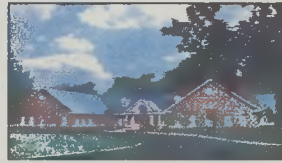


Sandra and Leon Levine Fulfill the Dreams of Seniors in Matthews

It began more than 36 years ago when 15 local seniors sought to create a social organization for themselves and fellow seniors. At the very beginning, the Happy Times Club, as they were called, met at the Matthews United Methodist Church. But the limited days and times that the church was available to them was prohibiting their dream of a full time program of sharing food, entertainment, travel and other activities. Their vision was idealized in the design of the Matthews Area Center for

Seniors (MACS), a 19,500-square-foot building with a pool for exercise, rooms for meetings, crafts, computer technology, volunteer participation, and nutritious meals. On paper it seemed the perfect place for the community to utilize not just for seniors, but also for family reunions, receptions, weddings, business meetings and club gatherings.

For this vision to take place two miracles had to occur simultaneously – and they did. First, the town of Matthews and the devel-



opers of Sycamore Commons donated 9.8 acres off Northeast Parkway. And the Sandra and Leon Levine Foundation provided a 3-to-1 matching challenge, resulting in a gift that exceeded \$1.5 million.

It is in response the generosity of the Levines that the center was named in their honor.

Jennifer Phillips, the Executive Director of the Levine Senior Center, has been moved time and again by the kindness of Sandra and Leon Levine. "My dealings with [Mr. Levine] have been limited," she says, "but each time I have marveled by how humble and kind he has been."

Iris DeVore, a founding member of the Happy Times Club, spearheaded the committee that brought the original plans for the Senior Center to the Levines' attention. "Mr. Levine seemed to be savvy to the existing needs from the time he saw the plans and heard the plea for help in developing a special place for seniors to meet for fellowship, fun, food, exercise, and continued learning," Iris says in her engaging North Carolina accent. "He is a beautiful, beautiful person and Sandra is just as charming and lovely as she can be."

Iris is thoroughly involved in the Levine Senior Center, so much so, that when given the chance, she can recite room measurements in addition to the function and purpose of each room in the building. For a fee of merely \$5 per month, seniors can enjoy a game room, exercise, a pool, meeting rooms, function rooms with a full audio and video equipment, as well as a

meditation room. "Had it not been for the gifts and encouragement from Mr. and Mrs. Levine, there would be none of [the above-mentioned amenities]."

The Levine Senior Center has touched so many of its participants. Bernie Rosenberg (z"l) so enjoyed the time he spent there, that he requested memorials in his name be donated to the Levine Senior Center.

Iris sums up her gratitude to the Levines this way: "What a pleasure to know those who are wise enough to share the fruits of their labor and witness the blessings. Thanks to Leon and Sandra Levine for making all of life more enjoyable and worthwhile without regard to age, income, social status or ethnicity."

The Levine Senior Center is located at 1050 DeVore Lane in Matthews; 704-846-4654; for hours and programs, call or go to www.levineseniorcenter.org. ☆

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LJCC Boys' Basketball Team Wins 3rd Place in National Basketball Tournament

The Levine JCC is very pleased to announce that its boys' 11th/12th grade basketball team finished in 3rd place in a national JCC basketball tournament held in Miami, FL February 29-March 2.

The team, consisting of one junior and nine seniors, participated in the 39th edition of the annual Marvin Blumenthal Basketball Tournament. This event attracted a total of nine teams from throughout the United States, including teams from Pittsburgh, Houston, Dallas, Memphis, Louisville, Jacksonville, Orlando and the host city of Miami.

Our Charlotte team finished with a record of 4-2, with preliminary round wins over Louisville (54-47) and Pittsburgh (56-47) and playoff round wins over Pittsburgh once again (55-53) and an overtime thriller to clinch the 3rd place trophy over Jacksonville (54-53). The teams' two losses were to the eventual runner-up team from Dallas and the eventual tournament champion from Miami.



The championship basketball team.

Each and every member of the team contributed in one way or another to help Charlotte secure the 3rd place position. In three of the team's total of six games, every member of the team scored at least one basket. That team depth certainly paid off, especially in the two playoff victories which were won by a combined total of three points.

Keith Orland was the Charlotte representative named to the All-Tournament team. Keith's desire, leadership, great defensive play and clutch shooting paved the way at crucial times to ensure the team's victories.

Special thanks to the Miami

host families for taking care of the Charlotte players while they were in town, to the Charlotte families who came all the way down to Miami to cheer their athletes on and to coach Mike Patterson for his patience, leadership and "coolness under fire" during the entire tournament.

Congratulations to all members of the team for representing themselves, their families, their community and their Jewish Community Center so well during the entire tournament. Each and every one of you should feel very proud for your accomplishments. Members of the team included: Alex Comen, Eric Frick, Matthew Leonard, Cameron Ollivierre, Keith Orland, Andrew Parker, Brett Patterson, David Raphael, Clay Ruff and Kyle Schumer. ☆



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Tikva Charlotte – Seeking New Director

In 2004-2005, the Tikva Charlotte program opened the doors to Jewish education for students who could not benefit from the structure of their regular religious school settings. These students with special needs have been meeting ever since in a place called "Tikva Charlotte." For two hours every Sunday, they study Hebrew, learn about Jewish festivals and customs, sing Jewish songs and discuss Jewish values. Each class session includes a large group project designed to develop socialization skills and small group activities that focus on the students' individualized educational goals. The program has been an unqualified success, due to a small teacher/student ratio (approximately 1:3), access to appropriate materials and cooperation between the principals of the mainstream religious schools.

Tikva Charlotte is currently looking for a new director to continue the excellent learning environment and warm classroom atmosphere that has made it so successful. Candidates should have good Hebrew skills and training and experience in working with children who have special educational needs. The position is for four hours per week, September through May. For more information please call Roz Cooper (704-944-6782), Debby Block (704-944-6786) or Susan Jacobs (704-749-3045).