

You are invited to a
Limited Audience, One-Night-Only, Once-in-a-Lifetime Event.

We could have done a better job of letting you know about the event **and how you can easily be a hero to someone special...**

Let Us Make It Up to You!

Dear Congregant:

You've probably seen the fliers hanging on the walls of the corridors of your shul or the inserts in the weekly Shabbos bulletins and thought to yourself:

"Great. Another cause."

Frankly, because of *who you are*, the *organizations you belong to* and *your history of donating...* you see a lot of notices and receive a lot of mail asking you to give generously. Sometimes you get a generic letter-of-thanks you can use to support tax deductions you claim on your income tax return. Sometimes you get a rubber bracelet or little pin... **Well, this time things are bit different...**

The Power of a Hug...The Miracle of a Smile

Have you ever just had one of those days? Everyone has... And I'm sure if you're married or have children, that your spouse and children have had those days too.

You know what I'm talking about... The drive to school or work took much longer than it should have because of some traffic accident (*thankfully no one was hurt*) where authorities wouldn't move the cars to the side of the road so the rest of us could get where we needed to be- and we were late for school, an exam or work.

Maybe you had a big presentation scheduled that day and it rained- ruining your presentation materials, your notes for your mid-term exam, your hair or clothes. Maybe it was just that you realized that your socks didn't match!

When one of our congregants was in high-school he tells me he was lucky enough to know two kids, let's call them John and Charlotte, who didn't care about any of that stuff. Let me explain...

Back in the high school he attended they began a relatively new "main-streaming" program. "Main-streaming" is where you take special needs and differently-abled students and *integrate* them into the general population for the classes they are able to manage. In this case John and Charlotte were two kids with Down syndrome... and our congregant tells me they were *the most genuinely happy and sincere people he has ever met.*

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You might personally know a "John" or "Charlotte" and understand exactly what he means.

Walking down the hallway he was always greeted with a wave and a smile, and when he said hello... He got a bear hug that took away his problems and his weariness-- left him laughing and very glad that he knew John and Charlotte. It was sometime around then he tells me that he heard coined the phrase: G-d's Children. John and Charlotte, although not Jewish, were certainly that: G-d's Children.

Helping Someone Special: Operation Mazel Tov

The Masorti Movement, founded in 1979, is the umbrella organization of Masorti kehillot (congregations), which fosters the practice of traditional Judaism among Israeli men and women while embracing modernity. ***In promoting the combined values of Conservative Judaism, religious tolerance and Zionism, the Movement strives to nurture a healthy, pluralistic, spiritual and ethical foundation for Israeli society.***

Approximately 50,000 Israelis are members and affiliates of the Masorti Movement kehilot and national programs, which engage some 125,000 Israelis each year.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah for the Special Child program annually prepares over 300 children with special needs for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Since 1995, the Masorti Movement has been running ***Israel's only national Bar/Bat Mitzvah program,*** which reaches out systematically to children with special needs in Israeli schools. Originally starting in one school, today the program operates in forty schools, hospitals and institutions throughout Israel and educates some 300 children a year.

The program works with special needs youth who would not otherwise benefit from standard Jewish enrichment classes, and provides an opportunity for them to be called up to the Torah. Participants include children with a variety of special needs, including those with Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome, mild and moderate mental retardation, hearing impairments, ADD, ADHD and other behavioral challenges, autism, and blindness. ***No one is turned away on the basis of the severity of his or her disability.***



The Bar/Bat Mitzvah for the Special Child Program reaches out to all sectors of the community (Orthodox, Reform, Masorti, secular, new immigrants), offering every child the opportunity to experience this important life-cycle event. The program attempts to re-enter these children into society as "whole people with varying differences," ***providing both children and families with the pride and joy of accomplishing this Jewish crossroads in their lives*** the overwhelming majority of which would otherwise not have the opportunity for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah--

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No other organization offers such a systematic teaching program for this sector of Israeli society.

You probably know someone in your congregation just like this who got the right kind of help locally to prepare for their bar or bat-mitzvah. There was something magical about watching them put on the tallit. There was a personal feeling of pride of accomplishment... Was there anyone in shul that day not smiling ear-to-ear and mouthing the words when they recited the blessings?

I'll tell you more about how you can help these children in Israel in a bit.

Celebrating a Milestone Anniversary

About twenty years ago another congregant tells me he organized a surprise party for his parent's milestone 25th anniversary. He recalls fondly the hours of preparation, stealing their phone book... making the calls to relatives and friends from all over-- getting their commitments to be there at exactly the right time.

He remembers coordinating table and chair rental and the exact timing of delivery (the tables and chairs had to arrive almost immediately after his parents left the house to give them time to set things up). Hiding hundreds of hors d'oeuvres in friend's freezers, drinks in friend's garages- timing the pick up the food he ordered from the local kosher deli based on the commitments he got on the phone... Moving furniture around, directing parking traffic so when his parents got home they wouldn't realize what was happening until they walked in the front door. And coordinating with his cousins who lived in town how they would *have to convince* his parents to see a matinee movie that day, at that specific time- whether or not there was anything playing in the movie theater his parents wanted to see.

