

Atlanta celebrated Israel's 70th at benefit for Israeli soldiers

More than 500 community leaders gathered on May 14 at the InterContinental Buckhead for the Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF) Atlanta Gala Dinner to honor Israel's soldiers and celebrate 70 years of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

The evening, which is one of the Atlanta Jewish community's largest events, featured keynote speaker U.S. Congressman Brian Mast. A former U.S. Army staff sergeant, Mast lost both of his legs after being seriously injured by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan. Bothered by anti-Israel demonstrations while he was studying at Harvard University, he traveled to Israel in 2015 to volunteer on an IDF base and show his support for Israel's soldiers.

"Volunteering alongside soldiers of the

IDF taught me that I had brothers facing the same battles I was," said Mast. "Today Israel and America both fight so that we may never allow ourselves to become terrorized by those who commit beheadings, suicide bombings, take hostages, and target the innocent with executions. The soldiers I met who were recovering from their injuries learned what I did: that we are blessed with 24 hours every day to do as much good as we can squeeze in."

Active-duty soldiers representing the IDF's best from the land, air, and sea shared their inspiring stories — 1st Lt. Shlomo, who received a citation for his outstanding courage during the 2014 Operation Protective Edge; Capt. "N.," a woman combat flight navigator; and Israeli Navy Capt. "Y.," the grandson of a Polish Holocaust survivor who, thanks to FIDF, was able to take part in the Witnesses in Uniform program, which brings Israeli soldiers and officers to Poland to commemorate and learn about the Holocaust. One of Israel's rising musical stars, award-winning violinist Bar Markovich, gave a special cross-genre performance.

"For the past 70 years, the brave men and women of the IDF risked their lives to

protect Israel and Jews around the world,"



Garry Sobel (photo: Greg Mooney)



Seth Baron (photo: Greg Mooney)

said FIDF Southeast Chairman Garry Sobel. "Our gala is a wonderful opportunity for our supporters to celebrate Israel's 70th anniversary, while meeting, connecting, and expressing gratitude to the young soldiers who safeguard the Jewish state today."

Other distinguished guests at the dinner included Consul General of Israel to the Southeast



Amb. Judith Varnai Shorer (right) with Israeli Minister of Education and Diaspora Affairs Naftali Bennett (left) (photo: Jon Marks Photography)

United States Amb. Judith Varnai Shorer; Atlanta resident Chaim Avneri, a veteran of Israel's 1948 War of Independence who served in the Haganah and later the IDF, after the state of Israel was established, until 1950; FIDF National Director and CEO Maj. Gen. (Res.) Meir Klifi-Amir; and FIDF Southeast Executive Director Seth Baron.

The funds raised at this event went toward FIDF well-being and educational programs for IDF soldiers. For more information or to support FIDF, please visit: www.fidfse.wixsite.com/ATL70.

MISH MASH

By Erin O'Shinsky

HADASSAH RECEIVES \$10,000 GRANT. Representing the Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) Foundation, Bill Loventhal, CLU, LUTCF, presented a \$10,000 grant to Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, at Best Strokes: Hadassah Bares All for Art, Awareness, and Treatment, a gala fundraiser with more than 400 in attendance.



Bill Loventhal, MDRT Foundation; Tamar Peretz, M.D., honorary chair of the event; Dale Bearman, M.D., event honoree; and Sheila Dalmat, Hadassah Greater Atlanta president

BISHKO AT JIFLA. Adrienne Litt Bishko is the new board secretary of Jewish Interest Free Loan of Atlanta (JIFLA). She has volunteered on the loan committee for more

than a year. Bishko graduated from The University of Michigan and taught middle-school English and Spanish. She was VP of administration at Temple Emanu-El, executive director at Temple Emanu-El, and executive director at Congregation Beth Tefillah, before forming Adrienne C Bishko Consulting, LLC, specializing in small Jewish non-profits, which led to a multi-year consultant position at Congregation Ariel. She currently serves as an administrative volunteer at Weinstein Hospice.

ACROSS THE GENERATIONS. Beth Jacob Preschool pre-K students sang a medley of rain and Passover songs to Café Europa participants. The children, who practiced for several weeks, were happy



Beth Jacob Preschool performing at Café Europa

and surprised when audience members sang along to "Ma Nishtana" and "Dayeinu." Beth Jacob Preschool visits Café Europa about once a year, and it is always a mutually enjoyable experience.

JELF'S YOUNG PROFESSIONALS HAPPY HOUR. Jewish Educational Loan Fund (JELF) recently hosted a Young Professionals get together at Taverna in Buckhead. Guests networked as they



JELF's Young Professional attendees



Jordan Arogeti and Aubrey Wasilewsky

enjoyed a host of delicious tapas courtesy of Taverna. JELF Board Member Jordan Arogeti spoke about her passion for JELF's critical mission. Ilana Davis Lind, a JELF recipient and one of the event chairs along with Jason Feldman, shared that she is proud of the opportunity JELF gave her to complete her education and is now proud to pay it forward as a volunteer and donor. Board President Stan Lowenstein provided words of inspiration to the younger crowd.



Director of Development Josh Schaier, CEO Jenna Shulman, Board President Stan Lowenstein, and Recipient Elizabeth Goldberg