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MARGATE | COMMUNITY CHANUKAH CELEBRATION

Margate celebrates spirit of Hanukkah with families, friendships, fun

John Russo 9 hrs ago 0

MARGATE, Dec. 15, 2024 — Danielle and Abraham Perl have only lived in Margate since July, but they have quickly learned there is much to do here.

“People have been very friendly and inviting and showing us the ropes of what’s available,” said Danielle Perl, 33.

That was exactly the experience they got Sunday at the Marjorie & Lewis Katz Jewish Community Center’s annual Community Chanukah Celebration. The event, with a goal to bring the community together as well as enjoy some of the Jewish traditions in the week leading up to Hanukkah, is done in partnership with the Jewish Federation of Atlantic and Cape May Counties.

This is the third year the JCC has done this event, said Genia Sperling, the JCC assistant director as well as director of the Atlantic City Marathon Race Series. The event was free, and guests did not need to be JCC members to participate Sunday, she said.

The celebration included crafts for kids, from coloring wooden Stars of David to making dreidels to working on a giant Hanukkah collage. Guests could also enjoy traditional Chanukah treats such freshly made latkes, sufganiyot (donuts) from the DonutNV food truck and hot chocolate.

The two-hour event also included a Dreidel Dash, which also was free. The jog around the block began and ended in front of the center on north Jerome Avenue and was just under a mile long. Each of the roughly 35 participants got a finishers medal.

“It’s just bringing the community together in the spirit of Chanukah,” said Sperling, 40, of Egg Harbor Township. “The JCC is very much a part of the community where the entire Jewish community can come together. We have a couple synagogues here (as well as) PJ Library, the Jewish Federation of Atlantic and Cape May Counties. It’s a nice space to be able to bring a community together.”

Chanukah, more commonly spelled Hanukkah, begins this year Dec. 25 and runs until Jan. 2.

The JCC, which started in Atlantic City, has been serving Atlantic County for about 110 years with programs for children of all backgrounds.

"Every year we get a couple hundred people that come out, and we have close to 20 Jewish organizations that partner for this specific event to put it on," said Rachel Waldman, the executive director of the Jewish Federation. "All of these organizations are in Atlantic County, but they service Cape May County too."

Waldman said events like these are "the most important" things the federation does.

"The only reason we exist is to keep our community strong (and) together," said Waldman, 32, of Linwood. "And events like this are just the perfect, sweetest way to celebrate together, show everybody they're not alone, especially when times are really challenging within the Jewish community."

The Perl family brought their 14-month-old son, Liam, to the center Sunday. While Liam walked around with his little wooden Star of David, Danielle praised the family-friendliness of the celebration.

"It's always nice to have events with kids we can bring him to and let him explore," Danielle said.

Linwood resident Reta Adler and her 2-year-old daughter, Susan, attend every year. Susan, who loves arts and crafts, was having fun coloring her Star of David with Camille Rosenberg, a member of Temple Beth Shalom in Brigantine, before she and her mom participated in the afternoon's dash.

"We love (this event)," said Adler, 40. "It's a great way to get the community together, a great way to start the holiday season and all the activities for the kids. She gets to see kids from her class (at the center), and we love it."

Susan was a month-and-a-half old the first year she did the dash with her mom. There was no stroller this time.

"She's a fast runner! She can easily do a mile," Adler said.

City resident Louis Pollack, 34, ran the dash and said the jog helped him get into the spirit of Hanukkah.

While they waited for him to finish, Louis' wife, Abby, and their 2-year-old daughter, Goldie, watched their rainbow sprinkle donuts get made by DonutNV.

"These events are so important, especially us being a young family," said Abby, 34. "We're new to Margate, so this has been our community hub where we've met people, we've met friends. It's been really important to us and our family. It's giving us a good sense of community, especially being younger and Jewish."



[John Russo](#)

Digital producer

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Abby Pollack, 34, of Margate, and 2-year-old daughter Goldie check out the donuts being made by DonutNV on Sunday during the Community Chanukah Celebration. "We're new to

Margate, so this has been our community hub where we've met people, we've met friends," Abby said.

- JOHN RUSSO PHOTOS, Staff Writer



Camille Rosenberg, of Temple Beth Shalom in Brigantine, helps 2-year-old Susan Adler, of Linwood, color her Star of David.

- JOHN RUSSO, Staff Writer



Jewish Federation of Atlantic and Cape May Counties executive director Rachel Waldman, 32, of Linwood, watches the start of the Dreidel Dash on Sunday in Margate.

- JOHN RUSSO PHOTOS, Staff Writer



Liam Perl, 14 months, of Margate, plays with his Star of David.

- JOHN RUSSO, Staff Writer



Margate residents Danielle and Abraham Perl with their 14-month-old son, Liam, on Sunday during the Community Chanukah Celebration at the Marjorie & Lewis Katz Jewish Community Center in Margate.

- JOHN RUSSO, Staff Writer



Runners get ready to start the Dreidel Dash on Sunday during the Community Chanukah Celebration at the Marjorie & Lewis Katz Jewish Community Center in Margate.

- JOHN RUSSO, Staff Writer



Louis Pollack, 34, of Margate, puts his Dreidel Dash medal around his daughter, Goldie's, neck on Sunday during the Community Chanukah Celebration at the Marjorie & Lewis Katz Jewish Community Center in Margate.

- JOHN RUSSO, Staff Writer



Those who completed the 1-mile Dreidel Dash on Sunday in Margate received these medals. The race, which went around the block starting at north Jerome Avenue, was free to sign up.



Jewish Federation of Atlantic and Cape May Counties executive director Rachel Waldman, 32, of Linwood, checks out the donuts being made by DonutNV on Sunday during the Community Chanukah Celebration at the Marjorie & Lewis Katz Jewish Community Center in Margate.

- JOHN RUSSO, Staff Writer