

# *The Polinger Pulse*

*A Publication of the Polinger Family Foundation*

*Winter 2007*

## **Editor's Note: Taking a New Pulse**

**W**elcome to the inaugural issue of the *Polinger Pulse*! The Pulse will come out three times a year, in winter, spring, and fall, and will be filled with news, commentary, features, and educational opportunities of interest to the Polinger family and the Polinger Family Foundation.

hope to be able to inform, educate, connect, maybe even inspire.

A lot to ask? Maybe. But we think it can be done. And we're hopeful you'll think so too.

Like any launch, this newsletter is still a work in progress. You can expect to see changes in both the look and contents over time – and hopefully some of those changes will come from you.

If you have an idea for a feature, a column a quiz, or a question about something you think we should be covering, send it to us. It's your newsletter and we want it to fit your needs and reflect your interests. So jump right in, don't be shy, and enjoy the first issue of the *Polinger Pulse*!



**Ground is broken at Johns Hopkins Hospital for the new Cardiovascular and Critical Care Tower. (See story p. 4.)**

## **Welcome to a New Generation**

**2007** will be remembered as a very special year for the Polinger Foundation – as it marks the emergence of a new generation of Polingers into the limelight. This year, for the first time, the nine members of the third generation of Polingers were able to make discretionary grants.

The prospect of enriching the Foundation by incorporating new ideas and perspectives is being warmly welcomed by current Board members.

“We're all very excited about bringing a new generation on board. The contemporary energy and viewpoints supplied by the '3<sup>rd</sup> Gen' should form an ideal complement to the wisdom and experience embodied by the current Board,” said Foundation President Lorre Polinger.

Although each grandchild was encouraged to make grants of up to \$1,000,

What can you expect? News items featuring updates and profiles of our most recent grant recipients. Feature articles that cover the latest issues or events involving programs or agencies we're funding. Commentary on themes of significance to the family and its grant-making interests.

Of course, we'll also have information about lectures, publications, training opportunities, or site visits that you might not be aware of. We

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The Polinger Pulse is published three times a year by the Polinger Family Foundation.

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family members who decided to pool their funds were eligible for matching funds of up to 8:1. At press time, the nine's final funding choices had just been received by the Board.

Although specifics on proposed recipients were not available, the combined grant allocations will total a remarkable \$39,850, due to the exceptionally high degree of collaboration demonstrated by family members this year.

The next issue of the *Pulse* will have more on the organizations selected by the family's newest grantmakers in their first year of giving.

## ***New Grants Approved***

The Polinger Foundation's 2006-7 fall cycle grant recipients are:

**Jewish Social Service Agency** – \$50,000

**American Jewish Committee** – \$25,000

**American University's Center for Israel Studies** - \$25,000

**Silver Spring Youth Collaborative** – \$15,000

## **Foundation Sponsors Catholic-Jewish Initiative**

**D**id you know that currently Latinos make up the largest group within the Catholic Church, and that they are the largest and most rapidly growing minority in the country? You may also have heard that, due to a lack of exposure and familiarity with the Jewish community, some anti-Semitism exists within this group, particularly among more recent immigrants.

In response to concern about this trend, the Polinger Foundation is funding a new initiative sponsored by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) aimed at improving understanding and relations between the two groups.

The Foundation's newest grant recipient is the AJC-sponsored Catholic-Jewish Relations Seminar, an intensive interfaith relations program that will take

place in summer 2007 in Chicago. The weeklong seminar aims to reach future Catholic Latino ministers and lay ministers before they assume their pulpits, and immerse them in a curriculum that highlights the tremendous strides in Catholic-Jewish relations that have been made since Vatican II.

The hope is that the seminarians will return to their home communities with a fuller understanding of the teachings of the Church on modern Catholic-Jewish relations and a renewed commitment to interfaith understanding, dialogue, and cooperation.



## **What Price Academic Freedom?**

### ***New Monograph Debates The Issues***

**I**f you follow the news, you know that issues concerning freedom of speech and thought have been problematic for college campuses of late.

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Columbia University, to name just one, has grappled with charges of anti-Israel bias and student intimidation, both in and out of the classroom. In other instances, universities have come under fire for their speaker selection policies or for failure to respond to student concerns about hateful or defamatory speech.

Research by the Israel on Campus Committee (ICC) suggests that anti-Israel bias is commonplace in Middle East studies departments across the US and that calls to university administrations for neutrality often go unheeded.

Although these are not new problems, the Polinger Foundation Board was sufficiently concerned about the implications of these incidents for college students in general, and Jewish college students in particular, to take action. Working with the ICC, the Foundation has sponsored a monograph on the nature and implications of academic freedom.

The document examines topics ranging from the interconnectedness of academic rights and responsibilities to the development and application of university codes of conduct to the implementation of meaningful grievance procedures.

It is hoped that the monograph, which will be publicly launched in March, will spark a broader national conversation on the rights and responsibilities inherent in academic freedom.

More on the ICC and its work can be found here: <http://www.israeloncampuscoalition.org/>.



**At a recent Polinger Foundation Board Meeting, Foundation President Lorre Polinger listens closely to ICC Associate Director Aaron Goldberg.**

## **Capital Campaign Updates**

### ***JSSA Breaks Ground for New Headquarters***

Last October, the Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA) held a groundbreaking for its proposed new \$15 million headquarters, which is the focus of its current capital campaign.



**US Representative Chris Van Hollen at the JSSA groundbreaking.**

In recognition of the outstanding work that JSSA does in providing an extensive range of support services to families in the Greater Washington DC area, the Polinger Foundation has pledged a total of \$250,000 to the capital campaign. Construction on the new headquarters is expected to take a year.

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## **Johns Hopkins Begins Work on New Tower**

It was a busy summer for Johns Hopkins, as the hospital broke ground on its much-heralded new state-of-the-art Cardiovascular and Critical Care Tower. The new Tower is part of a seven year \$1.2 billion overhaul of the overall hospital campus. When completed in 2009, the project is expected to be the largest hospital expansion in the country. As part of its longstanding commitment to Johns Hopkins, the Polinger Family Foundation is supporting a Family Respite Room in the new Tower, where patients and families can go to rest and relax during appointments and treatments.



**The new face of Johns Hopkins. The Cardiovascular and Critical Care Tower is at left.**

## **Why Are We Funding American University?**

A recent US study revealed that there are over 125 Middle East Studies programs in the US, but only a handful of academic programs that specialize in Israel. The US government has spent well over \$100 million on Mideast studies, but none of these funds has gone to curriculum development for the study of Israel. A 2006 survey conducted for the National Geographic Society showed that 75% of Americans aged 18-24 could not even find Israel on a map.

This imbalance has serious implications for the objective examination of contemporary issues in the Middle East. In response to concerns over the lack of a balanced perspective on Israel, a number of Jewish philanthropists have elected to initiate relationships with local universities, with an eye to supporting programs or endowed

professorships in Israel Studies.

For the last two years, the Polinger family has been associated with the Center for Israel Studies at American University (AU) in Washington, DC. During that time, the Center has established what is believed to be the nation's first academic Minor in Israeli Studies. The Center is currently developing curriculum for a Major.

This year, Foundation funding has supported a Visiting Scholar at AU, who has been teaching courses, advising students, assisting in curriculum development, and delivering a series of public lectures at the Center. For the next two academic years, the Foundation will extend its support to a Visiting Professor, who will assume similar responsibilities.

For more information on the Center, visit their website at:

<http://www.american.edu/israelstudies/index.html>.

