

# L'Chain

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Passover has traditionally been a time for families and friends to be together and to participate in the seder. For a growing number of families and individuals in our Jewish community, this Passover was a difficult one. It was difficult because people have lost their jobs and finances have become a big problem. In day to day terms, it means trouble paying the monthly mortgage or rent and it means cutting back on food. People make the cuts wherever they are possible. This kind of problem is not often an open topic for conversation for obvious reasons, but it is affecting Jewish families increasingly.

For the last 2 years, Ha Lailah B'nai B'rith Women has developed and carried out a program to raise money to purchase food for holiday

baskets for families in need. The baskets are provided by Ha Lailah from chapter and community donations, and distributed by Jewish Social Services in order to maintain confidentiality.

Through the generosity and concern of Ha Lailah and the numerous people who contributed, many families were able to observe Passover when they would not have been able to do so otherwise. The week's worth of food addressed itself to the more immediate problem of surviving on a greatly reduced income. As an example of the impact of the Passover baskets program, a story came back to us. One little girl in elementary school overheard her mother discussing the program on the telephone. After a short while, she came over and offered her mother \$1 which represented a lot of money to her. "What's this for?" her mother asked. She responded "I want to help the

families to have Passover. Is this enough?"

Financial need of this kind may be a disturbing sign of the times for a growing portion of the Jewish community. These are not poor people in any traditional way. These are people you might sit next to in temple, these are relatives, these are friends or it could be any of us. As disturbing as these kinds of problems are, it is reassuring to know that people are willing to help other people in times of trouble.

(Thanks to Patti Weisman, Ha Lailah BBW, for co-writing this article.)

## 100 Homeless

NEW YORK — While five synagogues have opened their doors to the homeless, only about 100 of the city's poor have taken advantage of the provision for a night's sleep.

One oddity is that a rabbi and his wife have slept at Rabbi Irving J. Block's Brotherhood Synagogue at 28 Grammercy Park South in Manhattan, according to Elenore Lester in The Jewish Week.

The other synagogues are the International Synagogue at Kennedy Airport which reported that during the past month about 40 have taken advantage of this premises, Congregation Rodeph Shalom at 7 W. 83rd St., where seven men have been taken care of for four nights a week, and two Brooklyn Synagogues, Beth Elishana David in Crown Heights and Beth Elohim on Garfield Place in Park Slope.

In the synagogues, volunteers from the rabbinical seminaries and members of the congregations assist while the city provides cots and fresh bedding.

At the Brotherhood synagogue, tea and coffee and a night-time snack and breakfast of juice, beverage and a roll or cake is provided.

Meanwhile the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies has begun a program funded by \$110,000 and supported by the resources of its network by which synagogues and community organizations and other public agencies will refer homeless individuals and families to it. An evaluation of the immediate needs and provision for shelter and emergency services will be provided. Although the Federation estimates the Jewish homeless at 1000, it is seeking to determine their needs, means to serve them and their actual number.

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# The Academy

## A Special Place To Learn

By Sue Brodsky

Eleven former students of the North Carolina Hebrew Academy, now attending private or public area schools, were interviewed recently about their educational experience at the Academy. According to all of the students, the biggest advantage of the Academy is the size of the classes. Small classes offer an opportunity for individualized learning, working closely with teachers, and getting to know the other students well. Daniel Fishman, a seventh grader at Piedmont Middle School, said, "Going to the Academy was special. The teachers were really concerned about you and your problems. They weren't ordinary teachers." Daniel Brenner, an eighth grader at Charlotte Latin School, supports this view by saying that students were encouraged to voice opinions at the Academy and the opinions were respected by the other students as well as by the faculty.

Leon Barkan, a sixth grader at Charlotte Latin, felt that the small environment lent itself well to developing close friendships with students of all ages. Adina Dressner, an eighth grader at McClintock Jr. High School, agreed with Leon and added that she felt "at home" in the friendly atmosphere.

Stephanie Brodsky, a fifth grader at Barringer Elementary School, remarked on the Academy's lack of a gifted and talented (GT) program, came to the realization that the Academy's entire program "is like GT." She went on to say, "It is more of an advanced school where you can work at your own pace."

The students were asked whether the Academy prepared them academically as well as socially for their new schools. All felt they were prepared as well academically if not better

than other students. Many were apprehensive about changing schools, making friends, and adjusting to a larger school setting, but all agreed that within a week or two they had made a place for themselves and were comfortable in their new surroundings. Aleisa Fishman, Middle School, says, "The Academy gave me a good self-image so that at Piedmont I was able to conquer the new situation I encountered."

A resounding 'yes' was the answer to the question, "Would you advise parents considering enrolling their children in the Academy to do so?" Many of the reasons for the vote of confidence pertained to the Hebrew and Judaica program offered at the school. Daniel Fishman feels that it is "good for a child to get into a language at a young age, and the school is special because it helps a young child learn about the Jewish religion." Both Jonathan Tepper, a fifth grader at First Ward, and Aleisa Fishman feel that a positive aspect of the program is the intensive Hebrew program that time does not allow for during afternoon Hebrew school. Daniel Brenner feels the most important attribute of the Academy is its "stress on Judaica which makes you feel proud to be Jewish." He further commented, "When you leave the Academy you feel sad to lose the in-depth preparation for each holiday and, therefore, much of the enjoyment of the Jewish holidays."

David Asrael, a seventh grader at Carmel Jr. High School; David Massachi, a sixth grader at Piedmont Middle School; and Dalya Massachi and Benji Schrader, both eighth graders at Piedmont Middle School, were also interviewed. Each former student agreed that the Academy was a special place.

## Your Jewish Lexicon

### Adult Jewish Studies -

Union of American Hebrew Congregations

### Get The Name Right

We Jews are the *am ha-sefer*, the "people of the Book," but many modern Jews unfortunately don't know the correct name of our Book. "The Bible," "The Hebrew Bible," or "The Holy Scriptures" will all do in a pinch, but the right name for Jews to use is the *Tanach*.

Where does that name originate? It is an acronym made up of the initial letters of the three sections of our Book of Books. The "T" stands for the *Torah*, the first section; the "N" stands for the *Nevi-im*, the books of the Prophets; and the "Ch" for *Ketuvim*, the "Writings." Put the consonants together and you get *TaNaCh*, our name for our Hebrew Bible.

We never call our *Tanach* "The Old Testament." That

is a Christian term having connotations that are unacceptable to us as Jews. The term suggests: (a) that the "New" has supplanted the "Old," an idea which we as Jews reject; (b) that the "Old" no longer has validity, a proposition which we Jews do not accept; and (c) that the "Old" and the "New" are equally sanctified, an idea we Jews have rejected 2,000 years and continue to reject today.

As the *am ha-sefer*, let's get the name of our glorious *sefer* correct: *Tanach*. It is the collection of 24 (or 39, depending on how you count) sacred Hebrew books, by which we have lived and for which many Jews have died over the centuries. Memorize the name and teach it to your children: *TANACH!*

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