



Jewish Children's Museum UPDATE



THE JEWISH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF ARI HALBERSTAM



WOMEN'S LEAGUE COMMUNITY RESIDENCE AWARENESS

The JCM is collaborating with the Women's League Community Residences (WLCR) to increase accessibility for people with special needs. Dr. Stephen Glicksman, long time developmental psychologist at WLCR, recently toured the museum exhibits and will be offering practical and insightful proposals on making it more accessible and meaningful for individuals with special needs. "The

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FROM THE DIRECTOR...

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Jewish Children's Museum and our many friends and visitors, I'd like to thank you for your friendship and gracious support. We so appreciate your role in introducing timeless Jewish wisdom and values to the tens of thousands of children who visit us for a fun, interactive and educational experience. Because of your support, we have succeeded in building an institution that is literally one of a kind.

The first ten years of the Jewish Children's Museum was full of trials and triumphs. Looking back at those years helps us to position ourselves to blaze new trails in offering a dynamic, fun and educational experience for our visitors of all ages.

There's no question that our children are the world's greatest natural resource. They are the ones who, in the not too distant future, will inherit the world we leave for them. When we see daily headlines tell of troubles, conflict and confusion we are often forced to wonder, "will our children ever set the world right?"

They will. Our little ones are being introduced to very valuable tools that will serve them well as they grow and take our place as the stewards of this world. A love for discovery and learning, imagination and a responsibility to humanity and our world will guide them through their lives and assist them in accomplishing wonderful things. The JCM is so proud to have the privilege of preparing our children in becoming tomorrow's leaders, and we're deeply grateful for your role in making the JCM so successful. Time after time, our friends and supporters have never failed in keeping the JCM at the top of its game with the best, most creative learning experiences for our visitors.

We thank you for your outstanding friendship and support, and look forward to many happy years in sharing the wisdom, heritage and values with the world.



Rabbi Y. Benjaminson
Executive Director

FUNSTATS

4224

Chanukah
Visitors

6012

Public School
visits

4722

Sukkos Visitors

5480

Pesach Visitors

2,000,000+

Visitors since
opening day

JEWISH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM STAFF

Rabbi Yerachmiel Benjaminson
Executive Director

Devorah Halberstam
Director of Foundations
and Government Services

Gershon Eichorn
Director

Rabbi Sholom Ber Baumgarten
Director of Operations

Chaim Benjaminson
Director of Marketing

Mendel Spalter
Director of Development

Shaina Kramer
Executive Assistant

Mushka Marcus
Development Assistant

Rabbi Nissen Brenenson
Director of Education

Chaya Serebryanski
Program Director

Mendy Weg
The Great Jewish Big Rig

Mendel Nemanov
IT Department

Yossi Shomer
Controller

Goldie Moskowitz
Accounting Manager

Bluma Rapoport
Data Systems

Batsheva Altein
Family Programs Coordinator

Shterna Weiss
Brana Weiss
Reception

Rabbi Mendel Nemes
Itta Simon
Mailing Department

Rabbi Mendel Cohen
Rabbi Herschel Scheiner
Special Funding Directors

Rabbi Berel & Chani Majeski
Friendship Circle

Peretz Lazaroff
Exhibit and Building Maintenance

Sara Leah Bronstein
Brochie Roubini

Frayda Aber
Geula Dalphin
Chaya Jaffe

Mushkie Wilansky
Geula Kulek

Mendel Levitansky
Education Department

KIDS AT **THE WHEEL**



Where can your kids get behind the wheel and drive around town? At the JCM Safety City, of course! Our Summer Safety event transforms the museum into a mini-city, complete with roads, stores and traffic signs. Kids get behind the wheel of their go kart and navigate their way around town, obeying traffic lights, learning who has the right of way and, of course, stopping for pedestrians! In the mini-city, children have the opportunity to dress up as community helpers, shop and work in the stores, and even meet real police and firefighters! Safety City is a great environment for kids to learn about traffic rules, staying safe in their surroundings, and how community helpers come to our aid! Safety City will be featured in the Museum throughout **July** and **August**.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Spending time at the JCM with family and friends is the best way to learn and have fun. What could possibly make the experience better? Museum membership – of course! We offer five levels of membership that give you access to benefits like FREE and discounted entry, guest passes, discounts at Mendy's Restaurant, Chocolate Cafe and museum birthday parties, members-only events and 50% discounts to more than 200 affiliated museums around North America!

