



TORCH  
5821 SW Freeway, Suite 606  
Houston, Tx 77057

**THE ASCENT CONFERENCE IS  
GENEROUSLY UNDERWRITTEN BY:**

*Linda & Howard Waldman*  
in memory of *Arlene Waldman Stock*

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"It's About Time..."



for the ASCENT  
Houston Conference  
for Jewish Women

Sunday  
December 3, 2006  
9:30 AM – 2:30 PM

The  
InterContinental  
Houston  
2222 W. Loop South, Houston



Arlene Waldman Stock Center for Torah



# Presenters

**Cathy Binstock**, a psychologist by training, responded to her daughter's desire for dance lessons by founding The River Performing and Visual Arts Center, an arts enrichment program for special needs children. She served as Founding Executive Director for six years, helping the organization gain recognition for its unique work. She lectures extensively throughout Houston.

**Sarah Braham** is the owner of Elijah's Cup, a store which features fine Judaic ritual objects. A community leader, she has been active at Beth Yeshurun, in Hadassah, chaired the JCC Book Fair, the Bureau of Jewish Education and the Planning and Allocations of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston. She worked at Turrentine's Needlecrafts and for ten years taught needle arts.

**Naomi L. Duke**, a Registered Investment Advisor and member of The K Corporation, a full service Financial Services Firm, educates individuals and families on strategies to reduce debt, maximize family wealth, and plan for the unexpected. Her work has included public service for economically disadvantaged youth and a specialization in financial planning for families of special needs children. She is completing her training to become a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and a Special Care Planner at Rice University.

**Lolly Friedman**, after twenty years in private practice as a real-estate attorney and an active lay leader in many local and national organizations, became the Executive Director of the Houston Jewish Community Foundation, a foundation with over \$80 million in charitable funds. Lolly has received numerous awards for her community service, including Young Leadership Awards from the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston and the Anti-Defamation League.

**Gabrielle Gelman** holds a B.A. in Psychology and Judaic Studies from Yeshiva University and an Masters in Occupational Therapy from New York University. She is currently pursuing an additional masters degree from Siegal College of Judaic Studies. Gabrielle is a Bible instructor at the Robert M. Beren Academy.

**Faige Grossman** is the Middle School Educational Specialist at The Emery/Weiner School. She has an M.A. in Special Education and an advanced Studies Judaic Studies degree. Faige is a frequent lecturer for TORCH and ASCENT.

**Nancy Levicki** has been involved for 34 years in a variety of Houston charities, including the Susan G. Komen Foundation, the Nature Conservancy of Texas, the Cattle Barons Ball and Episcopal High School. An author and former couture buyer for Sakowitz and author, she was a Founding Member for Dress for Success Worldwide. She was selected in 2005 by Texas Executive Women as a Woman on the Move, and recently as Houston Icon.

**Denise Landers** is the founder and CEO of Key Organization Systems Inc. and author of *Destination: Organization, a Week by Week Journey*. She was recently noted for her work in a chapter of the book, *Masters of Success*, and was spotlighted on William Shatner's Heartbeat of America series.

**Valerie Mirwis**, the mother of seven children, is a former member of the Board of Education and teacher at Robert M. Beren Academy.

**Malka Moskovitz** is the Rebbetzin at Meyerland Minyan, having arrived here in 2005. Hailing from Toronto, Malka is pleased to finally warm up in Houston, and to find the Jewish community of Houston equally warm and wonderful. The mother of three, she recently opened Kosher Kandyland, a kosher candy/chocolate store.

**Sara Nagel** is the wife of Rabbi Yaakov Nagel, a founding member of TORCH. In addition, she juggles mothering 6 delightful children and working as a pediatric audiologist at Texas Children's Hospital. Sara has lectured in various adult education venues on numerous Judaic subjects and has presented a series of classes for teenage girls.

**Hetty Perl** has served as the Director of the United Orthodox Synagogues Goldberg Montessori School for over twenty-five years. A graduate of Touro College with a degree in Education, she has been an educational resource for the Houston community as a teacher at the Robert M. Beren Academy and Congregations Brith Shalom and Beth El.

**Frumie Polatsek** came to Houston in 2000 as a member of ASCENT's faculty. She and her family are active members in the Houston Jewish Community and she currently serves on the Board of Directors of Young Israel of Houston.

