

AROUND THE 5 TOWNS

Auschwitz Survivor Mrs. Ita Lustig Visits The Gural JCC For A Special Shema Presentation

Not a sound was heard in the social hall at the Marion and Aaron Gural JCC last Thursday night as Mrs. Ita Lustig eloquently described her heart-wrenching journey from an innocent young girl in Romania through ghetto life, relocation, work, and concentration camps, Mengele's selection, the Death March, and her incredible survival of Nazi persecution and the dark, terrible days of the Shoah. Mrs. Lustig, 93 years old, *ki'h,*



Ita Lustig



spoke softly but powerfully with emotion but composure as she led the captive audience through each demeaning and demoralizing step of her Holocaust experience. Although the audience who attended this special SHEMA presentation were at the JCC because of their support and interest in JCC's Second Generation program, it was clear that this was the first time many of them had heard such an agonizing and detailed account of what a Holocaust survivor actually suffered through.

The SHEMA program (Listen! - Studies in the Holocaust - Education, Mem-

ories and Awareness) at the Gural JCC was launched during the difficult days of the pandemic when we tragically lost so many of our precious JCC Holocaust survivors and with them their remarkable stories. Cultural Arts and Education Director Rachayle Deutsch and social worker Judy Goldberg, who also co-facilitates the vibrant program for Holocaust survivors that has been a mainstay of the JCC for over two decades, realized that something had to immediately be done to preserve these legacies and memories. They began collecting bios of survivors from their own families and those from JCC friends and neighbors, and disseminating them to the community. Samples of these bios were blown up and mounted on posters around the room the night Mrs. Lustig

spoke.

They also formed a Second Generation group, including members who agreed to speak at schools to students and teachers and tell of their parents' experiences. To date they have reached thousands of students—virtually and in person—and have begun to make a much-needed impact in our community and in neighborhoods far beyond. They hope it is just the beginning.

Although the SHEMA initiative focuses on Second Generation efforts, the JCC was honored and privileged to have Mrs. Lustig as a special guest at the program. Mrs. Lustig did not always speak of her experiences during the Holocaust but in the past years realized how important it is to share her miraculous story.

After her presentation many questions were asked. How she carried on and from where she got her strength, the audience wanted to know. "We did what we had to do and kept going," Mrs. Lustig answered. Undoubtedly everyone there wondered if they could have done the same after so much loss and degradation.

Shortly before Mrs. Lustig was set to speak for the JCC she was hospitalized. When her doctor saw the numbers tattooed on her arm he had no idea what they meant. Before she allowed him to do further testing Mrs. Lustig insisted that he and his associates know exactly what those numbers stood for. Once again she held a captive audience as she

Continued on Page 82



The Premier Glatt Kosher Facility In Great Neck

Conveniently located across the street from Northshore Manhasset




We have completed significant upgrades to our game room, family leisure room, beauty salon, hallways, resident dining areas & all resident rooms!

Come experience "Home away from Home" at Highfield Gardens!

5 STAR RATED FOR CLINICAL OUTCOMES & QUALITY CARE





Medical personnel and a full roster of cultural programming for Farsi, Russian and Hebrew speaking residents.




FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT 516-303-0100
OR VISIT US AT www.highfieldgardens.com
 199 Community Drive, Great Neck NY 11021

AROUND THE 5 TOWNS

Continued from Page 79

told the hospital staff her story.

Just days after leaving the hospital, Mrs. Lustig lost her brother, *a'h*, the only other survivor of her family. It is a great testimony to Mrs. Lustig's fortitude, strength, and commitment to speaking up that, despite these two very difficult episodes, she managed to keep her JCC engagement and arrive from her home in Crown Heights accompanied by one of her lovely granddaughters, with dignity and poise.

This SHEMA event was made possible most of all by the support of Mrs. Lustig and the generosity of the many people who attended the program as well as by the efforts of the dedicated volunteers who help make the evening run smoothly.

If you would like to submit a SHEMA bio, become involved in the Second Generation group, or support the ongoing initiative, please contact the Gural JCC at 516-569-6733 or e-mail rachayle.deutsch@guraljcc.org. ■

Six Weeks Of Fun In The Sun At Hillel Day Camp

Each day at Hillel Day Camp gets better and better. Although so much has been packed into the first six weeks, we're not done yet!



There have been so many first-time experiences—entertaining and educating activities and high-flying special events. Sports, swimming, trips, specialty programming, on-campus events... campers are happy, engaged, and always on the go.

The swimming program, as always, is a great success. More campers than ever have passed the deep-water test and are swimming, floating, jumping, and diving in the pools. Sima Fish, aquatics director, takes water safety very seriously and imparts this to campers (through



Happy times at Hillel

her talented "pool" of lifeguards) twice each day. The team at the pool encourages the children to not only have fun, but to try their best when learning new skills, stay safe, and be kind and courteous to other swimmers—all important lessons that will stay with them forever!

For the summer of *yomim tovim*, campers celebrated Chanukah last

week. They had latkes and applesauce for lunch, and made *sufganiyot* in baking for dessert! To coincide with the color and light of the holiday, they held tie-dye week in art, too! Morahs Orit and Debra and the whole staff braved the heat and had a colorful show each time someone passed by.

Mad Science Show visited camp and



FIDF NY Event Ofer Yardeni and Marty Burger

everyone was amazed by all the fun science experiments. Flat Stanley even got to be a special guest with some of his friends.

On Superhero Day they took the lead from the brave Maccabees and dressed as many heroes from everyday to imaginary. They had a special *oneg* to get ready for the somber day of Tishah B'Av that they learned about in *Chinuch*. Tishah B'Av is a day to remember how to be grateful to Hashem for what we have. Campers colored pictures and put notes in their Kotel.

So, as we wrap up another week and mourn what was lost

Destruction, despair, and loss—at

what cost?

We look to rebuild and atone for the past

In Yerushalayim together very soon—at last! ■

Real Estate Moguls Join IDF Soldiers In Long Island Golf Outing Hosted By FIDF

Some of New York's most prestigious real estate professionals gathered on Monday, July 25, for the Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF) New York Real Estate Division 10th Annual Golf Outing at Glen Oaks Country Club in Old Westbury, N.Y. where they golfed, networked, and dined alongside soldiers who protect the State of Israel.

The daylong event at Glen Oaks honored Ofer Yardeni, CEO of Stonehenge NYC and FIDF national board member, and was co-chaired by Marty Burger, CEO of Silverstein Properties and Chuck Rosenzweig of Criterion Real Estate Capital. John Franco, a former American professional baseball player, was among the guests at the event.

"We are so proud to have honored

Ofer at our 10th Annual Golf Outing. His leadership, vision, and drive have been integral to the success of the FIDF New York Real Estate Division and most importantly, the soldiers of the IDF," said Andrew Feuerstein, Director of the New York Real Estate Division. "We are thankful to all of those who participated in the event."

The Real Estate Division was created in 2006 by a group of successful business and philanthropic leaders who were passionate about uniting members of the real estate community to support the men and women who protect and defend the Jewish State. The division plays a central role in the activities of