

Outreach

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NEWSLETTER

The Multiple Dividends of Outreach

By: Ephraim Z. Buchwald

The Mishnah, in *Avot*, Ethics of Our Fathers, teaches us that the performance of a single mitzvah attracts other mitzvot. The presumption is that once a person gets into the "mitzvah groove," other mitzvot start flying fast and furious.



Photograph by Doris Levin

Our Bible advises to "Cast thy bread upon the waters," because one never knows exactly where a single good deed may lead and what may be the far-reaching effects of that noble deed. This favorable "chain reaction" applies as well to the activities of the National Jewish Outreach Program, as we receive frequent reports of the impact that just one class or a single Shabbat experience has had on a person's life.

Don't tell the Board of Directors, but NJOP may very well be subject to charges of operating a pyramid scheme. The stories that come our way, often underscore the profound impact of NJOP on individuals and the subsequent ramifications upon their families and friends. Furthermore, the impact is often geometric rather than arithmetic.

While circulating among the tables at this year's annual Dinner at the Waldorf=Astoria, I was approached by Kim Kleppel, mother of our previous Dinner honoree, Beth (and Josh) Schwartz. Right there, in the midst of the Dinner, she began to regale me

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Fruits of Our Labor NJOP's Ninth Annual Dinner

Dressed to the nines, the friends and supporters of the National Jewish Outreach Program filled the ballroom of the Waldorf=Astoria Hotel for NJOP's Ninth Annual Dinner on Tuesday evening, February 4, 2003. Despite the economic difficulties of the past year, close to 600 Dinner guests arrived, optimistically focused on the future, to celebrate the "Fruits" of NJOP's Labor -- NJOP's outstanding success in giving Jews positive Jewish experiences and the continued development of new and exciting programs.

Following cocktails, guests were welcomed by Dinner Co-Chairs Drs. Dawne and Matthew Eichen. A highly respected "graduate" of Rabbi Buchwald's Beginners Service, Matt noted that the most significant statistic of NJOP's work is actually the uncountable number of people indirectly touched by NJOP, the friends, families and acquaintances who are influenced by the myriads of NJOP students and graduates. Yet, Matt maintained, despite NJOP's unprecedented success, there are millions of Jews who have yet to be reached.

How does the National Jewish Outreach Program continue to fight the battle against assimilation? Sam

Domb explained it best when he reminded everyone that the "trials of exile have made [the Jewish people] courageous." NJOP does what it must do, because "ignoring [assimilation] means drowning in our own tears." Further, Mr. Domb reminded all those present that the work of NJOP was the job of everyone, and while the NJOP

professionals have the talent, they need a "bigger wallet" to keep reaching out to ever larger numbers of Jews.

One of NJOP's proudest accomplishments has been its vast network of volunteers who teach classes and coordinate programs. It was, therefore, with much sadness, that Rabbi Buchwald movingly memorialized



The Ninth Annual NJOP Dinner Honorees: Stephen and Robin Apple and their children

two dedicated teachers who passed away this year, Joseph Blaustein, z"l, and JJ Greenberg, z"l. While they were generations apart, the octogenarian Joseph and the thirty-something JJ were both able to share their passion for everything Jewish through NJOP's Hebrew classes, which they had each taught for many years.

What motivated teachers like Joseph Blaustein and JJ Greenberg is the understanding, as Rabbi Buchwald explained, that "Ours is a generation of achievement without precedent in all

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150 Attend North Carolina High Holidays Services

Another note of thanks from another happy camper: I just wanted to send a quick note to say thank you. For the first time ever, I can honestly say that Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur had an impact on my life, and I owe it to the two of you. The love that you have for Judaism is so strong it is no wonder that people are drawn to both of you, and your teachings. Your service made me think and, best of all, I learned so much!

I was captivated by each lesson, comment, and commentary about the prayers. It made me realize how little I truly know, and how much I want to learn about being a Jew. For the first time in my life I watched as my husband took on a sense of ownership of his Judaism. For the ten years that we have been together, I have never seen him so excited to go to Shul! You make us feel so comfortable and welcome my husband cannot wait for classes to begin!

Rachel

Rabbi Mordechai and Meechal Roizman arrived in Charlotte, North Carolina, in May 2002 to open the Charlotte Torah Center with the goal of offering new exciting Jewish educational opportunities to Charlotte's 10,000 Jews. As a young growing community, Charlotte seemed the perfect place to reach out to unaffiliated Jews, and indeed it is. Only 4 months after opening their doors, the Charlotte Torah Center welcomed 150 people to their High

Thank you for making this one of the "best" Rosh Hashanas of my life... Fondly,
Carolyn

Holiday Beginners Services at the Charlotte Hyatt.

Advertising in the local newspapers, passing out flyers, making direct calls, and encouraging word-of-mouth publicity drew participants from all parts of the Charlotte community. Indeed, most of the people who came to the Torah Center's High Holiday Services were first time participants with the organization.

