

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2006

Happy New Year!



Whether you say two-thousand and six, twenty-oh-six, or “I can’t believe I ate/drank/consumed the whole thing,” one thing is clear: You’ve made it this far. Mazel tov.

Now the fun begins.

This year promises to be a busy and exciting one for the DJC. In 2005 we saw some extraordinary changes take place. Eliza Kukla’s appeal as our rabbi certainly caused a major transformation in this community. The number of requests she’s receiving, and the growing popularity of the services and study groups she’s leading, suggest that there’s a real appetite in the community for what she brings.

And there will be more in 2006. More services, more activity and more reasons – and ways – for you to connect with your friends and family at the DJC.

Eliza’s next visit is coming up soon – the weekend of January 20-22, to be precise. The January 20 service will begin at 6:30 p.m. at Eastminster United Church, 310 Danforth Ave., followed by a pot luck oneg shabbat at 7:30 p.m..

If you’re planning on attending, please bring any two of the following:

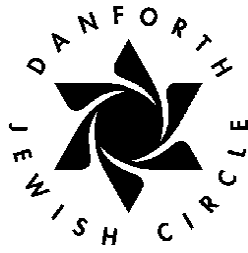
- A main course
- dessert
- salad
- drinks

All food should be both dairy/vegetarian and nut-free.

Eliza’s Friday night Shabbat services are now geared to everyone, including families. The Saturday study sessions – which have received rave reviews – will continue to focus on adults and their interests.

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There will also be a meeting with Eliza at 11 a.m. on January 22 (location to be determined) for anyone interested in exploring ways to make our Shabbat services more participatory and creative. If you'd like more information, please e-mail Avrum Jacobson at avrumj@sympatico.ca.

Also, on Sunday Feb 19, there is a meeting at 11 a.m. of the Social Justice Committee. All are welcome. Same contact info (avrumj@sympatico.ca).

For your planning purposes, and in response to popular request, we're also pleased to provide a schedule for Eliza's next few visits – subject to confirmation, of course:

HANDY-DANDY ELIZA PLANNER JANUARY-MAY 2006	
January	20-22
February	17-19
March	24-26
April	7-9
May	26-28



Whether you're planning a life cycle event or your life has taken an unexpected turn and you've lost your bearings, it can be a source of great comfort to have a rabbi in your corner. For that matter, you may simply have a nagging question about Jewish tradition you've been chewing on.

Eliza is available to offer a guiding hand or general advice, depending on your needs. She can be contacted at her new e-mail address: rabbi@djctoronto.com.

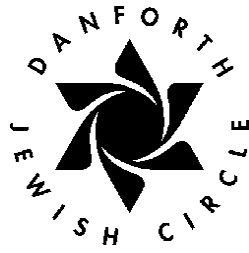
Given all that Eliza has on her plate, please be patient while waiting for a reply.

If you'd like to meet Eliza face-to-face during her monthly visits send your request to info@djctoronto.com. Openings are currently available for March and April.

There is also now a Rabbi's Study on the DJC web site (www.djctoronto.com). This little one-stop portal can provide you with all the information you need about Eliza's upcoming and previous visits, material she's provided and other useful pieces of information.

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A different kind of spin

This time, involving dreidels.

The DJC Jewish Studies program held its Chanukah party and celebration on Thursday, December 22. Good times – and latkes – were had by all.

New administrator Siobhan Devine captured the moment for posterity. Her handiwork, if you please:



The children learn a new Chanukah song



On their best behaviour

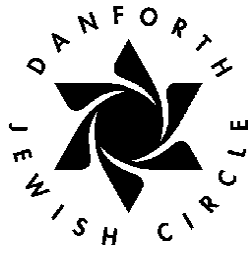


The light of our lives

Please also see the update on this year's school activities at the end of this newsletter.

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With heavy hearts...

We announce that our beloved administrator, Kathy Miller, will be moving onto other challenges (*not that we haven't been one – ed.*). Kathy has been a major force in the development of the DJC. Her years of service – helping to nurse us from our early, wobbly days and make us into the strong, vibrant community that we all know and love today – have been an incredible source of strength.

Kathy and her husband, Emil Sher, are more than just long-time DJC members. They were among its founders, people whose vision helped to shape us and whose energy served to drive us forward.

It would not be possible to replace Kathy. But onward we must go. However, with typical graciousness, Kathy's agreed to stay on and train her successor.

DANFORTH JEWISH CIRCLE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTION

Qualifications:

- Computer literate (word processing, understanding of database software)
- Able to operate from a home office
- Good telephone manner
- Good organizational and communication skills
- Bookkeeping experience
- Previous experience in a non-profit environment and/or with volunteers a plus
- Flexible time commitments

This is a part-time position that will initially require about 5-8 hours per week. However, at specific times, this weekly commitment will increase – for example, before the High Holidays, etc.

