

## Cultural Council of the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids

Invites you to



# DUO DMITRI

Luba & Dmitri, piano and flute performers  
with a personal story.



Sunday,  
November 21, 2010  
6:30 p.m.

Temple Emanuel  
1715 East Fulton

Natives of Moscow (Russia), Luba Agranovsky and Dmitri Kasyuk are graduates of the Gnessin Academy of Music in Moscow and the winners of numerous Russian piano and flute competitions.

Since winning both the Israel Broadcast Authority Competition (Jerusalem) and the "Carlo Soliva" International Chamber Music Competition in Casale Monferrato (Italy), their international career took off.

The Duo has made numerous recordings for Israel Radio, Israel TV and also has made highly successful appearances with Israeli Orchestras as flute and piano soloists. During the last ten years they have been performing regularly as Duo and Solo performers in music centers throughout Germany, Italy, England, Scotland, Russia, Israel, USA and Canada. They came to the USA in 1997, where they continue their education and musical careers.

*Dessert reception to follow.*

Individual Tickets

\$10 in Advance / \$12 at the door / Students \$5

*Free Child Care Available – Advance Registration Requested*



Over  
**180,000 elderly**  
Jews in the former  
Soviet Union receive  
hunger relief, medication +  
home care assistance.

.....  
**But 60,000**  
were turned away  
because we don't have  
the resources to help them.  
Your gift will help.

Over  
**45,000 young**  
Jews from over  
60 countries have had  
transformative experiences in  
Israel.

.....  
But many more are  
waiting for their chance.  
Your gift will  
make a difference.

**Every gift  
tells a  
story of love  
and hope**

## Every gift makes a difference



The impact is real. It is tangible.  
And it changes life for the better.

Every gift makes a difference.  
It makes a difference in our neighborhoods  
and in far-off communities around the world.  
And it makes a difference to the people of Israel.

Every gift makes a difference.  
It feeds that old Jewish man in Warsaw  
who hasn't left his apartment in 16 years.

It provides job counseling services to your  
neighbor, the mother of three who was laid-off  
during the economic crisis.

And it supports programs like Birthright Israel that  
inspire a life-long love of Israel and Jewish culture.

## FACT of the week

United Jewish Communities

Did you know that since Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005, Hillel has sent 3,700 young men and women to help rebuild the city? Their Federation-funded work has contributed to the repair of nearly 200 homes. Approximately 500 of Hillel's remarkable college and university students will follow in their predecessors' footsteps and return to the city this year to attend the 2010 Jewish Federations' General Assembly.

*Live Generously.™ It does a world of good.*

**Federation is now on Facebook!**  
**Become a Fan of Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids**

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### OUR MISSION

*Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids supports cultural, social and financial needs of Jews locally, in the State of Israel, and around the world.*

*This mission is accomplished by providing services to the community and through fundraising and allocation efforts.*

## Making the Most of your Campaign 2010 Dollars Young Leadership Challenge Grant

If you are under 40 years of age, any new gift or increase over last year's gift will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$5,000, thanks to the generosity of the Hurwitz and Thodey families through the Hy and Greta Berkowitz Foundation.

## The Louis and Helen Padnos Foundation Challenge Grant

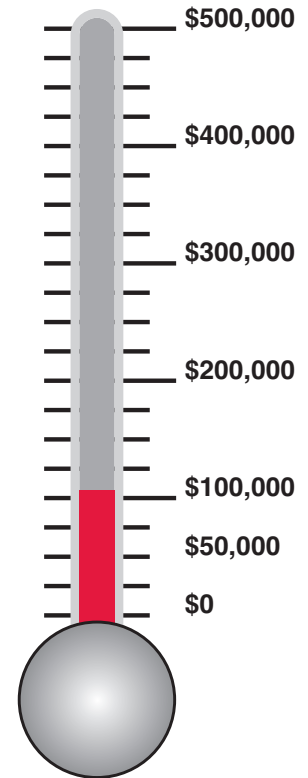
Any new gift and any increase up to \$2,500 to last year's gift will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$20,000.

