



# NATIONAL JEWISH Outreach

ת"ש

JANUARY 2005-Shevat 5765

INTERIM UPDATE

## HAPPY IN THE HAMPTONS!

It was a crisp, clear, beautiful day. The sun glistened on the blue water of the bay as a gentle breeze played with the thick rushes. The delightful weather was a perfect reflection of the truly festive mood of the supporters of the National Jewish Outreach Program at the fourth annual *Salute to NJOP in the Hamptons*.

NJOP's "Greatest Event of the Summer" was hosted by Andrea and Harry Krakowski at their beautiful Westhampton Beach home. Mr. and Mrs. Krakowski also acted as the event's Masters of Ceremonies and introduced the afternoon's program which included Rabbi Ephraim Buchwald, Rabbi Marc Schneier, Mr. Sam Domb, Guest Speaker Congressman Anthony Weiner, Honorees Gail and Michael Weisbrod and Mr. Eddie Jacobs.



Congressman Anthony Weiner

By way of introducing Rabbi Buchwald to the gathered crowd, Eddie Jacobs, renowned artist and architect, told a moving story of how Rabbi Buchwald helped him return to his Jewish roots. What Rabbi Buchwald made him realize, Mr. Jacobs explained, was that Jewish outreach is actually about teaching a person to "reach in," for bringing "a person closer to himself is the only way to help a person connect to the greater body that is *Klal Yisrael*." The only way for the Jewish people to survive is to help Jews remember who they are. Thus, said Jacobs, it is the responsibility of those who care about the Jewish people to support outreach, the "lifeblood of the Jewish people."

Before introducing the afternoon's guest speaker, Rabbi Buchwald thanked Mr. Sam Domb for his diligent efforts on behalf of NJOP and presented him with a beautiful *etrog* box. Introducing Congressman Anthony Weiner (NY-D), Rabbi Buchwald noted the Congressman's fierce support of Israel as well as his constant presence as a leader in the Jewish community.

As a New York Congressman since 1999, Anthony Weiner has been outspoken in his support of Israel and the Jewish community. Addressing the state of American Jewry today as reflected by the country's relationship with Israel, Congressman Weiner noted that there is nothing more important than Jews getting involved: learning more about who they are, visiting Israel and letting their government representatives hear from them. The Congressman stressed that he felt that there is no activity more patriotic for Americans than the support of Israel, which shares with the United States the goal of democratic living. He also praised NJOP for recognizing the plight of American Jewry, which, although stronger spiritually and deeply interested in all things Zionist, is simultaneously suffering a continued rise in alienation and assimilation. "NJOP," he said, "helps people recognize that the Jewish community is for them. And it works. Those who understood latent Judaism are starting to recognize a deeper Jewish identity."

After speaking on a wide range of political topics of vital importance to the Jewish community, Congressman Weiner concluded by reminding the guests that "if we keep supporting causes like [NJOP] and Israel, we can say that because we stood up, we are able

### INSIDE:

- Dinner Plans . . . . . 2
- 9th Annual RHA/C Highlights . . . 2
- High on the Holidays . . . . . 3
- Parenting Challenge . . . . . 3
- Planting Seeds . . . . . 4
- NJOP Calendar . . . . . 4



Sam Domb and Rose Mattus

Continued on page 2

(continued from page 1) to say [both] G-d bless America and *Am Yisrael Chai*.”

Rabbi Marc Schneier, the rabbi of the Hampton Synagogue, introduced the afternoon’s honorees, Gail and Michael Weisbrod, by noting that they have played a critical role in the creation and growth of the Hampton’s community. Noting that Mr. Weisbrod is a *Kohain*, he blessed them with the priestly blessing, “*Yivarechecha Hashem v’yish’m’recha*, May G-d bless you and guard you...” and, he added as a note about the Weisbrods’ generosity, “May the L-rd bless you with possessions, but not let possessions possess you.”

Michael Weisbrod proudly stated that he was a product of the outreach movement. His strong connection to his Jewish heritage was inspired by Rabbi Marc Schneier’s father, Rabbi Arthur Schneier. Mr. Weisbrod attested that he knew many people whose link to Judaism came through NJOP and Rabbi Buchwald, and that he therefore understood firsthand the critical importance of NJOP.

In a surprise conclusion to the program, Mr. Sam Domb, who has been one of NJOP’s strongest supporters and activists, presented, together with Rabbi Buchwald, gifts and honors to the Podolsky family, Gloria and Harvey Kaylie, and Andrea and Harry Krakowski, as well as a special birthday present for Mrs. Rose Mattus.



