

Texas Jewish Post

Since 1947

Gift of Preschool Scholarship Will Keep on Giving

New fund is a first, encourages others



Helen Risch

Dallas--The Helen E. Risch Scholarship Endowment Fund has been created for a number of important reasons: to educate, to bond parents, to inspire others to support early Jewish education. It started as a birthday present from Helen's husband, Frank. But perhaps its formation really started when Helen and Frank's daughter, Jolene, was organizing the preschool at Congregation Anshai Torah. There was not a great deal of money in Dallas earmarked for preschool-aged students, and very little --if any--set aside for Jewish preschools. "It was Jolene who recognized the need for financial assistance for preschoolers," Helen Risch said.

"We need to be aware that we have got to educate our children and their parents to maintain the continuity of Judaism. When the parents get together to see what their children are learning, they, too, continue the process of education. We have to go back to the very first school experience, and commit to teaching preschool-aged children about values and our Jewish traditions." Helen Risch spoke thoughtfully about the gift to the community of scholarship funds.

"I wondered, 'how can we give people the opportunity to do this?' Preschool is a place for teaching children information and values. But it is also very important to remember the parental side to this equation. We want the parents to become comfortable having their children in this type of setting." Helen grew up in an Orthodox Jewish home, and now, as a member of Temple Emanuel, has continued many of the traditions within her family. Helen and Frank's grandchildren are in Jewish day schools in Dallas and Houston.

Parents want the best education for their children, of course. "It is very interesting to me," Helen shared an observation. "There is a fear that if you isolate children in a Jewish setting, they won't be able to make it in the outside world. To the contrary, I

feel that they do better as a result of a Jewish education, in that they become much more aware of who they are and their place in the world."

Helen, a school psychologist in Dallas, knows how well and quickly children can learn. "We have twin grandchildren in a Jewish preschool in Houston. Yesterday, my daughter-in law called and said, 'Helen, here is a little song for you.' My granddaughter, at age three, and her twin brother sang the "Shema" all the way through! Now that they know it, they will always know it. And they'll never be uncomfortable with it or who they are."

Helen Risch is very candid about one aspect of the Helen E. Risch Preschool Scholarship Endowment fund. "This is just a start. It can't be just Frank and Helen, but everyone who needs to be involved in the education of young children. Our hope is that people will start or add to this or other preschool scholarship funds at the Dallas Jewish Community Foundation."

Applications to be submitted to any of the eligible Jewish preschools listed below by February 1, 2007. If you have an additional preschool you think belongs on this list, please contact Esther Nathan, Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas Jewish Education Director, enathan@jfgd.org.

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MEDIA ADVISORY

Helen E. Risch Preschool Scholarship Awards Presented Four schools identified for grants to promote additional enrollments

Dallas—The first Helen E. Risch Preschool Scholarships were announced today. Four Dallas Jewish Preschools received awards to allow them to increase their enrollment by at least one child.

Awards were given to:

- Temple Shalom Preschool
- Congregation Beth Torah Preschool
- Temple Emanu-El Preschool
- Aaron Family JCC Taglit Preschool

The awards committee included Jolene Risch-Minsky, Dallas area H.R. consultant; Emily Kern, Dallas area clinical social worker ; Elizabeth A. Sorrell, Superintendent of Public Schools, Carver Massachusetts; Ruth Ritterband former Head of School of Solomon Schechter Academy, now Levine Academy; and Helen and Frank Risch.

Professionals from the Dallas Jewish Community Foundation assisted with the process of applications and grant awards, helping to ensure anonymity for the families supported through the Helen E. Risch Preschool Scholarship.

“Our hope is that others will see the tremendous reaction to these awards, and will be inspired to start similar preschool scholarship funds at the Dallas Jewish Community Foundation,” said Helen E. Risch, for whom the Preschool Scholarship was established in late 2006 as a birthday present from her husband, Frank. David Agronin, Executive Director of the Dallas Jewish Community Foundation (DJCF) stated “This scholarship fund is a welcome addition to the current roster of 23 scholarships for college study, including yeshivas and study in Israel, currently offered by the DJCF.”

There are nine eligible Jewish Preschools in Dallas, and each would be pleased to participate in further rounds of scholarship awards so that they can attract more families to the joys of Jewish study. If you would like to establish a scholarship to support Jewish Preschool—or any type—of education, please contact the DJCF at (214) 615-9351 or at info@djcf.org.