While Rabbi Roizman was pleased by the initial response to the program, it was the return of the participants for the second day services on Rosh Hashana and for Yom Kippur Services a week later that truly moved him. When asked what he thought people enjoyed, Rabbi Roizman noted that outside of the wonderful basic programming provided by NJOP, the Charlotte Torah Center's Services had two extra benefits: Gilli Houpt led the prayer service with a dynamic variety of melodies that spiritually invigorated the participants, while Steve Eisenberg shared the benefits of his past experience leading Beginners Services.

I just wanted to let you know that Brett plans on taking the Fundamentals in Judaism class. We really enjoyed the Rosh Hashana service, and look forward to Yom Kippur.
Aliza

Rabbi Roizman had even more reason to be delighted when many of those who came to the High Holiday Services returned to the Center for other programs only a few months later. Indeed, the Rabbi estimates that at least 80 of the participants have returned for an additional program.

In addition to the members of the Charlotte community who attended the High Holidays Services, the Charlotte Torah Center drew approximately 15 students from the nearby University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Not only have many of those students continued to attend Torah Center programs, but they helped create an exciting relationship between the Charlotte Torah Center and the Hillel at the University.

Success can be measured by many factors--a large crowd, smiling faces, expressions of praise or gratitude, or continued participation. By any measure, there is no doubt that the Charlotte Torah Center's High Holiday Beginners Services were an all out success!



National Jewish Outreach Program

989 Sixth Avenue, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10018
(646) 871-4444 • 1-800-44-HEBREW
e-mail: info@njop.org
website: www.njop.org

NJOP Founder and Director
Ephraim Z. Buchwald

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Dividends

with a "saga" concerning NJOP's impact on her immediate and extended family. She has actually written the story for NJOP's Beginners newsletter,* and the story has the makings of a most dramatic historic novel.

Simply stated, despite living in Woodmere, N.Y., and despite their Jewish origins, Kim's parents converted out of Judaism. Kim defied her parents by marrying a Jewish man, but lived a mostly secular life. As a young adult, Kim's daughter, Beth, developed spiritual yearnings and began to attend the Lincoln Square Synagogue Beginners Service. Beth soon met Josh and agreed to date him on the condition that he too would attend the Service. Eventually Josh and Beth were married, and are now the parents of three beautiful children. Josh went on to become the President of Congregation Ohav Shalom, a dynamic

neighborhood synagogue on the Upper West Side of Manhattan.

Beth's first cousin (Kim's sister's daughter) who had also been raised as a non-Jew, started visiting the Schwartz's home for Shabbat and Jewish holidays. Soon, the young lady began to attend a Beginners Service and started eating kosher. In order to accommodate her daughter, Kim's sister, born Jewish but now living as a Christian, began providing kosher meals for her. As a result, not long after, Kim's sister returned to Judaism.

This is not an isolated occurrence. The narratives can fill many volumes:

- A young Columbia PhD student's doctoral thesis on John Milton required extensive research in the Christian Bible. Realizing that he knew nothing about his own Jewish scriptures, the young man began to read the Jewish Bible and to attend a Beginners Service. Today he is a highly regarded professor of English

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Read Hebrew America/Canada



Can you read this word? Could you read this word a year ago? If you answered yes to the first question and no to the latter, then chances are you are one of the more than 14,400 Jews who learned to read Hebrew this past fall as part of the National Jewish Outreach Program's 5th annual Read Hebrew America/Canada (RHA/C) Hebrew literacy campaign. In October and November 2002, 1,478 Hebrew Reading Crash Courses (HRCC) were offered at 721 locations across North America.

If you are a new Hebrew reader, perhaps you also feel as Marc McKibbon of New Canaan, CT, does: "After taking the Read Hebrew America crash course, my interest in Jewish studies has only increased. I am now taking a course in Basic Judaism at the local JCC. NJOP is a very important program for the education and spirituality of our people."

For many RHA/C students like Marc, learning to read Hebrew is a springboard to a renewed interest in their Jewish heritage. Not only has their interest been aroused, but they have also been given the most basic tools with which to delve deeper into essential aspects of Judaism, such as Jewish textual study and prayer.

Indeed, having access to the prayers is often one of the greatest gifts RHA/C students receive. Phyllis Brodsky of Stamford, CT, was excited, after all these years, finally, to be "able to read and sing familiar prayers in

Hebrew that had been memorized from frequent attendance [at services]."

While the majority of the RHA/C classes were Level

I Hebrew Reading, hundreds of One Day Review (ODR) classes were also an important component of this year's Hebrew literacy campaign. The ODR is an opportunity for Level I graduates from this year or a previous year, or those who had a rudimentary Jewish education, to renew and reinforce what they had previously learned and to gain the confidence to move on to the Level II HRCC.

More than 350 Level II classes were offered this year, and many teachers found themselves facing the familiar faces of those who had just graduated from Level I. "My classmates at the Hebrew Institute enjoyed the experience [of HRCC Level I] and most of us are going on to Level II. My hope is that I will be able to follow the Saturday service, reading the Hebrew text," wrote Norma Weinberg of Bronx, NY.

In an era when the number of North American Jews is declining (according to the preliminary results of the NJPS 2001 survey), and when nearly 32% of those born Jewish do not acknowledge Judaism as their religion, outreach is critical. For many of these unaffiliated or marginally affiliated Jews, learning to read Hebrew is the first crucial step to a deeper connection, the front line in the battle against assimilation. "[Learning to read Hebrew] really opened up a world that was opaque before. It's a great course, I grew up without any Hebrew study and participation in services was

difficult," said Keith Dubinsky of Berkeley, CA.

