

by **Liz Rhoades**

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A Bayside school for learning disabled children is looking for a new home.

The Lowell School, a state-accredited institution founded in 1968, has been renting space in the Bayside Jewish Center for 30 years. It houses 110 students in grades three through eight.

"They need more space badly," said Beverly Wayne, who with her husband, Peter, have been retained to devise a fundraising plan for a new facility.

The Long Island couple has been familiar with the school's work and is looking at all options to find a new site and raise money. "The key is finding the right location," Beverly Wayne said. "A former synagogue or school would probably be the best, if it was large enough," she said.



(Liz Rhoades)

Principal Sue Price, left, consults with Ruth Joseph, clinical coordinator and admissions director.

The consultants won't put a price tag on the undertaking until a site is found. "It all depends if they have to build from scratch or remodel an existing facility," she said.

Parents currently raise about \$100,000 a year, primarily through an auction in March, but Wayne admitted that they cannot be expected to fund a multimillion-dollar move.

The Lowell School also has a high school, which is currently located in space at the Garden Jewish Center in Flushing. There are 130 students there.

The aim is to have all grades under one roof. The schools take in students from the five boroughs and Long Island. About one-quarter are from Queens.

Despite lack of space, the Bayside school has a music and art program. It also utilizes the building's gym as an auditorium.

Most youngsters bring their own lunch, but no one goes hungry, according to the staff. Teachers make grilled cheese sandwiches daily in a tiny kitchen and once a week the seventh- and eighth- graders cook a hot lunch, which they sell at a low price.

Principal Sue Price said that it is a rigorous process to get a student enrolled there because demand is great. Youngsters suffer from learning disabilities such as dyslexia or have speech and language deficiencies. Classes have a maximum of 12 students with a teacher and an aide. Each student gets personalized attention and perhaps the most important thing—respect.

Donna Maietta, of Howard Beach, whose daughter, Madison, started in the third grade this year, is thrilled with the program. "This school bestows on the students a great sense of community, generosity and kindness," she said.

Maietta recently participated in the school's walkathon to raise funds for class



(Donna Maietta)

Students at the Lowell School prepare for a walkathon outside the Bayside Jewish Center. The school has outgrown space it has rented there for three decades.

trips, musical instruments and other needs. She was joined by her sister and mother. "It was wonderful to see the children cheer each other on, walk with their arms around one another and support each other in whatever way was necessary," she said.

As a parent with a daughter who is dyslexic, Maietta said she has a great sense of relief that there is such a program for Madison. She believes it is the perfect place for her daughter.

Ruth Joseph, the school's clinical coordinator and admissions director, noted that students learn how to compensate for their disability

and many go on to college. "They learn strategies to deal with the disabilities," she said.

On a recent visit, students were seen positively engaged in lessons with their teachers. There were no disruptions. Price noted that the school has a calm setting, with a supportive staff and no discipline problems. "My door is always open, literally," she said.

Joseph added that at Lowell, students don't look forward to weekends or vacations. "They want to be here," she said.

To learn more about the Lowell School or how to help financially, call (718) 352-2100. ☐