

25 YEARS
IN PICTURES

Winter 2024/5784

CELEBRATING

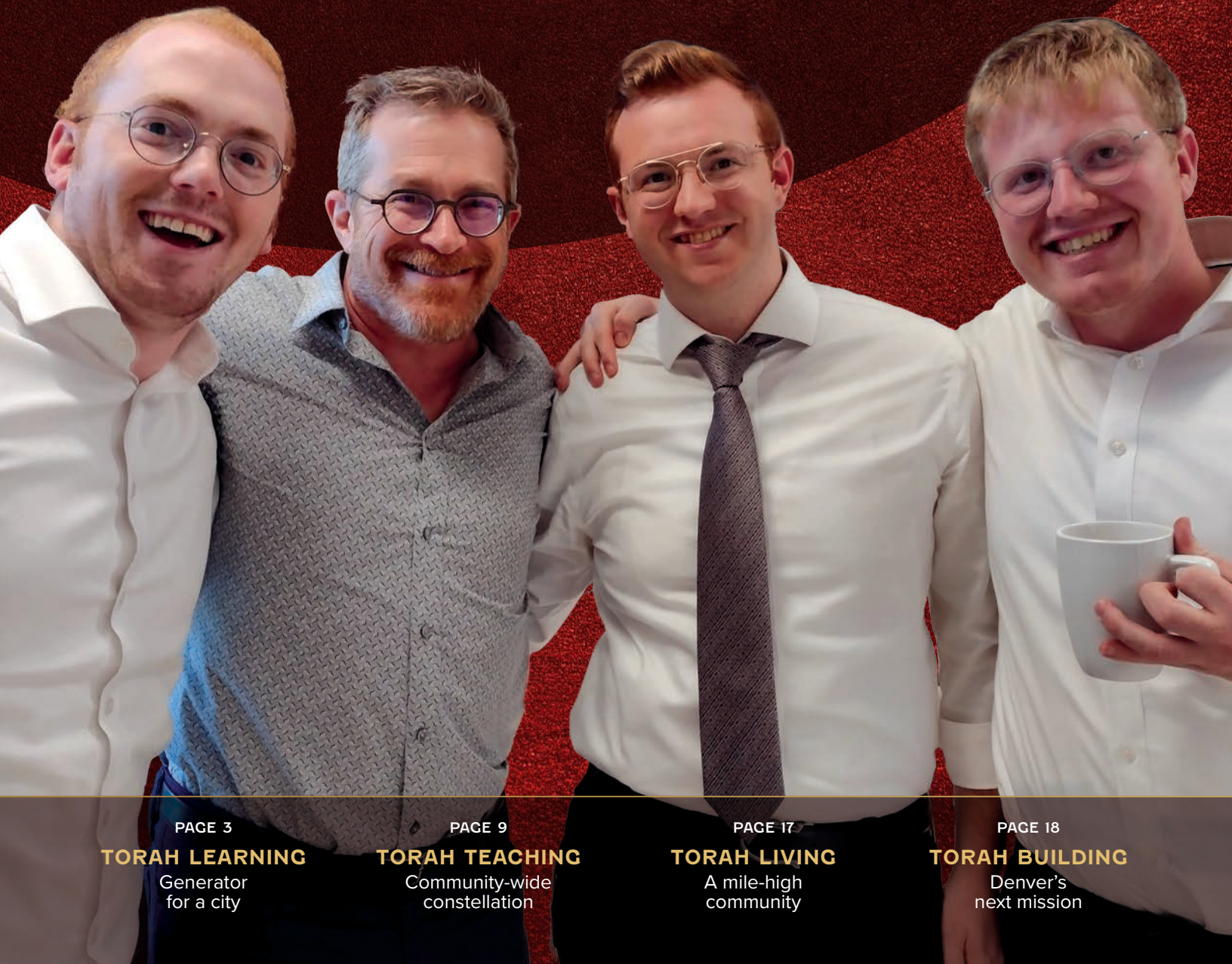
25
years

of Torah Growth



TOGETHER

Denver Community Kollel



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TORAH LEARNING

Generator
for a city

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A mile-high
community

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TORAH BUILDING

Denver's
next mission

Let's begin at the beginning.

25 Years Ago. Rabbi Myer Schwab, the dean of Beth Jacob High School, made a prediction: that the brand new Denver Community Kollel would turn Denver into a bigger city of Torah, a place where Jews would love to live. "I believe that with the advent of this Kollel, this process has begun, and will continue to happen in greater form."