For Keith, Norma, Phyllis and Marc, a whole new world has been opened to them. Not only will they have access to Jewish prayer in the original, but to a whole world of Jewish education and Jewish life that is waiting to greet them with open arms.

Write On...

The National Jewish Outreach Program is happy to introduce its friends and supporters to the newly launched Hebrew Writing Crash Course (HWCC). While more than 165,000 North American Jews have learned to read Hebrew through NJOP, we now hope to teach these students how to write Hebrew.

Similar to the One Day Review, the Writing Course is a one-day class specially developed by NJOP to give students the additional skill of Hebrew writing, while reinforcing the reading skills they learned in the Hebrew Reading Crash Course. The HWCC, written by Florence Wiener and designed by Sarah Rochel Reid, is subdivided into three segments, each of which contains instructions on how to form the letters, how to sound the letters, and practice sheets for writing the letters individually and in actual Hebrew words.

The HWCC is the perfect follow-up to the Hebrew Reading Crash Course...for more information, e-mail info@njop.org or call Florence Wiener at 1-800-44-HEBRE(W).

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Literature and Jewish Thought at Bar Ilan University in Israel.

- The inventor of the Laser Disc returned to Judaism, and has now completed the study of all 63 tractates of the Talmud for a second time!
- A well known physicist, also from a secular background, has received rabbinic ordination from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.
- A young lady, child of a

mixed marriage, was influenced to explore her Judaism by her cousins who had returned to observance. She is now residing in a very Orthodox part of Jerusalem with her husband, also a returnee, and their children. Her brother, who had been a chef in Japan, was persuaded to visit them in Jerusalem and is now a Brestlaver Chassid with his own family. Their non-Jewish father is very respectful when he visits with his observant children and grandchildren in Israel.

It may have started with a Hebrew Reading Crash Course, or a

Turn Friday Night Into Shabbat experience, but the ramifications are immense. That is why our rabbis state that "Those who save a single life, are considered as if they saved an entire world." The multiple effects of outreach are literally infinite.

NJOP is proud to be the Al-mighty's partner in this sacred endeavor, serving as a catalyst to help ignite the Divine spark that is found in every Jew.

**You can read the complete story, as written by Kim Kleppel, online at <http://njop.org/html/bereshith403.pdf>.*

“Those Were The Days”

What do Puff the Magic Dragon and the great Reb Shlomo Carlebach have in common? They both took Jewish music to new heights of popularity, and they were both featured in Howie Kahn’s concert of musical memories, “Those Were the Days,” on March 23, 2003.

The Saturday night concert, held at Manhattan’s Fifth Avenue Synagogue, as a benefit for the National Jewish Outreach Program, was just one stop on Howie Kahn’s

first North American tour. Currently a resident of Jerusalem, Israel, Howie is the Klitah Counselor/Program Director for The Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI).

Howie, however, is a native New Yorker who came of age just as Jewish music entered a new era of combining the popular sounds of the day with classic Jewish words. As a founding member of the popular singing group *The Ruach Revival*, and a participant in numerous other musical ensembles,

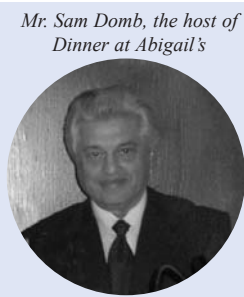


Howie Kahn and Rabbi Buchwald

Howie made important contributions to Jewish music, and used music to help the cause of Jewish outreach. Indeed, Howie and Rabbi Buchwald went to Australia and South Africa together to help inspire Jewish youth to return to their heritage. Howie was also the lead accompanist for Reb



Amy and Chanan Vogel with their new addition: Ariella Miriam



Mr. Sam Domb, the host of Dinner at Abigail's



Jerry Wartski, Rabbi Buchwald and Drs. Dawne & Matthew Eichen

Dinner at Abigail's

On May 7, 2003, as the State of Israel celebrated its 55th year of independence, Mr. Sam Domb and the National Jewish Outreach Program sponsored a special dinner at Abigail's restaurant in Midtown Manhattan. The Abigail's evening was not only a toast to the State of Israel, but also an opportunity for NJOP to thank some of its most ardent supporters.

While guests dined on Abigail's scrumptious fare, they had the opportunity to discuss among themselves the great work of NJOP in bringing Hebrew and Jewish literacy to the Jews of North America. For not a few of NJOP's graduates, that first little step of learning how to read Hebrew has actually enabled them to take the giant step of making Aliyah (moving to Israel). For others, NJOP programs were the conduit for making Judaism a definitive part of their lives.

