

Hanukkah on Ice



It stopped raining just in time and turned out to be a wonderful

evening for Hanukkah on Ice. And what a turnout: the party room was filled to overflowing, and the rough estimate is that we had 170 people. That included 35 Bhutanese teenagers, most of whom were skating for the first time. They had a great time and very much appreciated being there.

To put on such a large Hanukkah Party & dinner takes a lot of

people. There are many to thank. Thanks go to:

- **Wendy Osher**, chair of our Social Action committee, who was a big part of our inviting our Bhutanese guests, and **Joanie Isenberg** who made the first connection with them. Thanks to all the drivers who picked up our guests: Wendy and her husband **James Osher**, **Joanie**, **Judy Grumet**, **Bill Hashinger**, **Jim Rosenberg**, **Linda Jeub**, and **Harry Levinson**. More teenagers than we expected decided to come at the last minute, and the weather



made for a lot of traffic problems, but our drivers got everyone to the party.

- **Brian Primack** for leading the Hanukkah singing. Next year, we will make sure we have a stronger sound system.
- **Rachel Hovne**, Social Events chair & her husband **Hal Rubenstein**, who bought the supplies and organized the set-up. And thanks to all those who came early to set-up and stayed to help cleaning up.
- **Marty & Ann Davis** who are the latke brigade. They picked up 250 latkes and donated them--to help make it a real Hanukkah celebration.
- **Cecilia Mok**, who coordinates the Bhutanese refugees at the JF&CS, **Sancha Rai** who works at JF&CS refugee services as a translator, **Om Tiwari** who sat with the non-skaters and explained the history of the refugees in Nepal and Bhutan and their situation as they are getting settled here in Pittsburgh.

It was really gratifying to see everyone enjoying themselves, on the ice and off. Thanks to everyone for all the great dishes you made. It was a great night.



Religious School and Social Action Pair Up to Work with Bhutanese Refugees In Pittsburgh

The Religious School is joining together with the Social Action Committee to work with Bhutanese Refugees, who are being settled in Pittsburgh by the Jewish Family & Children Services. A group of teenagers from the Pittsburgh Bhutanese community came to Hanukkah on Ice; that was our first contact with them. It was great to meet them and to be part of enjoying a lively evening of dinner and skating.

When the next group of Bhutanese families arrives in Pittsburgh, we are going to try to pair them up with Dor Hadash School families as well as other congregation families who have children the same age. Pairing involves meet the family on a regular basis helping them get settled and learn their way around American customs. In addition, we will do some fundraising to help these families get the supplies they need to set up a household.

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Religious School

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The Religious School will also be active in the next few months with other social action projects through the winter, including serving dinners at Ronald McDonald House.

You may have noticed that students are getting more involved in the Dorot service, that we are giving out more individual parts to the Religious School students. We want to get the students used to being on the bimah; they will be spending a lot of time up there at their Bar/Bat Mitzvah and throughout their lives we hope. It is a real motivator if a student knows they are going to read Hebrew by themselves. I hope the congregation is enjoying hearing the students and be able to see their progress as the year and years go by.

I attended my first RENA (Reconstructionist Educators of North America) conference last month in New Jersey, and I want to thank the Religious School for sponsoring the trip. There is a Reconstructionist Jewish Educators list serve, and it was great to meet other Reconstructionist Educators, who came from as far away as California and Denver, whose ideas I read on the list serve. Our own Erin Hirsh, Director of Education of the JRF, was there making her learned and important contributions.

The most important thing I took away from the conference is that I have to get on my horse (the wrong metaphor, as you will see) and do better in keeping up with the technological changes that are happening in Jewish education. Our group tested a new Application for the iPhone that leads students on a tour of the Lower East Side, actually walking around that neighborhood eating pickles and knishes. We were given a demonstration of a new textbook on Israel that is tied to Google maps and hooks students to live pictures and websites in Israel, so they can go exploring online on the aspect of Israel they are studying. We visited Behrman House, one of the leading publishers of Jewish textbooks, who are developing an online center, where teachers can monitor students' homework and students can post their ideas so parents can read what is going on in class and even join in the conversation on topics being discussed. It won't be long before all their textbooks are online. These changes will be another aspect of community and aids to learning, but we all emphasized that the teacher-student relation is still the most vital component, and there will never be a substitute for bringing students and families together. To keep up, I better get something faster than a horse.

Hal

Calendar

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Saturday, February 25 / 2 Adar Shabbat Morning Service and Torah Study

10:00 – noon, Rabbi's Study
Parsha: Terumah, Exodus 25:1 - 27:19
Haftara: I Kings 5:26 - 6:13
Kiddush luncheon following the service

Saturday, March 3 / 9 Adar Caleb Resnick's Bar Mitzvah

9:30 am, Robinson Pavilion
Service Leader: Dan Leger
Parsha: Tetzaveh, Exodus 27:20 - 30:10
Maftir Shabbat Zachor: Deuteronomy 25:17 - 19
Haftara: I Samuel 15:2 - 15:34 (Shabbat Zachor)
Kiddush luncheon following the service

*Please join us
in celebrating on March 3, 2012 as
Caleb Resnick is called to the Torah as
a Bar Mitzvah.*

*Dan Leger will lead a service
beginning at 9:30 in the Robinson
Pavillion, and the entire congregation
is invited to stay for a Kiddush
luncheon immediately following.*

Letter to the Editor

Several people, to whom I showed the very interesting article (Nov/Dec Kol) by Derek Twombly on page 8, said the iPad technology does not work the way it was described in the article. Is there some error in their thinking or in Derek's description?
Gene Sucof

Dear Gene,

Mr. Twombly is a pseudonym for an imaginative writer within our congregation. He has been known to be a 99% unreliable source.
Donna Coufal
Kol Editor