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NEW JACKIE ROBINSON YMCA UNDER WAY

BY ROGER SHOWLEY

Demolition is under way on the Jackie Robinson YM-CA in Mountain View, a neighborhood in southeast San Diego, to make way for a \$25 million replacement.

The \$19 million first phase, due for completion next year, will include a 50,000-square-foot building with a fitness center, gym with two basketball courts, and rooms for children, teen and adult programs. A \$6 million second phase will include a 25-yard, six-lane competitive pool, family swimming pool and splash pad, enclosed by a retractable roof.

"It's ideal for introducing kids to the water," said Executive Director Michael Brunker, who added that the competition pool could serve swim and water polo teams from nearby Lincoln High School and Gompers Preparatory Academy.

A new playing field for a variety of sports also is planned in the second phase.

Brunker said members will have access to other area YMCAs during construction. Funding is coming from grants, donations and \$7 million generated by tax credits arranged by Civic San Diego, the city's redevelopment agency.

The YMCA began in 1943 as the Greenwood Youth Center and was named for the famous baseball player. Located at 151 YMCA Way, it draws 18,000 participants.

When the Y reopens in 12 to 18 months, officials expect the 40-member staff to grow by about a third.

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Philanthropists Learn How to Say No

WEALTH

PAUL SULLIVAN

Sometimes the hardest part of being a philanthropist is saying no — particularly if the request comes from worthy organizations or equally well-heeled friends.

"It's hard to say no to someone working on a worthy cause," said Susan Wolf Ditkoff of the philanthropy practice at the Bridgespan Group, a consultancy.

But how philanthropists say it can clarify their mission and help the rejected organization. Carrie Morgridge, of the Morgridge Family Foundation and the author of "Every Gift Matters: How Your Passion Can Change the World," said her family's foundation often makes three-year gifts to groups working in education, health, the arts and the environment.

But she said she told organizations at the outset that three meant three. "We're often asked, 'Can't you just do Year 4?'" she said. "We say, 'No, that's part of our agreement.' When we say no, we try to guide them to the resources in the other foundations and the other resources in the sector." A no like that should be expected. Other times an organization can become complacent with the grants it gets year after year. Rudolph G. Andrea, president of the Andrea-Mennen Family Foundation, said his foundation had put organizations on hiatus when they lost touch and then suddenly asked for more money.

"I took the position that right now you're out of the rotation," Mr. Andrea said. "That's the tough part when you have a relationship

Declining to give sooner, rather than later, is better for all.

that was great."

Most of the time, the no comes before a relationship has been established. John Oddy, senior philanthropic director at Foundation Source, recently wrote "Just Say No: The Art of the Turndown," which outlines the best ways to reject requests. At the top of his list is to be direct but compassionate.

"Part of giving them the news is allowing them to feel like they've done everything they could — to the extent that you can validate their cause or their effort while at the same time saying this isn't a great fit," he said.

Marianne Philbin of the Pierce Family Foundation in Chicago says that saying no doesn't get easier with time. "The earlier you can make a decline for legitimate reasons, the less painful it is for everybody," she said. "The sooner you can establish is there a fit here or not, the more respectful you are of everyone's time."

The Pierce foundation, she said, focuses on funding services for the homeless in Chicago but more specifically on making grants to help organizations with operating expenses. She said having such a specific screen limits most of the applications that would be outside the scope of what it would fund.

"When declines are the most difficult is when an agency is taken through a laborious process that takes up time from board members and staff and the C.E.O. and it still comes out with a no," she said.

Then there is the no that comes when philanthropists are asked by their friends or peers for donations to their own charities. Mr. Oddy often recommends they send the



MATTHEW BUSCH FOR THE NEW YORK TI

GIFTS THAT MATTER Carrie Morgridge helps connects donors with charities.

request to the board. When the request is rejected, the philanthropist can blame the board. This tactic is fairly transparent so people need to show they care about that cause. "I'll personally come to the benefit where you're being honored to show you that I care about

you and your cause," he said. "But make it clear that you're not going to be ongoing funders."

However they handle requests, every philanthropist has to say no at some point. "Declining worthy projects is part of the package," Ms. Philbin said.