

Slifka Center

Building forward

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF JEWISH LIFE AT YALE

Slifka Center: Building Forward Campaign Update - April 24, 2020

We are very grateful to the alumni, parents and friends who have already supported the *Slifka Center: Building Forward* capital campaign, in addition to our friends in the University who continue to partner with us. We are pleased to share this update with you and look forward to our continued work together. Thank You!

What We Have Accomplished

Campaign

Since the inception of the quiet phase of the campaign, we have engaged many Yale alumni, parents and University administrators through personal meetings and events in Manhattan and Westchester County in New York, Stamford and Greenwich in Connecticut, Boston area, Washington, DC, Houston, Los Angeles and San Francisco, Chicago and more. Beginning in March we have hosted a series of online gatherings as a way to maintain connections with one another to encourage health and safety amidst coronavirus. The capital campaign and building committees have worked to help us build connections with one another and have served as advisors in many areas. We have also engaged former leaders of Slifka Center as a way to understand the past to guide us in the future. This work is on-going.

As of mid- April 2020, we have raised over \$2 million in pledges and outright gifts, with several of our lead prospect donors not yet committed. The \$2+ million comprises 61 commitments. Our campaign goal remains \$10 million and although Yale Credit expires on June 30, 2021, we are taking a long-term approach to raising these capital funds.

Prospect research is an important part of any campaign and we are committed to these efforts in order to reach those who care about Yale and also care about Jewish life.

Construction

There has been a team of staff and lay leaders who are overseeing our construction planning. During the past year we have worked with a myriad of consultants including our architect Glen Landow, kitchen consultants, contractors, sound engineers, administrators with the University and the city of New Haven and more. Although a lot of this planning and beginning work has been invisible, it is necessary and the foundation for the plans.

There have been some necessary construction projects that have already taken place as part of the capital campaign, which include roof and masonry repairs to address water leakage issues throughout the building, re-balancing the HVAC system and safety and security upgrades such as the installation of new interior door locks, window shades and interior glass enhancements to help defense in the case of an active shooter, as well as the addition of a new security booth. Some of this work is invisible and includes infrastructure repairs to support our 19,000 square foot building and kitchen.

In addition, we have almost completed the entire construction project planning with the architect (Landow & Landow), and the Slifka Center Building Committee, co-chaired by Doris Zelinsky and Melanie Ginter. These plans, which include what is referred to as “soft costs” are necessary in order to move forward. By the end of June, we will have spent \$2 million on construction itself, as well as blueprints and other preparations. In early March, Slifka Center’s Board of Trustees approved a multi-phased approach to the construction which would allow us to fundraise and finance the project responsibly. Before the arrival of the impacts of the coronavirus, the original plan was to undergo Phase 1 of the project during the Summer of 2020, which included the lower level kitchen and dining room renovations, and first floor renovations including additional security upgrades, restroom expansion, coffee bar and the terrace.

Where We Are Now

Yale University, guided by restrictions governed by the State of Connecticut has put a moratorium on construction. While Slifka Center is a non-profit and independent of the University’s policies, we are respecting their guidelines as our own. The construction moratorium, in addition to the changed economic climate has made it impossible for us to do construction as planned.

We have been advised to continue with the planning phase so that we are prepared to move forward quickly and efficiently at a later date. At the appropriate time, we will even apply for construction permits which will be easier to reschedule than to initiate once the construction moratorium is lifted.

Slifka Center remains committed to the health and well-being of our students, colleagues, alumni, parents and friends. While staff works remotely, we are continuing to engage students and meet critical needs. Please see our website homepage for ways that we continue to engage our community at slifkacenter.org. The world’s fight against the coronavirus has put a halt to our plans and our ability to fundraise. We are using this time to connect with our stakeholders online and by phone. We have hosted three online events via Zoom featuring Yale College Dean Marvin Chun about Belonging, Slifka Center’s clergy about Passover, and an event about the ethical implications of coronavirus featuring Professor Shelly Kagan. In the coming weeks, we will need to resume soft solicitations for our annual campaign to try to lessen the impact on our operations, future programs and staffing.

There are aspects to the construction project which are immediately critical which include additional security to address the outside terrace. We have asked our architect and contractor to provide costs associated with these tasks which we will propose to take care of before students return to campus in the fall.

Looking Ahead

Slifka Center, its Board of Trustees and staff leadership are committed to this capital campaign project which is necessary to continue serving the Jewish student community. The University's accommodation to accept Yale Credit for *Slifka Center: Building Forward* cash gifts expires on June 30, 2021. We are continuing conversations with prospects who would like to take advantage of this. We are further brainstorming about Jewish Yale alumni whom we have not yet engaged to try to reinvigorate our fundraising efforts.

We are committed to keeping you informed as our campaign and construction plans evolve in this changing environment. We look forward to meeting in person, as well as scheduling opportunities to engage our stakeholders and celebrate our accomplishments and each other.

Thank you, again, for your partnership in this important work.

Best,

Uri Cohen, Slifka Center Executive Director
Rabbi Jason Rubenstein, Howard M. Holtzmann Jewish Chaplain at Yale

Campaign Co-Chairs

Richard Pechter '67, P '93

Victoria Lindenbaum Feder '90, P'19

Robert Bildner '72 and Elisa Spungen Bildner '75, P '06, '09, '10, 16