» Seeds To Table:
A new Detroit garden program to be unveiled.
See page 14.

» 'Exploring The Figure':
Work by Niagara and other artists at the Janice Charach Gallery.
See page 36.

» Family Focus:
A yesteryear-style play environment for kids.
See page 24.

» Tu b'Shevat:
Learn all about the New Year of the Trees.
See page 32.

Jewish dentists offer free work to Holocaust survivors.
See page 12.

» Never Forget!
Art exhibit at Holocaust Memorial Center honors memory of French children slaughtered.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH:
"Arrested by the police of the Vichy government, in complicity with the Nazi occupation, more than 11,000 children were deported from France between 1942 and 1944 and assassinated at Auschwitz because they were born Jews. More than 140 of these children lived in the 2nd district [and] went to these elementary schools. Paul 16 years old, Malka 16 years old ... We must never forget them."

See story on page 33.
Lucy Gorowicz loves to show her teeth — because they are beautiful and because she remembers how, for a long time, they weren’t.

“This patient had gone for years unable to chew her food; not to mention, she didn’t have a very attractive smile,” said Dr. Mark Luria, who provided her with upper and lower removable partial dentures in his Dearborn dental office.

“On receiving her teeth, through tears of happiness, she said [through a translator that] her own natural teeth had never looked this good, even when she was a young adult. She can now eat all the foods that she could only dream of before.”

Gorowicz, who lives in Livonia, is among 24 Holocaust survivors receiving free care from 38 area dentists and dental specialists — including endodontists, oral surgeons and periodontists — who are members of the Detroit Alumni Chapter of Alpha Omega International Dental Fraternity, the Jewish dental organization.

The group has been participating in the multi-city Alpha Omega-Henry Schein Cares Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program since it began in January 2015. The goal of the pilot three-year initiative is to provide pro-bono dental care to 250-300 patients in the U.S. and Canada. To date, 140 patients have been treated. The value of dental care provided and devices like crowns and dentures donated by dental labs during the first year is estimated at approximately $500,000.

“Many of these survivors have gone many years with a total lack of dental care and are now, after all these years, finally smiling as a result of our efforts,” said Luria, who helps to oversee the Detroit component of the project chaired locally by Dr. Marvin Sonne and Dr. Jamie Feldman.

The program was created following Vice President Joe Biden’s December 2013 announcement of the White House initiative to support the needs of Holocaust survivors living in the U.S. Both Sonne and Feldman attended the program launch in November 2014 in Washington, D.C.

Alpha Omega International was founded in 1907 by Jewish dental students to fight discrimination in dental schools. Based on principles of professionalism, fraternalism and Judaism, it is the oldest international dental organization and oldest international Jewish medical organization. Headquartered in Rockville, Md., AO International is now primarily an educational and philanthropic organization, having raised and distributed millions of dollars for dental health, education, research and care worldwide. AO International represents about 6,000 active dentists and dental students internationally.

“We stand for tolerance and inclusiveness for all and see our goal reaching far beyond the dental arena, although that is still our main focus,” said Sonne, a two-time past AO Detroit chapter president.

SHARING LIFE STORIES

“As an international Jewish dental organization, we have a unique perspective and a special bond to Holocaust survivors,” Dr. Avi Wurman of Toronto, a past AO International president and Survivors program co-chair, said in a statement. “All of us recognize the need to improve the oral health and the quality of life of this most deserving segment of our population.”

One quarter of the approximately 130,000 Holocaust survivors in the U.S. live in poverty. Many have special oral health needs from prolonged nutritional deprivation and little or no dental care as children.

Bernice Edelstein, AO International’s program coordinator, refers to the program as having “such a positive impact” on both the patients and the dentists.

“The participants give selflessly by providing comprehensive pro-bono dental care,” she said. “The pictures I have seen and the stories I have heard of these dentists and their patients are heartwarming.”

Detroit-area dental professionals say they are receiving so much more than they expected in their relationships with patients. Dr. Beth Rosenberg’s patient has shared life stories, through a translator, during his half a dozen visits to her Belleville office for care that included teeth cleaning and restorations for cavities.

