Gratz Insider, Summer 2016 - Story Continuation

[To return to the newsletter, close this page.]

Faculty News

Josey G. Fisher, Director of the Holocaust Oral History Archive and Instructor in Holocaust Studies  This month, Josey Fisher will participate on a panel at the annual conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ). As the umbrella organization of 40 Jewish-Christian dialogue groups, the ICCJ is the largest international organization dedicated to interfaith education and the study of interfaith relations. Fisher’s panel discussion will focus on what teachers and students bring to their understanding of the

Dr. Joshua Gutoff, Director of the Master of Arts in Jewish Education Program and Assistant Professor of Jewish Education  In June, at the annual conference of the Network for Research in Jewish Education, Dr. Gutoff received the Network’s Research Award for his article, “Towards a Moral-Imaginative Pedagogy of Talmudic Narratives,” which appeared in The Journal of Jewish Education. In praising Dr. Gutoff’s article, one of the judges wrote, “The ‘hole’ Josh Gutoff is seeking to help fill in the pedagogy of Talmud is very compelling and timely… an intensely relevant frame for the contemporary Jewish zeitgeist and also egregiously ignored for no good reasons. Much important at stake in this research.”

Dina Maiben, Hebrew Coordinator, JOLT and NEXT Instructor  This month, Dina Maiben, a popular instructor at Gratz, will assume the position of assistant director of Gratz Advance, the department encompassing our teen learning programs and our programs for supplementary school educators. Maiben is described by Rabbi Erin Hirsh, director of Gratz Advance, as having “a distinct blend of expertise in teen engagement, online teaching skills and supplementary teacher professional learning that is a perfect match for Gratz Advance.”

Dr. Asaf Romirowsky, Director of the Master of Arts in Israel Studies Program, JCHS and Adult Jewish Learning Instructor  In June, Dr. Romirowsky spoke in Frankfurt, Germany, at the fourth German Israel Congress. Over 3,000 people attended the conference, whose purpose, as described on the event website, was “to celebrate and enhance the friendship and cooperation between Germany and Israel” and “to generate more creative synergies and opportunities on all levels.” In his presentation, Dr. Romirowsky addressed the BDS movement and the War on Terror.
Dr. Ruth Sandberg, Leonard and Ethel Landau Professor of Rabbinics and Director of the Graduate Certificate Program in Jewish-Christian Studies
At the end of June, Dr. Sandberg had the honor of speaking to a crowd of over 300 people at City Hall in Philadelphia at an interfaith *iftar* celebration. *If tar* is the traditional meal at which Muslims break their daily fast during the holy month of Ramadan. Dr. Sandberg was one of three people invited to speak at this event; her topic was the practice of fasting in Judaism.

In addition, Dr. Sandberg’s article, “The Shared Beliefs of Judaism and Islam: A Bridge to Interfaith Understanding,” is due out soon in The Fountain Magazine.

Finally, more telling of a teacher’s impact than awards and accolades is student feedback. Deb Smith, a Gratz alumna and one of Dr. Sandberg’s former students, recently wrote an email chronicling all of the interfaith work she has been engaged in recently. Then, to Dr. Sandberg, she added, “Thank you for being my inspiration and guiding me on this path. I am ever grateful!”