Please help us meet our goals and raise this additional \$25,000 in challenge grants.

*Now is the Time -  
Please make your  
gift today!*

*Campaign  
Donations  
as of  
October 18,  
2010*

*\$102,000*



## ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

**Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids**  
2727 Michigan NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49546  
(616) 942-5553 email: info@jfgr.org  
www.jfgr.org

## Live Generously.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

*Please consider a 10% increase*

Please cut out this pledge card, fill it in and send it to the Federation office.

I HEREBY PLEDGE TO THE FEDERATION ANNUAL

CAMPAIGN THE SUM OF: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Payment:  Check  Stock

Please charge my:  Mastercard  Visa

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

# FEDERATION NEWS . . .

*Thanks to all who attended our 2010 Women's Campaign event, with guest entertainer Joan Wolfberg, who portrayed Golda Meir.*



*Judy Subar, Toby Dolinka and Joan Wolfberg (AKA Golda Meir)*



*A special event was held recently in honor of our major donors with guest violinist Pavel Ilyashov.*



# SENIOR PROGRAMMING . . .

## Seniors Hibachi Lunch Bunch



Seniors - don't miss the Community Chanukah Party this year sponsored by Chabad, Federation & United Jewish School. Kosher Deli luncheon at Temple Emanuel at 12:30 pm on Sunday, December 5  
Please call Ann at 942-5553 for transportation!

*Jewish Theatre Grand Rapids Presents*

### *Dividends*

*Seniors will be gathering at  
Temple Emanuel parking lot on*

**Sunday, November 14, 2010  
at 2:15**

*In order to carpool to  
GRCC Spectrum Theater, 160 Fountain St., NE*

**For rides, please call Ann – 942-5553**

*If you are driving and are willing to take a couple more  
passengers, please call Ann*

### **NAVIGATING MEDICARE**

*If you have questions, MMAP can help.*

MMAP is a free service that can help  
you make health benefit decisions.

**Call toll-free 1-800-803-7174  
or visit [www.mmmapinc.org](http://www.mmmapinc.org).**

MMAP is Michigan's SHIP, the State Health Insurance  
Assistance Program, and SMP Provider.

MMAP works with the Area Agencies on Aging to provide  
objective health benefit information and counseling, and is sup-  
ported by a statewide network of unpaid and paid skilled pro-  
fessionals.

You can speak with a MMAP counselor by telephone. You  
can schedule an appointment to meet in person. If you are  
homebound, a counselor will meet you where you live. You can  
visit [www.mmmapinc.org](http://www.mmmapinc.org) to find your local AAA agency.

*~ Save the Dates ~*

### **Upcoming Lunch Bunch Dates:**

**Thursday, December 16, 2010  
and Monday, January 10, 2011**

*Location to be announced*

## **LUNCH BUNCH!**

**Wednesday,  
November 10**

**11:30 a.m. at**

**Shiraz Grille**

*(A Persian Cuisine Experience)*

**2739 Breton Rd. SE**

**Cost: \$8.00**

**Please RSVP by Monday, November 8  
to Ann at 942-5553**

***Transportation is available  
if you call the office***

## Congregation Ahavas Israel

### Sanctuary Shabbat

**November 6 - Jeffrey Haus,**

Associate Professor of History and Religion  
and Director of Jewish Studies  
at Kalamazoo College,  
**“Challenges of Equality:  
Being Jewish in the Modern World”**

### Congregational Shabbat Lunch

**November 6**

*Come for services ... stay for a  
light lunch following.  
Sponsored by the Religious Life Committee.*

### Kabbalat Shabbat

**November 26, 6:00 p.m.**

*Join us once a month in welcoming  
Shabbat with song and prayer.*

*Looking forward to ...*

### Shabbat Mincha and Seudah Shelisheet

**Every Saturday in December at 4:45 p.m. –  
Sanctuary Shabbat**

## Temple Emanuel

### Community Interfaith Thanksgiving Service



**Monday,  
November 22, 2010**

**7:00 pm**

**TEMPLE EMANUEL**

**ALL ARE WELCOME!**

**G**raced with unity and diversity, we come  
together to give thanks and praise for the  
blessings we have received.

**P**rayers, sacred readings, music and a  
message will be woven together in  
an offering of gratitude from many faith  
traditions.

