By KRISTIN STERLING

The past six months have brought changes to the stretch of Broadway near Columbia’s campus. Last week the Morningside Heights Branch of the New York Public Library (NYPL) opened on the 113th block of Broadway, next door to Kim’s Video and Music, which opened for business in April. Both are located on the ground level of the Broadway Residence Hall.

The Morningside Heights public library opened in doors to the community on Monday, Sept. 24 and the official ribbon-cutting ceremony took place on Saturday, Sept. 29. The ribbon-cutting featured New York Public Library President Paul LeClerc, Council Speaker Bill Perkins and President George Rupp. The Harlem Jazz Foundation provided music and neighborhood children entertained the crowd with a song in honor of the new library.

In the aftermath of the Sept. 11 tragedy, the celebrations of this new building and indeed, the services provided by all of our libraries, reaffirm some of America’s most cherished values—the free exchange of ideas and information and the opportunity for people to connect with each other and discover the tools to improve their lives,” said LeClerc.

The ceremony was followed by a day-long community block party sponsored by the 113th Street Morningside-Broadway Committee. The block party included a bake sale, rummage sale, rides, raffle, music and games. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Playgarden, the Morningside Heights Library and World Trade Center disaster relief.

The new Morningside Heights Branch has a strong connection to the University. In predecessor, the Columbia Branch, had been located on Columbia’s campus, in Low and then Butler Library, from 1914 until 1996 when renovations to Butler Library prompted the public library to move into temporary quarters on 11th Street between Broadway and Amsterdam. Plans for the new $4 million facility were incorporated into the design of the Broadway Residence Hall at the request of the community.

“Columbia is delighted that the New York Public Library will join us in this fabulous new building, and we look forward to working with our NYPL colleagues to serve the information and education needs of this community,” said Rupp.

The three-floor, 17,000 square foot facility is almost ten times larger than the one-room temporary facility, allowing the library to display an additional 30,000 pieces. The entire collection contains nearly 50,000 volumes. Besides the collections for adults, young adults and children, the new library also includes a reference area and Spanish, Chinese and Japanese collections.

In addition to loaning books, the library also offers CDs, DVDs and movies at no charge to cardholders. The movie section, located on the ground floor, includes non-fiction, foreign and feature films. Library cards are available to all New York residents. The new library branch offers the puppet shows and craft programs.

“The community room is a welcome addition to our facility,” said Dean Smith, supervising branch librarian. “It will allow the library to offer special programs and provide an additional location for community meetings.”

Next door to the library is another welcome addition, Kim’s Video and Music, which opened in late April. A self-proclaimed “mediapolis,” Kim’s offers a vast selection of films, books and music. In addition to the traditional video categories of comedy, drama and science fiction, Kim’s offers selections that are not found at many chain video stores, such as independent, cult, animation, avant-garde as well as an expansive array of foreign films, organized by country and director. Kim’s strives to provide critically films that are not offered at other chain video stores. The entire collection consists of 20,000 films entitled to suit any taste.

“We specialize in alternative products and products from around the world,” said owner Youngman Kim, “and we have opened stores in areas where there are diverse, open-minded groups, like Columbia students.”

Unique to Kim’s is a section dedicated to films written or directed by Columbia faculty and students called “Crouching Tiger Hidden Student,” in a timely juxtaposition of the Oscar winning title of the film, “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” produced and written by associate professor of film and Academy Award Winner, James Schamus. In fact, Kim’s carries works by a variety of faculty including Schamus, Tom Kalin, Walter Bernstein, Christopher Vogon, James Hart, Bette Gordon and others, along with countless other films co-written or produced in Columbia in the future, Kim’s hopes to add alumni films to the section.

“We like to support young artists,” said Kim. “Many young filmmakers do not have the opportunity to share their work with a broader audience in order to gain exposure. Last fall this year, Kim’s is planning to send some of the student films from their Saint Mark’s Place location uptown to the Columbia store and vice versa to give stu- dents the opportunity to see what filmmakers at their peer institutions are creating. Our goal is to eventually offer the same student uptimes at each store. Not only will this increase the selection it will also give customers the ability to find works of writers and directors who went on to better things,” said store manager David Kang.

In addition to films, Kim’s offers an expansive music collection with selections in categories such as establishment, global grooves, electronic and experimental. The store also carries books on film/video production, screenwriting, film history criticism theory as well as faculty publications and course books. According to Kang, Kim’s is striving to become the “defacto” bookstore for film and visual arts.

As part of Kim’s commitment to serving the community, this summer staff began working with Columbia’s film division to obtain course syllabi. This information allows Kim’s to order extra copies of films that will be screened as well as videos and books thematically related to the classes. Kim’s Video and Music and the public library are already having positive economic effects on the area. In making the move to the larger facility, the library has retained all of its existing staff and is in the process of hiring additional staff people to better serve patrons. Likewise, with the arrival of the new school year and the influx of students, Kim’s is also looking to hire additional staff.

Both new additions on the 113th Street block of Broadway have already brought a steady stream of new pedestrian traffic, including students, parents with young chil- dren and seniors, giving far more credence to the adage “location, location, location.”

Kim’s Video and Music offers an enormous selection of videos, often grouped in specific categories, like those above.