Building a city of Torah isn't a simple thing. But the fledgling Kollel, led by Rabbi Schwab's son Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab and Rabbi Shachne Sommers, was ready for the challenge. Their goal was simple and clear: grow in Torah, and bring Torah



Roshei Kollel, 25 Years Ago



Roshei Kollel, 2023



Rabbi Myer J. Schwab, Dean, Bais Yaakov Denver

growth to everyone they could reach.

"From the beginning, we've been pursuing a three-part vision," Rosh Kollel Rabbi Schwab elaborates. "Learning Torah, teaching Torah, and living Torah."

Generator For a City

TORAH LEARNING

The Kollel's central strategy: create a makom Torah - a place solely dedicated to Torah learning at its highest level, day and night. A center of learning where budding Torah scholars could grow and blossom.

"Torah is everything," Rabbi Sommers stresses. "Because a handful of Kollel scholars are sitting and studying Torah, goodness and merit pour into the city."

"It's protection. It's blessing. It's an infusion of spiritual goodness that spreads outward," adds Rabbi Schwab. "That's how



When a Jew celebrates a milestone, you wish them, “mazel tov”.

This year, the Denver Community Kollel celebrates its 25th anniversary - an epic milestone.

BUT WHO GETS THE MAZEL TOV?

To answer this question, we need to understand the story of the Torah revolution that’s taken place in Denver over the last 25 years. The story of what happens when a kollel partners with a community whose leaders and members are deeply committed to spreading and growing in Torah.

“From the beginning, we’ve been pursuing a three-part vision-learning Torah, teaching Torah, and living Torah.”



Anniversary Celebration at Mile High Station, 2004



R' Yeruchim Olshin visits, 2005



Torah for Tycoons, 2004



Yesodei Hatorah, 2005



Torah for Tycoons, 2006



Aish Building, 2008



Taster's Choice, 2004



National Kollel Convention, 2004



RMHA, 2004



Home Group, 2006



Taste of Torah, 2006



Night Seder, 2006



Birchas Hachama, 2009



Avos UBonim, 2006



Beyond 9:00-5:00, 2006



Partners in Torah, 2007



Group with R' Salomon, 2007



Fathers and Sons, 2008



Fathers and Sons, 2008



R' Yeruchim Olshin visit, 2011



Lunch and Learn, 2008



Kumzitz, 2008



Mission to Lakewood, 2007

TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF
TORAH

LEARNING,
 TEACHING,
 LIVING.



