

Denver Community Kollel Celebrates Chanukas Habayis in Southeast Denver with Rabbi Chaim Mintz

This edifice has been in the making for decades. True, the renovations on the Kollel's new Southeast Torah Center, located at 4902 S. Xenia St., only took several months, but it is the product of a community that has seen sustained growth, both in physical



Rabbi Mintz speaks Motzoei Shabbos at the Kollel's West Denver Bais Medrash

as well as spiritual terms, for years. The Kollel has been bringing Torah learning, Torah teaching and Torah living to the Southeast community since its inception nineteen years ago, but its involvement moved to a whole new level with the arrival of Rabbi Moshe and Yehudis Heyman and Rabbi Dovid and Faigy Gertz ten years ago. Today, there are four Kollel families (including Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers) and several Kollel alumni living in Southeast Denver.

"Back in 2007, Rabbi Yaakov Meyer (of Aish Denver in Southeast Denver)



l. to r., Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab, Rabbi Mintz, Kollel Dean Rabbi Shachne Sommers, Kollel alumnus Rabbi Yechiel Erlanger

and the Kollel Deans had the vision that the Southeast community would take the next step," says Rabbi Heyman, who is now Kollel Director. "That vision has been realized many times over, but the opening of this Torah Center is truly a milestone."

On the Shabbos of March 17-18, Rabbi Chaim Mintz, *mashgiach* (spiritual overseer) of Yeshiva of Staten Island and founder of the renowned Jewish outreach organization Oorah, visited Denver to celebrate the *Chanukas Habayis* (inauguration) of the Kollel's Southeast Torah Center. Rabbi Mintz delivered a number of talks and Q&A sessions for both men and women throughout Shabbos,



Kollel scholars studying at the Southeast Torah

with over 250 people attending the various talks.

Included in these events was a Friday night learning session at the Torah Center Bais Medrash that attracted over 40 men. Simultaneously, a shiur (lecture) for women was delivered by the Kollel women at the Sommers home, which is adjacent to the Torah Center.

The learning was followed by an Oneg Shabbos/*Chanukas Habayis* featuring *divrei bracha* (words of blessing) from Rabbi Mintz and Rabbi Yaakov Meyer. Rabbi Mintz

discussed the impact a place dedicated to Torah study has on a community, explaining the Torah learned in the *bais medrash* brings blessing in both the spiritual and material realms, and that Jews of all walks and backgrounds will be



Second seder at the Southeast Torah Center

impacted by the Torah studied of the Kollel scholars and the community.

The Torah Center has been dedicated by Rabbi Meyer in memory of his father, Rav Yissochor Meyer, who passed away in 2015, as well as in memory of his cousin, Rabbi Yissochor Meyer, founder and Dean of Yeshivas Hanegev in Israel until his passing in 2011. The Torah Center will be named Ohel Yissochor, a reference to the tents of Torah frequented by the Tribe of Yissochor.



Night seder learning at Southeast Torah

"It is wonderful that the Kollel now has their own independent Torah Center in Southeast Denver," says Rabbi Meyer. "Anything that increases Torah learning and brings greater honor to Hashem is a wonderful addition to our community, and I wish the Kollel greater success each passing day." ❏

Kollel Publishes Kuntres Al Hahar Hazeh for Pesach

The Kollel published *Kuntres Al Hahar Hazeh on Pesach*, a compendium of Torah thoughts written by the Kollel members. More than 400 copies were distributed in synagogues and *batei medrash* in Denver and numerous other cities across the US and Canada.

A *kuntres*, a term meaning “pamphlet,” generally refers to a relatively brief work of Torah thoughts. The 46-page publication featured ten articles on halachic and aggadic Pesach-related topics ranging from *A Bar Mitzvah During Sefirah* to *The Matzah Inoculation*.

The *kuntres* is the brainchild of Kollel scholar Rabbi Chaim Yeshia

Freeman. “Rabbi Freeman is constantly looking for new ways to spread Torah,” says Kollel Director

of Operations Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher. “His determination and efforts ensured that a high-quality, professional publication would be offered to the community to enrich and inspire their Pesach.”

“The Kollel is here to disseminate Torah,” explains Rabbi Freeman. “While the Kollel is on break during Pesach, this is a wonderful way to continue bringing Torah to Jews across the country throughout Pesach. One Kollel scholar received a text from a friend telling him that he had seen his article in a *shul* (synagogue) in Brooklyn, New York!”



24 hours, More than 450 Donors and \$312,000

There's a lot happening at the Kollel. In the past nine months, the Denver Community Kollel has opened a new Southeast Torah Center, embarked on a capital campaign to create a three-story, state-of-the-art home for the Kollel, obtained a duplex in West Denver to provide affordable housing for Kollel families and temporary quarters for the Kollel West Denver Bais Medrash and Kollel offices, and placed Associate Scholar Kollel family Rabbi Akiva and Chani Stern in East Denver, enabling them to bring the Kollel's Torah learning, Torah teaching and Torah living to new levels there.

Growth also means a bigger budget. The Kollel has continued its Torah programs, learning sessions and events unabated throughout the greater Denver area, and obtaining sufficient funding for those programs is vital. To that end, the Kollel launched a crowdfunding campaign on May 9 to raise \$300,000 in 24 hours.

“These funds will help us meet the Kollel's budgetary needs,” says Kollel Director Rabbi Moshe Heyman. “The day-to-day Torah learning, both of the Kollel scholars and of the many

Jews that the Kollel studies with, are now enabled in part thanks to the generosity of those who participated in this campaign.”

The campaign ran on the well-known crowdfunding platform Charidy. The premise of the campaign is simple and compelling: Three matchers, or groups of matchers, commit to match every dollar donated during the 24-hour event, effectively quadrupling every contribution. If the goal is met, the donations are given to the institution. If the campaign fails to



At the home of Avraham and Joyce Litzman, calling, texting and emailing for the Charidy event

meet its financial objective, donors' credit cards are not charged and the organization receives nothing.

“It creates a nice amount of pressure, both on the organization as well as

the donors, to make sure this is successful,” says Rabbi Heyman. “If it's not, you're going home empty-handed.”

“With much *siyata dishmaya*, and thanks to our dedicated friends and supporters, the Kollel's Charidy campaign was a success!” says Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab.

More than just a success. Once the \$300,000 goal had been met, the campaign entered a bonus round, where every dollar was matched by a generous donor, doubling its impact. The total raised through the Charidy campaign was \$312,056. More than 450 people - including over 150 new donors - donated during the course of the 24-hour event.

“We have a great team of people in the Kollel, and a committed base of supporters. All of these people put their hearts and souls into ensuring this would happen,” says Rabbi Schwab. “I am grateful to everyone who helped us achieve our objectives. And ultimately, our objective is to continue bringing more and more Torah to more and more Jews throughout the greater Denver area.”