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Celebrating Life.  Jewishly.

A New Community, A New Approach

The Living Room is Chabad's new center in Chicago's vibrant Bucktown/Wicker Park community. The Living Room was designed to take the typical Jewish community center or synagogue concept to a new level, for a new audience. While it provides all the traditional services of any Chabad center, its driving force is to reach post-college, unaffiliated Jews in their 20s and 30s, seeking social and spiritual connectivity in a manner that is consistent with their culture, age and values.

In addition to providing religious services, Chabad of Bucktown also serves as an engaging and vibrant physical space for events and activities which are diverse and wide ranging thereby meeting post-college young adults where they are at in life. These vary from weekly Parshah classes to roundtable discussions on Business Ethics; from seminars where one can learn how to bake challah to informational tutorials on how to make Shabbat candles; from small-group events such as "Holy Hour Happy Hour" to our huge "Wicker Purim" celebration, which draws in hundreds of guests every year.

Chabad of Bucktown strives to provide a myriad of outstanding cultural experiences and activities to appeal to the broad spectrum of our community while also providing its members with a truly Jewish experience. In short, Chabad of Bucktown is devoted to serving its constituency with excellence as well as authenticity.



What is Chabad?

Chabad is the short name for Chabad Lubavitch. Chabad Lubavitch is a Chassidic movement based in Brooklyn, with adherents throughout the world. Originating in Russia during the 18th century, Chabad Lubavitch has grown from a small movement into a worldwide phenomenon. Today there are over 3,300 Chabad Centers in 75 countries. Chabad of Bucktown is one of thirty Centers in Illinois.



Meeting Our Community's Need

Students embraced Jewish life and energy on campus and have nowhere to run with it.

Bucktown/Wicker Park is considered by many to be the hippest community in Chicago, populated mostly by young professionals, artists, and musicians.. The nexus of the community, the intersection Milwaukee, Damen and North Avenues, is known as “The Six Corners” and is filled with chic restaurants, trendy bars, exclusive nightclubs, stylish boutiques and unique art galleries. It is just a few feet away from this very corner that Chabad purchased a building intended to be the new Chabad Center, rendering it the only Jewish institution in the neighborhood.

The Bucktown/Wicker Park community consists largely of singles in their 20's and 30's, typically right out of college. In the Jewish community, we provide significant investment in the cultural and spiritual

life on college campuses and with college age-Jews.

Yet oftentimes once the young people leave college, there is simply no where to channel the Jewish energy and passions, which we so carefully cultivated on campus. Synagogues, which often consist mainly of older congregants and families with children, lack appeal and programming for this group. As a result, these “twenty-something”s find themselves in limbo.

Neither resources directed toward campus Jewish life nor those dedicated to synagogue development reach them, and they lack places where they feel comfortable expressing themselves Jewishly.

They are in a transitional stage of life and have a hard time affiliating themselves and assuming leadership roles. We need to make certain that they have a comfortable place to build on their college experience and grow their lifelong interest in their Yiddishkeit. This is especially true at a time when people are increasingly more disconnected and in a state of “bowling alone” (a term used by Harvard professor Robert Putnam), essentially disconnected from the fabric of a community.

We, at Chabad of Bucktown, feel that these times are essential and formative in their growing sense of Jewish commitment. **We are here to help build a strong bridge between college and family life — an essential step to creating a strong Jewish future.**

Chicago, with its big city attitude and diverse job opportunities, is a central location for relocating after graduating. We are here to ensure that their Jewish commitment is a lasting one.





The Living Room in Action

“The Living Room” is meant to be a place where anyone can walk in and immediately feel at home. It is designed to be a place where people feel comfortable coming in for a quick visit or spending as much time there as they wish; hence, the name “Living Room.”

Our goal is to create a space where the young, hip Jews of Wicker Park can meet and mingle with each other within an atmosphere that can only be referred to as a genuinely “chill vibe.” “The Living Room” will be a place where young Jews gravitate; not only to learn about their religious and cultural heritage, but also to connect to one another on a personal level.

To ensure an inviting atmosphere, “The Living Room” will offer an area with the sort of environment young professionals already seek out, such as a combination café/art gallery with free Wi-Fi. The art gallery will cater to the many budding artists in the area and serve as yet another avenue for the unaffiliated

to express their Jewishness in art, while giving them a chance to meet other Jewish artists and display their art. Essentially, this will be “the place” where residents and visitors to Bucktown can come to enjoy their morning coffee or pastry, check out paintings by local artists, relax after work with a cup of tea or check their email or Facebook.

