



SMALL BUSINESS
CHAMPION
 A W A R D S
 STATE WINNER 2009



QUARTER 4 NEWSLETTER

Monday Oct 5 until Thursday Dec 24 2009

Distributed via email to help save all those trees! Extra copies available in our foyer.
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This Quarter at Buddies Early Learning Centre we celebrate the Jewish chagim (festivals) of Sukkot and Chanukkah, experience the miracle of birth firsthand with a chicken hatching incursion, host our neighbours for a special Sukkot morning tea, enjoy a dress up day AND a dress up week, rehearse and then perform at a special Graduation Ceremony, hone our skills for transition to school or to the senior room and get ready to say our goodbyes to what has been an exceptional year. Our weekly Buddies Bulletin will continue to keep you updated of deadlines, projects and events, but this newsletter should give you a more in-depth understanding of just what lies in store. Enjoy the read!

Dates to Diarise	Birthdays this Quarter
<p>October Mon 5th - Sukkah decorating Wed 7th - Sukkah Sorbet Supper 5-6pm Wed 7th – Rabbi Engel incursion with the Four Species Thu 8th - Sukkah Morning Tea with Bentleigh Co-Op Mon 26th - Fire Drill Thur 29th – Staff In-service</p> <p>November Mon 2nd - Melb Cup Mad Hatter Dress-Up Day Tue 3rd – Public Holiday. Buddies is closed. Sun 8th - 2010 Orientation Morning Mon 9th to Fri 20th - Chicken Hatching incursion Tue 24th – Fire Drill</p> <p>December Tue 1st – Curriculum Planning Day Sun 6th - Graduation Ceremony, Glen Eira Town Hall Thu 10th – Kitchen Planning Day Mon 14th to Fri 18th – Chanukah Dress Up Week. BLUE Monday, YELLOW Tuesday, GREEN Wednesday, PURPLE Thursday, RAINBOW Friday Thu 24th - Last day of Buddies 2009</p>	<p>October 27 Yotam Ishay (JNRS)</p> <p>November 2 Jodie Silberthau (JNRS) 4 Shelley Eisen (JNRS) 7 Max Klein (JNRS) 9 David Eikelis (SNRS) 23 Ella Prager (JNRS) 25 Daniela Shnaider (JNRS)</p> <p>December 5 Joshua Owen (JNRS) 12 Gabriel Patishman (SNRS)</p>

Breaking News!!!

Buddies wins Small Business Champion Awards 2009

Buddies is the winner of the Victoria Child Care Centre category in the Small Business Champion Awards 2009. The Australian Small Business Champion Awards is one of the largest small business award programs in Australia, promoting standards of excellence and recognising the best businesses in 35 different sectors. Buddies will now progress to the national level and compete with other state winners in the child care category.

Entrants were judged on multiple criteria, including level of customer service and quality of products, relevance to and involvement in the local community, methods of business promotion, development and motivation of staff, future plans, and general achievements over the past two years. Together with a written submission, entrants were required

to submit substantial supporting evidence, which for us included many passionate parent testimonials (**such as the ones included below**). We continue to be motivated by our vision of a centre where parents feel confident, well informed and involved; staff feel supported, consulted and empowered; and children feel happy and challenged. It is a great privilege to be entrusted with the care and education of children, and in winning this award we are thrilled to be recognised as the benchmark centre for excellence in the state.

“Having experienced other childcare centres we must say we were impressed with the activities [at Buddies]. He would come home and tell us of cooking, karate, and most of all he learnt about a new culture, which I feel is a wonderful gift. We highly recommend the centre.” Stephanie Cranford, mother of Ethan

“This kinder is the best my wife and I came to know over the years. We have two other children and none experienced such a place.” Avi and Hila Goldfarb, parents of Maya

“If you have something you would like to say, you can always find a “listening ear” around, and if you feel bad or uncomfortable of saying what’s on your mind, don’t worry, they’ll ask for your opinion sooner or later because they really want to know”. Shlomit Ben Shabat, mother of Ofir & Almog

“The years we have had at the centre were an absolute blessing. You have given Shai a home away from home where he knew nothing but love, happiness, excitement and many positive experiences. Thank you so much for being there for him, for me and for my family. We will forever be grateful.” Avital Chabat, mother of Shai.

