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Your Monthly MetroWest E-Newsletter

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DONATE NOW
or make a Tribute Gift to the UJA Campaign

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Voice of UJC Leadership

UJA Makes Connections Like No Other

by Scott Krieger, UJA Campaign Chair

Most people do not like asking others for money. It doesn't matter the purpose or cause, it simply feels invasive. Money, we tell ourselves, is a personal matter. How much we make, and how much we spend is private. To ask another for money, it follows, simply isn't our business.

For UJA, asking others for money has been our business for years. We do this so that others may benefit.

In fact, its been our business so long that there is an entire genre of jokes about United Jewish Appeal campaigns. Who hasn't heard the one about the guy stuck on a desert island who was optimistic about being discovered because his UJA bill wasn't paid? And who hasn't referred to UJA as the "Jewish IRS."

In fact, during my two years as campaign chair, countless people have expressed sympathy for my "timing" in wearing my title during our collective, difficult economic downturn. The only thing is, I don't agree with that sentiment — not for one second. In spite of recent difficulties, I am continually inspired on a daily basis.

The list of courageous, heartwarming stories from within our own community is endless.

This past week, for example, we were contacted by a Bat Mitzvah girl who is a soccer fanatic. She asked us to take some of her Bat Mitzvah money and donate it to a group of Ethiopian kids in Israel. She wanted to help out their local community center by supporting a soccer program they could enjoy. In one check, Morristown met Rishon L'Tzion.

The temptation, at this point, is to share a few more stories. That's the UJA way. I could easily write about the money we raised for Haiti after the earthquake, and throw in the phrase, "tikkun olam." Then, I could share a local story about a family devastated by the economy who has received a variety of help from our agencies.

I will not.

Our Bat Mitzvah girl captures the essence of UJA all by herself.

We make connections like no other.



Scott Krieger

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

MetroWest supports Elderlink — a professionally staffed information and referral service at JFS, specializing in issues of aging and support for caregivers and their families. Elderlink responds to an average of 100 inquiries each month. Elderlink can be reached at (973) 765-9050.

In fact, we are so effective at what we do that this year Charity Navigator - a group who evaluates the efficacy and impact of not-for-profits — awarded MetroWest 4 stars, the highest possible rating. That's like receiving an Emmy in helping.

While proud, we must remember that the 2010 UJA Campaign will be over before we realize. And with our goal set for raising \$20 million for the Jewish community, for those who need us, we understand that it's a tall order. Phones will be ringing, letters will be mailed and appointments will be made, all in effort to reach many of you.

You are our first connection.

In an age of i-This and i-That, where cutting-edge is every day, the philanthropic connections of a campaign to an "umbrella" agency remains. But then, of course, when it does rain, what do we all reach for?

Issues of the Day

Shabbat in the Ra'anana Park, Israel

by Rabbi Tamar Kolberg

A festive mood hung over the Ra'anana Park as evening approached and 200 people gathered to welcome the Shabbat amongst the trees and blue and white holiday flags anticipating Independence Day. It was a special Shabbat marking the transition from the dark days in Europe to the wonder of the birth of the state of Israel.

The special prayer service was laced with songs that are part of the world of secular Israeli tradition but also with traditional parts of the Friday evening Shabbat service. The service was created by the Rabbis of Kehilat Ra'anana, the Reform congregation in Ra'anana, who saw as their target not only members of the congregation but also many other Ra'anana folk, who are not used to welcoming the Shabbat in this way.

Praying in the park in this way, including and welcoming all Israelis, is part of the spirit of "Jewish Renewal" that is springing up all over the country. In Ra'anana, this movement is being led by Rabbi Tamar and her staff, Rabbi Danny Meyer and Rabbi Gili Tzidkiyahoo, in full cooperation with the municipality, and more specifically with the Department of culture and leisure, led by Deputy Mayor, Ronit Weintraub. Ronit lit the Shabbat candles in the park.

