



CONGREGATION HABONIM OF TORONTO

# BULLETIN

5 Glen Park Avenue · Toronto · Ontario · M6B 4J2

*Vol. 63 | No. 2 | May-Aug 2016 / Iyar 5776 - Av 5776*

## Schedule of Services and Events

Fri. May 27	6:30 pm	Potluck dinner/ Kabbalat Shabbat
Sun. June 5	10:00 am	Jewish Heritage School year end celebration
Thurs. June 9	10:00 am	Bar Mitzvah of Ethan Gerry, son of Marcie Goldhar & Noel Gerry
Fri. June 10	8:15 pm	Kabbalat Shabbat
Sun. June 12	10:00 am	Shavuot/ Yiskor service Bar Mitzvah of Noam Doron, son of Kim Doron & Ori Doron
Wed. June 15	7:30 pm	Annual Meeting
Sat. Aug 6		Offsite - Bar Mitzvah of Maddy Blanc, daughter of Naomi Azrieli & Francois Blanc

## Donations

- ❖ Alison Lubin in honour of Harley Jacobson's Bar Mitzvah
- ❖ Kelvin Wayne in memory of Faye Wayne
- ❖ Andrea Freedman & Neill Iscoe in memory of Mickey
- ❖ Leonard & Elizabeth Zuk in memory of Lauren Rachlin
- ❖ Randy Goodman
- ❖ Lori & Avery Ross
- ❖ Alan & Sari Stitt
- ❖ Jack & Karen Berkow
- ❖ Brian & Bunny Vyner
- ❖ Edye Rome & Charles Webster
- ❖ Rhoda Sion
- ❖ Dan & Galia Rosen
- ❖ Lenny & Susan Melvin
- ❖ Nathan & Barbara Haber
- ❖ Penny Balberman
- ❖ David Dime & Elisa Nuyten
- ❖ Joel Finkelstein & Paula Schipper
- ❖ Jordan & Faith Banks
- ❖ Dennis & Hazel Bader
- ❖ Richard & Jan Sutin
- ❖ Michael Schipper & Leah Lepofsky
- ❖ Andrea & Gary Kaye
- ❖ Daniel Debow & Jordana Huber
- ❖ Pamela Levison
- ❖ Roy Fisher
- ❖ Gary & Carolyn Lengyel
- ❖ Morry Edelstein & Laura Rachlin

(If you made a donation and an acknowledgment did not appear in the Bulletin, please accept our apologies and notify the office at: 416-782-7125 or [office1@congregationhabonim.org](mailto:office1@congregationhabonim.org) and it will appear in the next Bulletin)



## Habonim New Building Update – Fundraising and Construction News

### By Ted Rechtshaffen, President

Since our General Meeting in late February, when the Congregation voted 96% in favour of moving ahead prudently with a new building, we are doing just that.

#### As a quick recap of the plan:

- ❖ We are planning to build a new building in the same place as the current building, but also take over the land at 11 and 15 Glen Park. These are two houses that are owned by Congregation Habonim.
- ❖ The building would be two stories and have a full basement. The plan is to have a children's day care use the second story school space Monday to Friday.
- ❖ The larger space will allow for a small increase in membership, but we will continue to have double services on High Holidays.
- ❖ We will have ample space for small and medium-sized simchas.

Our best case timing would be to begin building after High Holidays 2016. For this to take place, we would need to have a few things all go well. These would be fundraising, building and construction planning.

#### Fundraising

Our immediate focus is to ensure that sufficient fundraising dollars are in place as we will only begin construction once 70% of the budget has been committed.

With a goal of \$10 million, I am extremely pleased to report that we already have commitments for \$6,000,000. Gifts have ranged from \$10,000 to \$1,000,000 as our members clearly recognize the importance of the moment and have stepped forward to help make this one-in-a-generation opportunity come to fruition.

We hope to raise another \$1 to \$2 million before the summer and will be reaching out over the next few weeks to members we hope will help bring us closer to our goal. Specifically, we are hoping to secure at least 25 more leadership gifts of \$18,000, \$25,000, \$36,000 or more (all payable over 5 years) during this period. And for those in a position to contribute \$100,000 or more, there are meaningful naming opportunities we would be happy to discuss with you.

