all while minimizing the risk for Rilke Schule.

Mark Pfeffer, president of Pfeffer Development and Charlie Sassara, chief executive officer of Sitnasuak Properties led a traditional German toast to the project team during the ceremony, reciting “The Carpenter’s Poem.” After the toast, the group threw their empty glasses to the ground, shattering the glass to bring good luck to everyone who worked on the project and the building itself.

“The partnerships within this project demonstrate how cooperation between public and private sectors can bring an otherwise challenging project like this one to a reality,” said Pfeffer. “We’re proud of this investment in our community.”

More information on Rilke Schule German School of Arts and Sciences is available at [rilkeschule.org](http://rilkeschule.org).

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