

L'Khaim



!פנים

The Winchevsky Centre Community Newsletter Toronto's Secular Jewish Culture and Education Centre

March/April 2009

Programs at a Glance



March

- Thurs. March 5 7:30 p.m. *"My Journey ... with Detours, Adventures and Adversity" – an IWD event with Sharon Hampson*
- Sun. March 8 1:00 p.m. *"Passport to Purim" – a carnival fundraiser for 'Oy di Velt Vet Vern Yinger'*
- Thurs. March 26 7:30 p.m. *"Grassroots Democracy in Action: Venezuela – A Beacon of Hope for Latin America"*
- Sat. March 28 7:30 p.m. *"Hemingway's Hot Havana" – a theatrical fundraiser for Cuba Hurricane Relief*
- Sun. March 29 11:00 a.m. TSJCS Module 4 begins: *"The Jewish Tradition of Social Action"*

April

- Sat. April 11 4:30 p.m. Sala Caboto **Annual Community Passover Third Seyder**
(see enclosed order form for details)
- Sun. April 19 7:30 p.m. *"I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors" a Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Commemoration*

For event information call 416-789-5502,
email info@winchevskycentre.org
or visit www.winchevskycentre.org.

Executive Report by Marsha Solnicki

What Do You Talk About For So Long at All Those Meetings?



Okay, I better start with full disclosure. Even though we do have a **UJPO Family Membership**, my two university-going sons are very busy with their school work and friends, and don't really pay that much attention to what's happening at the Winchevsky (although I do keep them apprised of events I think would be of interest to them). However, they do see me going to many meetings and they wonder, "What do you talk about for so long at all those meetings?"

I guess the easiest way to answer that question would be to have them come to our **Annual General Meeting** (this year's AGM was on January 18th) and hear for themselves what goes on throughout the year at the Winchevsky. It's through this annual event that members can get an overview of the activities of all the various parts of our organization, and we renew our pride in all of our diverse and rich programming, including annual events at **Holocaust Education Week** and **Jewish Book Fair**. The **Theatre Club** offers an opportunity to see good theatre with friends, and holidays continue to be the best attended events.



Left to right: Elizabeth Hill, Terry Azar, Shelley Cope and Charna Gord.

The **Shule's** new modular format is innovative and exciting, and will hopefully appeal to a wider range of families. The **Kinder Kapers** toddler program has been wildly successful and keeps the Centre jumping with the kind of energy only very young children have!

Camp Naivelt is enjoying a renewed zest and interest from new campers and has a fun and engaging program of events, ranging from aqua fit classes to interesting bagel brunch talks to spectacular theatrical productions!!

And the **Toronto Jewish Folk Choir** continues to have outstanding yearly programs, but does need more singers so that it can keep on nourishing the spirits of audiences, as it has for many decades past.

Halfway through the AGM, **Ruth Grossman** unveiled an entertaining powerpoint presentation of photos and artifacts from the UJPO archives. In fact, a suggestion was made by Shelley Cope to hold an event so that more people could help identify those featured in the photos.



So, for my children, this is just a taste of what we talk about at our meetings. As for everyone else, I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on the fun, important, interesting and relevant happenings at **your** Centre!



United Jewish People's Order (UJPO)

NATIONAL NEWS

What is Jeff Halper's Vision?

Jeff Halper, an Israeli Professor of Anthropology, is co-founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHN) and is a Nobel Peace Prize nominee. Born in Minnesota, he has lived in Israel since 1973. He is currently on an international tour and recently spoke at the Winchevsky Centre on January 22nd.

Using screen-projected maps, Halper compared the boundaries of pre-1967 Palestine to today. He explained that the West Bank has been fragmented by a growing number of Jewish settlements (over 200) and the "security barrier". These walls, twice the height of the Berlin Wall, don't follow the 1967 boundary, but penetrate deep into Palestinian territory to fracture it into fragments of land, cut off from one another by checkpoints.

What does this mean for the proposed two-state solution? Halper believes that the amount of land that remains for Palestinians in the West Bank would be too small and too fragmented to become a viable economic state. Israel would likely retain control of the borders, including the Jordan River, which would result in the control of the area's water resources.



With the fourth strongest military in the world, Halper doesn't believe Israel is threatened with annihilation. But he did say that Hamas miscalculated when they sent rockets into Israel. Israel's response was to bomb Gaza, killing almost 1,300 Palestinians, including 280 children.

