



**THE TOBY NUSSBAUM
JEWISH HERITAGE-NY2018 CONTEST**

***BAYIT:
HOME, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY***

**AWARD CEREMONY
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 2018
CITY HALL, NEW YORK CITY**

Jewish Heritage-NY2018 is a project of the
Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.





**THE TOBY NUSSBAUM
JEWISH HERITAGE-NY2018 CONTEST
AWARD CEREMONY PROGRAM**

Welcome..... Hon. Marco Carrión
Commissioner, NYC Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit

Greetings..... Michael Nussbaum
*Member, JCRC-NY Board of Directors, and
Co-Chairperson, Toby Nussbaum Jewish Heritage-NY2018 Contest*

Remarks Judith Shapiro
Chairperson, Jewish Heritage-NY2018

..... **Dale Nussbaum**
Co-Chairperson, Toby Nussbaum Jewish Heritage-NY2018 Contest

Tribute.....Bernard W. Nussbaum

Presentation of Awards..... Hon. Marco Carrión

Closing Michael S. Miller
Executive Vice President and CEO, JCRC-NY

**Jewish Heritage-NY2018 is a project of
the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.
The Toby Nussbaum JHNY2018 Contest is sponsored in cooperation
with the New York City Department of Education and
is supported by a generous grant from Bernard W. Nussbaum.**

**THE TOBY NUSSBAUM JEWISH HERITAGE-NY2018
CONTEST WINNERS**

**Intermediate School Level
(Grades 6-8)**

First Place:

Solana Drayton

P.S. 232, Queens

Teacher: Catherine Kellner

Contest Coordinator: Lori D'Andrea

Principal: Lisa Josephson

Second Place (tie):

Maeve Brennan and Lilliana Uritsky

Mark Twain I.S. 239, Brooklyn

Teacher: Michele Wallach

Principal: Karen Ditolla

Third Place (tie):

Matthew Driscoll and Madison Melendez

P.S. 232, Queens

Teacher: Dawn Collazo

Contest Coordinator: Lori D'Andrea

Principal: Lisa Josephson

**High School Level
(Grades 9-12)**

First Place:

Kent Dong

Stuyvesant High School, Manhattan

Teacher: Emilio Nieves

Principal: Eric Contreras

Second Place:

Alek Gozman

Brooklyn Technical High School

Teacher: Ashley Sapan

Principal: David Newman

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL FIRST PLACE

Solana L. Drayton

P.S. 232Q

Class 801

The Toby Nussbaum Jewish Heritage-NY2018 Writing Contest Bayit: Home, Family and Community

"AN ESSAY ABOUT HOME?" screamed my mother as she ran in and out of our living room in her vibrant red sweatshirt as if she were being chased by a Spanish bull. "You've been preparing for this your whole life." She carried that look in her eyes. That Light. Brighter than the Shamash lighting the Menorah on the Mosker family's table during the cold winter holiday of Hanukkah. At that moment, I realized that out of this story, would come something beautiful.

I go to P.S. 232Q in Lindenwood/Howard Beach Queens. My school population was, at one point, attended by an overwhelming percentage of students of Italian descent. P.S. 232Q had opened enrollment to a new program called Gifted and Talented. This program was to teach at accelerated levels to students whose thoughts were divergent. It was only open to the Queens residents who tested and preformed highly on the entrance exam. I was enrolled at this program in kindergarten.

When you'd walk into room K-011, you would see what resembled a bowl of Fruit Loops. This program was incredibly diverse. You could meet children of all different cultures and all walks of life, and both male and female. I thank this class for being the reason I have three permanent spots in the homes I consider Home.

Through the "Astre" program I met a warm family by the name of Mosker. A sweet, persistent and vibrant Jewish mother and a humorous, playful Muslim father. An odd yet winning combination to be sure. Their children, a kooky first-born boy that craves being the center of attention and prides himself on being self-taught and The Best at everything, ironically, he really is a wonderful dancer, DJ and a serious technology geek. Second born Amir, would grow up quickly to be reserved and a quirky but critical thinker once you knew him, and at last, our feisty little diva that you cannot help but fall in love with when you meet her.

