

JEWISH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

UPDATE



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



COMMUNITY AWARENESS

As a wave of knockout attacks swept through Brooklyn, the Jewish Children's Museum became the site for a crash course in cultural awareness on January 29th, with students from local middle schools spending the afternoon at the museum, enjoying an experience that was both fun and educational.

Approximately 100 children from nearby Middle Schools 61, 584 and 587 toured the museum and enjoyed a lunch of kosher pizza as well as an informative meeting with the

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FUNSTATS

FROM THE DIRECTOR...

Dear Friend,

It is with great pride and pleasure that we share the success of the past year and, eagerly anticipate an exciting year ahead.

Since the all new 4th Floor opened last year, tens of thousands of museum visitors are better informed, more enlightened and greatly inspired. A truly one-of-a-kind experience, the Museum continues to amaze new and returning visitors daily, and the 4th floor additional exhibits have served to recapture the minds and imagination of our youngsters.

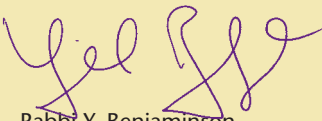
At the JCM, not only do the Museum exhibits educate, but themed family fun days, FBI Day, and Kosher Day have taught families about safety and Jewish life, and demonstrate difficult concepts and bring them to life in a memorable way for our children.

Looking ahead, we couldn't be more excited about The Great Jewish Big Rig. We know what an incredible impact this will have on children throughout the country, and are immensely proud of its creation.

Like everything the Museum has done in the past, the Big Rig will be designed and crafted to the highest standards, with hands-on, interactive exhibits and loads of fun.

This growth has come during rough times, as many organizations have been forced to curtail programming. For lack of funding, the Museum is grateful for the generosity of our supporters who have enabled us to continue at full pace even during these tough days.

We thank you for continued support of the Jewish Children's Museum, and look forward to continuing our partnership with you to fulfill our most vital mission.



Rabbi Y. Benjaminson
Executive Director



JEWISH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM STAFF

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MUSIC ROOM



Museum guests were enthralled by the Music Room, a temporary exhibit that ran at the JCM from January 19th through March 9th. Featuring a variety of musical instruments including hand drums, cymbals and an oversized xylophones, visitors spent hours experimenting musically and enjoying several interactive workshops.

“We created a musical wonderland for kids,” said Batsheva Altein, family program coordinator at the museum. “Music and rhythm are a central part of the Jewish life and celebration.”

A historical workshop explored the usage of music in the Torah, including cymbals and trumpets, and the exhibit featured several music related artifacts. Another workshop featuring water filled bottles taught children about pitch, vibration and volume as guests experimented with bottles containing various amounts of water.

Membership Relaunch

While there is no doubt that spending an afternoon at the museum is a wonderfully enjoyable experience, becoming a museum member is a concrete way of pledging your support to the JCM, a community institution that serves to educate children on many important components of our heritage and serves as a bridge for children of all faiths, instilling a sense of harmony and unity that is so vital in today’s world.

At the request of many of our museum visitors, we began a membership relaunch at the beginning of 2014 and, since that time, our memberships, which offer tremendous benefits to our supporters, have become a popular option at the museum.

JCM offers five different levels of membership and all members receive two membership cards, two guest passes, a ten percent discount at Mendy’s Deli and Chocolate Coffee Shop, a ten percent discount on all birthday parties, invitations to members only events and a subscription to our e-newsletter. All memberships also include free general admission for up to three visits per year and fifty percent off on any additional museum visits, with the number of guests included varying with the different membership levels. All memberships except for basic membership also include a fifty percent discount to over 200 children’s museums in North America as part of the ACM Reciprocal Network.



Art Week

GARDEN OF **UNITY**

Budding Picassos and miniature Monets had a chance to stretch their artistic wings during Art Week, a ten day event that was held from December 22nd through January 1st, in order to encourage children of all ages to express their creativity and individuality through various forms of art.

"Art is a universal means of self-expression, not limited to age, knowledge or background," observed Batsheva Altein, family program coordinator at the museum.

Among the different media that was available to museum visitors during Art Week were stained glass and the ancient Japanese marbling art, Suminagashi. The children also took part in a Garden of Unity project creating a giant mural, donated to the Maria Fareri Children's Hospital in Westchester, made

up of a dazzling array of flowers, each created by the children themselves. Each child was able to express their own individuality in the creation of their flower, and when joined together, the flowers became a beautiful garden, representing the many cultures and faces of the museum's visitors, joined together in unity.

The Artists in Action fair, held on December 25th, was a highlight of Art Week and featured a unique and eclectic group of artists. Museum goers of all ages enjoyed demonstrations of paper cutting by Dena Levie, toothpick sculptures by Nelson Pantoja and were able to try their hand at encaustic art, a process that uses heated wax, under the skillful eye of Renee Barenio.

