Message from the President

Chag Sameach from the Jewish Multiracial Network! I wish all of our members a welcoming and enlightening Shavuot. Please enjoy this extended holiday edition, because although many things are closing down for summer, here at JMN things are only heating up! We’ve got something for everyone—from panel discussions, our annual picnic in Central Park, another parlor session, and more videos in the works.

If you haven’t seen our first video “What does a Jew look like?” check it out at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vMjyZj34W8&feature=youtu.be

Wanna help us with our next upcoming video?
We want to see your family celebrating Shabbat!
Send us a 30-second, high definition clip of your family on Shabbat or photos of your Shabbat table or havdallah (within your observance levels).
A simple “Shabbat Shalom!” Will also do.
Please keep your videos to no more than 30 seconds. Please send high-definition videos and photos. email us at thejewishmultiracialnetwork@gmail.com.

Diversity Dvar

CHOOSING TO BE JEWISH BY JMN BOARD MEMBER, ERIKA DAVIS

Shavuot is among us and for lactose-intolerant Jews like me, it is less about blintzes and cheesecake. And if I’m being honest, as a non-observant Jew who still cherry picks holidays that I observe (Pesach, High Holidays, Hanukkah, Purim) and don’t, holidays like Shavuot (and Sukkot for that matter) are still a bit alien to me.

For me, Shavuot isn’t just about receiving the Torah. That’s too far-fetched and quite a burden to think about. On Shavuot, I most always remember my own conversion and Ruth, the hero of all converts.

On my conversion day I stood before the bima, before my friends and rabbis with my hair dripping and my arms wrapped around the Torah scrolls. As my rabbi spoke about who I was as a student and the process of becoming Jewish my arms started to shake. I shifted the weight of the Torah scrolls from one arm to the other, then the weight of my body and the Torah from one leg to the other. My rabbi kept talking and I started to wonder when I could put the Torah down when it hit me, when we make the choice to be Jewish, either through conversion or being active participants in Jewish life, you can never really “put the Torah down.”

As Jews interested in making Jewish communities more open, inclusive and welcoming spaces for Jews of Color and Multiracial Jewish families this obligation/mitzvah, dare I say, becomes more pressing. We can, of course, sit back and watch the Jewish world around us and live in communities that don’t reflect our multiracial homes or we can chose to be active participants in our Jewish world in such a way that creates enduring change.

My challenge for the JMN family is to choose to be Jewish. Make the conscientious choice to be an active member of your Jewish community, join a committee, enroll in a class, or attend a community meeting. Let your voice be heard and your face be seen. Too many Jews of Color and Multiracial Jewish families check out of their Judaism because it rejects them or doesn’t accept them, and make this choice for good reason. However, if we choose to be seen in our Jewish spaces, then in whichever unique meanings we have for Torah, we are able to take part in it.
GOAT CHEESE CHEESECAKE
Courtesty of Joy of Kosher, contributed by Shoshana Ohriner
http://www.joyofkosher.com/recipes/goat-cheese-cheesecake/

Servings
Yields 8 servings

Times
Prep Time: 20 min
Cook Time: 45 min
Ready Time: 1 hours and 5 min

Ingredients
5 ounces graham cracker crumbs
5 tablespoons butter, melted
1/4 cup sugar
Pinch salt
15 ounces goat cheese, room temperature
8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
3/4 cup (5.5 oz) sugar
1/2 cup sour cream
2 teaspoons lemon zest
6 eggs
1/4 cup honey
5 3-inch stalks fresh thyme
1 pint fresh blueberries or strawberries

Directions
1. Preheat the oven to 350. Combine the graham cracker crumbs, butter, sugar and salt in a small bowl and mix well. Press the crumbs into the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan. Bake the crust for ten minutes, or until it is slightly toasted. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool. Wrap the pan well with heavy duty foil or place the pan inside a 9-inch round silicone cake pan.

2. Place the goat cheese, cream cheese, sugar, sour cream and salt in the bowl of a large food processor and process until smooth and fully combined. Add the lemon zest. Add the eggs one at a time, processing just until combined. Pour the batter into the prepared springform.

3. Place the cheesecake pan in a larger roasting pan and fill the roasting pan half way up with boiling water. Carefully place the pan into the oven. Bake for 40-50 minutes, or until the center still wobbles slightly but the edges are set. Carefully remove the pan from the oven. Lift the springform out of the hot water and place on a rack to cool fully. Once the cheesecake is cool, cover it and refrigerate it for at least four hours, preferably overnight.

4. While the cheesecake is chilling make the thyme honey. Place the honey and thyme in a small saucepan and warm gently over low heat. Leave the honey over the heat for 10 minutes, then remove the pan from the heat and let the honey cool completely. Remove the thyme stalks and cover the honey until ready to use it.