While it usually feels awkward for me when I visit someone's home the first few times because I always feel conscious of everything - from the moment I walked in, Mr. and Mrs. Mosker treated me as if I were a family member. I would hang out with Omer and his siblings on the second floor of their apartment. My bashfulness and glass bubble was cracked when I heard the loud "Yalla" from downstairs which means "come here" and all the kids pushed each other in the race to the bathroom to wash their hands and go downstairs for dinner. The silence would be disrupted by the expected "Hey, I want the last piece of Schnitzel." As you eat delicious Israeli cuisine, and you end up fighting over the last Borekas after a day of Hebrew school, that's when you realize you're Home.

I have also found sanctuary with another family. The Mom is stay at home mother with a quick wit, lots of motherly advice, and plenty of interesting trivia about Astronomy. The Dad is

hardworking, a skilled wood craftsman and very regimented. Sasha is a whippy girl with a drive to succeed in school with a toughness about her that is strong enough to hold both her older and younger brother in line. The oldest brother is a Brainiac control freak and awesome basketball player, while the youngest boy is a sweet and videogame addicted tween. When our families met on the first day of kindergarten we instantly clicked. We have established a friendship that is made of gold. Whether it be the movie nights on free days or barbeques during the summer, the Motielalls and our family are usually together. This family has provided so much cultural exposure to us. We have attended at least 5 Jhandi's and even dressed up in Hindi garb. I have actually owned two saris which I have worn to attend these Hindu prayer ceremonies. One late night while we, the ladies of the family, sat together to peel one *very difficult to peel* veggie, laughter ensued as it became increasingly tedious for my hand bearing the knife and I had begun to complain, the elders revealed the joke was on me, as "everyone knows how tough Katahar is to peel". It was then that I realized I was Home.

What is home? It is a sacred place where you feel peace, love, comfort and acceptance. Home is family. Family is the bond that you share with people that endures a lifetime. Many people maintain that you must be BORN to a family. I assure you that isn't the case. By entering a multicultural learning environment, I got to blend with people I would probably otherwise never have the opportunity. With the relationships I formed with these, *my families*, I got to experience different belief systems outside my Roman Catholic upbringing. Through 9 years of friendships with these families, well more than half my life, I have discovered we have common ground. Whether the religion is Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, or Christianity, I realized we collectively believe in the same things. That is family, kindness to and respect for others, and progress. And the best part is, when my Muslim-Hindu family, my Jewish-Muslim family, and my Roman Catholic family walk, together, on New York's Famous Coney Island Boardwalk on summer nights holding hands, eating drippy ice cream cones and giving each other piggy back rides, My Life is Wonderful. Together my families really do resemble a bowl of Fruit Loops and that is the epitome of Home for me.

The dictionary illustrates one other definition of Home as, "A place where something flourishes".

I enjoy my families as often as life permits, I pray The World could one day know how good Home really feels.

Maeve Brennan

Mark Twain I.S. 239, Brooklyn

Bayit is a soft word,
a strong word, that flows
easily from the lips.

(Home.)

A word that rises like
ocean waves from shore
to shore-- waiting to breathe
life into new lands.

Brick houses on the twisted
streets of New Amsterdam,
horses clicking against
cobblestones and docks
reeking of seaweed and men
who long for the salty
sting of adventure.

Tenements, stacked like playing
cards and soot-black from factory
smoke. Worn shoes tap the rooftops
in summertime and a street vendor
calls out rhymes in Yiddish.
A child buys a mango, lets the juice
drip down his chin, and smiles.

Brownstones, with aching stoops
creaking with age, watered
with open fire hydrants and
decorated with sprouting petunias.
Tall, skinny trees, steadfast trees
weathered from storms, let
sunshine trickle through green
leaves and paint the sidewalk.

Bayit is a word passed between
generations. Folded up carefully and
smoothed at the edges like a quilt.
A word from a thousand places,
and one meaning.

(Home.)

Anywhere, after all, can be home.

Home is a very versatile word. To different people, it can mean many different things. To me, home is about love. It is about family bonding time. I think of home as the place with no worries. There is no going crazy over drama occurring at school, or being scared about the test you just took. Home is all about comfort. In a home, there are laughs, cries, and any other emotion you could think of. But at the end of the day, your very best friends are waiting for you. They'll support you no matter what, and will make you laugh when you don't even feel like smiling. Home is about seeing my siblings and eating the best matzah ball soup. It's about acceptance, and trust for everyone inside. Home should not be a lonely place. I've never had to worry about being alone in my home because I knew someone would always be there to cheer me up, or to simply provide company. That aspect of home is wonderful.