How we’ll be wrapping up our Year

Hard to believe there are only 12 more weeks left in our 2009 Buddies Year. Our formal program will wind up at the end of November, culminating in our Graduation Ceremony. This does enable many of our families and staff to schedule some much needed holiday time in December, before the busy new year kicks off on January 4. Don’t worry about the children being busy and stimulated during December – there is always lots to do and learn even up to the very last day of the year. However if you want to say a special goodbye or thank you to staff, or collect anything from the centre, please don’t wait until then.... the last week of November really is the time to formally say Shalom to 2009. (You can expect to receive your child’s scrapbook or folio then as well!)

This year’s Graduation Ceremony will take place on Sunday December 6 in the Auditorium at Glen Eira Town Hall and after all the feedback from last year’s event, we have made some exciting changes to the format. We don’t want to give too much away, but suffice to say the children will be even more “centre-stage” and there will be plenty of rehearsals taking place in the lead up to the big day. To run the sort of Ceremony that we understand our families want and will enjoy, it is unavoidable that we sell tickets to the event at \$10 per person. The ticket sales will contribute in part to the cost of the venue hire and other production expenses and are certainly not a revenue raising exercise. Importantly it means that we have been able to hire a much bigger venue so that families who do want to bring lots of guests are welcome and able to do so... and given how special the whole event is, we thought that this was of utmost importance. Ticket Order Forms will be distributed this month, with any purchases added to your November monthly statement. We hope that many families will be able to attend and look forward to a naches filled afternoon.

Chanukah at Buddies

This year Chanukkah rolls in on a Friday, and since it stretches for a lovely eight days, we get to enjoy an entire week from start to finish immersed in the celebrations. It’s the sort of chag that brings such colour and light into our lives, so what better excuse that to schedule not just one, but five fabulous dress up days. Diarise them now, so you don’t forget...

- Monday – come dressed in **BLUE**
- Tuesday – come dressed in **YELLOW**
- Wednesday – come dressed in **GREEN**
- Thursday – come dressed in **PURPLE**
- Friday – come dressed in **RAINBOW**, as many colours as you can!

We’ll be lighting our Chanukkiah each day and will be able to enjoy two Chanukkah-inspired Kabbalat Shabbats on Friday Dec 11 and Friday Dec 18. More information will come in our weekly bulletins.

Want a refresher on what Chanukah is all about? You’ll find it at the end of this newsletter....

Kitchen Update

After seeing how beneficial it was to set aside a block of time to review, brainstorm and consolidate our plans during our Curriculum Day, we decided last quarter to introduce a quarterly planning day for the kitchen as well. Centre Cook Jodie met with Owner Sam and Director Rochelle for an afternoon in September during which all aspects of the menu, food safety program, kitchen resources and routines and general cooking/ food issues were discussed. As a result of the meeting, we have increased the quantities or expanded the range of choices within some meals, created new ways in which the cook can contribute initiatives in the curriculum and chaggim especially, and applied even more rigorous checks and balances to our food safety and hygiene standards. We are very proud of the fact that our kitchen has received a FIVE STAR rating three years running. Our current 6 week menu is displayed outside the kitchen and is as mouthwatering as ever.

By popular demand here are the recipes for three of the children's all time favourite meals. Just remember that the quantities are to serve 50 children, so adjust at your end accordingly.

* Chinese Corn Soup (serves 50)

- Oil 2 tbl sp
- Onion 3 large
- Celery 4 stalks
- Carrots ½ kg
- Frozen Corn Kernels 1 kg
- Stock cubes 8
- Creamed Corn 4 cans
- #40 pasta 1 pkt
- Soya Sauce ½ cup
- Sesame Oil 2 tbl sp
- Wholemeal bread 4 loaves

Finely chop onion celery & carrot in the food processor. Fry the vegies in a little oil until softened. Add corn kernels and cook extra 5 minutes. Add Stock and bring to a simmer. Add creamed corn and return to simmer. Add the pasta. Stir well and boil for about 10 minutes. Add Soya sauce and sesame oil. Can be thickened with corn flour if necessary. Serve with bread and margarine.