The guest of honor was the mayor of Ra'anana, Nahum Hofri, who not only stayed through the evening but held a microphone and sang along, concluding the evening with the blessing over the wine and bread.

The many children, both from the three preschool classes belonging to the congregation and from other settings, were blessed under Talitot by Rabbi Danny. Young families pulled out picnic suppers and here and there people stood up and danced.

The event is a tribute to the town of Ra'anana that has been working on embedding the spirit of pluralism amongst its varied population. Kehilat Ra'anana and the municipality will be holding these events through out the summer, hoping to continue and work together on new projects every year.



Rabbi Danny Meyer, Rabbi Tamar Kolberg, the musicians, and Rabbi Kolberg's granddaughters

Kehilat Ra'anana is especially thankful to United Jewish Communities of MetroWest NJ, who have been supportive of the congregation in general and of this event in particular. There is no doubt that the contribution of the Religious Pluralism Committee of UJC MetroWest is being felt in town, due to the long range vision and belief that the members of this group have projected over the years. There is yet a long way to travel upon in the next years. May the bond between our communities grow from year to year.

Thank you, Metrowest!

Rabbi Tama Kolberg is a Rabbi at Kehilat Ra'anana, the Reform Synagogue in Ra'anana, Israel, a UJC MetroWest partner community.

Making a Difference

The Jewish Volunteer Network – A New Way for Jews to Help Jews

Jews helping Jews – United Jewish Communities of MetroWest NJ is the conduit for Jews reaching out to other Jews. That support between Jews is more than just financial, more than just donations through the UJA Annual Campaign, or planned giving and endowments through the Jewish Community Foundation. It is also personal involvement, community service and one-to-one help that people offer those in need, by volunteering their efforts to other members of the MetroWest Jewish community, and other Jewish communities in Israel and around the world.

UJC works with 20 agencies in the local community, many of whom need volunteers. And UJC has just created a new method for connecting Jews who are looking to volunteer with Jewish agencies, and Jewish agencies looking to find volunteers.

The Jewish Volunteer Network recently debuted on the website of UJC MetroWest – at www.ujcnj.org/volunteer. The Jewish Volunteer Network is a web page on which local Jewish agencies can list their volunteer opportunities, and community members looking to volunteer their time and efforts can see which opportunities are right for them.

In just the first few weeks since its inception, the Jewish Volunteer Network has hosted

several dozen volunteer opportunities, from nearly a dozen of UJC's partner agencies in the MetroWest community.

Here's how it works.

For those looking to volunteer: Go to the JVN web page – www.ujcnj.org/volunteer – and bookmark the web page for future use. On the web page, you will see a form in which you enter information about the kind of volunteer opportunity you are thinking about, the age groups you can work with, the dates you can be available. One at a time, fill in every volunteer opportunity you have been thinking about, and try some new ideas while you are at the web site. You will receive a list of appropriate opportunities, with contact information for each one. You will be surprised at the wide range of chances to volunteer that are out there, waiting for you!

For those agencies looking for volunteers: The web page provides detailed instructions on how to name one of your employees a Planning Administrator, and how that employee can then enter all your volunteer opportunities, making them available to everyone in the community who is looking to offer help to fellow Jews.

Caren Ford, Assistant Executive Director, Program Services, at Jewish Vocational Services, is just one of the MetroWest agency administrators who has successfully found a

volunteer through the JVN web page.

Ford spoke about the value of the Jewish Volunteer Network to her agency, and in particular to the clients of JVS.

"Through JVN, we recently found a wonderful young lady who is transitioning from a job in New York City, and wants to explore her vocational possibilities in the MetroWest area before going back into the job market. This is something we do with many of our clients. As a vocational agency, we work with many middle-income unemployed, and we suggest that they volunteer in the interim, to explore new job opportunities in new fields, and to take advantage of the networking opportunities.