Dr. Matthew Eichen of Cherry Hill, N.J., who recently co-chaired the Ninth Annual NJOP Dinner and who is a graduate of Rabbi Buchwald's Beginners Service, addressed those in attendance to thank them for their support of NJOP's work. Noting the delightful food, Matthew commented that the sages asked why G-d created the human being with a stomach, and thus dependent on food, rather than with the ability to extract nutrients

directly from his environment, like oxygen from the air? The rabbis responded that by necessitating digestion, humanity's understanding of G-d's greatness is elevated, requiring humans to stop and thank G-d for the food. By the same token, one may ask why G-d did not create outreach organizations, synagogues and Yeshivot, with full and balanced bank accounts. Matthew explained that just as people need food to enhance their relationship with G-d, people's personal talents, energies and financial resources are enhanced by helping these organizations do their work.

Working hard for the Jewish people is what NJOP is all about. Rabbi Buchwald noted that he recently attended a fascinating lecture at the City University's Department of Sociology, concerning the issue of Faith-based Initiatives and its possible affects on Jewish Philanthropy, delivered by NJOP supporter Dr. Susan Chambre. At the lecture, Prof. Egon Mayer pointed out that outside of the Orthodox community, there are simply no Jewish children! If you go to the local JCCs, he indicated, there are almost no early childhood programs but lots of geriatric programs because we are a rapidly aging community.

"I was shaken to my bones!"

announced Rabbi Buchwald. "We are not doing enough! We must respond! We need initiatives!" Indeed, he proceeded to tell the Abigail guests about NJOP's work on new programs such as a Chanukah Workshop, the new Shabbat Across America/Canada programming material, and a Crash Course in Jewish History. He stressed that now more than ever, "We need to be creative, to try everything--before it's too late."

One should not, however, despair, even in this time when the Jewish future appears to be increasingly bleak. Rabbi Buchwald learned this from his "Mr. Pick-Me-Up," Mr. Sam Domb, who constantly reminds him in times of crises that G-d takes care of everyone.

Before handing Rabbi Buchwald an extremely generous check, Sam Domb wished Israel a happy birthday. Addressing the crowd, he reminded those present that helping NJOP was an obligation upon everyone.

"G-d makes miracles," he intoned. "NJOP is G-d's miracle. G-d runs the wheel of fortune in my life: I am only the caretaker of that fortune." After hearing the moving words of Sam Domb, the guests of the Abigail's Dinner were certain that the best way to care for that fortune was by supporting NJOP.



Shlomo Carlebach, z"l, a man who had an immense impact on the entire Jewish world, bringing many thousands of Jews back to Jewish life through his music.



Howie Kahn started on the accordion at the age of 10

Billing himself as *Ruach Uno*, Howie has been performing his "Those Were the Days" concert in Israel. In truth, "Those Were the Days" is more than a concert, it's a sing-along, laugh-along stroll down memory lane. In Israel, the concert draws an audience of Americans who wish to relive and remember the summers of their youth, when Jewish music was dramatically transformed into a new, contemporary sound.

The Saturday evening concert, which offered a delightful dessert buffet, featured many of the songs of Shlomo Carlebach as well as those of the now classic groups *Pirchei, The Rabbis' Sons, Ohr Chadash, Ruach Revival, Kol Salonika*, and more. Singing and clapping along, there was no doubt that the audience was happily remembering exactly why "Those Were the Days."



Everyone sang along and had a great time!

NJOP STAFF

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How do you wow the tastebuds of cosmopolitan Jewry? Give them a little bit of everything.

Extravaganza

That is exactly what NJOP did at its Second Annual Food and Wine Tasting Extravaganza and Silent Auction held at the Roosevelt Hotel on November 18, 2002. With twenty-two of the New York area's finest kosher restaurants and caterers -- six more than last year, NJOP was able to make the delights of kosher cuisine accessible to all its friends and supporters.

"Last year's Extravaganza was such a success," said NJOP Director of Special Events, Amy Vogel, "that it was a real challenge to improve on it. This year, we had more of everything -- more food, more prizes, more variety. Most of all, however, we had more of a great time for everyone involved."

Involvement was the key. More than any other NJOP Special Event, the Food and Wine Tasting Extravaganza and Silent Auction relies on the help of NJOP's Young Leadership Division. NJOP would like to extend a hearty *yasher koach* (great job!) to Event Chairs Amy Lewis and Robert Schachter, Mindy Wolff Miller and Joel Pelofsky, as well as the entire event committee for their dedication and assistance. Without their help, NJOP would not have been able to offer the vast array (90!) of auction prizes -- dinner and theater, sports events, jewelry, hotel stays, make-overs, music and so much more. There were also two beautiful sterling silver Judaica pieces offered as raffle-prizes.

On November 18th, everyone went home a winner, whether it was with a prize or just the wonderful memories of good food and good fun for a really great cause!



Event Chair Mindy Wolff Miller & Dr. Fredric Miller



Rabbi Buchwald and Event Chairs Robert Schachter & Amy Lewis



Event Chair Joel Pelofsky

Thank You Restaurants and Caterers

Abigail's • Butterflake Bakery • Capstone Catering • Cathy Fields Custom Koshers Patisserie • Downy Catering • Eden Wok • Essex on Coney Downtown • Foremost Caterers • Josh's Place • Kay Caterers • The Kosher Marketplace • Le Marais • Le Marquise • Levana • My Most Favorite Dessert Co. • Prestige Caterers • Prime Grill • Ram Caterers • Royal Wine Corp. • Squeez'n Juices & Juice Cocktails • Shallots • Village Crown

*and to our many, many
generous auction donors*

Dinner

of Jewish history. And yet, ours is a generation that is uniquely ignorant without precedent in all Jewish history; America's Jews are wonderfully educated in the ways of the world, but abysmally ignorant in the ways of our people."