Israel uses the argument that it is a victim. Halper puts forth that Israel is not a victim, but rather the active perpetrator of a permanent apartheid regime over all of Israel/Palestine and, at this time, has no intention of ending its occupation. He agrees with **Naomi Klein** who, in her powerful book *The Shock Doctrine*, talked about "warehousing" of people, a system of building walls around those people who are considered surplus, not wanted or needed. Halper thinks Israel is now developing a model of warehousing that in future could be used around the world.



A thoughtful **Jeff Halper** ponders a question from the audience as emcee **Marilyn Kanee** looks on.

If two independent states are no longer viable, and a one-state democratic solution is unlikely – since the Palestinian population is growing faster than the Israeli, and Jewish dominance wouldn't be possible – what is Halper's vision? He believes the eventual resolution could be a form of Middle Eastern common market, similar to the European Union, that will allow both Israel and Palestine to become integrated into the economy of the Middle East and, eventually, live peacefully side by side.

– **Lyn Center**



HOLD THE DATE!

Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (CSJO) 2009 Conference:

"Our Heroes and Heroines - Past, Present and Future"

Friday May 22 - Monday May 25, 2009
Arcadia University, Philadelphia

For more information, visit www.cjsjo.org.

What Can I Expect if I Attend the CSJO Conference & I'm a Teen?

You'll meet secular Jewish teens and young adults from across Canada and the United States, and form friendships that last a lifetime!

We drive down as a group – and the drive is half the fun! You'll be staying in a college dorm for the weekend in rooms with others in your age group (13-25).

During the day, you'll enjoy interactive workshops, developed and led by young people for young people – including our own Winchevsky teens! Workshops focus on such varied topics as Jewish culture, history, ethics, politics, and interactive movement workshops.

The evenings are filled with food, singing, schmoozing, folk dancing, entertainment and great conversation, plus midnight Ultimate Frisbee, a night out in the city of Philadelphia, and a talent show where (almost) anything goes!

Don't miss this life-changing experience! For more information, call 416-789-5502 or come to our:

TEEN INFO NITE

Thursday April 16, 2009
7:00-8:30 p.m.
Winchevsky Centre Lounge



Shule Corner



Inclusive Tu B'Shvat Seyder Interacted With All Our Senses

The Winchevsky Centre is my family's destination on Sunday mornings. We have been attending since my son Graham was five years old and now at age 11, he is in the two-year B'nai Mitzvah Program. The Centre and the Shule have given our family a connection to our Jewish heritage, an understanding of the holidays, and opportunities to interact with 'soulmates'.

On February 9th, we had the pleasure of participating in the **Tu B'Shvat Seyder**. Tu B'Shvat celebrates the importance of trees, the changing seasons, and our connection to both. The hall was set up with many tables, each laden with plates of fresh and dried fruits to taste, and white and red grape juice to toast to and celebrate nature. We all sat down to begin a journey of appreciation for our environment with music, readings and food.

Every section of the seyder (the reading of which was shared by everyone) was introduced with a passage explaining the significance of the holiday, followed by a song, tasting of fruits and ending with a *l'kham* (toast) to protecting an aspect of the environment.



TSJCS student Shira Hunter, with parents Alex and Sylvia.



TSJCS family toasts L'Kham!

Musical guest **Chris McKhool** inspired us all to sing, move to the music and have fun! His presence engaged all of the children, adults and, in particular, my mother. She loves to sing and remarked "What a great program!", and how glad she was to be there. We both enjoyed watching the children's reactions of laughter and actions to each of Chris's original songs.



Chris McKhool sings "No More Trash!"

My husband and son related more to the readings, the focus on the renewal of life after winter, and the rebirth of spring. I was amazed at how each cup of juice and sampling of fruit symbolized the transformation nature and human beings go through, as winter becomes spring.

The Seyder included many moments of reflection, especially how just one change in our own lifestyle can have a positive impact on the environment. "Judaism and Environmental Justice" module leaders **Charles Levkoe** and **Airin Stephens** asked us all to write down a positive environmental act for change on paper leaves and fruits and together, we created a "**Community Environmental Action Tree**" – a visual reminder of our collective power to make change!



