



PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Announcing NSSRA Foundation's "A Place to Belong" Capital Campaign

Northbrook – July 21, 2020 – In a long-awaited announcement, NSSRA Foundation is thrilled to announce a \$2.2M capital campaign to fund the renovation of participant spaces in NSSRA's newly purchased facility in Highland Park. The new building will give participants their own space to play and grow.

The campaign was made public to NSSRA participant families by *A Place to Belong* Capital Campaign Committee on Friday, February 28 during a pre-construction tour, just a few weeks before COVID-19 brought everything to a halt.

Despite pausing the campaign over the last few months and holding the public announcement, *A Place to Belong* has great momentum, having already raised nearly \$1.9M through private donations. As we look to the future, the need for dedicated programming space has only intensified with COVID-19, and we are hopeful that we can complete our fundraising efforts and move forward with renovations as quickly as possible.

NSSRA purchased the building, formerly Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism, in August 2019, ending a six-year search for a new facility. Set back on Lake Cook Road near the Edens Expressway, the 5.5 acre campus and 30,000 square foot facility was put on the market by Lakeside in preparation for their merger with Congregation Solel. For NSSRA, Lakeside's location is ideal, in the heart of the northern suburbs and central to NSSRA's 13 partner agencies.

Roughly half of \$3.65M in funds needed to purchase Lakeside came from a capital reserve account created in 2013 when NSSRA's Board of Directors, representing 13 partner agencies, identified the need for a new facility. The remaining finances needed were provided thanks to a significant contribution of \$600,000 from NSSRA Foundation, and a generous \$1.15M gift from the Slotnick Family of Northbrook, in memory of Mitchell L. Slotnick.

Jay Slotnick, son of Valerie and Mitchell, has been participating in NSSRA programs for over 40 years. Mitchell was a founding member of NSSRA Foundation in 1997, and served on the Board until his passing in May 2018. Barry Slotnick, Jay's brother, also serves on NSSRA Foundation's Board.

"The Slotnicks stepped up to make sure we could purchase our new home outright, and that we were able to do it with cash," said NSSRA Executive Director Craig Culp. "That we could secure ownership of our new facility without any financing ensures a home, a place to belong, for NSSRA participants for years to come."

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NSSRA Foundation's \$2.2M capital campaign goal is an effort to support the renovation of participant spaces, which include a courtyard, participant lounge, five multipurpose rooms, fully accessible washrooms, library and a teaching kitchen. New programs being considered are cooking, art, gardening, fitness, expanded adult day program and more.

"With the acquisition of the new building, NSSRA's participant space will increase from zero to 16,000 square feet," said Culp. "The expansion and variety of dedicated space in NSSRA's new building will transform program offerings for decades to come."

With this new facility, NSSRA will be able to reduce waitlists, offer new program opportunities for residents with disabilities in their 13 partner communities, and serve more participants.

Speaking to families in attendance at the Family Reception in February, Campaign Co-Chairs Wendy and Michael Rosen expressed their gratitude for the strong donor endorsement of the campaign so far but added that success will require the support of the entire community to achieve the \$2.2M goal.

"While \$2.2M is an ambitious goal, it becomes attainable when you consider the generosity and confidence shown by our early donors," said Wendy Rosen. "We are thrilled to share details of the campaign with the public and its impact for our participants and 13 partner communities."

The success of *A Place to Belong* campaign will position NSSRA to serve more participants in the northern suburbs of Chicago, enable NSSRA to reduce waitlists and increase program opportunities and give participants of all ages and abilities a fully accessible, permanent home. The campaign is expected to be completed at the conclusion of 2020.

Capital Campaign Committee Members

Valerie Slotnick, Northbrook
Honorary Chair

Wendy & Michael Rosen, Northbrook
Co-Chairs

Franklin Baumann, Glencoe
Glenn & Sandy Binstein, Glenview
Mike Frazin, Chicago
Randi & Tom Gillespie, Northbrook
Sue & Gregg Hartemayer, Winnetka
Rick LaChapelle, Wilmette
Liza McElroy, Chicago
Barry Slotnick, Glencoe

Ed Bettenhausen, Northbrook
NSSRA Foundation Board President

Johnathan Kiwala
NSSRA Board Liaison

Craig Culp
NSSRA Executive Director

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Photo IDs

Image 1: Members of the Capital Campaign Committee and NSSRA Foundation Board of Directors at the Family Reception and Public Campaign Kick-Off Event on Friday, February 28. L-R: Michael & Wendy Rosen, Capital Campaign Co-Chairs; NSSRA Executive Director Craig Culp; Valerie Slotnick, Capital Campaign Honorary Chair; Ben Slotnick; Jay Slotnick; Barry Slotnick, NSSRA Foundation Director; Ed Bettenhausen, NSSRA Foundation Board President

Image 2: Lakeside Congregation for Reform Judaism, purchased in August 2019 by NSSRA as the home of its new recreation facility.

Image 3: Members of NSSRA's Board of Directors and full-time staff celebrate the purchase NSSRA's new facility at the Board meeting on Thursday, September 12. Pictured (L-R): NSSRA staff Candice Cunningham, Dani Kern, Blair Hill, Abby Whalen, Meggan Davies, Marissa Wayne, Mel Robson, Laurie DeSimone; NSSRA Board members Jim Hospodarsky (City of Highwood), John Muno (Winnetka Park District), Molly Hamer (Northbrook Park District), Lisa Sheppard (Glencoe Park District), Board Chair Kris Ford (Village of Riverwoods), NSSRA Executive Director Craig Culp, Steve Wilson (Wilmette Park District), Mike McCarty (Glenview Park District), George Alexoff (Northfield Park District), Jeff Nehila (Deerfield Park District); NSSRA staff Niki Cuttell, Kai Treston, Sierra Shum, Nicole Witt, Catherine Benson and Rebekah Lee. *Not pictured: Board members Johnathan Kiwala (Kenilworth Park District) and Sally Swarthout (City of Lake Forest).*

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NSSRA provides and facilitates year-round recreation programs and services for children, teens and adults with disabilities who live in the partner communities. NSSRA is an extension of ten park districts, two cities and one village in the northern suburbs of Chicago. This partnership includes the Park Districts of Deerfield, Glencoe, Glenview, Highland Park, Lake Bluff, Kenilworth, Northbrook, Northfield, Wilmette and Winnetka; the Cities of Highwood and Lake Forest; and the Village of Riverwoods. NSSRA has been creating an environment of belonging through play since 1970, this year celebrating 50 years, and has the distinction as the first Special Recreation Association in the country. For more information about NSSRA and the programs and services it provides, visit www.nssra.org.

Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association Foundation (NSSRA Foundation) was established in 1997 to support the mission of NSSRA by raising and granting supplemental funding. NSSRA Foundation raises funds throughout the year with all proceeds benefiting the Association. The Foundation, in conjunction with NSSRA, hosts annual events for all donors, supporters and families. The Foundation also raises funds through solicitation of grants and their annual Holiday Appeal. Throughout the year, NSSRA Foundation receives generous support from many individuals, corporations, foundations, businesses and community organizations. For more information about NSSRA Foundation visit www.nssrafoundation.org.