While our immediate focus must necessarily be on securing larger gifts, our goal is for every member to have a stake in the new building, with every family playing a role in building our new home. For those who can't contribute at the major gift levels, there will be ample opportunity to participate at a level of giving you are comfortable. And with every member making a commitment at a personally meaningful level, we will undoubtedly be successful in creating a wonderful building for generations to come.

A new building for a synagogue is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for its membership. We hope that all those who are financially able to do so, will view this as a gift to themselves, to the long term legacy of Habonim, and to their children and grandchildren.

If you would like to discuss your personal gift, please send a quick note to [office1@congregationhabonim.org](mailto:office1@congregationhabonim.org) and we will connect with you right away.



## Building Planning

Before construction planning can truly begin, we need to have full building plans approved by the City. This is a long journey, and I believe we are about 80% of the way there. Our remaining challenges – which we are working to overcome – relate to parking spaces and working with the community.

On the parking front, we simply can't build enough parking without significantly limiting the size of the building or it being cost prohibitive. We are currently working with a couple of neighbourhood organizations to partner with on overflow parking. We believe that this should solve the parking issue.

In terms of working with the community, as with any successful project, we want to work well with our neighbours. To that end, we have gone door to door to explain the plans further and will be having community meetings with interested neighbours to ensure that we are being as accommodative as we can to their needs.

## Construction Planning

Last week our Construction Committee had our first meeting. This committee will be overseeing the Project Manager, Builders and Tradespeople, to ensure that we are working with the best people for our project. This committee will do their best to ensure that the project is on time and on budget.

Because this is the part of the project that is still in its earliest stage, it is a little premature to discuss detailed timing, but we believe the project will take 18 to 21 months to complete.

We are still looking for another individual or two to join this Committee. In particular, we are looking for those with construction project management experience.

If you are interested in finding out more, please contact me directly at [tedr@tridelta.ca](mailto:tedr@tridelta.ca).

We are very excited about the progress to date, and will keep you informed of all the news related to the project over the coming weeks.

## Announcements

**30 Years of sculpture, painting and mixed media works  
by member Morton Katz  
on exhibit**

**Tuesday, May 17 to Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Peter MacKendrick Gallery – Artscape Wychwood Barns  
76 Wychwood Avenue, Toronto  
[www.torontoartscape.org/events/list](http://www.torontoartscape.org/events/list)



## The Blessing of a Park Bench - *By Avrum Rosensweig*

Recently, I received a gift.

The board of directors of Ve'ahavta, the non-profit I am employed by, has agreed to give me a year off, or as we are calling it: A Special Assignment Year.

I am grateful for this opportunity and I need it. I do because it has been twenty years since I founded Ve'ahavta and I am tired. I am not a type-A personality (unlike Eli, who is) and over the last couple of years I have had to push myself to complete tasks, or on some days, to roll out of bed in the morning. At some point I looked closely at why my energy had diminished and determined that the two decades of launching and growing programming, fundraising and all the administrative day-to-day oversight had taken a toll on me. In essence, 240 months has passed and with two heart-attacks and an abundance of white hair, there's a need to rejuvenate.

The special assignment? My goal over the 12-month period is to write a book about the first twenty years of Ve'ahavta.

Despite the achy bones, however, when I look back over the last two decades, I remember with pride a plethora of very rich and meaningful tikun olam activities spearheaded by staff and volunteers. As an example, in my mind's eye I see the many medical teams we assembled with the world-renown Dr. Michael Silverman to travel to distant and very impoverished nations like Guyana, South America and Zimbabwe.

I can see images of the Ve'ahavta van driven by our many outreach workers over the Bloor viaduct and along Lakeshore Boulevard. I remember looking out the window of our very first 'homeless van' trip together with our Native counterparts at Na Me Res (Native Men's Residence), and seeing a population of people – those suffering from homelessness - we would work with for many years to come.

I look back and recall our many crisis responses, some in partnership with the State of Israel, others with local

partners. One such response came 18 years ago when we drove with local (South American) church members down to El Salvador in a convoy of school buses. The buses were loaded up with humanitarian aid to assist impoverished villagers affected by a natural disaster. We delivered the many goods we had collected from the Jewish community and we left the school buses for the locals, with parts. What a holy thing that was.