The battle that NJOP is waging against the scourge of Jewish ignorance across North America, was cogently illustrated in a video created by Jon Freund under the guidance of Ashley Lazarus (the creative genius behind NJOP's video at its first Dinner in 1995). The promotional video movingly depicted how NJOP has impacted on the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews and highlighted the enthusiasm of NJOP's students and teachers, from New York to Chicago and beyond. Indeed, as Dinner co-chair Karen Lehmann-Eisner pointed out, NJOP has reached well over 600,000 North American Jews, the very number of Israelites who left Egypt, as recorded in the Torah portion read the week of the Dinner.

Keynote speaker, Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, the Chief Rabbi of Israel, was introduced by Harry Krakowski, and inspired a reverent hush from the crowd as he dramatically wove an historical tapestry illustrating the significance of Jewish continuity. If Socrates suddenly found himself in modern Athens, Rabbi Lau commented, he would recognize nothing of the language, culture or religion. If Moses, however, landed at Ben Gurion Airport, he would instantly realize that he was among family. The Chief Rabbi could not stress enough the critical importance of knowledge and education. Even in Israel, where, unfortunately, many children do not know what is contained in the *mezuzah* case on their doorposts, at least every child knows what is meant by "Shabbat Shalom." The Chief Rabbi underscored that it is the work of the National Jewish Outreach Program to teach North American Jews what "Shabbat Shalom" means, and through its work, to bring in the unaffiliated Jews and "open the gates, open the arms, open the ears, and give him/her to understand what it is all about. Then we will not only have a "Shabbat Shalom,"



Miriam and Jeffrey Zuckerman, Founding Board Member and President of NJOP



Bob and Shelley Fischel, Founding Board Member and Secretary of NJOP



Felise and Hilly Gross, Founding Board Member, Vice President of NJOP and the Evening's Comic Relief



Sam Domb, Dr. Marc Benhuri, Harry Krakowski, and Rabbi Israel Meir Lau

but the whole week, and the whole month, and the whole year, and the whole life, will be real *Shalom al Yisrael* (peace on Israel)." With this final prayer for peace, Rabbi Lau hastened from the Waldorf to board his return flight to Israel.

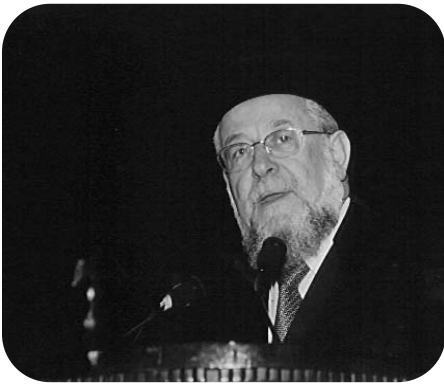
Inasmuch as there is really no better way to celebrate the "Fruits of Our Labor" than to honor the people who have helped cultivate that fruit, the evening's awardees were each highlighted in a special video presentation:

Shelley (and Robert) Fischel, (Miriam and) Jeffrey Zuckerman, and (Felise and) Hillel Gross were all Founding Board Members of the National Jewish Outreach Program. Shelley Fischel, an Executive Vice President at Home Box Office (HBO), has been the official Secretary of NJOP since its inception and an avid supporter of the outreach work of Rabbi Buchwald for the past 25 years. Jeffrey Zuckerman, a partner at the law firm of Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle, LLP, serves as President of the National Jewish Outreach Program. He became involved with NJOP through Lincoln Square Synagogue, and his dedication has not wavered, even though he has since relocated to Silver Spring, Maryland. Hillel (Hilly) Gross allows his reputation to precede him as the official "ham" of the NJOP Board. His video presentation brought down the house as he exaggerated his fawning over Rabbi Buchwald and his own mindless acquiescence to all that was asked of him. Through all the humor, however, it was clear that Hilly felt passionate about the importance of supporting NJOP's outreach efforts.

Rose Landowne, the recipient of this year's Special Service Award, has been teaching NJOP's Level II Hebrew Reading Crash Course since 1995, and



Special Service Award Honoree, Hebrew Teacher Rose and Morton Landowne



Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Chief Rabbi of Israel, Guest Speaker at the Ninth Annual Dinner



NJOP Board Member Leonard and Maura Shaykin



NJOP Board Member Tracy Gerber and Dvora Benedict

has been instrumental in the development of NJOP's Hebrew curricula. She has touched the lives of each of her students, empowering them to participate more fully in their own synagogues. Rose, a full-time participant in the Scholar's Circle Program at the Drisha Institute, sees NJOP's Hebrew reading programs as critical to the advancement of Jewish literacy among North American Jews, and is thoroughly gratified to be a part of such a movement.