TSJCS student holds up his action leaf and fruit for the Community Environmental Action Tree.

This community event was truly inclusive, a presentation that interacted with all of our senses, and offered involvement for all family members. **Bravo!**

– Elyssa Marks



TSJCS Module #4: "The Jewish Tradition of Social Action"

Experience how YOU can be part of the Jewish tradition of social action!

Through skits, crafts and storytelling, **SK-Grade 5 students** will learn about Jewish heroes who struggled for justice.

Righteous biblical prophets, workers for women's rights, writers and poets with mighty pens... meet them all in this module taught by professors **Richard Lee** and **Harriet Rosenberg**.

Classes start:
Sunday March 29
11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

To register, call 416-789-5502.



Upcoming Kinder Kapers Dates:

March 1 & March 29
April 5 & April 19

Kinder Kapers is a fun & interactive Sunday morning program for toddlers (18 months-4 years) and their grownups.

To register, call 416-789-5502.



News from Camp Naivelt

Our summer cottage community

This Year One of Most Successful Mid-Winter Mingles

On February 21st, Camp Naivelt's annual **Mid-Winter Mingle** was held at the Dovercourt Boys and Girls Club. This yearly tradition is one of the many ways the Naivelt community continues to stay together in between the summer months, and this year, we saw one of the most successful mingles, with more people in attendance than I can remember in recent years.



The growing membership in the Naivelt community was well represented, with lots of new faces at the event. It was particularly nice to see so many of the younger generations in attendance alongside these new faces.



Score!
Ezra Lipton,
Emily Chudnovsky,
and Kieran Hinton
enjoy a friendly
game of fuzball.

Lucas Meilach-Boston
Zoe Grossman and
Abby Cope.



I can also happily pass on the information that, for the first time, we were able to run the Mingle and make a profit doing so!

I would like to give thanks to campers **Guy Staughton, Ronit Little, Myles Lipton** and everyone else who helped set up the event. As well, a special thanks to my family, in particular **Michelle Cope**

for her work in organizing and preparing for this event, and **Stephen Cope** for his work in the 'musical accoutrement' department – as much as they are my parents, they really did do a lot to set up for this event, and deserve a special mention!

In closing, thanks to everyone who came out to this year's Mingle. Not only did you help brighten up the winter doldrums, but you managed to collectively bring a wide assortment of potluck dishes that – curiously enough – did not focus heavily on dessert (which has historically been the case). Hopefully, you all managed to have a great time!

– Ben Cope



Casting Call from Ruth Howard!

"Oy Di Velt Vet Vern Yinger" A Remount for Mayworks 2009!!

I am pleased to announce that **Jumblied Theatre** will be presenting a remounted version of our Camp Naivelt summer of 2008 show *"Oy di Velt Vet Vern Yinger"* (Oh The World Will Grow Younger) for the **2009 Mayworks Festival**.

We are excited to be continuing with this project, as it provides an opportunity to bring summer and winter communities and lives together, as well as to refine the piece and share it with more people.

For those of you not familiar with the project, *"Oy di Velt Vet Vern Yinger"* explores the roots and persistent utopian spirit of our own secular Jewish community. The summer production featured a multi-age cast of Naivelters, an audio sound-track of Naivelt voices,

both young and old, as well as characters from the Twelfth Children's Jewish Work Commune in 1920's Russia, based on the research of Professor **Ester Reiter**.

The Mayworks presentation will adapt this show to a Toronto setting, through a multi-media performance and installation that will allow audience members to add their own voices and views. We're not going to attempt to recreate the whole production exactly as it was in the summer; this show will be of a slightly different form and scale, but the spirit of last summer's show will be at its heart.

As both time and budget are limited, we are in the process of coming up with a plan that will not be overly demanding for rehearsals, and will still allow everyone who wants to contribute to take part. And of course, your help and participation are essential ingredients.

Our Maywork's production will be performed the weekend of **May 1-3, 2009**, with an intensive rehearsal schedule the weekend of April 25 and 26, and a few evening rehearsals earlier in April for those people taking on larger performance or musical roles.

Anyone interested and available for at least a portion of the two weekends is welcome to take part. You don't have to have been in the summer show, nor does your family have to own a Camp Naivelt cottage. Younger children under age 12 must bring a grown-up with them.