The incumbent will also serve as an assistant to Rabbi Eliza Kukla, providing administrative support such as scheduling, some correspondence and other duties.

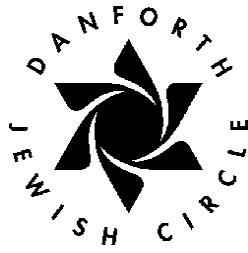
The position might appeal to a stay-at-home parent who has previous administrative experience, or someone who would like to re-enter the workforce slowly.

For more information, or to submit a resume (MS Word only please), please e-mail us at jobs@djctoronto.com

Deadline: January 20, 2006

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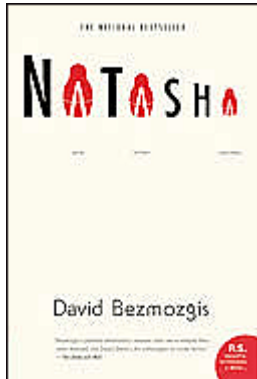
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Book it now!



The DJC book club will hold its first meeting of the new year on January 26. Heather Kassel will facilitate a discussion about Torontonian David Bezmozgis's first book, "Natasha and Other Stories," which looks at Russian immigrants to the city in the 1980s. It has won numerous awards, been nominated for several others and translated into 12 languages.

For more information, or to be added to the mailing list for this or future book club meetings, please contact the DJC at info@djctoronto.com.

For your consideration

We've received this letter from members Melanie and Jeff Trossman, and thought it worth passing along in its entirety:

Dear Family and Friends,

As many of you know, our nephew Jacob has a severe genetic disability, known as P.M.D (Pelizaeus-Merzbacher Disease). It is a neurogenerative disorder, specifically a demyelinating disease, for which there is no known treatment or cure.

However, there have been some recent advances which hold some promise. These are detailed on the following link <http://www.jacobsladder.ca/pmd.html>

Should you be planning on making charitable donations, please consider this project. Feel free to pass on the word.

Every little bit counts!!!

Tax receipts will be sent.

American donors should approach the P.M.D Foundation.

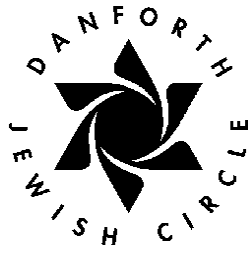
With Thanks

Sincerely,

Melanie and Jeff

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School days... school days...

Submitted by Jason Leizer, DJC Jewish Studies Program

The DJC has had an exciting beginning to a fabulous school year. I want to thank everybody once more for your hard work and dedication – teachers, teaching assistants, Debbie, Siobhan, Education Committee, DJC board and community, parents and most importantly the students.

Michelle Brown – Kita 1

Senior Kindergarten/Kita 1 has started off on an exciting foot. Our class has been following a thematic teaching model where each month the teachers and students are focused on a particular topic. The month of September featured a concentration on the High Holidays of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and the festival of Sukkot. With the discussion around harvest and related topics we touched upon some environmental and community building issues too.

Our introduction to Aleph Bet involves letter recognition and a vocabulary word with each letter. We always have a visual and craft approach in addition to the recommended text.

We have tried to maintain a fun and enjoyable approach to Jewish Studies and for this reason try to tie snacks and crafts in with each week's focus. It helps familiarize the children with food and themes, words and traditions that are involved with each holiday. November focused on Shabbat and children were able to make fabric challah covers and their very own Shabbat boxes, they also sampled challah at one snack time and did cut out cookie aleph bet letters to mention a few of the hands on activities we have introduced this far.

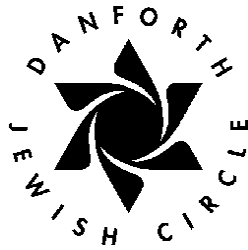
The coming winter will involve take home gardens that will introduce children to some of the plant life that is associated with Tu Bshvat and the concept of tzedakah will also be a focus for January.

Shula Goldzweig, Max Rannie (teaching assistant) – Kita 2

Kita 2 is a pleasure to teach, and we have been spending our time doing some of the following: In Mitzvot we learned about tzedaka (charity), To Tell the Truth, Shalom Bayit (where members of the family love and help one another), Honoring your Mother and Father, and Visiting the Sick. Before class break, we say the blessing “Borei Minei Mezonot” and then enjoy some cookies.

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In our Hebrew workbook, we have covered the letters “Shin”, “Bet”, “Tav”, “Nun”, “Lamed”, “Gimel”, “Samech”, and “Vav”. We also learned the words “Yeled” (boy), “Yaldah” (girl), “Ema” (mother), “Aba” (father), “Saba” (grandfather), “Savta” (grandmother), “Tinok” (baby boy), “Tinoket” (baby girl), “Shabbat”, “Nerot” (candles), “Bayit” (house), “Luach” (chalkboard), “Gir” (chalk), and “Sefer” (book).

