



Speak EZ

Your Monthly MetroWest E-Newsletter

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Voice of UJC Leadership

Women's Philanthropy: On the Cutting Edge

*By Leslie Dannin Rosenthal, President, Women's Philanthropy
Anna Fisch, President Elect, Women's Philanthropy*

In fundraising circles, there are three words that are currently garnering some attention: Jewish, women, philanthropy. Not surprisingly, we are very interested in what's being written on the topic, since it's what we do, as the president and president-elect of UJC MetroWest's Women's Philanthropy. We're even more interested in the intersection between what the literature is saying and what we are doing here in MetroWest.



Leslie Dannin Rosenthal Anna Fisch

One of the leading think tanks about Jewish women and philanthropy is the Hadassah Brandeis Institute and the latest issue of their e-zine, *614 HBI eZINE*, is devoted to the topic and is entitled "How Jewish Women Give." The various articles discuss many of the cutting edge issues we deal with on a regular basis. Joan Kaye authored the lead article, "Jewish Women's Philanthropy: The Big Picture." Although Kaye focuses on women who donate over \$500,000 a year, what she concludes about how and why women give is equally true of our donors at any level of giving.

Kaye says that most Jewish women philanthropists can be described as "venture philanthropists," who share common characteristics such as "the need to make a difference, a commitment to sustainable funding, leveraging funds, strengthening institutions, and reciprocity or partnership with recipients." We think these qualities are certainly found in the members of Women's Philanthropy. Although each of us may contribute a different dollar amount to the Annual UJA Women's Campaign, those dollars are used to the same goals. We certainly saw this on the Heart to Heart Mission to Israel in January and the Women's Major Gifts Mission to Cuba this month.

We saw our dollars in action, making a difference for differently abled Israelis at the Center of Independent Living and for Ethiopian teens at a brand new teen center when we were in Israel. That we make a difference for the small but vibrant Jewish community in Havana and in the small communities in the Cuban countryside was palpable — without us, the necessary work would not happen. Sustainability is something MetroWest

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Missions connect people to the world of Federation, increase giving, and enable donors to see UJA dollars at work. Three missions went out in the past 2 months!

- National Women's Philanthropy led the Heart to Heart Mission to Israel in January
- Women's Major Gift Mission to Cuba in March
- UJC's Couples Mission to Israel in March

61 participants, 15 days of 50+ site-visits and programs. \$196,000 in new money raised for our Campaigns. Wow!

is known for — if we take something on, we stick with it — it's how we are the only federation with six partnership communities in Israel! We spent a lot of time — and will spend more, I'm sure — talking about how to make a true difference in Cuba, to do more than just leave *tzedakah* but how to work with the Cuban Jewish community to meet their aims and goals on an ongoing basis. Talking about sustainability leads directly to leveraging funds. In Israel, we saw projects that are funded in part by the Annual Campaign, in part by the Israeli government and in part by Israeli foundations, which is a new and burgeoning source of funds. Finally, in terms of reciprocity or partnership with recipients, each mission had a great example. On the Heart to Heart Mission, we had lunch at the Neve Midbar spa (more like a pool and gym club, open to the public), at the restaurant there, which is run by the Ethnic Empowerment Women's Group of Ofakim, our Partnership 2000 community. A relatively small grant from MetroWest helped get this group off the ground. Now they are totally independent and we were so proud to see them doing so well - and they were so happy to feed us their delicious food! In fact, this concept of reciprocity and partnership is now part of every exchange we have with Ofakim — all of our projects must have some kind of impact in both communities. In Cuba, the partnership was somewhat more intangible. We were welcomed into the Shabbat community in the beautifully restored Patronato sanctuary in a Friday night service led by three members of the congregation. We would not have had this beautiful experience without them, and they would not have had the knowledge or the worship space if not for the JDC and us. So — if you're ever tempted to think of your gift to the Annual Campaign as going to an amorphous space, go on a mission, or even a local mini-mission. Seeing the faces, the spaces and the places will demonstrate the connections that all "venture philanthropists" look for in their work.