Founders Meeting, 1997



Bukharian Teen Class, 2003



Kollel Bais Medrash, 1999



R' Malkiel Kotler visits, 2001



Kollel Arrival, 1998



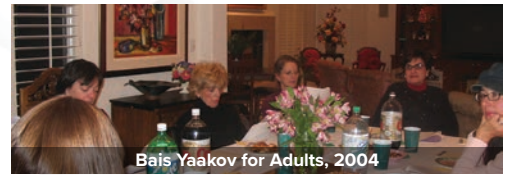
Kollel Arrival, 1998



Kollel Arrival, 1998



Lox and Learn, 2003



Bais Yaakov for Adults, 2004



Taster's Choice, 2003



Boys Teen Torah 2003



Kollel Arrival, 1998



Model Passover Seder, 2004



RMHA, 2003



Maimonades Fellowship, 2003



Model Passover Seder, 2004



Summer Carnival at the Kollel Youth Center, 2021



Sukkos at the Southeast Kollel Torah Center - Ohel Yissachar, 2019



Summer Night Seder Program BBQ, 2019



Talmudo Biyado, 2021



Groundbreaking Event, 2018



Night Seder, 2019



Groundbreaking Event, 2018



Building Dedication, 2020



Talmudo Biyado Trip, 2021



Summer Camp, 2022



Groundbreaking Event, 2018



Building Dedication, 2020



Hachnasas Sefer Torah, 2020



Building Dedication, 2020



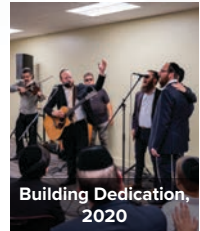
Building Dedication, 2020



Simchas Basi Hashoeva, 2022



Hachnasas Sefer Torah, 2022



Building Dedication, 2020



New Building, 2021



Hachnasas Sefer Torah, 2022



Pre-Winter Zman Learning, 2023



Batya Program, 2013



Gold Senior Program, 2015



JWRP, 2013



JWRP, 2012



R' Dovid Schustal's visit, 2012



R' Malkiels Kotler's visit, 2014



Day after Shavuot, 2014



Women's Wellness Workshop, 2015



Women's Wellness Workshop, 2015



Torah Class at Ohr Avner, 2015



JWRP, 2013



R' Malkel Kotler's visit, 2014



Donor Appreciation Event, 2015



Learnathon, 2016



Gold Senior Program, 2015



Women's Wellness Workshop, 2017



Gold Senior Program, 2016



GOLD Senior Program, 2016



Women's Wellness, 2012



Rabbi Halpern at Ohr Avner in Aurora, 2016



Day after Shavuot learning, 2014



Jewish Children's Extravaganza, 2017



Annual Celebration, 2015

a makom Torah benefits a city. The entire region is blessed and protected by the uplifting spiritual energy radiated by this powerful generator.”

It isn't easy to maintain such a generator. But it becomes easier when surrounded by a community that doesn't just provide financial fuel, but does it with sincere passion. One professional in the community candidly admits that when the kollel first arrived, “I didn't really know what bringing these guys out and learning would do.”

Today, he shares his conviction that “everybody's got to learn. I'm grateful I get to support it.”

25 years in, Denver is a place where Torah learning is honored and loved.

Community-Wide Constellation

TORAH TEACHING ✨

It's focused intently on nurturing its members' learning. But facilitating Torah growth in the Jews surrounding it also makes up a crucial part of its mission.

“On a communal level, a thriving kollel builds Torah in people's lives, helping them grow and develop and maintain a connection to Torah learning that they wouldn't have otherwise,” explains one Denver-based kollel alumnus. “And that's even if the people in the community aren't all focused on the kollel. The fact that people have a place to express a pure interest in learning creates a cause and

“ Simply knowing there's a place in town dedicated to this ideal penetrates and inspires people. ”



Mr. Louis Abrams, who recently retired from 50 years of teaching at Hillel academy has joined the Kollel's morning seder together with Brett Pepper.



Community Learning at the Learnathon

effect.”

“Simply knowing there's a place in town dedicated to this ideal penetrates and inspires people,” adds Rosh Kollel Rabbi Sommers.



R' Yosef Ephrathi



R' Tzvi Aryeh Finkelstein



R' Yaakov Moshe Goldenberg



R' Chaim Gross



R' Yisroel Kellner



R' Yitzchok Klein



R' Yitzy Melamed



R' Yaakov Moseson



R' Dovid Pollack



R' Nossan Schoss



R' Ari Sommers



R' Yechezkel Wenger



R' Aharon Wilen

CURRENT KOLLEL MEMBERS



R' Elchonon Joseph
Kashrus Administrator, Vaad Hakashrus



R' Yossi Kaplan
Director, Agudah of Colorado



R' Avrohom David Karnowsky
Director of Development, Beth Jacob High School + Rabbi, Aish Kodesh



R' Nesanel Kipper
Director of Development, Hillel Academy



R' Daniel Krausz
Owner, Design Develop, LLC



R' Levi Lebovits
Founder, Vaad Project + Mashpia, Hillel Academy



R' Chaim Leib Lipschutz
7th Grade Rabbi, Hillel Academy



R' Yosef Melamed
Software Developer



R' Eli Mozes
Rabbi, Yeshivas Toras Chaim



R' Yissochor Steinharter
Owner, Highland Properties



R' Akiva Stern
Nursing Home Administrator
Rabbi, Aish Kodesh



R' Yaakov Zions
Kashrus Coordinator, Vaad Hakashrus

CELEBRATING

25 years

FILLED WITH TORAH GROWTH

Sefer PUBLICATION

IN HONOR OF

THE KOLLEL'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY



LOCAL KOLLEL ALUMNI



R' Ari Aragon
Property Management



R' Avraham Abrams
3rd Grade Rabbi, Hillel Academy



R' Yechiel Erlanger
Director of Community Relations,
Aish of the Rockies + Real Estate



R' Mordechai Fleisher
Rov, Congregation Zera Avraham



R' Dovid Gertz
Child & Family Therapist



R' Shmuel Halpern
Rabbi of Young Israel of Denver

Celebrating a memorable milestone reflecting the high-caliber of learning that takes place at The Denver Community Kollel, our yungerleit have collaboratively contributed to the publication of a unique sefer on challah.

