



Subscriber Services

Social Networking
for the web generation

CJN

Headlines: The House finds a new home

Subscribe Contest RSS Advertise Mediakit



Wednesday, July 22, 2015

Member Login:

Email: * Postal Code: *

6th of Av, 5775

Shabbat times for Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Candle lighting: 8:31pm on Friday, 24 Jul 2015
 This week's Torah portion is Parashat Devarim
 Shabbat Chazon occurs on Saturday, 25 Jul 2015
 Erev Tish'a B'Av occurs on Saturday, 25 Jul 2015
 Havdalah (45 min): 9:33pm on Saturday, 25 Jul 2015

[Shabbat times for Montreal](#)

Home News Opinions Education Culture Lifestyle eCJN Past Articles Social Special Sections Contact Us

Community garden is therapeutic for its users

Jodie Shupac, Staff Reporter, Tuesday, June 30, 2015

Tags: Canada David Pinkus Fran Chodak Jewish Family & Child JF&CS Kensington Market Kiever shul Maxie's Garden Sabrina Malach Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs

0 Comments



Sabrina Malach, left, of Shoresh and Frances Creed, a JF&CS client, working in Maxie's Garden. JODIE SHUPAC PHOTO

TORONTO — In the living room of the Kensington Market home he's lived in since 1927, David Pinkus, 91, watches television.

People periodically slip back and forth through the hallway that runs the length of the house — it's the sole thoroughfare connecting the bed of wildflowers in the front yard to the vegetable garden out back.

Pinkus takes the commotion in stride.

"At my age, you can't go into isolation. That's the worst thing for an elderly person," he said.

Pinkus was approached by the charitable organization Shoresh Jewish Environmental Programs last year

and struck up a partnership in which Shoresh runs a community garden program out of his backyard.

Named "Maxie's Garden" after Pinkus' late brother, with whom used to share the Nassau Street home, the plots where the brothers once grew tomatoes are now tended for 25 weeks by about five adults who are clients of the downtown branch of Jewish Family & Child (JF&CS).

The latter has partnered with Shoresh on the initiative and is funding it, and the clients participating are typically dealing with challenges such as poverty or mental health issues.

For the second straight growing season, the group has been spending several hours each Thursday learning basic gardening skills alongside Shoresh's director of community outreach, Sabrina Malach, and members are growing an array of organic herbs and vegetables, including basil, dill, lettuce, beans, kale, zucchini and tomatoes.

They get to take home whatever they produce.

Frances Creed, a program regular, said growing vegetables has inspired her to incorporate more fresh produce into her diet.

"I love having my hands in the earth and seeing things grow. Being around nature is really calming, and I think it's good for our egos, because we start from nothing and grow something beautiful," she said.

Fran Chodak, a social worker at JF&CS who often joins the clients in the garden, said the program has many benefits: it allows participants to learn new skills, get physical exercise, spend time outdoors and avoid social isolation.

"Therapy can happen in a lot of different ways," she noted.

Malach said the program isn't as much about food security as about "the wow factor" — that sense of being uplifted by nature.

"People are coming here feeling really heavy, really dark, really depressed, and they walk into the backyard and go, 'Wow, look at what I planted. I made life happen. I'm alive,'" she said.

Other programs of Shoresh, whose mandate is to foster a Jewish community that embraces environmental

Search: Go

Look again, you can afford us! Call about summer pricing.

Living Life
ON THE AVENUE
RETIREMENT RESIDENCE

416-483-9900

Reuben Clinic
Two Neptune Drive
A Baycrest Residential Property

Rental Suites Now Available
For Independent Senior Living

Age 65+ One and Two Bedroom Suites Available

Baycrest Two Neptune Drive, Toronto, ON M6A 3E6

SENIOR RABBI

Adath Israel Congregation

Due to the untimely passing of our Senior Rabbi, Steven Saltzman (RIP), we are now searching for an experienced and dynamic Rabbi to join our synagogue family. The anticipated start date is August, 2016.

Applications can be obtained on our website www.adathisrael.com.

Family Moments
Send us your photo
[Click Here](#)

CJN Canadian J...
Liked

CJN Canadian Jewish News (The CJN)
4 hrs

The social challenges of #infertility can be just as stressful as the physical aspects, reporter Sheri Shefa found out. #IVF



stewardship, haven't explicitly targeted mental health, but Malach said she's noticed that it's a by-product of most of the group's initiatives, particularly those that engage seniors or children in growing food.

"Life is happening and it's very spiritual. That's God, to some people," she said.

Chodak stressed that Maxie's Garden is a "win-win" for all involved, especially when Pinkus comes out to the yard and talks to the clients.

"He knows the community, the neighbourhood and gardening so well," she said.

Malach noted that Pinkus often knows the clients' family lineages, "making them feel they're part of something."

"He's living history," she added, "this anchor of what's been happening in the neighbourhood and city for the past 100 years."

Pinkus, who worked as an engineer, has long been involved in Jewish and general community life, having volunteered with institutions such as Toronto Western Hospital and Mount Sinai Memorial Park Cemetery, where he was formerly president.

To this day, he's president of the downtown Kiever Shul, a role he's held since the 1970s.

"It's always a great thing to see things planted from an embryo – a seed – grow to fruition and be used for the health of people. There are people who can't afford to buy these products now. They're very expensive," Pinkus said.

Malach hopes to raise awareness of Maxie's Garden and help people understand that, in addition to environmental programming, Shoresh is "taking hunger really seriously, and social justice."

0
Recommend

Tweets Follow

CJN Canadian Jewish News @TheCJN 4h
The social challenges of #infertility can be just as stressful as the physical aspects, reporter Sheri Shefa...
<fb.me/7ukzQ7bE2>

CJN Canadian Jewish News @TheCJN 21h
Theodore Bikel was known for his portrayal of Tevye
<fb.me/3kVoevlur>
Expand

CJN Canadian Jewish News @TheCJN 21h
Theodore Bikel was a lifetime achievement award winner
<fb.me/2hoXL9tjB>
Expand

CJN Canadian Jewish News @TheCJN 21 Jul
WMNA event gives artist opportunity to showcase their
Tweet to @TheCJN

0 Comments **The Canadian Jewish News** Login

Recommend Share Sort by Best



Be the first to comment

ALSO ON THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS

Survivors' granddaughter attended Groening trial in Germany

1 comment • 2 days ago

Stephen Harper's Shandeh

8 comments • a day ago

Israel, Jewish groups condemn Iran nuclear deal

4 comments • 8 days ago

Week of July 2, 2015

3 comments • 22 days ago

WHAT'S THIS?

Subscribe Add Disqus to your site Privacy

BBQ FUNDRAISER
EVERGREEN SECOND ANNUAL **ASADO**
40 HOT CHEFS
10 BLAZING FIRES
1 SIZZLING NIGHT
Presenting Sponsor **MUSKOKA**
GET READY TO #FEELTHEFIRE

THE ISRAELI SOURCE
CANADA'S ONLY WHOLESALE OUTLET FOR ALL YOUR JUDAICA NEEDS
60 Doncaster Ave., Thornhill - (905) 482-2025



Subscriber Services >

Come visit us on **You Tube**

[Home](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Commenting](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Community Links](#)

[Media Kit](#)

[Past Articles](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Admin](#)