You're probably saying, "Wow... That was a lot of work and planning!"

And you'd be right. *But ask him about it and he'd tell you that it had to be that way...* His parents were only going to be married for 25 years ONCE! He **had** to plan it down to the last detail. Give him a minute more and he'll tell you that his parents were floored-- **breathless at the outpouring of well-wishes** and seeing friends and relatives in their living room, some who traveled some distance to be there- just for them. They talked about it for years!

Haven't you done the same for a friend or relative? Have you sweated over guest lists and menus for your son's or daughter's bar or bat mitzvah, sweet sixteen or graduation? Was it worth it?

I'm going to bet that it was and that you would do it all over again!

Well, this coming Sunday, February 10 at 4pm the New Jersey Cantors Concert Ensemble is throwing a party! A 60th anniversary-benefit concert featuring guest performances by the [REDACTED] Nursery, Gan and Ken students.

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The New Jersey Cantors Concert Ensemble are all members of the prestigious Cantors Assembly led by Hazzan Sheldon Levin, President. With offices at the Jewish Theological Seminary and affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, serving the needs of members, congregations and helping to preserve and enhance the traditions of the Jewish people.

From its founding in 1947 by ten dedicated Hazzanim, the Cantors Assembly has grown into the world's largest organization of Hazzanim with almost 500 members world-wide. The organization sets and maintains the highest standards of professional competence and ethics.

For over 50 years, the Cantors Assembly has aimed continually to meet the challenges which the evolving Jewish life patterns have brought to American synagogue life. In the process it has broadened its goals and perspectives to include not only the needs of the professionals, but the changing nature and needs of the contemporary worshipper.

Supporting the Masorti Movement's Bar/Bat Mitzvah for the Special Child program this year is just one of the ways the Cantors Assembly works to connect the modern American Conservative Jew to the Israeli Conservative programs that will help forward and establish Conservative Movement ideology in the State of Israel.

"The centrality of modern Israel heads our list of core values. For Conservative Jews, as for their ancestors, Israel is not only the birthplace of the Jewish people, but also its final destiny." *The Sacred Cluster, Rabbi Ismar Schorsch, former Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary.*

According to the MERCAZ USA Mission Statement:

"Conservative/Masorti Judaism was the first of the modern religious movements to embrace Zionism and has steadfastly remained at the forefront of the effort to promote its values: the centrality of Israel in the life and consciousness of the Jewish People and the unity of the Jewish People wherever they may live."

***Most of us have lived most if not all our lives with a State of Israel.
And she's 60 this year!***

Like the United States' 1976 year of celebrations and parades-- the State of Israel will one day celebrate her 200th birthday--***but she will never again be 60!***

Do You Like a Good Party, a Good Cause, and Gifts?

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With tickets for this charity celebration event priced only \$10 for Students, \$15 for Seniors and \$25 for Adults we're expecting a lot of activity at the door this Sunday. But we need your help to plan a really good event...

You see, the key to a planning a great event is knowing what to expect-- How many chairs to have set up, how much help to have at the door-- Just like the congregant's story planning his parent's anniversary party. *-Did I tell you that only one person who committed to being there couldn't show?!*

100% of the proceeds from the event will go to the Masorti Movement's Bar/Bat Mitzvah for the Special Child program (after cost). The New Jersey Cantors Concert Ensemble has donated 100% of their time and energy into planning and performance.

How can you help?

Simply by replying to this email by 7pm Thursday, February 7th -- *Your response will be noted as a pledge to be reconciled at the door!* (Please do not "reply all".)

Just let us know:

Party Name:

Adult Tickets @ \$25:

Senior Tickets @ \$15:

Student Tickets @ \$10:

Or you can return the bottom portion of this note with ticket information and check made payable to [REDACTED] to:



We'll take care of the rest!

You're invited to a great party celebrating Israel at 60 with proceeds going towards a great cause and we want to make sure you have a seat. Please reply now!

Very sincerely,



the New Jersey Cantors Ensemble and

P.S. I almost forgot to tell you about two very special offers. While tickets for the event are priced at only \$25 for adults, **seating is limited and we are expecting a full audience—**

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If you reply now pledging \$50 as a Patron you receive a reserved seat and a gift CD recording of Israeli music to enjoy again and again!

If you reply now pledging \$180 you are truly a Benefactor. Congratulations! **In addition to the gift CD recording of Israeli music to enjoy- you receive two reserved seats and a very special someone in the Masorti special needs bar and bat mitzvah mazel tov program in Israel receives a kippa, tallit and Kiddush cup!**

A good time, a good deed and a good gift! We hope you will take advantage of this very special offer in this very special time in our history.

P.P.S. *Your donation for this event may be tax deductible! Check with your tax advisor.*

We look forward to seeing you there!

.....

Yes! I will be attending the Israel at 60 New Jersey Cantors Ensemble Event 4pm February 10 at [REDACTED], Metuchen, NJ 08840.

Please reserve _____ tickets for me at the door.

Payment Enclosed/Pledge: \$_____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____, State: _____, Zip: _____

_____ Benefactor

_____ Patron

_____ Adult

_____ Senior

_____ Student

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