

"I completed my conversion with an immersion in a mikveh. I will never forget this day because it marked my commitment to Judaism. It means that I have chosen a new path and that my spiritual journey of learning as a Jew continues." ≈Norma, Jew-by-Choice

"I went in [the mikveh] in a blank state, and emerged feeling like a different person, as if I'd been through an ordeal and was able to accept my life as different now. I hadn't expected that. I've experienced change with other Jewish rituals, but nothing as profound. The physical act of the ritual allows other things to happen." ≈Jeff, mid-life transition

"On the last immersion I opened my mouth. I wanted to cleanse all the past that had been in my mouth, as well as the words that I had spoken in vain. I washed away whatever had been in my mouth, what I didn't want to be there. I thought I would cry. I felt like laughing and smiling and rejoicing. I have cried so much in the past, this was really a moment of great joy! I have been held in the arms of the living waters. I felt cushioned from all pain and caressed in healing energy. Healing all around and within, healing from past, healing for future. Now that I've had this experience, I have no holes in my soul." ≈Bonnie, incest survivor

COMMUNITY MIKVEH AND EDUCATION CENTER PLANNED FOR LOS ANGELES

Development has begun for the pioneering L.A. Community Mikveh and Education Center. A pluralistic Jewish community mikveh, it will serve as a gateway to the many unaffiliated Jewish men and women seeking a more spiritual path in Judaism. Creative immersion rituals offered by the Center will enrich the religious life of affiliated Jews. An essential element of the Center will be to welcome warmly all candidates for conversion to Judaism. The highly successful *Mayyim Hayyim* Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center in Boston, which opened in 2004, serves as a functioning model and consultant to our community.

The L.A. Community Mikveh and Education Center will provide innovative and imaginative educational programs for the Jewish community—including synagogues, organizations, groups, and individuals—about new and traditional uses of mikveh. The Center will be a valuable resource for understanding how mikveh can add meaning to moments of life transition and transformation such as graduation, wedding and commitment ceremonies, healing, child adoption, or new challenges. The L.A. Community Mikveh and Education Center will serve as an inviting portal to Jewish identity, ritual, and values.

A unique feature of the Center will be as host of the Sandra Caplan Community Bet Din, a multi-stream rabbinic court for authorizing conversions to Judaism which began its work in 2002. The Community Bet Din's residency in the Center will enhance the traditional procedures of conversion, including immersion, and facilitate the widest possible acceptance of conversion candidates.

The Mikveh Monologues – Monday Evening, December 17, 2007

The L.A. Community Mikveh and Education Center will be introduced to the Los Angeles community through ***The Mikveh Monologues***, an original play written by Anita Diamant, best selling author of *The Red Tent*, and Janet Buchwald. ***The Mikveh Monologues*** tells touching stories of people's immersion experiences, teaches about the potential for this ritual, and will engage our community in a conversation about the power of ritual in contemporary Jewish life. The performance is accessible and moving as only theatre art can be; you won't want to miss it! Ms. Diamant, who is also the founder and president of Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center, Inc., in Newton, Massachusetts, will join us for a pre-performance reception. The immersion stories highlighted in ***The Mikveh Monologues*** all took place at Mayyim Hayyim over the past three years. ***The Mikveh Monologues*** is appropriate for professional leaders of the Jewish community, temple groups, havurot, Jewish organizations, Hillel students, teen groups, and individuals interested in an evening of powerful theatre.

We invite your participation in this exciting and important project. The following committees are in formation: Clergy Advisory Committee, Mikveh Monologues Benefit Planning Committees, and Speakers Committee.

For more information about ***The Mikveh Monologues*** or the L.A. Community Mikveh and Education Center, contact Ms. Marca Gay, Executive Director, via email at la.community.mikveh@gmail.com or by phone at 323.683.0766. The mission statement and guiding principles can be emailed upon request. Founders of the mikveh project are George T. Caplan and Rabbi Jerrold Goldstein. Jewish professional organizations and institutes distributing announcement are: American Conference of Cantors PSW Region, The Board of Rabbis of Southern California, The Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Los Angeles, Institute for Judaism and Sexual Orientation of HUC-JIR, Jewish Communal Professionals of Southern California, Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health of HUC-JIR, and Los Angeles Hillel Council.