Temple Emanuel is located at  
1715 East Fulton Street  
616-459-5976

## Chabad House

### Chabad Kid Club!

**November 11**

### Chabad Kids Cafe

*Surprise and pleasantly shock your families as you learn to  
cook a full dinner and serve it to them.*

**R.S.V.P. by November 8**

**December 2**

**Yes we CAN!**

*Bring your canned goods and contribute to a Grand Can  
Menorah. All the cans will be donated to needy families.  
Festivities include a Chanukah Bash with fun holiday activities!*

*Contributions of can goods to help create the Greatest Can  
Menorah can be dropped off at 2615 Michigan St.  
After Chanukah the cans will be given to the needy.*

**R.S.V.P. by November 29**

*Chabad Kids Club is the place for Jewish children to have a  
great time, be proud of your Judaism and make a difference!*

**Ages: 5-10 year olds • Time: 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.**

**Place: 2615 Michigan St. • Cost: \$8 per club**

**For more information call Chayale @ 706-8019  
or e-mail [cmw770@gmail.com](mailto:cmw770@gmail.com)**

*~ SAVE THE DATE ~*

## GAN ISRAEL WINTER CAMP

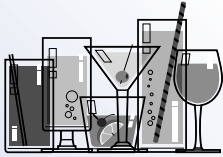
**December 21 & 22**

**Call Chayale  
for more info @  
616-706-8019**

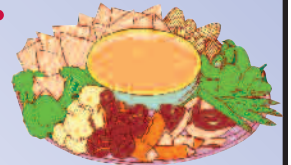
## Torah on Tap Returns –

Please RSVP

**Tuesday, November 16 • 7 p.m.**



**Graydon's Crossing Derby Station  
Grand Rapids, MI**



2237 Wealthy St SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

**New facilitator . . . Rabbi Tzi Muller**

*Rabbi Tzvi Muller serves as the Educational Director at the Weiss Family Partners in Torah of Metropolitan Detroit and as Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Jewish Values in Jerusalem. The Just Say Know to Judaism! series he offers at the West Bloomfield JCC has become a sensation in the community and has been met with unprecedented enthusiasm and participation.*

### **AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?**

**WHEN WE ARE MISTREATED**

This presentation offers Judaism's guidelines of how to face a situation in which someone hurts or offends us. How do we shield ourselves? Can we turn a foe into a friend? How can we become stronger and more loving people in the face of adversity? This session will be led by Rabbi Tzvi Muller in an entertaining, inspiring, and informative manner.

Sponsored through a generous grant from the Ravitz Foundation

All welcome – RSVP to [jeff@jfg.org](mailto:jeff@jfg.org)



## **YAD Mah Jongg**



*Join us at our next game!*

**Sunday Nights at 7:00 pm**

**November 7 • November 21**

For more information, call Michele Young at 828-4806

*Beginners welcome! No experience necessary.*

Contact Michele Young

For Details of Location



*The Chabad House, UJS and the Jewish Federation  
invite the entire community*

## CHANUKAH KLEZMERIZED!



*This event will feature*  
**“Klezmer Fusion Band”**  
**and Kosher Deli Lunch**

*Authentic Jewish music, Israeli circle dance,  
Yiddish swing, waltz or lullaby.  
If you can't sing it or dance to it, they don't play it.*

