



ב"ה



LIVING JUDAISM
JOYFULLY
 THE 2023 EDITION

Chabad Jewish Center
 Metairie, Louisiana



FROM THE RABBI'S DESK

Dear friends and partners,

It is our honor to present this brief report of our 2023 activities. Due to the extraordinary circumstances since October 7, we have increased our programming, focusing on increasing Jewish unity, hope and positivity.

Thank you for caring and sharing your resources through us and may Hashem grant us all a blessed 2024!

Sincerely,

Rabbi Yossie and Charie Nemes

Rabbi Mendel and Chaya Ceitlin

Rabbi Zalman and Libby Groner



WHAT A YEAR 2023 HAS BEEN



JLI EVENING CLASS



JUDA CLUB



WOMEN'S ROSH CHODESH SOCIETY



JUDAISM: THE SOUNDTRACK



FUTURISTIC PURIM PARTY



CTEEN JR LASER TAG



JUDA CLUB MODEL MATZAH BAKERY



LAND AND SPIRIT ISRAEL TRIP



EDUCATION & SHARING DAY PROCLAMATION



CITY-WIDE SHMURA MATZAH DISTRIBUTION



LAG BAOMER BBQ AND PICNIC



TASTE OF THE HOLIDAYS - WOMEN'S SOCIAL



HONEY GIRL OF AUSCHWITZ



MEN'S TEFILIN CLUB IN THE SUKKAH



55+ CLUB BREAKFAST IN THE SUKKAH



BAT MITZVAH CLUB



CHANUKAH AT NURSING HOMES



CHANUKAH AT OCHSNER, EJGH AND THE VA



CHANUKAH AT LAKESIDE



MOMMY AND ME IN THE PARK

... OCTOBER 7TH 2023, OUR HEARTS ARE TURNED TO OUR BELOVED ISRAEL



CHILDREN'S RALLY FOR ISRAEL



A MITZVAH FOR ISRAEL



CHALLAH BAKING FOR ISRAEL AT RCS



MEN'S TEFILIN CLUB - ARMS FOR ISRAEL



TEEN MITZVOT FOR ISRAEL



ISRAEL SOLIDARITY TRIP



UNITY SHABBAT FOR ISRAEL



ISRAELI CHANUKAH BBQ

2015
\$332,816

2017
\$417,516

2020
\$485,882

2023
\$635,090

TOTAL OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: \$616,647
TOTAL REVENUE: \$635,090

I was raised Catholic. My great grandmother, Tzila (Celia) Spruch, was a German Jew that was fortunate to escape Nazi Germany.

Eventually she made her way to Guatemala. There she met my Catholic great grandfather. Before being married, my great grandmother made it clear that she would not convert. They raised their children Catholic, including my 93 year old grandmother, Dora. My grandmother in turn raised my mother Catholic, who raised me that way, and I in turn raised my daughter Sofia Catholic as well.

When Sofia was 16, she informed me that she doesn't want to be confirmed. After the third time, I sat down to learn why. She did not feel aligned with the teachings of the church. She shared that after a lot of research, she wanted to convert to Judaism, as she felt it was more in line with her values.

Sofia knew about my great grandmother, who had been very present in my life until she passed away when I was 12. I had always taught Sofia that our relationship with G-d is a very personal one. I told her that I would speak to some Jewish friends to get guidance.

Sofia came home one day from running errands and told me that she had stopped at a synagogue. The synagogue was none other than Chabad of Metairie. When Rabbi Mendel heard that she wants to convert, he asked if her parents support this, and suggested that she and I come for a meeting together.

In the meantime, Sofia and I spent hours with my grandmother learning about our Jewish roots, accompanied by old family photos and documents. It's a wonder that we had them, as we had lost everything including our home in Katrina!

The following Sunday, we met at Chabad. After Sofia shared our family's history, they asked us to return again with my grandmother, who then shared everything she remembered about our great grandmother. This is when we found out that we are Jewish! At Purim, a

month later, Rabbi Schechter shared so beautifully, "No matter how you were raised, in what religion, for how many generations, you have always had a Jewish soul, and now you are just coming home."

What began as my supporting Sofia became an awakening. We began to study with Chaya and Libby. In 2011, my father passed away in a car accident and my mother and I almost did not survive. It has taken a lot of healing and years to figure out my purpose in still being here. I was becoming more knowledgeable about Judaism, but I was understanding myself as well.

Fast forward to the events of October 7, 2023. As we have been reeling from the sadness, the displays of courage, togetherness, and love stood out to me. Rabbi Yossi and Chanie Nemes visited Israel not long after the attacks, and they kept us informed of everything they saw daily. I've reflected that we are 'cut from a different cloth', with exceptional resilience and faith. As a man told Rabbi Nemes there, "We are an eternal people. This is a setback that we will overcome".

Ever since we have been at Chabad, I have felt such a warm welcoming embrace. Especially during this difficult time my existence makes more sense than ever. For that, I am grateful, and I am moved to tears...joyful tears!

I AM HOME. By Stephanie Lady



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