

Around the LOCAL NEWS Community

Good Things Come in Small Packages Chanukah Toy Drive Well Underway

By Raizy Goldberg



The schach has yet to be rolled away, but as early as October eager young children are awaiting the glory of Chanukah and the promise of colorful and exciting gifts and toys. This autumn we are *b"H* enjoying beautiful weather, a rainbow of fall foliage and hopefully a wealth of *nachas* and good health. But last year was not the case, as Hurricane Sandy wreaked havoc around us. Many of our friends and neighbors experienced devastation beyond words, yet an equal number of capable donors and volunteers heroically ensured that all children in need experienced a Chanukah of joy and light.

In that spirit of giving, this year our community looks to spark the seeds of generosity once again, through the joint efforts of the JCCRP/JCC Rochel Baron *a"h* Toy Drive, *l'zecher nishmas* Aaron Tepper *a"h*.

With three weeks to Chanukah, the toy drive is in full swing. At the helm are Nathan Krasnovsky, executive director of JCCRP, in conjunction with Joel Block, executive director of the JCC of the Greater Five Towns, and Ettie Schoor, who spearheaded Nivneh and was recruited by Nathan Krasnovsky for this project. Together with the incredible JCCRP/JCC dedicated staff members, Elisheva Trachtenberg, Social Worker JCCRP, Naamah Adelman, Case Manager Met Council/JCCRP, and Stacey Feldman of JCC, there are 9 volunteer coordinators working on a daily basis, and over 50 additional volunteers already lined up for packaging. Much gratitude and appreciation goes to

a number of key volunteer coordinators who are working very hard to make this a successful endeavor: Bukie Cohen, Ilana David, Ester Feuer, Chaya Giber, Chana Hoch, Fraidy Osina, Aviva Paneth, Rocky Stern and Miriam Vegh.

Toys are pouring into Brach's Supermarket, a primary drop off location in the neighborhood. There are beautiful signs posted in the store, a huge collection bin and anyone who brings in a toy can get a Chanukah treat from customer service. Since more space was needed because of the amount of toys expected, Mr. Brach approached Rabbi Neuman, who graciously agreed to provide space at Bais Yaakov Ateres Miriam. Mr. Brach is installing special shelving in the rooms where the packaging will take place. Deliveries will be made to Bayswater, Far Rockaway, Five Towns, Oceanside, Long Beach and Belle Harbor. The toys will be organized by age and gender and packages will be color-coded by neighborhood to make the delivery process as streamlined and manageable as possible. In order to maximize privacy, the packaging committee will be receiving a sheet by neighborhood with no names. Each volunteer will get families to package for but will not have any access to who the family is. Everything is coded with a number to ensure maximum privacy for all.

Community residents are so excited to participate and contribute toys to this very meaningful project. Amazingly, families who last year were on the receiving end of Hurricane Sandy relief are now so happy to be on the giving end. Families are going on Chanukah shopping sprees to buy gifts for others who are less fortunate. What a special feeling that is for the children who are lucky enough to get their own special Chanukah gifts year after year. For those who can't make it to the store, you can contribute online to the JCCRP website by clicking "donate to toy drive" and picking out gifts. There have been incredible, anonymous donors who have funded large segments of the project, as well as the Red Cross and the UJA-Federation of NY who are also contributing towards the drive.

The center used to store the toys was graciously donated *l'zecher nishmas* Naama Chana Markovits *a"h*. Naama's pure *neshama* was returned to Hashem upon her passing on June 23, 2010, two

days after her 4th Hebrew birthday. Her sweet and pleasant nature shone through all her deeds and actions, which she performed with excitement. Naama had a friendly, outgoing personality and was very sensitive to other people's feelings, a truly special child who touched everyone she met and illuminated her surroundings every day. Hopefully the *mitzvos* created through this project, by young and old, will be a *zechus* and *aliya* for her *neshama*.

Together, we can create a Chanukah of perfect *simcha* for those in need, both parents and children alike. Please join us in this extraordinary community-wide effort to light up Chanukah for countless families in our area.

New, unwrapped gifts in their original packaging and/or donations can be dropped off at Brach's Supermarket or at the JCC of the Greater Five Towns, 207 Grove Avenue in Cedarhurst.

For more information, to volunteer, or to submit a name of a family who you believe would benefit from this project, please email jccoydrive@jccrp.org or call 718-327-7755 and ask for Elisheva x6112 or Naamah x6124.

Tizku l'mitzvos!



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