

# JEWISH ST. LOUIS

COMPILED BY JILL KASSANDER

## Bais Yaakov High School

Yehudis Perel, Rochel Rosen and Nechama Weiss did an incredible job on the "Chanukah *Chagiga*." There were beautiful decorations and centerpieces and delicious food. Rabbi Elisha Feinberg's speech gave the students an inspirational insight into Hanukkah. The auction was lots of fun, thanks to the hard work of Matti Yari and Rina Zeffren. Mindi Mintz taught the girls a fun dance. Lots of teachers and volunteers helped with the evening, including G.O. heads Batya Gordon and Esther Yari.

## Brith Sholom Kneseth Israel

Director of Programming Roland Roth reported a record turnout for the synagogue's Third Fridays Program, hosted at Next Dor. More than 40 people in their 20s and 30s gathered for a traditional *Shabbat* dinner in the relaxed atmosphere of Next Dor, St. Louis' house dedicated to welcoming this emerging leadership demographic. Yoni Sarason, programming director for Next Dor, said it was the perfect event for the organization, which looking forward to helping "to create a vibrant community for post-college Jewish life in St. Louis."

## Central Reform Congregation

Members volunteered at the Juvenile Detention Center on Christmas Day, creating a fun afternoon for the students in the center since they couldn't be at home with their families on the holiday. There were three different activities for students to rotate through, including arts and crafts, games and drumming. Robert "Honi" Fishbone led a drumming circle, which attracted many eager students. Many of the congregants who participated pitched in supplies and materials to make the day a success. Shana Leopold made cookies; Vicki Essman, Tricia Goldman and Patti Padawer brought art supplies; Robert Fishbone brought drums. Ken Goldman planned and coordinated the day's activities and made sure that both the students and volunteers had a great time.

## Chabad of Greater St. Louis

More than 100 people gathered at the Creve Coeur Community Center to celebrate the *upshernish* (first hair cutting ceremony) of Mendel Landa, son of Rabbi Levi and Rivka Landa. Family and friends braved the cold weather and came from across the country and Canada to celebrate the special event. Mendel willingly let everyone cut a snip of his hair as he placed coins in a *tzedakah* box. Children attending the event also had the opportunity to make their own *tzedakah* box to take home.

## KolAm

A crowd of more than 120 participants attended the congregation's recent Hanukkah dinner and celebration. The delicious dairy potluck dinner included the traditional Hanukkah *latkes* and *sufganiot*. Congregant Louise Sirota led an edible *dreidel*-making activity for children. The evening was planned by the congregation's Ritual Committee, headed by Becky Cohen.



**CROWN CENTER** Crown Center for Senior Living staff and board members work to assemble items to donate to the Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry. Shown left to right are Steven Rosenblum, Lara Burch, Sylvia Nissenboim, Jeff Cohen, Betsy Garland, Diana Padratzick, Essie Rochman and Merle Miller. Crown Center for Senior Living staffers decided to forgo their annual holiday party, and to celebrate the New Year by making a contribution to the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry. Crown Center board members were invited to participate, and the group assembled bean soup and rice mixes to be donated to the pantry for distribution.



**NHBZ** Rabbi Ze'ev Smason and Rebbitzin Chani Smason were honored by Nusach Hari B'nai Zion at an awards dinner Dec. 20. They are shown above with their son Avrami Smason. Francine Attoun and Robin Rickerman co-chaired the event, which featured Dr. Leon Burke conducting the U. City Orchestra.

## St. Louis Holocaust Survivors and Descendants

More than two dozen St. Louis Holocaust survivors, descendants and spouses met for a special weekend event at Congregation Kol Am. David Halpern was the Master of Ceremonies. Jean Cavender, director of the St Louis Holocaust Museum and Learning Center, Rabbi Haziza-Sokol of Kol Am and Felicia Graber, co-founder of the group, made welcoming remarks. Liz Lippa, child survivor from Vienna, Austria led an intergenerational dialogue on "Our Common Familiar Feelings."

## St. Louis Kollel/ Torah MiTzion Kollel

The community came together for breakfast and learning at Young Israel on Dec. 25. The topic of discussion was whether or not one is really obligated to give a tenth of his or her money to *tzedakah*. The program was sponsored by Jill and David Mogil in honor of the first *yahrtzeit* of Jill's father, Saul Mirowitz.

## Temple Emanuel

Director of Education Ellyn Polsky reported an incredibly successful weekend of eating, playing and praying to celebrate Hanukkah. Marcia Mermelstein and the seventh and eighth graders collected \$260 for the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry through the sale of their fabulous ceramic bowls and the "Shabbat Hanukkah Pot-Luck In a Bowl Dinner." There was a delicious selection of soups to choose from that evening. Jelly doughnut bakers included Sarah Burack, Noah and Sam Clay, Jacob Goldblum, Keil Sherman and Matt Szymkowicz. *Latkes* were prepared by Robbin List, Donna and Jared Null, Debra and Jerry Shatoff, Saja Sims and Shirley and Andy Wise. The Maccabiah Madness included events and races directed by List, Leslie and Steve Masaki, Maria Roundtree, Amy Wilson and Sam Wise. Other volunteers making the event possible included Bria, Craig and Liz Nathanson, Ryan Brett and Linda Sayre, Karen and Sam Platt and shopper extraordinaire Paul Goldblum.



**TI** Recently, Temple Israel honored kindergarten teacher Sammy Shoss for 40 years of service to the congregation by planting a tree in her honor on the grounds of the religious school playground. Shown are Elijah Ballard (Shoss' grandson), Rabbi Mark Shook, honoree Sammy Shoss and her husband, Bill Shoss.

## Temple Israel

Joan Moscovitz, chair of the annual Thanksgiving Dinner, reported the program was a tremendous success. This was the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of the program, which provides a holiday dinner to people in need from area shelters, and more than 330 meals were served. Moscovitz gratefully acknowledged there were many volunteers of all ages who helped make the dinner a warm, memorable event.

## Torah Prep School

On the fifth night of Hanukkah, the fifth through eighth grade girls had a fabulous "Chanukah *Chagiga*." Sara Sheinert headed a beautiful choir performance, which included a medley of Hanukkah songs. The girls performed a play thanks to Ahuva Spetner, who worked on the script and coached the girls on their drama skills. Devorah Artman and Batsheva Grunberger led a dance for the eighth graders. The girls enjoyed a super supper prepared by Zippy Kent and Chana Ester Stern. Bracha Pentelnik arranged, prepared and organized the performance from beginning to end.

## Traditional

It was a full house at the 2009 State of Israel Bonds dinner honoring Ilse and Frank Altman, which raised over \$500,000 for Israel. The event committee included Esther Abramson-Krut, Isaac Boniuk, Jean and Stanley Estrin, Erika and Stanley Greenberg, Tobie Hupert, Ken Levy and Ceil and Bernard Tobin.

## United Hebrew

Judy Grosz and Thelma Peskind coordinated various winter holiday *mitzvah* projects. Members volunteered at various social service agencies in December. Many members participated in the Hanukkah candle lighting projects at Brooking Park Nursing Care Facility.