In Jewish Life Cycle, we talked about how Jewish people celebrate birth, baby naming, Brit Milah (Circumcision), and Pidyon Haben (redemption of first born son).

And for Chanukah we read the story of Chanukah, learned the blessings for lighting the Menorah, found out why we eat latkes, talked about the Sivivon (dreidel) and the letters on it, and learned a few Chanukah songs.

Brenda Capp – Kita 3

In **Kita 3** we have been taking an exciting journey into the world of the Torah. We have learned about the Six Days of Creation, Adam and Eve and eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Cain and Abel, Noah’s Ark and we have starting to learn about our Forefathers – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We have been continuing to learn the Hebrew Alphabet and have expanded our Hebrew vocabulary. And we have been doing lots of mitzvahs each week and sharing them with the rest of the class.

We are looking forward to learning more Bible stories and continuing to do acts of kindness.

Sara Price, Shauna Capp (teaching assistant) – Kita 4

Kita 4 has very creative students. Using drawing and performing as learning tools, the students have studied all sorts of interesting subjects. Almost each week, they learn a new set of Hebrew vocabulary around which they try to create short skits. Through games, they have studied about Maimonides’ “8 Levels of Tzedakah” and explored the differences between Orthodox and Conservative Judaism.

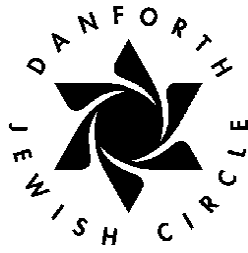
Lately, we have reviewed the story and customs of Chanukah through stories, songs and art. A special thank you goes to Shauna Cappe, the class assistant, who has played an integral part in teaching the students. Have a great winter break and we'll see you in January.

Rina Goldberg – Kita 5

This first term with **Kita 5** (HaKofim She’mazchikim שמצחיקים הקופים) has been a huge success! We began our journey together by filling out “Jewish identity cards”. We then reflected on our names and our identities and made a commitment to make personal goals to help us improve ourselves in the new year.

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We introduced the tzedakah unit with the viewing of the movie Pay it Forward. We considered the question posed by the teacher in the movie, “How would you change the world?” We then added *mitzvah* goals to our personal goals on our identity cards. We added all of the mitzvot that we accomplished on to our class mitzvah tree. We reinforced the different ways of giving tzedakah through a fun and lively Tzedakah Idol contest! All of the candidates represented Maimonides’ levels of giving tzedakah. We even made our own tzedakah boxes so that we can give tzedakah at home!

We discovered the differences between people by our disabilities obstacle course and discussed how to treat others who have disabilities. We feasted the way others in the world would eat and decided to work together to beat world hunger. A guest educator from TorahthaTevah did an exciting program with us and the Grade 6 class about how to improve in our treatment the environment and animals.

Assaf Weisz – Kita 6

Kita 6 this year are focusing on Tikkun Olam & issues surrounding social justice. Luckily, this is a topic that affords a great deal of creativity in how these issues are presented and digested. We have looked at a number of issues up to this point: Tikkun Olam, tumultuous times in Jewish history, world poverty, discrimination, the influence of media towards both negative and positive ends, evaluating role models, discussing our priorities as individuals and as citizens, and more.

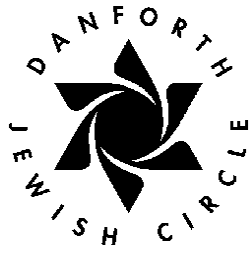
As a group we have all contributed to the establishment of class rules and reinforcement of an expectation for respect and insight. Typically, these issues have been presented through demonstrative games, media, etc., to trigger interest, and then are discussed in order to internalize them. In broader terms, the goal of this year is to bring about awareness about what’s going on in the world, and how we as Jews not only fit into the scheme, but mend the problems. To emphasize the need for action as well as discussion, the grade 6’s have been asked to consider what Tikkun Olam project they would like to embark on in the second half of the year. I look forward to it as I’m sure we all do.

Lauren Malach – B’nai Mitzvah Program

The **B’nai Mitzvah class** has been enjoying an engaging and creative program since the fall. As pre- Bar and Bat Mitzvah students we began by looking at what it means to become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah and how we could involve ourselves in our community as young people. We got the year off to a great start by organizing and coordinating a very successful youth program on yom Kippur. As leaders of the service we got a chance to test out our public speaking and our role as young leaders. We went on a number of field trips, one to the Holocaust Museum where we met and spoke with Magda Hilf, an Auschwitz survivor.

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We also helped sort clothes for Out of the Cold, a city-wide inter-faith program that shelters homeless people during the cold winter months. We have been practicing our public speaking and are looking forward to planning a group project in the New Year. So far, so fun.

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