

JFCS celebrates Chanukah with Survivors

A pair of Holocaust Survivors paint acrylic projects at Jewish Family & Child Service's Chanukah event Thursday, Dec. 14 at the Portland Kollel. Approximately 70 Holocaust Survivor clients of JFCS and their family members, caregivers and volunteers from the community came together for the party, which included beautiful food (latkes were on the menu, of course), a sing-along and well-timed warmth as the outdoor temperature dropped. While JFCS Case Manager Alla Piatski translated from English into Russian, Community Chaplain Rabbi Barry Cohen related the Hanukkah story from the Books of the Maccabees to today's heightened tensions during the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas. JFCS thanks Congregation Neveh Shalom's middle and high school students who created take-home Shabbat kits for the Survivors. This program was made possible by a grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. (Robin Taylor/Jewish Family & Child Service)



PJA to host 'Work For The World' day of service

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Portland Jewish Academy's MLK Day of service is back this year and looking to be bigger than ever as it expands to welcome community members beyond the student body.

The Work For The World Fair, set for Monday, Jan. 15 from 1-3 pm at PJA, brings back the annual service day from its Covid hiatus and provides children from across the community, ages preschool through fifth grade and their accompanying adults a chance to make a hands-on contributions to local projects serving the community. The fair is put on in partnership with PJ Library, B'nai B'rith Camp and the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

Elana Cohn-Rozansky, PJA's Service Learning Coordinator, explained that PJA began exploring its own day of service following work from Hands On Portland, a project of the local United Way. PJ Library, hosted its first MLK service day for children in 2016 and continued until the Covid pandemic.

"We looked at the opportunities available in Portland, explained Rachel Nelson, Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations at the Federation, who managed PJ Library when the service day was launched, said. "There were very few opportunities for hands on volunteerism for the under-five group and we wanted to create opportunities to reflect our Jewish values."

PJA had previously conducted family programming for MLK Day, Cohn-Rozansky explained, but saw an opportunity to shift to a service oriented event.

"We'll be making place mats for Meals on Wheels," she said.

"We'll be doing some cooking for PEAR, they serve homeless youth. We have signed up to bring lasagna, so there'll be some cooking going on. We will be assembling towel packages for Community Warehouse, taking large amounts of towels and breaking them up so that we can make them available to the people they serve."

An adult is asked to accompany each child, not just to help manage the sheer volume of youngsters, but to help visualize how these kinds of activities can be organized and conducted by families themselves, making *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) a part of each family's culture, not just the school's.

"We want there to be a glimpse at all sorts of opportunities that could potentially be done at home or organized as part of a birthday party celebration," Cohn-Rozansky said. "Planting those seeds for future service."

She estimated that around 60 people showed up to the first service day, with about 90 coming to the second. She's hoping for more than 100 this year with welcoming the broader community of young families, and hoping that, in a time where it seems that opportunities for community service are shrinking, this can be a way for those opportunities to grow.

"We really want to reignite those opportunities and give them some ideas about how to do that in small scale ways," Cohn-Rozansky said.

Registration is available now at pjaproud.org/wftw-fair. Cohn-Rozansky said that organizers are still looking for opportunities for service projects at the fair. Questions or ideas can be sent by email to workfortheworld@pjaproud.org.

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The 80-minute feature is followed by "The Anne Frank Gift Shop," a 15-minute short centered on using humor to solve a terrifying problem – the fading memory of the Holocaust. Another conversational program follows the films. Lead sponsor for this evening is the Mittle-

man Jewish Community Center and Portland Jewish Academy

The festival wraps with a Sunday, Jan. 14 matinee of "Irena's Vow" at 2 pm. The two-hour film depicts a nurse assigned to run the home of a Nazi commander in occupied Poland. Instead of turning a blind eye

to the brewing genocide, she uses her position to protect a dozen Jewish refugees, hiding them just under the nose of the German authorities. A final program follows the screening. The lead sponsor for Sunday's matinee is the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

Tickets to each screening are \$12, \$10 for students, seniors and OJMCH members. A festival pass is \$45 for those eligible for discount tickets and \$55 for the general public. For more information or to purchase tickets and passes, visit tinyurl.com/2024pjff.