



Assemblyman **Jeffrey Dinowitz**

Reports to the People of Van Cortlandt Village

A Win-Win-Win for Van Cortlandt Village

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz and community leaders announce a historic agreement between the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center (VCJC) and the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center (MMCC)

- **Synagogue and Senior Center – saved!**
- **Early childhood education – expanded!**

Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz and community leaders have announced an agreement that will save the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center and the Van Cortlandt Senior Center and bring 130 early childhood seats to the community.

The Mosholu Montefiore Community Center has signed a lease with the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center to use the second and third floors of the building at 3880 Sedgwick Avenue. As a result, the VCJC will not have to close and in one fell swoop, learning opportunities for children are opened.

The space in the upper floors of the VCJC had been rented for many years by the Department of Education for kindergarten classes, but the DOE ended the relationship last June. The loss of rental income jeopardized the future of both the Jewish Center and the Senior Center.

In the agreement, eight large rooms will be converted to Head Start and Universal pre-K classrooms for two, three, and four-year-olds. Bathrooms will be renovated and a handicapped bathroom will be added. Also, in a stroke of design

genius, a large rooftop area will be transformed into an early childhood play area with safety flooring and fencing.

Assemblyman Dinowitz stated that the parties were brought together by community leader and attorney Andrew Cohen. Together they brokered the deal that is a huge win for all three organizations and the entire community. Assemblyman Dinowitz also secured the capital funding of \$345,000 to finance the renovations that will make the facility safe and appropriate for young children.

“I am thrilled to have helped save the Shul, the senior center and to provide 130 spots for early childhood education,” Assemblyman Dinowitz said. “Both the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center and the Van Cortlandt Senior Center play a vital role in the Van Cortlandt Village Community. The loss of these two great institutions would be devastating. Saving them and providing a top-notch location for early childhood education is a win-win-win for all involved.”

“I am proud to have played a key role in bringing together the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center and the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center in a tremendous win for our community,” stated community leader Andrew Cohen. “It would be a sad day if the Jewish Center, along with the Van Cortlandt Senior Center, were forced to close.



Community leaders announcing the deal struck to keep the center open, including community leader and attorney Andrew Cohen; Robert Gillman, President of the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center; Donald Bluestone, Executive Director of Mosholu Montefiore Community Center and Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz.

continued on back page

By making their space available for the Mosholu Montefiore Community Center they will receive rental income that will keep them financially viable and Mosholu Montefiore will be able to provide more service to more young children in our community. This is wonderful news for the entire community.”

“We were perilously close to losing our building, which would have been a disaster not only for our congregation, but for the seniors who rely on their center and the entire community,” said Robert Gillman, President of the Van Cortlandt Jewish Center. “But with this agreement, our congregants and seniors still have a home and now so do pre-school children. This is a pronounced ‘win-win’ situation.”

“There is an overwhelming need for early childhood education,” said MMCC Executive Director Don Bluestone, “and

this space is perfect for it. Grants will support the expanded programming and we’re very grateful to Assemblyman Dinowitz for getting the funding for the necessary renovation.”

Mr. Bluestone added that MMCC’s early childhood program will work with the Senior Center on a meaningful intergenerational relationship.

“This really couldn’t be better,” said Sharon Wolfe, Executive Director of the Van Cortlandt Senior Center. “We were really worried that our seniors wouldn’t have a place to go. Now, they still have that and also they’ll see children in the building which is about the best thing for them.”

Construction is slated to begin within the next couple of weeks and should be completed in time for the September 2013 school year.

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