

## Jewish Contributions Celebrated on Capitol Hill



Shmuel &amp; Dov Lenchevsky

L-R: Mr. Stanley Treitel; Senator Richard Blumenthal; Senator Tim Kaine; Representative John Lewis; Rabbi Levi Shemtov; Mr. Ezra Friedlander; Rabbi Gabriel Kleinerman; Mr. Richard M. Horowitz; Mr. Richard Boruch Rabinowitz and Rabbi Hershel Lutch of Aish Int'l.

### THE FRIEDLANDER GROUP

On Wednesday, May 20, the Kennedy Caucus Room in the Russell Senate Office Building was packed in a bi-partisan celebration of American Jewish Heritage Month to recognize the many contributions of the Jewish people to the United States.

As President Ronald Reagan declared in 1981, "American Jews have contributed significantly to the spiritual and cultural elevation of our society since the founding of our nation. Jewish immigrants and their descendants have brought dignity and distinction to every field of American endeavor. Our Jewish citizens have served America by fighting for her freedom, building her industry, striving for her goals, and nurturing her dreams."

In 2006, President George W. Bush proclaimed May as Jewish American Heritage Month and each subsequent president has continued this tradition. The Friedlander Group and Project Legacy have been sponsoring a special tribute on Capitol Hill for the last several years.

Among those feted this week was Holocaust survivor and author of the acclaimed book, *A Candle in the Heart*, Judith Kallman of Greenwich, CT, who was lauded by Senator Richard Blumenthal for her efforts to convince students to stop the hate.

Chief Rabbi of the Bukharian Jewish community and president of the Bukharian Rabbinical Council of America, Rabbi Itzhak Yehoshua, immigrated to the United States in 1987 and successfully built the American Bukharian immigrants into a vast community with over 65,000 members.

His accomplishments were lauded in a Senate resolution introduced in honor of Jewish Heritage Month. Senator Blumenthal noted that "after the fall of the Soviet Union, many Bukharian Jews immigrated to the United States seeking a better life free from oppression. Under Rabbi Yehoshua's

leadership, the community demonstrates how immigrants integrate into American life while preserving their unique culture and traditions."

To recognize the importance of civil rights, the program featured Mark Meyer Appel, founder of The Bridge Multicultural and Advocacy Project, an organization that unites people of every racial, ethnic, cultural and religious background advancing civil rights for all Americans and bridging the divide between different communities. Indeed, it was appropriate that Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy III, (D-Mass) made that presentation as he is the grandson of Attorney General and Senator Robert F. Kennedy, a major figure in the civil rights movement.

Also honored was AISH International, which aims to connect Jews to their ancient heritage in a warm, non-judgmental environment. Several of their supporters received special recognition including: Ruth Hyman, Mr. Bob and Mrs. Michelle Diener, Mr. Gary M. and Mrs. Pennie Abramson.

Emceed with a strong dose of humor by Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, executive vice president of the New York Board of Rabbis, and Mr. Greg Rosenbaum who chairs the Jewish Heritage Month Celebration, the event included a list of impressive speakers from both houses of Congress and both sides of the aisle. A standing ovation was given to Rep. John Lewis, the civil rights hero who recalled three young men he knew who were arrested and lynched for fighting for freedom in the United States. They were Andrew Goodman, Mickey Schwerner and James Earl Chaney, lynched by the KKK in 1964.

Another standing ovation was earned by the speech of Mrs. Kallman. As a child, she and her siblings became fugitives of the Third Reich. She survived thanks to the kindness of strangers and ended her long odyssey through Czechoslovakia, Hungary, England, and Israel in America, where, she said, "... I discovered that life is



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R-L: Mark Meyer Appel with Congressman John Lewis.



Jeff Cohn

R-L: Mr. Richard M. Horowitz; Rabbi Hershel Lutch; Rabbi Gabriel Kleinerman; Mr. Richard Boruch Rabinowitz and Mr. Bob Diener at the Jewish Heritage Celebration in the U.S. Capitol.

## AISH International Honored During Jewish Heritage Month

### AISH INTERNATIONAL STAFF

AISH International was recognized for their accomplishments and contributions at an event held in Washington on Wednesday, May 20, in conjunction with Jewish Heritage Month.

According to the Senate Resolution introduced by Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), Aish is being honored for having "enriched the society of the United States." Further, Aish's impact in many American cities "demonstrates that in the United States, people may freely connect with their culture and religious heritage and contribute to the fabric of life in the United States."

Aish International shared this honor with several of its major sup-

porters who were presented with the Jewish American Heritage Award. "Our partners are dedicated to providing inspiring and accessible Jewish education. Their unwavering support is the reason why we have made such a powerful impact across this great nation" remarked Mr. Richard Boruch Rabinowitz, Aish International's executive director.

Rabbi Hershel Lutch, Aish International's managing director noted, "We thank the U.S. Senate and the Jewish Heritage Celebration Committee for their acknowledgment of our organization's contribution to fabric of Jewish American life and American society as a whole. This is a proud moment for Aish International and our partners."

indeed beautiful and that I can enjoy my family and love deeply. I owe that ability to my parents, of blessed memory, who lavished the best of their love, hope and care upon me ... And I owe it to the freedom I found in America, a freedom from fear that allowed me to raise my children in peace, to practice

Judaism without shame. How does one say 'thank you' for that?"

Other speakers were Sen. Bill Cassidy, Sen. Tim Kaine, Sen. Kelly Ayotte, Sen. Ron Johnson, Rep. Chris Van Hollen, Rep. Eliot Engel, Sen. Ben Sasse, Rep. Ted Deutch and Rep. Lee Zeldin.