

B'nai B'rith Women Marks Its 90th Anniversary

B'nai B'rith Women celebrated its 90th anniversary in August. A group of 34 women who gathered in San Francisco on August 18, 1897 were the small beginning of today's major Jewish women's organization with 120,000 members throughout the United States and Canada.

BBW, uniting Jewish women to promote social advancement through education, service and action, conducts programs and activities in the U.S. and Israel addressing a wide range of concerns. These include the preservation of Jewish life and values, advocacy for women, philanthropy and community service.

BBW's major contribution to Israel for the past 36 years has been its Children's Home and Group House, residential treatment centers for emotionally disturbed boys. The facilities have a worldwide reputation for their unique treatment program, which substitutes human contact for drugs and offers long-term treatment of five years or more. The continuity and stability inherent in this therapy have produced a remarkable recovery rate of 70 percent; more than 1,000 of the Home's graduates are now productive members of Israeli society as a result. During BBW's 1987 Mission to Israel last March, members participated in the groundbreaking for a new residential cottage and expanded facilities at the Children's home.

BBW also sponsors the Arab-Jewish project in Israel, which is administered by the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at Hebrew University. In or-



Amy Seligson (L), looks on as Adele Tauber lights candles on a cake celebrating BBW's 90th birthday. Tauber is the current president of BBW's first chapter, San Francisco #1, which grew from a group of 34 women who first met together on Aug. 18, 1897. Seligson is president of BBW's Jewish Women's Network, the newest chapter in San Francisco.

der to foster understanding between Arabs and Jews, this program brings together Arab and Jewish students for meetings, lectures and outreach programs in Arab villages.

Advocacy for and empowerment of women is the major component of BBW's public affairs agenda. BBW was the first Jewish organization to back the Equal Rights Amendment, and has been a leader in uniting Jewish women's organizations on issues that affect women at home and in the workplace. Last fall, BBW hosted a Women & Work conference for the 12-member Leadership Conference of National Jewish Women's Organizations, where representatives of two million

members agreed to focus their combined efforts on attaining parental/family leave, pay equity and pension reform legislation. BBW produces and distributes educational materials for its members about these and other issues, and conducts a variety of programs centered on the needs of Jewish women today. Members also participate in leadership training, developing skills they can use in their personal and professional lives. In many cities, BBW provides networking opportunities for Jewish career women—often the only Jewish contact they experience.

Another constant on the BBW agenda is community service. Many chapters conduct programs in hospitals,

nursing homes, schools and other facilities. In cooperation with the March of Dimes, the organization's Operation Stork program focuses on preventing teenage pregnancies and promoting prenatal care, and Project Gene provides education on Tay-Sachs and other genetic diseases.

Throughout its history, B'nai B'rith Women has remained firmly connected to its Jewish roots. BBW supports the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization and Hillel, which give high school and college students the opportunity to explore their heritage and to socialize with other Jewish youth. BBW also supports and works with the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation

League to combat anti-Semitism. A convenor of the Women's Plea for Soviet Jewry for more than a decade, B'nai B'rith actively seeks freedom for Soviet Jews, and recently launched an "Honor a Refusenik" program which allows chapters and individual members to purchase honorary BBW membership for refusenik women.

The new "Creating Jewish Memories" program further demonstrates BBW's commitment to the preservation of Jewish life and values. The 20-minute slide show features men and women who describe their Jewish memories, attitudes and conflicts in an attempt to determine what shaped their identity as Jews. The program is being utilized by Jewish community centers, synagogues and schools as well as by BBW members, to stimulate thought and discussion about the complex question of how to pass on Jewish values to their children.

"As BBW continues to pursue the rights of women and undertake programs to preserve Jewish values, it gives its members the unique opportunity to express the dual dimensions of their identity as women and as Jews," said BBW President Irma Gertler. "Over the past 90 years, we have continually met the challenge of change, both in the world around us and in the needs of our members," she added. "On this important milestone for our organization, we can look back with great pride on what we have accomplished, and look forward with confidence to what we will achieve in our next 90 years."

Happy New Year

To all of our friends of the Jewish faith:

May you find peace during Rosh Hashanah. A time to reaffirm faith, examine past conduct and pray for forgiveness.

A time to remind man of the importance of living a God-fearing, God-loving life.

Peace to you and your family during this time of Rosh Hashanah.

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