

NEWSLETTER ISSUE NO. 2

# THE CHAI CENTER NEWSLETTER

ARTICLE FROM THE SUN SENTINEL

## VACANT RESTAURANT BUILDING TO BECOME CHAI CENTER CHABAD

March 10, 2014 | By David A. Schwartz, Staff Writer

For two years Rabbi Hershy Bronstein tried to buy the vacant Buffalo Southwestern Café building at 5761 Coral Ridge Drive to convert it into a Chabad synagogue. But it took the help of an evangelical Christian and divine providence to make the purchase happen.

Late last year real estate broker Harold White, 76, of Miami, was walking from his car to the building to put up a "for sale" banner when he tripped and fell, hitting his head on the concrete sidewalk.

Bronstein and his wife Chanie had just left the storefront Chabad synagogue in the nearby shopping center and were driving to the building when they saw White lying on the sidewalk.

Chanie Bronstein brought a bottle of water to White. "I got up and took a drink and kind of brushed myself off," White said. "[Bronstein] said, 'You don't need to put [the building] on the market. I've been trying to buy it for two years.'" They went to the Chabad Synagogue of Coral Springs and briefly negotiated the sale price of the foreclosed building.

At 9 a.m. the next day, White brought over a contract.

Bronstein calls White malach [angel]. "He was determined to get it done," Bronstein said. "I believe it was held for us. Hashem gave us a gift."

"I know God works in ways that we don't always understand," said White, a longtime member of Christ Journey Church in Coral Gables.

There was a month-long delay over a zoning problem but the building sold for about \$1.5 million, slightly below owner Wells Fargo's asking price, on Dec. 17 of last year.

During that time, White and Bronstein became friends. "I became very fond of the rabbi," White said. "We like each other. He's a very sweet man. I think we'll be friends until the lord calls me home."

Bronstein, 33, who grew up in Miami Beach, was considering a five year stint as a Chabad rabbi in Germany when he was invited in 2005 to start the Chabad in the Heron Bay area as an independent offshoot of the Chabad of Coral Springs.

The new Chabad grew from a few couples who met in the rabbi's apartment to a small congregation that met in a school classroom, then to sharing a store in The Shoppes of Heron Lakes and finally to renting a storefront in the shopping center.

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE BUILDING CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

### We're Building A Home. Come Join Us!

Floridians enjoy long sunny days amongst scenic views complete with palm trees and ponds. But when all is said and done, isn't it wonderful to come home at the end of the day? Conversations with friends are often peppered with talk of what work is being done on your homes and all choices are made with loving care and much thought. Rabbi Bronstein of The Chai Center Chabad invites the community to build its spiritual home and wants it to be just as beautiful as your own homes, a centerpiece of the community drawing in anyone looking for an authentic Jewish experience.

Rabbi Heshey and Rebbetzin Chanie Bronstein have made quite an impact on the community in their relatively short time here, welcoming everyone—whether to their small apartment, little storefront, or rented, transitional space—for prayer services, learning, advice, and more. For the upcoming High Holidays, they would like to welcome everyone to the Chai Center Chabad on 5761 Coral Ridge Drive.

Imagine the strong blast of the shofar echoing throughout the beautiful modern sanctuary in a building designed by world class architect Itamar Goldenholz of Goldenholz & Associates Architects & Planners. Imagine driving your little children to a bright, colorful early childhood center with plenty of playspace and an environment which sparks learning and knowing they will receive a top notch Jewish and secular education.

Imagine an opulent, elegant catering hall to host special occasions without having to sacrifice kosher food.

As Theodore Herzl noted, "If you will it, it is no dream." This dream is well on its way to becoming reality after acquiring the building, making the down payment, receiving the certificate of occupancy, and even affixing an attention drawing menorah to the front. Now, \$370,000 is what stands between this "dream" and "reality."

All contributions are welcome but keep in mind this is an investment in your spiritual home and try to dig a little deeper, if possible. With just a few months to go, the community cannot afford to have anyone stand on the sidelines and need everyone's involvement in this community project.

Please visit [www.ChabadSynagogue.com/CapitalCampaign](http://www.ChabadSynagogue.com/CapitalCampaign) for sponsorship opportunities for every budget.





The original article, published in the Sun Sentinel on March 23, 2014

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"Every time [the rabbi] made a move, we thought he was crazy and he pulled it off," said Steven Kravatsky of Coral Springs, whose family was one of the few that started the Chabad.

