

A Generous Congregation Responds....

\$700,000 Raised to Date

B'nai Israel Synagogue's Capital Campaign - Off to a Great Start!!



B'nai Israel Synagogue
Capital Campaign

Excitement, determination, and shared purpose filled the room the evening of Sunday, February 9th for the launch of B'nai Israel Synagogue's Capital Campaign to build a new synagogue on its current



Brooks & Terri Edwards
Campaign General Co-Chairs

location. Brooks Edwards, General Campaign Co-Chair, announced to hearty applause, that we have raised \$700,000 from just nine families. The Advisory Council meeting, held at



Vicki & Paul Friedman
Campaign General Co-Chairs

the home of Terri and Brooks Edwards, brought together both the

Campaign leaders recruited to date and prospective members of the Campaign Advisory Council – the governing board of our fundraising effort. The Edwards welcomed over 50 fellow congregants, shared the details for this exciting



Mark Liebow & Tina Liebling
Advisory Council Chairs

new venture, and emphasized that the Campaign is one of the most important projects that the Synagogue has embarked upon in its 93 year-old history.

Honorary Co-Chairs Bea and Chet Bahr, Barbara and Phil Henoach, Pneena and Sheldon Sheps have a long and extensive history of concern, love, and commitment to B'nai Israel Synagogue. Pneena Sheps, who was representing the Honorary Co-Chairs, stated, "It is

almost impossible to be Jewish in America if you are not part of a Jewish community. We have found our Jewish community here at B'nai Israel Synagogue. Today, it is our turn to support B'nai Israel for the future as others have provided for us."

Advisory Council Co-Chair Tina Liebling, along with her husband Mark Liebow, discussed why they have taken on a leadership role in the Capital Campaign. Tina observed, "B'nai Israel is a very special place in our community. Many organizations and projects call out for our



Pneena Sheps
Honorary Co-Chair

time and our funds. Many are important and worthy, but there are others who can meet those needs. Our Jewish

community is small; no one else will do this for us. We must provide



Kristy & Jeff Mintz
Division II Co-Chairs

for the future of Rochester's Jewish community as others have done before us. We have eaten the fruit of the trees that they planted. Now it is time to plant our own. It is an exciting time, because we can be the designers of that future, it is time for us to step forward.

Jeff Mintz, President of the Board, discussed the needs and the goals of the Campaign. Jeff stated, "Our goal is to meet privately with every member of the congregation to discuss their participation in this very special and very

B'nai Israel Synagogue's Capital Campaign - Off to a Great Start!! (continued)

important project. In fact, this will be the very first synagogue ever built in Rochester as all other Jewish facilities have been renovated structures. We need and hope for 100% participation. This will likely be the only time in any of our lives when we are called upon to participate in such a momentous event. "

Campaign. Paul stated, "Tonight marks the official start and launch of the Campaign. When



***Sharon & Charles Rosen
Advisory Counsel & Chair,
Communication Comm.***



***Beth & Barry Karon
Advisory Counsel & Chair,
Recognition Comm.***

Paul Friedman, General Campaign Co-Chair along with his wife Vicki, reviewed the plan, strategy, and structure of the

we are done, we expect to emerge not only with the necessary funds to build a new facility, but also as a closer knit, prouder, and more united congregational community."

Barry Karon, Chair of the Recognition Committee and member of the Advisory Council, presented the Recognition Policy for new dedications and

the levels of recognition. Sharon Rosen, Chair of the Communications Committee and a member of the Advisory Council, presented the logo and theme for the Campaign. The Campaign theme is, "Building Our Home, Welcoming The World" selected by the Communication Committee to reflect the unique nature of our



Rabbi David Freedman

congregation. The Committee members are a talented group who have developed a Campaign Kit, stationery, pledge cards, signage, and monthly Newsletters. The goal of the Communications Committee is to properly inform the congregation about the Campaign and its progress.

Rabbi Freedman noted that the weekend was a most appropriate time to begin a capital campaign as the Torah portion had been "Teruma"--"an offering that is lifted up." (In

modern Hebrew, "teruma" is the word for "contribution.")

The Rabbi concluded by stating that our "teruma" should not be viewed only as a thing which we should and must do, but as something that can benefit us as individuals and as a congregation: elevate our lives as Jews and enrich our experience as a Jewish community.

Brooks Edwards closed the program emphasizing the need for the B'nai Israel congregational community to join in support of this initiative. "Terri and I recognize that the Synagogue is the foundation of our Jewish life and religious roots, and as such, is one of our highest priorities for philanthropic giving. Today, perhaps even more than in the past, we need our Jewish institutions. We, like other synagogues, count on our members for support. We cannot be successful without the active participation of each and every member of the Temple. We have an extraordinary opportunity to enrich our Synagogue life and that of our children, and our children's children. This Campaign is about what we stand for as a congregation and a community. Every person in our congregation has a stake in its success," concluded Brooks.



