

news

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Raymond G. Perelman to Name Center for Jewish Life at Drexel University

New Center will be the home of Hillel at Drexel

PHILADELPHIA (Sept. 3, 2014)—Renowned Philadelphia area philanthropist **Raymond G. Perelman** has pledged \$6 million for the construction of a Center for Jewish Life at Drexel University. The new facility, which is expected to open in the fall of 2016, will be named the *Raymond G. Perelman Center for Jewish Life* and will be located on N. 34th Street.

The *Raymond G. Perelman Center for Jewish Life* will be the first facility at Drexel dedicated to Jewish student life. It will be the home of Hillel at the University and be the site for Shabbat services and dinners, Jewish education programs, and programs facilitating opportunities in Israel. The Center is intended to provide a comfortable home-like meeting place where Jewish students and their friends and loved ones can socialize together.

“Drexel University is deeply grateful to be one of the organizations that have been transformed by Raymond Perelman's philanthropy,” said Drexel President **John A. Fry**. “It has been an incredible privilege and great pleasure for me to get to know Ray in recent years and I have been inspired by his desire to make a difference in the city he loves.”

This is the second major gift to Drexel made by Perelman, who received an honorary doctoral degree from the Drexel University College of Medicine two years ago. In 2012, he pledged \$5 million to support the creation of the *Raymond G. Perelman Plaza*, which covers a large swath of Drexel's open space along the former 32nd Street between Market and Chestnut Streets. The Plaza is being completed this summer and will be dedicated in the fall.

“The continuity of the Jewish people is deeply important to me,” said Perelman. “In John Fry, I recognized a university president who truly wants to make his institution more welcoming to Jewish youth. I was delighted to be able to help support something I deeply care about.”

The preliminary design for the *Raymond G. Perelman Center for Jewish Life* calls for a three-story, 14,000-square-foot structure. The building will feature event space for 100 or more people, chapel, meeting rooms, student lounges and offices for Drexel Hillel. A kosher kitchen and

kosher food services are also planned. The facility will also feature a large outdoor patio for socializing and construction of a Sukkah.

According to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Hillel of Greater Philadelphia, **Rabbi Howard Alpert**, the new center will be essential to Hillel's growth at Drexel. "Hillel enjoys one of its most fruitful university partnerships with Drexel University," he said. "With the new Center, we will be able to increase our services to Jewish students and families and create a truly robust Jewish community at Drexel."

Jewish students currently make up a relatively modest number of the undergraduate population at Drexel. The Center for Jewish Life will help increase that number substantially.

"Our goal at Drexel is to make the University a greater school of choice for Jewish students from our region and across the nation," said Fry. "Having a Center for Jewish Life will go far in enhancing the cultural, social and religious experiences for these students."

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