**Irene Merker Rosenberg** is the Royce R. Till Professor of Law of the University of Houston Law Center, where she has taught for over thirty years. The first woman granted tenure at the Law Center, she teaches criminal law and procedure and constitutional law. She also writes extensively in the area of Jewish law, and has published numerous articles in major law journals.

**Raul Sanchez** is the Chief Decorator of Wish Bakery, a kosher full line scratch bakery in Houston. Raul has over ten years of bakery decorating experience.

**Jennifer Watson**, the author of *Baby Signing for Dummies*, teaches parent seminars and play classes in various Houston area locations and travels nationally to speak to teachers regarding the use of ASL in the classroom. A curriculum consultant with McGraw-Hill/Wright Group, she also works with Children's Ministries at St. Peter's United Methodist Church in Katy, Texas. She leads the Houston Signing Babies Support Group.

**Shalva Weinreb** and her family recently joined the Houston Jewish community after several years in Jerusalem. Shalva is deeply involved in TORCH's TNT program which strives to engage Houston's unaffiliated young Jewish professional community through social and educational programming. Shalva holds a marriage instructor certificate from the JME in Jerusalem. Currently she is a Judaic teacher for UOS Goldberg Montessori School.

**Zehava Wolbe**, an ASCENT faculty member, received her teacher's training at Meohr Seminary, a division of Neve Yerushalayim. After living in Jerusalem for three years, she and her family moved to Houston in 2005. She owns and operates PaperPal, a paper goods retailer.

**Rachel Yaghobian** is the Rebbitzin of Congregation Beth Rambam and the Principal of Sephardic Gan/Torat Emet. For over ten years, Mrs. Yaghobian has taught adults as well as children of all ages, in Houston and in Israel. She has a Masters Degree in Educational Administration and an advanced degree in Judaic Studies. In addition, she is a certified marriage counselor and a labor doula.

**Jessica Zweback** has been a certified yoga instructor since 2001. She earned a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Maryland. As a professional singer and drummer, she brings many artistic influences to her yoga classes at Bikram Yoga Studio in Sugar Land. Jessica also does one-on-one, private yoga instruction.

9:30 AM



Registration

10:00 AM

Keynote Address, Sarah Chana Radcliffe

"Talk the Talk"

Jewish Perspectives on the Power of Words to Transform Relationships, Impact Cosmic Peace, and Guarantee a Seat in Heaven



11:00 AM

Choice of Workshops: Tracks 1-8



12:00 PM

Gourmet Lunch



1:00 PM

Choice of Workshops: Tracks 1-8



2:00 PM

Dessert Reception & Wrap Up

"Words Are Made Up of Letters" with Sarah Chana Radcliffe

# Schedule

Houston Jewish Women are Invited to Bring Items to Donate to ASCENT's Co-sponsors:

For **AMIT's** Program for Autistic Children in Israel: Bring new **stuffed animals**.

For **Dress for Success** Wardrobe Assistance Programs: Bring new or gently used **black handbags** or new **Q sized panty hose**.

For **Jewish Family Service** Emergency Financial Aid Program: Bring **gift cards** from grocery stores, Target, and Wal-mart.

For the **Jewish Federation of Greater Houston**: Bring **school supplies** to be brought to the children of northern Israel during the Community Mission in February.

For **Hadassah's** Let My People Read Program for pediatric Patients at Ben Taub Hospital, Meals on Wheels Program, and program to help Houston area women's centers: Bring new or gently used **children's books**; Bring single serving, nutritious, non-perishable and canned **food items** (commercially produced); Bring old **cell phones** and **toiletries**.

For **The River Performing Arts Center** for Special Needs Children: **Tambourines** 6", 8" & 10", disposable cameras with indoor flash, new boxes of large **crayons**, colorful **pipe cleaners**, new **art supplies**.

For **Sharsheret**, A Resource for Jewish Women with Breast Cancer: Bring new neutral tone **make-up, lipstick and nail polish** (clear); **Bring small toys and games**, puzzles, lego sets, travel games, for the Busy Box Program.

