

Focus on Federation — Part IV

By Rita C. Mond

This series of articles is being written to better understand the importance and functions of The Charlotte Jewish Federation.

Some of the constituent agencies of the CJF were highlighted in the last issue. Many others, both large and small, local and national are allocated funds. Lubavitch of N.C. was allocated \$5,700 this year; Hillel (in N.C.) \$9,000; Hebrew Cemetery, \$5,000; BBYO in Charlotte, \$4,000; ADL in N.C., \$2,000. These are the organizations which will be dealt with in this article.

Lubavitch of N.C.

Lubavitch of North Carolina is a Jewish educational organization committed to the furtherance of Jewish knowledge and experience through the Chassidic philosophical approach of warmth and enthusiasm.

Since its inception nearly eight years ago, Lubavitch has reached out to thousands of Jews throughout the Carolinas, by offering special programs to Jewish youth on college campuses and at home by providing essential services to many hundreds of Jewish families through educational programs ranging from full preschool and afterschool care to adult educational groups.

Activities also include Chabad House Shabbatones, holiday programs and a summer day camp. Some of the existing programs are: Gan Yelodim Preschool which gives quality education both in Judaica and secular subjects. Staffed by qualified teachers, the school provides the structure and free play necessary to satisfy children's needs in the most formative years.

Talmud Torah is a full supplementary Jewish education program for children ages 5-13, encompassing Judaica and Hebrew lessons after their secular day school hours. It includes tutoring for Bar Mitzvah and private lessons in all matters of Judaism.

Gan Israel Day Camp: This summer camp provides a full day of fun, excitement and a real Jewish experience. Programs include sports, educational trips, Jewish calisthenics, swimming, arts and crafts, challah baking, etc. The counselors are specially trained.

Shabbatones: Traditional services are held at the Chabad House on a regular basis, in addition to the weekly Minyans held every Friday Shabbat and Sunday morning. Lubavitch teaches how to allow prayer to be a personal link with G-d. Kiddush follows with a full Shabbat meal, which includes families and singles joining in song and story in the Chassidic tradition.

Adult Education: Consists of weekly Torah sessions.

Classes in Chassidic philosophy allow participants to experience self revelation, spiritual uplifting and inner peace. There are also Bible study groups.

"The Jewish Sound," a weekly Sunday morning radio program at 9 a.m. on WSOC AM 93, brings a variety of Jewish music and thought to listeners in the Carolinas. This one hour show includes reflections on the weekly Torah reading, Jewish personalities, mitzvah and story of the week.

Celebrations are held for the major Jewish holidays which are open to the public and always well attended. Holiday and educational material, including a Shabbat candle brochure with a local Carolina calendar are sent to over 7,500 Jewish households. Holiday kits are distributed to thousands of school children during the holiday season.

Hillel

Hillel in N.C. is affiliated with the oldest and largest Jewish campus organization in the world. All Jewish students, regardless of affiliation or background, are welcome to the programs and activities that are offered. Hillel is dedicated to providing a forum for the exploration and enjoyment of Jewish heritage in all its dimensions. Folklore and folk dancing, Jewish music, history, philosophy, ethics and religious study, worship, community service, sports, politics and poetry — all have a place in its program. There are opportunities to become involved in action on behalf of Israel and in support of Jewish communities throughout the world. Through Hillel's various offerings students are free to question, experience and create a meaningful Jewish community on campus. Hillel seeks to serve about 2,500 students on the various campuses in North Carolina.

Holidays are celebrated at both the Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill campuses. The students from Duke and UNC come together frequently either for Shabbat dinner or a social activity. A community Seder was held this year for 175 students; a number of students were assisted in conducting sederim with friends in the dorms or arranged for home hospitality for those who desired to have Seder with a family.

Special lectures were held with outstanding speakers such as Elie Wiesel and Mr. Muhamed Mussarwa. "Israel at Forty" was also celebrated by students from the extension campuses at N.C. State and Greensboro. A number of

students from South Carolina and Virginia participated as well.

This spring a Reform Student Outreach program was initiated. Discussion/Dinner series were held; topics were suggested by a group of students and the various congregations sponsored the dinners. Rabbi Friedman of Durham/Chapel Hill spoke on "Interdating;" Rabbi Task of Greensboro led a discussion on "How to Deal with Evangelical Groups on Campus;" Rabbi Seigel of Charlotte discussed the topic "Jewish Sexual Ethics."

Students participated in the Washington demonstration during Gorbachev's visit in December; Duke students adopted a refusenik who was granted an exit visa earlier in the year.

Hillel also offers weekly socials, study breaks, Shabbat services and dinners and monthly bagel brunches. Most of these programs revolve around Duke and UNC-CH; every effort is made to provide some programs at the extension campuses at N.C. State, East Carolina U., UNC-G and Guilford College. UNCC has yet to have a program for Jewish students there.

BBYO

The B'nai B'rith Youth Organization in Charlotte is comprised of a B'nai B'rith Girls (BGG) chapter and Aleph Zadak Aleph (AZA) chapter for the boys. These youth range in age from 13-18. There is also a younger group which has been formed from ages 11-13. They have regular scheduled meetings locally and are involved in a variety of social, educational, recreational and charitable activities. It is a way of Jewish youth to meet one another, share ideas and learn, no matter whether they are affiliated with either temple or are unaffiliated. They also have opportunities of meeting other Jewish young people involved with BBYO throughout the state at various conventions. There are some conventions where they meet others from the entire S.E. seaboard, from Maryland to Florida.

They learn about Judaica, leadership and people. Many of the BBYOers go on to be active members in Hillel and then later on in B'nai B'rith Men and B'nai B'rith Women. Many of the volunteers in the community started as BBYO members.

ADL

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith has its regional office in Richmond,

VA and serves the states of Virginia and North Carolina. Its purpose is to combat anti-Semitism, racial and religious discrimination. It has worked tirelessly for many years to combat the very existence of the KKK.

ADL helps with the school systems in allowing Jewish children to be excused from classes on the Jewish holidays. A calendar-memo date book is produced by them which our B'nai B'rith Women distributes to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system and to the private schools.

National ADL has a dolls for democracy program which Charlotte Chapter BBW has done for many years — stories and dolls promote a better understanding of minority groups.

Hebrew Cemetery

The Hebrew Cemetery Association provides facilities and care in time of grief. It

maintains the Hebrew Cemetery and provides those who wish to become members a special rate for grave sites.

Some Other Recipient Agencies

The Charlotte Jewish Federation allocates money to various other agencies involved with Jewish education, the clergy, scholarships, HIAS (working with UJA to bring out Jews from Soviet, Arab and other countries and establish new lives in the West), and local community assistance organizations.

(Editor's note: Thanks go to Rabbi Yoseph Groner, Rabbi Binyomin Weiss and Rabbi Frank Fischer who contributed to this article.)

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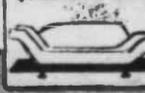
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