Furthermore, we have become aware that many of these young, local professionals are getting married and starting families, and a demand exists for top-quality Jewish child care and education within the community. “The Living Room” will therefore meet this need by featuring a preschool and a Hebrew school, as well as a women’s mikvah in the near future for the growing families in the neighborhood.

Moreover, in fulfilling “The Living Room’s” vision, Chabad of Bucktown plans to create four hospitality suites where members and visitors alike can stay and feel at home. It will appeal to local residents who need a place to stay for Shabbat and to traveling businessmen and international backpackers frequenting the area.

In a place as cutting-edge and avant-garde as Bucktown/Wicker Park, it is essential to always have fresh ideas. One of our new, innovative ideas is to provide more events and activities outdoors in the fresh air. For several years now our ongoing “Shabbat on the Roof” events have been some of Chabad’s most popular summertime happenings, packing the roof with people from across Chicagoland. In the past, legroom at these events has been a hot commodity. However, the roof at “The Living Room” building is immense and will enable us to continue these



traditions on a previously unimaginable scale. Plans for the new roof include building a colossal deck for special events, outdoor lounge areas for small gatherings, a massive outdoor viewing screen for multimedia presentations as well as a playground/ play area for the preschool.

In addition to being the focal point for the Bucktown/Wicker Park Jewish community,

“The Living Room” is intended to be a premier gathering place for all residents of the neighborhood and Chicagoland at large. For that reason, Chabad of Bucktown aims to open its doors to other groups and individuals interested in throwing public or private events. The various facilities of “The Living Room,” being designed specifically to host large as well as small scale functions, are perfectly suited for multi-purpose public use. Renting space for events and functions to the general paying public has potential to become a great source of revenue as well for Chabad of Bucktown/Wicker Park.

“The Living Room” also offers opportunities for retail space on the first floor, along with a full-service kosher restaurant, completely unique for the Wicker Park area, as well as the whole downtown metropolitan area, ensuring a definite success.



Our Commitment

Chabad of Bucktown/Wicker Park has already succeeded in establishing itself as an indispensable part of Chicago Jewish life for young adults over the past year. We have developed a brand name for ourselves, and more importantly a successful model for catering to young Jews. We have also created a Jewish institution in a neighborhood that lacks other Jewish institutions. More than that, we have created an environment that inspires young Jews to reach out to other young Jews. We are building a community with a life of its own. We're making Jewish life relevant and giving young Jews an opportunity to find their own voice in expressing themselves religiously.

Rabbi Yosef and his wife and partner Sara's dynamic, warm personalities, coupled with their absolute dedication and commitment to the Jews in the neighborhood are drawing in large crowds to their Shabbat dinners and holiday events. They open doors of opportunities to those people who never thought themselves fit to organize and hold leadership roles in our events. As a result these individuals gain ownership of the project and acquire a sense of commitment that just makes them come back for more. Consequently, they feel compelled to involve their friends as well, creating a positive ripple effect.

We have engaged our participants in planning and building the center from the ground up. Our events have strong leadership committees and engage the young leaders of tomorrow – a group that is arguably the hardest demographic to engage in as the “bowling alone” attitude becomes more and more the norm. These individuals are not the CEO's who have



a comfortable living and are looking to get fame, nor are they the campus student boards that have embraced their home away from home.

Chabad of Bucktown has specifically molded its identity to fit with the dynamics of its neighborhood. Young professionals make up the core of Chabad of Bucktown's most active members. Many of these young professionals are also artists, musicians and general "bohemian types" adding a distinct character and one-of-a-kind flavor to all of Chabad of Bucktown's ventures. These unique, talented and artistic individuals come together at Chabad of Bucktown to give a whole new meaning to the words "Jewish Community."

Our past four years speak for themselves. Close to one thousand people walk through our doors annually, a sure testimony of our growth strategy. What makes our Chabad unique, and drives our success, is a strong core of committed regulars who not only show up, but drive the very character and direction of our programming. As much as we do use traditional advertising, we have found that the tremendous numbers that show up at our events are brought to us by powerful word-of-mouth. Facebook users, for example, invite their friends to our events who then invite their friends and so on. Through our lay-leaders, we have developed an aesthetic and a reputation for being hip, fun, and real. Even our promotional graphics are created in-house.