* Vegetable Pasta Bake (serves 50)

- Spiral Pasta 6 x 500 gm
- Tomato Soup 3 cans
- Carrot, grated 1 kg
- Zucchini, grated 3
- Frozen spinach 250gm
- Grated Cheese 1 kg
- Season-All □

Pre-heat oven to max temp. Cook pasta as per packet instructions and drain. Spray 3 large pyrex baking dishes with cooking spray. Divide pasta amongst dishes and mix tomato soup, vegies and half the cheese through each tray of pasta. Top with remaining cheese and sprinkle with Season-All. Bake until golden. Serve with Cucumber Salad.

* Cucumber Salad (serves 50)

- Continental cucumbers 6
- Vinegar 3 cups
- Water 2 cups
- Sugar 1 cup
- Salt 1 teaspoon

Peel cucumbers and slice them in the food processor. Mix other ingredients into the cucumbers and allow to soak in.

Junior Room Program Update

**** From Co-Teachers Limor Peretz and Peter Verveniotis ****

What a wonderful year we have had at buddies, we have thoroughly enjoyed delivering an exceptional programme to your children. Please find your last overview of what will be happening in the Junior Room for the final quarter.

The room has been buzzing the last month with Rosh Hashana, and we have continued focusing on seasons, incorporating weather, flowers and various other seasonal topics and subjects.

Spring and Summer

- The cycle of a butterfly
- Discussions of blooms, Australian native flowers and seasonal vegetables
- Growing our own grass
- Being sun smart and taking precautions when outdoors
- Beautiful beach theme to be incorporated in our classroom

Sukkot

- Various experiences and activities to be conducted
- Songs to be held during morning/afternoon mat sessions
- Discussions on the four kinds of fruit, lulav, hadas, aravah and etrog
- Decorating the buddies Sukkah
- Family and staff projects

Chanukah

- Various art and craft experiences that represent the symbols and customs of this holiday
- Cooking experiences
- Morning/afternoon mat sessions including songs and stories

Self-help and Independent skills: We continue encouraging the children to use their own initiative when serving morning and afternoon teas, pouring their own water and making their own beds. We will be providing more work sheets that will require the use of pencils and twist crayons and try to move away from thick style crayons. More activities will be added to our plan according to the children's interests at the time. For all our chaggim (holidays) please refer to the monthly plan for more information on the experiences and activities.

It has been a pleasure and an absolute delight to have had such a beautiful group of children in the Junior Room this year. We wish to extend our sincere thank you to all of you for entrusting us with the care of your children, and making us feel part of your family.

Senior Room Program Update

**** From Co-Teachers Ann Hopson and Belinda Kay ****

What an amazing third quarter! We had so many special incursions and parent visitors. It certainly made our winter brighter. Thankfully, the "Winter Quarter" is now almost over and we can look forward to sunny days, warmer weather and a real opportunity to clear away the winter colds. However, with Melbourne's unpredictable weather it provides us with a fantastic opportunity to teach the children how to put on and take off their own light layers of clothes.

Over the next Quarter a lot of behind the scenes activities will be based around school preparation and readiness. Yes...it's already that time of the year. If you haven't already received a letter confirming your child's place at your chosen school, you soon will. You will be advised of orientation dates and we strongly recommend you attend as many of these as is physically possible. On our side we will be working with the children on:

- Writing their names legibly in English – with a lot of exposure to Modern Victorian Cursive script.
- Putting on and removing own clothing and, most importantly, putting personal belongings into lockers (school uniforms are expensive and a nuisance to replace).
- Speaking up and out loudly and clearly for ourselves.
- Waiting turns to talk and not interrupting peers or teachers.
- Sitting quietly at group times and listening.
- Using more details in show and tell presentations.
- Applying (or attempting to apply) own sunscreen.
- Recognising when we are hot, cold, thirsty and hungry.
- Strengthening hand and finger muscles in preparation for writing skills.
- Following directions clearly and REALLY listening to teacher's instructions

It sounds a lot and it is, but this is all a vital part of our world. Three quarters of our year we have lots of different themes we work on. This Quarter isn't too different as we will be covering some fun topics including:

- Summer – We are a sunsmart centre and we encourage the children to apply their own sunscreen. We run discussion groups and, as teachers, act as role models by applying our own sunscreen. The children are verbally and physically assisted and we make sure to go over any areas of skin they have missed. We ask for your patience in respecting your child's attempts, as there will inevitably be sunscreen in their hair.

