

Freeing Soviet Jews

At JFS annual meeting, Sharansky gives his account of Operation Exodus.

Renowned refusenik Natan Sharansky was on hand at the Jewish Family Service annual meeting on May 17 to discuss and commemorate Operation Exodus, the international undertaking that rescued 1.5 million Jews from the former Soviet Union. About 1,000 people were part of the celebration at Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield. They were able to hear a conversation between Sharansky and Joel Tauber and Marvin Lender, both key leaders during Operation Exodus.

Key donors were able to enjoy dinner with Sharansky, a former Israeli politician and current head of the Jewish Agency for Israel. Frankel Jewish Academy students also were on hand to discuss their Operation Exodus-inspired artwork.

The night included awards given to the Patti Nemer JFS Employee of the Year Nathan Torman, Mentor of the Year Sarah Tupica-Berard and Volunteer of the Year Larisa Korot. North Farmington High School senior Zachary Collen, who placed second in the 100 Menschen's essay contest, received his award. Other winners were FJA seniors Hannah Katz (first place) and Randi Traison (third place); they were out of the country on their school trip. *



Larry Sherman, Natan Sharansky and Jane Sherman, whose late father, Max Fisher, played a major role in Operation Exodus



In conversation about Operation Exodus: Joel Tauber, Natan Sharansky and Marvin Lender.



At dinner before the program, Natan Sharansky speaks with Gerald and Barbara Cook.



Michael Baum, son of the late Patti Nemer, announces that Nathan Torman, right, is the winner of the Patti Nemer JFS Employee of the Year Award.



Scott Eisenberg, JFS board members Sheldon Stone and Mark Milgrom, and Perry Ohren, JFS CEO



Natan Sharansky and JFS President Don Rochlen



Vivian Dean speaks with Natan Sharansky.

JHSM Conference To Gather Jewish Women's Stories

The Jewish Historical Society of Michigan's Michigan Women Who Made a Difference (MWWMD) project seeks to document, preserve and share the stories and achievements of Michigan's Jewish women who have helped build and shape our communities, institutions and organizations.

These women led community organizations, founded businesses, or were political and social justice leaders. They often stood in the background, leading with strength, dignity and silence to make our world better. Their stories are largely untold.

JHSM created a book that shares the stories and accomplishments of Jewish women from Detroit and SE Michigan. The next phase is to create a database of the stories of Michigan's Jewish women who "made a difference," whether as professionals or as volunteers.

The MWWMD Jewish Voices Conference will be held Monday, June 27, at Temple Emanuel in Grand Rapids, which is equipped with special hearing aid technology. The day will be spent celebrating and discussing the stories and achievements of these women.

The conference will bring together Jewish women and men from across the state who have been working on identifying and collecting women's stories as well as others interested in bringing the voices of Michigan's Jewish foremothers back to life to provide inspiration for generations to come.

The vision is to create a robust website with short biographies (curated through the project), and articles and blogs written by writers (academics, journalists, students, workshop participants.) The articles, tagged with trending topics, will bring the contributions of these women to the forefront and offer contemporary, inspirational perspectives on the historical accomplishments.

Making this information available online will increase its audience to students, historians, researchers and community members not just statewide but nationally.

A bus to Grand Rapids will leave the West Bloomfield Jewish Community Center at 7 a.m. Cost is \$25; no fee for the conference. The bus trip also includes a quick visit to Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids.

Questions and conference registration is through the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, contact (248) 432-5517, tweissman@michjewishhistory.org or www.michjewishhistory.org. *