

# THE DENVER COMMUNITY KOLLEL KOLLEL UPDATE

*Because Torah Is for Every Jew*



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## ***Kollel Infrastructure Campaign Moves Forward***

The Kollel's campaign to create Torah infrastructure has taken several steps forward in recent weeks.

In Southeast Denver, construction on the Kollel's Southeast Torah Center is well-underway. Under the expert direction of Kollel Associate Scholar Rabbi Yossi Kaplan of EJC Construction, owned by Efraim Cunningham, a steady stream of construction workers are knocking down walls and constructing others, pouring concrete, running wires, adjusting plumbing, installing doors and getting the Bais Medrash into tip-top shape.



*Scene from progress on the Kollel's new Southeast Torah Center*

Completion is projected for early January. "We look forward to seeing you at our new Bais Medrash when it's done!" says Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers.

In West Denver, meanwhile, the Kollel was informed that it had to vacate its current premises by January 1, 2017. The projected completion of the Kollel's new West Denver home is not until sometime in 2018, and the Kollel needed to find temporary quarters. Rather than pay exorbitant sums to rent a location, the Kollel purchased a duplex on the corner of Wolff St. and 14<sup>th</sup> Ave.

"This was a wonderful opportunity for the Kollel, Heaven-sent," says Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab. "This happened thanks to a number of dedicated supporters and a large dose of help from Above."

While one apartment of the duplex will serve as a temporary home for the West Side Bais Medrash, the other is being used for the newest Kollel family, Rabbi Chaim Yeshia and Mira Freeman.

The renovations for the temporary Bais Medrash are being done with an eye to the not-too-distant-future, ensuring that the space can be easily converted to a home for a family once the Kollel's new building is completed.



*Duplex on corner of Wolff St. & 14<sup>th</sup> Ave., recently purchased by the Kollel*

"With Hashem's help, we are looking to the future as we create Torah infrastructure that will provide affordable housing for the Kollel and its families," says Rabbi Schwab, "and these two structures - one in Southeast Denver, the other in West Denver - are an important part of that vision."

## ***Kollel Donor Appreciation Event***

The Denver Community Kollel's annual Donor Appreciation Event took place on Sunday evening, October 9<sup>th</sup> in the elegant and spacious building of Altura Periodontics. The Kollel's friends and supporters turned out in droves to attend this special occasion.

At the event, Rosh Kollel Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab launched the start of the Kollel's much-anticipated capital



*Rosh Kollel Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab discussing blueprints for the Kollel's West Denver building with Jesse Aragon*

campaign. The three-million-dollar campaign, explained Rabbi Schwab, would provide a Torah Center in two different areas.

In West Denver, a new, state-of-the-art two-story building with a basement will be constructed, providing a spacious, beautiful place for community members to come study Torah and attend classes. The new building will also house an outreach center for the many Jews moving into the rapidly-gentrifying West Denver neighborhood.

In Southeast Denver, the Kollel has already obtained a house that has become the home for the Rosh Kollel, Rabbi Shachne Sommers, and his family. Attached to the home, the Kollel is creating a Torah Center for the community. Rabbi and Mrs. Sommers, who are widely-respected and much-



*The two buildings the Kollel will be using for their Batei Medrash in two areas of Denver*

sought-after in the community, will be in close proximity to the new Bais Medrash, making them more available and accessible to community members.

More than half of the funds - 1.6 million dollars - have already been obtained, explained Rabbi Schwab, through commitments, pledges and financing.

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# Yarchei Kallah 5776

Our Sages tell us that in the Jewish months of Elul and Adar, Jews would stop working and come together to spend the month immersed in the study of Torah. This idea, known as a Yarchei Kallah, continues in communities throughout the world today, and, thanks to the efforts of the Denver Community Kollel, the city of Denver was treated to a Yarchei Kallah of its own to begin the month of Elul.



Rabbi Halpern delivers lecture at Yarchei Kallah

Rabbi Binyomin Halpern, Rav of Kehillas Bais Halevy in Lakewood, led the Yarchei Kallah on Sunday and Monday of Labor Day Weekend, the first two days of Elul. Rabbi Halpern's son, Rabbi Shmuel Halpern, is a member of the Kollel, and this Yarchei Kallah was his initiative.

"This is something whose time has come in Denver," says Reb Shmuel. "There are so many people here who have developed a true love of Torah, and this was the perfect opportunity to take

Torah study here to the next level."

The learning focused on kiddush and havdalah. The study session began with 2 ½ hours of chavrusah learning, followed by a one-hour interactive lecture delivered by Rabbi Halpern. A sumptuous breakfast and lunch were provided for participants, as well.

More than 25 people participated in the Yarchei Kallah, including Josh Close of Broomfield, Colorado, who has been learning with the Kollel for nearly five years.

"The Yarchei Kallah program was an excellent addition to my Labor Day weekend," says Josh. "It provided a unique insight into the aspects of Kiddush and Havdalah. The Kollel Rabbis hosted engaging chavrusa sessions which radiated the room with much energy as everyone discussed various sources, and Rabbi [Binyomin] Halpern led a lively discussion on the topics at hand to sum things up. The Kollel put together another inspirational event which was extremely eye opening to Torah knowledge!"

Rabbi Yehoshua Hoffman joined several others in learning with Rabbi Binyomin Halpern.

"I appreciated the wonderful experience of learning with Rabbi Halpern," says




Rabbi Halpern delivers a talk for women

Rabbi Hoffman. "Learning with him, his relationship with Torah was evident. It gives him life, it gives him excitement. His enthusiasm at every step of the sugya (subject material) caused me and the others learning with him to become excited, as well!"

Chuck Michaels, a member of Aish Denver, attended both days of the Yarchei Kallah with his son, Benjamin.

"My son Benjamin and I enjoyed spending two mornings at the Kollel, engaged in chavrusah learning with [Kollel Scholar] Rabbi Zions and listening to Rabbi Halpern from Lakewood, New Jersey. It was a great opportunity for us to spend a holiday learning together on a high level."

In addition to the Yarchei Kallah learning, Rabbi Halpern also delivered a class to more than a dozen women on Monday night, focusing on the month of Elul. 

## Kollel Donor Appreciation Event

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As for the remaining funds - "We will do this," said Rabbi Schwab to the audience as they applauded, "with your help."

"Together, we will build Torah infrastructure, for ourselves, our children and untold numbers of future Denver Jews searching for the neshama of the Jewish People - Torah."



Larry Halpern speaking at the Kollel's Donor Appreciation Event

The concise but impactful program also featured a short address from Larry Halpern, a Kollel supporter who now spends his days studying Torah,




Kollel founder and Bais Yaakov High School Dean Rabbi Myer Schwab speaking with Dr. Marc Sievers including many hours daily at the Kollel Bais Medrash. Larry described his transition from the business world to the Bais Medrash, and the opportunity to build a relationship with the Kollel scholars.

"What has really amazed me as I've been learning at the Kollel is that each of the (Kollel) rabbis is so knowledgeable," said Larry.

"Tonight," he continued, "I am asking you to support the Kollel as they embark on their future with the new Kollel building and the new Bais Medrash



Partial view of the crowd at the event

in the Southeast... I would also like to invite you to come on over and learn with us at the Kollel, as well. For me, it has been an amazing experience." 



Kollel alumnus Rabbi Yechiel Erlanger with Kollel supporters