OUT OF TOWN ALUMNI

Forging Onward Spreading Outward

When a Kollel member moves somewhere else, they take the Kollel's mission with them. **Across the country, these former Kollel members are learning, teaching and living Torah.**



R' Dov Holczer

Passaic, NJ

10th Grade Rebbi, Yeshiva Sampson
Rephael Hirsch, New York



R' Aryeh Jakubowicz

Scranton, PA

4th Grade Rebbi,
Scranton Hebrew Day School



R' Michel Levitansky

Chicago, IL

12th Grade Rebbi, Mesivta Shaarei Adirim



R' Mordechai Mandel

Cleveland Heights, OH

7th Grade Rebbi, Yehiva Derech Hatorah



R' Chaim Mandelbaum

Chicago, IL

11th Grade Rebbi, Kesser Yona Chicago



R' Zev Chaim Pruzanky

Passaic, NJ

Assistant Principal, Yeshiva Ketana



R' Shlomo Rosenberg

Lakewood, NJ

Project Manager, BP Print Group



R' Gavriel Rudnick

Minneapolis, MN

Staff Accountant with Weinberg Brothers
Investment Company



R' Yehoshua Schwartz

Oak Park, MI

6th Grade Rebbi, Yehiva Beth Yeudah



R' Dovid Schwartzberg

Ramat Beit Shemesh, Israel

Loan Officer

“When a community dedicates a space for the light of concentrated Torah learning, its glow overflows.”

Light always spreads outward. When a community dedicates a space for the light of concentrated Torah learning, its glow overflows.

But spreading Torah wasn't just a happy consequence. Because the Denver Kollel was founded on the burning conviction that “Torah is for every Jew.” No matter who they are or where they come from, every Jew has a birthright - the right to learn Torah.

“We're color blind here,” says Rabbi Schwab. “It doesn't matter what you look like. If you're a Jew and you want to learn Torah, we are here for you.”

And Denver is keeping

them busy. Because 25 years in, Denver is a place where people want to learn Torah.

“As a baal teshuvah, I'm at a level where I need that higher-level in-depth study,”

“It's critical that we have a place where we can keep growing.”

The Denver community holds a constellation of stunning Torah organizations. Together, all have worked to support and strengthen the connection to Torah of countless Jews in the region. The primary component the Kollel sought to add to this shining array was – a bais medrash. A place where Jews could come and imbibe the pure, rarified nourishment of Torah study.

A bais medrash, of course, isn't just a physical space. Excellent, eager students need excellent, eager teachers. Providing these teachers became the Kollel's specialty.

“We can't take credit for the Torah. The only thing we can take credit for is helping people become strong vessels to spread



R' Shlomo Abraham
Passaic, NJ
7th Grade Rebbe, Yeshiva Bais Hillel



R' Yehuda Amsel
Oak Park, MI
Director of Community Relations, Yeshivas Darchei Torah, Detroit



R' Aryeh Erlanger
Edison, NJ
Beis Medrash Rebbe, Edison Yeshiva



R' Chaim Yeshia Freeman
Atlanta, GA
Rov of Netzach Israel + Teacher, Yeshivas Ohr Yisrael & Temima High School



R' Chaim Gobiuff
Lakewood, NJ
5th Grade Rebbe, Lakewood Cheder + Program Coordinator, Torah Umesorah Teacher's Center

“ 25 years in, Denver is studded with radiant Torah partnerships forged between Kollel alumni and the community who’ve embraced them. ”

Denver is a community with discerning taste. Filled with both leaders and individuals passionate about inspiring Jews and their connection to Torah, they’ve embraced the Kollel, turning to its members to help them strengthen community infrastructure.

“They want people with Torah, with shalom, with middos tovot,” says Rabbi Schwab. “And, of course, with talent. The Kollel is like the incubator to develop our scholars into the teachers and leaders our community desires and deserves.”

Rabbi Shmuel Halpern, Rav of Young Israel of Denver, tells the story of one such

partnership:

“When Young Israel was looking for a rabbi, they knew they wanted someone connected to high-level Torah learning and growth. It’s something

“The real key to hashpa’ah is being connected yourself - filling yourself up with Torah, and letting it spread outward.”

that helps set the tone for the shul, for the community, for the community’s children, and that’s what the shul leadership was looking for.”

Rabbi Halpern describes

a bit about how his years in the Kollel primed him for a rabbi’s role. When another shul experienced a gap in leadership, the Kollel stepped in to serve as an address for halachic guidance. “The

Kollel has a very humble leadership, and every scholar gets the chance to become their own person. The primary halachic guide was Rabbi Sommers, but there was a lot of opportunity for me to be involved - in the eiruv, in the mikveh, and just

generally dealing with people and answering questions. This was part of the development I received in the Kollel to help me step in and fill this role.”

