

# Concordia University builds Throw Center

By Charity Prater

Concordia University is building a unique fitness facility in Northeast Portland, to be used by athletes training for the Olympics, Concordia University students and others in the local community. The facility will be designed specifically for athletes who throw the shot put, discus, hammer and javelin. The Throw Center will open sometime this summer.

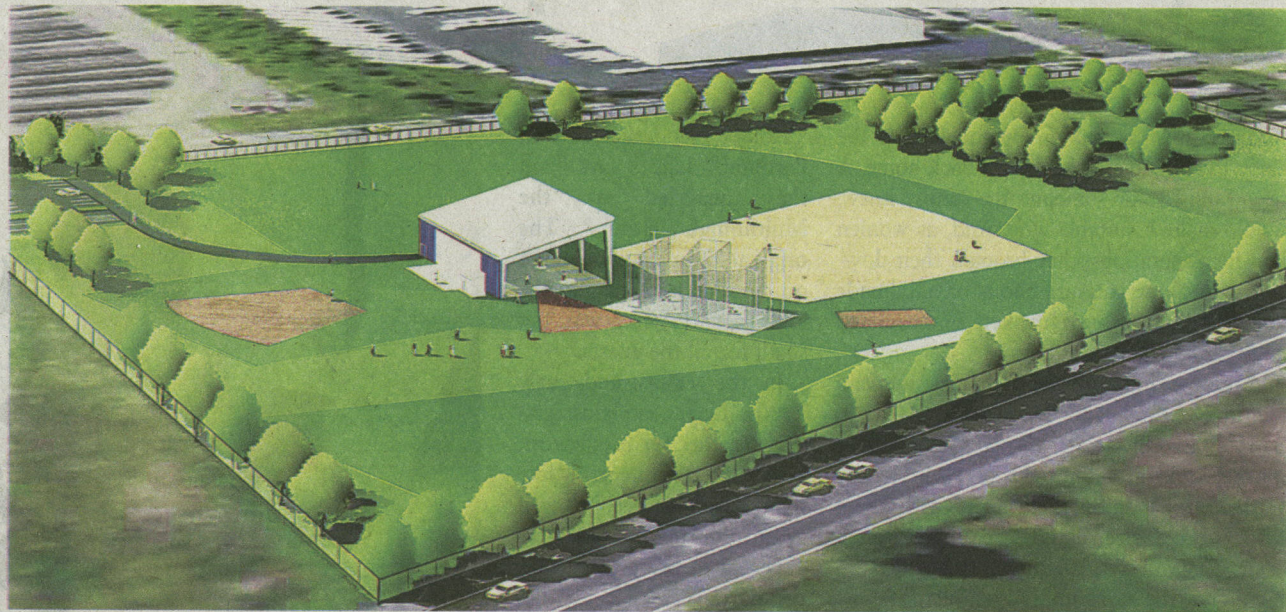
Mac Wilkins, a former Olympic throwing champion, part-time assistant trainer and coach at Concordia, has been implementing and dreaming of the project for more than three years, with the assistance of Greg Harris, Concordia's director of marketing.

"Mac wanted a facility that works with Concordia University's commitment to the community and his personal commitment to fighting obesity," says Harris. "Everyone can do something to get exercise, and throwing is one of the simplest for people who are disabled. The facility will be open to disabled athletes."

The facility is being built on a 10-acre piece of land on Northeast 33rd Avenue near the Portland Airport.

The facility will provide enough room for four people to throw the discus while three throw the shot put and two throw the hammer. Surface materials will include packed sand, throwing pads for the discus, bare cement and grass. To protect athletes from sun and rain, the training area will include a basketball-sized covered area, similar to a driving range for golfers.

Once the project is complete, Wilkins plans to be there from 2 p.m. until dark, six days a week, to support the athletes.



Concordia University's Throw Center was designed for athletes who throw the shot put, discus, hammer and javelin. – Courtesy Group MacKenzie

now preparing for our third season of competition. In the two years that our athletes have been throwing, the throwers have earned three National Championships and nine All-Americans."

For more information on the Concordia Throw Center, visit [www.cuatthethrow-center.com](http://www.cuatthethrow-center.com). For more information about Mac Wilkins' career as an Olympic champion, visit [www.macwilkins.com](http://www.macwilkins.com). ★

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# Portland Airport.

“There aren’t many places in Oregon, or the country, where athletes can go to a facility that has a landing area that is made specifically for throwing events,” says Wilkins, who is passionate about Olympic throwing events. He used to compete in Olympic discus events and holds many medals, including a 1976 Olympic Gold Medal, a 1984 Silver Medal, and a 1988 Fifth-place Medal. He is a four-time world record holder and an eight-time U.S. Champion.

“It’s a miracle that I found my way to Concordia,” says Wilkins. “I’ve been at Concordia since February of 2005. We are



**Mac Wilkins, a former Olympic throwing champion and part-time assistant trainer and coach at Concordia University, has been working for three years to make the Throw Center a reality. – Photo by Charity Prater**



**Mac Wilkins (left), and Greg Harris, Concordia's director of marketing, worked together to make the Throw Center a reality. – Photo by Charity Prater**