

The Charlotte JEWISH news

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An Affiliate of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte

May 1 Yom HaShoa Commemoration Coordinated With the Butterfly Project Dedication

This year's Yom HaShoah commemoration to honor the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust will take place on May 1. The Yom HaShoah event will also include the dedication of the Margaret and Lou Schwartz Butterfly Garden. The focal point of the garden is a magnificent sculpture, designed by Paul Rouso and adorned with more than 2,000 vibrant hand-painted butterflies, honoring the tragic loss of 1.5 million children.

The Butterfly Project is part of a worldwide effort, *Zikaron V'tikvah*, Remembrance and Hope, which strives to promote tolerance and understanding through education and artistic expression. Through the project's educational workshops, faith and school groups as well as many other members of the greater Charlotte community created over 2,800 ceramic butterflies, each one crafted in the name of a specific child who died in the Holocaust.

The garden and sculpture are the result of the perseverance, planning, and generous contributions of Butterfly Project volunteers and community members over the last three years. The garden is named for the parents of Larry Schwartz, current President of the Sandra & Leon Levine Jewish Community Center.

Margaret Berger and Lou Schwartz were teenagers living in Chust, a Czechoslovakian village, when one day in 1943, they came home from school to find their entire families gone. Soon after,

Margaret, 14, was sent to Auschwitz and Lou, 17, was sent to Dachau. They never saw their immediate families again. Both Margaret and Lou were deemed strong enough to work as slave laborers; Margaret made light bulbs and Lou built underground bunkers. By the time of their liberations, each had been starved to less than 100 pounds.

They returned to their village to find it in ruins, with no family members left. Amazingly, they found each other and, with a great desire to move on with their lives, they married. In 1947, the young couple and their first child moved from Bratislava to Natanya, Israel, and in 1953 the family immigrated to the United States at the invitation of a relative. They eventually settled in New Jersey with their children, Jeffrey, Yaffa and Larry.

Larry stressed that neither of his parents were bitter about their past experiences. Margaret and Lou Schwartz were always forthcoming about what they had been through, grateful that they had survived, and happy that they were able to make a better life for their children. Indeed, in 1967, Margaret and Lou started their own business, United Canvas & Sling, Inc., which flourishes as a family business to this day. They instilled a strong work ethic in their children and each child participated in the family business at a young age. Jeffrey, Yaffa and



Margaret and Lou Schwartz

Larry, in turn, had great love and respect for their parents and appreciated all they had gone through to give their children a better life.

Despite all the hardships and heartbreak they endured, Margaret and Lou retained their love for God and Judaism. They both had great inner strength and a desire to educate others about the Holocaust. They often spoke to their children, grandchildren and student groups about their lives during those traumatic times. They participated in Stephen Spielberg's Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation by recording their individual stories. (DVDs of their testimonies will be available at the Levine-Sklut Judaic Library.)

With this in mind, Larry Schwartz was immediately drawn to the Butterfly Project when he learned about it from Judy August, a Butterfly Project volunteer. He felt that the story and legacy of his parents, now deceased, would be greatly honored by a memorial for the children lost in the Holocaust.

The dedication of The Margaret and Lou Schwartz Butterfly Garden, however, is only one aspect of The Butterfly Project. The educational workshops will continue, and with the ongoing participation of volunteers and

Yom HaShoah and the Dedication of the Children's Holocaust Memorial Sculpture

Sunday, May 1, 1:30 PM

Location: The Margaret and Lou Schwartz Butterfly Garden
Join us at the entrance to the Blumenthal Education Building next to the Levine-Sklut Judaic Library for the unveiling and dedication of the Children's Holocaust Memorial Sculpture that honors the 1.5 million children who perished. The educational programs are free, however space is limited.

The ceremony will be followed by two educational programs. Tickets for these educational programs are available at the Levine JCC Customer Service Desk (704-366-5007).

Who Will Tell Their Story: Passing on the Legacy

Sunday, May 1, 2:30-4 PM

Location: Gorelick Hall

Appropriate for age 10+

This premiere performance was written by our local teens highlighting the stories of Holocaust survivors, Suly Chenkin and Irving Bienstock.

Voices of the Children of the Holocaust

Sunday, May 1, 2:30-4 PM

Location: Sam Lerner Center

A lecture by Dr. Racelle Weiman, Director of The Center for Holocaust and Humanity Education, Temple University

Exhibit of artifacts related to Anne Frank and Children of the Holocaust

Sunday, May 1, 9 AM-4:30 PM

Location: Levine-Sklut Judaic Library and Resource Center

There will be age-appropriate activities for 5-10 year olds (1:15-4 PM in Levinson Family Place) and babysitting available, both by reservation (704-366-5007).

For more information about the project and related events, please visit The Butterfly Project at www.charlottejcc.org.

donors, they will continue in perpetuity. Further, it is hoped that area schools will designate The Garden as a field trip destination for Charlotte's youth to learn about the Holocaust and to come

to a deeper understanding of the consequences of racism and intolerance.

The Shalom Park memorial to the children lost in the Holocaust and the Margaret and Lou Schwartz Butterfly Garden will become a lasting piece of the fabric of this community's rich history. Your attendance at this year's Yom Ha'Shoah Community Observance is welcome (please see details in sidebar). And so too, is your participation in the ongoing life of Charlotte's Butterfly Project. As a volunteer or a contributor, you can make a difference. Please visit www.charlottejcc.org for more details. ☆

Also inside...

**Yom HaZikaron, Yom Ha'Atzmaut
Community Celebration, see page 15**

Temple Beth El Mitzvah Day, see page 10

**drumSTRONG Drum to Beat Cancer,
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