"The rabbi is just an amazing guy," said Kravatsky, a member of the synagogue's executive advisory committee. "He's incredibly persistent and smart. He doesn't let challenges deter him. He just carries on through. He goes step-by-step through the process. He has a goal [and] he wants to obtain the goal."

Bronstein said the building was desperately needed for a congregation of more than 200 families that was outgrowing the 1,300 square foot storefront synagogue and renting space in another building for its Hebrew school.

He said he saw the potential in the vacant building. "You've got to create a vessel and you believe," Bronstein said.

"It's been a dream of the rabbi. We used to joke. We knew we had to have that building," said member Allen Kopelman, of Margate. "The building was a major landmark. It's important to have a presence," he said.

A lighted menorah at the top of the building can be seen from the street. Bronstein said the Chai Center Chabad soon will have a sign.

An architect has created plans for the renovation of the building and a cocktail event on April 6 will launch a \$1.8 million capital campaign.

For more information about the Chai Center Chabad, visit [mychaicenter.com](http://mychaicenter.com) or call 954-341-9511.



## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### What progress has been made with the Building and Capital campaign since the purchase of the Chai Center seven months ago?

Much has been accomplished since we purchased the property on December 31, 2013. First, we worked closely with the city of Coral Springs to obtain a change-of-use permit for the property. We were also granted a certificate of occupancy and business license. We renovated and enhanced the exterior of the property, including painting the building, resurfacing the parking lot, installing signage and updating the landscaping. Finally, working together with the building committee, architect, and engineers we completed the building plans and submitted them for permits.

### When does construction begin, and how long will it take to complete the new Chai Center Building?

Construction will begin the right after Yom Kippur. The general contractor estimates that the work will take between four to six months. During that time, all prayer services, programs and Hebrew school classes will continue to take place at the Chai Center. We are working to make sure that at all times there will be rooms to accommodate our programs.

### What are some of the major changes the Building and Capital campaign will accomplish?

We are actually demolishing 90 percent of the interior. Practically everything is being redone, from the electrical system to the structural components. In addition, we are building classrooms for Gan Shalom Preschool and for Hebrew School. We are adding bathroom, a warming kitchen, a playground, revamping the synagogue furniture and much more.

### What are some of the highlights planned for the Preschool and Education Wing?

This is a very exciting part of the project. The school will feature state-of-the-art classroom furniture, a beautiful playground with special rubberized flooring, etc. We are also focusing on a dedicated faculty and creating a strong curriculum. With only limited spaces, each child will truly thrive. Our goal is to enable each child to reach his or her fullest potential.

### What are some of the highlights planned for the synagogue sanctuary and multipurpose room?

This part of the project is the most complicated, but at the same time it will give the Chai Center tremendous flexibility. The creation of this large space requires a beam insertion in the ceiling. The beam insertion will allow us to open the wall, and give us a very large room. Together with a custom designed hufcor movable partition, the room can be used for many different setting and layouts. Thus, we will be able to host and even cater all sorts of lifecycle events

### What are the goals of the Capital Campaign during this phase?

The goal is simple: raise funds to cover the cost, without taking on new debt. We anticipate the project will cost between \$370,000 and \$400,000. So far, our Capital Campaign goals were reached. We raised \$350,000, most of which went for the down payment; the rest was used for the exterior work.

### Is there anything planned for when the construction is complete?

Yes! Once the construction is complete, we will be inviting the entire local Jewish community, together with dignitaries and donors, for a grand opening ribbon cutting and community celebration. Let's join together so we can make this happen soon!

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN PROGRESS METER

**Goal** \$1.8 million

**Phase one: \$350,000** - Down Payment - Completed

**Phase two: \$350,000** - Construction and Renovation - Ongoing.

**Phase three: \$1.1 million** - Pay Off Mortgage - To Be Announced

## SAVE THE DATE

**Oct 2014** - Launch of Capital Campaign

**Dec 2014** - A Charidy! Fundraiser

**April 2015** - Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening Celebration

**August 2015** - 10 year Anniversary Dinner - Celebrating a Decade of Community Service

**Sep 2015** - Grand opening of the Gan Shalom Preschool

For Additional Information Please visit [www.MyChaiCenter.com](http://www.MyChaiCenter.com) or call the Chai Centers Office at 954-341-9511