



EDITORIAL

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Exceptional people, exceptional devotion!

March 13—an exceptional day for exceptional citizens made possible by the drive of an exceptional human being and Rabbi, with an exceptional capacity for compassion.

Rabbi Leib Heber, Jewish Chaplain at State Institutions which house mentally retarded children and adults, is the compassionate force behind the first community-wide effort of its kind to honor the courage of these handicapped citizens to make the most of their lives and energies.

The formal ceremony and luncheon honoring 165 of the 314 Jewish residents of State Hospital and homes will be held at 12:30 p.m. Sunday, March 13 in the William Penn Hotel grand ballroom.

Civic and communal leaders, headed by Governor and Mrs. Milton J. Shapp, are scheduled to be on hand in the welcoming com-

mittee, along with members of the staff and directing heads of the institutions involved.

So eager are all the Jewish residents in the State institutions who are able to participate, that some cases are expected to be wheeled in on hospital beds, accompanied by their staff attendants.

Rabbi Heber noted that for many of these exceptional men, women and children their only connection with the Jewish community has been the weekly visit by their Jewish Chaplain and an occasional rare outing and meal at a communal synagogue or temple.

For the most part, these people are the forgotten-community in the midst of the busy, bustling larger community, often with no time for our forgotten ones.

The luncheon banquet and ceremony downtown will be

preceded by a religious service at Congregation Poale Zedeck, Squirrel Hill at 9:30 a.m.

State buses will bring the exceptional residents of the participating schools and hospitals to the ceremonies, an unusual highlight in otherwise routine institutional life.

The measure of the "mitzvah" is in the duty to help in cheering and honoring the sick of heart and spirit and those who strive to overcome adversity to the utmost of their ability.

Everybody needs to win, to succeed, sometimes. These folks almost can never "win". This time, they will—and together in the embrace of community.

Most often compassion is more bitter than sweet; this time, we trust it will be more sweet than bitter.

Western Pennsylvania Auxiliary for Exceptional People (WPAEP) formal sponsor of the event, has invited all members of the Greater Pittsburgh community to come, enjoy, and sponsor a guest. Cost is \$12.50 per person, and reservation checks may be sent to the WPAEP care of Jesse J. Cohen at 5445 Beacon St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15217.

Rabbi Heber remarked that "perhaps for the first time in their lives these exceptional people will enjoy the splendor of a community banquet, taken for granted by so many of us."

We wish these exceptional people joy and well-being; and those in whom they inspire such exceptional devotion, may they grow in the words of the Psalmist, "from strength to strength."