5. To serve the cheesecake run a sharp knife around the edges of the pan. Slowly release the springform pan. Top the cheesecake with the berries. Gently warm the honey so that it more pourable and drizzle the honey evenly over the top.

Jewish Learning Corner

THE BOOK OF RUTH - COURTESY OF CHABAD.ORG
The Book of Ruth is read on Shavuot—there are several reasons given for this custom.
1) Shavuot is the birthday and yahrzeit (anniversary of passing) of King David, and the Book of Ruth records his ancestry. Ruth and her husband Boaz were King David’s great-grandparents.
2) The scenes of harvesting described in the book of Ruth are appropriate to the Festival of Harvest.
3) Ruth was a sincere convert who embraced Judaism with all her heart. On Shavuot all Jews were converts—having accepted the Torah on Mt Sinai.

Volunteer with JMN
Interested in becoming more active in JMN? Email us at info@jewishmultiracialnetwork.org and look for ideas on our Volunteer Page.

Local Events
Please check our website and Facebook page for additional events to be added soon!

New York City

Shavuot Across Brooklyn
June 3
JMN’s own Debbie Vishnesky will be hosting a talk about Diversity in the Jewish Community at Shavuot Across Brooklyn, Debbie’s learning block is at 12:45AM.
"There are Jews There? A Discussion of Jewish Diaspora and Diversity, Past and Present with Debbie Vishnesky"

Jewish communities have existed all over the world for centuries, yet we often learn only about the European Jewish experience. We know the twelve tribes dispersed around the world, but we miss out on the stories of Jewish communities who appeared everywhere from the Silk
Road to the islands of the Caribbean. With help from the Jewish Multiracial Network, we will take a look at Jewish communities in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean and the context under which they have thrived and struggled. We will explore concepts of Jewish identity and authenticity through themes like ritual and practice, halakha and tradition, and assimilation and persecution. Finally, we will turn the tables and discuss what these diverse communities have to do with current events like diversity in Israel and the notorious Pew Study.

http://ow.ly/xp8Ue

Panel at the JCC Manhattan
Mixed Multitudes: Race and Ethnicity in the Jewish Community

Erika Davis, Yitz “Y-Love” Jordan, Eric Greene, Tamara Fish, and Deborah Vishnevsky
Moderated by Chava Shervington, President of the Jewish Multiracial Network
Thu, Jun 19, 7–9 pm, $10/$15

As the American Jewish community struggles with Jewish continuity and strengthening Jewish identity, we will address how the experience of being a Jew of Color affects these critical communal issues. Recent studies, articles, and media personalities have created a small spotlight on Jewish diversity and now more than ever, the American Jewish community is being exposed to its own rich racial and ethnic diversity. Join the Jewish Multiracial Network as we discuss the intersection of race, ethnicity and Jewish identity. In the course of our conversation, panelists hope to increase awareness of the varied experience of Jewish people of color as well as tools for maintaining Jewish identity.


JMN Annual Picnic

JMN invites you to our annual summer picnic on the great lawn in Central Park, Sunday, July 20th, 2014 from 1 pm to 5 pm. We'll be meeting at the Arthur Ross Pinetum at 85th street on the west side of the great lawn in Central Park. This area has picnic tables, an open lawn and swings. We'll put up signs and have balloons so that we'll be easy to spot. We look forward to seeing everyone!

Please bring only vegetarian/dairy food.

Parlor Series, Part II Allyship

We’re excited for the second sequence in our parlor series—which are guided, but intimate and provocative conversations related to Jewish diversity and inclusivity. This conversation will be focused on allyship and what it means to be an effective supporter and advocate of Jewish diversity issues.

Please contact me at president@jewishmultiracialnetwork.org if you’re interested in bringing our parlor series to your community.

Los Angeles

Although not a JMN event, we recommend our members in the LA area check out the mixedremixed festival, June 14th, 2014 at the Japanese American National Museum 100 N. Central Avenue Los Angeles, CA. We particularly recommend, Sleeping with the Fishes, a feature film that showcases a Latin American Jewish family that’s being shown at the festival. For more information, check their website at http://www.mixedremixed.org/

Fellowship for Younger Members

Ma’ase Olam, an Israeli social change nonprofit, is currently interviewing applicants for a challenging education Fellowship in Israel. A high percentage of the students that our Fellows teach and mentor are Israeli youth of color, and it is critically important that our Fellowship reflects the diversity of background and identity found among the Jewish diaspora. In order to qualify for the Fellowship, applicants must:

Identify as Jewish
Be 21-30 years of age
Be college graduates
Hold citizenship in an English-speaking country
Possess a strong interest in education, youth mentoring, and social change

The Fellowship lasts for 10 months and begins August 31st. If you or someone you know meets the above criteria, please email them at maaseolam@gmail.com for more information. You can also visit their website at olam.maase.org.il