

Solomon Project Update
Greg Sterling, March 2010

As I write this article, the Winter Olympics are in full swing. I'm always struck by the athletes that talk about how they were driven by their big goals. Yes, they had ups and downs along the way, but they were always focused on their goals and they were committed to accomplishing them. I would say that the Solomon Project is now on the "final lap" before we can begin construction on our big goal. I'm confident when we look back, after we finish this project, we will be very proud as a community that we accomplished a very big goal that at times seemed too big for us. In this article, I want to give you an update on where we stand as we move closer to our goal of starting construction for the first phase of the Solomon Project.

We have divided our efforts in two major parts: fundraising and design. I would like to talk about fundraising first. As I write this article we have received pledges just above \$2.9M. There are several families that we have spoken to who are in the final stage of deciding how much they will pledge, and even more families that we still need to talk to. We believe we have a reasonable and doable path to achieving our fundraising goals.

I have to be honest and say that while the fundraising is going well, it is also a process that is taking longer than I expected. We are coming to a key decision point during the month of March. That is when we need to decide when to submit our plans for a building permit. When we apply for a building permit, we will need to pay significant building permit fees. We obviously prefer to pay permit fees when we are confident of our start date, which still hinges on fundraising. Given that, our fundraising team will be working very hard during the month of March to meet with as many families as we can. When we are confident that our pledges will cover all the construction and financing costs, we will set a start date and then apply for the permits. If things go according to our plans, we would like to start construction in late May and hopefully be finished with construction by the end of this calendar year.

Here comes my request to you. Please help us get to this exciting decision point. When a Beth Jacob member who is working on the fundraising team reaches out to you, please take their call (or reply to their e-mail). We are creating something very special, and I'm sure you will want to be a part of it. Certainly we recognize that everyone's financial circumstances are unique; however, at the same time, this is an opportunity to be a part of something special, and it is a meaningful way to be a steward for our community.

On the design front, the design team has been working very hard to address the many aspects of this project. I'm very excited how the design has evolved and improved, and I'm confident you will be impressed. It meets our goal of building within our means and maintaining the style of the existing building. At the same time, it will be beautiful, fresh, and modern. We have some design touches that will make this first phase very special and practical at the same time. As with all building projects, we will not be able to do all the things that we have on our wish list because we intend to stay within our budget.

When I step back and look at the number of people involved in this project, I'm struck by the broad support and commitment of so many Beth Jacob members to improving our spiritual home that we hold so dear and share together. We have come far together on this important project. I truly believe WE CAN DO THIS. I look forward to celebrating our success together when we finish it.