

The Charlotte JEWISH NEWS

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Soviet Jewish Families Arrive in Charlotte

By Alan Kronovet
Rita Mond

Charlotte has joined the growing number of cities in the United States welcoming Soviet Jewish immigrants into their communities. During one week in May, seven Soviet families arrived in Charlotte to begin their new lives after months of waiting. They are gradually settling into their new homes at the Idlewild Apartments.

The families have been met with open arms. Through the first fifteen days of May, volunteers have logged 466 hours of time either in preparing for the families' arrivals or in activities since the families came to town. The monumental task of coordinating this outpouring of volunteer interest is the respon-

sibility of Penny Eisenberg, herself a volunteer. Penny has spent countless 15-hour days preparing apartments, organizing along with Jewish Family Services, volunteer training sessions, working with the host families, and generally helping to ensure that these new families have the smoothest possible transition into the community. Over 200 people have volunteered goods and services and Penny has done an outstanding job coordinating this effort.

The involvement of the entire community has been unprecedented, particularly those who have been acting as translators and interpreters. Mark Barkan and Miriam Diamond's work as interpreters has been tireless. These first weeks when language can be a barrier, the efforts of

Mark and Miriam to help the families acclimate to their new surroundings have been tremendous. Alexander Ehrenburg and Natasha Volovik, who translated and retyped into Russian the N.C. Drivers Manual, and Gregori Bunich, who translated into Russian the Resettlement Policy, also spent countless hours helping to make the families' transitions easier. Ingrid Noreiko has worked with Central Piedmont Community College, Jewish Family Services and the Jewish Community Center to devise and implement English classes, which began the end of May at Shalom Park. These folks, who have given so much of their time as volunteers, are Soviet immigrants who came to the United States in the mid 1970s.



The Zolotaryova family (L to R) Anzhelika, Yulia and Larisa at their arrival in Charlotte.

The experiences of some of the host families best describes our local resettlement effort. The Cojac, Rabinovich, Schreiber and Sheffer families are just some of them. Lynne Sheffer and her family love learning about another culture and trading family stories.

Language has been no barrier, as the families have come up with interesting ways to communicate. The Rabinovichs have devised an intricate sign language, while the Cojacs are trying their hand at learning some Russian.

And for all the children, the universal language of "hanging out and messing around" eclipses any barrier language might have been. Whether shopping, eating or just socializing, Sara Schreiber says the fam-

ilies are building the bonds of close friendship.

For all the host families, these past few weeks have been wonderful. All have gained a greater understanding of the difficulties of life in the Soviet Union and a greater appreciation for life in the United States.

The Lapushin family are from Minsk. Semyon Lapushin, 37, is a radio electronics engineer; his wife, Asya, 36, is a woodwork technician. Semyon's mother, Mariya, 63, is a retired physician. They have two sons, Maxim, 4, and Grigory, who will

The Men family, who as of this writing will be arriving any day, is from Kiev. Igor, 31, is a design engineer; his wife Inna, 29, was a hotel attendant.

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JCC Holds Annual Meeting

Mike VanGlish Re-elected JCC President

The Jewish Community Center held its fourth annual meeting on Sunday, May 6. Among the program highlights was a presentation made by Larry Gerber, Evelyn Berger and Hal Levenson. These three, along with Paula Musler and Barry Hantman, executive director, attended JWB's Biennial Convention in Washington, D.C. in April. Larry, Evelyn and Hal spoke of their leadership experiences while at the convention and how it relates to all of us in the Charlotte community. An article written by Evelyn Berger about the convention appears on page 10.

There were four very special awards presented at the meeting. The President's Cup Award was presented to Evelyn Berger for her dedication to senior adult services, developing a volunteer program, and ongoing community work. Through Evelyn's efforts, the JCC has added a Senior Adult Nutrition Program, raised funds to continue to provide transportation for the elderly and helped establish a fund for children with special needs. Her caring and concern for the JCC, its members and community, have embodied the spirit of the JCC.

The Executive Director's Award was presented to Gene Kavadlo. Gene was chosen for his significant contribution in helping to develop a cultural arts and music program at the JCC. His leadership, involvement and direction have resulted in a variety of programs over the past few years which have helped bring cultural and artistic endeavors to the entire community of



Mike VanGlish

the City of Charlotte. Gene's caring and concern for people and his giving of himself has made him a role model for members and staff involved with the JCC.

The Outstanding Volunteer Service Award was presented to Scott and Steve Menaker for their significant contributions and dedication to Health and Physical Education programs, particularly in the area of youth basketball. For the past four years, they have led the senior high school select basketball team. Their leadership, inspiration and care for these young men have provided them with a solid foundation and understanding of teamwork, good sportsmanship and hard work. Scott and Steve have represented the JCC by consistently upholding the fine, quality reputation that the JCC has established through the years.

Over the years, the JCC has worked with a variety of other organizations in order to bring quality programs for the benefit of members of the Charlotte community. Among the myriad of programs offered has been

"Great Decisions," a program offered in conjunction with the Center for International Studies at UNCC. Subjects have been topical, relevant and provocative, resulting in much thought-provoking education. The JCC and the entire Charlotte commu-

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Phil's Deli Sponsors Annual Chai Party

Phil's Deli will be holding its fourth annual Chai Party on Sunday, August 5, 1-4 p.m. at Gorelick Hall in Shalom Park. Phil Levine states that this will be even better than the previous parties and there will be plenty of prizes, t-shirts, entertainment as well as a delicious buffet for our senior citizens (65+). Please make your reservations with Phil at 366-5405 or Marcia Stern at the JCC, 366-5007. Transportation will be provided if needed. There is no charge for this fun-filled afternoon.

**You are Cordially Invited
to Hear
Moshe Aumann
Counsel General of Israel
and
Dr. Jack Perry
former U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria
"America/Israel/Europe:
The Changing Dynamics"
Wed., June 13, 8 p.m.
Shalom Park**

Desserts and Coffee No Charge
Sponsored by B'nai B'rith Lodge and Charlotte Jewish Federation

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