I remember with horror waking up one morning to the news that 250,000 had been gobbled up by the earth in Haiti – a disaster of biblical proportions. It was then I understood the driving nature of our brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisrael who found their way into Haiti within forty-eight hours of the disaster. Most other countries responding to the quake worked for days to figure out where to land their planes, let alone setting up their operations.

And of course when I dwell upon Ve'ahavta's history, I think too about the Ve'ahavta Street Academy, a school for those on or near the street, and - in concert with Congregation Habonim - both our Creative Writing Contest for the Homeless and of course our Passover Seder for the Homeless. What an exquisite night. Eli and I would lead the sederim and well over 140 guests filled the Habonim hall -- responding to the Haggadic call of "those who are hungry let them come and eat."

I write this article to share with you some of the blessings I have received over the last twenty years. And I write this to remind you how important it is to smell the flowers – to find a park bench somewhere where you can sit and read for an hour or two about ideas, and the beauty and challenges of life.

How glorious it is we can work, particularly on something we are passionate about. How fortunate we are to have the ability to separate from our work and take in all the things around us and enhance our understanding and love of life.

[Avrum.rosensweig@veahavta.org](mailto:Avrum.rosensweig@veahavta.org)



## Sponsored Syrian Refugee Families are Coming Soon

The Midtown Syrian Refugee Sponsorship Group, composed mostly of Habonim members, was excited recently to learn more about its sponsored family who is coming. Last month, some of the group met with Ala, a Syrian Kurd who came to Canada as a refugee about 12 years ago. Ala is now a proud Canadian citizen. JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) Toronto, who is working with the Midtown group, is concentrating its efforts on family reunification. Ala is the first cousin of Ahmad whose family will be coming as Midtown's sponsored refugee family. The family is expected later in the summer or perhaps early fall.

Ahmad, age 33, will be coming to Canada with his wife Khadije, age 31, daughter Fatima who is nine, and son Ali who is five. Midtown is excited to welcome them. On the one hand, Ahmad and his family have been lucky in that they left their hometown of Aleppo relatively early in the conflict, in 2012. However, life in Beirut has been difficult for Syrian refugees and work is not always easy to come by for Ahmad, a carpenter by trade. Fortunately, after Ahmad has a chance to learn English in Canada, he may have an opportunity to work with his cousin, Ala, who is a contractor. That is, unless he'd like to train to do something else. His wife, Khadije, is a homemaker and has said she would like to go to school to be a hairdresser. She evidently speaks a little English which could make things much easier for the Midtown group. Their daughter, Fatima, is in school in Beirut and is learning some French. Ali, who speaks Arabic and Kurdish like the rest of his family, will start school for the first time when he comes to Canada.

Midtown is gearing up its efforts to collect household goods and furnishings, as well as clothes now that it knows the sizes of the coming family. Ahmad is 5'6". Khadije, 5'1", might prefer modest clothing. Fatima is 4'5" and Ali is 3'7". If you have items you would like to donate, please contact Shelly Haber at [shellyhaber@me.com](mailto:shellyhaber@me.com) or at 416-781-2886. Midtown is hoping to find a two-bedroom apartment for the family near Lawrence Avenue East and Victoria Park, close to where their cousin Ala lives.

Volunteers from A New Beginning, who include Habonim member Debbie Shawn, met recently with JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services) Toronto and members of their anchor family (relatives of the sponsored families who are already living in Canada). As previously discussed in the Habonim bulletin, A New Beginning is sponsoring two different family groups. One of these families has additional relatives being sponsored by a group from Beth Tikvah Synagogue. A decision was reached to work together as both groups are sponsoring and volunteering with members of the same extended family. This will simplify things for the anchor family and give the two sponsoring groups the best opportunity to help these refugees settle successfully in Canada.

A New Beginning has started to organize for the arrival of the families since they are hopeful that some will be arriving in Canada in the near future. Committees have been set up to assist with many of the resources that they anticipate will be needed. Debbie Shawn and Suanne Kelman will be co-ordinating donations of furniture and household goods for the refugee families. If anyone has donations available, please email Debbie and/or Suanne with photos of the items at [skelman@ryerson.ca](mailto:skelman@ryerson.ca) and [debbieshawn@rogers.com](mailto:debbieshawn@rogers.com). Debbie and Suanne will keep track of what has been offered although they will wait for the arrival of the families to figure out exactly what they need, and want, before collecting any items.

