

NEWSLETTER

November 2006

Annual General Meeting

The DJC will be having its annual meeting on **January 25, 2007**. The most important aspect of the meeting is the election of the Board of Directors. In preparation for the meeting the board has appointed a Nominations Committee which consists of members of the community and the current board. The committee has a challenging task, as it works towards representing our diverse membership with the collected skills required. In order to create stability on the board, terms of office are staggered. This year four positions will be voted for, as the other four of the eight member board are half way through a two year term. One current board member will seek to fill one of those positions which will leave three open positions.

The Nominations Committee would like to include the entire community in this process by inviting all members to nominate a member that they feel could contribute positively as a board member. This person should:

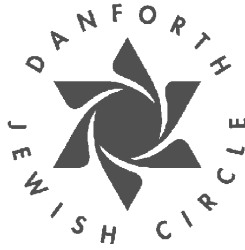
- Be a member of the DJC and uphold DJC values;
- Have demonstrated a commitment to the community through other volunteer activities;
- Be available for monthly meetings, chairing a working committee, occasionally attend other DJC meetings and initiatives and;
- Be able to engage in discussions respectfully, honoring differing opinions, and have an ability to work towards consensus in decision-making.

If you would like to nominate someone, please first seek their approval and then submit their names to the Nominating Committee by writing to info@djctoronto.com by December 10, 2006 along with a brief descriptive paragraph about the individual. All names submitted will be respectfully considered. The Nominations Committee will then recommend a slate to the board, and all members will then receive an annual meeting package by regular mail. So ***please mark your calendars for January 25*** and we look forward to your involvement in this important process.

Sincerely,
The Nominations Committee.

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Member Satisfaction Survey

In anticipation of our Annual Meeting on January 25, the DJC Board is conducting a member survey to learn what is working, what's not, and what people want to see in the coming year. There are three questions on the survey, one about High Holiday services, one about scheduled DJC programs and events, and one about life-cycle related support. Short and sweet. We'd like to hear from everyone, so take 5 minutes and send us your thoughts. Responses must be submitted by December 11th. The survey is being conducted online. To participate, you will need a password. All members received an email containing a password and a link that takes you right to the survey. If you need help with this, contact Kathy Miller at info@djctoronto.com. *Thanks in advance from the DJC Board.*



Making Our Years Count

By Rabbi Eli Kukla

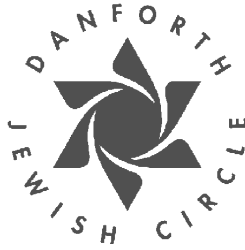
"And Sarah was a hundred years and twenty years and seven years – these were the years of Sarah's life." (Genesis 23:1) These are the opening words of this week's Torah portion, *Chayei Sarah*, which tells about the death of the Biblical matriarch Sarah by recounting the span of her life. According to tradition the Torah is not just counting the years of Sarah's life but telling us that Sarah was a justice-seeking woman who made her years count!

The portion goes on to describe how Sarah's husband, Abraham, cared for her and made sure that she was properly buried and mourned over. Judaism teaches that caring for the needs of the dead and those in mourning, is the deepest form of "*chesed*" (loving-kindness). Not only is Sarah's memory honored by Abraham's care, he is also transformed by the experience of caring for her. Abraham purchases a cave for her burial that alters his status in his community from a "*ger*" (literally an outsider) to a full resident and member.

It is appropriate to me that this is our portion for the week at a time when, as a community, the DJC is working to more deeply meet the needs of those who are struggling with loss, illness, grief or mourning. Being present for

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each other in these times not only allows us to express “*chesed*” or loving-kindness to one another, I think it also will transform us as a community. Supporting one another through moments of loss and struggle forms the roots of a deep and sustaining community where no one feels like a “ger” or an outsider.

If you are facing mental or physical illnesses, care-giving for sick loved ones, are grieving over a loss OR if you would like to support other members of your community through these moments, the DJC wants to know. Here are a few ways to get or offer support:

- 1) We are starting to develop a “Healing List” to be read before we recite the prayer for healing on Friday nights, as well as list of members of our community or loved ones of our members who have passed away to share before we recite the mourner’s kaddish at services. If someone in your life is struggling with illness or if you have lost a loved one, please submit their names and their relationship to you to Kathy at info@djctoronto.com Not only will we be able to pray for healing or honor their memory, letting us know that you are facing illness or loss will allow members of the DJC to reach out to you if you choose to accept their support.
- 2) As noted elsewhere in this newsletter we are forming a “Chesed” team of DJC members who would like to support other members of the community through times of transition, illness or loss.
- 3) I am available for personal meetings to discuss issues of grief, coping with mental or physical illnesses or the challenges of care-giving. I want to know what is going on in your lives as much as my schedule permits and have the opportunity to be involved in your lives. Most of these types of issues are best discussed in person as opposed to over email or phone, so to reach me please make an appointment with Kathy at info@djctoronto.com.

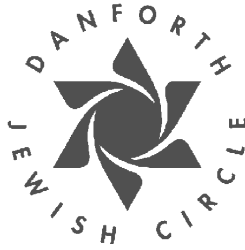
Building a community of *chesed* (loving kindness) is a way we can not only count our years together but make our years count!

