

M'Yad L'Yad

Enhancing lives through uniquely personal,
yet anonymous giving



APRIL, 2007

M'YAD L'YAD NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 9

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Thank You, Friend

Fund set up to honor the memory of Murray Safran

This issue of our newsletter is dedicated in celebration of the life of our dear friend Murray Safran. Murray died on December 16th and although we were privileged to know him for only six years the loss we feel will always be with us.

Gloria Safran is one of the founding principals of *M'Yad L'Yad* and is an integral member of our organization, and Murray joined us as a Board member shortly after our inception.

When visiting the Safran home for a meeting, fund raiser or dinner party we are always greeted with the warmth and graciousness of life long friends. Murray's smile embraced and welcomed you. Gloria and Murray's home envelops you with their commitment to family, community and Jewish tradition.

The Board quickly recognized Murray's quiet,



thoughtful manner in analyzing and resolving many of the issues we faced in creating and developing *M'Yad L'Yad*. We looked to Murray for his leadership and wisdom which he so powerfully yet gently shared with us.

In honoring Murray's generous and charitable spirit and his dedication to *M'Yad L'Yad* we have established the Murray Safran Fund. (See page 3) This on-going project will allow us to

respond to special, emergent problems of our recipients and provide additional resources beyond the scope of usual sponsor benefits.

We invite you to share in this endeavor and help honor our dear friend Murray.

With our deepest respect and appreciation,

Ellen and Stephen Greenberg, co-chairs

Benefit Jazz Concert to be Held at the Heckscher Museum

Long Island native Meryl Zimmerman to headline evening of music and art

M'Yad L'Yad proudly presents a benefit concert featuring the Meryl Zimmerman Jazz Quartet at the Heckscher Museum of Art in Huntington, on Sunday, April 29, at 5:30 p.m. We invite you to join us for Meryl's premier performance on Long Island, as we enjoy a delightful evening of music, art and refreshments. (To read more about Meryl Zimmerman, see Page 2)

As an added bonus, guests are invited to view the works of world-renowned photographer/conservationist Ansel Adams in an exhibit entitled *Ansel Adams and Edwin Land: Art, Science and Invention, Photographs from the Polaroid Collection*, plus selected artwork of Long Island high school students in *Long Island's Best: Young Artists at the Heckscher*.



Invitations to this unique evening of entertainment were recently mailed. Admission is \$50 per person, with patron tickets at \$100 per person. If you would like to join us for music, art, hors d'oeuvres and desserts, while at the same time supporting our program of charitable giving in an anonymous dignified manner, please call us at (631) 742-7194. Space is

limited, so we encourage you to order your tickets promptly.

The Board of Directors of *M'Yad L'Yad* offers special thanks to Heckscher Museum board member Bette Schneiderman and the entire staff of the Museum for their support and assistance in bringing you this remarkable evening of performance and visual art.

"Kindness is the language the deaf can hear and the blind can see."

Mark Twain

Meet Meryl Zimmerman—a True Student of Jazz

Singer comes home to Long Island for M'Yad L'Yad benefit concert

In 1954, jazz legend Ella Fitzgerald said: “the only thing better than singing, is more singing.” Five decades later, Meryl Zimmerman is living the words of her idol.

Zimmerman, daughter of M'Yad L'Yad Director Mark Zimmerman, will perform a benefit concert at the Hecksher Museum on April 29. She has been a professional jazz singer since graduating from Washington University in 2005, where she majored in—*anthropology?* Zimmerman



“I knew that music was what I wanted to do with my life, but I wanted to make sure I got a well-rounded education,” said Zimmerman, who minored in jazz. “I am still young and idealistic enough to think that I can support myself by singing.”

And sing she does. Zimmerman performs at least once a month in Manhattan clubs

and lounges. She has gotten rave reviews for the work she has done with the Laura Nyro Project—celebrating the music of the late great singer/songwriter—and she also sings with Khorikos, a classical music choir.

But Zimmerman is not done learning her craft. She has applied to the Manhattan School of Music, hoping to hone her skills at one of the top music schools in the country.

“Going to graduate school will allow me to put all of my focus on improving myself as a musician,” Zimmerman said. “I would be surrounded by other people who are doing what they love to do, and that would be inspiring. It would be a great atmosphere for me.”

