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Community News

Continued from Page 68

ments between Israel and the Palestinians have mandated that contentious issues should be resolved through negotiations between the parties involved. Therefore, the Palestinian application to the UN is illegal and flies in the face of the Charter of the United Nations," the WJC president pointed out.

WJC Secretary-General Dan Diker added: "There should be a Jewish state for the Jewish people and a Palestinian state for the Palestinian people, living side by side in mutual recognition, peace, and security. Such an outcome cannot be achieved through unilateral actions. Since 2009 the Palestinians have refused to negotiate, believing they could use the international community to extract concessions from Israel.

"Over the past weeks and months, the WJC leadership has met with dozens of heads of state and government, foreign ministers, and UN ambassadors, in a concerted effort to sideline the Palestinian efforts to impose their statehood plan on the United Nations. We urge the members of the Security Council not to sound the death knell of the peace process by prematurely endorsing Palestinian statehood," Diker said.

The World Jewish Congress (WJC) is the international organization representing Jewish communities in 92 countries around the world. The WJC serves as the diplomatic arm of the Jewish people to governments, parliaments, and in-

ternational organizations.

Legislation For A Congressional Gold Medal For Raoul Wallenberg

On September 21, members of the United States Congress gathered in the U.S. Capitol to announce the introduction of legislation to award a Congressional Gold Medal to legendary Holocaust humanitarian Raoul Wallenberg.

The luncheon took place in the historic LBJ room and featured a bipartisan gathering of the House and Senate as well as organizational, spiritual, and diplomatic leaders across the spectrum. Bills were introduced simultaneously as H.R. 3001 and S. 1591 in the House and Senate respectively.

U.S. Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand (D-NY), who introduced the legislation in the Senate along with Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Carl Levin (D-MI), spoke passionately of how Wallenberg rose to the challenge during one of the darkest times in history. "The heroic rescue of Hungarian Jews by Raoul Wallenberg during one of the darkest hours of human history exemplifies his outstanding spirit and dedication to humanity," said Senator Gillibrand, who was introduced by Leon Goldenberg. "It is my honor to introduce a bill in the Senate to award Raoul Wallenberg with the Congressional Gold Medal for the innocent Jewish lives that he selflessly saved during the Holocaust."

New York Congressman Gregory Meeks (D-NY), who introduced the legislation in the House along with Congresswoman Nan Hayworth (R-NY),

SMASHING RETURN



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spoke passionately as to how he hopes to greet the audience next year back in the Congress after the medal's successful passage; while Congresswoman Hayworth spoke of her recent, moving trip to Israel. Chair of the Armed Services Committee Senator Carl Levin spoke of the importance of recognizing Wallenberg on the centennial of his birth and his own pride in being an early cosponsor. Co-chairman of the Helsinki Commission Senator Ben Cardin, applauded Senator Gillibrand on her leadership in the issue and spoke of the importance of honoring Wallenberg's achievements. Other prominent members of Congress that spoke include Representatives Nadler, Grimm, Cohen, Sherman, Rahall, Green, Lamborn, and Rohrabacher.

Wallenberg worked for the US War Refugee Board creating protective passports and safe houses for Jews in danger of being deported to Auschwitz, but his fate remains unknown after he was taken prisoner in 1945 by the Russian Army on charges of spying for the U.S.

Swedish Ambassador Jonas Hafström attended and hailed Washington, DC as the city that has adopted Wallenberg as one of its own. Publisher of the *Hamodia* and director of Project Witness Ruth Lichtenstein, delivered the keynote address and spoke of the spiritual heroism of Raoul Wallenberg. Other attendees included András Bácsi-Nagy, deputy chief of mission of the Republic of Hungary, luncheon chair Ken Abramowitz, and the luncheon master of ceremonies Jonathan J. Rikoon. The gold medal is part of a larger effort in honoring Raoul Wallenberg in time for his centennial in 2012 by the Raoul Wallenberg Centennial Celebration Commission, spearheaded by the CEO of the Friedlander Group, Ezra Friedlander. ❖

Sefer Torah Written By Thousands Of Rehovot's Children

By Shoshana Lesser

In a tremendous display of unity, children from both sec-

ular and religious schools all over Rehovot sang and danced this week around the *sefer Torah* that they had written. Marking the end of Rehovot's 120-year celebrations, the idea was the inspiration of the town's chief rabbi, Harav Simcha Hacoheh Kook.

"I suggested to the municipality that each child in Rehovot writes a letter in a *sefer Torah* in honor of the town's anniversary," Rav Kook related in an interview. Rehovot resident and philanthropist Sandy Colb enthusiastically donated the funds and the project got underway: Each school in town allocated a special room for the *sofer*, who went around the schools throughout the year.

"Ten children at a time were ushered into the "special room," and were given instructions what to say and do. Many of the children who had the chance to place their hands over the *sofer's* had never seen a *sefer Torah* in their lives, let alone be active in writing one! The excitement was palpable. All in all, 5,000 children participated in this unique project."

The climax was, of course, the *hachnasat sefer Torah*. In an unparalleled event, thousands of religious and irreligious children with their parents joined the parade led by Harav Kook and the mayor of the town, Rachamim Malul, dancing around the *sefer Torah* as it was led to Rehovot's historic Beit Knesset Hagadol, built by Rav Yaakov Broyde, one of the town's founders.

"You can't imagine how children with no Torah background kissed the *sefer Torah* and danced around it," said Rav Kook. "I do not believe that there has ever been a *kiddush Hashem* like this. The fact that thousands of children wrote a *sefer Torah* will surely be a tremendous privilege for the Jews here in Israel and all over the world." ❖

HASC Center's Day Hab Visits Rav Matisyahu Salomon

Caption for Photo: HASC Center's Day Hab participants



and staff enjoy their visit with the Lakewood mashgiach, Rav Matisyahu Salomon, shlita.}

HASC Center's Yeshiva/63rd Street and Williamsburg Day Habs went on an exciting outing last week when they visited Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, New Jersey. The highlight of their trip was a personal visit to the home of the revered *mashgiach*, Rav Matisyahu Solomon, *shlita*. The *mashgiach*, in his own special way, was able to connect with each one of his visitors. When staff members asked him to give *berachos* to the program participants, the

mashgiach responded that they should *daven* for him to be *matzliach*. He gave them his name so that they can have him in mind. The young men also enjoyed a delicious meal in the lunchroom of the well-known Beth Medrash Govoha where they were served by some of the *bachurim* who learn there daily. A great feeling of camaraderie was felt between the two groups. Afterwards, the day hab consumers *davened Minchah* in one of the *batei medrashim*. It was a day well spent for everyone involved. The participants felt so good to be a part of the yeshi-

va scene in Lakewood, even for just one day, and they, in turn, made a great impact on Lakewood. ❖

PureSimchas Torah: LTOV Presents Learning Torah On Sukkos Vacation

By Rochelle Maruch Miller

Following a highly successful summer program under the superb helm of Rabbi Raphael Monczyk, Learning Torah on Sukkos vacation will afford boys the opportunity to continue the learning momentum while spending Sukkos with their families in *Eretz Yisrael*.

As parents who are *yirei Shamayim* and *shomrei Torah u'mitzvos*, imbuing our children with a love and enthusiasm for learning Torah is of paramount importance to us. We invest our energy, efforts, and time, working in tandem with our sons' *rebbeim* and *yeshivos*, doing everything we can to ensure that our children grow in learning and in *midos*. With meticulous attention to every detail, we pains-

Continued on Page 72

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