

THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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Editorial

It Is All Coming Together

While the excitement tends to be focused on the Project site as the facilities are being prepared for construction, there is a second, equally if not more important, kind of construction going on — the building of the community.

When, at the very beginning of the idea of the Project, a phone survey asked hundreds of community members what their major concern was about the concept, the single greatest worry focused on the ability of the leaders of the various institutions and organizations to work together.

That response was a sign of the times; times marked nationally as well as locally, by institutions concerned for preservation in the face of uncertain population shifts and an equally uncertain economic future. If it remains a concern elsewhere, Charlotte Jewish leadership has clearly shown it can and wants to work together. The benefits of that spirit of cooperation are seen in such programs as Israel Independence Day, the Joint Jewish Studies Institute, Joint Teacher Training for Jewish Education, the sponsorship of the Chassidic Festival and numerous other ventures and programs of all sizes for all ages.

The two newest examples of cooperative community building are no small undertakings and their successful outcome will affect each and every one of us.

The first is an extensive study by the JCC of the shape and form that institution is to take in the new facility. Under the leadership of its President, Harold Josephson, and its Director, Marty Schneer, hundreds of volunteers will be divided into committees to study current needs, future needs and trends on a local as well as national level. (See Phase-In story on page 1). The intention is to have the programs and services established and either in place or ready to begin at the point the community is ready to physically move into the facility.

The second community effort is Federation coordinated and focuses on an outreach to the unaffiliated and the intermarried. 'Unaffiliated' has been initially defined as not belonging to one of the three Temples.

The project consists of a massive outreach to these individuals by mail and by phone to learn what they want and need in order to affiliate. This will be followed by establishment of the most requested programs and classes, some on a cooperative basis between all the institutions.

The spirit of trust and mutual respect which allows for broad spectrum cooperation in these efforts is deserving of the highest recognition and praise. The physical Project will draw interested viewers from all over the nation, but the model of community building will be much more valuable and will be sought after around the nation as a Charlotte Jewish community export.

This sense of building a community was a part of the original dream of the leaders who created the Foundation, and it has continued as the goal for each new institution President or Foundation Board member. The vision of these dedicated individuals was amazing and their ability to make it come true is nothing short of miraculous.

From the Desk of Marty Schneer —JCC Executive Director

When I first arrived in Charlotte last Fall after the burning of the 'J' building, one of the major concerns of the membership was the future of the Center's Day Camp Program. The Camp Committee along with Dana Klein, former Children's Director, struggled with the reality of developing a new program that by necessity would have to be geared to our outdoor setting. While various alternative arrangements were made to help accommodate parents and campers such as buying a bus and erecting tents for each group, many of us still wondered whether the community would continue to support the Day Camp program as they had in the past.

At this point into the camp session I am pleased to report that we are witnessing a true success story illustrated by the community's response to the J's camp program. Thanks to a lot of hard work by the Camp Committee and some fortuitous circumstances which brought Cary Bernstein

back to Charlotte to direct the camp, we anticipate surpassing last year's registration totals. Cary and her camp staff, including Israeli Shaliach and nature specialist Sarah David, have created an atmosphere which encourages youngsters to explore their natural environment and develop both their creative potential and physical abilities. As one parent put it "camp is more than just buildings."

As many of you are aware the JCC will be moving to the Armstrong House on the new site by mid-September. This realization has led many to wonder about what facilities will be completed by next summer. The Center's leadership has been working closely with the Foundation Board to ensure that everything possible is being done to hasten the construction process. We are keenly aware that any delays



may not only cause some inconveniences for the institutions involved, but also lead to increased construction costs. Contingency plans are being developed by the 'J' to prevent any interruptions in service including providing access to a swimming pool for the membership if construction is delayed. The transition period that we are now facing undoubtedly will present some difficulties, however we should keep in mind that what began as a grand vision for the future of Charlotte Jewry has now become a tangible reality. Our experience with Day Camp this summer vividly demonstrates that with ingenuity and cooperative effort we can actually benefit from changing circumstances, as we work to 'build' a Jewish Community that will be unified and prepared to take full advantage of its new multi-purpose facilities.

Those of you who attended the Center's July 4th Celebration know that it was a huge success. Over 130 parents and children participated in pool games and contests of all sorts, and then enjoyed a scrumptious chicken barbecue dinner. What many of you might not realize is the role Lynne Sheffer, Vice President of Programming, and Terri Cathcart, Chairperson of our Children's Committee, played in the planning and implementation of the program. These two women and the committees they represent have really picked up the slack during our search for a new Children's Director. Our continued success depends to a great extent on the work of our lay committees, and on behalf of the staff at the 'J'. I would like to thank Lynne and Terri for their much needed support.

We are sorry to report that Abby Hoffman, former JCC Adult Activities Director resigned from her position in June. Abby was employed by the Center for 1½ years and was responsible for upgrading many of the Adult Programs. Under her guidance Senior Adult programming was also revamped, enabling our older adults to take greater responsibility for their own program planning.

Abby will be venturing into the relatively new field of employee assistance being offered by businesses and unions; we wish Abby all the luck in the world in her new profession. A story on her successor, Susan Ett, can be found in this issue.



Who Is HOW?

By Ellie Katz

A positive approach to life is my goal. I have decided it is time to concentrate on my abilities, not my disability. This is without a doubt most important to me.

I reached this conclusion because feeling sorry for myself was doing nothing but adding stress to my neurological condition. These negative feelings were only adding unnecessary burdens to my family. I discovered there were many ways for me to improve my life. I went to Charlotte Rehabilitation Hospital outpatient facilities and entered a water exercise program which improved my physical condition, helping me change my attitude about myself. By doing something positive about myself, I soon realized there were other interests that would change my life.

Last year, I read an article in the Weekly South newspaper about a courageous handicapped woman named

Deborah McKiethan, the founder of the organization HOW (Handicapped Organized Women), an organization which promotes self-esteem and self-help for disabled women.

By chance, while taking therapy at the Rehabilitation Hospital, I discovered that HOW had an office there. I arranged to meet with Mrs. McKiethan to find out, in more detail, what it was all about. HOW has an office donated by the Rehabilitation Hospital where both Deborah McKiethan and her husband, Jim, are administering all the functions. Mr. McKiethan recently quit his job to assume the post of Director of Development of HOW and is traveling to promote their concepts and raise funding for the expansion of services. They have already received calls from people in twenty-six other states to expand HOW nationally.

I will be helping HOW. If you need help, let us show you how.