



ST. LOUIS JEWISH LIGHT

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Local groups support upcoming concert to benefit South Africans B'NAI AMOONA CANTOR TO PERFORM

BY CATE MARQUIS, SPECIAL TO THE JEWISH LIGHT

What if your child could not go to school because she did not have a uniform? That is case in South Africa, where an old law requires student uniforms for school attendance. But the St. Louis Chapter of the [American Jewish Committee](#) and Congregation B'nai [Amoona](#) are helping out, by co-sponsoring a benefit concert to help provide those uniforms to impoverished South African children.

The interfaith Celebrating Life concert takes place on Sunday, Oct. 26, at 6 p.m. at the St. Francis Xavier College Church at Lindell and Grand on the St. Louis University campus. The featured singers will be Diana Solomon-Glover, of New York's Riverside Church, and Cantor Sharon Nathanson, of Congregation B'nai [Amoona](#) in St. Louis. Other performers include Dello Thedford and the Gospel Symphonic Choir of St. Louis and B'nai [Amoona](#) Zamarin Youth Choir.

In addition to the singers, there will be comments from local dignitaries such as St. Louis County Executive Charlie Dooley, who is serving as Honorary Co-Chair and a talk by Reverend Linda Tarry-Chard, founder and president of the Project People Foundation, which provides the uniforms for the South African students. Author and journalist Charlayne Hunter-Gault serves as Honorary Patron and Benefactor Chairs are the Riverside Church and Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS, both of New York.

Tickets are \$30 and available from B'nai [Amoona](#). They can be purchased by calling Barbara Shechter at B'nai Amoona at (314) 576-9990 or (314) 367-8264, or from the Project People Foundation website at www.ProjectPeopleFoundation.org. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

"When Linda contacted me, we immediately said yes," Nancy Lisker, St. Louis Chapter Director of the [American Jewish Committee](#), referring to Reverend Linda Tarry-Chard of PPF. "As Jews, we are very close to the plight of South Africans and African-Americans."

AJC quickly became one of the co-sponsors of the event and recruited Steve Sorkin, who is also director of the St. Louis Rabbinical Association, to help organize and promote it.

"I was first contacted by [Batya Abramson-Goldstein](#), who is the executive director of [JCRC](#)," Sorkin said. "She had met with Reverend Linda, who told her they were looking for someone to work with them locally. I called Linda, we talked and it worked out."

Lisker spoke about the interfaith benefit concert at a luncheon organizing meeting on September 24. Approximately 20 people attended the meeting, about equally divided between members of the Jewish and African American communities. Linda Tarry-Chard spoke about the PPF's work.

Project People Foundation provides a dual benefit when it donates uniforms for South African schoolchildren. PPF trains poor South African women as seamstresses to make the uniforms, providing both immediate employment and training in a job skill, which they can use to start their own small business. Many of the women trained by the PPF program have gone on to start their own business or been hired by other manufacturers. An earlier PPF sewing project created dolls with a dark complexion for South African girls, who had never had a doll who looked like them.

"It is a wonder organization," said local organizer Steve Sorkin

According to PPF's Linda Tarry-Chard, this was the third luncheon event organized by Lisker and the local AJC in support of the benefit concert. "She has been wonderful from the beginning," Tarry-Chard said of Lisker. "She said yes from the beginning and I love people who say yes from the beginning."

The Celebrating Life concert is the fourth in a series of five interfaith benefit concerts in support of PPF. Previous concerts took place in Delray Beach, Florida, Atlanta, Georgia, and New York City. "The reason they chose St. Louis is because the soprano soloist that is going to be featured on the program, Diana Solomon-Glover, is originally from St. Louis," Steve Sorkin said. Solomon-Glover is the niece of Alderman Freeman Bosley, Sr., and the cousin of former Mayor Freeman Bosley, Jr.

Nancy Lisker began contacting local synagogues and one that expressed special interest was B'nai [Amoona](#), who really liked the PPF cause. "They do this (concert) in different cities throughout the United States and they have a featured soloist, Diana Solomon-Glover, who goes to every single one of the concerts, and then they invite a local cantor to be guest artist at the concert," said Cantor Sharon Nathanson of Congregation B'nai [Amoona](#). For the St. Louis concert that featured performer is Nathanson.

"I got a call from Nancy Lisker, who is the contact for Project People Foundation, she is one of the Jewish contacts in St. Louis. She put us together," Nathanson said, explaining how she and B'nai [Amoona](#) became involved in the fundraiser. "We were really very moved by what they are accomplishing," she said, about the work of PPF.

"Diana and I will have a few acts together in the concert," she said, referring to soprano Solomon-Glover. "One of the songs we will be performing is 'Good' from (the musical) 'Wicked,' about how meeting someone else can change your life."

Nathanson said there would be a variety of music in the program, including gospel pieces from Dello Thedford and the Gospel Symphonic Choir. The congregation's youth choir, B'nai [Amoona](#) Zamarin, was also asked to perform.

"They will be performing 'Seasons of Love' from 'Rent,' " Nathanson said. "The teenagers will be soloists on that piece and also Diana Solomon-Glover will be a soloist on that piece."

B'nai [Amoona](#)'s Social Action Committee is publicizing the concert and selling tickets. Phyllis Cantor, the head of the committee, is one of the people involved in that planning and promoting. Jan Baron is co-chair of a sub-committee specifically working in the event, and was one of the people who attended the September 24 organizing meeting.

"We want to get as many people to the concert as possible, because of what it stands for," said Jan Baron. "In South Africa, if you don't have a uniform, you can't go to school."

Baron noted that many of the children in need are AIDS orphans.