Guests of Honor Robin Gordon Apple and Stephen J. Apple came to NJOP "relatively" -- Robin's father, the late Edward S. Gordon, was a first cousin of Rabbi Buchwald. But the passion and drive they display in promoting NJOP programs goes above and beyond the bonds of family. Through Rabbi Buchwald, Robin was first able to really connect to her heritage. From her start in Jewish learning and living at the Beginners Service, the Hebrew Reading Crash Course, Turn Friday Night Into Shabbat, and other introductory programs, Robin is now the proud matriarch of a Jewish home and a member of the NJOP Board of Directors. Unlike Robin, Steve had a formal Jewish education, but it wasn't until he joined the extended Buchwald-Gordon family that he found the inspiration to live a full Jewish life. Today, Steve is the President of the Young Israel of Harrison and works closely with NJOP in reaching out to his community. The four Apple children attend the Westchester Day School.

With such precious "fruit" as the Apples (pun absolutely intended!), sprouting from the efforts of the National Jewish Outreach Program, there is no question that NJOP's programs will continue to make certain that the Jewish people blossom and flourish.



Sam Domb, Israeli Ambassador Alon Pinkas, and Rabbi Buchwald



Dinner Co-Chairs Drs. Dawne and Matthew Eichen



Dinner Co-Chairs David Eisner and Karen Lehmann-Eisner with their son Jason



Rabbi Haskel and Audrey Lookstein

March 7, 2003

A Shabbat Of Valor Across North America

Year after year, the National Jewish Outreach Program is informed by coordinators and participants alike that what they love about Shabbat Across America/Canada is the sense of unity it fosters between all North American Jews. This year, with the threat of war in the air, the unity of the Jewish community was emphasized even more.

Recognizing the spirit of patriotism and bravery that was ignited throughout the country, the National Jewish Outreach Program used this year's campaign to encourage synagogues and Jewish centers to focus their SAA/C programs on people of valor. Whether acknowledging local members of the military, police or firefighters, or celebrating someone's outstanding service to the community, many locations took up the call, each defining "valor" in its own unique way.

Temple Emanuel in Pueblo, Colo., used SAA/C as an opportunity to introduce participants to a wide range of

local heroes. A sheriff's deputy, a correctional officer, a victim's advocate, a volunteer firefighter...these were just a few of the 10 community heroes honored by Temple Emanuel. Dr. Debra Wingfield noted that the participants truly appreciated that the local

"heroes" were not the same old faces that they always see and hear about in the newspapers, but rather their own neighbors and friends.

Many congregations, however, looked beyond their local communities, and even outside the country, for the heroes that have inspired them. Not surprisingly, Israel became a focal point for many. Some locations, like Congregation Brothers of Joseph in Norwich, Conn., focused on the courage it took people in their community to visit Israel during the past year. Others used SAA/C as an opportunity to honor Israel and the Israelis themselves, as did the Beth El Synagogue Center in New Rochelle, N.Y., where Consulate Representative Ido Aharoni was invited as a guest speaker.

Members of the Harrisburg, Pa., communi-

ty know all too well about the heroism of people living in Israel. Their SAA/C program honored the memory of Ben Blutstein, z"l. Ben was dedicated to his Judaism and hoped to become a Jewish educator, and so, at 25, chose to spend the year studying at the Pardes Institute in Jerusalem. Tragically, Ben's life was cut short by a terrorist bomb at Hebrew University. In his memory, over 250 participants from 4 different local synagogues joined together to celebrate SAA/C, sing zmirot and listen to guest speaker Rabbi Daniel Landes, the head of Pardes Institute.

Who is a hero? Who is a person of valor? Communities across North America learned during the 7th Annual Shabbat Across America/Canada that anyone can be a hero. Indeed, each one of us has the ability to reach inside ourselves and make a profound impact on the world. ★



Shabbat Across America/Canada's New Additions

The National Jewish Outreach Program has once again revolutionized Friday night programming by introducing a package of new Shabbat Across America/Canada materials guaranteed to stimulate participants of all ages. Centered around *Shalom Aleichem* and *Aishet Chayil*, songs that start the Friday night Shabbat meal, the new programming material presents locations with a choice of two programs:

The *Shalom Aleichem Discussion Guide* taps into people's search for spirituality by focusing on the Jewish perspective of angels, as understood from the Friday night song *Shalom Aleichem*. The *Discussion Guide* also incorporates four Biblical texts in which angels play a significant role. By including not only source material, but also questions and answers, the *Shalom Aleichem Discussion Guide* offers SAA/C coordinators everything they need to lead a vibrant discussion.

The *Aishet Chayil Study Guide*: The verses of *Aishet Chayil* (literally "Woman of Valor") come from chapter 31 of the Book of Proverbs, which is attributed to King Solomon. NJOP's *Aishet Chayil Study Guide* is based on a commentary on the Book of Proverbs by Rabbi Yitzchak ben Shimson HaCohen (d. 1624), which notes how the character traits described in each line of *Aishet Chayil* are represented by a different Biblical woman. For each woman mentioned in Rabbi Yitzchak's commentary, NJOP created a "Biblical Personality Card" containing a brief biography of the woman and an explanation of how one might see the connection between the woman and the verse(s).