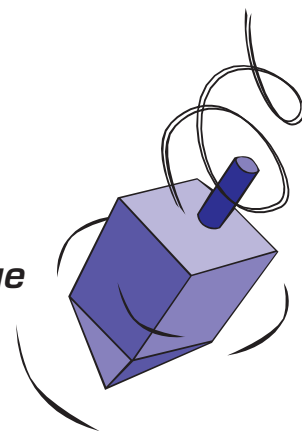
*Don't know the dances or too embarrassed to try to learn?  
Klezmer Fusion will lead and teach you Israeli circle and  
line dances, many of them basic and easy to follow.*



**Sunday December 5**  
**Temple Emanuel**  
**12:30pm - 2:30pm**

*All UJS students and staff are FREE of charge  
\$4.00 admission for others*

Admission Includes:  
Kosher Deli lunch  
Sofganiot (traditional jelly donuts for Chanukah)  
Arts and Craft center  
Ann Arbor's "Klezmer Fusion Band" concert  
Dance Instruction



**RSVP to Sari@jfgf or the Federation office 942-5553 by November 21**



## Cultural Council of the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids 2010-2011 Spectrum Series



### **DUO DMITRI** Luba & Dmitri, piano and flute performers with a personal story.

Sunday, November 21, 2010  
6:30 p.m.

Temple Emanuel  
1715 East Fulton

Natives of Moscow (Russia), Luba Agranovsky and Dmitri Kasyuk are graduates of the Gnessin Academy of Music in Moscow and the winners of numerous Russian piano and flute competitions.

### **CHICKENFAT KLEZMER ORCHESTRA** Chicago based Klezmer group

Co-sponsored by The Grand River Folk Arts Society  
Saturday, January 22, 2011 • 8:00 p.m.

Temple Emanuel  
1715 East Fulton



ChickenFat Klezmer Orchestra formed at the Old Town School of folk music in Chicago, and plays various klezmer styles influenced by vaudeville, Roma, Greek, Romanian, Turkish and Bulgarian music.

### **CHARLES ASHER SMALL**

"Understanding the  
Challenges of Iran and  
Anti-Semitism"

Saturday, February 12, 2011  
8:00 p.m.

Temple Emanuel  
1715 East Fulton



Charles Asher Small is the Director of the Yale Initiative for the Interdisciplinary Study of Anti-Semitism and the Director and Founder of the Institute for the Study of Global Anti-Semitism and Policy.



### **AMIR GWIRTZMAN** Jazz Musician – "The Pied Piper of Israel"

Spring of 2011

*Date & Location To Be Announced*

Israeli multi-instrumentalist Amir Gwirtzman has performed worldwide as a solo jazz musician and a member of the acclaimed Israeli world music band Esta.

### **ISRAEL SCOUTS FRIENDSHIP CARAVAN SHOW** Singing and dancing their way into your heart

Summer of 2011  
Back by popular demand!



### **Cultural Council of the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids Spectrum Series 2010 – 2011 Membership Form**

Please send me season tickets for **Spectrum 2010 – 2011**

- I/We would like to be an Underwriter – \$500 and up  
 I/We would like to be a Patron – \$250 – \$499  
 I/We would like to be a Sponsor – \$125 – \$249  
 I/We would like a Family membership – \$75  
 I would like a Single membership – \$50  
 I would like to be a Cultural Council Volunteer, please contact me

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my Check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payable to **The Jewish Cultural Council**

Please mail this form with your check to:

**The Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids  
Spectrum 2010 – 2011**

2727 Michigan NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506-1240



## Beit Sefer B'yahad/ United Jewish School

1715 East Fulton, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

616-459-5976 • Fax: 616-459-6510

Pam Rush - School Director

pam@templemanuelgr.org www.unitedjewishschool.org

UJS held its annual Blessing of the Pets service on 10-3-10. Lots of dogs, cats, and other furry and not so furry animals were present to receive their special blessing. Special musical guest Marc Rossio also entertained with great music.

11-21-10 UJS Open House - We have school open houses once a month for those that like to hang out during Sunday school. Come enjoy a "good" cup of coffee and a nosh. Kibbitz with friends, surf the internet (the building is wireless) or just watch and relax.

