

# REAL ESTATE & CONSTRUCTION REVIEW



**Illinois Edition**

[www.constructionreviews.com](http://www.constructionreviews.com)

volume 4 2008 Edition



The Resource for Real Estate & Construction Decision Makers

construction  communications

# The Cove School Renovation & Addition

## Facts & Figures

**Owner/Developer:** The Cove School

**Type of Project:** An addition to and renovation of an existing school

**Size:** 32,000 square feet (renovations); 11,000 square feet (addition)

**Cost:** \$3.3 million

**Construction Time:** February 2006 - August 2006

**The Need:** To expand and upgrade the school's facilities in order to ensure students can grow academically, socially and physically

**The Challenge:** Adhering to a tight budget, and performing construction while school was in session



**MB Real Estate Services**  
Owner's Representative

**David Woodhouse Architects LLC**  
Architect

**Valenti Builders Inc.**  
Construction Manager/General Contractor

**CCJM Engineers, Ltd.**  
MEP & Sustainable Engineers

**Henrichsen's Fire & Safety Equipment Co.**  
Fire Protection

**jmi Crafted Commercial Millwork, Inc.**  
Architectural Millwork/  
Casework/Woodwork

**Modernfold Chicago, Inc.**  
Operable Walls/Partitions

**Olsson Roofing Company, Inc.**  
Roofing Contractors

**Ravensberg, Inc.**  
Movable Wall Systems

For more than 60 years, The Cove School in the village of Northbrook has been educating students with learning disabilities from all over the Chicago area. It was the first school founded solely for this purpose. While there are now many other schools that serve learning-disabled students, Cove remains a premier school in this area of education. Recently, the school expanded and upgraded its facilities so students would have the room necessary to continue to grow academically, socially and physically.

Cove serves students from elementary school through high school. Students at Cove "learn to learn" through a comprehensive curriculum that encourages continuous growth in their strengths while supporting their learning challenges in nontraditional ways. Traditional learning barriers are destroyed, and students are enabled to reach their full potential.

Cove's renovation and expansion project includes a renovated gymnasium, a new lunchroom and presentation stage area, a new multimedia center, a new art studio, an expanded onsite occupational therapy suite, a new speech and language suite, an expanded social work suite, and a separate high school area with elective classrooms. Not only does the new high school wing provide a separate identity for high school students, the additional space offers students a wider selection of electives and better prepares them for the future.

David Graff, vice president of MB Real Estate Services, oversaw the project for Cove. According to Graff, the existing building and site layout was inefficient. In addition, the internal spaces didn't lend themselves well to the way the school needed to operate, so the school wanted to



Photos courtesy of Melinda Foukal, Valenti Builders

revamp the way the building and site operated. "The team achieved this with an addition that became the new face of the building, reconfiguration of the internal spaces...new building systems...a new multipurpose space and much more," he said. In addition, the site was reconfigured to create more efficient parking at the front of the school and a safe and more secluded play area at the rear of the school.

Like most private schools, Cove had a tight budget to work with. As a nonprofit organization, the school receives its funding through donations from foundations, corporations and individuals, as well as through tuition. In order to maximize the budget, the team fully utilized value engineering during the planning stages, according to Graff. The end result was the creation of multipurpose spaces, which reduced the overall size of the expansion portion

of the project while still satisfying the program needs.

One of the main considerations during construction involved ensuring the safety of the students and faculty. Since construction began while school was still in session, a logistics plan was created to separate the school population from the project. "The main entrance was relocated, the student drop-off area was reconfigured, temporary staff parking was created, and sound barriers were installed between the existing school and the construction area," said Marty Patterson, project manager for Valenti Builders Inc., the project's construction manager/general contractor.

"[The project] was a team effort for the school, the board, the architect, the contractor and the municipality," said Graff. This team effort resulted in a big win for the students of The Cove School. ■

— Marci Grossman