Chesed: Lending a Hand

Strength and sustenance are at the heart of what defines a community. Sometimes, the need for both can surface out of the blue — an ailing parent, a lost job, or mental and physical challenges can send us into a tailspin. We are

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committed to being there when individual members need our collective support. We have created a *chesed*, long a cornerstone of synagogue life that means "loving kindness". We want to be there not just for celebrations but for those difficult days when the support of a community is a balm. If you or someone you know is in need of a helping hand, please contact Kathy Miller at info@djctoronto.com. If you'd like to be part of our chesed, please contact Rosie Beitel at rosiebeitel@sympatico.ca.

Listening Campaign = Meaningful Conversations + Sound Decisions

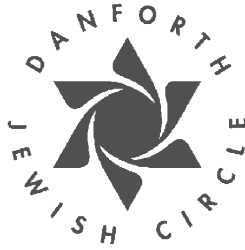


At an energizing meeting in November, the DJC launched a new initiative called the Listening Campaign. Listening Campaigns have been used by other congregations, unions, communities and businesses to make sound decisions based on their members' needs. In our case, we have formed a core group of seventeen members who will spend the next 4-6 months engaging in one-to-one conversations. Each of us is eager to listen to congregants to find out their stories, what is meaningful, what excites them, and what they want from their affiliation with the DJC. At the same time, we'll be learning about their concerns, talents and expertise we'll be building relationships, one at a time. The core group will then pool what they have learned and make recommendations to the Board.

"Thinking back to why I chose to get involved, I remember one particular DJC book club meeting some time ago. A rich discussion of ideas was taking place where participants spoke about their own personal life experience, and I recall being really surprised to learn just how many Jewish communities there are represented inside our large one. There were experiences and stories the likes of which I had no idea were being lived! It's that sense of discovery that had me, and likely others, get curious about the individual members that make up DJC

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and volunteer to invite members into conversation. It's not always easy to get to know new people in my own home town of Toronto, and this goes a long way in making that possible. If that wasn't enough, the regular core group training sessions that we've started with Rabbi Eli on such topics as change, power, and listening from a Jewish perspective are supporting me to be the best listener in this and other parts of my life." - *Sheila Goldgrab*

If you would like to be called by one of us to have a conversation with you, please contact Kathy Miller at info@djctoronto.com and she will add you to our growing list of willing participants. All conversations are less than an hour long, and are designed to be casual and exploratory.

Would you like to become a core member who conducts the conversations? The next intake session for core group members will be held in February 2007. The exact date will be announced in the DJC eNewsletter.

Successful Beginnings - Children's Jewish Studies Program

Well, we got off to a great start on October 11th with an incredible group of teachers: enthusiastic, skilled and knowledgeable. One week later we held our Parent's Orientation meeting where parents were given an overview of what they can expect over the school year. As well, we had an Open House for any new parents and children who wanted to see our program in action before joining in. All events: the start of the school year, Parent's Orientation and Open House were a great success!

Let's talk Hebrew! We are introducing more Hebrew vocabulary into the program. Not to turn our kids into fluent torah readers but to have our kids gain an exposure to Hebrew by using it casually during class on a repetitive everyday basis.

Finally, no one person does all of this. There is a group of dedicated volunteers who set the direction for the program and see it through. Frankly, we could use some help. If you want to volunteer a lot or a little - it would be so much appreciated. Please write to Kathy Miller at info@djctoronto.com or call **416-580-1233** to let her know you're interested. - *Jeff Krymalowski, DJC JS Board*

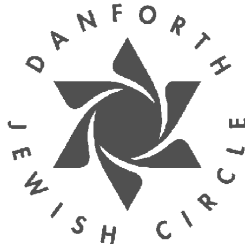
Educationally speaking, please consider...

EXCHANGE STUDENT

Odi Zahavi is a 16 year old living in Berlin. His father is an Israeli-born film director and his mother is a teacher. Odi speaks German, English, French and

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Hebrew. Odi is interested in coming to Canada as an exchange student from September 07 to February 08, and is looking for a home, preferably with teenagers. By all accounts he is bright, responsible, and independent. He also has a good sense of humour. If you are interested in finding out more, please contact Avrum Jacobson at 416-524-9602 or avrumj@sympatico.ca.

December Calendar www.djctoronto.com

Friday, **December 1** - Shabbat service, **6:30pm** at Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth Avenue- Hurndale entrance (corner of Jackman/ Hurndale). Rabbi Eli Kukla leading. **Free childcare provided.** Kiddush to follow.

Saturday, **December 2** - Torah Study with Rabbi Eli Kukla, **10:00am** at Riverdale Presbyterian, 662 Pape Avenue (side door, follow steps down to the basement).

Sunday, **December 3** - Community Chanukah party, **3:00pm- 5:30pm**, Eastminster Church, 310 Danforth Avenue. (See attached flyer

Looking forward to Chanukah!

Q: How can you purchase beautiful Judaica at reasonable prices and support the DJC at the same time?

A: Shop at Judica Maven, online: www.judaicamaven.ca. Choose the Tzedakah program and 10% of the price of your purchase will be donated to the DJC. It's simple, it's easy and we all benefit! Everything you need for Chanukkah - decorative candles, chocolate coins, dreidels, menorahs and more - is available. Phone: **416-656-5650**.

Celebrating our in home Shabbat services

If you would like to volunteer your home for a Friday evening service, contact Diana Chastain at dianach@allstream.net or **416- 465-0635**.

In home services will continue in January-look for an announcement in our December newsletter.

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