Thank you to Carly Fishman who designed our beautiful new UJS T-shirt.

School  
Calendar

### November is Jewish Book Month

11-7-10	Guest reader – Judy Subar – <i>Something from Nothing</i>
11-14-10	Guest author - Karrie Korroch – <i>Jewish Folk Tales</i>
11-14-10	Special musical guest Mark Bloom
11-21-10	UJS Open House 10:00-12:30pm
11-24-10	No midweek Hebrew Thanksgiving
11-28-10	No Sunday School Thanksgiving



## Chanukah "KLEZMERIZED"

UJS Chanukah celebration features "**Klezmer Fusion Band**" playing authentic Jewish music, fraylachs and horas, a rousing Israeli circle or line dance, Yiddish swing, waltz or lullaby. If you can't sing it or dance to it, they don't play it.

**When: Sunday December 5**

**Where: Temple Emanuel • Time: 12:30 – 2:30**

All UJS students and staff are FREE of charge • \$4.00 admission for others



**KOSHER DELI LUNCH**

**Sofganiot (traditional jelly donuts for Chanukah)**

**Arts and Craft center**

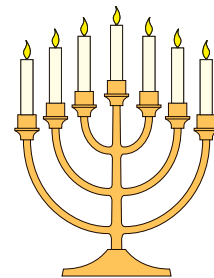
**Concert featuring "Klezmer Fusion Band"**

**Dance Instruction**

*All are welcome to participate. This is a community event.  
All UJS students are expected to participate!*

## Happy Chanukah!

### SUPPORT OUR ANNUAL ADOPT-A-FAMILY PROGRAM!



*The Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids confidentially matches anonymous donors with families in need of generosity and kindness.*

**Please consider sponsoring a family or making a donation.**

In addition, we need to identify members of our community who could benefit from this extra support.

*Please call or email our Director of Social Services to make a donation or suggest a family for adoption.*

Ann can be reached at 942-5553 or [ann@jfgr.org](mailto:ann@jfgr.org)

**Jewish Theatre  
Grand Rapids  
presents**



By Gary Richards • Directed by Barbara Wepman

**November 11, 13, 18, 20 at 8 p.m.**

**November 14, 21 at 3 p.m.**

**Spectrum Theater**

Second Floor Black Box Theater

160 Fountain NE

Box Office: 616-234-3946

Beginning October 25 for Season Subscribers

All others beginning November 1

*Dividends* is a warm and tender play about tradition, caring, change, and love. How well does any grandson really know his grandfather? Through past memories and their present relationship, *Dividends* explores the generation gap between Neal and his grandfather who is in the hospital nearing the end of his life. Despite their distant relationship in the past, Neal finds himself looking after Pops and, along the way, learning a great deal about his life and unfulfilled dreams, and ultimately helping him achieve one of those dreams. Critics have described *Dividends* as "delightful, absorbing, charming, and heartfelt!"

### JEWISH COMMUNITY ROSTER

Something beautiful is growing around here thanks to our loyal advertisers and a great team effort.

As the long-awaited version of the Jewish Community Roster is nearing completion, we need your assistance. If you or anyone you know has had a change of address or phone number since the last edition, please let us know. We also need to know if you have adult children living at home (or in the city) who should be included in the book.

Please call either Eileen at 949-6444 or Janice at 676-8141. Thank you for your help.



## Global Day of Jewish Education

**Sunday, November 7, 10 am – A Taste of Talmud  
at Temple Emanuel**

The Grand Rapids Jewish community will join the international Jewish community in celebrating the completion of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz's translation of the Talmud. Rabbi Steinsaltz will culminate nearly five decades of groundbreaking work translating the Talmud, making it accessible to all Jewish people. The Global Day of Jewish Learning will honor that achievement by bringing together Jewish communities around the world in a historic, unifying celebration.