Some might think of a house or apartment when bringing up the word home, but to me, it's more of what's on the inside rather than the brick surrounding. It's about those people who make you laugh. It's about the people who know you love pickles and hate peas. Home is about the memories you've made with the people you love. Whether it's a keychain from Israel or a picture in Florida, you're keeping the memories of family time. I've only been on vacation with my family, and I can feel that the vacation spot is similar to what I feel at home. That's not because of the same carpet, it's because of the same people surrounding you. I enjoy that and therefore respect the word home very much.

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL THIRD PLACE TIE

P.S. 232Q

Matthew Driscoll

Class 604

April 5, 2018

Jewish Heritage Writing Contest

Home. When one thinks of the word “home”, it is usually thought of as a physical place, a place you live in. One may explain a home is where one lives, eats, drinks, sleeps, and have moments of happiness and sometimes sadness. Yet, home is more than just that. In Hebrew, bayit means home. It’s definition carries many layers of meaning. Bayit is not only the physical space. Bayit is a space that holds spiritual and emotional space. Yes, it can begin in the home you live in. However, it extends out; to your community, state, country, and world.

The meaning of bayit goes beyond the home I live in. My background is quite diverse when it comes to both cultures and religions. The members of my family range from Italian, Puerto Rican, Polish, Irish, Russian, Greek, and American. In addition, some practice the Jewish, Catholic, or Greek Orthodox religions. Near or far, we are still a family. We always remain in touch with one another.

It may appear challenging at times for myself to completely comprehend the exact details, followings, and beliefs of each of the cultures and religions in my family.

However, aside from the many differences in our family, we share the same understanding of our bayit. We all refer to our home is something much more than just a physical space.

What we do individually or within our family, extends onto others. We know we each have the ability to have an impact on people around us and the world we live in. We cannot control others but can control ourselves. It is done so by the choices we make in regard to our attitude and behavior. When doing so, we can adjust both for more positive outcomes. I know when I extend a helping hand, positive thoughts, or even constructive criticism, it leads to bigger and better things. Those things can extend onto others. In return, they may reflect and even be just as helpful to others.

When thinking about families, several cultures and religions come into play. Yet, the members of the families can share similar or identical beliefs of what their bayit is. "The home should be perceived as a microcosm of the universe: The harmony that permeates the home and the family extends beyond fostering harmony between families, communities, and ultimately, the nations of the world. In the absence of harmony between one's own family we can hardly expect to find harmony between strangers." (Rebbe Menachem Schneerson 1902-1994, 20th Century Jewish Leader)

Bayit also has to do with community, a group of people you live around. Community, when related to the word Bayit can also have to do with the saying "Do unto others as they will

do unto you". Why? Well, that is because when you are part of a community, you have to be kind, respectful, and generous with one another. "Work for peace within your family, then in your street, then within the community" (Rabbi Raphael 1751-1827 18th-19th Centuries Jewish Leader) You always have to start small, and then go bigger.

Bayit is more than just one's home. It also refers to one's community and family. It has been explained well by Rabbi Chaim Weiner, Director of Masorti Europe. "There is something special about a home. It is a safe protected space and something that we all yearn for. Indeed we say "there is no place like home". The huge range of meanings of the word bayit shows that lots of places can be home; indeed almost anywhere can be home. A home isn't about space; a home is a state of mind. And with the right attitude, almost anywhere can be our bayit."

P.S.232

Madison Melendez

604

April 14, 2018

My Home

A home is very important to someone. A home is where someone is safe. A home is where you feel loved, you can laugh with people etc. Bayit means to me, somewhere you have a roof over your head and you can go there and not be judged, and do anything you want there and make family memories.

Home should be like a safe word. When I had to move to Florida when I was 4, it was very difficult to leave my family and leave the home that I was brought to when I was born. I was living with my grandparents for a little bit while we got everything situated in our new home. In my grandparents' house I felt safe and I felt like I can talk about how I was feeling without anyone judging me. I felt like it was my new home because we were there almost every day.

I am Jewish but not very religious. When I was in Florida my family and I would celebrate most Jewish holidays at my grandparents' house. At my grandparents' house I feel like I can always go there to celebrate my Jewish heritage. This makes me have a strong relationship with them and I can ask them anything about my culture. It gives me a connection to Judaism that I don't have in all places.

