



Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel

Gloria Bieler Earl Greinetz
Masorti Foundation Co-chairs

David H. Lissy
Executive Director & Chief Executive Officer

Shalom U'vracha from Jerusalem!



With your help, these young Israelis, participants in Bayit Cham, were able to attend Ramah Day Camp this summer. Bayit Cham is an after-school program that provides meals, transportation and school supplies to needy neighborhood children and is operated by members of Moreshet Avraham, a Masorti kehilla in the East Talpiyot neighborhood in Jerusalem.

Jack Roth 5K Rock & Run/Walk Supports Masorti



Runners at the Roth Run/Walk

As the skies cleared, the Columbus, Ohio community came together on Sunday, June 3rd for the 2nd Annual Jack Roth 5K Rock & Run/Walk, a memorial tribute to a great friend to Masorti. During his lifetime, Jack traveled to Israel on numerous occasions, becoming a passionate believer in the need for a pluralistic, egalitarian religious movement there and for a youth movement to assure its future.

At his instigation, now each winter Israeli teens from NOAM, the Masorti youth movement, visit his synagogue, Tifereth Israel. Maren Roth, Jack's daughter, and his wife, Janice, were among family and friends who planned this outstanding event, which raised an estimated \$25,000 for Masorti. ❖

Masorti's First Sephardi Kehilla

This is a story with a very happy ending for all of us.

When Rutie Guter-Elazar and Yonatan Elazar returned to Israel after living for four years in the United States, they could not find a Sephardi egalitarian community. But, by posting notices around their southern Jerusalem neighborhood, they soon had such a minyan.

Today, about 50 families and singles, the majority of whom are of Iraqi, Iranian, Moroccan, Tunisian, Spanish-Portuguese and Bucharian origin, are part of Kehillat Degel Yehuda, named in memory of Elazar's father, Dr. Daniel Judah Elazar, a political scientist, who co-authored, with Dr. Rela Mintz-Geffen, *The Conservative Movement in Judaism: Dilemmas and Opportunities*. Last month, Degel Yehuda became the first Sephardi kehilla to join the Masorti movement.

Meeting in members' homes for Kabbalat Shabbat, holidays and communal dinners, the kehilla draws its strength from the German & Greek Colonies, Baqa and Talpiyot sections of Jerusalem, home to many young families. T'filot at Degel Yehuda reflect traditional liturgy

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First Sephardi Kehilla Affiliates with Masorti

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and nusach, with melodies that combine Sephardi-Yerushalmi with Moroccan and Tunisian tunes.

Yonatan Elazar believes the kind of Sephardi community of which he is a part is a natural target for affiliation with Masorti. Nevertheless, he notes it must be understood this affiliation will be in the context of maintaining Sephardi identification, values and liturgical practice.

Elazar believes that Sephardi masortiyim can play a major role in helping the Masorti movement take root in Israeli society. In that regard, he will be working with the leadership of Masorti and other like-minded Sephardi masortiyim to form new Sephardi kehillot within the Masorti movement.

The addition of Degel Yehuda to the constellation of Masorti kehillot in Jerusalem represents the movement's first significant inroad to the Sephardi community in Israel and is another sign of growth, not just in numbers, but in breadth and depth. ❖

A Message from Masorti Foundation Executive Director & CEO David Lissy



It is a terrific feeling to be able to share with you a newsletter so jam-packed with good news and interesting information.

For months now, I have been telling people that the days are long gone when Masorti could be described as just a group of English speakers. If you need evidence of how fully Masorti is integrated into Israeli life, start by reading the article about the team of first rate talent now working in the office in Jerusalem. Led by sabra Yizhar Hess, the team includes two more sabras and olim from Russia, Romania and the UK. Other senior staff members are from Latin American and the US.

There is similar diversity among the rabbis leading kehillot, with sabras, along with olim from Europe, Russia, Latin America and North America. With their leadership, Masorti is showing Israelis that a synagogue can (and should) be as much a place for tikkun olam and service to the community as it is a place for prayer and education.

The speed with which Masorti kehillot reached out to help people in Sderot and surrounding areas is just one small example of how Masorti fulfills its obligation to the larger community.

