

The Charlotte JEWISH news

Vol. 32, No. 1

Tevet-Shevat 5770

January 2010

An Affiliate of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte

Federation's Main Event Features Rabbi Daniel Brenner Charlotte Native is Executive Director of Birthright Israel NEXT

The Jewish Federation's 2010 Annual Campaign will officially kick-off on Sunday, February 21, during The Main Event featuring special guest speaker Rabbi Daniel Brenner, Executive Director of Birthright Israel NEXT, who was recently named by *Newsweek* Magazine as one of the 50 most influential rabbis in America.

Brenner's speech entitled "Going Retro? The Next Generation's Search for Jewish Authenticity" will be both eye opening and inspirational. His remarks will address the future of Jewish life in America, what the next generation will bring to the table and how we as a Jewish community can connect and engage them. Rabbi Brenner will surely leave us looking at ourselves and our community in a new light.

The Federation is especially pleased to be bringing Rabbi Brenner to our community because he was born and raised in Charlotte and was educated at the Hebrew Academy before attending Charlotte Latin and graduating from Myers Park High School. Daniel is the son of Dr. Saul and Martha Brenner, long time members of Temple Israel.

The highly popular Federation annual event is chaired by Kevin Levine and Louis Sinkoe, who have assembled a fantastic Steering Committee of community leaders to help promote the event. "Louis and I are honored to chair the Main Event and are excited

and pleased that Rabbi Daniel Brenner accepted our invitation to be our guest speaker. Having Daniel, who is our contemporary, return to his hometown to address our community is a tribute to the strong Jewish upbringing and values instilled in him by his parents, the Hebrew Academy and Temple Israel. From my days at the Hebrew Academy and Temple Israel, I remember Daniel as an energetic, talkative, and boisterous kid. He has come a long way from throwing magnolia seed 'grenades' during carpool line. His views and stories will entertain and inspire us all," remarked Kevin Levine.

The Main Event will be held at Temple Israel at 7:30 PM and a sumptuous dessert reception will follow the program. Event tickets are \$25 per person and can be purchased online at www.jewishcharlotte.org or by calling the Federation office at 704-944-6757.

In the Spring of 2007, Daniel Brenner was hired by the Birthright Israel Foundation to launch a wide-reaching effort to engage the over 200,000 North American program participants and their peers in Jewish communal life. Birthright Israel NEXT, the project has grown into a national organization with professionals working in twelve cities, peer-driven programs that are attracting over 50,000 participants, and a robust training program for emerging leaders. It is now the largest effort to foster

Jewish cultural, intellectual, civic, spiritual, and philanthropic life for young adults ages 22-32.

Brenner's rabbinic path has focused on working across boundaries. Prior to working for Birthright Israel, Brenner worked outside the Jewish world, directing an educational center at Auburn Theological Seminary, a historic Protestant institution on Manhattan's Upper West Side. In this capacity, Brenner launched America's first doctoral level program for clergy that work in the context of religious diversity, created an educational curriculum for Face to Face/Faith to Faith, Auburn's international youth leadership program. He also developed Evolution, DNA and the Soul, a popular program of science education for religious leaders with Columbia University. At Auburn, Brenner was at the epicenter of the successful effort to stop anti-Israel divestment in the Presbyterian Church and his efforts in this debate garnered him a Simon Rockower Award for Excellence in Jewish Journalism.

Before his work at Auburn, Brenner served for five years on the faculty of CLAL: The National Jewish Center for Learning and

Leadership in New York City where he pioneered programs that forged bonds between leaders of different Jewish denominations and co-authored (with help from Joseph J. Fins, M.D., Chief of Medical Ethics at Cornell's New York-Presbyterian Medical Center and Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard) *Embracing Life and Facing Death: A Jewish Guide to Palliative Care*. In his preface to the book, Senator Joseph Lieberman praised the work as a "transcendent contribution" to Jewish life.

Brenner is also a prolific playwright - his fifth professionally produced play premiered at New York City's Vital Theater. Brenner holds a B.A. in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin and both M.A. and rabbinic degrees from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. He lives with his wife Lisa and their three children in Montclair, New Jersey.

According to 2008 Main Event speaker Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, "Daniel Brenner is a wide-ranging scholar whose intellect has traversed so many fields, and whose heart encompasses the whole Jewish world, and the non-Jewish world as well. How wonderful it is



Rabbi Daniel Brenner

for the community of Charlotte that he is a native son, and that he is returning to share with you his hard-earned wisdom."

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte is to raise and distribute funds to support and enrich the lives of Jews locally, nationally, in Israel and worldwide. Through education, planning and community building, the Federation's mission ensures that Jewish values, goals, traditions and connections are preserved for current and future generations. ✨

**JEWISH
FEDERATION**
OF GREATER CHARLOTTE
Local, Global, Eternal

ISreel: Cinematic Views of Israel Sunday, January 24 at 7:30 PM in the Sam Lerner Center for Cultural Arts

Join the Charlotte Jewish Film Society as it continues its cinematic journey to the land of Israel. Our upcoming presentation is of the fascinating film "Children of the Sun" by Ran Tal, which documents the experience of growing up on kibbutzim in the 1920s and 30s.

"Not everyone's home movies chart the rise and fall of a bona fide social movement, but not everyone grew up on a kibbutz. In the early 20th century, these cooperatives sprang up throughout what is today Israel to foster a utopian society based on absolute equality. Children born on the kibbutz were charged with no less than delivering redemption to mankind. Hand-in-hand with the new social order came the abolition of the nuclear family. No

mommy and daddy, only nannies. No private bathrooms, only communal coed showers. Children were raised not as individuals but as a group.

There was no I, only we. In his moving and unconventional documentary, director Ran Tal collects more than a dozen of these first-generation kibbutzniks and pairs their reminiscences with the splendidly preserved home movies that track their unique upbringing. Sometimes with warmth, sometimes with rancor—but always with wit and candor—Tal and his subjects reflect on a fundamentally different way of life, while also hitting on something at the core of human identity."

The screening of this film will



be followed by a discussion with community members, who themselves grew up in a Kibbutz and will share their personnel experiences with us.

This event is free and open to the public. For more information please contact Tair Giudice, Program Director, at 704-944-6763. ✨



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