At their essence, Rabbi



Rabbi Goldenberg Teaching Learn2Learn



Talmudo Biyado program with Rabbi Wenger

it,” Kollel Director Rabbi Heyman shares. “We like to think of ourselves as a really effective recruiting firm. The young men we bring into the kollel consistently show themselves to be incredibly smart, fine, talented individuals.”

Where do these talents shine? In the bais medrash... and across the community. In study partnerships with community members (“I’m not sure how many chavrusas the kollel alumni and scholars maintain. Probably a mind-boggling number,” remarks one community member). In shiurim delivered at every level to every sector of the community. At social learning events.

“They’re doing from A to Z, with spokes all around the community,” reflects a community member. I guess that’s what sets them apart as a kollel- they’re truly a community kollel. I’m always impressed by how the Kollel manages to pick scholars who become so involved in the community. And they’ve managed to groom each one of them knowing their individual strengths and how they can best contribute to the community.”

“Being part of the kollel allows your personal kochos, strengths, to emerge and develop,” shares one kollel alumnus. “The Kollel pushes your wings outward. Your time in the Kollel, the support they provide, and the home you’ve built there becomes an engine that drives you as you move into the community. Whatever you’re doing, you’re driven by that engine, and you’re empowered to live with a constant achrayus to see how you can make an impact. And though you’re no longer in the kollel, you have the ongoing support of the kollel behind you, helping you accomplish in the community.”

KOLLEL HANHALA



Rabbi Shachne Sommers
Rosh Kollel



Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab
Rosh Kollel



Rabbi Moshe Heyman
CEO/Menahel

Halpern makes clear, the Kollel and his shul share the same goal. “The real key to hashpa’ah (spiritual influence) is being connected yourself - filling yourself up with

session held, every shiur attended, adds brightness to our torch of Torah.

And 25 years in, Denver’s torch is burning brilliantly.

“**Denver is a place where people want to grow. So they’ve watched, taken note, and internalized.**

Torah, and letting it spread outward. That’s what the Kollel does, and that’s what the shul leadership was looking for in a rabbi - someone deeply connected to Torah learning.”

It’s one story, but it’s a microcosm of the greater Denver community’s story. Because 25 years in, Denver is a place where Torah is sought out and strengthened. Where a visionary community partners with their Kollel to build and spread Torah.

25 years in, Denver is studded with radiant Torah partnerships forged between Kollel alumni and the community who’ve embraced them. You’ll find former Kollel scholars - and their wives - in schools and Torah organizations. In shuls across the city. In outreach organizations, both within and beyond the mainstream Denver community. In the kashrus arena.

And then there are the individual-level partnerships - those forged by every Denver resident who’s chosen to enrich their own Torah life by joining the Kollel in Torah study. Most busy American professionals and businessmen spend their evenings and Sundays relaxing. In Denver, you’ll find a holy crowd of them in the Kollel’s batei medrash, dedicating significant time to a Jew’s most precious pursuit. Every learning

A Mile-High Community

**TORAH
LIVING**



Torah is meant to change us as people. As we learn it and teach it, we’re pursuing the ultimate goal of living it. Becoming people of Torah.

Living Torah, and helping others live Torah, makes up the third prong of the Kollel’s mission. And 25 years in, the Denver community has become filled with people committed not just to learning Torah, but to living it too.

“A tremendous amount of credit for this shift goes to our wives and families,” Rabbi Schwab shares. “Watching our scholars and their families living Torah lives has changed the dynamic here. The women of our Kollel transformed the community simply by being who they are.”

“The women of the Kollel, past and present, are beautiful role models,” adds a community member. “Many of them are heavily involved in the community themselves. They signify ahavas Yisrael.

AISH OF THE ROCKIES

&

DENVER COMMUNITY KOLLEL

A Magical Partnership

Some might think that an outreach powerhouse focused on gently nurturing less-knowledgeable Jews, and a Lakewood kollel focused on intense yeshiva-style learning, would operate

on different planes. Here in Denver, however, they've formed a Torah-building partnership which leaves community members in awe of its accomplishments.

"The partnership between Rabbi Meyer and Rabbi Sommers is really remarkable," one shares. "Rabbi Meyer was so welcoming, so proactive in bringing the Kollel to his side of town. And there's such trust between the two organizations. Every time they move together into uncharted territory, it blossoms."

