

Let us be the responsible ones

(On December 2, the Women's Division of the Greater Charlotte Jewish Federation sponsored "The Main Event," the kick-off event for the Women's Division 1998 Campaign. The following remarks were delivered that evening by Meg Goldstein.)

My name is Meg Goldstein and I am the co-chair of the 1998 campaign of the Women's Division of the Greater Charlotte Jewish Federation.

Women's Division is an arm of the Charlotte Jewish Federation operating its own fundraising campaign and educational programming. Women's Division gives us a forum in which we can participate in community decision-making and influence policy.

This is the first event held for the 1998 campaign of Women's Division of the Charlotte Jewish Federation. As we proceed with the campaign, we will often hear the question "Why should I make a pledge separate and apart from my husband?"

In the traditional Jewish family, one never heard the expression, "my husband gives." The Jewish mother classically accepted it as her obligation — not as a woman, but as an individual in her own right — to help her fellow Jews. In fact, it was she, rather than her husband, who filled the "pushke" boxes that hung on the walls, and which were for Israel and those in need.

The Women's Division is the modern day expression of this ancient womanly involvement. So when asked, "Why a Women's Division," or "why a gift separate from my husbands?" I can give you nine very good reasons.

Because caring is only the first step. Giving one's time and financial resources completes the process.

Because every woman has the right to express her own commitment to the Jewish people by making her own pledge.

Because, as women, we serve as role models for our families to give tzedakah — we set the standard by what we do as individuals. A woman's commitment educates her family and can have a profound influence on her husband.

Because we live in a world where apathy and silence threaten

our democratic way of life. We each have the responsibility to promote our Jewishness and be counted one by one.

Because an ever increasing number of women have taken on key community leadership positions. If we want to have equality in decision making we must also be equals in financial commitment.

Because a woman's commitment is a moral responsibility that she, as a Jew, must assume simply because she has no choice — certainly not if she is concerned with the Jewish survival of her children and their children after them.

Because American aid to Israel is influenced not only by the amount raised by American Jews but also by the number of Jewish contributors. My husband's pledge counts for one. A single pledge from my husband and me also counts for one. But a pledge from me with a separate pledge from my husband counts for two. Your individual pledge is an individual vote for Jewish survival. Congress counts not just the dollars raised by the Jewish community — but the number of pledges — the votes — for Israel. We must count one by one.

Because millions of dollars from individual women's separate gifts play a major role in meeting the health, education and welfare needs of millions of Jews in Israel, the former Soviet Union, in 57 countries around the world and in our own Charlotte community.

Because no one else can perform a mitzvah for you. You must do it for yourself.

In 1997, the annual campaign of the Charlotte Jewish Federation raised \$1,590,000. In that campaign 1171 women contributed a total of \$355,000. This equates to 22% of the dollars raised, which is in line with the national average for all Women's Divisions.

Our gift to women's Division decides the quality of the community in which we live. We have a choice. We can assure the continuity of high quality services which is the strength of local and world Jewry or we can hope that someone else will do it for us. Let us be the responsible ones. ✪



(Above) Ruth Goldberg, Women's Division President with Shoshana Cardin



(Right) Jill Newman and Dale Polsky, Main Event chairs.



(left) Bobbi Bernstein, Lee Blumenthal, lion of Judah Division chairs with Shoshana Cardin.



(Right) Stacy Gorelick and Meg Goldstein, Women's Division campaign chairs with Shoshana Cardin.

The Main Event

Shoshana Cardin, "the Chief of Staff of American Jewry," spoke to 150 women at the Main Event on December 2. The evening, sponsored by the Women's Division of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, was the kick off event for the 1998 Women's Division Campaign. Over \$140,000 was pledged that evening.

A bird you set free you may catch again, but a word that escapes your lips will not return.

Mishle Yehoshua



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