

Yeshiva Elementary Summary Report

Information about the Applicant

Yeshiva Elementary School (YES) is a K-8 school in the diverse, historic, and occasionally troubled Milwaukee neighborhood of Sherman Park. YES was founded in 1989 and serves as an anchor for the neighborhood's Jewish community, which is a key part of the diversity and stability of Sherman Park. Yeshiva Elementary School was initiated by members of the Orthodox Jewish Community of Milwaukee with the following objectives as their goals:

- To teach elementary school children Torah and Mitzvos (commandments) in accordance with the ideals and aspirations of Torah as elucidated by the Sages of Israel in order to provide excellence in Orthodox Jewish education which will prepare our children to attend the finest seminaries, Yeshivos and institutions of Jewish higher learning.
- To provide our children with a strong foundation in General Studies that demonstrates understanding and excellence and provides a basis for advancement into any college preparatory high school.
- To provide an educational institution which will encourage and attract Jewish families to move to Milwaukee.
- To foster meaningful Jewish ideals that promote faith and respect in the global community.
- To advance values embodied in Judaism that inspire distinguished moral and ethical behavior.
- To shape young lives in the observance of Torah, Mitzvos (commandments) and in character refinement as modeled by personalities that were and are Torah champions.

YES was founded by volunteers to serve the needs of the community. Our mission calls on us to provide each child looking for a Jewish education with the services and supports he or she needs to succeed. If there were to be a child in a wheelchair that we needed to turn away or we needed to exclude from key parts of our program, we would be failing in our mission.

Statement of Need

We are requesting \$10,000 to help us install a wheelchair lift to make our gym/lunchroom and two classrooms accessible to those who can't walk up or down the stairs.

Project Goals and Expected Benefits

Provide a wheelchair lift to make the lunch room more accessible. There have been several examples of students whose participation was forfeit from a lack of the lift.

In Spring of 2022, we had a child who spent a few months in a wheelchair as he recovered from a leg injury. During these months, he was unable to join his classmates in the lunchroom, in the gym during recess, and in our library and prayer room. Because the building doesn't have a practical way from him to get to these key locations, he missed out on programs, opportunities, and social interactions. He even missed a full-school assembly, as the gym is the only room that is large enough to hold all of our students.

The second event was the school's annual Grandparents' Day, when approximately 60 grandparents and other special friends join our students for a morning of programming, activities, and fun. There were several grandparents in attendance with limited mobility, including Mr. Fred Askotzky and Mrs. Roberta Goldner.

Project Implementation Plan

This lift will go in one of the main stairways leading to the gym/lunchroom/multi-purpose room and provide easy, safe, and quick access to this area. The lift we will install will fold up against a wall when not in use, so it will be reserved for disabled seniors like Mr. Fred Askotzky and Mrs. Roberta Goldner, and any future students who may have a disability that impacts their mobility.

We are ready to move ahead with the project, once funding is secured. The full cost of this project is projected to be \$30,000. We are just beginning efforts to fundraise for this project. We typically raise approximately \$550,000 annually for operating costs, and we are aiming to fund this project with additional fundraising for our parents, alumni, and friends.

Once we have funding, the project will be straightforward: we have already determined the vendor and the location. The vendor will need just a day or two for the installation. We expect that the installation can happen even while school is in session; if for some reason it can't, we typically have no trouble scheduling our vendors for winter break, spring break, or after-hours.

Evaluation Plan

As the scope of this project is narrow, the evaluation of the project will be straightforward: if the wheelchair lift successfully allows those in wheelchairs or other mobility limitations to easily and quickly access the gym wing, we have succeeded.

Budget

Wheelchair Lift: Project Budget

Installation of Wheelchair Lift, including parts and labor\$30,000

Staff Recommendation

The grant can be recommended for approval. The installation will directly benefit disabled students attending the school providing access to parts of the building that are currently off limits. The grant aligns with the initiatives of the foundation.