# Tracks

# "It's About Time..."

# Tracks



	To Be Inspired	To Get the System	To Learn From Women	For Something New	To Work on Our Relationships	To Parent	To See the Light	To Give and Get
<p><b>A</b></p> <p>11:00 – 12:00</p>	<p><b>A PRAYER FOR A CHILD</b> <i>Valerie Mirwis</i></p> <p>What do you really, really want for your children? Jewish tradition has expressed parents' hopes and desires in prayers that start in pregnancy and accompany our children throughout their lives. Hear how others have expressed their deepest desires, how we can communicate them to our Creator, and then write your own tefillah (prayer) to take home, framed, to add to your arsenal of parenting tools.</p>	<p><b>WHERE HAS THIS WEEK GONE? GAINING CONTROL OF YOUR TIME</b> <i>Denise Landers</i></p> <p>Learn to de-clutter your desk, your "to do" list, and to manage your emails, answer machines and cell phone messages. This combination of organizational approach and time management system will have the ultimate goal of reducing stress in your life. Now, let's all take a deep breath as we plan those changes that will lead to reduced stress in our lives. Yoga expert Jessica Zweback will complete the session with a five minute lesson you can take home and use daily.</p>	<p><b>DESPERATE TENTWIVES</b> <i>Gabrielle Gelman</i></p> <p>Sarah is held to be the first great Jewish woman, and we seek to emulate her many worthy traits. What on earth was she thinking in bringing another woman into the tent? This class will explore her motivation for bringing another wife to her husband, and the role of Avrohom in the relationship between these two memorable women. Study traditional sources and bring your own point of view to this fascinating story. You'll be able to add some important figures to your list of people who have taught us life's lessons.</p>	<p><b>Creative Corners (Choose one)</b> <b>KNIT ONE, PURL ALREADY!</b> <i>Sarah Braham</i></p> <p>Know how to knit, but can't quite get going on a project? Bring your yarn and needles, sit in our comfy armchairs, and let Sarah finally get you launched on that scarf or king-size blanket. For proficient beginners and intermediate knitters.</p> <p><b>PIPED DREAMS: CAKE DECORATING</b> <i>Raul Sanchez</i></p> <p>The chief baker of Wish Bakery will teach you how to make the prettiest cupcakes and fanciest cakes. Limited to 12 participants. Take home your kosher creations, just don't lick your fingers when anyone is watching!</p>	<p><b>CROSSING THE CALLOSUS: HOW MALE/FEMALE BRAIN DIFFERENCES AFFECT YOUR RELATIONSHIPS</b> <i>Sarah Chana Radcliffe</i></p> <p>The corpus callosum connects the left and right cerebral hemispheres of the brain. Information crossing the hemispheres in your spouse's brain is not the same in yours. This fact accounts for all of your marital challenges - from finances to parenting and everything in between. Fortunately, it also leads to practical solutions. If you're going to live with a man, you might as well find out what he's really thinking and what you can do about it!</p>	<p><b>A CHILD GROWS IN HOUSTON: PLANTING &amp; NURTURING FUTURE GENERATIONS OF JEWS</b> <i>Sara Nagel</i></p> <p>Here are the fundamental ideas for good parenting. Our goals help clarify what exactly it means to be a "successful" parent. How can we provide our children with spiritual anchors that will help them in this very material world? How does the Torah, even as it requires us to expect children to adhere to community standards, instruct us to respect and foster individuality in our children? What are the common needs of all children? Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of their children as well as a new set of practical ideas to bring home.</p>	<p><b>MYSTERY AND MASTERY OF SHABBAT</b> <i>Frumie Polatsek, Malka Moskovitz, Zehava Wolbe</i></p> <p>You have heard about the beauty of Shabbat and may already experience parts of Her majesty. Come, sit around our beautiful Shabbat table and learn both why and how we welcome Shabbat into our homes. Learn the brachot, (blessings), customs, and practice songs that lift our spirits. Ever wonder why we cover our eyes when we light candles? Why do we put salt on the challah? Feel free to ask all your questions and practice new skills. This is a hands-on class where all levels of knowledge and observance are welcome. You'll increase your appreciation for the beauty of Shabbat, and will be more comfortable at your own or another's Shabbat table, guaranteed!</p>	<p><b>PROFILES OF PHILANTHROPIC WOMEN: SIMPLE STEPS TO CREATE YOUR OWN CHARITABLE LEGACY</b> <i>Lolly Friedman</i></p> <p>What inspires a woman to give charity? What influences her style of giving? Look inside the lives of significant women philanthropists in the Houston Jewish Community, and see how simple it is for you to get started. Creating a personal charitable legacy is about matching your means with your priorities.</p>

