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## **GARY ROSENTHAL COLLECTION'S HIDDUR MITZVAH PROJECT SET TO SHOW SUCCESS OF MASORTI/CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM'S YAD PROGRAM**

*Eleven Jewish Communities Helped Raise More Than \$25,000;*

*Masorti Germany Rabbi Ederberg to Accept Check Marking Program's Culmination*

**WASHINGTON, D.C., May 5, 2006** – For the past two years, Jewish-American youngsters from Conservative synagogues throughout the country have been working with world-renowned Judaica artist Gary Rosenthal, participating in community-building arts enrichment activities to benefit re-emerging Jewish communities in South America, Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union.

As part of their Bar and Bat mitzvah experiences, more than 200 children in 11 Jewish communities, representing 11 U.S. states, created more than 260 yads (*Torah pointers*) as part of the Masorti Olami/World Council of Conservative Synagogues Project L'Chayim. The effort raised more than \$25,000 for Masorti/Conservative Jewish education programs in Argentina, Germany, Ukraine and other countries in Europe. The students who made the yads donated their own money to participate.

To mark the project's culmination, Rosenthal will present a check to Rabbi Gesa S. Ederberg, Director of Masorti Germany, whose kindergarten in Berlin benefited from the project. Masorti Gan opened in September 2004 and educates nearly 30 children in bilingual Hebrew-German Jewish education. Rabbi Ederberg is the only Masorti Rabbi in Germany and one of only a few female rabbis serving communities in Europe.

The presentation will take place on Friday, May 5 at 2 p.m. at the Capital Hilton Hotel (1001 16th Street NW, Washington, D.C.) in the Press Room of the American Jewish Committee's 100<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. The Press Room is located near the Massachusetts Room.

In addition to the Masorti Germany kindergarten, the Yad Program also supported:

- **Camps Elise**, a network of overnight and day camps in Argentina serving more than 2,000 campers. The funding will underwrite a full-time camp director;
- **No'ar Masorti Argentina Leadership Program**, an initiative for high school students interested in teaching children about Masorti Judaism, Zionism, religious pluralism, democracy and tolerance. The high schoolers are trained to work as counselors to work in the congregation and at summer camps;
- **Pan-European Mercaz Ruchani u'Masorti Conference Scholarships**, a program for young adults 18-30 years old from all over the world to attend annual seminars in Europe and South America dedicated to strengthening the Jewish identity of young adults and developing leadership for the Masorti Movement. The funding supports travel costs to the workshops for the attendees;

**(more)**

- **Youth and Adult Programming in Ukraine**, an effort to provide additional educational programming and to support the funding of a youth and regional director in Ukraine. Masorti Olami wants to expand youth and adult programming throughout Ukraine and needs a full-time employee to coordinate and develop educational and cultural programs; and
- **No'ar Masorti Educator for Kiev**, an initiative to educate the Jewish community in Kiev about Masorti Judaism, Zionism and pluralism and to develop young leadership in Ukraine. The funding will be used for hiring an educator who will develop programming in Kiev and surrounding areas.

As part of The Gary Rosenthal Collection's Hiddur Mitzvah Project, young adults and their families come together at local synagogues to construct a cut glass mosaic that is sent to Rosenthal's workshop in Kensington, Md. for finishing. Then, Rosenthal and the youngsters sign each yad as a pledge to teach the world about Judaism and social responsibility.

Project L'Chayim involved synagogues in Atlanta, Georgia; Birmingham, Alabama; Caldwell, New Jersey; Cherry Hill, New Jersey; Dobbs Ferry, New York; Erdenheim, Pennsylvania; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Nashau, New Hampshire; Palo Alto, California; St. Petersburg, Florida; and Toms River, New Jersey.

### **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 artisans, he creates one of the most popular and unique lines of Judaica in the world: The Gary Rosenthal Collection ([www.collectgaryrosenthal.com](http://www.collectgaryrosenthal.com)). By combining copper, brass and steel with brilliant fused glass, the collection has a contemporary style rooted in tradition.

Artwork from The Gary Rosenthal Collection has been presented to Presidents from Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush and can be found throughout the world in many fine galleries, private collections and museum shops including the American Craft Museum, the B'nai B'rith Museum, the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery, the Corning Museum of Glass and The Jewish Museum.

The Gary Rosenthal Collection is committed to helping other perform hiddur mitzvah (*beautification of the commandment*) and is pleased to offer The Hiddur Mitzvah Project as an entertaining and functional way to perform a service as well as teach the invaluable lessons of arts enrichment and community building. For more information about The Hiddur Mitzvah Project, visit [www.hiddurmitzvah.org](http://www.hiddurmitzvah.org) or call (301) 493-5577.

### **About Masorti Olami, World Council of Conservative/Masorti Synagogues**

Masorti Olami, the international organizations of the Conservative Judaism Movement, welcomes Jews at all levels of observance and knowledge who are striving for religious growth in a modern world. Today, there are 100 diverse synagogue centers in South America, Europe, the Former Soviet Union, Africa, Asia and Australia. For more information about Masorti Olami, World Council of Conservative/Masorti Synagogues, visit [www.masortiworld.org](http://www.masortiworld.org).

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