Harry Krakowski, Stuart Podolsky,  
Jay Podolsky and Zenek Podolsky



Honorees Gail and Michael Weisbrod



Eddie Jacobs



Arnold Stark and Rabbi Buchwald



Gabrielle Donati and Steven Hirsch



Rachael Erlichman  
NJOP's New Events  
Coordinator

## Rachael Erlichman Takes The Reins For the 11th Annual NJOP Dinner

The theme of the 11th annual NJOP Dinner is *Hitchadshut/Renewal*. Since its inception in 1987, the National Jewish Outreach Program and its supporters have worked tirelessly toward, and aspired for, nothing less than the wholesale renewal of the Jewish people.

While NJOP strives to bring a broad renewal to the Jewish people, it must also renew itself by hiring the best and the brightest of the upcoming stars in the Jewish philanthropic world. Rachael Erlichman, NJOP’s new Events Coordinator, joined the NJOP staff after working as an Assistant Program Coordinator for Aish HaTorah. From the moment she started in October, Rachael jumped right in and took over the intense and detailed planning needs of the 11th Annual NJOP Dinner. Working with this year’s Dinner Chairs Karen Lehmann-Eisner & David Eisner, Sylvia & Carl Freyer, and Tracy & Sander Gerber, Rachael’s natural poise and dynamic personality eased any transition worries. The Honorary Chairs for this year’s event are Eva and Ulo Barad, Helen and Jack Nash, Marta and Rubin Schron, and Judy and Michael Steinhart

This year’s Dinner will once again be held at the Waldorf=Astoria, on Tuesday evening, February 1, 2005, at 6 PM. For more information, or to reserve your tickets, please call Rachael at (646) 871-0111 or email her at rachaele@njop.org.

NJOP is pleased to announce that this year’s Guests of Honor will be the Podolsky family: Zenek and Fannie Podolsky and their children Shirley and Stuart Podolsky and Sharon and Jay Podolsky; and Janet and Saul Spitz. The Young Leadership Award will be presented to Eliana and Vladimir Gutin. Batya and Eddie Jacobs will be receiving the Leslie Nelkin Special Service Award.

# רִיד הַיְבְּרוּ אִמְרֵי קָהָ-קָנְדָה

## (READ HEBREW AMERICA/CANADA)

Take a guess! What special program drew close to 10,000 people to synagogues and Jewish centers across North America during the month of November? READ HEBREW AMERICA/CANADA, which fulfilled the widely varied needs of the participants. For instance, many students hoped to be able to help their children or grandchildren with their Hebrew school homework. Others wanted to feel more comfortable at their synagogue services. Still others wanted to prepare for a trip to Israel. No matter what the motive, the National Jewish Outreach Program's READ HEBREW AMERICA/CANADA program was there to help.

For the last eight years, synagogues and Jewish centers across North America have come to know and love NJOP's Hebrew Reading Crash Courses and the annual Hebrew literacy campaign, READ HEBREW AMERICA/CANADA. Time and again, many of the volunteer teachers have raved about the ease of using the *Reishith Binah* Hebrew Primer and the other specially designed materials provided by NJOP. And the program continues to grow. RHA/C 2004 saw courses offered at 51 new locations, allowing more Jews than ever the opportunity to "be a part of it."

Knowing that it often takes multiple impressions to catch someone's attention, NJOP decided to diversify its advertising and public relations campaign. In addition to its annual radio blitz, this year highlighted Rabbi Buchwald as the announcer, and newspaper ads, NJOP extensively utilized the internet and email to get the word out. After all, you never know what might inspire someone to learn Hebrew. Yet the most critical aspect of advertising for RHA/C is the satisfaction expressed by students and the word of mouth that is generated. Most students are able to read basic words by the second lesson. Eric Steinfeld, who took the class in New York City, was so inspired that he decided to try his new skills out at synagogue. With great excitement, he came to his fourth class and reported that, for the first time, he was able to follow the services without the transliteration.

Students who completed the Level I Hebrew Reading Crash Course are, hopefully, even now, reviewing and preparing for a Level II course. It is NJOP's hope that its recently created video HOW TO TEACH LEVEL II, as demonstrated by NJOP's Hebrew language specialist, Florence Wiener, will allow for more and more Level II classes to be offered.

### *The Great Jewish Parenting Challenge*

Without question, parents of Hebrew school students represent one of the greatest untapped markets for outreach, which is the reason why NJOP has presented them, via their children's Hebrew school principals, with the Great Jewish Parenting Challenge. The Challenge, which was initiated by NJOP Community Development & Outreach Coordinator Larry Greenman, packages five of NJOP's premium educational programs to be offered as a special curriculum to these parents at the same time that their children are in Hebrew school. Although this is NJOP's first attempt to work directly with religious school directors and principals, by the beginning of READ HEBREW AMERICA/CANADA, 39 locations were registered for the Challenge.

The Challenge creates opportunities for parents to interact with their children in a whole new way.

