



The Center for Jewish Life

Embracing Our Past. Building Our Future.

UPDATE!

ISSUE 4

Issue 4 Editor – Larry Taren

FEBRUARY 2015



Danny Goldberg, Anna Cervenak and Max Bartikowsky

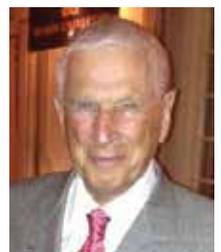
MAX BARTIKOWSKY AND ANNA CERVENAK MAKE MAJOR GIFT TO CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE

Max Bartikowsky and Anna Cervenak have dedicated much of their lives to philanthropic causes, particularly in the Wyoming Valley. Almost every Jewish institution in Luzerne County has been the beneficiary of Anna and Max's generosity. And with their newest commitment, the couple has again put belief into practice with a \$100,000 gift to the Campaign for the Center for Jewish Life. This should not be a surprise, given the philanthropic history of the Bartikowsky family going back decades. Max has also significantly included The Center for Jewish Life in his will.

Max and Anna seem to have service to our community in their DNA.

Applauding them for their gift and for their history of philanthropy, Campaign Co-chair Larry Taren said that "the entire Jewish community is forever in debt to Max and Anna."

In an interview, Max explained that, growing up in Wilkes-Barre during the 1930s and 40s, much of his life revolved



Larry Taren

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MAJOR GIFT *continued*

around the YMHA, the forerunner to the Jewish Community Center. It was there that he made friends, learned how to shoot a basketball – he had to be careful not to hit the low ceiling – and where he first heard that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor.

Later, at the JCC on River Street, the Korean War veteran kept up his love of sports into adulthood – playing hoops well into his 50s. And the JCC is where he took his first steps as a budding philanthropist, putting into practice the values he had learned from his parents, eventually serving as president of the Board of Trustees of the JCC Building.

The new Center for Jewish Life will not only replace the antiquated JCC, but will house the Jewish Community Alliance and other Jewish agencies and congregations and function as a communal-gathering space, offering athletic, social, cultural, educational and religious activities.

“The JCC and the wider Jewish community have played a hugely important role in our lives,” the couple stated. “We believe in the forward-thinking concept of the Center for Jewish Life. It is right for the Jewish community of the Wyoming Valley in the 21st century. Naturally, we wanted to do our part to help in this visionary endeavor.”

Max added that he thinks the Center for Jewish Life “will be a terrific asset. It will attract a lot of Jewish families to settle here when they see what we have to offer.”

I believe in giving back to the community,” said Max,

who is well known across Northeastern Pennsylvania as the third-generation owner of Bartikowsky Jewelers, which closed in 2013.

In addition to being active in the JCC, the longtime member of Temple Israel was honored in 2013 with the synagogue’s Pillar of the Community Award. In 2008, he and Anna were given the Anti-Defamation League’s Distinguished Community Service Award. The jeweler has also been involved in a number of non-Jewish charities, including his alma mater Wyoming Seminary, and the Association for the Blind.

Anna holds a master’s degree in social work and retired in 2007 as the director of community relations and external affairs at Verizon. She has served on the boards of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance, Junior Achievement, Association for the Blind, Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Business and Industry, and the Jewish Family Service Advisory Board. She also chairs the Blue Ribbon Task Force to save Tobyhanna Army Depot and the Board of Step by Step.

“I think one of the best ways to start moving forward is to build the Center for Jewish Life,” she said. “I think it is very important to have something like this to give to the next generation. It is certainly needed for the Jewish community, and whatever is good for a certain segment of the community has to be good for the general welfare of the area.”

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What will be included in the Center for Jewish Life?

In addition to the wide range of existing programs and services currently offered through the JCA (which includes the JCC and JFS), there will certainly be new programs and services that will be possible with a new, modern facility and about which we are now dreaming. Temple Israel has committed to moving its administrative offices and religious school to the Center. Discussions are continuing with other community organizations. Plans also allow for welcoming other partner organizations whose presence will offset operating costs and add to the breadth of programs and services that will be offered to the community.

How much money will the community save in annual operating expenses by moving to the campus?

We conservatively estimate that the new Center will result in a savings of operating costs of approximately \$100,000 per year for the community.

How much will this project cost?

