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For immediate release

## **THE GARY ROSENTHAL COLLECTION EXPANDS 'THE HIDDUR MITZVAH PROJECT' TO ISRAEL**

*'Art for Israel' Initiative Designed to Strengthen Ties Between  
Jewish Communities in U.S. and Israel*

**WASHINGTON, D.C., March 14, 2006** – World-renowned Judaica artist Gary Rosenthal is taking an international leap to strengthen ties between Jewish communities in the United State and Israel.

For the past three years, *The Hiddur Mitzvah Project from The Gary Rosenthal Collection* has been bringing together Jewish-Americans to create one-of-a-kind Judaica, such as Torah pointers, mezuzot and Sabbath candle holders. The project features intergenerational arts enrichment activities that incorporate lessons of social responsibility and community building and are deep-rooted in the traditions of Judaism.

Now, the Washington, D.C.-based artist is developing an international component to *The Hiddur Mitzvah Project*. The Israeli-based offshoot – known as *Art for Israel* – is designed to establish closer bonds between sister cities in the U.S. and Israel and to benefit arts enrichment, education and humanitarian programs in Israel.

“Through this expansion of *The Hiddur Mitzvah Project*, two communities separated by thousands of miles can create glass mosaics on the same day that will be incorporated into the same pieces of Judaica,” Rosenthal said. “This program is unique in that each piece will be touched by the hands of Jewish-Americans and Jews in Israel.

”The Gary Rosenthal Collection encourages Jewish-Americans to participate in the *Art for Israel* program annually as part of their efforts to connect with and to directly support Israel,” he added.

*Art for Israel* participants create glass mosaics that are Rosenthal’s workshop in Kensington, Maryland, near Washington, D.C., where they are melted at 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit, fused into solid pieces, and mounted onto various pieces of Judaica from The Gary Rosenthal Collection.

“The *Art for Israel* program can be implemented as an arts enrichment activity or a community fundraiser,” said *Art for Israel* Director Abigail Cutler, a Washington, D.C. native who has been living in Israel since September 2005. “It is fully customizable and provides participants with a greater understanding of Judaism and community service, and always will be a reminder of the unique relationship and history between the U.S. and Israel.”

To date, a handful of *Art for Israel* programs have already taken place.

**(more)**

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At the Zin Elementary School in Israel's Ramat HaNegev Region, 11- and 12-year-old children created glass for pieces of Judaica that were sold in Denver, Colorado through the Allied Jewish Federation of Colorado. The money generated from the Denver sales went back to the Israeli school to fulfill their long-time goal of building an ecological park for children.

In the Beit Shean Valley, mentally and physically challenged students at Ulpanit Gilad School created glass mosaics that were used in Judaica and sold in Cleveland, Ohio through several different Judaica stores. Proceeds from the artwork sales are being used to buy furniture and tools to teach woodworking to the Ulpanit Gilad students.

A project also took place in the Hadassah Neurim Youth Village in Beit Yannai, in which students and mission participants from abroad created glass that was incorporated into Judaica and sold in the U.S. to benefit the Youth Villages program. Other *Art for Israel* initiatives have brought together community members from the city of Petach Tikva and the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston (Texas) and students from the city of Akko with the Jewish community of Youngstown, Ohio.

Additionally, the *Art for Israel* program has presented a \$500 grant from The Gary Rosenthal Collection Foundation to a sheltered workshop in Jerusalem that supports intellectually challenged adults. The grant will be used for educational and arts enrichment programming.

"It is our hope that, with the combination of direct sales of *Art of Israel*-created Judaica and money raised through sister cities throughout the U.S., The Gary Rosenthal Collection will send at least \$50,000 to support arts enrichment, education and humanitarian programs in Israel," Cutler said.

For more information about *The Hiddur Mitzvah Project* or to find out how your Jewish community can participate in the *Art for Israel* program, visit [www.hiddurmitzvah.org](http://www.hiddurmitzvah.org) or contact *Art for Israel* Director Abigail Cutler (202) 558-5294 (a U.S.-based international phone number) or via e-mail at [abigailcutler@yahoo.com](mailto:abigailcutler@yahoo.com). **Judaica created through the *Art for Israel* program can be purchased through *The Hiddur Mitzvah Project* Web site at [www.hiddurmitzvah.org](http://www.hiddurmitzvah.org) or by calling The Gary Rosenthal Collection toll-free at (800) 962-1545.**

### **About The Gary Rosenthal Collection and The Hiddur Mitzvah Project**

Gary Rosenthal has been sculpting in welded metals for almost 30 years. Together with a team of talented craftspeople, he creates one of the most popular and unique lines of Judaic art in the country: The Gary Rosenthal Collection. Combining copper, brass and steel with brilliant fused glass, the collection has a contemporary style rooted in tradition.

Since its inception in November 2003, more than 150 Jewish organizations and communities in over 22 states have taken part in *The Hiddur Mitzvah Project*. The activities have featured fundraisers for synagogue education programs; candlestick-making as part of Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations; and a nationwide effort to create menorahs and dreidels for Hurricane Katrina victims.

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