Please reply as soon as possible to express your interest and availability, or with any questions to: ruth@jumbliedtheatre.org or call me at **416-203-8428**. I will also be holding an information session about the remount at the Winchevsky **"Passport to Purim"** community event being held on **Sunday March 8** as a fundraiser for this Mayworks production (*see Special Events page in this issue for program details*).

Looking forward to hearing from you!

– Ruth Howard



Toronto Jewish Folk Choir

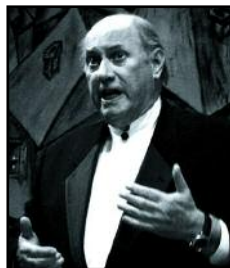
Toronto Jewish Folk Choir Benefit Concert – Way to Go!

Soprano **Miriam Eskin**, a vivacious star of Russian and Israeli musical theatre before her arrival in Canada in the early 1990s as part of the Russian Jewish influx to the country, made headlines singing at the successful Toronto Jewish Folk Choir **Benefit Concert “Yiddish and Broadway Songs”**, held at the Winchevsky Centre on January 24th. It was attended by more than 100 people, and the full house enjoyed moments of precious socializing, as well as delightful musical numbers.

The evening featured traditional Yiddish songs – some of which were delivered in a very tasty jazz format – and a collection of best-loved Broadway songs in English. Versatile pianist-arranger **Nina Shapilsky** provided spirited accompaniment, and guest soloist **Herman Rombouts** added compelling bass vocal selections. Also featured were a silent auction and artwork displays.



Soprano soloist
Miriam Eskin



Bass soloist
Herman Rombouts

This was the first ever such fundraising event for the Choir, which dates back to 1925 when a few Jewish immigrant factory workers got together and founded the **“Freiheit Gezangs Farein”** (Freedom Choral Society), the predecessor of the UJPO’s Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, and gave their first spring concert in 1926 under the baton of Hyman Riegelhaupt.

The turning point in the Choir’s history came in 1939, when **Emil Gartner** took

the Choir to its greatest heights, and established its reputation for memorable annual concerts with a 140-strong chorus. Back in the 1950s, the Choir performed on the stage of Toronto’s **Massey Hall**, accompanied by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Over the years, the Choir continued to achieve a high level of musicality and interpretation of the Yiddish repertoire.

Today, with about 35 members, it is more the size of a chamber choir. It continues to perform a wonderfully rich repertoire under reputable and talented conductor **Alexander Vepriusky**, with world-class accompanist **Lina Zemelman**, regular soloists such as Eskin and Rombouts, as well as orchestral backing as required. It manages an audible feat in a world where Yiddish is no longer regularly spoken, Jewish folk traditions are increasingly overshadowed by religious ceremonial music, and modern Hebrew reigns supreme at the expense of Yiddish and Ladino.

The latest group of singers to join the Choir’s cohorts, as well as its current conductor and accompanist, are all Russian Jews who migrated to Canada during the 1990s. During the last decade, Canadian Jewry grew by 14%, making it one of the fastest-growing communities in the Diaspora. Of all the Jews who immigrated to Canada over the past ten years, 25% were born in the Soviet Union, or its successor states. Benefit Concert’s soloist Eskin is one such known talent in this newly-forming niche in Toronto’s Jewish community .



Miriam Eskin sings alongside pianist **Nina Shapilsky**.

Currently, Canada’s largest Jewish communities can be found in Toronto (175,000), Montreal (100,000) and Vancouver (30,000). The majority of the community is of Ashkenazi descent, but there is also a growing population of French-speaking Moroccan Jews in Montreal. Among our Choir members there are also a number of middle-eastern Sephardic Jews who speak French, Turkish, Arabic and Ladino.

The Choir thus proudly continues to be home to members of various communities within the Canadian Jewish diaspora, and thrives on reflecting the richness of Jewish culture and folklore in its myriad colours.

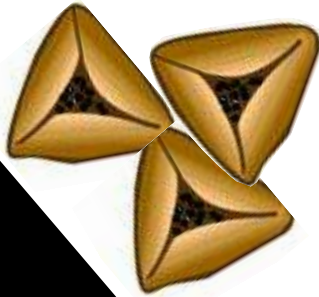
It also performs works on Jewish themes by classical composers and strives to enhance contemporary Jewish culture through the commissioning of new works by Jewish-Canadian composers. Among the well-known composers who have written works for the Choir over the years include John Weinzweig, Louis Applebaum, Milton Barnes, Srul Irving Glick, Ben Steinberg and Leon Zuckert.

