

NEWCOMERS Resources



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Josh is a native Charlottean and attended the former
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Are you a newcomer to Charlotte?

Would you like to be featured in this new and growing section of *The Charlotte Jewish News*? We are looking for people who have been here less than a year who wouldn't mind answering a few questions and sitting for a photograph. Please call 704-944-6765 if you or someone you know would like to be our next Newcomer feature family.

Are you the owner or proprietor of a business that would be of interest to newcomers?

Let them know who and where you are by advertising in the Newcomer's Resources Guide.

Newcomers One Newbie's Experience

By Amy Krakovitz

Every newcomer to Charlotte has a different experience. For some it is difficult, breaking ties from old homes, creating new friends and a new life. For others, it is easier: friendships come easily, synagogue life becomes a pleasure, doctors, plumbers, schools are easily located.

But everyone has challenges. Even the toughest transitions can turn into the most rewarding life experiences.

When we first moved here, our children were seven and two, so school selection was of the utmost importance. My research at the time led me to McKee Road Elementary School, and without sufficient time to build or purchase a house, we rented an apartment.

The space in the apartment was certainly big enough, but both boys were active and lively. Soon our neighbors began complaining about the noise from our house (little boys do a LOT of jumping).

My younger son was enrolled in the Charlotte Jewish Preschool, one of the best things I have ever done for either of my children. Debby Block was director at the time and I will never forget any of his wonderful teachers: Susan Aizenman, Sandra Perlin, Andrea Wilson, and Carol Klein.

I had left a full time job at a publisher of travel magazines and was interested in going to work again once my children were settled in school. Finding work was more difficult than I expected, in spite of the prosperous economic climate of the early 1990s. I was shocked at the low salaries being offered and even more surprised at the saccharine interview techniques. "Why, darlin'?" I would hear (add in your own version of a syrupy Southern accent), "you are

truly marvelous! You are perfect fo' this position. We'd all benefit from havin' you heah." And then they wouldn't take my calls.

So when we had been here six months, I was unemployed, in an apartment with two small boys, missing my friends, and it was my 40th birthday. I think I handled it beautifully during most of the day. I received flowers from my sisters and I called one sister in Atlanta to thank her for the gift. Instead of speaking, though, I suddenly

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heard myself crying. Weeping, really. Forty years old, my kids are out of hand, and I have no value. Or so I thought.

Not long after that I got a phone call that saved my sanity. It was Melissa Raphael, who was chair of the Camp Shalom (now known as Camp Mindy) Committee, asking if I would join the committee. I am ever grateful for this opportunity, because this opened up a whole new world to me.

Volunteering in the Jewish community brought me new friends and more opportunities than I had had as perpetual transplant. I was now a real citizen of Charlotte.

What I should have said to myself on the night of my 40th birthday was, "This too shall pass," as indeed it did. We bought a house. My children grew up and settled down. And I have been editing *The Charlotte Jewish News* for ten years now.

So my suggestion to newcomers is to start out by volunteering. Read *The Charlotte Jewish News* to see what is going on in this community. But you will also find many of the basics you need as a newcomer in Charlotte: where to hold your children's bar/bat mitzvah; an agent for your new homeowner's insurance; a dentist; a real estate agent to find you that new home ... and so much more. ☆

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Charlotte Jewish Film Festival Donates Film to Levine Sklut Library

The mitzvah of Tzedakah is one of the pillars of Judaism. The Charlotte Jewish Film Festival embraces the Jewish tradition of giving back to the community by donating films to the Levine Sklut Judaic Library and Resource Center. This year, the Festival will be donating the film *God and Allah Need to Talk: A Film for Healing and Reconciliation*. This must-see interfaith film by peace activist Ruth Broyde-Sharone has been enthusiastically received at churches, synagogues, mosques and universities world-wide. It was a hit at the Charlotte 2008 Film Festival as well, with over 200 people attending the viewing and panel discussion at Temple Beth El. The Festival is pleased to be able to share this compelling movie with the



Charlotte community.

Mark your calendars for February 28-March 8, 2009 when the Fifth Annual Charlotte Jewish Film Festival returns with the best in Jewish cinema from around the world. ☆