



## **Rabbi Weiner's Oct. 2007 Bulletin Article**

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, I spoke about the significance of Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary which the entire community will celebrate throughout the year. I am proud that our synagogue has planned several important and exciting events to honor this milestone in Jewish history and highlight the meaning of Israel to American Jewish life. You will find information elsewhere in this bulletin about a major scholar residence weekend with Herb Keinon, the internationally renowned diplomatic correspondent for the Jerusalem Post on November 2-3, 2007. We will participate in communal day of study with Dr. Arnold Eisen, the new Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and one of the nation's experts on the relationship between Israel and American Jewry. We will celebrate Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day later in the spring. I encourage your support and active participation in all of these events.

During my remarks I also briefly mentioned another project, which I hope every member of the synagogue will support. In partnership with the Jewish National Fund (JNF), and in cooperation with synagogues throughout the United States of America, we are in a unique position to make a contribution of lasting value to the people of Israel, it's economy, and the environment. Just a small contribution will make a difference.

The Jewish National Fund was created over a hundred years ago with a mission to reclaim the land of Israel. Through the help of supporters throughout the world, JNF raised money in order to purchase land throughout Israel. Many will remember the famous blue boxes which occupied such a respectful place in many a Jewish home. After the State of Israel was born in 1948, and the mission of reclaiming the land of Israel adopted by the government, the role of JNF shifted to developing the land, building agricultural infrastructure, and developing the desert that occupies such great percentage of Israel's geography. One of JNF's major successes over the years has been its major reforestation projects, making Israel the only country in the world with more trees at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century than it had at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>. And all this was created through partnership with Jews throughout the world working to improve Israel.

The Jewish Community Center of Paramus will participate in the new initiative of the JNF called "The Essence of Life Campaign". Endorsed by the Government of Israel, this program has been designed to improve the lives of the men and women serving in the Israel Defense Forces, focusing on the Ramon Air Force

Base. The Ramon Air Force Base is one of Israel's largest and most important military installations, providing protection for Israel's entire southern region. Some 3000 military personnel and their dependants live there. The Essence of Life Campaign is an project to improve living conditions on the base, which is situated in a harsh desert, by building parks, playing fields, and perhaps most importantly, seven water reclamation pools, transforming the arid desert into a green oasis, improving the lives of those on the base, and providing much needed water to surrounding communities as well.

There will be several opportunities during the year to teach you more about this project, and demonstrate the various ways we can help. We will devote a Shabbat later in the year to raising awareness about this great endeavor. Educators from JNF will visit our Hebrew School to teach our children about Israel and the challenges it faces, and the way its award winning environmental projects are making a difference. We will host a representative from JNF who will teach us about the many, many outstanding projects that JNF sponsors, and how in cooperation with synagogues throughout the United States, the essence of life campaign will transform this significant area of Israel's Negev Desert.

I am very excited to announce our synagogues participation in this campaign. There will be many ways for each member of the synagogue to participate. As I said earlier, I will look forward to 100% participation and I look forward to seeing our efforts on behalf of Israel crowned with success.



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