

The following programs are underwritten by the Rubin Family Educational Fund of the Jewish Federation.

Daniel Leisawitz & Ted Merwin presentations are FREE events.

Questions: Jayne Kleinman (610)921-0624; JayneK@JFReading.org

**Evocation of the
Lost World of the Roman Ghetto:
The Poetic Project of Crescenzo Del Monte**

Thurs. Nov. 13 -- 7:00pm at the JCC

*The research of the culture and
cultural production of the Jews of Italy*

Crescenzo Del Monte was born in the Ghetto of Rome in 1868, two years before it was dismantled and its inhabitants were granted full rights of citizenship in the newly united Kingdom of Italy. Over the course of his life, Del Monte witnessed the full integration of Jews into Italian society, which resulted in the rapid rise of Jewish Italians in the social, political, economic and intellectual life of the nation, but also led to a loss

of cohesion in the ancient Jewish community. In particular, integration into the broader society led to the demise of the particular dialect of the Jews of Rome, which had developed over the centuries of their semi-isolation in the heart of the city. Del Monte dedicated his life's work to the documentation and presentation of this rich dialect, and sought, through poetry, to erect a memorial monument of words for a vanishing world. Prof. Leisawitz will share the history, sights and sounds of the old Roman Ghetto through an exploration of the poetry of Crescenzo Del Monte.

Daniel Leisawitz is lecturer in Italian and director of the Italian Studies Program at Muhlenberg College. He received his Ph.D. in Italian Studies from Yale University in 2010, and holds a Masters degree in Italian Studies from the University of Pennsylvania. His main areas of research are Italian cinema and Renaissance literature. He has published several scholarly articles and has recently completed a translation of a forthcoming book on cinema in the 21st-century, which is due out early next year from Columbia University Press.

Lunch and Learn

December 12 -- 11:00am at the JCC

**"Homeland for the Jewish Soul:
The Jewish Deli"**

Stay for a free deli lunch
following the presentation



TED MERWIN

During the interwar era in New York, as the children of Jewish immigrants began to move into the mainstream of American society, the Jewish deli became a popular gathering place in the burgeoning outer-borough Jewish neighborhoods, as well in the entertainment district in Times Square. The Jewish deli became a gathering place on par with the synagogue, one in which

overstuffed pastrami or corned beef sandwiches symbolized nothing less than the achievement of the American Dream. Over time, as delis sprouted up around the country, the deli also became an iconic part of American popular entertainment. From Yiddish vaudeville star Aaron Lebedeff's 1920s signature song, "Rumania, Rumania" to the John Belushi's 1976 SNL skit, "Samurai Deli," to Rob Reiner's 1989 film, "When Harry Met Sally," the Jewish deli and its fare became emblematic of Jewish culture for Jews and non-Jews alike.

Ted Merwin, Ph.D. is a professor, writer, journalist and noted public speaker. He is a dynamic, charismatic, entertaining lecturer on Jewish food, clothing and popular culture. He has given more than a hundred public lectures on Jewish culture in the last several years. He is the author of *In Their Own Image: New York Jews in Jazz Age Popular Culture*, as well as of a forthcoming book on Jewish food, *Pastrami on Rye: An Overstuffed History of the Jewish Delicatessen*.

"People fall into two distinct categories...people who like delicatessen and people who don't like delicatessen. A man who is not touched by the earthy lyricism of hot pastrami, the pungent fantasy of corned-beef, pickles, frankfurters, the great lusty impertinence of good mustard—is a man of stone and without heart."

—Herb Gardner, *A Thousand Clowns*

These events are free of charge, but we need to know how many will be attending so that we may plan accordingly.

Call Jayne at 610-921-0624 or return form to Jewish Federation, PO Box 14925, Reading PA 19612

Number attending:

_____ November 13; Daniel Leisawitz

_____ December 12; Ted Merwin (RSVP by 12/1)