"One of the biggest challenges of creating new programming for SAA/C is making the material interesting for everyone--the unaffiliated, marginally affiliated, and the strongly affiliated. It has to capture the imagination of those who have never studied Jewish texts while piquing the interest of those with a strong Jewish background, because SAA/C draws a wide range of participants. Both of these programs, hopefully, accomplish these goals," explained Sarah Rochel Reid, who wrote and designed the programs.

"With a choice of additional programming options, we can help both larger and smaller locations, each of which have very different program needs," added NJOP Program Director, Rabbi Yitzchak Rosenbaum. "The excited response we received from rabbis and coordinators shows us that we are heading in the right direction. The people want more and more we shall give them!" ★

NJOP IN THE SERVICE

With Shabbat Across America/Canada taking place as the crisis in Iraq intensified, the National Jewish Outreach Program sought to use SAA/C as a means of providing spiritual comfort to its co-religionists in the armed forces while unifying the Jewish community behind our servicemen and women. Working together with Jewish chaplains in the armed forces, NJOP scheduled programs at the Fort Belvoir Military Congregation in Virginia, the West Point Jewish Chapel in New York, Fort Bragg in North Carolina, Fort Sill in Oklahoma, and at the Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska. Although, by March 7th, many of the Jewish service personnel had already shipped out overseas, their families were able to share in the spirit of a communal Shabbat, and were provided with spiritual sustenance and support at a very crucial time.

Additionally, through the good offices of Rabbi David Lapp, Director of the Jewish Welfare Board's Jewish Chaplains Counsel, NJOP contacted Jewish chaplains throughout the American Armed Forces and offered free copies of NJOP's well-received publications *Around the Year with NJOP* and the *Crash Course in Basic Judaism Companion Guide* to be distributed to interested members of the U.S. military.

The end of SAA/C however, did not mean the end of the relationship between NJOP and the United State's Jewish soldiers. Not only did NJOP continue to supply Jewish chaplains in the Persian Gulf region with NJOP publications, but it responded to a request by Rabbi Lapp to supply all the necessary classroom materials for a Hebrew Reading Crash Course to be offered somewhere in Iraq.

The National Jewish Outreach Program is proud to be able to give something back to the service men and women who have put their lives on the line, and in some cases have made the ultimate sacrifice, to advance the cause of freedom. ★



INSIDE NJOP: *Amy Gugig*

"I'm 8 years older than when I started, someone has to be blamed for that," joked Amy Gugig when asked how working for the National Jewish Outreach Program has affected her.

There is no doubt, however, that the National Jewish Outreach Program has been affected by Amy. Primarily responsible for NJOP's office technology (the computers, the website, the network -- basically "all things with batteries and plugs"), Amy has taken NJOP into the 21st century. Indeed this has been no small accomplishment.

"When I first got here, we were using only DOS and no one had internet access. There was no website," explained Amy, reflecting back to her introduction to NJOP through Susan Rothenberg, z"l, a member of the original team that computerized NJOP. Susan asked Amy to take over her work at NJOP so that she could pursue other interests. For Amy it was an excellent opportunity not often available to one with no formal training in the field. As a small non-profit organization with a strong desire to expand, NJOP gave Amy numerous opportunities to learn through experience. The more Amy has learned, the farther NJOP has advanced.

The most visible aspect of Amy's work at NJOP is the NJOP website. Amy worked with a designer [and NJOP's marketing consultant, Melanie Notkin] to develop NJOP's original site, which NJOP quickly outgrew. After facilitating the site's complete reconstruction by the Rare Medium Group (thanks to Board Member Marc Rowan), Amy has successfully handled its continued expansion. The website has become a critical tool for everyone associated with NJOP. Potential students can find local classes and programs. Interested websurfers can read all about Judaism and the Jewish holidays. Program coordinators and teachers can register on-line. The site even has a media area dedicated to letting the press world know what NJOP is all about.

It is not only through the website

that Amy is involved in the numerous departments of NJOP, but in the reality of all the actual work of the office. Amy has become an integral part of the system as a whole. "I [try to] help out wherever I'm needed. I help the people who design things, people who format things, people who stuff and mail things, people who run things...in essence, I have a hand in just about everything here."

Amy also plays an important role in the development of NJOP programs. As one of the few staff members who is not actively involved in a Jewish community, Amy often helps the programming staff view their work through the eyes of those they are trying to reach. NJOP's commitment to work with the entire spectrum of the Jewish community has kept Amy intricately involved.

"I am constantly asked why I work for NJOP if I am not religiously involved," says Amy, "but I look at it from the perspective of NJOP offering an educational opportunity. Many people can relate to some area in their life where they didn't try something because they were too embarrassed, even though they really wanted to do it. People can miss out on their entire life because of a fear of looking foolish. For those people for whom that thing is Judaism, NJOP offers them a way to try it without embarrassment or fear of failure. NJOP offers a safe way to learn. I think that is very valuable."

Amy also noted that she appreciated working at NJOP because of the attitude of her coworkers. Unlike the for-profit offices in which she previously worked, Amy has consistently found satisfaction in working with people who are excited about what they are actually doing and not how much money they may be earning.

While Amy may joke and say that she can only look back and reflect on being older, there is no question that she has been a powerful influence in making NJOP bigger, better, and faster. As for those eight years, NJOP is happy to take the blame! ★



Amy Gugig has been with NJOP for 8 years.

