

Hanukkah 2015 Report

December 6 - Hachnasat Torah and Hannukat Bait

We decided to hold the Hanukkat Bait with Hachnasat Torah on the first day of Hannukah. It is very symbolically because of the connection to “The commandment – is a lamp, the Torah – is a light” (Mishlei 6:23). The light of the Torah shined on the first day of Hanukah as we entered our new building, Hannukat Bait, our home.

Kiev Community Masoret had the pleasure of inviting many guests and representatives from various Jewish organizations to the Hachnasat Sefer Torah, the welcoming of the second Torah scroll. On this day several significant events took place in Kiev Community.

The main and the biggest room of the Jewish Community was the stage for the official welcoming of the guests and members of the community. The great celebration started with greetings from Rabbi Reuven and Lena Stamov. They introduced the guests and thanked all who visited the community for this important and festive day.

Such guests as Rav Shlomo Zakharov, Arcady Monastirskiy (president of the Jewish Forum of Ukraine, Chairman of the Board of the Jewish Fund of Ukraine) and Alexander Zaslavsky (Head of the Publishing House "Zaslavsky" and philanthropist for Kiev community) fastened mezuzot on the doorposts of our new building signifying the start of a real Jewish home. Children also took part in hanging mezuzot.

Then the Hachnasat Torah ceremony began. It was an incredible and very beautiful ceremony. Men, women and children danced. Everyone feel united and connected with the Torah. An elder of our community also danced with the Torah and gave a very beautiful and emotional speech about how important it was that different generations of Jews gathered for the celebration.

This grand celebration was attended by guests from Jerusalem, Odessa, Zaporozhe, Rovno and Berdichev. Unfortunately, representatives from Chernivtsi and Kharkov were not able to come. Warm greetings were sent from the representative of Midreshet Shechter - Gila Katz. There were greetings from Masorti movement, madrichim of Rama Yahad Camp and Tatyana Voitaluk - regional representative of Project Keshet in Ukraine. Representatives of various Jewish organizations – Rav Shlomo Zakharov, Arkadiy Monastirsdkiy, Julia Goldenberg (founder and director of the Jewish Foundation "For You"), Tatyana Voitaluk (regional representative of Project Keshet in Ukraine) and Irina Klimova (Director of Sholom-Aleichem Museum) spoke about Kiev Masoret Community and wished us prosperity and growth.

The first candle was lit and the Hanukkah celebrations started. Children from NOAM group lit hanukkiyot with their madrichim on the windowsills. We were very pleased that there were about 20 kids, not counting the smallest ones and students. Rabbi Shlomo Zakharov led the Maariv prayer.

In total, we had more than 100 people of all ages. It was a grand event with live music (violin), teenagers presented their cartoons made about Hanukkah and children sang Hanukkah songs, got Hanukkah gelt and presents and played sevivon. Zeev Waksman, a guest from Odessa, prepared a special Hanukkah quiz with very interesting questions.

It is important to note that members of the community raised money for the new and beautiful Hanukkiah and decorating the Aron a-Kodesh.

A Jewish calendar was published for the Masorti Movement in Ukraine. Alexander Zaslavsky, philanthropist of the Kiev community, helped with the publication. The calendars were distributed on the first day of Hanukkah to guests and members of the community.

Many community members talked and reminisced about Hanukkah roving seminars which took place for several years. It will be great to organize these again for next year. In addition, people are willing to donate money to it. Many Jewish organizations arrange such seminars and members of our community want be only a part of the Masorti Movement. That is why it will be great to conduct such seminars regularly.

December 7 - Latkes party for youth with Masorti Community Youth Club MAROM and Hillel Kiev

MAROM met in the historically Jewish town of Podol, on the second day of Hanukkah. The youth of Kiev Community Masoret and Kiev Hillel gathered to celebrate in a friendly and Jewish atmosphere. People got acquainted, played interesting Hanukah games and answered questions in Hanukkah quizzes. Rav Reuven Stamov told about the history of Hanukkah and interesting reasons why we celebrate it eight days during this period of the year. As the part of the sightseeng-historical project "History of Kiev and neighborhood," Lena Stamov told about the town of Podol. It was very important and symbolical to light Hanukkah candles in that place, because this was the place of Podol Jewish settlements. They learned about the first mention of Kyiv in Hebrew in Kievan letter - a recommendation letter issued to Yaakov ben Hanukkah Jewish from the Kiev Jewish community sent to other Jewish communities. This is the oldest authentic document, released from the territory of Kievan Rus.

The gathering of more than 35 people ate the traditional Hanukkah treat - latkes and very unusual Hanukkah treat- sushi in the form of Hanukkiah. It would be great to make a Student Shabbaton MAROM. The number of young people of the MAROM age has increased in the community, and this kind of event is very important for the development of the movement in Kiev and Ukraine.

The Third Hanukkah candle

After the classes in Ulpan, the Kiev community lit the third candle.

The Fourth Candle

Lit Hanukkah candles in JAFI Kiev.

The Fifth day of Hanukkah in Kiev-Mohyla Academy

On December 10, teachers, students of the master's program in Jewish Studies and some youth members of Kiev Community celebrated the 5th day of Hanukkah. Rav Reuven and Lena Stamov were invited as well as Tatiana Yaroshenko - NaUKMA Vice President for Research and Information. They lit candles and Rav Reuven talked about Hanukkah.

Hanukkah Shabbat

Community members joined for candle lighting, yummy latkes and desserts and a perfect Kabbalat Shabbat. The Community candle lighting ceremony brought the joy of Hanukkah in a very special way.

Seventh Hanukkah Candle

An active part of community gathered in community center to spent time with lessons on Parashat Hashavua and Halacha, the history of Hanukkah and started the new week with Havdalah.

December 13 – Last day of Hanukkah in Kiev Community Masoret

On the last day of Hanukkah, there was a big celebration in the community center. More than 50 people and kids gathered. As usual the day started with Hebrew lessons and children drew sevivons in artistic studio. Lena Stamov talked about the tradition of Hanukkah gelt for kids and about the holiday for adults. Everyone had an opportunity to take part in Hanukkah dances and sing Hanukkah songs. Children and adults saw a scientific Hanukkah miracle show. On this day, each Hanukkah candle was lit by representatives of different generations in the community.

In conclusion, Hanukkah was quite full. All events were successful and the community was happy. Hanukkah celebrations included mitzvah projects: Mitzvah Day (creating Hanukkah cards for sick and poor children, collecting money, clothes and presents for them) and the Light of Hanukkah (in cooperation with Moishe House community started a charity event for the collection of household cleaning products and personal care for the elderly poor people.) Children received clothes and gifts from Kiev community and there was much gratitude to the Kiev Masoret Community.

Many members of the community asked about a Hanukkah Shabbaton. It would be wonderful to organize for next year. Kiev community has already made plans for next Hanukkah for the installation and lighting of a large hanukkiah on Podol Square.

And of course thanks to everyone who helped Kiev Community Masoret in conducting these Hanukkah events. Thank you so much for cooperation, assistance and congratulations! We could not have done it without you!

Photos you can find on Dropbox and our page in Facebook –

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/s12cn691zqxefv3/AADhVxGpucr7RIXLXNG8vwCVa?dl=0>

<https://www.facebook.com/masoretinkiev>