

CENTRE FOR JEWISH LIFE

BENEFIT DINNER

2011 Report



CENTRE FOR JEWISH LIFE
where jews connect

APPEAL

A few years ago, Yossi Vogel approached me with an idea. He and his brother's vision was to fundamentally fill a significant need, which in the immediate future was becoming a serious issue - that reaching out to the younger generation, who for some reason or another, seem to have been and continue to be excluded from our communities, was paramount.

Despite the efforts of many great organizations, it simply appeared that a large group of people were out there, and were going to be left out of our community. The natural conclusion was that we would lose them and countless of generations from the Jewish nation, as in most cases they simply never had the opportunity to be connected with their faith.

The Vogels' vision was to open a centre in the West End which would attract people and reconnect Jews to each other, to their faith.

The challenge that I and the other founding partners - which include, Dr Sam Peltz, Colin Gershinson, Conrad Morris, Alan Lee, Dennis Levine, Edward Mizrahi, Martin Moshal, Alan Samson - set out for them was to continue to use their energy and insight to reach as many people as possible, to build a location that would appeal to all types of people, especially in this modern era, and to conduct the operations with the transparency and fiduciary responsibility of successful financial managers.

A tough challenge, I must say.

I believe that over the past few years, Yossi and his brother Mendy, and with the help of their father Rabbi Faivish Vogel and many other people including all the young people who have spoken tonight, have done a



tremendous job in fulfilling these core goals. As you can see around you, in the video and also in the brochure, the Centre, that most lay leaders and elder members of the London Jewish community did not believe would work, has reached out to:

- » Over 4,700 unique people and over 30,000 visits
- » From 35 different nationalities
- » With almost 350 different programs and events.

This is a tremendous achievement which frankly is incredibly difficult to achieve, and as you know, given my own role as Chairman of St. John's Wood Synagogue, I personally appreciate the significant success that these guys have achieved. **I wish we could all mirror this success.**

This Centre is absolutely crucial in terms of creating a network and centre for people to connect, to learn and to grow as individuals, as members of their community and as Jews.

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With a fall out rate approaching 50% to intermarriage it is absolutely imperative that this function continues to have our support and to grow in its strength.

Reconnecting people to the Jewish faith is absolutely paramount. A simple measurement to illustrate the point is that there are 51 couples who can directly attribute their marriage to the Centre for Jewish Life, where they have met their spouses.

This statistic is tremendous, 51 couples, **wow**, and is absolutely illustrative of the core aspects that we need to continue to achieve.

As you can see in the brochure on the last page, the total cost to run the Centre is approximately £665,000, given the current programs and events. To fund these costs, after receiving approximately £110,000 of ancillary income, the Centre needs at least **£555,000 per year in donations to break-even**.

In the past 3 years, unfortunately the shortfall for expenses has added up to approximately £145,000, with £45,000 alone in the current year. The Centre has grown dramatically in its use, but as we all know, the past few years have been difficult for charities. **We need this dinner to re-stabilise our finances and build our base for the future.**

The Centre for Jewish Life is an extraordinarily important charity and it fundamentally needs your support for it to serve a crucial need for our community.

I think I was asked to give the appeal given my direct personal involvement with many of the charities in the UK and my understating of the importance of The Centre for Jewish Life.

The Centre has been run with absolute clear financial and operational transparency with very clear aims and objectives, to reconnect people to their faith. Whether this has been done via important speakers, a series of networking events, special holiday programs or major Friday night dinners, it works and needs to continue, otherwise **we all lose**.

It complements and does not compete with all of the other good organizations, and of course our own synagogues. **Please remember this organization is about the future, our future and not the past.**

We need your help to build this solid platform and continue to build on our very important characteristics. **Creativity, courage, persistence, leadership, passion** and most importantly **vision** is what made this Centre possible, and with you support, it can continue to thrive and grow to serve as a crucial need for our community.

The Centre has already demonstrated real tangible results now it is crucial to build on its success.

We are clearly looking for significant contributions, and as you can see in the brochure, we welcome patrons and benefactors, and we would appreciate when you do give, you consider this should be one of your important organizations to support.

Thank you

KEITH BRESLAUER