Another article in *614-HBI eZINE* focuses on the two paths of Jewish women's philanthropy. Deborah Skolnick Einhorn, a noted scholar in this area, looks at the differences between organizations where the funds are donated by Jewish women for Jewish causes and those where the funds are donated to benefit Jewish women and girls. Clearly, MetroWest Women's Philanthropy falls into the former category, but Skolnick Einhorn goes beyond trying to divide women's giving into neat subsets. In fact, she notes that there is a large overlap in the Venn diagram of membership in the two groups. What unites the women who give to Jewish causes and those who give to benefit Jewish women and girls is a significant commitment to Jewish communal needs — and most importantly, the belief that "their dollars can still be well spent in the Jewish world." The author's concluding question is one that those of us interested in Jewish women's philanthropy are trying to answer: "How will new modes of giving (and getting) impact what women give to and get from their own philanthropy?" If women are looking for connection and involvement as part of their philanthropy, how will e-philanthropy enhance or detract from that value? If women are looking to see the difference their dollars make, can umbrella giving remain relevant or will designated giving become more of a vehicle? We face these issues every day, both in Women's Philanthropy and in MetroWest. We'd love to hear your thoughts on these important questions.

Finally, "Making Philanthropy Cool," by Stefanie Zelkind, reminded us of the discussions we've been having for the past five years in our Philanthropy 101s. Stefanie was part of a "giving group" for Jewish mothers and teenage

girls called "No Small Change." Zelkind describes how the group worked and the good it did for the participants as they reached their goals. They didn't have a lot of money, but they had the desire to make a difference. We hear this all the time in our Philanthropy 101s – how moms teach their families that even the smallest act of *tzedakah* changes not only the recipient, but the donor as well. If you haven't attended a Philanthropy 101, why not host one? Call or email Robin Leitner, rleitner@ujcnj.org or (973) 929-3035 and who knows – it might be "no small change" for you!

UJA Benefit Concert

The 13th Annual UJA Benefit Concert is Coming, May 12 – NJ Governor Christie to Attend

The 13th Annual United Jewish Appeal (UJA) Benefit Concert will be held on Wednesday, May 12, at 7:30 p.m., at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. As it is every year, the evening will be a festive gala event of music, community celebration, and philanthropic spirit in support of the UJA Annual Campaign.

A special musical program will be performed by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, led by conductor Gerald Steichen and featuring gifted pianist Benjamin Hochman.

The evening will present a salute to legendary composer Leonard Bernstein with some of his most iconic music – the *Overture to Candide* and *West Side Story Symphonic Dances*. In addition, Benjamin Hochman will explore the classical and jazz fusion of George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Adding to the prestige of the evening's festivities, this year New Jersey Governor Chris Christie will be in attendance, to show his support for UJA MetroWest.

The Annual UJA Benefit Concert is always an important occasion, bringing the MetroWest Jewish community together and providing one of the largest fundraising events of the campaign year.

In the midst of the ongoing economic crisis, the needs of the MetroWest Jewish community are increasing. The partner agencies of United

Jewish Communities of MetroWest NJ provide the social safety net, offering critical services needed by people who are facing sudden job loss, financial adversity, family stress, and other related challenges. To do that, these agencies depend on increased funding from UJA.

That makes this year's Annual UJA Benefit Concert not just a gala event, but an indispensable humanitarian affair.

Every year, the UJA Annual Concert honors one of MetroWest's premier philanthropic couples. This year, the UJA Annual Benefit Concert will pay tribute to Ruth and Martin Barber, in recognition of their extensive and longstanding involvement in the Jewish community.

Currently, Martin serves on the executive committee of UJC MetroWest, is a member of the Board of Trustees, and is the treasurer of the Jewish Community Housing Corporation Board. His past MetroWest positions include president of the Jewish Community Foundation, vice president of Daughters of Israel, and treasurer of UJC. He also was president of Temple Beth Shalom in Livingston.

