

NCC & SoNo Collection pair up for career training

By Robert Koch

NORWALK — With work on The SoNo Collection well under way, Norwalk Community College will launch this month a career-training program aimed at helping students get a solid start in the sales and retail customer service industries.

On Monday, school officials announced that SoNo Collection developer General Growth Properties had awarded the Norwalk Community College Foundation a \$250,000 grant to fund the program. Extended study classes will begin Oct. 24.

“Norwalk Community College and the Norwalk Community College Foundation are excited about the opportunity to partner with GGP to create a retail career pathway,” NCC President David L. Levinson said in a statement. “This will benefit 500 women and men over five years who will be part of this exciting new enterprise.”

GGP, a Chicago-based mall developer, broke ground in early summer on the nearly million-square-foot, upscale regional shopping center on the 95/7 site off West Avenue and Interstate 95 in South Norwalk. The company has targeted fall 2019 as the opening date.

The SoNo Collection will house a sculpture garden, public realm areas and 728,000 square feet of retail space, including anchor tenants Nordstrom and Bloomingdale’s as well as 80 to 100 shops and restaurants.

As part of its development agreement with the city, GGP committed \$250,000 to creating with NCC a career-training program for local residents.

“We are very excited to get this program going with NCC and the NCC

Foundation,” said GGP Senior Director Douglas Adams. “They have been great partners and we believe it will result in more job opportunities being filled by local Norwalk residents.”

Classes for the Retail Customer Service and Sales curriculum within the college’s Extended Studies & Workforce Education program will begin Oct. 24. The classes will meet from 6 to 9 p.m. Oct. 24 through Dec. 19, as well as Thursday, Dec. 14 and Thursday, Dec. 21, also from 6 to 9 p.m. A \$25 registration fee will be charged, however, the fee is refundable upon successful completion of the certification exam.

Graduates of the eight-week program will receive a certificate in Retail Customer Service and Sales, and be able to sit for the National Professional Certification in Customer Service and Sales exam offered by the National Retail Federation, according to NCC.

Priority registration will be given to Norwalk residents. All enrolled students will receive support and career services to ensure that they are job ready.

The initial grant from The SoNo Collection is for five years. In the later years of the grant period, NCC students will be able to take an Advanced Customer Sales and Supervision course.

For more information and to register, contact the Division of Extended Studies at NCC at 203-857-7080 or visit www.norwalk.edu/dept/extstudies. Reference the Retail Customer Service and Sales Certificate program.