Look at the story about local governments allocating space to Masorti kehillot. Pretty exciting, isn't it? Exciting, too, is the news of the first Sephardi kehilla to affiliate officially with Masorti. For all of the legal battles at the national level, this success at the local level is what really demonstrates progress.

Unfortunately, there still are legal battles to be fought. As I write this message, I have just heard the story of a community where the local Orthodox rabbi changed the lock on the **public** mikveh just so Masorti rabbis could not use it for conversions. He did this without even telling the mayor, so that the municipal authorities were themselves effectively locked out of their own mikveh.

But let's not dwell on the deeds of those who show such disdain for their fellow Jews.

The good news is that your financial support for the Foundation has been instrumental in affording Masorti leadership the opportunity to develop programs that are helping the movement grow. Please keep it up.

Warm good wishes for a sweet and wonderful year. ❖

Masorti Foundation Names Two to Board



Marc Roston



Steven Ravitz

We are delighted that over the last year several new members have joined the Board of the Masorti Foundation. Among them are Marc Roston and Steven Ravitz. Marc Roston, who is married to Rabbi

Francine Roston of Congregation Beth El in Orange, NJ, is a Managing Director and a member of the Investment Committee at Silver Creek Capital Management. He is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University and earned a doctorate in economics from the University of Chicago.

The Rostons, parents of two children, have made multiple visits to Israel and have long been strong Masorti supporters.

Steve Ravitz is President of Supermarkets of Cherry Hill, a family business in which he has

now been joined by three of his five children. Steve has just completed serving as president of Temple Beth Sholom in Cherry Hill, NJ.

Last November, Steve accompanied his Rabbi, Steven Lindemann, on the RA/Masorti mission to Israel in the aftermath of the war. His son, Shawn, also participated in that mission. Steve describes that mission as an eye opener in terms of understanding the importance and impact of Masorti.

In addition to their five children, Steve and his wife, Lynny, have 5 grandchildren. ❖

Exciting New Space for Masorti Kehillot

In Israel, allocation of official space for synagogues is controlled by local government authorities. Masorti's growing influence is evident from the fact that municipalities are beginning to grant space to Masorti kehillot. Three recent examples are Kiryat Bialik, east of Haifa, Modiin, west of Jerusalem, and Herzliya, north of Tel Aviv.

In Kiryat Bialik, the kehilla plans to add a floor to an existing building where it has been meeting in temporary space. The new space will have a sanctuary to accommodate 500 worshippers, classrooms, a social hall and offices. At the signing ceremony with municipal officials, Rabbi Mauricio Balter called the agreement, years in the making, "an important acknowledgement of the pluralistic, egalitarian and Zionist values our kehilla has been promoting." Kehilla members are understandably thrilled.

In Modiin, for the first time in any city in Israel, the Masorti kehilla will receive a pre-fab building largely paid for by the municipality. Until now, all such government subsidized pre-fab buildings have gone to Orthodox institutions. When members of Cong. Agudath Israel in Caldwell, NJ heard that the kehilla needed funds to assure its ability to acquire the pre-fab facility, CAI members pledged \$25,000. The money will be used for

laying the building foundation and for connecting it to city water, sewage and electricity. The 1,800-square-foot facility will contain a sanctuary, a play space for children, and a kitchenette.

Agudath Israel, which is building its own new facility in Caldwell, considers its support of the Modiin kehilla to be a true partnership. It is planning to send a delegation to Modiin for the building dedication, anticipated in December.

In Herzliya, the kehilla has received approval to build a new building in a prime residential neighborhood filled with young families and without established synagogues. This offers real opportunities for the growth of the kehilla.

While not involving new land grants from municipalities, we can also report that the kehilla in Karmiel is expanding its current facility. In Zichron Yaacov, because of the help of Masorti friends in the US who have purchased the space now rented by the kehilla, along with adjacent spaces, the kehilla will be able to add to its space secure in the knowledge it will have a long-term lease on favorable terms.

All of these developments are a clear reflection of the growth of Masorti. ❖

A Message from Masorti Foundation Co-chair Earl Greinetz



I take enormous pride and pleasure in the many Jewish organizations to which I now devote my 'working' life.

But Masorti remains on the top of my list, for the open, tolerant, egalitarian religious practice it promotes.