### The classes are as follows:

10:00 am - Rabbi Schadick "Some Values of the Talmud"

10:50 am - Rabbi Weingarten "How can the Talmud be part of your daily life?"

11:40 am - Rabbi Krishef "The Talmud they never taught you in Hebrew school."

RSVP to  
Federation  
942-5553

### UNITY

The Jewish people will come together on November 7 in the exploration and celebration of their shared culture, texts and history.

### CELEBRATION

While we are celebrating the momentous achievement of Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, we are also celebrating the text that unites Jews from around the globe. The Grand Rapids Jewish community will participate in this celebration by coming together to learn as a community.

### LEARNING

Rabbi Steinsaltz's mission is based on the conviction that the foundational texts of our heritage belong to us all. It is upon this pillar that the Global Day of Jewish learning stands: the Day reminds us that - while we may be dispersed across the globe - we are bound together through our sacred sources and values.

## HADASSAH BOOK CLUB

Thank you to Karen Haight for hosting  
the October meeting and to Flory Silverstein  
for being a wonderful facilitator.

The next book club meeting is:

**December 8, 2010, 7:15 pm**

at Sue Remes' home

3403 Burton Ridge Rd. SE

RSVP (a must): 949-3505



Book to read: *Little Bee* by Chris Cleave

February meeting:

**February 9, 2011, 7:15 pm**

Book: *The Help*

by Kathryn Stockett

*We are your Faithful Book Ends . . .*

Flory Silverstein – 949-5766

& Sue Remes – 949-3505



WE'RE HAVING A  
**BLOOD  
DRIVE**



**Sunday,  
December 12**  
starting at 10 a.m.  
*at Temple Emanuel*



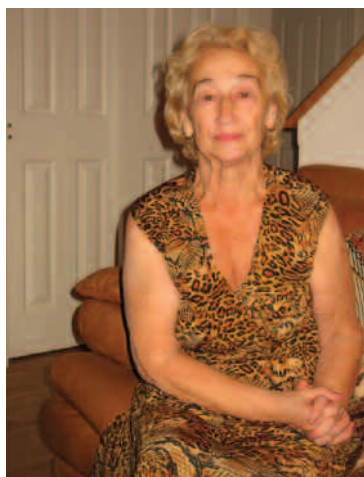
## Russian emigre, 83, ends long path to freedom

*A widowed physician is granted permission to join daughter in NJ*

(August 4, 2010) – At 83, Raisa Sirota is enjoying her first taste of American life.

A physician from St. Petersburg, Russia, she was granted refugee status about a year ago, and arrived in West Orange in April, where she is living with her daughter and son-in-law, Evgenia and German Laufer.

Her arrival culminated a three-year battle with Russian immigration authorities, resolved with the assistance of HIAS, the international Jewish migration agency.



Raisa Sirota, 83, immigrated to New Jersey from Russia in April. She lives in West Orange with her daughter and son-in-law.

Sirota was among the approximately 200 Russian Jews per year who are given the status of refugees, according to HIAS, which — despite the large exodus of Jews from the former Soviet Union over the past 20 years — still monitors the persecution of Jews and other minorities in Russia and neighboring countries.

Asked what she likes best about living here, her eyes lit up and a broad smile broke out across her face. “Freedom,” she said,

with her daughter and son-in-law translating during a reporter’s visit to their home.

Then she laughed. “I have finally found what Khrushchev and all the Soviet leaders always promised communism would bring: the perfect society where everyone is happy. My whole life was filled with shortages, difficult relationships, constant fear of being Jewish,” she said. “Now, I have come to a country that must be communist — everything is perfect!”

In a conversation followed by homemade blinis, salmon caviar, cookies, and tea served in porcelain cups brought from St. Petersburg, she described living through

historic events, what it meant to be Jewish in Russia, and her ordeal trying to finally leave Russia.

Sirota was born a decade after the October Revolution into a family of prominent doctors on her mother’s side. Her mother was a physician and her father was an engineer. The family spoke Yiddish and celebrated Jewish holidays at home, but Sirota learned early to fear being Jewish.