Ruth serves on the Board of Trustees of UJC, is on the Board of Women's Philanthropy, is co-chairing the Lion of Judah Sapphire category, and is a member of the Israel Program Center committee. Ruth is a past board member of the Community Relations Council and JEA, and a past vice president of Business & Professional Women.

In addition to their record of Jewish community service, they have both had successful professional careers. Martin is a founding partner at Wiss & Company, LLP, Certified Public Accountants. He retired in 1996. Currently, he is an officer at Dan Jon Management Corporation, a real estate management company. Ruth has been an educator for most of her career.

This year's UJA Benefit Concert will also be special as it features two of the rising stars of the Classical Music World.

With a career that ranges from symphony to opera, Broadway to chamber music, Conductor Gerald Steichen has established himself as one of America's most versatile musicians. He serves as Music Director of the Ridgefield (Connecticut) Symphony, Principal Pops Conductor of the Utah Symphony, and Associate Conductor of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. He has conducted

the Boston Pops, New Jersey Symphony, Columbus Symphony, and the Oklahoma City Philharmonic. Internationally, Steichen has led the NDR Orchestra — Hanover (Germany), the NRK Orchestra (Oslo, Norway) and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.

Born in Jerusalem, pianist Benjamin Hochman has achieved widespread acclaim for his performances as orchestral soloist, recitalist and chamber musician. After his successful recital debut at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he became a presence in New York through concerts with the New York Philharmonic and the American Symphony Orchestra, his Carnegie Hall debut with the Israel Philharmonic, and appearances at the 92nd Street Y. Mr. Hochman has performed with the Chicago, Pittsburgh, American, and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestras, Seattle, Vancouver, New Jersey, and Portland Symphonies and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Canada under eminent conductors such as Kazuyoshi Akiyama, Leon Botstein, Nir Kabaretti, Jaime Laredo, Jun Märkl, Arthur Post, Lucas Richman, Bramwell Tovey and Pinchas Zukerman. He has appeared in his native Israel with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Ra'anana and Jerusalem Symphonies, and has joined conductor Pinchas Zukerman and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in a Mozart Piano Concerto project with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago.

The UJA Concert benefactors are Joan L. and Allen I. Bildner, Short Hills; Judy and Stewart Colton, Short Hills; Toby and Leon G. Cooperman, Short Hills; Beth and William S. Furman, South Orange; Anita and Franklin Hanoach, Livingston; Dr. Victor and the late Dr. Mia Parsonnet, Millburn; Eric F. and the late Lore Ross, South Orange; Judy and Josh S. Weston, Montclair; Beth and Leonard Wilf, Short Hills; and Barbara and Edward Zinbarg, Short Hills. The benefactors established an endowment that helps cover the cost of the concert.

Proceeds from the concert will support the 2010 UJA Campaign.

Concert tickets range from \$100 to \$20. To order, call 1-800-ALLEGRO (255-3476), Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. For additional information about the 13th Annual UJA Benefit Concert, contact the Concert Hotline at (973) 929-3010 or e-mail concert@ujcnj.org. You can also find detailed information about the event at <http://www.ujcnj.org/concert>.

Making a Difference

Neshamot Teomot (twinning souls)

A high school twinning program between Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex and Union and the Merchavim high school in UJC MetroWest's partner community of Ofakim/Merchavim, Israel.

One of the most successful projects of P2K, UJC MetroWest's Partnership 2000 through JAFI, is the Solomon Schechter — Merchavim high school twinning program, known as "Neshamot" (souls). The project involves various "living bridge" connections, encounters and joint ventures. Every year, starting with 9th grade and running through graduation, students from N.J. and Merchavim, Israel have at least one encounter with each other. The highlights include the SSDS 9th graders trip to Israel, the Merchavim "Neshama Yetera" 11th graders trip to NJ, and the SSDS "Neshama" semester long program in Israel.