"The Jewish Volunteer Network is great for us. We can use it with our clients, to help them find opportunities to volunteer and take good, positive steps in the job search process, and it helps us get more volunteers at our agency. It's great to have another tool for finding our own volunteers.

"It's also wonderful to have a lot of volunteer opportunities listed in one place. Volunteering is not just about stuffing envelopes any more. There are many ways to volunteer and many ways to take advantage of the opportunities out there. It's good to have an easy way for our clients to find so much of what is available in the MetroWest community."

The Jewish Volunteer Network web page can be found at www.ujcnj.org/volunteer. For more information on the Jewish Volunteer Network, please email webmaster@ujcnj.org.

What Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?

Helping students with special needs transition from school to careers

by Peggy Himsl, JVS Associate director of Rehabilitation Services

"These young people are wonderful, talented and able to give so much to this world. They just need some help today finding their special niche and acquiring the life skills necessary to succeed." This is the request of the mother of an 18 year old son with developmental disabilities. The transition from school to careers is difficult for many young people, but for teenagers with special needs and their parents the transition

can be an extremely challenging process. Adolescents with disabilities require specialized supports when assessing their interests, skills and abilities as they develop a plan with their parents and school transition team to prepare for and enter the world of work.

The JVS School-to-Careers Transition Program is designed to fill a gap in services for young people with disabilities ages 14 to 21 as they contemplate life after high school. The cornerstone of this program is a formal Vocational Evaluation that is conducted by highly skilled JVS evaluators on-site at the student's school. The evaluation is tailored to the individual needs of each student. Each evaluation results in a comprehensive written report that includes specific recommendations that can be utilized to refine certain aspects of the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and help formulate a seamless transition to post-secondary education, skills training and future employment. Parents should be aware that their children with special needs are entitled to vocational evaluation and other vocationally related services as part of their federally mandated transition plans and that many school systems will cover the cost of the JVS evaluation and other services.

Teenagers with disabilities want to get part time and summer jobs just like their peers. "What I would really like to do is apply for a job working at a local veterinary hospital that is down the road from me that I can walk to," said a 17 year old teen diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder who participated in the pilot year of JVS' Career Camp during the summer of 2009. Career Camp is an innovative program that provides students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders with the opportunity to engage in vocational activities designed to simulate job tasks and give hands-on experience developing a variety of different work skills. Classroom instruction is interactive and includes resume writing, completion of job applications, and practicing interview skills. Program participants take field trips to learn about the range of jobs available in the community. Career Camp 2010 will run from August 16th to August 27th.

Other JVS programs designed to assist teens with disabilities make the transition to the world of work include Community Based Assessment where teens can sample a variety

of jobs with the support of a JVS job coach; Work Adjustment Training where they learn to develop appropriate work behaviors while participating in a remunerative employment experience in the JVS Rehabilitation Center; Skills Training Courses in Microsoft office and customer service; and Specialized Employment Services, including customized job development and job placement services, job coaching and supported employment.

JVS has provided transition services to more than 435 students in 129 different high schools throughout New Jersey. As Virginia Chiller, Wayne District Transition Coordinator comments, "The evaluators are professional and put the students at ease...reports are chock full of valuable information you just can't get from the classroom or child study team testing...JVS staff are accommodating and prompt to get the job done!"

For more information about transition services for students with special needs, contact Lauren A. Klein, JVS Coordinator of Rehabilitation Services, at (973) 674-6330 x237 or Lklein@jvsnj.org.

Working Together with Our Partner Agencies

Moments That Make Life Magical and Summers Memorable

by *Diana Ackerman*

SUMMER CAMP: Two simple words whose meaning can only be understood by those lucky enough to experience their magic. Summer camp exemplifies sportsmanship, emulates friendship, embodies leadership, and understands kindness. At camp, any dream is attainable and any goal reachable. In fact, its effects are endless and immeasurable, and if you're really lucky, summer camp is life changing.