- Our Letterland educational programme will formally finish shortly. We will finish our weekly character class, finalise revision and focus on vowels and capital letters, culminating in an individual name creation poster with each child's name spelt out using the corresponding Letterland character.
- Chanukah is the last Buddies Chag we will share and celebrate together. For the teaching staff it is mixed with excitement of the festival and both the sadness and joy that our children will soon graduate. Chanukah is a magical festival and we will honour it in the true Buddies spirit and dedication through art work, stories, discussion groups, song and by creating our own individual chanukiya.
- The children will also be prepared for our formal graduation ceremony and there will be ample formal and informal discussion so that they're aware of what to expect on the day as it can be an overwhelming experience for some.
- Show and Tell: We are facing a few issues with children taking items from lockers that don't belong to them. Consequently, we have created an official Show and Tell Box so those items can be placed inside in the morning and not left in lockers. The box is located in the Senior Kinder classroom on top of the bookshelf. Please speak with your child about what they have chosen to bring in for Show and Tell. If you feel it will assist them, jot down a few points we can use as prompts and place the list alongside the item in the Show and Tell Box.

As we approach the end of the year many of our children will have orientation at their new schools. Each school runs its own unique orientation programme that differs in length and time of day that it takes place. Once you receive details about your child's school orientation, please let us know. You are welcome to drop us an email/leave a note in our foyer letterbox/phone.

We have enjoyed watching the children develop and grow, learn and be stimulated. Each day is a joy, a challenge and an experience that we have been privileged to be a part of.

In Brief

- Are you going on holiday in December or January? Please let us know so we can coordinate holiday bookings and staff rosters accordingly.
- Seen a great idea for a classroom project at another child care centre or school? We're always thrilled to learn what's out there – don't hesitate to bring us your own "Show & Tell".
- Graduating seniors who need holiday care during January before school commences – sit tight! Bookings will be coordinated during November. Unfortunately we cannot start any earlier as we need to wait until holiday notices are in, so we can determine what spaces are available.
- Our Weekly Bulletin is written to be short and snappy with a summary of everything you need to know about the week ahead, but specifically upcoming event details, reminders about policies/ procedures, rosters for imams/ abbas, general centre news and updates on staff rosters/ annual leave/ student placements, etc. If you think anyone else in your extended family would benefit from receiving the bulletin in their inbox on Friday, let us know and we can add them to our email distribution list.
- We are looking for a new website host for our online photo albums, that can provide us with added levels of security. If you have had a good experience with any provider, please let us know.

Let's make a difference this quarter - Tzedakah (Charity) Update

In Quarter 3 through your child's tzedakah at Kabbalat Shabbat we raised \$181.95 for The Children's Medical Research Institute (CRMI) which is an independent not for profit organisation committed to unlocking the mysteries of disease. Scientists investigate birth defects, cancer and epilepsy, amongst others.

In Quarter 4 all *tzedakah* raised will be donated to **Meir Panim**. Meir Panim responds to the cries of Israel's neediest families with immediate action and compassion through its network of relief centers that provide numerous social service programs throughout Israel. Thousands of meals are served every day, over one thousand ready-to-eat meals are delivered to the elderly and homebound and meals are prepared and distributed to children at schools and after-school clubs who, for them, this is often the only meal they get during the day. According to the February 2009 poverty report from Israel's National Insurance Institute 1,631,000 people are living in poverty, 777,400 are young children, 418,000 families are impoverished and 1 out of every 3 children in Israel goes to bed hungry. With *tzedakah* raised from Quarter 4, Buddies will on your behalf sponsor children's meals. \$50 sponsors a meal for 25 children, \$100 for 50, \$200 for 100, \$500 for 250 and so on. So, let's make a difference in as many children's lives as we can...together!