The first teacher exchange was an important experience for both the American and Israeli teachers. Through a program developed by Lilach Bluevise, Israel Program Coordinator at SSDS and Randi Brokman, Living Bridge Coordinator from the UJC MetroWest Israel Program Center, both groups of teachers explored issues of Jewish identity, Jewish pluralism, and Jewish life in MetroWest. This included a mini-mission to important services of the Jewish community. In addition, the teachers shared different types of tikkun olam which can be practiced in both schools and together explored new and interesting means of cooperation between the two schools.

After more than five years in operation, it is now clear that both schools have highly benefited from this multi level partnership and it has become a national model among North American — Israeli partnership communities. The most recent encounter was unique because, for the first time, it involved the faculty. A delegation of 12 teachers headed by the Merchavim high school principal, Eli Peretz spent 10 days in MetroWest where they studied together and were hosted by the SSDS faculty headed by Lilach Bluevise, Israel coordinator and Joyce Reiner, head of school. Next year a delegation of faculty and board members from SSDS will go to Israel to have a similar encounter with Merchavim. We call it family.

The Living Bridge is supported by the Partnership 2000 and part of the new philosophy is to broaden and deepen personal relationships between our partner communities and to work together to strengthen the Jewish People.

Below are testimonies from two teachers, one from NJ and one from Merchavim who participated in the last faculty encounter.

I wanted to be a part of this program for many reasons. I was interested in learning about how children learn in Israel, what types of programming they do, specifically Tikkun Olam and Chaagim. I wanted to participate in a program to help build stronger ties between our children and children in Israel. I also want very much to go to Israel since I have not been there since I was 16.

Being in the program has been so exciting for me. It was excellent to make friends with teachers there, to really have the chance to learn about their school, their needs, our common difficulties with students, and our common learning themes.

Something personal that came out of the program was how hard we have to work at being Jewish here, embedding it in our families, our children, our community, while in Israel they just are. It is just part of them. Yet, because of this way of thinking on their end, many of them realized that they are not as connected spiritually to their Judaism. They went home feeling the need to re-evaluate their level of commitment to their own Judaism. It also made many of us embrace our own Judaism in a different light.

For our school, I am so excited and proud to be a part of this program. I am excited to begin the cross-over activities that we will bring into each of our schools jointly. I can't wait to go there, and learn more from them, be a part of their school/home communities, and meet their students and other teachers. I want to help make this program as successful as possible for all of us, and am thrilled to be a part of it.

— *Gena Rosenberg, Program Coordinator, Solomon Schechter Day School of Essex and Union, West Orange, NJ*

I joined the Mifgash because I wanted to be a part of the "bigger picture." Our school is

more than just an educational institution. Our school is our extended family and our community. Since my children attend SSDSEU, I wanted to be involved in different ways. Furthermore, I wanted to share my passion for math and Judaism with our sister school in Israel. Math is the universal language and Judaism is who we are. The relationships that were formed during Chanukah 2009 will spill into our lessons that our students will experience. They will see that Israel is not only taught to our students, Israel is also a part of their teachers' lives. We are all in it together. We are one.

It was incredible to see how easily every member of the delegation, both Israeli and American, blended and immediately found ways to communicate with each other. Everyone was eager to share ideas, stories, and future endeavors. It never occurred to me that I would be the one who gained and benefited from the relationships formed. I look forward to future connections with Merchavim where we can enrich and excite both schools with lifelong commitments.

— *Nina Bilmes, Math Teacher, Solomon Schechter High School, West Orange, NJ*

Working Together with Our Partner Agencies

The Journey from Outside our Community to Inside

by Dana Lichtenberg

A young mother recently brought me a gift. With tears in her eyes she thanked me for being nice to her and her daughter, for introducing her to other young families in her neighborhood and for making her feel a part of the Jewish community. She explained to me that her path has not been an easy one. It was not as easy as she expected to meet people and make friends. "Until I found you [the Morris County Connection]," she told me "I was alone day after day."

As members of the engaged community, it is often hard for us to remember what it was like to be on the outside. For many Jews, finding a way into the community is the hardest step. Jewish families on the periphery of our community — they do not belong to a synagogue, send children to a Jewish Day School, or belong to the JCC — do not know how to navigate their way in.

