

# THE MANHATTAN PROJECT

## backflip

**A recently renovated aquatics center shows how the Big Apple comes together**

By **Tim Conway**

Staff Writer

In the past month, New Yorkers from all walks of life have joined together to aid fellow citizens in the face of unspeakable tragedy.

While their unity has inspired the nation, the camaraderie New Yorkers have demonstrated following the events of Sept. 11 isn't unheard of.

Take the Lenox Hill Neighborhood House, for example. Located in New York's posh Upper East Side, the 70,000-square-foot community center has been a gathering place for New Yorkers for more than 100 years. A recent \$1 million face lift to the facility's pool room — its first renovation since the original construction in 1928 — will keep the diverse group of patrons swimming shoulder to shoulder for years to come.

What makes the facility special, if not unique, is who uses it: anyone who wants to, rich or poor. Although the facility has its share of wealthy clientele, financial aid is available for those who need it.


"What's interesting is that this is a neighborhood that has



Photo by Norman McGrath

To retain the pool room's architectural history, designers included bronze wall sconces and a lifeguard chair modeled after chairs of the 1920s.

rounds the pool. The light reflects off the light-blue ceiling onto the water, creating a well-lit, yet serene, pool room.

A little bit of serenity may be just what many New Yorkers need right about now. 

some of the richest people in the world and some of the poorest people in the world," says Amie Gross, principal of Amie Gross Architects, a New York firm that oversaw the renovation project. "The range of people who use the pool is very broad."

And everyone can appreciate the facility's new look. The entire pool, deck, walls and ceiling were replaced, and the locker rooms were completely renovated. To keep with the original architecture, the design plan called for retaining a series of archways that surround the 19-by-58-foot pool.

To make the pool area appear larger, crews removed the existing drop ceiling and created an arched ceiling a full 5 feet higher than the old ceiling. The new ceiling emulates the archways around the pool, and the shape of the ceiling complements the new cove lighting system that sur-

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