

The Shabbos Project Across America



At the Beth Jacob of Atlanta communal Shabbos *seudah*, bags were placed on each of the 70 tables containing grape juice, challah rolls, paper goods, a salt shaker, *bentchers*, and Shabbos treats for the kids.

DEVORAH KLEIN

Over 1,300 cities worldwide celebrated the International Shabbos Project, with Challah Bakes, *Havdalah* concerts, community Shabbos meals, and of course, *shemiras Shabbos*. Here is a very small sampling of how the Shabbos Project was celebrated in four different communities in the United States.

In Atlanta, Congregation Beth Jacob hosted the largest Shabbos lunch in the world, according to the offices of the International Shabbos Project. While original plans were to host an outdoor Block Party, forecasts for inclement weather necessitated that the venue be moved indoors. Nevertheless, close to 800 guests were served a *Shabbos seudah*.

This is the third year that Beth Jacob hosted the Toco Hills Block Party for Shabbos lunch, and each year, it grows exponentially. In an effort to make the event as accessible as possible, it is free and open to the public, (reservations are requested, but not required).

"This is the only time during the year that people from all different Atlanta shuls come together," explains Rabbi Yitzchok Tendler, executive director of Beth Jacob. "This is something that people really appreciate." The event was attended by a diverse cross section of the community, including a group of college students from a nearby college who were experiencing Shabbos for the first time.

There were communal *zemiros* and dancing between the tables, with Jews from Toco Hills joining together — Ashkenaz, Sephard, American, Israeli, Yemenite, Persian, British, Canadian, etc.

A few hundred miles away in Savannah, Georgia, 130 women from all affiliations gathered together for a Challah Bake on Thursday evening. On *Leil Shabbos*, *shomer Shabbos* and non-*shomer Shabbos* neighbors gathered together in groups to make block parties for the *Shabbos seudah*. Rabbi Eli Lob reported, "On my block, we had about 60 people gather together. We chose one corner of the street where all the neighbors are Jewish, and obtained a permit from the police to close it off."

On Shabbos day, a communal lunch was held



At the Beth Jacob of Atlanta communal Shabbos *seudah*, students from Temima High School created flower decorations that were hung from the ceiling.



Rabbi Dovid Kapenstein

Kollel Ner Hamizrach in Atlanta prepared for 125 people participating in the Shabbos Project. Meals were provided both for Friday night and Shabbos lunch.

at Congregation Bnai Brith Jacob, and included about 170 attendees from all different backgrounds and affiliations. The program featured six different speakers, who all spoke about what Shabbos means to them.

During *shalosh seudos*, a "youth and adult collaboration" sang a beautiful *Shir Hamaalos* together, which attracted many additional participants. A beautiful Shabbos ended with a musical *Havdalah*.

Across the country, in Phoenix, about 600 women gathered for a Challah Bake at the Jewish Community Center on Thursday evening. Prior to the Challah Bake, a Shabbos *shuk* was held, and featured various vendors and booths with materials relevant to Shabbos. One booth sold *Havdalah* candles, another served cholent, restaurants offered food-tasting for various traditional Shabbos foods, a kids' booth offered the chance to create a colorful match box, and more.

On *Leil Shabbos*, a Carlebach *minyán* was held at the Phoenix Kollel, and featured a well-pre-

pared local boys' choir, whose heartfelt *niggunim* greatly enhanced the *davening*.

After *davening*, an outdoor *Shabbos seudah* was attended by 200 people. On Shabbos day, community members held *seudos* in their homes, with many guests in attendance. Many families invited guests for Shabbos who were experiencing Shabbos for the first time. Shabbos ended with a beautiful *Havdalah* concert.

Moving northward, Minneapolis held a full spectrum of special programming. A Challah Bake was held on Wednesday evening, led by Mrs. Adina Cohen and Mrs. Gity Fredman. Over 400 women attended the event, and enjoyed dancing and *achdus*, along with kneading and braiding challah.

On Shabbos, about 90 young adults stayed in the *frum* neighborhood for Shabbos, under the auspices of JWAY, the young adult division of the Minneapolis Community Kollel. The *Leil Shabbos seudah* was held under a large tent set up at the home of Mr. Albert and Mrs. Chaya Miller.