In working with the Foundation's Los Angeles Committee, I take seriously my responsibility to raise awareness and support for Masorti on the west coast. In December, we will host the 12th Annual Los Angeles Dinner. As in years past, we expect to have about 500 people, representing the laity and spiritual leadership of our community. The event has become a showcase to honor those in our community who have made

significant contributions to Masorti. It has also created an opportunity for our local rabbis to educate congregations as to the importance of Masorti for religious life in Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.

I would like to urge other Conservative communities in the United States to follow the example we have set in Los Angeles. Form a committee dedicated to promoting Masorti. Plan a community-wide fundraiser. Recognize those among you who have made a difference. Start small, but do begin, for as our tradition teaches, "it is not upon you to complete the task, but you are not free to desist it from it."

Speaking from experience, I can promise that there are few things you will find more personally rewarding. ❖

When You Are Traveling Outside the United States...

To find a Masorti congregation in Israel, log on to www.masorti.org.

To find a Masorti congregation elsewhere in the world, log on to www.masortiworld.org.

Masorti Office in Jerusalem Welcomes New Staff

In our last newsletter, we welcomed our new Executive Director in Israel, Yizhar Hess. We also welcome the strong new team he is assembling. Their extremely varied backgrounds give texture to the mosaic that is Masorti.



Mikie Goldstein,
Resource Development Director

Born in the UK, Mikie Goldstein made aliyah in 1989, after completing a BA in Middle Eastern studies at Manchester University. He worked for five years in the Development Department at Hebrew University, after which he spent four years working in public affairs for the Israeli Consulate in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and two years at the Israeli Embassy in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Mikie first joined the Masorti movement as resource development coordinator in 2002, leaving two years later to take a position in the Culture Department of the Israeli Embassy in Ireland. For the last two years, he was resource development director of the Migraine Association of Ireland before returning in June to head Masorti's Resource Development Unit, where his responsibilities include all fundraising planning and initiatives.



Olya Weinstein,
Kehillot Development Director

Russian-born, Olya Weinstein spent five years at the Jewish Agency in Russia as a coordinator of youth and student clubs and as aliyah coordinator. She made aliyah in 2000. Since then, she has been sent by the Jewish Agency on short-term shlichuyot to both the United States and Kazakhstan. Olya, who has a BA in English linguistics from Bar Ilan University, worked for three years as national coordinator of Marom, Masorti's program for college students and young adults. She was promoted to kehillot development director in June and is now the primary contact with the kehillot, helping them to develop their outreach and programming.



Gretty Schweitzer,
*Public Relations and
Marketing Communications Director*

After waiting six years for permission to leave their native Romania, in 1979, Gretty and her family were able to make aliyah, settling in Kiriath Motzkin, a city in the Krayot region,

east of Haifa. She first became acquainted with Masorti when, as a tour guide for the Israel Supreme Court, she came into contact with groups of Americans affiliated with the Conservative movement. Gretty has worked as a teacher of communications, a local radio manager, a hi-tech marketing director and, last year, as a public relations consultant to the families of the three abducted soldiers, helping to orchestrate their campaign to raise awareness of their plight. Now completing her master's in communications and political marketing, Gretty brings to her job experience in strategic communications, education and management.



Yaniv Glikzman,
National Coordinator, Marom

Born in Israel to olim from Uruguay, Yaniv Glikzman grew up in the Jerusalem suburb of French Hill, attending Kehillat Ramot Zion. This important early connection to Masorti was decisive in Yaniv's career plan to enter the field of informal Jewish education. His first job was as a shaliach from the Jewish Agency to the Masorti community in Uruguay. Yaniv believes strongly in the importance of making religious pluralism a central tenet of life in Israel, especially through the introduction of enriching and appealing programming for college students and young adults.



Omer Pickholtz,
Director, NOAM

Tenth-generation Jerusalemite Omer Pickholtz has worked for the past seven years for several organizations that promote pluralism in Jewish life. Omer's professional experience began at NOAM, Masorti's youth movement, as a chapter coordinator and leader of the youth leadership course, followed by experience as a group facilitator, youth leader, activities coordinator and program developer in other formal and informal educational settings, including five years as NOAM's national youth leadership coordinator. With his career having come full circle, as NOAM's new director, Omer is at the same time, completing a law degree at Hebrew University. ❖

Profile: Rabbi Uri Ayalon, Yotzer Or Congregation, Jerusalem



When Uri Ayalon made aliyah from Argentina, he was only 7-years-old. He watched as his parents built a whole new life for the family in Israel.