The Last Word

**** From Centre Owner Sam Bihary ****

Phew! And Wow! It is very exciting for me to reflect on how much we were able to accomplish in Quarter 3, look with glee on all that awaits in Quarter 4 AND cast my eyes ahead to the plans already taking shape for 2010. Last newsletter I explained that my focus right now is very much on (1) the people/ staff; (2) the policies and practices; and (3) the program at Buddies. I've certainly been kept busy on all fronts and whilst not wanting to inundate you with too much detail, here's a snapshot of some of the changes we have initiated that I am most proud of:

- Our weekly email bulletin is keeping all our valued families well updated about events at the centre, staff news, policy changes, and programming initiatives. Instead of waiting 4-5 weeks between newsletters, we're now communicating with each other on a weekly basis, and the most pleasing consequence of this more regular dialogue is just how many new parent helpers we have been welcoming into our classroom.
- Every single centre policy has been reviewed (and some new ones have been added), which has resulted in plenty of changes being made to systems, documentation, signage and protocols at the centre... all enabling us to deliver an even higher standard of professional service and care for children and their immediate and extended families. Our updated Parents and Curriculum Handbooks will be circulated in November together with our 2010 fees, but we are not waiting until next year to roll out our initiatives. The fact is - "If it's great... why wait!" and that's why if you have been reading your weekly bulletin – or just keeping your eyes and ears open whilst you're here - you will know that things are evolving almost daily... Buddies really is a dynamic place to be!
- I am really enjoying taking a hands-on role at our Wednesday birthday celebrations and Friday Kabbalat Shabbats; if I haven't had the pleasure of welcoming you to either yet, I hope to do so soon. Both bring together all our children and staff (and a growing number of parents too) and have become real "soul-nourishing" highlights of everyone's week, and mine especially!
- Staff-wise, the team are benefiting from the launch of quarterly in-services and curriculum planning days, rostered management meetings with myself on a weekly basis, a new Staff Handbook and weekly staff newsletter.... as well as some fun events on the side including group dinners and one-on-one lunches. Our revamped staff room is now a comfortable "couch-friendly" oasis for our hardworking team... and together with lunchbreaks that have been extended from 30 minutes to 1 hour, the result is a more rested, more re-charged group who are bursting with great ideas week after week!

I want to thank you again for your support of what we do here at Buddies; I love getting feedback and hearing your ideas and not a week goes by in which we don't find ourselves getting excited about another new opportunity to do things differently or better. Our recent win in the 2009 Small Business Champion Awards positions Buddies amongst the best small businesses in Australia and is a huge achievement that we can all be proud of, because it is an achievement that reflects the collaborative involvement of everyone – staff, parents, children, management, friends have all made Buddies the great place it is today, so Mazal Tov and Well Done everyone!

Before I sign off, let me pop on my parent's hat and share another lesson well learnt, this time from my six year old son Jack. During the recent school holidays I mapped out a busy day of activities for the two of us (involving Imax and a city picnic no less), only to have him wrinkle his nose in disgust and insist he'd rather stay home instead. Not to watch TV, or surf the net, or play his Nintendo DS, mind you... but simply to spend the morning playing with me. So home we went and for the next 4 hours I put myself in Jack's hands, making a silent pact with myself to do WHATEVER he wanted. And here's how it panned out. We kicked the footy. We bounced on the trampoline. We played cricket – first with a big ball, then with a tennis ball. We lay in the sun. Then Jack drew a map on paper of an obstacle course weaving through our house, and we'd go out and follow it, then go back inside, where Jack would draw the next part, and we'd go out and follow it again. I will never forget the moment, midway through the morning, when my son looked up at me from his drawing, his cheeks still flushed from the cricket game we'd abandoned earlier, and said in such a matter of fact voice "See mum, I told you we'd have fun". And he was right; I don't think I've had such a fun morning in ages and certainly not with him. Which reminded me that to really engage with kids, you may have to do things on their terms and not your own. Imax, Iceskating, Rock climbing, Movies, New Toys, Amusement Arcades, Fun Parks, Spending Sprees – however big or expensive the activity, more often than not it won't come close to an extended, uninterrupted playtime together. There will be a day – hopefully not too soon – when Jack won't want me as a playmate. But until that day comes, and as often as I can, I'm much more excited about putting up my hand when he asks who wants to play.

Wishing you a fantastic fourth quarter and year end. Chag Sukkot Sameach. Sam

Want a refresher on what Chanukah is all about? Read on....