They might be intimidated by our familiar lingo and acronyms, or they just can't find a doorway comfortable enough to walk through. The work of the Morris County Connection strives to lower these barriers, open new doorways, and create new entry points into the Jewish community that introduce newcomers to the programs and services available to them in our Jewish community.

Through a variety of outreach techniques, we meet the people who can't find their way in and invite them to events and programs that create an environment that is welcoming and comfortable for them. We create an environment where they literally run into us as they are going about their normal routine, and we engage them.

Most of our programs exist in the public sphere and are open to the public. We have programs like "Hanukkah Story Time" at Barnes & Noble and "Art in the Aisles" at the local craft store. We teach non-Jewish mothers who are raising Jewish children — everything from celebrating Shabbat at home to cooking brisket and chicken soup. We help Jewish grandparents nurture the identities of their interfaith (or

non-Jewish) grandchildren. We partner with children's play places to bring holiday programs to the community. We also ask our synagogue congregations to look within themselves to see how welcoming they are. One of our goals is to make our community more approachable and make people feel like they belong.

We recently held "Passover in the Aisles," a program created by the Jewish Outreach Institute, which is literally a Passover event in the aisles of a supermarket. Every year, the program brings a taste of the holiday to a local supermarket to create an easy way for people to ask questions about the holiday, sample some foods that might not be familiar, and get resources about celebrating the holiday at home. The participants guide the direction and tone of the Passover conversation. We take nothing for granted. The family with bread in their cart on the day before Passover might be Jewish — and we want them to know that they are welcome.

This year's "Passover in the Aisles" was held at Whole Foods in Madison. The event included a special Passover story time with the PJ Library, a display of Kosher for Passover foods, and resources for creating a family-friendly Passover.

After the event, the children enjoyed juice and cookies, while the adults had an opportunity to ask questions, explore new recipe options, and engage one another. It was heartwarming to see the participants stay in the store for lunch to spend more time with their new friends. There were children laughing, phone numbers being exchanged, and discussion about which event they were attending next. It was as if community was being built before my eyes. After an event like "Passover in the Aisles," we contact the participants, assess their needs, and help connect them to existing programs and services that best meet their needs. This type of personal follow-up has been essential to our success! The goal is to give these participants their first meaningful Jewish experience, and help them find a way to engage in our community and eventually become active participants in the community. We want each participant to feel a personal connection to the MetroWest Jewish community. As the outreach coordinator, I have witnessed this entrée into the community happen many times. For each individual or family, the path and the speed

are different. But all of these participants, like the young mother bearing gifts, share one common thing – the journey from outside our community to inside.

Dana Lichtenberg is the Morris County Outreach Coordinator for JCC MetroWest. The Morris County Connection is a collaboration among JCC MetroWest, Jewish Family Service of MetroWest, and the synagogues of Morris County, and is supported by United Jewish Communities of MetroWest NJ. Dana Lichtenberg can be contacted at DLichtenberg@jccmetrowest.org, or by calling (973) 929-2936.

Thoughts from MetroWest Rabbis

Pesach and Back to Basics

by Rabbi Stanley Asekoff

Just a few days before Pesach I met a friend in the "Passover aisle" of the supermarket. Shopping carts literally overflowing with all kinds of holiday merchandise, we stopped, looked over each other's purchases, and then he spoke. "Why? Just tell me why? It's out of control. Every year we buy so much more than we can possibly consume. We cook far in excess of what we need for the Seders. We load up our refrigerators, freezers, and pantries with such an overabundance of food! We really don't need it! We either throw it out after the holiday or save it for next year-and then discard it and do the same thing over again. It's wasteful, expensive, energy and time consuming! It's a physically exhausting and draining holiday! Why? Just tell me why!"

