

Chabad Warrior Defends All Jews

Arthur Katz, longtime champion of Jewish causes on the Island

By **JAMES BERNSTEIN**

Since he was a teenager growing up in Nassau County, Arthur Katz has been deeply involved with Jewish issues, including for years now, the Chabad. His interest

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

began with helping save Jews trapped in what was the Soviet Union from imprisonment and persecution by the authorities in the Kremlin.

Though he was raised in a Conservative home, Katz had what he described as a metamorphosis toward Lubavitch Hasidus, and he has now worked closely for decades with Tuvia Teldon, the chief Chabad-Lubavitch representative in Long Island and Director of the now-closed Jewish Academy of Suffolk County. He was also its past president.

Just recently, Katz, of Jericho, and Teldon, launched a program to install as many mezuzahs on the homes of Jewish residents on Long Island as possible. Katz is funding the project, which will see mezuzot offered free of charge to all Islanders who desire them.

How did Katz decide to back a campaign that has long been a cornerstone of the Lubavitch outreach movement? Like Teldon

and all Lubavitcher, Katz believes that mezuzot are one of the bedrock mitzvot of Jewish observance.

“But that’s the technical reason,” he said. There’s more to it, and the force that led him to pair with Teldon is very much in keeping

He is grateful to Katz for coming up with the idea for the mezuzah program. “Many years ago,” said

ed Long Island schools to be a part of it all. The local winners went on to compete with those from the

activism on the Island.

As a teen, he became a protester against Soviet oppression of Jews.

openly supporting Zionism, an offense of great magnitude to the nation that backed the Arab states in their effort to destroy Israel.

“I stood for the Long Island movement for Soviet Jewry,” Katz recalled, “took part in demonstrations.” He also later worked to resettle Jews who were able to exit the U.S.S.R.

The anger that galvanized him into literally marching for Soviet Jews, said Katz, stemmed from lessons he learned as a child. “I grew up in a family that was affected by the Holocaust. There were people who couldn’t get out. What [brought] me to the table were the stories I heard.”

Katz never forgot those stories, and he’s devoted much of his time and resources to ensuring that the Holocaust and its victims are never forgotten.

He was there when the Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County (HMTC) opened in 1992, actively supporting its work, particularly in educating the community about the Shoah. He was recently honored by the Center at a golf outing on Long Island.

The U.S. and many other countries are seeing a rise in anti-Semitism. Synagogues have been defaced, Nazis and skinheads have marched openly in the streets of Charlottesville, Va., resulting in the death of one young woman who had turned out to oppose the Nazis.

The Holocaust is increasingly being forgotten and too many enemies of the Jewish people claim



Arthur Katz, who has championed Jewish causes for decades, is now promoting a program to provide mezuzahs to as many Jewish families on Long Island as possible.



Rabbi Tuvia Teldon, Regional Director of Chabad-Lubavitch on Long Island, is working with Katz to promote the mezuzah program.

other schools.

“It was a great success and we all had a lot of fun,” Katz said.

He handed out anti-Soviet literature, attended meetings, and spoke out about the suffering of Soviet

Teldon, “the [Lubavitcher] Rebbe compared having a mezuzah in the house to having a helmet over your head” — the Rebbe saw them as nothing less than protection by the Divine.

“How many will take the mezuzahs?” he wondered. “Hope-

Katz’s friend and colleague, Chabad leader Tuvia Teldon says, “He doesn’t just talk the talk. He walks the walk.”

with the issues that have mattered to him for most of his life. “Today, with all the anti-Semitism we are seeing in every direction, a Jew with a mezuzah on his door says ‘I’m proud of my Judaism, my heritage.’”

Teldon said Katz “doesn’t just talk the talk. He walks the walk.”

fully, thousands. It’s a very important thing.”

In March, Katz helped organize a Torah learning competition for hundreds of children from 13 Chabad Hebrew Schools on Long Island. Similar competitions were held at other Chabad schools across the country, and Katz want-



Chabad students on Long Island taking part in March in a Torah learning competition that Katz helped organize.

His effectiveness in promoting and generously supporting Chabad will not surprise anyone familiar with his long history of Jewish

Jewry, their general mistreatment and the heroism of those who went to prison for trying to revive Judaism in the U.S.S.R. and for

that it never happened. Katz, who recently became a member of the organization’s board of directors,

continued on page 19