

• SPOTLIGHT •

# JEWISH FEDERATION'S BEAUTIFUL NEW CAMPUS & EVENT CENTER

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In 2018, the board of the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee began envisioning and discussing new additions to their campus. As one of America’s fastest growing Jewish communities, it was vital that they expand to offer more to the local Jewish community and the surrounding Sarasota-Bradenton community.

Five years later, their plans have come to fruition, with a beautiful, extensive new campus and event center that encompasses 16 acres. It also houses 30,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor premium event space. In addition, a security and training center, renovated office space, and a Holocaust Memorial Garden are also part of the many changes to the Federation’s campus.

One of the most prominent features of the new Morganroth Event Center is the 10,000-sq. ft. Kaplan Community Hall, which accommodates up to 500 individuals for a seated meal or 1,000 participants for lecture-style occasions. Rooms of this size are in high demand in our two-county area and, as a result, this creates a unique value proposition for the Federation.

Other notable features of the Morganroth Event Center include the expansive Mitchell Family Lobby, which will

provide space for pre-or post-event receptions for as many as 300 participants and multi-purpose rooms that can be arranged into one large or two separate rooms to accommodate groups of various sizes.

According to Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee CEO Shep Englander, the Morganroth Event Center is a necessity in this community.

“The Sarasota region is facing a shortage of premier event venues in our fast-growing region, especially for large catered events with 400 or more attendees,” Englander said. “This shortage will get worse with the Hyatt being torn down this summer.”

The event center is unique in its size and ability to meet the needs of small and large family and life-cycle events, celebrations, galas, organizational programs, as well as business meetings and conferences.

A common complaint Englander hears from people in the community when it comes to event venues is a lack of convenient parking, resulting in long and frustrating wait times. Englander points out that this is another situation (added to the shortage of event venues) that



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will get worse. The Federation was keenly aware of this ongoing problem and strategically planned to mitigate it with 400 conveniently located parking spots at the Morganroth Event Center.

Another major feature the event center provides is their nationally recognized catering partner, Constellation Culinary. Constellation has over 19 locations in eight cities and leads event operations around the country. This includes internationally renowned cultural institutions such as Carnegie Hall, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the New York Botanical Garden, and Perez Art Museum Miami. Constellation joined the Sarasota market in 2020 with the opening of the Sarasota Art Museum. They continue to serve there as the Sarasota Art Museum’s exclusive catering partner and restaurant operator.

Constellation’s chef and lead of culinary efforts, Kaytlin Dangan, will work closely with the Federation to create menus and flavorful, visually appealing meals in the new 3,000 sq. ft. on-site kitchen. With a background in cultural institution restaurant leadership, she also plans to collaborate with local SW Florida farmers when planning the menus.

Aside from delicious food, advanced technology is another feature of the event center, adding to the overall experience. This technology enables the venue to enhance events with live and recorded music, video, custom lighting, and, as Englander says, “anything to support the customer’s goals.”

Englander says all are welcome at the Morganroth Event Center and the Federation is getting the word out to civic leaders, local businesses, schools, charities, nonprofits, and families planning weddings and other meaningful life events.

“We are ready to meet the expectations of our visitors and customers of the present and future,” Englander said.

Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee Board President, Bruce Udell, agrees.

“I feel the event center will be a major asset and resource for the whole community,” he said. “For one thing, we have committed a lot of resources to security on the campus. So, in today’s world, it will be a beautiful and serene, yet energetic, and safe environment to hold



family celebrations, community events, and corporate conferences. It is what this community needs now with the growth we've had in Sarasota."

Aside from the events center, there are also many other much anticipated additions to the new campus. These include the Ritter Wolk Security and Training Center, the updated Klingenstein Administration Building, and the Holocaust Memorial Garden.

The Ritter Wolk Security and Training Center is a 3,000 sq ft. facility providing onsite training for emergency management, local safety for not-for-profit organizations, community groups, and other organizations. It includes two training classrooms and security planning headquarters to increase the security of all local Jewish facilities.

Additions to the Federation's campus security include a 24-hour security checkpoint at both the entrance and exit, safe rooms for staff and visitors, state-of-the-art software and technology for monitoring campus visitors, as well as ground maintenance to prevent blockage of important sightlines.

The extensive renovation of the Klingenstein Administration Building is also a part of the new campus, providing modern office and meeting spaces, with room for growing businesses to expand.

As part of its mission to greatly increase impact with its campus renovations, the Jewish Federation's new 2.5 acre Holocaust Memorial Garden will feature educational stations to explore specific themes from history. These will provide educational programming for schools, students, youth groups, and the community.

The main goals of the memorial garden are to:

1. Ensure accurate, age-appropriate, and interactive content throughout the Memorial Garden that will fully satisfy both teachers' and students' educational needs outside the classroom.
2. Build a fully integrated professional development program to equip Sarasota-Manatee educators to best meet Florida's Holocaust education mandate for grades 5 through 12.

ENTRANCE RENDERING



The garden will feature educational stations that explore the following themes:

- Before the War (1930-1939): Jewish Life, Rise of Nazi Germany, Kristallnacht
- The Experiences of Children During the Holocaust
- The War Years (1939-1945): Ghettos, Concentration Camps, Killing Centers, Mass Shootings
- The War Years (1939-1945): Jewish Resistance
- Path of the Righteous: Upstanders, Rescuers, Liberators
- After the War: Nuremberg Trials, Jewish Migration, Establishment of the State of Israel

Local first and second-generation Holocaust survivors will be invited to participate by speaking with teachers and sharing their stories to strengthen the educational materials created.

For Englander, the Holocaust Memorial Garden is an especially meaningful and essential feature of the new campus.

"The Holocaust has cast a shadow over my life since I was a child. Most of my father's family was murdered by the Nazis in the Auschwitz concentration camp, including his mother Rose's parents and nine of her eleven siblings," Englander shared. "As the oldest, Rose had been able to leave for America with an aunt and uncle just in time. Only two of her nieces, Elsa and Irene, survived. They moved into my father's apartment when he was in high school."

"I grew up with Elsa and Irene, who were regularly in our home. I understood from an early age that something horrible had happened to them," he continued. "Last summer, I visited Auschwitz for the first time on a trip with Bruce and several other Federation leaders. It was a searing experience, which only deepened my determination to understand and teach the lessons of the Holocaust. So, it is deeply meaningful to me to help build a unique site for immersive Holocaust education on our campus."

For more information on the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee's new campus, go to [www.jfedsrq.org/campus](http://www.jfedsrq.org/campus).