

PSF 'optimistic' that they will be open in 2010

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Chief Reporter

After a series of delays — some due to unforeseen renovation issues and some due to the economy — the Presentation School Foundation (PSF) is back on track in its campaign to transform the former Presentation School building in Oak Square into a multi-tenant community center serving Allston-Brighton children and families.

When the Presentation School Foundation purchased

the former Our Lady of the Presentation School from the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston in 2007, organizers hoped to be open in 2008. Unfortunately, it was discovered that the building needed more renovation work than was originally thought. Then it was the economic downturn that scuttled the proposed fall of 2009 opening.

However, now due to a recent \$17,500 grant from the Slomo and Cindy Silvian Foundation, Nathan Spencer, PSF's director of community relations said he and the

Board of Directors are optimistic that the building will open this year.

Spencer said that when PSF originally acquired the building, the popular thought was that the money was there for the taking.

"It's sad that we're not open right now because there's so much need for a place like this in the community," Spencer said. "The really important thing is that we're still alive considering the financial stresses on all

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ends."

The PSF community center will contain Affordable, full-time, year-round preschool for families, YMCA after-school programs and summer camps for local youth, educational enrichment programs in science, math, reading and writing, and media literacy for children. There will also be Adult Education programs, including ESL and Civics for immigrants.

The \$17,500 grant comes from the Slomo and Cindy Silvian Foundation, a New York based foundation focusing on children's welfare and education. The money will go to support some of the significant renovations that are necessary to transform the building into a community center. Specifically, the grant will help support the installation of an elevator in the building — a necessary step to ensure that the building is

fully accessible.

This is the fourteenth foundation grant PSF has received.

"We are grateful that the Slomo and Cindy Silvian Foundation has joined more than a dozen other foundations and many dozens of local individuals and businesses in supporting this important community development project. We still need to raise additional funds to move forward with the significant renovation required to reopen the former Presentation School as a community center," Thomas O'Brien, PSF's President said.

According to Spencer, since they began the process, the PSF has received over a million dollars from members of the community and foundations such as The New Balance Foundation which helped PSF acquire the building.

"A huge amount has come

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A rendering of what the Presentation School Foundation's Community Center will look like. Organizers are hopeful that the building will open this year.

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from residents who have given 25 to 100 dollars per year," Spencer said. "The Slomo and Cindy Silvian Foundation grant is extremely helpful to us because it shows that not just New England

foundations are involved, but foundations from all over the country are participating in this as a project that needs to be realized."

Spencer said the PSF is working on finance options to

move the work forward, but there are no clear options yet, but "Things are looking very good," he said. In the next few months there will a number of large fundraising events to really get things moving.