"This was our second annual Artists in Action event," said Rabbi Nissen Brenenson, director of education at the museum. "We've built on last year's success and have introduced many new art forms for the children to explore."

Food DRIVE

The smallest of people sometimes have the biggest of hearts.

That was the theory behind the three week long food drive held at the museum, beginning President's week and running through March 9th. Featuring an exhibit about the many different forms of charity and giving, the Kids Can Give Food Drive was a hands on opportunity for museum guests to learn about the importance of giving to others.

Several boxes of food, including canned goods, pasta and other non-perishables were collected during the Food Drive, and are being donated to the Met Council, which will distribute the items to needy families in the tri-state area. Timed to coincide with Purim, the Food Drive was a golden opportunity to give museum visitors the opportunity to take part in the mitzvah of Matanos L'evyonim. Even those who did not bring any food items with them were able to share in the Food Drive by contributing some pocket change to a tzedaka box and then donating dried fruit which was available at the JCM and was sponsored by Manishevitz.

The exhibit also featured a video presentation of Baila Olidort's book "Quarters and Dimes and Nickels and Pennies", showing youngsters how money that is dropped into a tzedaka box ultimately reaches its intended goal and improves the lives of others.



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



PLAYING IT SAFE

With winter just behind us and the warmer weather finally here, our thoughts begin to turn towards outdoor activities, but paramount in our minds is the safety of our precious children as they set out to embark on a fun-filled summer.

In an effort to better educate our children about safety, the museum will be running a "Playing it Safe" program throughout the

month of July, which will include bicycle helmet fittings, sun smart challenges and free prizes. Visitors to the museum will have the opportunity to explore a real ambulance on "Open Ambulance Day" on both July 7th and July 14th, with live emergency demonstrations by the Midwood Ambulance Service. Sunday July 21st will feature a daylong Safety Adventure program, with a special street safety obstacle course designed to teach youngster about road signs, biking rules and navigation.



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museum's director of programming, Rabbi Nissen Brenenson and Mrs. Devorah Halberstam, director of foundations and government services. Also in attendance were representative of both the 71st and 77th precincts of the NYPD, which coordinated the event.

According to Mrs. Halberstam, the program was arranged in order to better acquaint non-Jewish residents with the customs and culture of their Jewish neighbors and to promote harmony and unity within Crown Heights.

"These children are the next generation's leaders," Mrs. Halberstam told COL Live.

"This is the best way to build relationships of understanding and kindness."

Mrs. Halberstam shared her own story with the children, telling them how her son Ari was murdered 20 years ago, singled out in a terror attack because he was Jewish. The meeting was also an opportunity for the visitors to ask any questions they might have about Jews and Judaism and Mrs. Halberstam noted that the students had very limited knowledge of Jewish culture, despite the fact that they live in an area with a large Jewish population.

The program, which was sponsored by the museum, with lunch sponsored by the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council, was deemed to be extremely successful, giving the children an opportunity to learn about their Jewish neighbors in a positive and enjoyable setting.





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 G-d given gifts and 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, Torah Circles and holiday programs, which teach about yiddishkeit through music, 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 Lubavitch Center, is supported by community members and the

JCM is proud to host The Friendship Circle at the lower level of the museum. 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 therapist 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 needed to be filled,” 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.”

AROUND WITH THE JCM



WORLD FAMOUS CHINESE ACROBAT CHOL HAMOED PESACH

Children enjoyed a Pesach Seder Balancing Act with Chinese Acrobat Yang Xiao Di. They watched in wonder as Xiao Di balances plates, raw eggs, wine bottles, and much more!



WORLD FAMOUS VENTRILOQUIST CHOL HAMOED SUKKOT

Families joined for some serious fun as Jonathan Geffner and his puppet partners enchanted visitors of all ages during the Holiday of Sukkot.



ROSH HASHANAH BUZZ AND SHOFAR FACTORY

Children watched live bees hard at work for that Rosh Hashanah honey and discovered how a horn becomes a shofar. Children use drills, saws, and sandpaper to prepare unworked ram's horns into the traditional Shofar used during the Jewish New Year

THE YEAR

KOSHER DAY

Over 5,000 people turned out for Kosher Day run by the Jewish Children's Museum on Kingston Avenue, enjoying free food, an children's concert, rock climbing and the chance to milk a real cow.



SOIL TO OIL WORKSHOP

In this hands-on workshop, visitors learned how olive oil is made using methods that have been around since Temple times.



PURIM IN THE PALACE

Families joined us for Storytelling with Queen Esther, a search for King Achashveirosh's missing signet ring, and were given the opportunity to design their own Purim mask or crown.





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