We have a busy performing schedule, with regular concerts at Baycrest and for Jewish Music Month. We have also participated in the “Zimriya” Choral Festival, Holocaust Education Week, Festival Canada 1997 (sponsored by the National Arts Centre), and the Ashkenaz Festival, not to mention at numerous Winchevsky Centre events, including this year’s upcoming **Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Commemoration**, being held on **Sunday April 19th** (see events page for program details), and of course, our **Annual Spring Concert**, being held this year on **Sunday May 31st** (watch for details in the May-June issue of *L’Khaim*).

For more information about joining the Choir, our repertoire and/or our upcoming concerts, contact Enid Moscovitch at 416-593-0750 or by email at tjfolkchoir@sympatico.ca.

– **Nergis Canefe**

SPECIAL EVENTS



“PASSPORT TO PURIM”



a fundraising carnival for the remount of
*Oy di Velt Vet Vern Yinger**



ANNUAL PASSOVER THIRD SEYDER

with special musical guests

Adrienne Cooper

David Wall & Marilyn Lerner

- Interactive Purim shpiel with **Lisa Marie DiLiberto**
- Music with **Martin van de Ven**
- Homentash baking (and tasting!)
- Face painting, fortune telling, carnival-style games
- Costume photo booth & parade
- Shalach Mones Project
- 50-50 raffle & prizes

Program Highlights

- **Adrienne Cooper** performing songs reflecting on contemporary issues of conflict and peace-making, complemented by innovative visual projections
- **David Wall & Marilyn Lerner** - award-winning Toronto musicians
- **“Supermatzah!”** – a Passover play performed by **The Winchevsky Wits**
- traditional Passover full-course dinner including wine and ceremonial foods

Saturday April 11, 2009

4:30 p.m.

Sala Caboto at Villa Columbo, 40 Playfair Avenue

(see order form insert for details)

Sunday March 8, 2009

1:00-3:00 p.m.

Members: \$5

Non-members: \$7

** the Jumblies Theatre production that debuted at Camp Naivelt in 2008 will be remounted at Mayworks 2009. Read more in the ‘Camp Column’ of this issue.*





Winchevsky Community Events March & April 2009

Unless otherwise indicated, all events are held at
The Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Avenue (Lawrence & Bathurst area)



*“My Journey ...
with Detours,
Adventures
and Adversity”*

Marking International Women's Day
with special guest
Sharon Hampson

**Thursday March 5
7:30 p.m.**



Canadian treasure **Sharon Hampson** shares her motivating personal story as featured in the impressive anthology *“Living Legacies - A Collection of Inspirational Contemporary Canadian Jewish Women”*.

Her moving story is one of taking risks, trusting oneself, rolling with the punches and moving forward. By sharing her stories, Sharon shows how to use resilience and optimism as a springboard to success and happiness.

From Camp Naivelt to stages around the world, Sharon is well-known for her role in the musical troupe *Sharon, Lois & Bram*, and is a Member of the Order of Canada. A three-time breast cancer survivor, Sharon is the Founding President of WILLOW Breast Cancer Support Canada, and has been active in the breast cancer community since 1993.

She is the recipient of the YWCA 2007 Woman of Distinction Award in the area of Health honoured by the 'Y' for *“singing her way into the hearts of children, and fighting for the health of Canadian women.”*

\$10.00 suggested donation.
Proceeds to **WILLOW**.

*“Grassroots Democracy in Action:
Venezuela – A Beacon of Hope
for Latin America”*

**Thursday March 26
7:30 p.m.**

Dr. Maria Paez-Victor will discuss recent developments in Venezuela which are transforming the country including how Chavez deals with governments' objections to Israeli government policies and charges of anti-Semitism; the Socialist Bolivarian Revolution; and how the challenges facing Latin America affect all of us trying to build a more humane society.

\$10.00 suggested donation.
Proceeds to the **Louis Riel Bolivarian Circle of Toronto**.



“Hemingway's HOT Havana!”

featuring master storyteller
Brian Gordon Sinclair

**in a one-man play to raise funds
for hurricane relief in Cuba**

**Saturday March 28
Doors open at 7:30 p.m.
Performance at 8:00 p.m.**

This bold, rousing, adventure tale is brought to life by author, director and master storyteller **Brian Gordon Sinclair**, who will make you believe that Ernest Hemingway is standing right in front of you!