“We were afraid to go to synagogue — my parents could lose their jobs,” she said, according to Evgenia and German’s loose translation.

Only her uncle was allowed to purchase matza for Passover. He had lost a leg in World War II, and “no one would touch him,” she said.

“Everybody was also always a little bit afraid to visit the Jewish cemetery, afraid someone was watching. We just had this feeling. We were always afraid. As a Jew all the time when I was growing up in Leningrad, I had a sense I could be punished or oppressed at any time.”

She was 14 when the siege of Leningrad began in 1941. “We went without food, electricity, without water. My mother wouldn’t let us go out of the house. She was afraid someone would eat us.” Her mother eventually succumbed to the famine and sickness that contributed to the deaths of an estimated one million people during the siege. She was just 43 and left behind Raisa, her brother, and their father.

The war, however, offered Sirota one opportunity that would be closed for decades to Jews: the chance to go to medical school in 1944. The war effort needed doctors, regardless of nationality, and she was admitted.

But not long after she started working as a pediatrician in a clinic, she was caught in the Doctors’ Plot, a largely anti-Semitic campaign conceived by Stalin to persecute physicians and other intellectuals.

She nearly lost her license to practice medicine.

“There was so much propaganda that Jewish doctors wanted to kill people. Everyone was afraid to be treated by Jewish physicians,” she said. “I was the only Jewish doctor in the clinic where I worked. I went to visit a family, and I prescribed Vitamin D for a baby — this boy had a lot of problems stemming from vitamin deficiencies. But the mother was afraid to give him the vitamins, because of the propaganda. She thought it could be poison.

“In my clinic, everyone tried to create a case against me. The baby became worse because the mother didn’t give him vitamins. Everyone said he became worse because I gave him the wrong treatment. But the woman was honest and she said she didn’t give the medicine I had prescribed. They opened a huge case against me.”

After Stalin’s death in 1953, his successors dropped the show trials and the overt propaganda against Jewish

physicians.

“Fortunately, Stalin died and that saved my life,” she said. “Otherwise, who knows, I might have had to go to Siberia with my baby,” she said, referring to Evgenia.



Photo of Raisa, bottom row, second from left, as a young woman in Russia. Photo courtesy of Raisa Sirota.

## Too old to move?

The anti-Semitism never stopped. She wanted to complete the equivalent of a fellowship, or continuing medical education. “Somebody else was always sent, even those who weren’t interested. Nobody ever said ‘it’s because you’re Jewish,’ but everyone knows it’s understood.”

Patients remained reluctant to call her because she was Jewish, she said.

She ultimately switched specialties, becoming a radiologist in 1960. But even there, she felt hostility from her colleagues, she said.

And yet when emigration restrictions on Soviet Jews were relaxed in the 1980s, Sirota stayed in Leningrad. In 1990, Evgenia immigrated to Israel, where she has a daughter from a previous marriage. Later she moved to the United States and married Laufer.

Why did Sirota stay?

“I understood that I never could be a physician [anywhere else], not only because of the language barrier,” she said.

And by the time the doors opened for Soviet Jews, Sirota and her husband, also a physician, were already in their 60s. They felt they were too old to start again.

Despite the new openness of the Gorbachev regime and those that followed, Sirota saw no shift in popular attitudes toward Jews.

“When you’re a Jew in Russia, you feel it in your skin,” she said. “People don’t change that quickly. In everyday life, I didn’t feel any different.”

In 2000, she and her husband decided it was time to

go. By the time their application was accepted, however, he had grown very ill and they could not make the trip. After he died in 2005, she could not immigrate because his name had been on the application.

Her apartment was near a synagogue. She thought she could finally learn about Judaism without fear of reprisals from government agents. But little had changed in society. She had stones thrown at her, swastikas drawn in the hallway of her apartment. One day, someone pushed her down and said, “Jew, what are you still doing here? Why don’t you leave?” she recalled.