Membership is also an important way to show your support to the JCM and ensure that we remain the most original, innovative and hands-on place for kids of all ages to learn and discover.

Corporate membership offers museum benefits to employees and an opportunity for corporate citizens to position themselves as supporters of education, mutual respect and the Jewish community.

For more information on family or corporate membership, visit jcm.museum/membership, or contact membership@jcm.museum.



BUBBLE TROUBLE

Bubble volcanos, bubble roller coasters... kids in bubbles?! It's just another day with Bubblemaster Jeff Boyer. Bubble Trouble teaches kids the science behind the fun in this bubble bonanza. Jeff juggles, sculpts and builds while giving the audience what will probably be the most exciting, hands-on physics lesson they'll ever experience! Bubble Trouble is at the JCM **April 6 - 9**.

MUSIC TO OUR EARS

Young Maestros love our larger than life music room! Where else can they get to play their own drums and percussion instruments, see the unusual instruments described in the Torah, learn about how sound and music works, and get their hands on jumbo-sized musical instruments! This exhibit is always a hit with kids (and parents) that have an ear for music! The Music Room is open **June 1 - 30**.

GET YOUR PASSPORT READY

Kids have a unique chance to travel to Egypt, Spain, Russia and other points around the globe with the JCM Passport to Jewish History! Visitors get their passports stamped as they "visit" lands all over the world on a virtual tour of pivotal places and events throughout Jewish history. Take a fascinating peek into the past and cultures around the world. Tours begin in **September**.

THE LOST ARTS

Metal artist Maurice Nseiri offers an extraordinary glimpse into the unique Jewish arts of his native Syria. Intricate and majestic, these rare works are replete with symbolism that reflects the persecution, pride and perseverance of the Jews of Syria.

Nseiri himself rarely exhibits his collection or tells the story of his exile. Nonetheless, he has left an indelible mark in his estranged, war-torn homeland, from the majestic doors of the Damascus Al-Franj Synagogue to Assad's presidential palace. His craftsmanship is testament to a rich culture, now extinguished in its native birthplace.

The Nseiri Exhibit will be at the JCM **Spring 2015.**



THE TORAH UNWRAPPED!

The Torah scroll, the center of Jewish life, is made with skilled craftsmanship and painstaking attention to detail. Kids will get their hands dirty as we tackle the many different skills involved in writing a scroll. Learn how to make ink, prepare parchment, write the aleph-bet letters and put the whole thing together at our Torah Unwrapped workshop. Torah Unwrapped is at the JCM **May 3 - 17.**



FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE JEWISH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM IN CROWN HEIGHTS GATHERED FOR A GRAND PURIM PARTY AND MEGILLAH READING.



MATZAH MADNESS

Flour, water, fire and speed... how hard could it really be?! Baking matzah is lots of fun, but not as easy as it looks! Join the JCM as we find out what it is that makes matzah so special

and roll out the fun as we get ready for Passover by trying our hand at making and baking our own matzah! Matzah Madness will take place **March 15 - 29.**



Continued from cover

museum has always welcomed everyone," he explains, "but now its staff wants to take it to the next level." Museum staff will be trained to be aware of the challenges of museum guests with special needs. "The underlying premise," says Dr. Glicksman, "is that everyone should be able to access this resource on his or her own level, truly enjoy it, and gain from the experience."

Among the adjustments being considered are methods of simplifying ideas to those with intellectual disabilities, addressing the sensory needs of visitors with autism,

and the printing of user-friendly guides highlighting relevant exhibits.

Dr. Glicksman is delighted that WLCR is involved and has already begun developing recommendations to address this select niche of museum visitors.