JCC MetroWest Camp Deeny Riback is just that summer camp. Times may have changed, but the camp experience has not. "CDR" is a 35-acre life-size playground where anything is possible. Camp is about living in the moment — it's 39 days of non stop, in-your-face action where best friends are made, first loves found, and life-long memories created. At camp, the only difference that matters is the difference you make in another's life. CDR is values. CDR

is growth. CDR is self esteem and life skills. CDR represents Compassion, Integrity, Respect, Charity, Leadership, and Equality. All in all, CDR represents the CIRCLE of life.

At CDR, lesson trumps outcome. We understand that in order to teach it, you've got to love it. Our staff gets involved with our campers, not just teaching them new skills, but laughing and learning with them. A rainy day at Camp Deeny Riback is not spent off-site in a movie theater or an arcade — a rainy day at CDR means unit sing-downs, ultimate soccer games, friendship bracelet making, and talent shows. Every day at CDR is magical.



Samantha Welt, Hallie Zenenberg, Meryl Greenfogel enjoy a day at Camp Deeny Riback

Walt Disney, the man who brought magic to life, said, "You can dream, create, design, and build the most wonderful place in the world, but it takes people to make the dream a reality." Well, Mr. Disney, we've got the dream, the place, and above all, the people. CDR staff understand the "how to" of being a role model. CDR staff "walk the talk," because we know that the feeling of impacting another's life is constant, continual, and contagious.

American camps have been in existence for over 100 years, and we have watched the world change. Texting has replaced talking, emailing is now considered a sincere form of communication, and the biggest and best beats quality and understanding. Kids today are growing up in a fast-paced, high-pressure world. It's time to slow down and experience the quality moments that allow our kids to just be "kids" — moments where knuckles might get scraped at Gaga and ghost stories told at an overnight. Moments where a burnt hot dog is a gourmet cuisine and a pat on the back means more than a paycheck.

Moments where you will learn how to drink bug juice without getting a bright red mustache, or memorize all the words to “the littlest worm” — both significant rights of passage. Moments where you realize that puff paint and lanyard are just as necessary as water and sunscreen. Moments where you will encourage, laugh, understand, and teach. Moments that make life magical and summers memorable. At Camp Deeny Riback, we know it’s time to come back to the values and lessons that make growing up worthwhile — it’s time to come back to camp.

Diana Ackerman is Director of Camping Services at JCC MetroWest.

Thoughts from MetroWest Rabbis

Female Orthodox Rabbis?

by Rabbi Menashe East

These past number of months have been stressful times for the Orthodox Jewish community. We witnessed public debate, critique and recriminations about an issue, which for most of the Jewish world means very little. Should Orthodoxy ordain women?

Now, I think this means little for the majority of the Jewish community, particularly in the United States, simply because the point is moot. After all, the major Jewish denominations already ordain women. But as an Orthodox rabbi, I would strongly urge all of us to pay close attention to these developments and to the tone of the discourse that the Orthodox community engages in around identity defining issues of this sort.

The continuity of any tradition must be driven by a fierce commitment to its original forms. In modern times, often a deep sense of nostalgia for the way things have always been guides the movement of Jewish life. This attitude can run counter to social norms and expectations. In his parting message to Israel, Moses reminds the Jewish people who were about to inherit the soil: “Remember the days of old.” (Deuteronomy 32:7) To remember is to uphold; with memory the future is secure.

But memory is but a piece of the narrative of Jewish tradition and continuity. The second half of the above verse in Moses’ monologue

is equally important: “Understand the years, shnot, from generation to generation.” (ibid) The Hebrew term for year is Shannah. Shannah is etymologically linked to the word Shoneh, change. Essentially, Moses’ dying request for the people is twofold: Remember the old and change with the new.

