

Community News
Continued from Page 74

itz, Agudath Israel's Vice President for Community Services, who highlighted the organization's many valuable social programs.

The Legislative Breakfast was chaired by Joseph Zelmanovitz, Esq, Partner in Stahl and Zelmanovitz, and was graciously sponsored by Health Plus, and Med Review and coordinated by the Friedlander group. ❖

Global Day Of Jewish Learning, November 13

The *Shema*, the theme of this year's second annual Global Day of Jewish Learning, to be held on Sunday, November 13, opens with six seemingly small words—words that carry within each segment of each letter a declaration of the bond, principles, and identity of the Jewish people. "For the Jewish people, the *Shema* is a call, a slogan, a sign of identification and an expression of

great emotions," says Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz as he explains the choice of theme for this year. "*Shema Yisrael*, Hear O Israel, has been with us from the very beginning of our history."

Around the United States and across the globe—from Oregon to Florida, from Vermont to California, from Latvia to Uruguay, from Canada to China, over 300 events are being held. People in more than 250 communities and in over 40 countries are once again joining in a day of celebration and learning. This year's Global Day organizers see the potential for a revival in Jewish learning by using the *Shema* Prayer as the backdrop because it is the unifying and inspiring text of the Jewish People. Utilizing workshops, family educational programs, seminars, and breakout sessions, parents and children alike across the interdenominational spectrum are joining in community-wide events. Along with the Aleph Society, organizing partners of the Global Day of Jewish Learning include: the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC); the Jewish Community Center Association; Jewish Education Service of North America; Jewish Federations of North America; Hillel: The

Foundation for Jewish Campus Life; and the Shefa Institute in Israel. Visit www.TheGlobalDay.com for the full list of partners and participating communities.

Last year, in Mumbai, 3,000 people came together to study Jewish texts. This year events are being held in 71 locations in the Former Soviet Union as well as in Peru, Morocco, and in six locations in Romania. Since the 1980s, the JDC has been Aleph's partner, even as it cares for Jews around the world, addressing both the physical and the communal needs of the Jewish people.

As so eloquently explained by Rabbi Steinsaltz, "The *Shema* prayer has accompanied the Jewish people for thousands of years—in its ancient homeland and in exile, in times of peace and war, in the gas chambers and along with the cries of triumph. This was the Jewish 'password'; it was how Jews recognized each other—despite geographical, linguistic, and cultural differences." He further points out that the *Shema* is just as significant in its unifying aspect between individuals. "We Jews are slowly becoming strangers to one another. The divisions are not just ideological or political; they are harsher than that. Because we face

'free floating hatred' (the opposite of love freely given), we are losing our common language, the words we use to share, the words we use to recognize one another. Instead of useless dialogue and discussion, let us find the words and ideas that we can share, and let us say them together. A small beginning is the *Shema*. These are words and profound thoughts to which we can all still agree."

"The Global Day of Jewish Learning remains unique in fostering Jewish unity through a simultaneous 'learn-in' around the world. Our interest is to spark and nourish a love for Jewish learning and to rejoice in the unity that Jewish learning can engender," said Rachel Weiss-Berger, Global Day coordinator. Centered on the *Shema* theme, the Global Day curriculum guide offers topics, source materials, and questions for conversation to facilitators managing study groups or cultural events, who may then adapt the material to suit the educational backgrounds and interests of their groups. The Global Day of Jewish Learning's supporting partners include the governing bodies, leadership, and ordaining institutions of the Reform, Conservative and Orthodox movements. ❖



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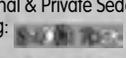
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