



LJY-Netzer Membership is Up 20% from Last Year

London, 11th October, 2007

LJY-Netzer, the semi-autonomous youth movement of Liberal Judaism, and a branch of Netzer Olami, has reported phenomenal growth in membership, with numbers up by more than 20% on last year's figures. This rise follows a concerted effort on the part of the movement's *mazkirut* (leadership), after a motion was passed at the *Veidah* in December 2006, which made growth one of the movement's key targets.

The largest increase was seen in the 12-13 year old age group, which has been the subject of particular focus in the movement over the past year. Delighted former Mazkira, Jenny Walton, attributed this success to the the movement's new style of programming, created to specifically interest this age group. Some of these programmes included theatre, cinema and bowling trips, and a Shabbat sleepover titled 'Fun Event.' Former Education Officer, Jordan Helfman, echoed this, crediting the accomplishments to the movement's enthusiastic fieldwork and the employment of a Synagogue Youth Development Worker to focus on youth clubs within Liberal Judaism's communities.

Such tremendous growth has left this year's Mazkirim, Victor Kaufman and Lauren Dubell, with a set of new challenges – the first step is to find a bigger venue for the movement's popular Machaneh Kadimah (summer camp), which is threatening to burst at the seams!

Jenny Walton summed up, saying: "LJY-Netzer has always felt like a close-knit family - many of us have grown up together like cousins and siblings. As we grow, we take on the dimension of an extended family, with all of the joy and the new challenges that brings".

Liberal Judaism Chief Executive, Rabbi Danny Rich, said: "I am thrilled by the increase in participants. LJY-Netzer is an integral part of our strategy to strengthen the British Jewish Community. What is particularly impressive is the democratic decision making and planning which has led to this result".

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Notes:

Liberal Judaism - one of the three major strands of Judaism in the UK with over 30 congregations and 10,000 members across the country - seeks to make Jewish life relevant to the modern world.

The main difference between Liberal Judaism and traditional (Orthodox) Judaism is in their respective attitudes to the bible. While preserving the core beliefs and practices that underpin the religion, Liberal Judaism believes that ancient laws must be interpreted to ensure that ethical values and practices take account of what we know and the world as it is today. Ethical behaviour and social action take priority over ritual.

Liberal Judaism believes in the equality of each individual, regardless of race, gender or sexuality. We apply this belief in practice, with support for mixed-faith and same-sex relationships. Liberal Jewish men and women have equality of opportunity in all aspects of religious life, including practice and education.

www.liberaljudaism.org

**Contact: Alex Mankowitz
Liberal Judaism
a.mankowitz@liberaljudaism.org
07793 209 865**