"WLCR is very committed to continue developing material that will train museum staff to pick up on the nuances of visitors with differing abilities.

'Inclusion' has come a long way from simply having a ramp installed for those with special needs," he says. "We've moved way beyond that."





THE FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

Twenty years have passed since The Friendship Circle was first established in Detroit, with a group of eight teenage volunteers spending time with three children with special needs on a weekly basis. Since that time The Friendship Circle has grown exponentially and today almost 11,000 volunteers enjoy hours of fun and camaraderie with approximately 5,000 children at 79 locations all across the United States, Canada and Australia.

The benefits of The Friendship Circle are manifold, as children with special needs are given the opportunity to highlight their talents and are integrated into the local community. Additionally, parents and siblings have the opportunity for a well deserved respite while The Friendship Circle's volunteers get a hands on lesson in the importance of giving back to their community. Among The Friendship Circle's many programs are Friends at Home, where pairs of teenagers visit children with special needs in their own homes, holiday music programs, stories and art projects, winter and end of summer camps, sports nights and sibling support programs.

Each of The Friendship Circle's local chapters, run by the local Chabad Center, is supported by community members and the

JCM is proud to host Friendship Circle's Brooklyn Chapter. A new sensory play room was completed this past January, offering children the opportunity to take advantage of state of the art equipment and toys. The new space, which is open to children in The Friendship Circle program after school, on public holidays and during Friendship Circle programs, is the result of months of planning and meetings with therapists and

mothers of children with special needs and is designed to offer children a space that would stimulate their senses and give them an opportunity to indulge in healthy and creative playtime.

"This was a need that was necessary to fill," observed Rabbi Berel Majeski, who has been at the helm of Brooklyn's Friendship Circle, along with his wife Chani, for almost two years. "I have been involved with the community here for almost ten years and in that time I can see a major difference in how people perceive kids with special needs and how young people are eager to volunteer. I

have seen ten years of The Friendship Circle making a difference, breaking down stigmas and changing the outlook on special needs kids within our community."

While Rabbi Majeski has been involved in many different endeavors within Crown Heights, and has worked on The Great Parade and as a teacher in local schools, his tenure at The Friendship Circle has been an incomparable experience.

"Every day here is special," said Rabbi Majeski. "I love my job, every single day."



YEAR IN REVIEW

2014



WILD WORLD OF ANIMALS CHOL HAMOED PESACH

Children explored the wonderful world of exotic animals. Through an educational and fun show the youngsters discovered all about the exciting lives of various animals and their habitats. Animals shown included leopard, owl, tortoise and more!



CIRQUETACULAR SUKKOS!

Over 2,500 visitors were amazed by this unique circus act including acrobatics, juggling, illusionists, contortionists and more.

CHANUKAH ART FESTIVAL

Artist Richard League created Chanukah themed sculptures out of fruits and vegetables.





ARTISTS IN ACTION

- Mark Mckenzie from Cool Way Ice created an ice sculpture of the Museum logo.
- Robin Antar displayed samples of her rock sculptures and the equipment she uses in her work.
- Ruby Chishtee displayed a variety of her birds made out of junk materials and set up a table for children to make their own stuffed animals with materials and beads all the way from India.

MUSIC ROOM

This exhibit included larger than life musical instruments, hand held percussion instruments for children of all ages to enjoy, a display of instruments sourced in the Torah, and music workshops teaching kids about pitch and sound since ancient times.



A-MAZE-N' SHABBOS

The Museum staff built a walkthrough maze where children were able to find their way out with puzzles teaching them about Shabbat. There was also a challah workshop where children made their own small challah to take home.

How many children do you see on this wall? Dozens? Or just one? But if you look at the individual squares, there are 1,408 faces. This "photo mosaic" creates one image. It also carries a special message: Kids come in all sizes, shapes, and colors. Each child is unique—the many different faces of children, and the humanity we all share.



THIS 30 FOOT HIGH MOSAIC GRACES THE FRONT OF THE JEWISH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM ON EASTERN PARKWAY.



JEWISH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM
792 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, New York 11213
718.467.0600

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