



## ALL ABOUT ECRUSY:

- United Synagogue Youth is the middle and high school branch of United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, encompassing 17 regions across North America.
- The Eastern Canadian Region of United Synagogue Youth is the only completely Canadian region, encompassing Ontario, Quebec, and the Atlantic Provinces.
- Did you know:
  - ECRUSY was one of the first USY regions?
  - The first ECRUSY convention was held December 11-13 at Beth Jacob in Hamilton?
- Kadima, the Middle School arm of United Synagogue Youth, provides pre-teens with leadership opportunities and Jewish experiences beyond Hebrew School and Day School.
- ECRUSY offers leadership and social action opportunities, volunteer hours, and the chance to meet teens across the region, the continent, and in your own backyard.
- ECRUSY Chapters have monthly programs. Check out the Chapters section on the website for more information.

# Welcome to the ECRUSY Parent Newsletter

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## ECRUSY NEWS~

Welcome to the ECRUSY Parent Newsletter. We hope this newsletter will keep you informed of events for your children and special programs around the region.

For information about upcoming events, people in our region, chapter links, scholarship information, the calendar, and more you should also check out our website:

[www.ECRUSY.org](http://www.ECRUSY.org)

From all of us at ECRUSY we wish you and your families a Hag kasher v'sameach, a happy and kosher Passover!



### Scholarships available!

We understand that the cost of conventions can sometimes be difficult to afford. Most synagogues offer money to their teens for USY events. Did you know that ECRUSY also has a scholarship fund for regional events? Just download the form from the ECRUSY website and turn it in with your registration. Scholarships are due by the first registration deadline.

The ECRUSY Scholarship Fund is supported by donations from alumni and families. Do you have a special event coming up, a graduation or a birthday? Why not celebrate the moment with a donation to the scholarship fund? Contact

ECRUSY Spring Regional Convention:

Battle of the Sexes~ Examining gender roles in Judaism and challenging each other

May 27-30, 2010

Programs for grades 5-7 & grades 8-12.

Registration Coming Soon!

## Kol Dichfin: Let All Who Are Hungry Come and Eat~

Kol Dichfin, the Haggadah tells us. Everyone who is hungry and should come eat. Through [Project Reconnect](#), and working together with NAASE, Women's League, and

KOACH, we offer college students, unaffiliated young adults, and alumni of USCJ programs who find themselves away from home help in finding a seat at a Seder table. If one of

your children (or grandchildren) needs a place to go for Seder, please let [Project Reconnect](#) help - go to [www.projectreconnect.org](http://www.projectreconnect.org) for details.

# Do As I Say (and as I do)



"The data are clear that parental encouragement of participation in Jewish activities dramatically increases actual participation rates."

A recent report commissioned by the Rose Community Foundation and presented by the Jewish TEEN! Funders Network showed that teens are significantly influenced by the beliefs and actions of their parents. Whether they admit it or not, teens want to follow in your footsteps. Parental encouragement can dramatically increase youth

participation. "Jewish teens report the highest rates of any common U.S. religion of both desiring, and lacking quality adult connections with members of their faith.... Similarly, teens report being less likely to participate if they observe their parents to be pushing them to participate, while the parents themselves demonstrate limited involvement in Jewish com-

munity life." Further teens today are looking for more significant ways to connect with being Jewish and with the community through leadership, volunteerism, and communal opportunities.

We can't do it without you. Parents are our #1 link between our teens and continuing connections with Jewish life.

## J-Serve: Jewish Teens Serving the World

Why should Sunday, April 25th be different from all other Sundays? On all other Sundays we may work, rest, or hang out with friends and family. On this special Sunday we can join with youth from around the world as we serve our communities.

Since 2005, Jewish teens in North America have been participating in J-Serve, the International Day of Jewish Youth Service, joining other faith communities as part of Global Youth Service Day. J-Serve provides teens with the opportunity to fulfill Jewish values of

g'milut hasadim [acts of loving kindness], tzedakah [charitable giving], and tikkun olam [repairing the world].

