

The Charlotte JEWISH news

Vol. 34, No. 8

Elul-Tishrei 5772/3

September 2012

An Affiliate of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte

Joined In Education Sponsors Three-Days of Anti-Bullying Programs

Lee Hirsch, Director of the film "Bully," to Keynote Event

What do an eight-year-old girl, a 17-year-old boy and a 68-year-old grandmother have in common?

They all can be bullies and they all can be bullied.

Unlike the caricatures of 50 years ago, bullies don't conform to any particular size or gender, nor do they limit their prowess to the playground. Buses, shopping malls, parties, and the internet all qualify.

son or group of people hurts, embarrasses, or frightens another person on purpose over and over again."

According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ASPCA), each school day, nearly 160,000 students skip school for fear of physical and verbal abuse from their peers. "Many more attend school in a chronic state of anxiety and depression," the website says, and "it's reported that six out of 10 American youth witness bullying at least once a day.

Elka Bernstein, director of CJJ is excited to be co-hosting this program, "Bullying has become an issue at younger and younger ages; we hope that by shining a light on this problem, we can set new standards for children in their interactions with others."

Lee Hirsch, director of the critically acclaimed "Bully," will speak at Knight Theater Tuesday, January 15, using dozens of clips from the movie to take the audience on his journey. On Wednesday, January 16, a day-long symposium, "Stand up to Bullying" will feature several



Lee Hirsch

nationally recognized speakers and workshops targeted to different age groups, as well as additional separate programs for teachers, parents, and administrators.

Mariashi Groner, director of CJDS hopes that "parents and educators will learn to identify the differences between true bullying versus developmentally typical childhood interactions and how to address each case."

JIE, a non-profit collaborative effort of Charlotte Jewish Day School, the Jewish Preschool on Sardis and Charlotte Jewish Preschool, creates synergy between three institutions, their professionals and their volunteers and demonstrates that organizations with a common goal can work cooperatively to bring greater opportunities to the community.

For more information, contact JIE at www.joinineducation.org or call Gale Osborne at 704-366-4558. ✪

Meet Our New Shlichah, Roni Amitai

About fifty years ago, a small 12-year old boy and his family, who had only just made aliya to Israel from the Soviet Union were taken to live in Kiryat Gat. Twenty years later, a young girl from Australia, who had only come for a few weeks to volunteer in Kibbutz Hazerim, decided to make aliya.

That is the story of my parents who met in Israel as students and only 10 days after meeting, decided to marry. And so, my story begins – Roni Amitai, your new Israel emissary, the daughter of Janet and Zvika.

Hello! My name is Roni Amitai, and I am the new shlichah, or community emissary, for Charlotte. I was born and grew up in Mevasseret Zion, a community just outside of Jerusalem overlooking the main road to Tel Aviv. I have two older brothers – Gilad and Matan – both of whom served in elite units of the IDF and who are now creating their own families. My father has an insurance brokerage company and my mother owns a Re/Max real-estate franchise. However, if you ask them who they are and not what they do, my mother would answer that she has a degree in archaeology and is a social activist and my father would say that he is a poet and a professional wine-lover. They have always been active in their town striving to make a contribution to their community as well as being active members of the synagogue for Progressive Judaism where I was called to the Torah.

It was only natural that I too would look to make a personal contribution and so I volunteered for Magen David Adom for three years while in high school, after which I was recruited to the army as a non-commissioned officer in the Casualty Unit. My job was to be a liaison between the army and injured soldiers and bereaved families. As a natural continuation of my army service, my choice for academic studies was Community Social Work and I am now proud to be a graduate of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. My practical training brought me together with the disabled in the Gilo

neighborhood of Jerusalem to create and guide a leadership group of people with special needs. The group's aim was to improve accessibility in their suburb both physically and socially. Together with a steering committee and volunteers within the epilepsy community, I also worked in the Israel Epilepsy Association in charge of advocacy and promoting the National Awareness

Week. At the local high school, I moderated workshops designed to prepare students to cope with their forthcoming army service and personal dilemmas.

My real passion is working with people to help empower them. I believe that now is the time to begin to develop the spiritual assets of the Jewish people and the State of Israel by finding the connection between the two through community work. Only by understanding our mutual story can we preserve Jewish culture in its various shades.

I am looking forward to getting to know each and every one of you and working together to create a special connection. I know that the Charlotte Jewish community is a strong and prosperous community, which contributes to itself as well as to its surroundings and believes that the connection to the State of Israel is the essential and central source for the continued existence of both.

The shaliach program is funded by the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte and is a program of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). The shlichah serves as an emissary from Israel, representing her country and educating our community on Israel and Zionism. If you are interested in asking Roni to join you for a program in your community, please contact the Jewish Federation at 704-944-6757 or email shaliach@jewishcharlotte.org. ✪



Roni Amitai



And although most people don't need a formal definition, Allan L. Beane, Ph.D., and author of the "A Mini-guide for Parents," defines bullying as "when a per-



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The High Holy Days

Five local rabbis present their view of our Days of Awe.

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