This got me to thinking that what we need – and not just for Pesach, but all year long, and for all aspects of our lives – is a return to basics. We are encumbered with so much "stuff" that we lose sight of the basics. Now would be a good time to think about this, both for next year in terms of Pesach; and for tomorrow and the day after in terms of the quality of our lives! After all, what are the basics for a successful Pesach? Homes cleansed of chametz, two Sedarim with all the ritual necessities (seder plate, matzah cover, matzah, kiddush cups, etc.), Haggadot to help us fulfill the Mitzvah of telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt, stimulating discussion about the meaning of the holiday,

and a nice meal to accompany it. It doesn't have to be elaborate. It doesn't require a "40 course banquet." But it does need to have depth and meaning. Returning to the basics for Pesach means that we devote as much time to preparing ourselves educationally and spiritually as we do to the physical acts of cleaning, cooking, and shopping. It means acknowledging that although the physical preparations are necessary, they are not sufficient without the accompanying educational and spiritual preparation. It means readjusting the time used for physical preparation (cleaning, shopping, cooking) as compared with the time allocated to spiritual and educational preparation, with more of an emphasis on the latter! It means that we use some of this "new found time" for studying, reading, and gathering materials to be brought to the seder to enrich the experience and enliven the discussion. It means coming to the Seder with a clear picture of the educational and spiritual goals we want to achieve in the time we spend together around the table reading, eating, singing, praying and rejoicing. And because this article is being read right after this year's seders, it means evaluating the Seders we have just experienced while they are still fresh in our memories, deciding how well we did, what we can do better next year, and what changes we need to make to get back to the basics.

With regard to looking forward, Pesach also can be understood as a paradigm for our lives in general. Especially over the last year or two, as an unexpected consequence of the economy and the resulting "scaling back" in which all of us are involved, we are in fact (although we may not realize it) occupied with the challenge of figuring out what is basic/essential and what is secondary/peripheral (because we can no longer afford all the "stuff," and are therefore questioning just how truly basic it is for the "good life."). For too long Western culture has not so subtly put out the message that the quality, value and success of our lives is largely determined by how much money we make, how much "stuff" we acquire, how much shopping we do, how many vacations we take, what we spend our money on, and the status we achieve professionally, socially, or politically. What I learn from Pesach this year is that we don't need lives filled with "stuff" as much as we need lives endowed with meaning, purpose and direction; lives distinguished by holiness and sanctity.

Yes, both for all future Passovers and for our lives in general, it's time to go back to the basics. How do we do that? There is no easy recipe. However, to paraphrase Abraham Joshua Heschel, of blessed memory, Judaism has the answers. We just have to discover the right questions. In asking about the basics we have found the right question. Now let us use our Jewish resources (Rabbis, teachers, communities, and sacred texts) to find answers that imbue our lives with depth, substance and meaning!

Rabbi Stanley Asekoff is the Rabbi at B'nai Shalom in West Orange.

Community Relations Committee Update

CRC in Action

Become an informed and active advocate

New Voices: Who Speaks for American Jews on U.S.- Israeli Relations? — As new Jewish organizations are emerging on the U.S. foreign policy scene they are providing a divergent group of views on U.S. Policy in the Middle East. The CRC is co-sponsoring this program to identify points of common agreement as an alternative to the often-polarizing dialogue among American Jews about U.S.-Israeli Relations. To RSVP, visit www.ujcnj.org/newvoices.

Advocacy Forum: Confronting Anti-Israel Activities on College Campuses — May 6. We need YOU to encourage your teens to attend this program. Each year the efforts to delegitimize Israel's right to exist increases on college campuses throughout the U.S. This interactive program developed by the Anti-Defamation League will prepare MetroWest teenagers to respond to anti-Israel and anti-Semitic activities on college campuses and resources available to them. For more information, visit www.ujcnj.org/campusadvocacy.

No Nukes for Iran: Take Action — While Congress works on finalizing Iran sanctions legislation, we urge you to purchase banners, posters, and magnets to stand in unity in support of US efforts to Stop Iran from creating nuclear weapons. To purchase visit <http://www.ujcnj.org/stopiran>.

To learn more about the CRC and sign up to be on their emailing list click here.