

Remembering the soldiers

Yom Hazikaron at Ben Porat Yosef

BY LARRY YUDELSON | May 5, 2016, 4:55 pm |

Zachor, remember, is the motto of Yom Hashoah.

But the word actually shows up on the Hebrew calendar a week later, in Yom Hazikaron, memorial day, when Israel remembers its fallen soldiers and victims of terror. It is the day before Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israeli independence day.

In contrast to America's Memorial Day, a time of sales and barbecues, Israel keeps the memory in memorial day.

It is a day marked most notably by the two-minute sirens that sound at 8 at night — like all Jewish days, it begins at sundown the night before — and at 11 the next morning. The siren brings the country to a halt. Traffic stops as drivers leave their cars and stand at attention by the side of the road.

And it is a day increasingly marked by American Jews.

This year, on Tuesday night, May 10, a Yom Hazikaron commemoration will take place at the Ben Porat Yosef Yeshiva Day School in Paramus.

Cheryl Mandel, whose son David was killed in 2003 as he led a raid on terrorists in Nablus, will speak.

The commemoration is co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey, Yashar LaChayal, and the One Family Fund, in addition to Ben Porat Yosef.

Ben Porat Yosef has observed Yom Hazikaron for many years.

"We have a lot of Israelis and our principal is Israeli," said Ruth Roth, the school's director of admissions and public relations. "Because we have this population, we as a school are profoundly affected by the day. We started doing a commemoration years ago.

"Then we realized we needed to offer this up to the community, because it's something the entire Jewish community should be aware of and sensitive to.

"We only have Israel because of the soldiers who are there on the front lines. We have to understand how the country is dependent on those young people. There's a lot of sacrifices for us all to be able to have the Land of Israel."

The center of the evening's program will be a talk by a mother whose son was sacrificed to protect Israel.

Cheryl Mandel and her husband, David, and their five children made aliyah from Toronto. Daniel was 24 when he was killed while leading his soldiers in an operation to capture three wanted terrorists responsible for the deaths of at least 30 and the injuries of more than 140 Israelis.

Ms. Mandel “has since dedicated herself to telling his story, and trying to convey the lessons of that experience and how she has maintained her belief,” Ms. Roth said. “She has really turned it into a story of inspiration.”

“She is an incredible woman,” said Michelle Napell, head of the American office of the One Family Fund in Teaneck. “The strength she has shown is beautiful.

“I have heard her speak. How she recovered from that loss and decided not to let it define her and takes strength from being part of an unfortunate group of mothers who lost their sons as soldiers and victims of terror is inspiring.”

The evening also will include a “brief, moving dramatic presentation that speaks to the sacrifices of the soldiers,” Ms. Roth said. It will be performed by students at Ben Porat Yosef’s junior high school.

<http://jewishstandard.timesofisrael.com/events/yom-hazikaron-ceremony/>

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