

Make a Menorah for the White House

The Gary Rosenthal Collection already has a dreidel in the White House and we hope to add a menorah to it. We also hope to be the ones to present it to President Obama, along with some of those who helped to make it! That, of course, will be dependent on a number of factors that may not all be in our control. But you can be sure of one thing. We will be making a menorah that will go to the White House and we are inviting students all over the country to help make it! UPDATE 9/30/09: We have officially partnered with Temple Micah and ironed out the details for this project. For all the details, you can read this letter being sent out by Deb Srabstein of Temple Micah:

Dear Colleague,

I would like to invite you to join me in a very exciting opportunity. I am working with nationally renowned Judaica sculptor, Gary Rosenthal, to commission a unique Hannukiah to be presented to President Obama this coming Hannukah. No matter your personal or political views, I know you join me in wanting to express and to share our hope with our President. In order to create a truly special sculpture, we are extending this invitation to Jewish schools and communities across the country, in hopes that Jewish communities from all 50 states will be represented in the final piece (the "Obamenorah"). To see a picture of this very special menorah, visit this page.

To accomplish this, Gary Rosenthal will be donating his time and materials to send glass mosaic kits to schools and synagogues across the country. There will be no charge to the participating schools. As a completely free activity, you will design a small triangle of glass that represents how you light up your community with "milut chasadim, acts of loving kindness. As part of the activity, you will also make a drawing to represent the same, and send along a one page story of how you share your light with those around you.

The glass will be fired and placed alongside other triangles to create a beautiful work of art on the menorah. The drawing and story will be placed in a book that will be presented along with the final Hannukiah.

In order to participate, here is what you need to do: Contact Gary Rosenthal at garymrosenthal@aol.com to let him know that you'd like for your community to participate no later than October 10th. Gary will then mail you the materials needed to participate in the project. Pose this question to your community: "How does our community help to bring light to the world?" While of course your answers might be abstract, we are looking for specific community-wide projects or initiatives that you feel may be inspiring to others. Please write a one paragraph answer. Honor one artist in your community to draw a picture of how your community brings light to the world. You may choose an artist old or young, famous or not yet famous. You will then create a small mosaic triangle based on the picture. The mosaic triangle will be based on the picture/tikkun olam project, but will be an abstraction of it. You may choose one color or idea that best represents the whole picture.

The glass piece, picture, and paragraph need to be received by Gary no later than November 15th, 2009. The picture and short paragraph will go into a book that explains the process that went into creating the menorah. Gary will then take each glass triangle and integrate it into the menorah. Additionally, we will create a book that accompanies the menorah with the description of each project. Gary will also ask your help in creating smaller versions of the "Obamenorah." Each participating community will receive five glass triangles to turn into mosaics and then each one, individually, will become the front of a menorah. This limited edition item will be available for sale on a first come/first serve basis with 100% of the proceeds going to fund future Hiddur Mitzvah projects.

Thank you for joining me in this exciting project.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Please pass this letter on to other colleagues!

Kol tuv (all the best),
Deborah Ayala Srabstein
educationdirector@templemicah.org

UPDATE:I can now share with you the prototype of this piece. The sixteen glass triangles in the center will be created by sixteen different groups across the country and then assembled into the final piece. If you are intersted in getting involved as one of these groups, don't hesitate to contact us! We are still working out details on participation, but we are hoping to make it a free or nearly free event for those involved. I also have a picture of the menorah's smaller counterpart, a replica of the larger piece that will be made available for purchase to the public.

How can you get involved? Just print out this form and send it to

The Gary Rosenthal Collection
4218 Howard Ave.
Kensington, MD 20895

Fax 301.493.5578

Or, give us a call at 301.493.5577, or shoot us an email !