

Around The Community

JCC of the Greater Five Towns/JCCRP/UJA-Federation of New York Chanukah Toy Drive a Tremendous Success

This past Monday, the JCC of the Greater Five Towns and the JCCRP had another successful Chanukah Toy Drive in memory of Rochel Baron, *a"h*. With gifts in hand and spirits high, the community is getting ready to celebrate Chanukah.

Rochel Baron, *a"h*, the originator of the Toy Drive, had the sensitivity and the caring to ask, "Why are sick kids the only ones to get gifts? What about people who cannot afford them?" And just like that, the idea of the Toy Drive was created. Years later, we still see her tremendous impact; one thoughtful person can truly create a rippling effect and change in the community.



Ariel Richman packing up toys and the toy drive distribution

Community residents volunteered their time and energy, excited to be helping others in this meaningful project. Families donated money and went shopping as well to buy gifts for other peoples' children. On Sunday, we had over 50 volunteers getting the gifts ready and perfect to present to the families. Toys were distributed to the families in a sensitive, private manner, and were arranged by age, ranging from 0-19. Many volunteers brought their children to help package gifts, who energetically and excitedly picked out toys for other kids. On Monday, the families came to pick up their toys, gift cards, and doughnuts for Chanukah. We are delighted that over 500 local children from struggling families were the recipients of these toys. Of course, none of this could be accomplished without the commitment and dedication of our Toy Drive coordinators: Shani Abittan, Adi Aryeh, Danielle Kupferman, Daphna Mishaan, Fraidy Osina, Rebecca Richman, Rocky Stern and Lily Weichholz.

Bayli Sinensky, a Bnos Bais Yakov student from Woodmere, generously

donated many of her own bas mitzvah toys and gifts to share with the community. In total, she donated hundreds of gifts and gift cards, truly conveying a strong sense of community and deep caring toward others. Even at such a young age, she has succeeded in setting a tremendous example of what it means to be such a caring and giving bas yisroel. We extend our gratitude to Bayli and her family and wish them a sincere mazel tov on the occasion of her bas mitzvah.

Lastly, we would like to express our deep gratitude to all of the donors and generous sponsors of our toy drive: Brachs, Five Towns Judaica, Gourmet Glatt, Kiss and Makeup, La Toys, Rite Lite, Seasons and Suki & Ding. A special thank you to the students of the Congregation Sons of Israel Hebrew School in Woodmere and Lev Bais



Bayli Sinensky and her friends at her bas mitzvah

Yaakov in Brooklyn for donating the toys they collected from their toy drive to this project. We would also like to thank UJA-Federation for being incredibly supportive in helping fund this endeavor and we appreciate their continued support. We hope that through facilitating this community-wide project, we've been able to help create a Chanukah of perfect *simcha* for those in need, both parents and children alike, as well as bring an *aliyah* to the memory of Rochel Baron, *a"h*.

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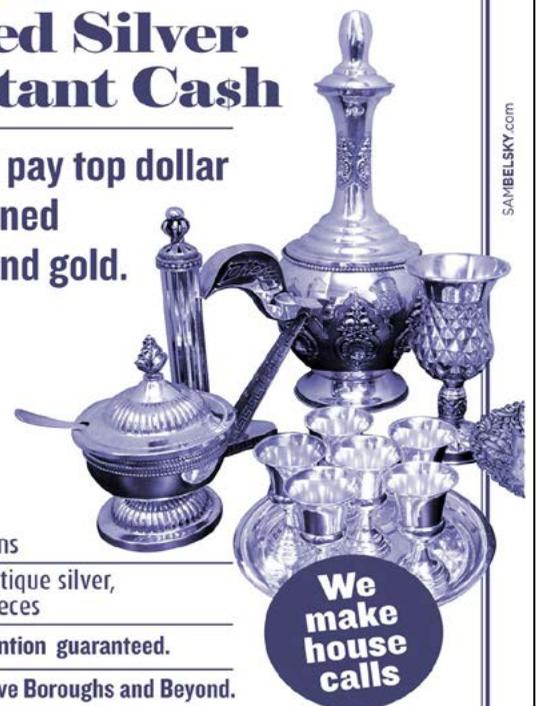
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