All About Chanukkah

** From Centre Director Rochelle Kotek **

Chanukkah

One of my family's favourite holidays! *Chanukah*, the Festival of Lights, is observed for eight days, beginning on the evening of the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev. *Chanukah* is a wonderful holiday of renewed dedication, faith, hope and spiritual light. It's a holiday that says: "Never lose hope." *Chanukah* commemorates the victory of a small band of Maccabees over the Greeks who ruled over Israel.

What does Chanukah mean?

Chanukah has two meanings. First, and foremost, it means "dedication" because it was on *Chanukah* that the Holy Temple was purified and rededicated to God after many years of idol worship. The other meaning gives us an easy way to remember the Hebrew date of the holiday: "*Chanu*" means "they rested", and "*Kah*" (composed of the Hebrew letters for 25 - "*Koof* and *Hay*") means "on the twenty fifth" (day of *Kislev*). *Chanukah* is also called "The Festival of Lights" referring to the flames kindled on each night.

The miracle of Chanukah

The year was about 165 BCE and Israel – The Kingdom of Judea – was divided. Antiochus wanted the Jews to pray to idols and adopt the Hellenistic Greek cultures. He was ruthless and cruel and was nicknamed Antiochus the Madman. He forbade the Jews to observe the commandments of *Brit Milah* (circumcision), *Rosh Chodesh* (the New Moon), and the *Shabbat*. Jewish women were systematically mistreated. Jews who dared to remain loyal to their faith were brutally tortured and murdered and their property confiscated.

Just when the Jews were losing hope one courageous old man stepped forward. His name was Mattityahu and he was a *Kohan* (priest) and head of the Hasmonean family from the Judean town of Modi'in (you can find this city today between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv).

The Syrian-Greek governor set up an idol in Modi'in, rounded up the townspeople, and introduced an "enlightened" Jew who would sacrifice a pig on the idol in recognition of the decree of Antiochus. Old Mattityahu stepped forward and slew the traitor. Crying out, "Whoever is for *God*, let him come to me," he called the people to rebellion. The people were scared but Mattityahu's five sons led the way. They fought the Syrian-Greeks, retreated to the mountains, and began a guerrilla war against the Syrian-Greeks and their Jewish allies. On Mattityahu's death bed he charged his sons to carry on the struggle. He passed on the leadership to his second son, Judah the *Maccabee*, who was a mighty warrior and a charismatic leader.

A large group of men led by Judah the *Maccabee* climbed to the top of a mountain overlooking Jerusalem. (the same mountain that the Jordanians attacked Jerusalem from in 1967) and saw there was no resistance. On the twenty-fifth day of *Kislev*, they marched into the Holy City and immediately made their way to the Temple. There were idols, filth, impurity were everywhere. They rummaged through the ruins seeking at least one flask of pure olive oil with which to light the makeshift *menorah* they hastily put together. Flask after flask they found - every one of them defiled. Finally - one small jug, enough for only one day, remained with the seal of the *Kohan Gadol* (High Priest) intact! Quickly, with trembling hands, they poured it into the *menorah* and lit it. It would be eight days before they could manufacture more oil for the next lighting, but meanwhile, they lit what they had.

The flames of the *menorah* burned and burned and burned and burned and burned and burned and burned and burned. For eight days they burned. (I bet you counted). Those eight miraculous days were chosen as the eternal symbol to commemorate the miracle of *Chanukah* - the eight day long Festival of Lights, where we light the *Menorah* each evening, publicizing the miracle some 2000 years ago.

Why eight days?

Since the oil was enough for one night, only seven days were miraculous. Why, then, wasn't *Chanukah* made a seven-day festival? Many answers have been given over the years. Here are a few:

- One extra day of celebration was proclaimed to commemorate the miracle of the military victory.
- The Syrian-Greeks did such a thorough job of defiling the Temple that it was a miracle to find even that one jug of oil. So the first night's lighting, too, was miraculous.
- Knowing that it would take eight days to secure new oil, the *Maccabees* decided to ration the oil they found. They used only one eighth each night - yet that little bit of oil burned until dawn every single night.
- After pouring the oil into the cups of the *menorah*, the *Maccabees* saw to their amazement that the oil jug was still full. A miracle - even on the first day!
- After burning all night, the cups of the *menorah* were still full the next morning.

- On each night, the *Maccabees* made very thin wicks in order to conserve oil. Nevertheless, the *menorah* burned with bright and hearty flames just as if the wicks had been of normal size.

