

THE Jewish Home

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SEASONS SHOP WITH FAMILY. **SEASONS LAWRENCE**
330 Central Avenue,
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Around the Community

The Marion and Aaron Gural JCC Celebrates Gratitude

It is not every day that a friend or neighbor turns 99-years-old. When that person is also a Holocaust survivor the milestone is not just a wonderful cause for celebration. It is an occasion to pause and reflect and mark with utmost respect, gratitude and distinction.

The Marion and Aaron Gural JCC in the Five Towns had the great privilege of acknowledging and celebrating just such an occasion last week at our annual Thanksgiving Luncheon for Holocaust Survivors, where this year's theme was gratitude.

An incredible and heart-warming count of over ninety Holocaust survivors gathered in our festively decorated social hall last Thursday and, among them, our guest of honor, Laura Greenbaum, celebrating her hundredth year. On hand to offer words of congratulation and appreciation were New York State Senator Todd Kaminsky and Town of Hempstead Councilman Bruce Blakeman. Mr. Blakeman presented Laura

with a Certificate of Recognition and special birthday wishes. Senator Kaminsky wished Mrs. Greenbaum a heartfelt *mazal tov* and presented her with a Senate Proclamation in honor of this milestone birthday. Senator Kaminsky told a captive audience that in 1990 Holocaust survivor Maurice Vegh, amazingly in attendance at our Thanksgiving event and sitting right near him, spoke before his 6th grade Long Beach class about his Holocaust experiences. The impact of that speech has stayed with the senator throughout the years and he recalled it again last week, heralding the Jewish people's strength and resilience and our great spirit.

For sixteen years our JCC has been the meeting place and safe haven for Holocaust members from our community and beyond to gather in a recreational, social and enrichment program. Throughout the course of the year many important occasions are marked and celebrated. The Thanksgiving gathering



is a particularly popular and uplifting event. This year, special guest speaker Rabbi Zalman Wolowik, of Chabad of the Five Towns, addressed the survivors, family members, staff and other guests reiterating the theme of gratitude. Rabbi Wolowik reminded us that every day when we awake we must be thankful. Regardless of our negative experiences, we must look at the world around us in a positive light, find common goals, and appreciate the blessings we are given, including living in a free world. He emphasized

that Holocaust survivors and the Jewish people are a beacon of light to the world and must share their memories as well as their messages with their families and their communities.

A number of students from Shulamith School for Girls joined the festivities, helping to serve a delicious hot lunch and dancing with the survivors during the musical entertainment.

Laura Greenbaum, our guest of honor, sat proudly and regally among her family and friends. Born in

Czechoslovakia in 1921, she survived Bergen Belsen and Ravensbruck concentration camps. Liberated in 1945, she emigrated to the U.S. soon after and worked as a seamstress for most of her life. She is a beloved member of the JCC's Café Europa and several programs for Holocaust survivors. It was a great joy to honor and recognize her at the Marion and Aaron Gural's Thanksgiving Luncheon.

The Marion and Aaron Gural JCC is a beneficiary agency of UJA-Federation of New York.

Rambam Hosts 21st Annual Shabbaton in Israel

Since the inception of Rambam in 1992, the Mesivta has held an annual Shabbaton for its alumni learning in Eretz Yisroel. This year's get together, Rambam's 21st, was held at Yeshivat HaKotel in Yerushalayim. Both the boys and Rosh Mesivta, Rabbi Zev Meir Friedman, look forward to this event. "It is an opportunity for the *talmidim* to get together, schmooze, catch up and enables me to witness their progress and help them with any questions they may have. It is great to see the growth that the *talmidim* experience," said Rabbi Friedman.

On Friday afternoon, the boys *davened* Mincha at the Kotel. Their joyous singing of *kabbolas* Shabbos attracted

others to their *minyán*. After Maariv, they headed back to Yeshivat HaKotel for the *seudah* which was filled with *divrei Torah*, *zemiros* and schmoozing.

All the boys were very interested to hear about the latest happenings in Rambam and to get "caught up" on recent events and programs. The *seudah* was followed by a *tisch* where more *divrei Torah* on the *parsha* were shared over nosh and soft drinks.

On Shabbos morning after Shacharis and *kiddush*, the boys were treated to a walking tour of Yerushalayim with Michael Eisenstein, an expert tour guide during the week, volunteering his time on Shabbos.

Lunch, *zemiros* and more



divrei Torah ensued. After a brief break, boys returned for an interactive *shiur* with Rabbi Friedman on "*Mitzvos tzrichos kavannah*." "I was amazed to see how the boys were able to anticipate, ask,

and answer many different opinions that the *meforshim* bring down in analyzing this issue. The *nachas* was well worth the trip!" shared Rabbi Friedman.

The discussion contin-

ued until Mincha which was followed by *shalosh seudos* and more *ruach*. Shabbos came to an end with Maariv and *havdalah* with many hoping to join again next year.