“We have spoken about his life in Russia when he was younger, about immigrating to America, and the several steps and countries he went through before coming to Michigan, as well as his difficulties because he never learned to speak fluent English,” she said. “He has conveyed a little about the Holocaust when speaking about growing up in Russia.

“He is a very kind and happy man. He is always happy to be in the office and always tries to slip me money or treats for my work — which I never accept — but which make me realize how appreciative he is for getting a denture and partial denture so he is able to eat better.

“My staff enjoys seeing him, too. I can’t explain how rewarding it is to help him. It has been such a fulfilling experience for me, and I am so happy that I can be a part of this program. I feel so good to give back to someone who has endured so much in his life.”

SURVIVOR CONNECTION

“Although I was born after the Holocaust, I knew many survivors, heard the stories and saw the toll it took on them,” Feldman said. “My parents were not Holocaust survivors, but during World War II my father fought in the Navy and his brother fought in the Army. My ex-wife’s parents were survivors, and my brother, [the late] Clark Feldman, was a psychiatrist in Los Angeles who did special group sessions with Holocaust survivors and children of survivors.

“My parents were committed to ‘Never Forget!’ The horrors and atrocities were not hidden from me,” said Feldman, AO International photographer and a past AO Detroit chapter president, whose Survivors program involvement is based in his Southfield home.

“The struggles of every Jew are my struggles,” he said. “Alpha Omega is a unique organization that affords me the opportunity to do far more than I could as an individual.”

While in Washington, D.C., last December for the annual International Convention of Alpha Omega, Feldman visited the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

“The hellacious tragedy is beyond belief,” he said. “Despite a tear in my eye, I left the museum with pride and the satisfaction that I was making a difference. Perhaps it is a small thing in the total scope of this ongoing catastrophe, but at least I am doing something. I wish it was more. These survivors deserve more.”

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

The Survivors program is just one of AO International’s many social-action, worldwide volunteerism and community outreach projects.

“The Detroit Alumni Chapter has always responded to the dental needs of the Jewish community,” said Gail Halsted, AO Detroit’s executive director.

Beyond their regular practices, members provide free dental care to the indigent in their own offices, and volunteer in local clinics and those in foreign countries. Members also participate locally and with AO International Global Oral Health Initiative programming that includes support of the elderly, working with the handicapped and the Special Olympics, and distributing food to the needy.

In an overlap of volunteerism, Luria’s brother, Bruce, also a Dearborn-based dentist and AO International member, encountered the patient he treated through the Survivors program in a setting outside of his office.

“Bruce was delivering food for Yad Ezra through his temple, Birmingham Temple, and was so surprised when the woman who came to the door was his patient,” said Mark Luria, a past AO Detroit chapter president. “The patient was even more surprised!”

The 315 Detroit chapter members include volunteer specialists and dentists who provide no-cost care for low-income Jewish patients without dental insurance at the Southfield-based Jewish Dental Clinic, a project of AO’s Detroit chapter.

BRINGING DIGNITY

In addition to survivors, the program includes individuals of any faith who were victims of Nazi persecution.

Patients must be without dental coverage. Locally, Jewish patients are referred by Jewish Family Service of Metropolitan Detroit (JFS) in West Bloomfield, which assists 300 Metro Detroit Holocaust survivors with support that includes home care, coordination of services, transportation and help in accessing funds owed to them through the

A Reason To Smile

Alpha Omega provides free dental care for Holocaust survivors.

Shelli Liebman Dorfman | Contributing Writer
Jewish Disability Month Activities Begin With Film

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For information on the Alpha Omega-Henry Schein Cares Holocaust Survivors Oral Health Program, or to volunteer, call Dr. Marvin Sonne at (248) 933-4761 or access the Detroit chapter website at www.aodetroit.org or the international website at www.ao.org.

Dr. Ester Sleutelberg in her Oak Park office with patient Svetlana Soyfer

Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany.

“The Alpha Omega program is of great value and fills a huge gap in services available to low-income older adults,” said Yuliya Gaydayenko, JFS senior director of Older Adult Services. “The patients who have been served through the program expressed their high satisfaction and appreciation for the wonderful work of volunteer dentists.”

