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February 16, 2007/Shevat 28 5767, Volume 59, No. 22
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COMMUNITY

Celebrating Jewish study

BETH SHAPIRO
Staff Writer
[E-MAIL](#)

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Hundreds of Valley Jews will participate in the Phoenix Community Kollel's third annual Jewish Unity Live 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28, at the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts as they come together to celebrate a year of Torah and Jewish text study. Jewish Unity Live (JUL) was launched in 2005 as a national campaign to encourage commitment to Jewish learning.

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"There are many things that divide the Jewish people," said Rabbi Zvi Holland, dean of the Phoenix Community Kollel. "The greatest moment of unity in Jewish history is when we accepted the Torah at Sinai. Today, we may not pray together, but we can study together."

According to [jewishunitylive.com](#), Phoenix is one of 12 communities in the United States and Canada that will be holding Jewish Unity Live celebrations in 2007, during which an estimated 10,000 Jews will celebrate the completion of a Jewish text. The other sites include Atlanta; Chicago; Dallas; Lakewood, N.J.; Long Island, N.Y.; Los Angeles; Ottawa; Providence, R.I.; Seattle; St. Louis; and West Palm Beach, Fla.

Holland says the goal of JUL is to open the world of Jewish text study to all Jews. "We have participants from every walk of Jewish life - from unaffiliated to people who haven't belonged to a synagogue since their bar mitzvah to people who visit one regularly."

To participate, one simply contacts the Phoenix kollel to indicate an interest. There are no requirements or fees to join. Holland says a person may choose to study anything whether it's the weekly Torah parsha, Maimonides or attending a Jewish study class. He hopes that all the people who sign on will become active students either on their own or by taking part in the dozens of weekly group and individual learning opportunities offered by the kollel.

"One of the things we're proud of is taking people who couldn't read Hebrew to being able to study Talmud."

The theme of this year's Phoenix JUL is "Stories of our Lives," chaired by Mitzri Friedman. Holland describes an evening of storytelling by six or seven local people of different ages and walks of life representing the diversity of the Jewish people. Hollywood producer Daniel Kaufman, known for his visual and digital effects in such films as "We are Marshall" and "Cast Away," will serve as showcase producer. The evening will feature musical entertainment by The Chevra and Eli Gerstner.

Details

- What: Jewish Unity Live 2007: "Stories of our Lives"
- Who: Phoenix Community Kollel
- When: 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28

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- Where: Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, 7380 E. Second St.
- Cost: \$15-\$100
- Contact: 602-433-0300 or kollel@aztorah.com



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