Lunch 12:00 - 1:00

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<p><b>B</b></p> <p>1:00 - 2:00</p>	<p><b>WOMEN OF ACTION, WHO CAN FIND?</b> <i>Cathy Binstock &amp; Nancy Levicki</i></p> <p>These women will inspire you with their stories and practical advice. Cathy Binstock is the founder of Houston's The River Performing and Visual Arts Center, which provides accessible, affordable art enrichment classes and camps for children with special needs. Nancy Levicki, formerly a couture buyer for Sakowitz, co-founded Dress for Success, which provides interview suits for low income women entering the work force. What drove these women to action? How can we take our passion and help others? You'll be mightily impressed and may even be moved to action yourself.</p>	<p><b>LAW AND ORDER: A COMPARISON OF AMERICAN AND JEWISH CRIMINAL LAW</b> <i>Prof. Irene Merker Rosenberg</i></p> <p>In this session, you will learn which legal system is more likely to give the death penalty. The Talmudic rules regarding confessions, circumstantial evidence, causation, witnesses, and capital punishment are fascinating in the lengths they go to protect the criminal. What is the reasoning of the Rabbis? Are we similarly protected under American Law? Learn the similarities and differences between these two legal systems in this engaging and scholarly presentation.</p>	<p><b>YEHUDIT, CHANA AND THE MIRACLE OF CHANUKAH</b> <i>Hetty Perl</i></p> <p>At this time of year, we prepare for Chanukah in many ways. Join this session to be reminded of the rituals of the holiday, and also learn about two women whose heroic actions are told at this time of year. Both Chana and Yehudit are considered "Women of Valor" by our people. Their brave stories are as dramatic as one can imagine. Learn about their heroism and remember this in your Chanukah celebrations this year.</p>	<p><b>HEY, BABY, WHAT'S YOUR SIGN? SIGNING WITH BABY</b> <i>Jennifer Watson</i></p> <p>What do you talk about with your baby after you've discussed current events? If you ever run out of things to say to your baby, this class is for you. Learn a fun, creative, and non-pressured way to communicate with your infant. Soon the whole family will be gesticulating, and all the kids will be talking to each other with their expanded vocabulary. Using ASL as a way to stimulate your children's vocabulary and your interaction with them is a skill you can pick up in one session.</p>	<p><b>THE SPIRITUAL KISS: THE ART OF INTIMACY</b> <i>Faige Grossman Shalva Weinreb</i></p> <p>How does the traditional Jewish view of intimacy between a man and a woman speak to us today? Jewish wisdom reveals a simple and profound formula for creating and maintaining vibrant intimacy. Explore how to channel the God-given energy in your relationship. Discover the secret to achieving balance between two separate individuals, as you strive to achieve one heart and one soul.</p>	<p><b>RAISING CHILDREN WITHOUT RAISING YOUR VOICE</b> <i>Sarah Chana Radcliffe</i></p> <p>Following the advice of the book with the same name, parents can learn to maintain their cool in the heat of the parenting moment. Practical strategies will be offered as well as effective techniques for developing a positive parent-child bond, reducing non-compliance, increasing emotional intelligence and imparting the essential interpersonal skills that will guarantee your children a lifetime of loving relationships.</p>	<p><b>JEWISH WOMEN: LIGHT UNTO THE NATION</b> <i>Rachel Yagobian</i></p> <p>From the traditional Shabbat lights, to Chanukah, to the Havdalah candle, light is an integral part of our heritage. This class will discuss the deeper mystical meaning of light and the spirituality it brings into our homes. Participants will receive a Havdalah candle to take home, as well as a wealth of Midrashim and practical tips on lighting candles throughout the year. Understanding the significance of lighting candles as a Jewish woman can connect us to our Creator, about whom we say, "In Your light, we see light."</p>	<p><b>ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, GROW! HOW TO COUNT, PRESERVE, &amp; INCREASE YOUR WEALTH</b> <i>Naomi Duke</i></p> <p>Whether you have a million, or a fraction thereof, you need to know how to count what you have, budget, set goals, and make plans regarding your finances. In this nuts and bolts class, you will learn the basics of budgeting with an emphasis on practical application. If you have big dreams that require big finances, this session will lay out the practical steps for moving towards your goals.</p>
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