The tools provided by NJOP have opened the doors to Jewish living and learning for so many members of my congregation.

Rabbi Jordan Goldson, Kol Ami, Scottsdale, Arizona

After taking the Challenge, parents will find themselves better equipped to assist their children with their Hebrew school homework and will also have much more confidence to teach their children their family traditions. Additionally, through their participation in the learning program, parents are demonstrating the high value that they place on Jewish education, thus enforcing the importance of their children's religious school education.

In the mission statement of our Talmud Torah, we state that one of our goals is to empower parents to become their children's Jewish teachers. The workshops that you have provided help us immensely in this goal.

Cantor Marc Philippe, Congregation B'nai Zion, El Paso, Texas

## HIGH ON THE HOLIDAYS

Question: What is the best method of running a High Holiday Beginners Program? Answer: There is no best way--any program that reaches out effectively to the unaffiliated and marginally affiliated Jews in a community is a "winner" by NJOP's yardstick. With this spirit of inclusiveness in mind, the National Jewish Outreach Program has, year after year, done its best to support synagogues and Jewish centers that host High Holiday Beginner Services. In that light, we present you with three different synagogues and three different services that successfully reached unaffiliated or marginally affiliated Jews in 2004.

In Atlanta, GA, the lay congregants took the lead to run Congregation Beth Jacob's explanatory service. Participants ranged from regular Beth Jacob congregants to people who saw an ad for the service in *The Atlanta Jewish Times* and came to Beth Jacob for the first time. The program, which focused on explanations and answering questions, was a great success, with no less than 25 people at each service.

In New York City, Rabbi Buchwald once again led his famous Lincoln Square Synagogue High Holidays Beginners Service, which he has been running for almost 30 years. The services take place in the beautiful New York Historical Society, which was over-

*Continued on page 4*

# Planting Seeds

It has often been noted how odd it feels to celebrate Tu B'Shevat (the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat--January 25, 2005) in the winter. The holiday of Tu B'Shevat is first referred to in the *Mishna (Rosh Hashana 2a)*, where it is called the New Year for trees. While there are no additional prayers during the day's services, and there are no special "requirements" for Tu B'Shevat, there is a widespread custom to eat some of the seven special foods by which G-d praised the land of Israel in the Torah: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and honey (from dates). Some Jews even get together to eat a special meal on Tu B'Shevat. This meal is sometimes called a Tu B'Shevat Seder (similar to a Passover Seder).

To understand why Tu B'Shevat falls out in the winter, one must look beneath the snow and the ice, deep within the earth to the seed that was planted in the fall. On Tu B'Shevat, that seed ends its dormant stage and begins to reach-out and stretch upwards toward the air. It is on or about Tu B'Shevat, that the seed begins its path to realize its potential.

Tu B'Shevat is, therefore, a celebration of potential. Before the winter ends, the seeds are preparing for the spring. So too, in each Jew, there is a moment when their *pintele yid*, their dormant Jewish spark, is awakened and they start to let their Judaism blossom.

At NJOP, we have been planting the seeds of learning in tens of thousands of unaffiliated and marginally affiliated Jews across North America. There is no way to know or calculate the full effect of NJOP classes, how many seeds might lay dormant for years before beginning to blossom. What is important is that the seeds have been planted. NJOP thanks all those who have helped us plant the seeds of Judaism for the last 17 years, and hopes that we will all be privileged to see the beauty that blossoms from these efforts.



## NJOP EVENTS

### 11th Annual Dinner

February 1, 2005  
Waldorf=Astoria  
New York, New York

### 9th Annual SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA/CANADA Program

March 4, 2005  
Continent-Wide Friday Night  
Shabbat Campaign

For more information about attending or sponsoring an upcoming NJOP Program, please contact NJOP's Events Coordinator, Rachael Erlichman, at (646) 871-0111 or [rachaele@njop.org](mailto:rachaele@njop.org).

(continued from page 3) flowing with more than 250 participants. Known as a service that is both meaningful and enjoyable at the same time, it is a full High Holiday service, which Rabbi Buchwald and Rabbi Dr. Mordechai Reich lead, stopping for explanations and questions as needed.

Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld of Ohev Sholom Talmud Torah Congregation in Washington, D.C., used a different approach. During Torah reading, which divides the service between *Shacharit* (morning prayers) and *Mussaf* (the additional service in which the majority of the High Holiday prayers are found), he offered a 45 minute explanation of what was to come. Each day he had a small group of 6-7 people with whom he shared the basic structure of the *Mussaf* service and key notes on where they, the congregants, were expected to "chime in." After the *Washington Post* featured an article about the synagogue on the front page of its Metro Section, Rabbi Herzfeld's services drew many non-members to the synagogue as well.

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