Religious School students' pictures depicting their dreams of the future synagogue. More drawings can be viewed in the lobby of the synagogue.

We want to thank Terri and Brooks Edwards for extending their gracious hospitality to B'nai Israel Synagogue members who attended the Advisory Council meeting.

Our Silent Heroes

We commend our courageous team of volunteers for coming forward when asked to join our leadership team. Without them, there would be no Campaign. But several of our Division Chairs have related to us that soliciting gifts for the Synagogue is not an easy task. We have taken the literary license of combining several of these accounts into one story to give you an idea of how it feels to ask others for their participation and financial support for the Capital Campaign.

As The Story Goes, Told By Mrs. Jane Doe Doblinsky

"We desperately need solicitors for Division II Co-Chairs for the Campaign. Would you, as a couple consider joining us?" As we listened, we swallowed hard. We should have expected it. After all, both of us have been strong supporters for a new building. "Think about it," we were asked.

We thought. Not long, actually because we both knew that we simply didn't have a choice. If not us, who? The Synagogue building cannot continue to exist in its present state. The roof leaks, the classrooms are dilapidated, and the list goes on. If we wanted a building to serve our Synagogue community into the future, it was now or never. It was now. "Yes," we replied.

Then the reality sank in. I've always hated solicitations. Yet they're necessary. We have to. If we don't, we clearly won't raise the money. No money, no new building. OK, go for it!

I was nervous the entire week before I actually picked up the phone to make my calls for appointments to discuss the campaign. I had read over all of the materials. I was ready for any objections. I was terrified. Palms sweating, I made my first call. To my delight, my friend on the other end was receptive. "Yes, of course, that date sounds fine." I was astonished. The campaign leaders had assured me that making the appointment was the hardest part of any solicitation, and it was already done! That was pretty easy!

As the time approached to make the visit, my husband and I prepared and rehearsed. Was this easier or harder than raising our children? But again, the haunting refrain, "If not us, then who?" We had to step forward.

My husband called me from work on the day of the appointment. "I

hope I don't blow it," he wailed. I laughed. I reminded him that we believe in the project, and besides, we are volunteers -- they can't fire us. Relax!

Well, our meeting went just fine. After discussing the project in detail, my husband and I relaxed. Our host and hostess were absolutely warm and gracious. Were they uncomfortable? It did not appear so. We all realized that this was our project to undertake together. They listened and asked questions because they were concerned and caring people.

The outcome was wonderful. We felt even better than when we had made our own financial commitment. We were actually making a difference. We were literally setting bricks into the building and laying the foundation of our community's future.

Our Volunteers

In reality, there is little difference between the solicitor and the donor. Both live in the greater Rochester area. Both are involved in B'nai Israel Synagogue. Both care about the well-being of their congregation. They are friends, perhaps neighbors. They have shared similar life experiences. It's just that the solicitor has already made a gift to the Campaign, while the other congregant is being asked. The solicitor is also probably more nervous than the potential donor, for it often seems harder to ask for money than to give.

If one of our volunteers calls you, please realize that this Campaign volunteer worker sincerely wishes to talk to you about your Synagogue and its future. This worker's only "commission" is the satisfaction of having made a difference.

Participation – The Heart of the Campaign

The remarkable leadership that has emerged for the Campaign is a testimony to how important this Campaign is to the congregational community. As we have said before, our leaders are the inspiration that continues to move this project forward. These are the individuals who have stepped forward to lead this Capital Campaign.

Campaign General Co-Chairs

Terri & Brooks Edwards
Vicki & Paul Friedman

Honorary Co-Chairs

Bea & Chet Bahr
Barbara & Phil Henoch
Pneena & Sheldon Sheps

Advisory Council Co-Chairs

Tina Liebling & Mark Liebow

Advisory Council Members

Susan & David Ahlquist
Carol & Yossie Bitton
Cynthia & David Freedman
Lynda & Richard Goldberg
Gayle & Bruce Kall
Beth & Barry Karon
Jolene & Scott Litin
Kristy & Jeff Mintz

Sharon & Charles Rosen
Veronique & Maurice Sarano
Gail & Geoff Thompson
Sandra & Arnold Weissler

Communications Committee

Sharon Rosen, Chair
Trish & Eric Ambrosio
Carol Bitton
Arlene-Ebin Diamond &
Mike Diamond
Lynda Goldberg
Gayle Kall
Beth Karon
Cari Uslan

Recognition Committee

Barry Karon, Chair
Carol & Yossie Bitton
Bruce Kall
Lilach & Amir Lerman

Scott Litin
Gail & Geoff Thompson
Stanimir Vuk-Pavlovic
Sandy & Arnold Weissler

President

Jeff Mintz

Rabbi

David Freedman

This is the first issue of your "Building Our Home, Welcoming The World" Campaign Update. The Campaign Update will introduce the Campaign leaders and keep you apprised about the progress of the Campaign. If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, please call the Campaign Office at (507) 281-1501 or e-mail us at Bnaisrael@aol.com.



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