JFS also provides transportation and translators to dental program patients, if needed.

“I am honored and proud to be able to provide dental health care to those in need; but especially this care as these patients are, sadly, members of probably the most unfortunate group of human beings ever,” said Sonne, who provided treatments in his Trenton office on his day off to accommodate the work schedule of his patient’s daughter, who acted as his driver and translator.

“The Holocaust survivors have suffered the very worst that humankind has ever created. To bring a little dignity to them is the greatest mitzvah I could do, my tikkun olam.”

Lucy Gorowicz is the first patient Luria has treated through the program, but he expects to see more in the coming year.

“Having the ability to restore a Holocaust survivor’s self-esteem and improve their oral health and overall wellness is certainly a gift to me,” he said. “Working with Lucy over multiple appointments never failed to bring joy and a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment to my life, while improving my patient’s life.

“And it doesn’t get any better than that!”

Stewart Miller, the headmaster whose school is showcased in the Ken Burns documentary, The Address, will kick off National Jewish Disability Awareness and Inclusion Month (JDAIM) at a screening of the film at 12:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 31, at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills.

The film follows the lives of the boys of Miller’s Greenwood School in Putney, Vt., who grapple with learning challenges as they triumphantly succeed in reciting President Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. The annual competition empowers the students to develop courage, self-confidence, a positive mindset and achieve success.

Burns, a longtime judge at the annual recitals, said, “It is a minefield for these kids. Getting to the point where they can recite the address in public involves acts of courage that are embedded in this speech.”

Miller has dedicated his professional life to empowering students who face learning challenges.

The event is presented by the Jewish Federation’s “Opening the Doors” program, providing innovative educational and community-wide services for diverse learners in Jewish schools.

Other programs include “Overcoming Learning Challenges through Music,” 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 25, at Adat Shalom for ATID students.

The JDAIM Reads Book Club will hold facilitated discussions at the Federation Building in Bloomfield Township. Feb. 10, “Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime” with Rebecca Starr; and Feb. 24, “Uniquely Human: A Different Way of Seeing Autism” with Lissie Rothstein. The 7 p.m. programs are open to educators, families and mental health professionals.

JDAIM will conclude March 7 with a talk by Wendy Silverman, Ph.D., ABPP, titled “Have No Fear: Tips for Helping Children and Teens Manage Anxiety” at 7 p.m. at the Berman Center for Education at Shaarey Zedek in Southfield.

To register for the Jan. 31 film presentation or other programs, visit jewisdetroit.org/jdaim or call (248) 205-2549. $5 for the film in advance, $10 at the door. NIRM “out-of-network” credits and CE Clock Hours will be available for specific programs.

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Jewish Disability Month Activities Begin With Film

MINTZER, LAWRENCE
MIODOWNIK, JONATHAN
BERMAN, GARY
BERMAN, MARK
BIRNHOLTZ, SANDY
BOGROW, EARL
COHEN, JEFFREY
DARMON, PAUL
DEROVEN, RICK
DWOSKIN, MARC
FELDMAN, JAMES
FISHER, BRUCE
FOX, KENNETH
GELLER, JUSTIN
HITCHCOCK, ROGER
LASER, ALLAN
LEWIS, BERNARD
LEZELL, RICHARD
LIPTON, JEFFREY
LURIA, BRUCE
LURIA, JAMIE
LURIA, MARK
MILAN, MITCHELL
MINTZER, LAWRENCE
MIODOWNIK, JONATHAN
BERMAN, GARY
BERMAN, MARK
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LURIA, MARK
MILAN, MITCHELL
ROCHLEN, MICHELLE
ROSE, ROY
ROSENBERG, BETH
SCHWARTZ, EV
SCHAFAFER, ROMAN
SLEUTELBERG, ESTER
SONNE, MARVIN
STEIGER, JACOB
STUTMAN, JEFFREY
TARNOPOL, MARC
WEINFELD, JEFFREY
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Marvin Sonne