

Membership Coordinator's Report

The Upper Midwest Region sent out a powerful mailing to all annual members of our region inviting them to join more than 220,000 life members of Hadassah and informing them of the dues increases and available savings offers. We are hoping that we will get a overwhelming response, increasing our entire regional membership this year.

In addition, either a letter or e-mail was sent to each Upper Midwest Region president to encourage each chapter to strive to reach individual membership goals. Each chapter was updated on it's current status of renewals, new life, new annual and total membership actual numbers and goals for this year.

As of March 1, many of our chapters are approaching membership goals. Congratulations are in order for the chapters which have already reached some of their membership goals:

Cedar Rapids/Iowa City — new life	Des Moines — renewals
Lake Superior — new annual	Omaha — new annual
Sioux City — new life	Sioux Falls — new life
St. Cloud — new annual	

Chapter are reminded of the thrill of receiving awards at National Convention when their chapter's goals are met. Wouldn't it be exciting if our region had the most awards! Did you know that if your chapter meets all membership goals plus your fundraising goal — you will receive a lanyard and special recognition?

We are continually striving to increase our membership — It is a year-round effort. Now is the time for Membership Vice Presidents to start planning for next year. Get out your calendars, get together with your committee members, have a vision for the future of your chapter's membership. Keep up your valiant efforts in changing people's lives through volunteering your efforts with Hadassah.

Please contact me with any membership questions.

Susie Fishman, Membership Coordinator
651-688-8179 or susie6147@aol.com

Annual Members Dues Increase to \$36 on June 1, 2004

Here are some ways to avoid the increase:

Option 1: Multi-Year Plan - Any annual member who renews or joins NOW can do so at the current rate of \$25 per year for up to three years. (For two years, they can enroll NOW for \$50 and save \$11; for three years they can enroll NOW for \$75 and save \$22).

Option 2: Easy Five Payment Plan - Current members or new members can "Commit to Life" and never pay annual dues again by paying \$50 for 5 months (\$250) using our snip, clip and go coupons (see the Winter Spotlight). If you have already paid your annual dues, submit \$225 in total. Remember, Life Membership will increase from \$250 to \$360 on June 1, 2005.

Option 3: Send in your full payment for life membership of \$250 or \$225 if your dues are current.

The first 36 region annual members who become life members by sending their dues to the region office will receive the new Hadassah Jewish Holiday Cookbook, a \$30 value. For more information contact the region office 1-888-924-4999 or umregion@hadassah.org.

Hadassah helps Jessica Fishman fulfill her dream

(Jessica Fishman is a Life Member of the St. Paul Chapter and the daughter of Susie Fishman, Upper Midwest Region Membership Coordinator. Merkaz Hamagshimim, a division of Young Judea, is sponsored by Hadassah. It is both an absorption center and community center in Jerusalem where young immigrants can find support and advice on aliyah, participate in community service and other activities, including theater.)



Almost everybody told me that making aliyah would be hard and that my dreams would be crushed. When I told them of my plans to get drafted into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Spokesperson Unit, people were skeptical and told me I should also be skeptical. However, I knew that with hard work and persistence I would be able to reach my goals. What I didn't count on was that there was one more thing that I would need besides hard work and persistence, and that was a support system.

My family is my first and most important support system. They have always believed in me and stood behind me. Their support and love truly gives me the strength to keep chasing after my dreams; however, strength only got me so far in this maze that we call Israel. I also needed people that could guide me through all the new and strange bureaucracies in Israel, to be there when I had a bad day dealing with a screaming Israeli, and to be there to help me celebrate an achievement. I needed people that were not only my support system, but people that knew all the inside information about Israel.

I found this support system at Merkaz Hamagshimim Hadassah in Jerusalem. When I got off of the plane when I made aliyah, I was scared, but there were smiling faces from Merkaz Hamagshimim to welcome me to Israel and bring me to my new home. There was a welcome basket of goodies in my room and people to help me carry up my bags. The community at Merkaz Hamagshimim greeted me with open arms and in no time, these people became my family and support system. In Israel we are all in the same situation and therefore bond instantaneously. We are young idealists, trying to learn Hebrew, to find jobs and realize our dreams of making a successful aliyah.

Merkaz Hamagshimim offered me not only the support of the residents, but of the staff members, who were always at hand to answer my questions, to give me advice and to help me with Israeli bureaucracy (and if you think bureaucracy is hard in English, try it in Hebrew!). Furthermore, I was lucky enough to intern at Merkaz Hamagshimim while I studied in Ulpan (Hebrew classes). The internship helped to support me financially, got me involved in the programming and helped me become close with the staff. I cannot fully express my gratitude to the staff for all the help they offered during my aliyah process. Yael, my boss when I interned at Merkaz Hamagshimim, not only helped me with small annoying questions, but helped me with some of the largest steps in my life.

Yael took it upon herself to help me realize my dream of being drafted into the IDF Spokespersons Unit and calmed me down once I finally got my draft notice. She gave me advice, down to the smallest detail about basic training and took me shopping for all the army gear I would need. She truly became a big sister to me during the process. Because of Yael and people like her at Merkaz Hamagshimim, I was able to have a successful aliyah to Israel. What I personally find even more amazing about Merkaz Hamagshimim is that the staff and the programs offered by Merkaz Hamagshimim give this type of support for all its residents and members.

Merkaz Hamagshimim was truly my dream catcher!