Sometimes a person will have more than one place to consider home. I have two places to consider home, my house I live in with my mom, and brother, and my grandparents' house. I consider my house my home because I live here and can be anything and do anything here. The reason why I consider my grandparents' house my second home is because I can learn more about my culture with my family and can talk about anything. A home is very important to everyone.

HIGH SCHOOL FIRST PLACE

Stuyvesant High School

Kent Dong

April 2018

Essay Contest

A Home Beyond Home

Throughout the 19th and 20th century, widespread military conflicts and lack of access to proper resources in Europe and abroad had led to the immigrations of millions of European Jews and other ethnic groups to America. These immigrants all envisioned America as their future home, a place where they can live a better life and secure a better future for their children.

I agree with Rabbi Chaim Weiner that “a home isn’t about space; a home is a state of mind, and with the right attitude, almost anywhere can be our bayit.” To me, a home is less of a place but the feeling of support and acceptance from my family members, friends, and the larger community that will allow me to be who I am without fear of being judged. One of my favorite museum is the Tenement Museum in the Lower East Side. This red-bricked building was once home to 15,000 people from over 20 different countries. From the Epstein, Jewish Holocaust survivor family, to the Chinese Wong family, these immigrants were as different as can be in terms of cultural background. However, they all managed to forge a home for themselves in a tight knit community based upon mutual respect and support while preserving their own sense of identities. As a first generation Chinese immigrant, I have also found a home among my friends, many of whom are different from me in culture and values. As a child, I grew up in a primarily Hispanic neighborhood, so many of my friends were Hispanic. Despite our differences, we accept and respect each other for who we are. Most importantly, we are all willing to go out of our way to support and help one another in times of difficulties.

“The harmony that permeates the home and the family extends beyond fostering harmony between families, communities, and ultimately, the nations of the world.” -- Rebbe Menachem Schneerson. This quote is a call to action for people to strive to live

in harmony with both their families and community and to form a "home" in the broader community based upon inclusiveness and acceptance. In New York City, Jewish immigrants worked hard to secure a good living for their families and to secure a good education for their children, while at the same time helped to form social service agencies, labor unions, and other organizations that benefit both Jewish and non-Jewish New Yorkers. Whether its by helping new immigrants acclimate to a new life in America or providing social support, these organizations serve to unite the community by improving the quality of life of many people regardless of cultural background and to make America a better home for everyone.

Ultimately, a home is not defined by a place, but by the people and the feeling of being accepted and supported by a larger community. As stated by Rabbi Chaim Weiner, the home is a state of the mind, and can be achieved anywhere with the right attitude. It is important to understand, however, that part of having a right attitude is being willing to extend the harmony of a home and family to the outside community as well.

Toby Nussbaum Jewish Heritage Writing Contest Scholarship Essay

By Alek Gozman

Brooklyn Technical High School

Home is a magical place. When we think about our homes, we get a fuzzy warm feeling. When we go far from home, we long for it so much that we feel sick. When we are home, we feel relieved and free and any other emotion we may associate with happiness. Rabbi Chaim Weiner is correct when he states, "it is a safe protected space." It is the people we have in these homes and the memories we make with them that affect us so dearly.

My parents are Jewish refugees from Ukraine, and it really shows in our home. If you come by, you may be treated to borscht, gefilte fish, or my mother's freshly baked challah (which is to die for). You will watch Russian game shows and play Durak. You can see me blow the shofar on Yom Kippur (if I haven't fainted from hunger). When I think of home, I don't remember the couch or the TV or even my bed; I remember my family sitting together and eating dinner. I remember the delicious food and the cultural traditions we follow. I remember watching my friends' pupils widen as they tried my mother's latkes at Chanukah dinner. I remember even the little things like the markings my parents made in the wall as my brother and I grew.

Almost every home is similar to our own. It may not have the same cultural or religious traditions that we have, but it follows its own traditions. The memories you make do not need to be with your family and they do not need to even be in your house. You can create a home anywhere and you can find any person to create a tradition with. That to me is the true meaning of a home.

JEWISH HERITAGE-NY2018

**A project of the Jewish Communal Affairs Commission of
The Jewish Community Relations Council of NY**

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JCRC-NY Executive Vice President and CEO: Michael S. Miller

JHNY2018 Chairperson: Judith Shapiro

**The Toby Nussbaum JHNY2018 Contest Co-Chairpersons:
Dale Nussbaum and Michael Nussbaum**

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