Lighting the Menorah

The *Menorah* (or *Chanukkiya* in Hebrew), that we use today, is a nine-branch candelabra. On each night one more candle is added and lit, beginning with one candle on the first night of *Chanukah* and ending with the eighth on the final evening. The ninth branch is reserved for the *shamash*, the servant light, which is lit first and used to kindle the other lights of the *Menorah*. The candles of a *menorah* must be of equal height in a straight row. The *shamash*, should stand out from the rest (i.e. higher or lower).

The best time to light the *Chanukah* candles is at nightfall. The whole family and guests should be present. If someone can't be home by nightfall, we may light as long as people are still up and about - either at home or out of doors.

The generally accepted custom is to place the *menorah* at a window so that it can be seen from the street. This is because we are required to proclaim the miracle publicly by means of the lights. Or, the *menorah* may be placed on the left side of a doorway opposite the *mezuzah* on the right side, so that we may be surrounded by *mitzvot* as we light the *menorah*.

The first day's candle is placed at the far right side of the *menorah*. On each succeeding day, an additional candle is placed to the previous night's candle's left. The lighting is done from left to right, in other words, the new candle of each night is lit before the old one(s). Light the *shamash* (extra candle) first. Then use the *shamash* to light the candles from left to right.

Chanukah and Women

It is customary that women do no housework for the first half hour that the *Chanukah* lights are burning. Why? First of all because the Syrian-Greeks mistreated Jewish women systematically thru their vicious laws. Secondly, because a major figure in the victory was a Jewish woman named *Yehudit*, (Judith). She won the confidence of the Syrian-Greek General Halifornus. Then, after making him sleepy with wine and cheese, she decapitated him. When she hung his head out the window, the Syrian-Greek army was demoralized and the Jewish victory was greatly facilitated.

The Dreidel – Sevivon - Spinning Top

The *dreidel*, or "*sevivon*" as it's called in Hebrew, was introduced as a special treat for children. During the long winter nights of *Chanukah* they are given a respite from their studies and given this special *Chanukah* toy. Its origin is from the Syrian-Greeks who decreed that the teaching or studying of *Torah* was a crime punishable by death or imprisonment. But the children defiantly studied in secret; and when Syrian-Greek patrols were spotted, they would pretend to be playing an innocent game of *dreidel*. A four-sided spinning top, traditionally used to play a lively *Chanukah* game. The *dreidel* has on its four sides, letters that tell the *Chanukah* message: a great miracle happened there. In Israel the *dreidel* bears the letters *Nun, Gimel Hay, and Pay* for "*Nes Gadol Hayah Po*", a great miracle happened here. In the rest of the world however, the *dreidel* says the letters *Nun, Gimel Hay, and Shin* meaning "*Nes Gadol Hayah Sham*", a great miracle happened there (in Israel). So even as the *dreidel* spins it delivers a message.

How to play Dreidel

Each player places some coins/raisins/pieces into a kitty, and each player takes a turn spinning the *dreidel*.

"Nun" means nothing, you win nothing, you lose nothing.

"Gimel" means you take the whole kitty.

"Hay" means you win half of what's in the kitty.

"Shin" (or in Israel - "Pay") means "put in" - you lose, and must put one coin/raisin/piece into the kitty.

“Chanukah gelt” (money)

On *Chanukah*, it is traditional to give all children *Chanukah gelt* (money) and/or presents. Of course, this beautiful custom adds to the children's happiness and festive spirit. In addition, it affords parents an opportunity to give children positive reinforcement for exemplary behavior, such as diligence in their studies, and acts of charity. *Chanukah Gelt* should be given to children after lighting the *Menorah* and the children should be encouraged to give charity from a portion of their money.

Miracles and Menus

Which Jewish home hasn't enjoyed sizzling potato "*latkes*" and doughnuts on *Chanukah*.

Because the ancient miracle took place through a jug of oil, Jews for over 2,000 years have commemorated the event with delicious oily delicacies and fried food. And because the Jewish heroine Judith used cheese and milk to help her lull Syrian-Greek General Helipornas to sleep so that she could kill him, dairy delicacies like luscious cheesecake are *Chanukah* delights.

Chag Chanukah Sameach to all our Buddies families!!!!