With Aish nurturing the community's Jewish growth, and the Kollel providing a bridge toward more advanced levels of Torah study, "that's the whole key, bringing those two pieces together. After many years, I still pinch myself every day over how unbelievable what we have here is."



Partners in Torah, 2005



Partners in Torah, 2023

NEVER-ENDING GROWTH

Spiritually & Physically



15 years ago, the Kollel settled two families in Southeast Denver, triggering an ongoing growth spurt in the area both numerically and spiritually. 5 years ago, the community reached a major milestone - the opening of its own bais medrash facility. Community members quickly turned the Southeast Kollel Torah Center/Ohel Yissochur into a busy hub of Torah study.

Soon, a wonderful problem developed: the Kollel Torah Center grew too small to accommodate its community. When the property next door went up for sale, the Kollel purchased it and began creating plans for a new, spacious Center. The now-completed renderings show an enlarged main bais medrash, a spacious library, three shiur rooms, and an art room to welcome community youth.

With plans ready for implementation, the Kollel has launched a capital campaign to bring the new Torah Center to reality. "This project represents the next chapter in the Southeast Jewish community's growth," Rosh Kollel Rabbi Schachne Sommers says. "Working together as a united community, Hashem's blessings will surely rest on our efforts, helping us continue building Torah to ever-greater heights."



“ Together, we've formed an oasis where Torah flourishes. ”

They're just friends with everyone, regardless of background. And their value for Torah, their pride in their husbands' learning, is something you can feel.”

Denver is a place where people want to grow. So they've watched, taken note, and internalized.

“25 years ago, there was only a handful of people in line to buy a mehadrin esrog for Succos,” Rabbi Schwab recounts. “Today, there are dozens and dozens.”

Rabbi Schwab and fellow Kollel leaders Rabbi Sommers and Rabbi Heyman describe watching the community climb spiritual mountains throughout the range of Torah living. They describe how community members have transformed and elevated their approach to Shabbos. How they've shifted time from other hobbies to prioritize Torah learning. How they've inspired each other in raising their standards of kashrus. How they've chosen ever-more-serious schools and yeshivos for their children.

And how today, many of these children fill seats in kollels across the globe.

In a way, the Denver Kollel's journey reflects the community's own Torah journey. “It used to be that the Kollel was a nice addition, an enhancement,” Rabbi Schwab observes. “Today, it's become a central community pillar.” 25 years ago, the people of Denver enhanced their lives with sprinklings of Torah. Today, they give it central importance, and live that conviction.

Denver's Next Mission

THE MISSION CONTINUES

It's been 25 years of building. 25 years of a community coming together behind the most precious of missions - the mission to strengthen Torah. Organizations. Individuals. Long-time kollel alumni. Newcomers to the bais medrash. Together, we've formed an oasis where Torah flourishes. We've strengthened and supported each other's efforts to bring Torah to everyone who seeks it, creating a Torah infrastructure that makes Denver a place where any Jew can grow and thrive.

Mazel tov, Denver. This is your simcha - our simcha together.

On November 28, we'll mark our simcha with a celebration. And we'll celebrate in a way that reflects and promotes the Torah mission we share.

Together, represented by 160 community members, we'll complete the entire Shas.

Together, on November 28, we'll learn the last several pages. We'll celebrate our accomplishment with a gala community-wide Siyum Hashas.

And together, we'll recite the famous tefillah, “Hadran Alach.” We return to you, precious Torah study. Because together, we've built a community with a tireless commitment to Torah growth.

And together, we'll continue growing.



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11.28.2023

שישן ושמו LEARNING SHAS... Together בשמחת תורה

The Denver community gathered on November 28th to celebrate a community-wide Siyum Hashas held in celebration of the Denver Community Kollel's 25th anniversary. "Instead of a dinner, we thought it would be better to celebrate 25 years of Torah with even more Torah" said Rabbi Moshe Heyman, CEO of the Kollel, at the Seudas Mitzvah. Over 175 lomdim across Denver joined together to complete all 2711 blatt of shas in 8 short weeks. Some took dozens of blatt, others learned their first blatt in their

life. This diverse collaboration was noted by Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab, Rosh Kollel "Together, we wove a tapestry of communal limud hatorah which paints a picture of a community that is united through Torah. What a magnificent Kiddush Hashem!"

Rabbi Sroy Levitansky, Director of Ichud Hakollelim who was the Keynote speaker highlighted the transformation of a community with Torah at its heart.

