

CENTRE FOR JEWISH LIFE

BENEFIT DINNER

2011 Report



CENTRE FOR JEWISH LIFE
where jews connect

The Centre for Jewish Life’s (CJL) annual benefit dinner held at its West End headquarters gave opportunity not just to highlight another successful year, but “to tell it like it is” to its biggest supporters.

Guests watched member testimonials and pledges of support from many including CJL Advisory Board members, Edward Misrahi, Keith Breslauer, Eduardo Azar and Yuli Edelstein MK, minister for Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs. The CJL’s mission statement and successes were presented by video. MC Jonny Gould kept the event rolling with an air of informality.

In the Words of Rabbi Yosef Vogel, “The evening provided a great opportunity for people to appreciate firsthand the impact that the Centre for Jewish Life has had on so many young Jews”. The dinner raised £110,000 which will go towards the operating costs of the many programs and events provided by the CJL.

The CJL plugs a gaping hole in the London Jewish scene. There are thousands of unaffiliated Jews around Central London who without the weekly programmes of social, educational and business activities would be left without a semblance of any Jewish life to hold onto.

Yosef and Mendy Vogel, architects and visionaries of the CJL presented a gift to Mr. Edelstein, as a mark of thanks for his inspiring speech.

The Centre for Jewish Life continues on an upward course, but everyone connected with an organisation like this knows one thing – its work can never be completed. Continuing good work comes from firm foundations.

EDWARD MISRAHI

Outreach is very important. One Person at a Time. it is something that I am very passionate about. This Centre has managed to touch a chord with a certain portion of the Jewish population in London. The young professionals. They tend to be non-affiliated and have found this Centre where they feel comfortable. The Centre for Jewish Life is very active. One of the things I think that they’ve been able to achieve well is to make it a place where people feel that it’s cool and trendy to come. A place where many other Jewish people their age, come.

EDUARDO AZAR

In welcoming the guest speaker, Yuli Edelstein, Eduardo Azar, recalled a meeting he had with Lubavitcher Rebbe over 20 years ago. The Rebbe was responding to his question as to the Jewish population in the USSR. He was taken aback when the response came “Between one million and seven million” the Rabbi asserted.

Having come to appreciate the precision and exactness of the Rebbe’s use of language, he thought it strange that this figure was very vague. He asked just that. “Well” said the Rebbe “it all depends on you and people like you. If nothing is done, it’s likely to be one million. If we all work at it, the population will rise to even seven million”.



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YULI EDELSTEIN

[I told many stories about my Russian experience, and especially when in prison. The guard who seized my Tefillin from me, started to break the Tefillin over his knee... I lost it... and started to attack the guards.]

It sounds like a very dramatic story, but to me, it's not dramatic at all. Because I promise you that most of you, thank G-d, and would never be in this kind of situation. But I promise you that most of you would have acted in the exact same way, because it's really something on the most basic level. Someone is taking your Tefillin away from you. It's like taking your baby away from you. You are trying to fight. You can't compare the power of the two sides, but you are trying to fight. It's much more difficult when no one is taking away your Tefillin. This is the situation you're facing right here, right now.

No one tells you not to be Jewish. No one tells you not to go to the Shul or not to go to the Jewish centre here, the Centre for Jewish Life. It's only a choice, all the options are there, and this is the most difficult situation. I want to tell you that this success of 4,000 people and yes, 51 couples, and yes, all the activities that you have is an incredible success, because no one is taking away the Tefillin, from you and I sincerely hope that you continue with this success, and I sincerely hope that the dinners will grow. No, not these dinners. This is important, but the Friday night dinners and all the other activities and business activities, you name it, because I think that it's not something happening in London, and even not something that will be happening in Chicago. It's about keeping the Jewish people together, and it's about the common denominator"

THANK YOU

Jewish people as inspired by Jewish tradition, throughout the millennia, have begun their day by saying two words. perhaps the most important words that human being can say to each other. In Hebrew Modeh Ani, in English, Thank you.

Thank you to all of you who are gathered here tonight and to those who are not here tonight. All of you are shareholders in this great effort of reconnecting Jews to each other and to our people. all this would not have been possible without the vital contribution made by each and every one of you.

However, notwithstanding the success we must always remember that our work has barely started. We are aware that the challenge of reconnecting each and every Jew to our people, is immense and the scope for impact is huge. Our success so far is just the tip of the iceberg. In order to attract more people, to impact more Jewish lives, we need to do more. There is no limit to how much further your partnership with the centre for Jewish life can go.

On behalf of everyone who has been touched, inspired or found their better half, by the good efforts of the centre for Jewish life, we say thank you. We hope to make this one of your finest investments.

