

# Community Councils Honor Betsy Gotbaum

By Boruch Shubert

A standing-room-only crowd of government officials, community leaders and local residents packed the Surf Solomon Senior Center in Coney Island to pay tribute to the Honorable Betsy Gotbaum, the outgoing public advocate of New York City, for her eight years of service to New Yorkers in need of assistance with problems related to city government.

Throughout the award ceremony, jointly sponsored by the Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island (JCCGCI) and the Shorefront Jewish Community Council (SJCC), Gotbaum was praised for her productive efforts on behalf of tens of thousands of families, senior citizens and children.

"We all owe you a great debt for advocating so diligently for the most vulnerable members of our society," declared New York State Senator Diane Savino. Referring to the honoree's previous citywide positions, which include serving as advisor to three mayors and leadership of the New York City Police Foundation, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and the New York Historical Society, Savino asserted, "Together with your dear husband, labor leader Victor Gotbaum, you have probably done more than anyone else to improve life for the residents of New York City."

Assemblymember Alec Brook-Krasny, who translated some of his comments into Russian for the benefit of the many

Russian-speaking attendees, hailed Gotbaum for being a "stateswoman" who was

"extremely effective" in her work as public advocate, avoiding the political skirmishes that often entrap government officials.

Assemblymember Steven H. Cymbrowitz lauded Gotbaum for her achievements in such areas as housing, education and immigration, and took note of her extraordinary dedication to improving children's services. "Betsy Gotbaum has been a remarkable public official," Cymbrowitz stated. "I am sure her career is not over and that she will continue to find ways to serve the people of this city."

The ceremony included several unique presentations in honor of the longtime government official. Gotbaum received a special proclamation from the office of Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, extolling her for many years of service "devoted to the betterment of the city" and detailing some of her many accomplishments. The proclamation was presented by Izabella Vais, a senior special assistant to Borough President Markowitz.

Several members of the JCCGCI's various senior centers (which include Haber House Senior Center, Marlboro Senior Center, Surf Solomon Senior Center, Jay-Harama Senior Center, and Ocean Parkway Senior Center), along with center director Grace Brandi, gave Gotbaum a large bouquet of flowers as an expression of their profound appreciation for her special concern for the well-being of the city's seniors.

In a gesture of gratitude for Gotbaum's advocacy for children's services, a group of pre-

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school children from the Roberta Bright Day Care Center performed two songs in her honor.

Rabbi Moshe Wiener, executive director of JCCGCI and SJCC, presented Gotbaum with a plaque in recognition of her exemplary efforts on behalf of all New Yorkers, especially women, children, and the frail elderly.

"With her numerous accomplishments, Betsy Gotbaum has improved the lives of tens of thousands of individuals throughout New York City," Rabbi Wiener noted. "Her tenure as public advocate will remain alive for all New Yorkers for many years to come."

In her remarks at the end of the award ceremony, Ms. Gotbaum thanked Rabbi Wiener and her fellow public officials for working closely with her over the past eight years for the welfare of their constituencies. "I won't forget any of you," she stated, "and I hope to remain actively helpful on behalf of community members who need assistance."

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