

JEWISH NEWS

THE CHICAGO

A NEW LOOK FOR MOSHAVA...

By C/JN staff (07/09/2010)

A former camper who is now a well-known architect has signed on to help with an ambitious long-term plan to renovate **Camp Moshava** in Wild Rose, Wis.

The architect, **Phillip Katz**, is based in Milwaukee but has Chicago family roots; both his parents were natives. As a youth, he attended Moshava himself for many years.

His firm, Phillip Katz Project Development, specializes in what he calls liturgical architecture - synagogues and other "sacred spaces." He recently attracted national attention for a new sanctuary and complete remodel of **Congregation Emanu-El B'nei Jeshurun** in Milwaukee.

The Moshava project, while still in the embryonic stage, will involve renovation or reconstruction of many of the buildings, according to **Rivkie Lafer**, co-chair of the camp's board along with **Howard Braun**. She is the first woman to hold that position in 72 years.

Camp Moshava is sponsored by **Religious Zionists of Greater Chicago** and **Bnei Akiva**.

"I feel lucky we got hold of Phillip," she said. "We have big plans for him. He has done other camp projects, and the camp is suffering a bit. We're trying to bring it back from almost dying and make it everything it used to be and beyond that."

Lafer's own involvement in Moshava is deep. Out of her and her husband's blended family of five children, four are at the camp, and her husband, **Evan Lafer**, serves as the "rosh sports" - head of sports. Lafer's parents and various aunts, uncles and cousins all attended Moshava camps in different parts of the country, as did she.

Among other projects, the camp needs a new dining hall and infirmary, Lafer says. "These are big, big structures, and there are lots of little buildings that need to be redone," she says. "Our biggest hope is new guest housing, a special guest housing unit with apartments where people can come and spend Shabbos" and on other occasions during the year beyond the camp season.

Such a unit would help to provide income for the camp, Lafer says. Camp personnel are also working with the **Harold Grinspoon Foundation**, a national foundation that funds Jewish projects.

Camp alumni, especially younger ones "were very excited" when they found out about Katz's involvement, she says. "He's got a fine reputation, people really like him, everybody's heard great things about him. He does beautiful work and he'll be a big asset to the camp," Lafer says.

As for Katz, he says he considers "sacred architecture" "a primary vehicle for architects to make the world a better place. The Jewish soul has a desire to complete the world, to perform *tikkun olam*. Sacred architecture is a very powerful way to realize those goals," he says.

Lafer says she believes Katz will help achieve her goal for Moshava: to make it "the most amazing camp in the world."