That our Oral tradition — the Mishna, the Gemara and the entire corpus of Rabbinic literature — has assumed a written form, should not be taken for granted. Since the Sinaitic revelation until some 1,800 years ago, roughly a 3,000 year span, the Oral Torah was meant to remain just that, an Oral tradition. The continuity of an Oral tradition depends on the living breath of the people; a dialogue between teacher and student, between student and fellow student, between parent and child. These conversations came from the heart, from memory and they came to life in the study hall and in the home. Originally, the Jewish people would have been known not as the people of the book, but as the people of the word. And the community religiously retained this strict adherence to its original form. But exile, oppression and human limitations took their toll. Eventually, the word weakened; it was misspoken, misunderstood and nearly forgotten. Rabbi Judah the Prince made a decision, which — for the Jewish world at the time — was earth-shaking: He took the untamed, abstract Oral Torah, preserved in our collective memory, and concretized it, writing those precious memories onto paper. Yet, were he to have remained passive, the badly eroded Oral tradition could have been overwhelmed and lost by the tides of time; our memory would have been lost forever. The Talmud justifies this stunning move with the verse: “At a time to act for God, make void your Torah.” (Psalms 119:126)

Though using different language, the Orthodox community engages this very conversation today. In its treatment of the significant question: Should a woman be ordained? — the Orthodox community is grappling with the two, at times competing, demands that tradition casts upon it: Should we retain the days of old? Do we risk more than we gain should women assume a more prominent role in traditional Jewish life? Or: Should we understand the reality of the changes in women’s education, leadership and advancement? Do we risk more than we gain should women not assume a more prominent role

in traditional Jewish life?

Maybe, through this process, we will see the unfolding of a tradition narrative that unifies memory with change. These conversations make me proud to have been raised in and now to be serving the Orthodox Jewish community. To me, this is an inspiring picture of the current Jewish world. Today, we are not merely reading and re-reading Jewish history, but we are living and writing Jewish history.

Rabbi Menashe East is the Rabbi and spiritual leader at Mount Freedom Jewish Center in Randolph, NJ.

Community Relations Committee Update

CRC in Action

Become an informed and active advocate

Take Action: Participate in Iran Disclosure Project & Urge Honeywell to Stop Doing Business with Iran — UANI is currently calling on the Pentagon and the U.S. Government to debar Honeywell from all U.S. government contracts. Honeywell does more business with the U.S. Government than any other company that is active in Iran. To learn how to support this initiative, [click here](#).

The Iran Disclosure Project is an initiative of UANI (United Against Nuclear Iran) that calls on companies to end their business in Iran and to identify publicly traded companies that have failed to disclose to investors the legal and financial peril associated with their business dealings in Iran. The following companies have responded to UANI's pressure to end or limit

business in Iran: General Electric, Huntsman, Siemens, Caterpillar, Ingersoll Rand, Royal Dutch Shell, and KPMG.

This project aims to get the SEC to change definition of what constitutes "material information." To learn more about this initiative, [click here](#).

- **UANI Calls on the SEC to Take Definitive Action to Require Companies to Disclose Their Iran Business**
- **Action: Call on the SEC to Require Companies to Disclose Iran Business**

More information on Honeywell:

"Honeywell Is Pressured to End Iran Ties" (May 20, *Bloomberg/Business Week*)

"Lobbying Group Targets Honeywell's US Defense Contracts" (May 20, *The Wall Street Journal/Dow Jones Newswires*)

"U.S. group targets Honeywell over Iran" (April 8, *Reuters*)

Support Security Assistance for Israel — President Obama has requested \$3 billion in security assistance for Israel for fiscal year 2011. This aid reflects the third year of a 10-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the United States and Israel in 2007 to gradually increase U.S. security assistance to the Jewish state in order to meet increasing threats, including a potential nuclear-armed Iran. Please urge your members of Congress to support security assistance to Israel and the overall foreign aid bill. To take action, [click here](#).

To learn more about the CRC and sign up to be on their emailing list, [click here](#).