
NORTHWEST HOME FOR THE AGED /PARK PLAZA SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT
CHICAGO-AREA
JEWISH EDUCATION WITH MULTI-YEAR GRANTS

Chicago, IL -- Northwest Home for the Aged (NWA) and PARK PLAZA have embarked on a groundbreaking, cross generational effort totaling \$11 million to support and sustain Jewish day school education across the Chicago Jewish community. This unprecedented multi-year gift builds on NWA's ethos of service to the Chicago Jewish community for more than 75 years and its mission of providing high quality housing for Jewish seniors. NWA's flagship facility is Park Plaza, an independent living community located on the far north side of Chicago.

The gift follows a strategic decision by NWA to take advantage of the current robust real estate market and sell an investment property that, although valuable, was not part of its core mission. The sale and its proceeds ensured that two vital goals would be met. First, that Northwest Home for the Aged, at its key PARK PLAZA property, would continue to provide the highest quality independent living for Jewish seniors across metropolitan Chicago. Secondly, that other critical needs within the Jewish community -- specifically, Jewish day school education-- would receive vital support over an extended time horizon.

After deep consideration, the NWA board devised a plan to allocate \$11 million in funding over a five-year period to three recipients: The Associated Talmud Torahs' REACH program, Solomon Schechter Day School of Metropolitan Chicago (SSDS), and Chicago Jewish Day School (CJDS). This funding, structured as endowments, will maximize each institution's impact and ensure their long-term sustainability. It will also enable each institution to build further capacity from their respective base of supporters. Like Park Plaza itself, these institutions serve Jewish families and school children across the broad spectrum of the Chicago Jewish community.

"The Hebrew words "l'dor v'dor" are literally inscribed into the doors at Park Plaza," said Alan Caplan, president of Northwest Home for the Aged. "From generation to generation; that's what we believe in, as individuals and as part of the Jewish community, and that's exactly what this gift is: a gift that gives from one generation to the next, and the next after that. We at NWA/Park Plaza are thrilled to make these gifts to support Jewish education in and around our communities."

The grantees fill important roles in Jewish education across the Chicago area. The Associated Talmud Torahs (ATT), founded in 1929, is the central agency dedicated exclusively to Torah education. Indeed, Chicago is the only Jewish community in North America that has such a resource. ATT's REACH program focuses specifically on services for children who learn differently, building the capacity of the Chicagoland Jewish day school system to effectively teach students with a wide range of needs, allowing those students access not only to a meaningful general education, but one which incorporates Jewish learning. The other grantees, Solomon Schechter Day School, in Northbrook, founded in 1962, and Chicago Jewish Day School, in Chicago, founded in 2003, are both pre-school through grade eighth grade Jewish day schools. (CJDS begins with a junior kindergarten program). Both schools serve a diverse Jewish population.

Judy Finkelstein-Taff, CJDS Head of School, said of the NWAH/Park Plaza gift, "It seems very poignant to me as we look at the cycle of our lives and think about how we stand on the shoulders of the ones who came before us. We educate our students to celebrate the diversity of their present, and our students become the next generation of shoulders for their children to stand on. This gift will not only ensure the future of our school, but in a sense, it is ensuring the future of the Jewish people."

Lena Kushnir, SSDS Head of School, also reflected on the importance of the Park Plaza grant to Schechter. "Both my husband and I are Schechter alumni and are parents of two alumni. As a former Schechter teacher and current Head of School, I can say with great certainty that a Schechter education is invaluable. The foundation that Schechter provides is the bedrock upon which we live our lives. It is simply the best gift I've ever received or given. Yet, while the Schechter experience is invaluable, there is a real cost to being able to provide this strong and critical foundation to students and families. The gift from NWAH/Park Plaza to our endowment fund will enable us to provide vital tuition assistance and ensure that more parents will be able to provide their children with a strong Jewish educational foundation. We are deeply grateful to NWAH/Park Plaza for this tremendous gift."

The NWAH/Park Plaza grant will have a far-reaching impact on ATT's REACH program. Rusi Sukenik, REACH's director of student services noted, "This endowment enables us to provide support to schools and teachers to teach struggling learners in a manner that best fits the student and addresses the needs and learning styles and needs of each student." Rabbi Mordechai Raizman, ATT's Executive Director of Operations added, "An endowment of this magnitude impacts our day school community in a profound manner. It ensures that no parent will worry that their child is falling through the cracks. This grant gives everyone a chance to succeed. Programs such as REACH are very costly to sustain. This grant is visionary in its nature and will allow us to provide for children for many years to come."

Jewish diversity, inclusion, and acceptance are the hallmarks of NWAH/Park Plaza. The community's residents span the spectrum of Jewish observance and experience. Many are lifelong Chicagoans. Others have moved to Chicago to be close to adult children and to enjoy a secure, supportive, and fully modern and updated facility. Park Plaza provides a rich Jewish life that includes broad based programming as well as kosher meal service. Park Plaza recently completed a major renovation to allow it to continue to provide a high quality of life to its residents.

The cross-generational aspects of Park Plaza are obvious the moment one enters. "Local schoolkids, grandkids, great-grandkids ... they're here all the time," said Elly Bauman, Executive Director of Park Plaza. "Kids are here to celebrate Shabbat and holidays, to visit relatives, and to volunteer. It's part of what helps us fulfill our mission of providing Jewish seniors with a life that's not just comfortable, but which has dignity and meaning."

"It's just really what Park Plaza and Northwest Home for the Aged are all about," added Alan Caplan. "We put 'l'dor v'dor' front and center, the first thing you see when you enter the building, whether you're a resident or a first-time visitor. It's what grounds the Jewish community. Northwest Home for the Aged couldn't be more pleased to put our primary principle into action with these gifts. They are investments in the future of our community."

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