

Around the Community



In honor of Chanukah, Yeshiva of South Shore boys, in a gesture of their hakoras hatov to our police department, presented the 4th Precinct and Captain Lee Steinberg with a Chanukah gift for the officers. Talmidim of the yeshiva are pictured with Rabbis Binyomin and Mordechai Kamenetzky, Captain Steinberg and Yoeli Steinberg (not related) of Gourmet Glatt who provided the refreshments.



Assemblyman Todd Kaminsky at Shaaray Tefillah's Chanukah Concert with Eitan Katz held on December 9, the 4th night of Chanukah. Pictured from L to R: Past president David Malek, Assemblyman Todd Kaminsky, Rabbi Uri Orlian, current president Yakov Melmed, and their children.

A Chanukah Miracle at the JCC on Grove Avenue

Each year when we celebrate the eight days of Chanukah we are reminded in the holiday's prayers of the two miracles that occurred over two thousand years ago when the few rose up and conquered the many and the small pot of oil burned for eight days when there was only enough to last a single night. This year at The Marion and Aaron Gural JCC, while remembering the miraculous Chanukah story, we experienced our own bit of a miracle in our Kadima program for single parent families as an unexpected outpouring of Chanukah wishes and gifts came through our doors for our Kadima children.

The struggles of a single parent family are unique and often painful. Throughout the year the challenges faced by the single parent as well as his or her children are many. Perhaps, however, it is with the approaching of Chanukah that the financial as well as emotional stress is most apparent. Where will the children be spending the holiday? How will their week be broken up? Which parent will be able to accompany them to their school party or recital? Will there be available

funds for Chanukah gifts?

In anticipation of this difficult time in the lives of our Kadima families, the JCC helped ease the tension and create a sense of joy and excitement. Chanukah gift bags were prepared and distributed to our Kadima families courtesy of a long-time JCC neighbor and supporter. Our Kadima families were all invited to enjoy a festive Chanukah party with our friends at the Atlantic Beach Jewish Center complete with dinner, a magic show, art project and Chanukah gifts. In addition we were the recipient of an incredibly generous donation of toys by a UJA-Federation donor from Manhattan who heard a presentation on Project Kadima at a recent meeting. He made sure each and every one of our Kadima children received a special Chanukah gift.

With all the good cheer going on in our building, as families happily came in to pick up their holiday packages, one remarkable Kadima parent took matters further. On her own Facebook page she appealed to her friends and neighbors to remember the children of single parent families who aren't fortunate

enough to be able to celebrate the holiday with both parents, grandparents and extended family – to remember the children, who perhaps were not able to receive gifts this year due to tremendous financial hardship, court battles and legal setbacks. In a heart-wrenching appeal in her own words our Kadima parent pointed out that although children of divorce are everywhere in our community (to date there are 95 single parents enrolled in Kadima), you wouldn't necessarily know who they are or how much they are struggling to keep their lives together. She requested that we think of these children, many of whom we do not know by name or face but may just be sitting next to our own children in school or shul or on the playing field.

Within hours after this heartfelt Facebook appeal came out responses began pouring in. Phone calls, emails and JCC visits resulted. Toys, gift cards and checks were dropped off all week long. Our JCC staff marveled at the amazing generosity of spirit and funds that came in from the community as a result of the post as well as all the other

agencies and donors who kept us in mind during the Festival of Lights.

Kadima, our single parent family program, made possible by The Jewish Communal Fund and UJA-Federation of New York, is a relatively new initiative at The Marion and Aaron Gural JCC. Our staff is still identifying the many needs and services required by this ever growing population. Our doors are always open. We offer counseling, support groups, lectures and workshops, holiday programs and family trips. Your support in this endeavor is greatly appreciated. Our Chanukah miracle on Grove Avenue could not have happened without you.

For more information or to make a donation please contact Rachayle Deutsch (516)569-6733 ext. 222, rachayle.deutsch@guraljcc.org. The Marion and Aaron Gural JCC, 207 Grove Avenue, Cedarhurst, New York 11516, Att: Rachayle Deutsch.