Three years ago, she decided to reapply. But the interview went poorly.

“They were aggressive, very hostile. There was a wall separating us and I spoke through a translator. They questioned everything and were very negative. They didn’t hear me, they didn’t trust me.” Her application was denied.

Evgenia called HIAS, and its Moscow director, Leonard Terlitsky, became involved. HIAS helped coordinate the appeal on both sides of the ocean, managing legal formalities, sending letters to the American Embassy, helping Sirota meet various medical requirements, visiting with her in Leningrad, and calling both mother and daughter every step of the way.

Sirota’s case is “quite unusual,” according to HIAS’ Genever McBain, in that she was granted permission to leave after declining to use the initial permission and then had a second application denied. But, McBain said, “It does happen occasionally.”

A year ago, Sirota was granted permission to leave.

Sirota has reconnected with people who immigrated long ago, including an old close friend from medical school who happened to attend the same adult day care center in Jersey City where she spends some of her time. She continues to be in touch with staffers at HIAS. “We are very grateful to [all of them] for their attention to my mother’s situation and valuable advice,” said her daughter.

Asked what it means to her to be Jewish here in New Jersey, Sirota said, “For the first time, I feel no pressure. I feel wonderful! Now I’m just a normal person,” she said. “I meet people from different backgrounds and I don’t feel different, and there’s no tension. I’m feeling very happy!”



Photo of Raisa as a young woman in Russia. Photo courtesy of Raisa Sirota.

## Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids Endowments

Life cycle times, both happy and sad, are traditional times to make donations to Jewish causes. You can make a donation of \$5 or more to the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids in honor or in memory of members of our community. We then will acknowledge that donation with a card to that individual or family. This is a wonderful way to send your good wishes and be able to fulfill the mitzvah of tzedakah.

Please be sure to indicate what the occasion is and who is to receive the card. Please specify which of the following funds you would like your donation to be credited to:

- **The Woman of Valor Fund** - (\$10 minimum contribution). To honor the women in our lives who have made a difference personally, locally, or nationally.
- **The Federation General Endowment/L'Dor Vador Fund** - To help ensure the continued work of the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids for now and the future.
- **The Julian and Judith Joseph Fund** - To provide for local programming and events through the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids.
- **The David and Susan Samrick Youth Scholarship Fund** - To provide scholarships to Jewish sleep away camps and experiences.
- **The Chuck and Maxine Shapiro Fund** - To help ensure long-term aid to Israel and Jews around the world.
- **The Louis and Louise Weiner Fund** - To help ensure local programming for seniors in the Grand Rapids Jewish Community.
- **The Jerry and Judy Subar Fund** - To help ensure funding for overseas Jewish communities' needs.
- **The Leven Family Fund** - To establish and provide Jewish facilities, and support for cooperative programming among the congregations that support Jewish education for our youth.

*Thank you for supporting the  
Grand Rapids Jewish Community*

### **The David and Susan Samrick Youth Scholarship Endowment Fund**

To honor Chani Liberow  
From Judith and Julian Joseph

### **The Louis and Louise Weiner Fund**

In loving memory of our son, Nikolay Rapeyko  
From Lidiya and Vilen Rapeyko



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No matter where or when in the future, you can be there to provide for the Jewish community. Your will makes it possible. Leaving a bequest to the Jewish community enables you to create a permanent legacy that can help Jews in need forever. Learn how you can help preserve the Jewish community – for years to come.

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**Next Issue's Information Deadline: November 17, 2010**

**On the second Tuesday of every month,**  
families depend on food donations from the  
**Food Bank at Temple Emanuel.**

Drop off food donations between 10 am - 2 pm Monday through Friday at Temple Emanuel  
or mail checks payable to Temple Emanuel and specify the donation is for the Food Bank.

Temple's Address: 1715 E. Fulton, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

**FEDERATION APPRECIATES OUR  
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**NANCY SMITH**

**FOR DRIVING OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**