Another thing that inspires Zimmerman is her “day job,” teaching young children about music and singing, at Music Together locations in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

“I absolutely love it,” Zimmerman said. “If I could teach music to young children

during the day, and sing jazz at night for the rest of my life, I would be a very happy and fulfilled person.”

Jazz has always been a love of Zimmerman's, who grew up on Long Island and attended Half Hollow Hills East High School. However, the 23-year-old has family roots in music-rich New Orleans and has a dream of performing at Jazzfest, the city's annual music festival. In fact, she has pulled much of what she does in jazz from musical influences such as New Orleans funk, pop, R&B, and Cajun music.

“The great thing about singing jazz is that you can take songs from all different type of music and make your own arrangements,” Zimmerman said. “You can jazzify them.”

It is not as easy, however, to “jazzify” an anthropological lecture on the development of societies and cultures.

“I have been singing as long as I can remember,” Zimmerman said. “It is what I love.”

Communities Help Make Chanukkah Special

High School East Holiday Collection

Anyone who thinks that young people today are self-centered or uninvolved has not met the students at Half Hollow Hills High School East. The school's Student Government undertook a collection of money to purchase items for two M'Yad L'Yad families. With the involvement and support of the entire student body, the collection yielded over two thousand dollars. Students then went to Target, and with information about the two selected families, bought clothing, toys, and other items that we then sent on to our families. One recipient family was Sally and Glenn and their four children, and the other was Barbara and her five children. Like so many M'Yad L'Yad families, these two families struggle as health problems prevent the adults from working. We thank Spencer Fogel, an officer of the Student Government, who made the connection between the school and M'Yad L'Yad and coordinated the project. Because of his efforts, and everyone at High School East, Chanukkah at Sally and Glenn's house, and Christmas at Barbara's home, were wonderfully enhanced celebrations.

Temple Chaverim Religious School Collection

The students of the Temple Chaverim Religious School in Plainview learned about Maimonides and the levels of charitable giving in Judaism, and then turned that knowledge into practice when they collected money to support a M'Yad L'Yad family for Chanukkah. M'Yad L'Yad director Mark Zimmerman visited the students and spoke about the concept of tzedakah in Judaism. The students learned that tzedakah, which we often translate as “charity,” is better translated as “justice.” While the meaning of charity implies a choice to give or not, the notion of justice is that everyone must give, as it is the just and right thing to do. And the students took this lesson to heart, providing hundreds of dollars in supermarket gift cards to benefit Cheryl, a M'Yad L'Yad recipient. Cheryl is now raising her two young grandsons, following the death last year of their divorced mother. Cheryl was thrilled to receive the gift cards at Chanukkah time, and was greatly touched by the generosity of the young people from Temple Chaverim. We thank the students, their parents, teachers, and principal Debby Brandell for their efforts, and we look forward to pairing with them on future tzedakah projects.

Midway Jewish Center Religious School Collection

After a wonderfully successful Passover drive, the students at the Midway Jewish Center Religious School did it again, collecting clothing, gifts, household goods, and hundreds of dollars of gift cards to benefit seven M'Yad L'Yad families. Each class was matched with a specific M'Yad L'Yad family, and students and their parents donated items that would best meet the needs of those families. We are so grateful to volunteer coordinators Ruth Spitz and Cindy Denbaum, school director Dina Hochbaum, and everyone at Midway Jewish Center for their support. The Talmud states that one who gives charity anonymously is greater than Moses. We are proud to know that there are so many students at Midway who aspire to this level of great leadership.

South Huntington Jewish Center Sisterhood Collection

For the second year in a row, the South Huntington Jewish Center Sisterhood organized a wonderful collection of Chanukkah gifts to benefit the children of M'Yad L'Yad recipients. Under the direction of Robyn Schmigeliski, the synagogue prepared paper dreidels, each of which featured the name, age, and gender of a M'Yad L'Yad child, noting the child's wish for Chanukkah (such as a gift card to the Gap or Target). Synagogue members selected dreidels and then fulfilled the wish, purchasing the requested item. These items were then sent on to our families, benefiting two dozen children. We appreciate the generosity of everyone at South Huntington Jewish Center, and thank them for making Chanukkah special for so many children in need.

