

March 2020

Dear Members of the Jewish Community,

Leaders from Ahavas Israel, Temple Emanuel, Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids, and Chabad House have been meeting for over a year to explore ways to unite and strengthen the Jewish community. Our goal is to be proactive and forward thinking in exploring collaborative, short-term and long-term community planning. We have presented the idea of collaboration to the boards of each organization and received their support of this initiative.

Our Jewish Community has a track record of success with collaboration by:

- Establishing a combined United Jewish School
- Creating the Community Endowment Funds Committee
- Offering joint programming for the entire Jewish Community

Using these successes as a model, we can capitalize on past collaborations to improve our collective community. Each organization is currently financially stable and each has a strong core of commitment with longevity in the community. With these strengths, we have an opportunity to work together to minimize duplication in the areas where we overlap, create financial savings, and use our resources effectively for the greatest positive impact on the community.

We encourage you to consider the following questions and share your suggestions and input.

- What do we want our legacies to be?
- How can we create a successful future for our organizations?
- How can we create a successful future for our greater community?

While respecting each organization's autonomy, practices, and identity, we are exploring the possibilities of a shared physical space. We envision one campus where all organizations can come together while maintaining their individual spaces to worship, practice their respective customs and traditions, and maintain their own rabbi and board leadership. As we have learned from other forward-looking Jewish communities, successfully collaborating in a single facility would make our community more connected and stronger.

We recognize that this is not going to happen overnight. We need broad community support to reach this goal: a united Jewish Community. There are opportunities now and in the future for the community to participate in this process, and we hope that you will share your thoughts, questions, concerns, and suggestions with any of the leaders listed below, now and along the way.

Most respectfully,

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