International NJOP

Dear NJOP,

I just wanted to express our thanks from the Moriah College (Australia) Parents Group for the wonderful Hebrew Crash Course that we are using. I have now taught two groups and we are currently in the third session. The groups have basically started from the aleph bet and have graduated with good reading skills and basic knowledge of "Jewish Culture"... Thank you again for the wonderful teaching material that you provide.

Velvel Lederman
Melbourne, Australia

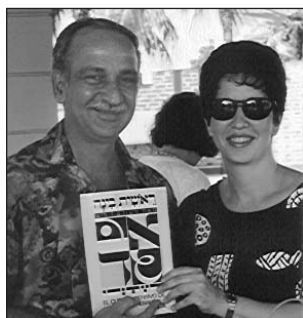


Learning Hebrew in Australia: Ilona Kishner, teacher Velvel Lederman, & Alan Sommers

Dear NJOP,

Enclosed are the long-promised photos from our Cuba trip. As you can see, NJOP has had an impact across the Island. I seem to have given away all of my personal copies of Reishit Binah (in Spanish). When you get a moment, could you please send me 2-3 copies.

Karen Radkowsky
New York



Jose Barlia, head of the Jewish community of Sancti Spiritus, Cuba, and Karen Radkowsky of Bnai Jeshurun's Latin America Committee

FROM THE MAIL ROOM

Hi:

I just heard your "Be a part of it" radio ad on WXRT FM here in Chicago. EXCELLENT! Efforts such as this are a big part of what we need to bring people back to a meaningful Jewish life! Keep up the great work Rabbi Buchwald and all the people at NJOP.

Robert Ferdman
Chicago Il

Dear Sir,

Thank you and everyone involved in NJOP for giving us the opportunity to learn Hebrew. Our teacher did a wonderful job, she went way above and beyond her duty; her dedication is admirable. Learning to read Hebrew was a joyous experience.

Sincerely,
Vera Matty
Long Island City, NY

I've just completed the 5 classes of the Crash Course in Basic Judaism. Enjoyed it much and looking forward to listening to more of your tapes.

Sharon Byars
via email

Hi there,

I was on-line tonight looking up some information on my Jewish heritage and came upon your information. After reading it, I wondered who published such useful information. I saw the National Jewish Outreach Program.

I smiled and reached down to pick up my homework book titled "The Hebrew Reading Crash Course" ...a project of the National Jewish Outreach Program.

*Thank you for all that you do.
Cheryl Susan (Brightman) Kennedy
via email*

*Dassie,
First, again, let me thank the National Jewish Outreach Program for the well-structured and very qualified Hebrew Reading Crash Course program that your organization provided...For myself, as a student, your course of study is proving to be challenging and enjoyable as my knowledge of Hebrew, coupled*

Thank you...

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*with my reading skills, increases weekly. I'm sure that I speak for my fellow students in saying we are all impressed with your class, the book, and our instructor too, and value that which you are providing to those of us who are in a quest for a greater communication skill in Hebrew...Dassie, I want to affirm my strong feelings relative to that which NJOP is making available to those of us who want to gain more knowledge about Hebrew, or a greater understanding of Judaism. Your organization is to be commended, and thanked, for you do mankind a great service. Kindly yours,
J. Michael Rosenberg
Dallas, Texas*

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Gail & Michael B. Weisbrod

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THEY'RE BACK! Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald and Hilly Gross A Triumphant Return to Radio!

If you thought you heard the impassioned voice of Rabbi Buchwald streaming from your radio recently, you were probably right. Rabbi Buchwald and Hilly Gross returned to the New York area airwaves this spring on WSNR 620 AM.

"The radio is an excellent forum for outreach," explained Rabbi Buchwald, "because it is an opportunity for people to sit back, relax and just listen. It's less direct, and therefore, less threatening."

Rabbi Buchwald and Mr. Gross covered such challenging topics as "Must All Outreach be Orthodox?" "Jews Without Money," "Should We Boycott French Champagne?" "The Jewish Media's Coverage of the Orthodox World," etc. By focusing on such cutting edge issues, the radio program is a means not only to reach out and educate unaffiliated and marginally affiliated Jews, but also to confront larger issues in the traditional Jewish world.

"We wanted our listeners to really think about the topics that are critical to the Jewish world. Sweeping issues under the rug won't make them go away. If we talk about the challenges we face, we can hopefully start working on solutions," noted Hilly Gross as he explained how the multi-guest format of the show allowed for open and lively discussion.

The revival of the NJOP radio program came at the impetus of Mr. Sam Domb, who has been unfaltering in his dedication to the work of the National Jewish Outreach Program. NJOP would also like to thank Sylvia and Carl Freyer for their unstinting support of the show and Dr. Joseph Frager for arranging the station and studio. While the show will be on hiatus for the summer, look for news of the radio show again this fall!

IN MEMORIAM

NJOP records with sorrow the following losses

Joseph Blaustein

beloved father of Dr. Stuart Blaustein

Claire Deskin

beloved mother of Michael Steinhardt

JJ Greenberg

beloved son of
Blu and Rabbi Yitz Greenberg

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