

# Locals Inspired to Provide Peaceful Summer for Sderot Kids

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This month, over 30 people gathered at Dmitry and Marie Gofshteyn's home in Marblehead to learn about the embattled children living in Sderot and to raise funds so they can attend summer camp. By evening's end, more than \$6,600 was raised.

The Children of Sderot Fund was initiated by the Russian School of Mathematics two years ago, when the Russian-speaking community collected money to bring 20 children from the city of Sderot to two summer camps in the United States — Shaloh House in Boston and the Russian School of Mathematics in New Hampshire.

Many of the people, who are of Russian Jewish origin, had helped raise money for the past two years so that children of the Israeli border town could escape the continual barrage of Kassam rockets for a short time while enjoying a peaceful summer away from danger.

Among the contributions, \$810 came from the residents of the Leisure Towers Apartments in Lynn, a subsidized housing facility with mostly Russian-speaking elderly residents. Aida Sadolevskaya, age 93, read about the children and began knocking on doors, explaining the situation and persuading her neighbors to donate.

"I am not done yet. I will collect more," said a determined



Photos by Alex Vulfson

**Pianist Artem Belogurov acknowledges the applause of the gathering.**

Sadolevskaya, who later collected another \$400.

Members of Congregation Ahabat Sholom in Lynn donated another \$1,000. And Serge Bologov, the president of the Russian Community Association of Massachusetts, presented another check.

Last summer, thanks to the continued fundraising efforts of the Boston Russian-speaking community, 52 children from Sderot spent their summer at "Yaar Lavi" in the forests of the Golan Heights. This project was implemented in partnership with the Israeli organization Green Horizons that specializes in outdoor activities for children.

The Children of Sderot Summer Camp 2009 will take place on the picturesque hills outside of Jerusalem, facilitated with cabin houses, a dining room and rolling acres of land for outdoor play. The children

will swim in a pool at a nearby kibbutz.

Three out of six counselors for the camp will be young men and women from the North Shore Russian Jewish Community. Each one of them is required to raise money to cover their travel expenses. The staff in Israel is working with IDF Educational Services.

Ari Rotman, president of the board of directors of the Russian Jewish Community Foundation (RJCF), the non-profit organization that spearheaded the fundraising efforts, told the gathering that \$50,000 is needed to pay for the Sderot summer camp 2009.

"Your donation is needed!" he said, concluding a powerful speech about the mission and goals of giving Sderot children support and hope.

New England Conservatory student Artem Belogurov gave a piano performance. The 21-year-old from Odessa, Ukraine, has



**Eugene Wolfson, a Brandeis student who will be a counselor this summer, along with his brother Mikhail, at the Children of Sderot Camp, chats with Aida Sadolevskaya who helped to raise \$1,200.**

performed in Jordan Hall and other prestigious venues.

The documentary, "Sderot, Rock in the Red Zone," by award-winning filmmaker Laura Bialis was shown. This is a story about what it's like to live through a never-ending war. Bialis has been documenting the lives of teenagers in a youth choir and rock bands that play in a bomb-shelter turned rock clubs.

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*For more information on the Children of Sderot Fund and how to donate, visit [www.rjcf.com](http://www.rjcf.com).*

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