A New Beginning knows that the Syrian refugees who have already arrived are anxious to become productive members of Canadian society and they anticipate that this will be the same for their sponsored families. If any Habonim members know of employment opportunities for new immigrants, please contact Debbie Shawn at [debbieshawn@rogers.com](mailto:debbieshawn@rogers.com). A New Beginning is grateful for your help and support.



## Mazal Tovs on Recent Bar/Bat Mitzvahs

- ❖ Vivian Glens & David Hausman on the Bat Mitzvah of Jordan
- ❖ Boaz & Vanessa Axelrod on the Bar Mitzvah of Kai (see photos below)
- ❖ Jennifer & Ken Tanenbaum on the Bar Mitzvah of Ethan (see photos page 6)

**מזל טוב !**

## Mazal Tovs on Recent Births

- ❖ Brett & Kasia Saitowitz, on the birth of their sons Levi Zoni Saitowitz & Harrison Stori Nattan Natta Saitowitz, Grandsons of Seymour & Bev Saitowitz
- ❖ Julie Herczeg & Stephen Shedletzky on the birth of their daughter Sophie Bea Shedletzky, granddaughter of Susan Liebel & Gabor Herczeg

## Mazal Tovs on Recent Accomplishments

- ❖ Dr. Vivian Rakoff on receiving the Order of Canada.

## Bar Mitzvah of Kai Axelrad





## Bar Mitzvah Ethan Tanenbaum





## ANNUAL MEETING 2016

Congregation Habonim's annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 15 at 7:30 pm at the synagogue (5 Glen Park Avenue).

### **Nomination of Candidates for Election as Directors**

At the annual meeting the members will elect directors. The Board is very grateful to Sander Gibson and Adrienne Chajes, who are retiring from the Board, for their several years of service as directors. If a by-law amendment passed by the Board is approved by the members, two new directors in addition to the two required to fill Sander's and Adrienne's spots will be needed. Four candidates have come forward. Members have the power to nominate other candidates under article 6.7 of the By-laws: "Every member may nominate himself/herself, or may nominate one candidate for election to the Board of Directors. Each nomination must (a) be submitted to the President (Ted Rechtshaffen) in writing; (b) must contain the signatures of at least five percent (5%) of the Members of the Congregation in support of the nomination; and (c) contain a short biography of the person nominated and the principal services to be rendered, if elected. Nominations will close at least thirty (30) days prior to the Annual Meeting so that notice of those nominated can be sent promptly to Members. No nominations shall be accepted at the Annual Meeting."

### **Voting by Proxy**

If you cannot attend the annual meeting, you can vote by proxy. A proxy form and instructions will be available on our website, or contact Robin in the office at 416-782-7125 [office1@congregationhabonim.org](mailto:office1@congregationhabonim.org)



## Governance Committee Recommends By-law Change

The Governance Committee met several times this past year. Its members are Shelly Haber, Stephen Halperin, Gabor Herczeg, Cliff Lax and Ted Rechtshaffen. The committee recently recommended that:

- (1) the board increase in size from 12 to 14 directors; and
- (2) the board set membership fees and be required to seek membership approval if it intends to increase fees more than 7.5% over the previous year's fees.

The board accepted these recommendations and consequently passed the following by-law amendment, subject to approval by the members of Habonim. The by-law amendment will be put before a vote of Habonim's membership at its annual meeting on Wednesday, June 15th at 7:00 pm.

Congregation Habonim of Toronto  
(the "Congregation")

### **First Amendment to By-Law No. 1**

A by-law relating to the number of directors  
and the setting of annual membership dues.

#### **Whereas:**

Upon the recommendation of a governance committee established by the board of directors, the Congregation's board of directors wishes to

- (1) have the power to set annual membership dues and be required to seek the Congregation's approval if the board intends to increase the dues by more than 7.5 percent; and
- (2) increase the size of the board of directors from twelve to fourteen directors.

#### **Now therefore, By-Law No. 1 is amended as follows:**

1. **Article 4.1 is hereby repealed and the following substituted therefor:**

4.1 (1) Subject to Article 4.1 (2) the annual dues to be paid by each Member ("Annual Dues") shall be set by the Board of Directors from time to time.

