

Church of Scientology has grand opening in Dunwoody

By Stephanie Hartley
DeKalb Neighbor Staff Writer

The Georgia Church of Scientology recently opened its doors in DeKalb County for the first time.

Members of the community gathered on Saturday to celebrate the completion of renovations since the church's move to Dunwoody two years ago. The church is located at 1611 Mt. Vernon Road.

"We want to open our doors for everyone so they can come in and find out about the church

and find out about the programs we run," said Susan Webb, director of public affairs. "It's very important that people understand our religion and what we do, and that's why we're having an open house."

The only church of Scientology in Georgia, and the biggest in the Southeast, the site will serve as a major stopping ground for believers throughout neighboring states.

The Rev. Diane Stein estimates that about 1,200 scientologists avail themselves of the church's services each month.

The renovations include a new course room where the words of L. Ron Hubbard, the Church of Scientology's founder, will be studied.

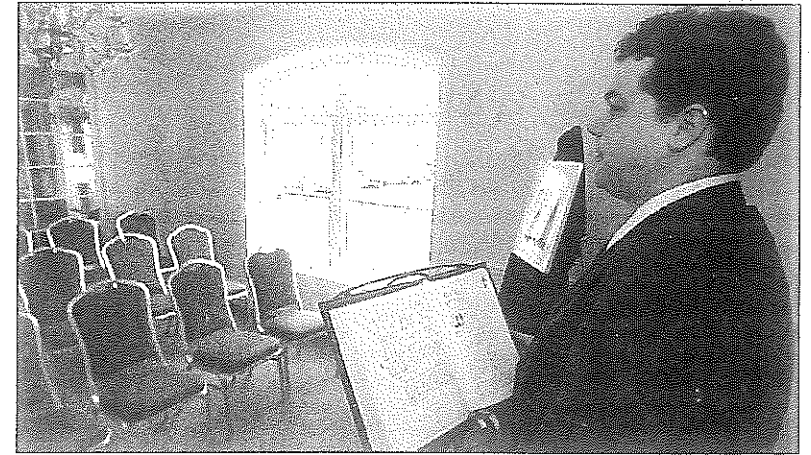
Ten counseling rooms, where parishioners can seek one-on-one counseling have also been added to the back of the church, as well as a sauna designed for the faith's purification process.

With a new chapel and a meeting room, church administrators feel they now have the space to bring people in for community discussions.

"One of the unfortunate things in this world is that if you don't have a space or quarters where you can bring people in and show them the types of projects you're working on, it's very hard to get along," said Ms. Stein.

Ms. Stein said she hopes the extra space will allow them the room to invite community leaders for discussions on tolerance and programs such as the church's literacy program and Drug-Free Marshals program geared towards children.

Information: (770) 522-8983.



Staff photo by Stephanie Hartley
Paul Stein, executive director and senior minister at the church, surveys the new worship room.