

Celebrating Hanukkah

By Adi Rodavsky, Community Shlichah

Whenever I tell teenagers here that Israelis only really eat doughnuts at Hanukkah, they're shocked. In truth, we don't really have Dunkin Donuts or any other doughnut shop because those are so heavily linked with Hanukkah and not with any other day of the year. For some of my Israeli students, doughnuts are what Hanukkah is all about.

However, it is important to remember that while doughnuts are great, they're not what the holiday is about. This month

we're mentioning Hanukkah not only because outside forces have tried to harm the Jewish people and failed, but also because we seek to celebrate the power of brave individuals fighting against a power seemingly much stronger than themselves.

The theme of the few against the many is always present in the history of the Jewish people. It is exactly that aspect which makes our history so special - time and time again, our people were called to face enemies much stronger than themselves and they have prevailed. Some

of the world's most inspiring stories feature this element, from the battles of *Lord of the Rings* to the cry for freedom in *Les Misérables*.

For us, however, this is not a story about a fantasy land, it is not a made up plot in the brilliant mind of a French author. The idea that few can prevail against the many, that faith and unity can overcome all obstacles, is always with us, a hand print on each of our hearts. This is what makes Hanukkah special. On this day, we remind ourselves and our families that few people can achieve great things if they have faith and if they are unified. We remind



of oil. They may not seem like they'll do wonders on the first day at class, they may not even believe that they can; but if I believe, then wonders would certainly come.

On this Hanukkah, let us remember these lessons, the strength of our people and the importance of believing in our own personal tiny pots of oil as each one of those has the potential to make miracles happen in our lives.

I wish you and your families a wonderful Hanukkah. ✨

ourselves that one little pot of oil has lasted for eight days; we remember that we must never doubt the weaker and smaller as they are just as able of greatness. As an educator, Hanukkah reminds me to look at each of my pupils as my own little pot

Faith, Love, & Hope: An Evening with Special Guest Speaker Jeannie Opdyke Smith

Thursday, January 15, 7:30 PM in the Sam Lerner Center at Shalom Park

Join the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte's Women's Philanthropy as we celebrate and honor the power of women. Inspired and guided by our tradition of *Tzedakah* (justice/charity), *Chesed* (acts of loving kindness), and *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world), the Federation seeks to empower women as philanthropists and leaders.



Jeannie Opdyke Smith

Jeannie Opdyke Smith is the daughter of the late Irene Opdyke, a brave and inspiring figure who received international recognition for her life-saving actions during the Holocaust when working for a high ranking German official.

Smith knows her late mother, Irene Gut Opdyke, never considered herself a hero. Gut Opdyke claimed that her work of saving Jews during the Holocaust was love, not bravery. Yet, she has received international recognition — the Israel Medal of Honor and the Commander's Cross, the Polish Medal of Honor, are both tied to her name. The Vatican gave Opdyke a commendation and her story is part of a permanent exhibit in

the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.

Jeannie is part of a new group of Holocaust speakers called Second Generation, who share their parents' first-hand stories. Irene's story, though filled with the horrors and hate that the Holocaust holds, brings a message of faith, love, and hope: that good can triumph over evil. Her tale of bravery proclaims the conviction that one by one we can say no to hatred, persecution, and prejudice. Jeannie has spoken to audiences around

the country telling her mother's inspiring story of how one woman can truly make an impact on the world.

Irene's autobiography, "In My Hands: Memories of a Holocaust Rescuer," relays the detailed account of her life during World War II. The book was adapted into the nationally acclaimed Broadway play, "Irena's Vow," starring Tovah Feldshuh.

The evening begins at 7:30 PM with a dessert reception and book signing to follow.

This event is free and open to the public. To register visit: www.jewishcharlotte.org.

Questions? Contact Tair Giudice, Director of Outreach and Engagement at 704-944-6759 or tair.giudice@jewishcharlotte.org.

Jeannie Opdyke Smith will be the keynote speaker at Federation's Lion of Judah Luncheon on Wednesday, January 14. For more information about becoming a Lion of Judah, please contact Sue Littauer, Director of Development, at 704-944-6758. ✨

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Tributes to the Jewish Federation Annual Campaign

The Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte thanks and acknowledges the following tributes made July 7 – November 7.

In honor of Holly Levinson
By: Gary and Janie Levinson

In honor of Linda Seigel being awarded the Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award
By: Connie Kraus, Sandy and Elaine Melnick

In memory of Mildred Lyons
By: Aaron and Allison Neiss

In memory of Michael Smith, brother of Harvey Smith
By: Mike and Sue Littauer

If you would like to make a Tribute to the Jewish Federation, please contact the Federation office at 704-944-6761. ✨

Join us on December 11 as we present our new look.