

Jewish Journal



HAPPY HANUKKAH!

South Broward & Miami-Dade

THE LARGEST JEWISH NEWSPAPER IN THE NATION

Wednesday, November 24, 2021

Giving back at Thanksgiving



Jodi Mofsen, Rhonda Teitel, and Linda Klasfield pack Thanksgiving bags at the Soref JCC's WECARE Food Pantry in Plantation. The project included participation from the social action committee of Temple Dor Dorim in Weston. **MIKE STOCKER / SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL**



Clothing pantry, synagogues partner for Hanukkah toy drive

By Sergio Carmona
Florida Jewish Journal

The RAK PAK clothing pantry of Goodman Jewish Family Services of Broward County has partnered with two synagogues for a Hanukkah toy drive.

Through the RAK PAK's (Random Acts of Kindness) partnership with Temple Beth Torah Sha'aray Tzedek in Tamarac and Temple Beth Am in Margate, new and unwrapped toys, games and gift cards for children of all ages have been collected for families in need throughout Broward.

Darrelle Buckley, RAK PAK manager, said this is the second year the clothing pantry hosted a toy drive for Hanukkah. Buckley explained what prompted it.

"The RAK PAK provides new and gently used clothing and hygiene products year-round to families of limited income to help build their self-respect and self-esteem," she said. "However, we know the holidays are gift-pressured, and not all families have the means to buy presents for their loved ones. We wanted to do our best to help those in our community experience the joy of giving and receiving gifts this time of year — especially as it's been such a difficult pandemic year."

Buckley noted, "These gifts are more than just material items to these families; they represent the support of our Jewish community, and they provide the opportunity to build experiences and memories that can last a lifetime."

Regarding the part-



Toys collected from PJ Our Way at the RAK PAK clothing pantry of Goodman Jewish Family Services of Broward County. For the Hanukkah toy drive, Goodman JFS has also partnered with two synagogues: Temple Beth Torah Sha'aray Tzedek in Tamarac and Temple Beth Am in Margate. **RAK PAK/COURTESY**

nership with the synagogues, Buckley said, "For many families in need, the bright lights of Hanukkah can feel depressing and dim, however due to the RAK PAK's partnership with Temple Beth Torah Sha'aray Tzedek in Tamarac and Temple Beth Am in Margate, the spirits of Broward County children will be illuminated this year."

"Generous members have come together to donate hundreds of new toys, games and gift cards for children of all ages," she continued. "PJ Our Way has also donated 200 gifts and 100 books for children all ages."

Buckley said the organizations are looking to collect as many new toys, games and gift cards as possible, so that they can

assist as many families as possible.

Gifts are being collected at the preschool at **Temple Beth Torah Sha'aray Tzedek**, 5700 N.W. 94th Ave. in Tamarac, through Nov. 29. People can drop off toys, games and gift cards from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. from Mondays through Fridays. Office is closed on Nov. 25 (Thanksgiving Day) and 26. Gifts may also be shipped directly there.

The synagogue has already collected and dropped off its first donation of toys, and its Sisterhood and Early Childhood Center are heading the project there.

Helaine Norman, the Sisterhood's president, said, "For well over a decade, TBTST Sisterhood has prominently displayed our Dreidel of Dreams proj-

ect in our front lobby."

"Congregants were able to pick a dreidel card with a child's name and age, and fulfill their request, enabling us to gather gift cards and requested items for needy children and teens throughout the county," Norman continued. "During the past two years, this was not possible due to COVID-19. We got through by collecting only Target and Walmart gift cards and monetary donations, which the JFS will use to make dreams come true."

Norman added, "This year, we partnered with our Tikkun Olam Committee to gather gift cards, and with our preschool, who is collecting new unwrapped toys to donate to the same organization."

"Together, Temple Beth



From left, Elizabeth Heller and Ronit Goldstein, director for Temple Beth Torah Sha'aray Tzedek's Early Childhood Center in Tamarac, with gifts collected for the Hanukkah toy drive. Goodman JFS' RAK PAK clothing pantry partnered with Temple Beth Torah Sha'aray Tzedek and Temple Beth Am in Margate for a Hanukkah toy drive. **TEMPLE BETH TORAH SHA'ARAY TZEDEK/COURTESY**

Torah Sha'aray Tzedek will work to help make the holidays a joyful time for all children and families," she said.

Ronit Goldstein, the synagogue's Early Childhood director, said, "One of the most beautiful *mitzvot* within Judaism is to give *tzedakah* [charity]."

"We teach our children in our daily activities and curriculum the values of kindness and *tzedakah*, which helps in many ways," Goldstein continued. "This is an ongoing awareness at our school as we always encourage *tzedakah* as part of our daily curriculum."

Goldstein added, "This month, we teamed with the Goodman Jewish Family organization to provide unwrapped new toys to

families in need."

"The mitzvah project was part of our Grandparents Day event," she said. "Participants arrived with unwrapped new toys and were engaged in creating holiday cards to go along with the toys."

Over at **Temple Beth Am**, 7205 Royal Palm Blvd in Margate, toys are being collected at its main office through Nov. 23. Office hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays, and Sundays from 9 a.m. to noon. Gifts may also be shipped directly to the synagogue.

Visit tbst.org or beth-am.org for more information on the synagogues, and jfsbroward.org/services/rak-pak/ for the clothing pantry.