Hats and Gloves

Many students, as they approach their bar or bat mitzvah, take on a tzedakah project, sometimes donating money from the gifts they receive, and sometimes giving of their time for a worthy cause. Few of these students, however, commit to their projects on an ongoing basis. Dan (who wishes to remain anonymous) is one of the exceptions, a local student who took on a project for his bar mitzvah and has continued it throughout his high school years. He collects children's hats and gloves for distribution every winter to local children in need. For the last two years, Dan has partnered with M'Yad L'Yad for the distribution of the items he has collected. Thanks to Dan's efforts, 50 of our recipient children received beautiful new hats and gloves during this past Chanukkah/Christmas season. While these gifts surely provided warmth to so many children, they also warmed the hearts of everyone at M'Yad L'Yad, who are proud to be associated with such a fine young man as Dan.

Tiphania's Gifts Donation

Tiphania's Gifts, the Judaica store at the Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center, generously donated gift items to M'Yad L'Yad for distribution to our recipient families at Chanukkah and Christmas time. Items including games, candles and more, were sent to over a dozen M'Yad L'Yad families, greatly enhancing their holiday celebrations. We thank Ken and Renda Rosenblatt of Tiphania's Gifts for their generosity, and look forward to working together with them in the future.

Jewish Cultural School Collection

The Jewish Cultural School in Centereach may be a small institution, but they are a group with a big heart and a huge commitment to the concept of tzedakah. At Chanukkah time, the students and their parents collected almost 50 pounds of food plus hundreds of dollars in gift cards to benefit a M'Yad L'Yad recipient family. The recipient family, Taryn and Steven and their three children, struggle to make ends meet. Health problems prevent Taryn and Steven from working. They were surprised and greatly pleased to receive the package from the Jewish Cultural School, enhancing their Chanukkah celebration. We thank the students, parents, and teachers, and in particular 8th grader Gregory Fear whose leadership ensured the success of this collection. We look forward to joint projects in the future to support those in need in our local communities.

SPOTLIGHT ON ... Ellen Greenberg

Following is the first "SPOTLIGHT" column, which will focus on one of our M'Yad L'Yad volunteers. All of our volunteers, including the Board of Directors, committee chairs and members, sponsors, and others, are deserving of our focus. We will learn about the people behind the acts of mitzvot (good deeds) and hesed (loving kindness).

Where better to begin than with Ellen Greenberg, M'Yad L'Yad Co-Chair with her husband, Stephen. Of course we will spotlight Stephen at another time ... ladies first. Once you have had the pleasure of meeting Ellen, you will forever remember her enthusiasm, intelligence, warmth, generosity, and genuine desire to assist those in need. She makes everyone in her presence feel special and important, and believes that "involving family and friends in volunteer work enriches one's efforts of giving and caring."

Ellen's involvement with the Box Project, which provides boxes of clothing, food, and other necessities to the many poor and needy in Appalachia and other areas, and her awareness of the large number of Jewish poor on Long Island, led to her participation in the creation of M'Yad L'Yad. Ellen was aware of the importance of "an anonymous relationship enriched by a sense of personal contact and connection in addition to an exchange of 'things'."

Ellen was born in Borough Park, Brooklyn, but grew up in Queens. She attended Adelphi University, and received her Master's Degree from Queens College in Speech Therapy, which she practiced for a number of years in the Garden City school system.

When Ellen is not participating in her many charitable endeavors, among other things, she can be found preparing her unique chicken soup that she enjoys sharing with friends. She loves to spend time with her two daughters and sons-in-law, and especially "our two delicious grandsons."

She and Stephen enjoy spending time in Manhattan, "for its excitement, sounds, and varied options to explore." They enjoy movies, particularly at the Cinema Arts Centre in Huntington.

For several years, Ellen has been studying Jewish Theology and Philosophy at the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership (CLAL), and Torah with Rabbi Buechler at the Dix Hills Jewish Center. In her own words Ellen explained, "It is fascinating how a work this complicated and ancient still teaches us so many profound lessons today! It helps me to understand other religions and realize how similar we all are. We all want the same things; it's just a matter of how we get to them."

