

Rabbi Irwin Kula Helps Jewish Community Keep Level Heads in Turbulent Times

More than 500 people came to the sanctuary at Temple Israel to attend Federation's annual Main Event campaign kick-off and hear Rabbi Irwin Kula speak about "Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life."

Rabbi Kula began by taking the position that to attend an event to raise money for those less fortunate is participating in a holy act. He called the day of the campaign kick-off a "yom tov," a holy day, and the pledge cards "sacred documents." Using the campaign as a backdrop, he focused on the rough economic times we are in and are surely faced with in the near future. But using our resources, whether large or small, to help out fellow Jews, is an act that defines Judaism more than any other.

He kept the audience focused on the optimistic by pointing out: "A salary freeze is bad; no salary is worse. A loss of value in your home is bad; having no home is worse."

While he focused on the spiritual and giving aspects of Judaism, he made sure that the practical and functional aspects were not ignored. He even suggested a connective

activity to keep up our optimism and execute a daily ritual at the same time: upon waking every morning, he suggested performing the traditional "Modeh (Modah) Ani." This, he posited, would keep us grateful for all we have each day, while at the same time, connect us to our ancestors through a daily ritual that has been carried out for centuries.

The program was followed by dessert reception with fruit, pastries, coffee, and punch. Rabbi Kula signed copies of his book, *Yearnings: Ancient Wisdom for Daily Life*, while participants partook of the food and good company.

Andrea and Adrian Mesoznik won the raffle which gave them the option of \$2,500 cash or \$3,000 toward a trip to Israel.

A special thank you to this year's Event Chair, Jonathan Howard, and the entire Main Event Steering Committee for the dedication and hard work.

This year's Main Event raised over \$73,000, representing a 14% increase over last year. Eighteen of the pledges made that night were new or recovered gifts. ✪



Main Event chair Jonahthan Howard with guest speaker Rabbi Irwin Kula.



Brenda and David Levin, Cindy and Jason Corbett



Andrea Weisberg, Linda Greenfield, Ira Dunst, Donna and Burton Greenspon.



Robin Leavitt, Susan Cernyak Spatz, and Janie Meyers.



Raffle winners Andrea and Adrian Mesoznik.

Special Thanks to Arthur Mattos, ArtShots Photography. All photos are available online at artshotsphoto.com. Click on proofs/galleries, then other events.

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BBYO raised money at the coat check. Seated, left to right: Allie Michel, Lindsay Trapani, and Laura Schewitz. Standing: Josh Fine.



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AS A RESULT...

- ✓ You receive donor credit for your gift plus the match.
- ✓ You direct your company's philanthropic dollars to the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte.
- ✓ Your gift to Federation literally turns the lights on for 13 million Jews in Charlotte, Israel and around the world.

For more information, please call the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte at 704.944.6757.