The following are a few key examples of our most unique and successful events:

Wicker Purim

Wicker Purim, among the largest of the Purim parties in Chicago, has seen an audience of over 300 people. In just two years it has become an established phenomenon. The religious experience is engaging through use of live video, artistic flourishes, and an enticing location, and perhaps its greatest success is that its artistic and avant garde appeal brings in an audience who otherwise wouldn't be comfortable at a typical Jewish event.



Holy Hour, Happy Hour

Born out of a coffee shop conversation, Holy Hour Happy Hour is our most original event. The event is hosted by volunteers in the community who then promote it themselves. It consists of a quick Friday night Shabbat service followed by a kiddush consisting of beer and kosher snacks. People come for the prayer and stay for the schmoozing. The idea is to build a grass-roots community around a fun and spiritual activity where people can participate without necessarily making an all-night time commitment. Those who are interested can then join us for a dinner at our house. In just three months, the turnout to Holy Hour Happy Hour has doubled. We hope to see this event grow from once-a-month to a genuine, home-grown minyan every week.



Shabbat on the Roof & Hookah in the Sukkah

“Shabbat on the Roof” is a traditional Shabbat meal with an angle. We hold it on the roof of our house, with the Chicago skyline as a backdrop. Offered during the summer months, Shabbat on the Roof brings the largest crowds among our monthly Shabbatons. Likewise, we use this excellent feature of our Chabad House to host our annual Sukkah party, complete with hookah, live music and food. “Hookah in the Sukkah” brings over 100 people.



Realizing the Vision

Chabad secured our centrally-located building in early 2010 with generous support from local donors. We are now seeking donors interested in partnering with us to realize the full vision and potential of the Living Room. We are looking for gifts at multiple levels with the ultimate goal of \$3.2 million over the next five years.

“The Living Room” venture creates a unique opportunity to donors due to the economics of the project. The acquisition of the property for a third of the asking price, in addition to the high retail value on the ground level, as well as outdoor media signage should render the building self-sustaining, enabling us to reach our goal by raising only a third of the total project.

Once the entire \$3.2 million is raised, there will be a steady flow of income to help cover the operational budget.



Concept Plans

Rooftop

Event venue, Sukkah, and play area



Second Floor

Hospitality suites, conference room, and Rabbi's living quarters



First Floor

Art gallery, synagogue, preschool area and offices



Ground Floor

Car park, retail space, storage, and event venue



Be a Partner in Our Collective Future

Major Living Tributes, Memorials and Endowment Opportunities

Dedications, memorials, and endowments are sincere expressions of respect and esteem. They perpetuate the honor of a family name, the good works of an individual, or the memory of a loved one. They will serve through the years as an inspiration to us and future generations.

Naming Opportunities

Building Dedication	\$1,000,000
Preschool Dedication	\$500,000
Sanctuary Dedication	\$360,000
Green Roof Outdoor Event Center	\$360,000
Living Quarters	\$250,000
Coffee Shop/Art Gallery	\$250,000
Mikvah	\$250,000
Jewish Center Security	\$200,000
Commercial Kitchen	\$100,000
Playground	\$100,000
Aron Kodesh	\$75,000
Library	\$75,000
Rabbi's Study	\$50,000
Classrooms (2)	\$30,000
Hospitality Rooms (4)	\$25,000
Bookcases	\$5,000
Dedication on Founders Wall	\$1,800

Total Building Campaign Goal: \$3,200,000

Contact Information

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In just a few years, Chabad of Bucktown / Wicker Park has seen tremendous growth and success. Building on our working formula, we intend to nurture the vibrant community in our neighborhood and to develop ourselves as a space where young post-grad Jews feel comfortable.

In order to create such a Jewish oasis, we need more space. We have already far exceeded the capacity of our modest Chabad house. Regular crowds for our monthly dinner are now so large we can no longer comfortably fit them.

Although the real estate market is weak across the board, in this neighborhood the prices have held steady and an average single-family home (let alone something big enough to accommodate our programs) is over one million dollars. We need your help as a donor to great Jewish causes. With the right resources, we can provide our community with tools to expand and develop new and innovative programs. Most importantly, we can establish this new center, with enough space for our continued, fast-paced growth.

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