J-Serve Toronto involves youth communities across the Jewish spectrum all working together. J-Serve Toronto provides the opportunity, transportation, and materials. You provide the heart and soul. Check out [www.jservice.ca](http://www.jservice.ca) after April 1 to sign up for your opportunity.

Imagine, one day, across the globe, teens will join each other to make their community and the world a better place. Last year ap-

proximately 10,000 Jewish teens in more than 70 communities participated in J-Serve. This year J-Serve and its partners hope to involve even more in cities across the continent. Will your kids help make a difference?

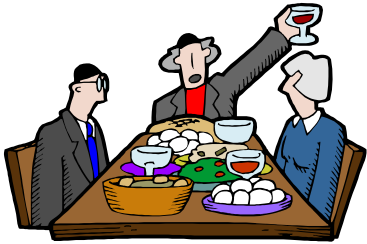
Do you have a volunteer opportunity for teens? Contact Rabbi Jen Gorman, ECRUSY Director.

Chaperones needed too! If you'd like to help out, sign up on the website, [www.jservice.ca](http://www.jservice.ca) after April 1.

USYers making blankets for earthquake victims in Haiti.



# Keeping Youth Involved in Seder



“Use the seder to get people talking!”

learn from them. No matter what age, kids have something to teach us. Use the seder to get people talking

about what’s important to them. Instead of reading the Maggid section word for word, try asking your children, and other seder participants what they think it means. What does it mean to be hungry to a 7 year old, to a 15 year old, to a 22 year old, or to a 36 year old? What does it mean to be in need?

Let each person at the table share which of the four sons she/he connects with and why. The answers might surprise you.

Check online for silly seder songs. Print them out and sing them. Yes, it is embarrassing to teens when their parents sing “Bad Things Will Come to Egypt” complete with sound effects, but they’ll laugh even as they roll their eyes.

Tzey ulmad, Go and learn: examine the verses and symbols in the Haggadah through the eyes of the seder

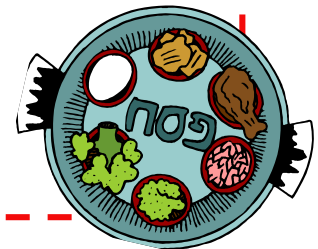
participants. The seder is the original bibliodrama. We read these words as if we are being redeemed from Egypt. What do these things mean to you

Finally, study upon study has shown that people learn better when they’re not hungry. The Roman symposium was a feast filled with hors d’oeuvres. Once you reach karpas, the green vegetable, you may eat any foods with the same brakhah, which covers most vegetables. Try baked potatoes, sweet potato fries, salads, artichokes, crudités, acorn squash, quinoa, or roasted vegetables. Sephardim, and those who eat kitniyot, can add popcorn to the list. The options are almost endless. Try your family’s favourite vegetable dish. Dip into balsamic vinegar and salt water as your dressing. Food helps conversation flow. As the Haggadah tells us, “whoever elaborates upon the story of the Exodus deserves praise.”

“Contrary to popular belief, the red & yellow Passover Haggadah was not given to Moshe at Sinai.”

The Passover seder is the most celebrated Jewish ritual. More than 80% of those who identify as Jews participate in some form of a Passover seder. It combines all the right parts: food, timing, family participation, fun for all ages.... Unfortunately many youth, especially teens and pre-teens can see the seder as a chore. Contrary to popular belief, the red & yellow Passover Haggadah was not given to Moshe at Sinai. The original seder was based upon a Roman symposium and is meant to be an active discussion.

Try turning the Maggid section over to your kids. Pirkei Avot, The Ethics of the Fathers, states, “ I have learned much from my teachers, more from my colleagues, and the most from my students.” As parents, we are our children’s first teachers, and we continue to



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