

# Ruthie Warshenbrot is the 2009 Winner of the Jewish Communal Service Association's Young Professional Award

Ruthie Warshenbrot is the 2009 winner of the Young Professional Award of the Jewish Communal Service Association, the most prestigious honor for young professionals in Jewish community service, it was announced by Howard Charish and Jay Spector, Co-Chairmen of the JCSA Awards Committee.

Warshenbrot was chosen from a large group of nominees who were recommended by their colleagues at scores of organizations throughout North America. The Award recognizes integrity, commitment, creativity, and the importance and impact of their exemplary work.

She was honored during the General Assembly of United Jewish Communities (UJC), meeting Nov. 8-11 in Washington, DC.

"... Ruthie's stor[y] illustrate the extraordinary diversity of our nominees," said Mr. Charish, who is Executive Vice President of the United Jewish Appeal-Federation of Northern New Jersey. "... Ruthie grew up in Charlotte, NC, the daughter of Israeli parents. And now just a few years later, [she is a leader] in service among [her] colleagues ... communities."

"Being nominated for this award is in itself a distinct honor, and a tribute to all of the young professionals who were singled out by their organizations," noted Mr. Spector, who is President and CEO of the Jewish Educational and Vocational Services of Philadelphia, "and we congratulate them all. Like ... Ruthie, they are dedicated, innovative and unsparing in their efforts – and they are the future leaders of our community."

Ruthie Warshenbrot is Executive Director of Limmud NY, an organization that brings together Jews of all ages, backgrounds and lifestyles — including those with no formal Jewish affiliation or with multi-cultural relationships — to celebrate Jewish life and learning in all its diversity in a multi-day immersion experience and with year-round programming. Ruthie joined Limmud NY in 2005, and her rise within the organization was rapid and stellar, as she assumed an ever-increasing role and exceeded expectations as Program Coordinator and then Program Manager. She was named Executive Director in May 2008

and, as the only paid employee of Limmud, works with more than 100 volunteers, handles finances, and delivers an annual conference with 1,000 participants. Not many organizations with a high six-figure budget would put a 25-year-old at the helm, but she was selected with the unanimous support of Limmud NY's Board because of her composure, commitment, enthusiasm and the skills honed during her student days at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. There, she was cited by Hillel for her outstanding leadership, was president of Carolina students for Israel, and helped plan Holocaust Awareness Week. As a result of her campus and community work, she was elected to the national Board of Hillel, one of only six student members. Ruthie is a graduate of the University of North Carolina (B.A., 2005) and completed a Jewish Studies program in Prague in the summer of 2004.

Ruthie says, "The Talmud sages argued about which is greater, study or action, and they agreed that study is greater because it leads to action. I want to use my learning to bring together Jews of

all backgrounds to form one community, and I have the privilege of working with Limmud NY, with its core values of diversity, volunteerism and learning."

The JCSA Award, which includes a \$1,000 honorarium, is underwritten by the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, the Mandel Foundation and the Bernard Rodkin Fund of United Israel Appeal-Federations of Canada.

The Jewish Communal Service Association of North America (JCSA) works with a broad spectrum of organizations in the United States and Canada to shape, define, and promote professional leadership in Jewish community service for the 21st Century. JCSA connects practitioners and leadership and provides opportunities to share knowledge and collaborate across fields of service. JCSA brings together multiple professions, associations and advocacy groups, linking 16 local organizations by providing partnership and advancement opportunities. JCSA supports professional develop-



Ruthie Warshenbrot

ment and the creation and dissemination of educational resources, and promotes best practices, recognition, advocacy and networking.

JCSA actively assists in the creation of new groups — and in the development and retention of young talent through its prestigious Young Professional Award, which recognizes exemplary leadership, and its Graduate Students Network. JCSA's publications, including the Journal of Jewish Communal Service, focus on professional standards, trends and developments, and critical thinking on important issues for the Jewish community. ☆

## Sid Sussman Receives Bridge Builder Award from Mecklenburg Ministries

"It is not enough to build bridges to understanding. It is important to get people to use the bridges."

Sid Sussman is a true bridge builder. Since his birth in 1918, Sid has worked and volunteered in many professions and called a number of places "home." Living through the great depression, Sid attended New York University but his plans for medical school were interrupted by World War II. Sid served five years in the army, leaving at World War II's end as Captain.

Throughout his life, Sid has understood and embraced the importance of service to others. Sid's many volunteer activities throughout his life include president or Yale University's Peabody Museum of Natural History, chairman of the Anti-Defamation League of Connecticut, planning committee member of Danbury Hospital, board trustee of St. Raphael's Hospital board member of Temple Beth El, and board member of Mecklenburg Ministries. Sid's belief that "knowledge is both powerful and effective in bringing people

together" is evidenced in his leadership of Temple Beth El's community Relations Committee, serving to educate others about Judaism, and his deep involvement in the Comparative Religion Series, hosting guest lecturers of different religious groups. Sid, and his wife Joan, are actively involved in the United Religions Initiative that brings people together in honest discussion about their differences.

Mecklenburg Ministries awarded Sid with its annual Bridge Builder Award at its breakfast in October. Sid was cited for his work with the interfaith Mecklenburg Ministries, where he served on the board for ten years, and with Temple Beth El, where he's headed the Community Relations Committee and spearheaded a popular Comparative Religion series.

He has "inspired countless people with his interfaith commitment," said Maria Hanlin, executive director of Mecklenburg Ministries. She also pointed out that Sid designed the award he picked up at the event. ☆

## Sandy Benjamin Wins the Inaugural Spirit of Mercy Award

The inaugural Spirit of Mercy Award was presented to Dr. Sandy Benjamin at the Spirit of Mercy Gala attended by 300 invited guests on October 3 at Carmel Country Club. The award criteria for nomination included: 1) medical care excellence and innovation; 2) medical staff leadership; 3) compassionate care; and 4) community service.

Dr. Benjamin relocated his laboratory medicine practice at the Cleveland Clinic Medical Center to Mercy Hospital (currently

CMC-Mercy) in 1978. He has served as Chief Pathologist and Medical Director of Outreach Laboratory Testing for the Carolinas Laboratory Network of the Carolinas Healthcare System since 1999.

Dr. Benjamin was voted "Physician of the Month" for CMC-Mercy Hospital in June 2009 and voted by his physician peers as a 2009 Top Doctor in Charlotte Magazine's annual poll. He has served and continues to serve on many committees at

Mercy Hospital. Dr. Benjamin has a long list of service to the community including work in the Jewish community, youth and sports community, as a mentor for high school cultural diversity students, and a member of the board of directors for the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.

Married to Lois Benjamin, the two recently celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary. They have two adult children, Robyn and Lee. ☆

## Youth Visions

### Friendship Circle Chanukah Bowl!

The Friendship Circle is inviting all families and volunteers to join us for the conclusion of our Bowling League with a grand pre-Chanukah Bowl! Many have participated in this unique league, and it was a smashing success. Special Chanukah activities and gifts will be available, and refreshments will be served.

The event will be held on Monday, December 7 at 5:30 PM at Carolina Lanes in Matthews, NC.

For more information, contact Bentzion at 704-366-5983 or info@friendshipcirclesc.org. ☆



Volunteers Adam Fischel and Kyle Worrel with their buddy, Max



Rebecca Cook enjoying bowling with her buddy, Michael.

.....  
[www.charlottejewishnews.org](http://www.charlottejewishnews.org)  
 .....