The estimated cost for the new Center for Jewish Life is approximately \$11 million. About \$5 million will come from the donation of the property, government grants, and the sale of the current JCC and JFS buildings, leaving approximately \$6 million to be raised by the Campaign.

A CONVERSION STORY: FROM SKEPTIC TO ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORTER *BY SUE STRASSMAN*

Three years ago, I was among those who could not believe in the feasibility of a new JCC on Third Avenue. Among the things I could not believe was that it would be cheaper to build a new building than it would be to “fix” our beloved 60 South River Street. Yet, as a former president of the JCC, I am intimately acquainted with the problems of an aging building.

Clearly the JCC has a storied past. What about its future? While I was delighted by the extremely generous acquisition of the property on Third Avenue and the subsequent gifting of it to the Jewish community, I was also quite skeptical that the dream would ever become a reality. Frankly, I just didn't buy into the dream.

Nothing was ever said to change my mind or abate my skepticism. Then at one meeting the chairman stood up and finally cleared my vision. He said the magic words: “The JCC at 60 South River cannot sustain itself on dues alone or even with program fees. The new building will allow us to rent out space and create funding to augment dues and fees.” That certainly caught my attention. This is absolutely true.

He went on to say, “Even if we were to raise the \$5 million necessary to fix this building, we will still have an old building with patched-up problems.” That, too, caught my attention. “How,” I asked, “can you say that it will cost less to build new than to fix this building? That does not seem possible.” And then he said more magic words: “Because we will be using the footprint of the former Price Chopper. Aha! I finally had my answers. In that moment, I became a “convert” and I have never looked back. I have completely invested my time and energy into the creation of the Center for Jewish Life on Third Avenue. I am excited about the prospects of my grandchildren enjoying this new building. I am excited about the prospect of all our children - those returning to the Wyoming Valley and those who have remained - having a spanking new, exciting “home away from home.”

I invite everyone who is reading this to join me in an enthusiastic greeting of a new era. Many of us are emotionally involved in our grand old building, but remember, River Street was not the JCC's first home. Just as in the case of the Y.M.H.A., it has existed in other places, and each subsequent center was bigger and better than the last. I know that you, like I, will want to watch the evolution of our newest home. Please join me, and take advantage of every opportunity to be part of this grand experience. Your desires and interest are of great importance to this project.



WHEN THE CAMPAIGN COMES CALLING

In the next few weeks or months, expect a call from a campaign volunteer. He or she will likely ask for an in-person appointment. The dedicated volunteer is doing a difficult job that is necessary if we are to succeed in our mission to build the Center for Jewish Life.

Search your conscience. Consider how much you are able to give and what Jewish life means to you. Remember, any pledge you make is payable over five years. Also, consider a legacy gift. The new Center offers plenty of opportunities for naming rights. This will be the most important gift you will ever make. Be generous!



THE NEXT STEP *BY ESSY DAVIDOWITZ*



Lao Tzu, the ancient Chinese philosopher, is frequently quoted as saying that “each 1,000 mile journey begins with a single step.” For the Jewish community of the Wyoming Valley, it is time to take that next step. Previous generations have handed down our communal institutions to all of us. Now it is our turn to assume the responsibility for the future. We can continue the legacy. The development of the Third Avenue campus will facilitate the perpetuation of Jewish life in Wyoming Valley. We have all been informed about the plans for the project. Now is the time to take an active role in supporting this endeavor.

Stop in the JCC and see the architect's drawings. Consider how you might find meaning in your life by helping to make our new building a reality. The name Center for Jewish Life encapsulates a vision for a central edifice dedicated to the athletic, recreation, intellectual and spiritual needs of our community. Please consider joining Bill and me and make your financial commitment to this major venture by taking the next step.



The Center for Jewish Life

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Groundbreaking ceremony for the new

Center for Jewish Life

Coming soon!

**Come be a part of history and glimpse
into our community's future!**

CAMPAIGN BEGINS A NEW PHASE

The “quiet phase” of the Campaign for the Center for Jewish Life is almost complete. This phase has involved the solicitation of JCA board members and all committee members involved in the planning for the campus. Soon we will be reaching out to the entire Jewish community.

It will be the largest, most ambitious fundraising campaign in our community’s recent history.

Your gift will be nothing short of transformational.

It will affect every Jew within the Wyoming Valley for generations to come.

Together, we must resolve to meet this challenge.

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