

# Observe Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut as a Community

By Dana Kapustin and Hadas Kasher, Co-Chairs, Yom Hazikaron/Yom Ha'atzmaut Committee

We want to take a moment to invite you to participate in two very important events with us. Together as one large family, along with our brothers and sisters in Israel and around the world, we will remember and celebrate. We all appreciate the fact that we have a Jewish homeland, but it came with a price. Over the last 62 years, Israelis and Jews from around the world have lost their lives for the Jewish State, to ensure that we have a Jewish homeland.

Israel's Memorial Day (Yom Ha'Zikaron) is devoted to the memory of those who have given their lives so the State of Israel can exist today. On Sunday April 18, at 1 PM we will remember this sacrifice. On Memorial Day in Israel, Israelis participate in ceremonies during which the names of the fallen are read, prayers are said, and songs are sung. Ceremonies take place in schools, memorial sites and cemeteries. Here in Charlotte, we will do the same. In addition, we hope that by hearing personal stories from members of our community, you will feel more connected to Jews around the world and in Israel. At the very same moment you will be united with Jews worldwide. We will

unite to remember the sacrifice, and the price of a Jewish homeland. Following this day of remembrance will be a day of celebration.

Israel's Independence Day (Yom Ha'Atzmaut) begins the minute Israel's Memorial Day ends, and the switch from sorrow to joy is quite sudden and dramatic. Israel's Independence Day is celebrated each year on 5 Iyar, which corresponds to May 14, 1948, the day that the State of Israel was proclaimed. On the eve of Israel Independence Day, there are parties, singing and



Pardes Rock

dancing on the streets, and fireworks. Here in Charlotte, on Tuesday, April 20, we will experience Israel with music, Israeli dancing, Israeli exhibits and fun. Pardes Rock, an amazing Jewish rock band from Florida, will entertain us. It will be a fabulous party, and we hope you will join us. (6 PM Israeli food and exhibits/7 PM concert by Pardes Rock).

We want to invite you to share these very special days with your Charlotte Jewish

community. As one large family, we will mourn together and celebrate together. Please bring your family and friends to these two events. We want to encourage you to join your Charlotte Jewish community, together

with Jews around the world and in Israel, as we stand together as one big family.

See the insert in this issue of *The Charlotte Jewish News* for more information. ✪

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## WOMEN'S NEWS

### The Humanitarian Response to Worldwide Tragedies

By Bunny Bramson, president, Charlotte Chapter of Hadassah

Israeli and Hadassah medical personnel – physicians, nurses, technicians – response to the horrific crisis in Haiti, following an earthquake which devastated an already desperately poor nation, was not unexpected.

The history of Israel since 1948 has been a primer of humanitarian action and reaction to crises leveled on humanity.

As we scroll back to the 20th century, we look at a very few of the ethical responses to human needs:

"Operation Moses" evacuated over 7,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel. Youth Aliyah created and adapted special programs to help them adjust and thrive. In Kenya, HMO surgeons in the early 1990s gave sight through eye surgery to hundreds, many for the first time. Also, in the 1990s, Hadassah created special retraining pro-

grams for thousands of newly arriving in Israel, Soviet Jews.

Indeed the National Board voted an additional \$1 million for HMO, Young Judaea, and other emergency programs.

In the mid-90s, a nurse, Elsie Roth, "galvanized" her Hadassah Nurses' Council to spearhead a relief drive for war ravished Bosnia. One hundred tons of supplies from Hadassah members were collected and delivered.

These instances of rapid and humane response to tragedy are but a few in our history, beginning with the first humanitarian response by a few women in a new organization nearly 100 years ago, to a Palestine plagued by disease and disorder.

The tradition continues; the response is swift and reflexive; it defines us, and may it never be otherwise. ✪



Bunny Bramson



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