"I feel very fortunate and grateful for so many things in my life, and privileged that I am able to help others through my involvement with M'Yad L'Yad," said Ellen in closing.

M'Yad L'Yad Mission Statement

M'Yad L'Yad- Helping Hands, is dedicated to enhancing the lives of the needy in our community. The anonymous pairing of volunteer sponsors with recipients encourages ongoing relationships and provides friendship and dignity, as well as material support.



Our Benefactor's Circle

Anonymous (2)	Hinda & Jerry Ritigstein
Meryl & Stewart Ain	Gloria Safran
Victoria & Hunter Allen	Nina & Julian Sandler
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Rabbi Susie Heneson Moskowitz	The Herman Goldman Foundation
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	Lustig And Hermer LLP

As mentioned on Page 1 in our co-chair's article, M'Yad L'Yad has established the Murray Safran Fund, in memory of our dear friend and board member. This fund will benefit our recipients who have an emergency need or other unique situation requiring additional support. We thank those of you who have already made donations in Murray's honor and memory. Additional donations to the Murray Safran Fund can be designated on the contribution form below.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ e-mail: _____

I would like: (please check)

- Additional information about M'Yad L'Yad
- To volunteer to sponsor a M'Yad L'Yad family
- To join M'Yad L'Yad as a benefactor (min. donation of \$500)
- To make a donation to M'Yad L'Yad of \$ _____
- To make a donation to the Murray Safran Fund \$ _____
- To buy Tribute cards _____ \$5 each _____ 4 for \$18
- M'Yad L'Yad to send a Tribute card (\$5 each) to: _____

Please make my donation or Tribute Card ...

In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

Acknowledgment to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Message: _____

A Message From Our Director

Mark D. Zimmerman, M'Yad L'Yad director,
reports on "Sharing a Hug"

From the very beginning the founders of *M'Yad L'Yad* agreed that anonymity should be a part of our program. They were guided by the knowledge that within Judaism, in order to assure privacy and dignity, anonymity of donor and recipient was one of our most highly regarded ideals. Given that our program recipients would be local families and individuals, people we might well see in our synagogues, classes, or elsewhere, there was the recognition that only with the promise of anonymity could we ensure that recipients would feel comfortable sharing their circumstances with us while accepting assistance.

On occasion, we have been asked by sponsors or recipients if it would be possible to meet their counterparts. Some of our sponsors and recipients have established close relationships through written correspondence while still maintaining the required anonymity of our program. Could they take it to the next level and meet in person? Our answer is no, although we do understand the desire for a more personal connection.

Of course, there are many programs of charitable assistance that do not require anonymity, and which provide wonderful support to those in need. For example, FEGS sponsors an Adopt-A-Family program wherein volunteers are matched with families in need to provide visits and social support. We encourage those of you who would like to establish a more direct connection to someone in need to consider this, or other programs that provide personal contact.

Yet the approach taken by *M'Yad L'Yad* is a great choice for those who prefer privacy, and it is a valuable program for recipients who need assistance, but wish to maintain their own privacy as well. The dignity of all is assured through our program of anonymous matching.

As the director of *M'Yad L'Yad*, I do occasionally have the opportunity to meet some of our recipients. For example, we recently received the donation of a television. We identified a recipient, Sol, who could use this TV, and to save shipping costs, I personally delivered the television to him. Sol, a gentleman in his 80's, lives in a small apartment with his adult daughter who has very serious health problems. Sol had worked in the Jewish community for many years, but now finds himself struggling to support himself and his daughter. He was so pleased to receive the television. His old one didn't work unless he banged on it. He thanked me for the TV as well as for other assistance he has received from *M'Yad L'Yad* and from his sponsor. Before I left, Sol came over to me and gave me a hug. I was so touched by his response, and I felt as if he had given me far more than I had given him.

That hug is what our sponsors give up when choosing to participate in *M'Yad L'Yad's* anonymous program. And so I share that hug with all of you - with the donor of the television, with Sol's sponsor, and with all of you who support *M'Yad L'Yad* and enable us to reach out to people like Sol in an anonymous and dignified fashion.



M'Yad L'Yad - Helping Hands
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