(2) If the Board of Directors raises the Annual Dues by more than 7.5 percent, the increase in Annual Dues shall not take effect unless confirmed by a vote of the Members at a meeting of the Members.

(3) The Board of Directors shall give written notice to Members promptly after either the Annual Dues have been set by the Board or, if applicable, after an increase in Annual Dues of greater than 7.5 percent has been confirmed by the Members.

2. **Article 6.1 is hereby amended by replacing the second line of Article 6.1 as follows:** "supervised by a Board of Directors (including the Officers) composed of fourteen (14) Directors,"

3. **This By-law shall take effect when confirmed by the Members at a meeting of the Members.**



## We found the Afikoman!



On the Second Night of Passover, over 160 people gathered at Habonim for our annual Congregational Seder. Pictured here are Alon and Tamar Israeli with their hands on the Afikoman.

## Join us Friday, May 27, 2016 @ 6:30 pm Kabbalat Shabbat & Pot luck Dinner



Please Register on our website or by calling the office.



## News from Habonim's Jewish Heritage School *by Cathy Rechtschaffen*

The end of another year is fast-approaching, and it's been another wonderful learning experience. Our first year running a Thursday program has been well received and we hope to continue the program next year. Registration for the 2016/2017 academic year will begin for returning families the first week of May and will then be opened to new families in the middle of May. Fees have increased by \$50 for this coming year - \$950 for non-members and \$850 for members for the Sunday morning program, and \$800 for non-members and \$700 for members for the Thursday after school program. A non-refundable 25% deposit is required upon registration. Should you have any questions regarding registration, please contact Cathy Rechtschaffen at [habonimschool@gmail.com](mailto:habonimschool@gmail.com).

Our year-end celebration will be held on Sunday, June 5, 2016, 10:00 AM – Noon. Members and their families are welcome and encouraged to join us. There will be many fun activities planned as well as some delicious food. RSVP [habonimschool@gmail.com](mailto:habonimschool@gmail.com).

With the new building plans moving forward, the Jewish Heritage School will be in temporary space for the next two academic years. These plans have not been finalized as yet, but it is the intention for the space to be in close proximity to our current location. We will communicate with all school families as soon as we have a confirmed space.

## Marshall McLuhan Catholic high school world religion class tour Habonim





**In Memoriam:**

Mourning those who passed away in the last year:

James Ruderman

Sam Iscoe

Mike Wolfish

Sydney Barwin

Lynn Albert

Jeffrey Lyons

Alice Lieberman

Edith Klein

Cantor Esther Ghan Firestone

Cyril Hersh

Erwin Greben

Ari Firestone

Rebbetzin Gittel Rosensweig

Andrea Gabor

Elsa Allen

Faye Wayne

Shirley Zuckerbrot

Phil Wynn

Maxine Drevnig

Lauren Rachlin

**Yahrzeits**

Please log into your profile on our website to add your family Yahrzeits.

Yahrzeit reminders will be sent out in the near future.

If you would like any assistance please contact Robin in the office at 416-782-7125 or [office1@congregationhabonim.org](mailto:office1@congregationhabonim.org)

**Information and contributions to THE BULLETIN.**

Contact: Paula Schipper, [pfschipper@gmail.com](mailto:pfschipper@gmail.com)

**PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

[www.congregationhabonim.org](http://www.congregationhabonim.org)

**RELIGIOUS SCHOOL**

[www.jewishheritageschool.org](http://www.jewishheritageschool.org)

**To SEND TRIBUTE & CONDOLENCE CARDS**

**and to MAKE A DONATION:**

Call Rhoda Sion at (416) 782-9663 or write to:

716-660 Eglinton Ave. W., Toronto M5N 1C3

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**PHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL?**

Call the Habonim office:

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**Email:** [office1@congregationhabonim.org](mailto:office1@congregationhabonim.org)

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**Cantors**

Cantor: Aviva Rajskey

Contact: [avivar@rogers.com](mailto:avivar@rogers.com)

Associate Cantor: Kim Doron

Contact: [kimdoron@rogers.com](mailto:kimdoron@rogers.com)

**Jewish Heritage School Principal**

Yodfat Snir Mandil

Contact: [yodfat\\_snir@hotmail.com](mailto:yodfat_snir@hotmail.com)