

Center for Independent Judaic Studies Opens in Kingston

Jewish Education Resource for Entire Community

For Immediate Release

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Kingston, NY/August 8, 2013 – Long-time Ulster County resident and clergyperson, Cantor Devorah E. Gartner, is opening the Center for Independent Judaic Studies (CIJS). Classes start in September. CIJS is based at local synagogue, Congregation Ahavath Israel, 100 Lucas Avenue, Kingston. We will offer unique opportunities for learning, open to the entire community – children and adults, both Jewish and non-Jewish. There is no membership fee. All classes and programs are on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Based on the Jewish Community Center model, CIJS is designed to facilitate Jewish learning in a format that recognizes the challenges of a society where free time is at a premium, and respects the ever-increasing cost of living. By offering programming that can flex with individual needs, CIJS staff hopes to reach out to both affiliated and unaffiliated Jews, as well as the community at large. Whether a student wants to drop in for a series of workshops, or just one specific class, or is simply interested in Jewish learning but not yet ready to make a commitment to a synagogue, CIJS programming fits such needs. Additionally, CIJS staff is open to programming suggestions. If you don't see a class you're looking for, ask. Community-driven interests, as well as opportunities for individual tutorials, as both CIJS goals.

Schedule of Classes

Beginning in September, we will be offering a series on the 4th Saturday of each month. Designed as an ongoing **Shabbat Lunch & Learn** program for adults, teens and younger students (if accompanied by a parent), we will eat, schmooze and explore **The Rituals of Our Lives**. The series will run from September to June; however each month's session will stand alone, so you can attend as many or as few work for you.

Judaism 101 through 613: Hebrew/Bible/Judaica is designed for students in Grades 2 to 7 – a non-traditional religious education in the traditional Sunday timeslot from 9:00am-12:30pm. In a format inspired by cutting edge research in Jewish education, we believe that this multi-disciplinary, year-long program combines the best practices of experiential and project-based learning.

The Art of Kabbalah, co-taught by Cantor Devorah and artist/jewelry designer, Rose St. Hilaire, is open to adults and teens who want to explore this ancient mystical side to Judaism through the hands-on creation of religious art. This program runs from October to December on Tuesdays from 6:30pm – 8:00pm.

As CAJE (Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education) B'nai Mitzvah National Network Co-Chair, Cantor Devorah worked to explore and implement the best practices in education for Bar/Bat Mitzvah students, both traditional pre-teens and adult learners. Offered here, with both one-year and two-year options, are comprehensive **B'nai Mitzvah Programs** in service leadership and Torah literacy. Ideally taken parallel to **Judaism 101**, the classes meet on Wednesdays – Grade 6 from 4:00pm-5:30pm and Grade 7 (adult learners also welcome) from 6:00pm-8:00pm.

By popular demand, we will offer **Conversational Hebrew for Beginners** on Thursdays from 4:30pm-5:45pm. Perfect for the adult learner, or as an adjunct to **Judaism 101**, this class welcomes multi-age students from Grade 5 through adult.

Holocaust through the Eyes of Hollywood is a year-long program for teens (and adults) to explore this pivotal period in our history as a people. Using films, documentaries, television, and plays, we will journey through this difficult era. In late winter, we will meet for a community viewing of the Spielberg masterpiece *Schindler's List*, in preparation for a trip to the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. (optional supplement to course). In addition, we will craft a program for Yom HaShoah commemoration based on our shared experiences. Program meets on Thursdays from 6:00pm to 8:30pm from October to June.

For the full schedule of program descriptions and prices, please contact Cantor Devorah Gartner at (845) 901-5428 or cantordevorah@gmail.com .

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