Masorti was there to help Uri and his family as they settled into their home in Jerusalem. When he was old enough, Uri joined NOAM, the Masorti youth movement where he found a supportive group of friends with whom he later did his military service in a Nahal unit.

Service in the IDF was followed by seven years working in various educational capacities for NOAM: directing the high school division; coordinating the incoming Nachal units; educational director; and in several positions at Ramah/NOAM, the summer camping program. When he went on to study communications and Jewish history at Hebrew University, Uri remained connected to Masorti, getting involved in educational and social action endeavors.

Later, as a rabbinical student at the Schechter Institute, Uri did important fieldwork in the Katamonim sector of Jerusalem working with a program devoted to grassroots community education in disadvantaged neighborhoods. One summer, he set up a summer camp on the Hebrew University campus for 160 Jewish and Arab youngsters, integrating them through cultural arts projects that explored both heritages.

Now, Uri has made his passion for social justice a focal point of his rabbinate.

The residents of Talpiyot, a Jerusalem neighborhood of veteran Israelis as well as Ethiopian, Russian and other olim, are usually too busy worrying about how to feed their children, find decent child care and juggle several jobs to do or think about much else. In response, Uri has launched Yotzer Or, a remarkable new kehilla that seeks to meet the community on its own terms.

At Yotzer Or, Jewish and Israeli identity-building is achieved through programs that address the pressing needs for material, educational and spiritual support.

Yotzer Or activities nurture artistic and intellectual expression and religious development in a Jewish context. Services for children, which aim to occupy them after school, encompass homework help and exam preparation; English lessons; a storytelling hour; art classes; a theater group; and organized games. Adults are invited to participate in study of the weekly Torah portion from a family perspective, while a Women's Circle has created a space for women to gather to share personal concerns and support one another.

A Family Reading Project brings families into the kehilla's library to promote Hebrew and Jewish literacy and pride in a communal institution. Ethiopian olim receive special attention in an ulpan that offers personal tutoring along with assistance with daily activities – grocery shopping, visits to doctors and housework. In a meaningful mutual learning process, students teach their tutors Amharic.

The kehilla has a monthly musical Kabbalat Shabbat and also gathers for t'filot and festival celebrations. Tours of Jerusalem are also a way of enriching for new olim the experience of being in Eretz Yisrael.

Today, Yotzer Or counts about 40 families as active members, but in welcoming everyone and collaborating with other local organizations, in reality this unique kehilla touches far more than that number. ❖

Masorti Supports Residents of Sderot and Vicinity

As it did during crisis in the north in the summer of 2006, the Masorti Movement took an active role in coming to the aid of the families in Sderot and surrounding areas that had been living with the stress and challenges of daily threats to their homes and personal safety. Thanks in part, to a grant to Masorti from United Jewish Communities, the movement has been able to defray the expenses of providing that critical assistance.

This summer, youngsters from Sderot attended two Masorti kehilla-run day camps, in Ashkelon and Omer. Masorti also paid for buses to transport hundreds of local residents out of the Sderot area for day trips the movement organized, so they could relax, if only briefly. The day-long bus trips were also appreciated by young Israelis working in Sderot to help the community and who, themselves, have been under considerable strain.

In another example of the countless ways that Masorti kehillot have assisted, one community in Jerusalem collected non-perishable food, clothing and books, as well as toys and games for youngsters stuck in shelters in Sderot. They also tried to boost the local economy by purchasing items there.

Rabbi Barry Schlesinger, spiritual leader of Kehillat Moreshet Avraham in Jerusalem and president of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel, not only helped organize the day long bus trips, he also himself spent a day in Sderot working as a volunteer. ❖

Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel

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Now, more than ever, we need your financial support. Please help us secure Israel's spiritual future by sending your donation to:

Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 832
New York, NY 10115-0122

212.870.2216
877.287.7414 (toll free)

www.masorti.org
info@masorti.org



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