



## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

**JOHN A. DELANEY**  
MAYOR

CITY HALL SUITE 400  
117 W. DUVAL STREET  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32202

### NEWS RELEASE

April 17, 2003

City leaders got a preview of the newly-renovated San Marco Branch Library and the newly-constructed Balis Community Center during a Check It Out ceremony today. City Council members, the Library Board of Trustees and other dignitaries joined Mayor John Delaney as he checked out the first book. Following the Check It Out ceremony, lunch was served in the new Balis Community Center. The San Marco Branch Library and Balis Community Center will host Grand Opening events from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup>. Those events are all free and open to the public.

The \$1.8 million library renovation project is funded by The Better Jacksonville Plan and the community center is funded by a private donation from the Balis Family of San Marco. The San Marco Library was built in the 1950s and until now, has never been renovated. The facility has been closed for the past year for the renovation and construction project.

“This is the first library project under The Better Jacksonville Plan to be completed, and it looks great,” said Mayor Delaney. “I invite everyone to come out this Saturday, see the new library and community center and take part in all the activities.”

The new library features an expanded Children’s Area and more space for books. The Library also features increased access to technology with 34 computers. The Balis Community Center features a multi-purpose room with seating for 125, four classrooms, a small kitchen and a 20’ by 23’ patio that overlooks Southside Park. The library and the community center share a conference room. The renovation project has allowed the San Marco Branch

-MORE-

Library to expand from 7,540 square feet to 11,440 square feet. Coupled with the

new Balis Community Center, the entire facility has a total of nearly 19,000 square feet. The new facility also has 57 parking spaces.

Through the Art in Public Places Ordinance, \$11, 500 worth of art will be displayed in the lobby of the new facility. Jerry Smith, a San Marco painter, will be creating an acrylic painting depicting a woman with an umbrella standing by the St. Johns River.

The San Marco Branch Library is the first of 12 library renovation projects to be completed under The Better Jacksonville Plan. The Better Jacksonville Plan also includes six new regional libraries located throughout Duval County, as well as a new \$95 million Main Library downtown.

Grand Opening Events at the San Marco Branch Library and Balis Community Center will be held on Saturday, April 19, beginning at 10 a.m. Activities include egg decorating, Easter hat making, an Easter egg hunt, a bunny hop demonstration, a talent show, a family kite making contest, a tennis clinic, square dancing, jazz performances, and several story telling hours. All activities are free and the public is encouraged to attend.

The San Marco Branch Library is open Mondays from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays from noon to 9 p.m., and Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Balis Community Center is open Mondays – Fridays, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Community Center is also available to rent by calling (904) 630-4100.

For more information, call Sharon Ashton at (904) 630-7377 or visit [www.coj.net](http://www.coj.net).