Light refreshments will be served.

\$15.00 suggested donation.
Proceeds to the **Cuba Hurricane Relief Fund**.
Co-sponsored with the
Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association.

Please bring your old suitcases to donate to 'Not Just Tourists Toronto', which will be used to send medicine to Cuba.

Commemorating
the 66th Anniversary of the



*“I Was a Child of
Holocaust Survivors”*

featuring writer and artist
Bernice Eisenstein

and songs of resistance performed by
The Toronto Jewish Folk Choir

**Sunday April 19
7:30 p.m.**

Uniquely structured and uniquely told, *I Was a Child of Holocaust Survivors* draws on Bernice Eisenstein's memories of her 1950s childhood as the daughter of Holocaust survivors who met in Auschwitz as the war was ending, and were married shortly after its liberation.

This award-winning literary graphic memoir took root in Bernice's imagination several years ago, almost a decade after her father's death; she began with a series of drawings of her father, but realized that pictures alone could not convey what she had to say:

“And so I entered into a dance between pictures and the written word. I had two languages that worked together – to translate the layered meaning of my past, and that of my parents, on to the page.”



This brilliantly crafted memoir has received acclaim around the world for its originality of vision, the startling beauty of its prose and its poignant, haunting artwork.

\$5.00 suggested donation.



Community News

*Please join us in welcoming our
MWS/UJPO Board of Directors,
elected at our AGM on January 18, 2009:*

- Sol Blaser**
- Christine Cushing**
- Howard Kaplan**
- Barbara Lipton**
- Ronit Little**
- Gord Meslin**
- Louise Rosenberg-Lee**
- Marsha Solnicki**

*Thank you to outgoing Board member **Sandra Traub**
and a special welcome to our first youth Board member
Louise Rosenberg-Lee!*



We send get well wishes to...
David Abramowitz
Sol Blaser

Welcome to new UJPO member...
Nergis Canefe



Our heartfelt condolences to...

The Vidal-Duran family on the recent passing of **Adrian Vidal-Duran**, a former cottager at Camp Naivelt.

With sadness, we announce the recent passing of **Loretta Rix** of Berlin, fondly remembered for leading artistic projects at Camp Naivelt and the UJPO on Christie Street.

PASSOVER Food Drive

Every year, the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) holds a Passover Food Drive, which provides food to over 3,000 families in Toronto.

In support of this drive, there will be a **Passover food drop box** outside the Winchevsky office between **Sunday March 8 - Friday March 20, 2009**. Donations must be marked "Kosher for Passover", and boxes of matze stamped '2009'.



"What's New With You?"

*Is there a milestone in your life?
Does your family have exciting news?
We're happy to share your news with our community.*

Best wishes to UJPO member **Jenny Kastner** in her move to Boston. *Keep in touch Jenny!*

*

"Thought I'd share some news as a proud aunt! My nephew Josh Zucker's latest album *"The Chemistry of Common Life"* is nominated for a Juno Award as Alternative Album of the Year. We are very proud of his accomplishments and consider this a continuation of the strong Naivelt musical tradition!"

Marsha Solnicki, UJPO member

Please email news flashes to: lisaroy@winchevskycentre.org

The Winchevsky Centre is home to:

- **United Jewish People's Order**
- **Morris Winchevsky School – Toronto's Secular Jewish Community School**
- **Camp Naivelt**
- **Toronto Jewish Folk Choir**

The Winchevsky Centre, founded on the traditions of social justice and humanism, is committed to making secular Jewish life relevant and accessible through a wide variety of cultural, social and educational programs.



Celebrating our Roots
Transforming our Present
Welcoming our Future

The Winchevsky Centre

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Email: info@winchevskycentre.org
Website: www.winchevskycentre.org

If you wish to correct, add or delete a name from our mailing list, or if you do not wish for your photograph to appear in L'Khaim or on our website, contact L'Khaim editor Lisa Roy.

Your donations are critical in sustaining the important cultural and educational work of the Winchevsky Centre. Tax deductible receipts are issued for donations to the "Morris Winchevsky School" and "Toronto Jewish Folk Choir".