

Women's Events

ORT Celebrates 120 Years Hadassah Happenings in May



Few organizations make it to 120 — a number of special significance in the Jewish tradition. When ORT celebrated its 120th birthday on April 10, it made it to a very short list of organizations that have not only aged gracefully but are as relevant today as when they were just a gleam in their founders' eyes. Since its birth, ORT has been the Jewish world's leader in technology education.

Looking at longevity elsewhere in the non-profit world, the United Jewish Appeal was founded in 1939, after Kristallnacht. The American Red Cross was established in 1881.

ORT was founded in St. Petersburg on April 10, 1880, to provide basic agricultural and industrial skills to the impoverished Jews of Czarist Russia. "ORT" is an acronym from the Russian for "The Association for Spreading of Work." Over the decades, ORT has kept to its original mission: providing individuals with skills for meaningful and satisfying work.

"ORT is the Jewish people's gift to the world," the President of American ORT, Robert L. Sill of Cleveland, said. "After 120 years, ORT can still claim that it is has stayed true to its founding principles and legacy. In the dawn of the 21st century, ORT remains vital, active, and its educational training programs are even more necessary and in demand today."

After World War II, ORT was in the Displaced Persons (DP) camps training Jews in job skills for new lives in Israel and the U.S. Since the creation of Israel, ORT has been part of the country, training the workforce and helping shape the Jewish State. Ousted from Russia by the Communists, ORT is back in the former Soviet Union with technology centers and schools that provide top academic education along with reconnecting Jews to their religion and heritage.

As the industrial revolution was replaced by the technological revolution, ORT has focused on the high-tech job market. Both Jewish and non-Jewish students get high-tech job training at Bramson ORT College in Forest Hills, N.Y., and Los Angeles ORT Technical Institute (LAOTI). In Chicago, Zarem/Golde ORT Technical Institute emphasizes training a new generation of immigrants in English as a Second Language and computer-related office skills.

Accounting for ORT's success for over a century, the President of Women's American ORT, Pepi Dunay of Boca Raton, FL, said, "We've always involved the community. We were in touch with the businesses, the companies, the factories that would benefit. We

have truly trained our students for careers that were in demand. And we weren't satisfied with what was. We've always been looking ahead to what was coming and felt the responsibility to teach nothing but the best to our students."

At the age of 120, ORT is the world's largest non-governmental education and training organization, with programs in 60 countries including India, South Africa, France, Great Britain and Argentina. Major funding for ORT programs worldwide comes from American ORT and Women's American ORT. For additional information, contact Women's American ORT at (212) 505-7700, ext. 238, or American ORT at (212)353-5800. Or check their Web sites, www.waort.org and www.aort.org. Locally, call Shari Naman at 841-1674.

On Wednesday, May 3, we will honor our donors with a fun-filled evening including a presentation by Ellen Fliegel of Doncaster. For more information, call Shari Naman at 841-1674. ☆

Like Esther in the story of Purim, strong women have worked to protect, save and improve lives of people throughout history. The women of Hadassah are no different.

Now, like many other times in the history of our organization, we have an opportunity to take action to save lives — this time from the danger of gun violence in America.

Hadassah has joined with many other like-minded organizations to participate in a march against gun violence, the Million Mom March, being held in Washington, D.C., on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 14, 2000. Like Hadassah, the Million Mom March was started by women who felt they needed to make a difference in our society.

The goals of the march are:

- Passage of effective gun control laws — including safety locks for handguns and mandatory waiting periods and background checks for people wishing to purchase firearms;
- The strict enforcement of cur-



rent gun laws; and
• Ending the marketing of gun use to children and criminals.

We urge the Jewish Community to write your congressmen and senators to stop gun violence and let our elected officials know your feelings, particularly in light of the NRA convention here in Charlotte on May 20-21.

On another note, Hadassah will be running a voter challenge during the L'Chaim Festival 2000.

We will have voter registration materials available and information on "Early Voting," a new option for Mecklenberg voters this year. We look forward to seeing you at the festival.

For membership information, please call Amalia Warshenbrot at 365-3313. ☆

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