

Josh Barry Photography
"Which is the best choice for Simcha photography in your town?"
 Let's face it. Simchas are special. It's a time you will cherish and remember forever. If you want to remember those "special" moments, then you'll fit right in with my family of satisfied clients. Call me for your free infopack I will explain the details of my most popular packages. No obligation or pressure. We'll even include a special report "The 7 Biggest Mistakes People Make When Hiring a Photographer" Mention this ad and book your Mitzvah or Wedding before April 30th and receive a free DVD presentation customized to music (\$200 value). **Josh Barry: Innovative and creative, diplomatic and charismatic, personable and huggable. No wonder everyone looks so relaxed and like they are having fun!**


"Wonderful! Stupendous! Artful! Josh, we could go on and on with adjectives describing your talents. You captured the emotions of our very special day and was able to display them in such a beautiful fashion. We were wowed by your technique and amazed by your presentation. You have our highest recommendation and we will, of course, recommend you to all our friends and family."
 Tammy and Fred Heyman

"We received the pictures today, and we are very pleased. I will definitely hire you again. I still hear from guests how nice you were which was a nice extra bonus in addition to how well the pictures turned out. Zoe can't wait to show the pictures to her friends. Thanks!"
 Lauren Ganslaw

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"The photos are beautiful. You did a terrific job."
 Barbara Cohen

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simchahs



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impact it has on you. When the bride closes her eyes, can she see herself photographed in this style? After the dancing's done and the dress gets hung up and never gets worn again, are you going to be happy?

"Don't think, 'You do good work; but can you change the style?' There are enough photographers out there that you don't have to settle for anything," said Mr. Barry.

Ask yourself a lot of questions. "Does their work show that they take challenges? Do they do something different every time, or are they burned out?" said Mr. Cohen. Added Mr. Vallon: "Look at their Web sites if they have one. Definitely see examples of their work."

Here's another tip from Mr. Barry: "I would recommend that you check with clients that the photographer has worked with to find whether or not they have a good reputation. You want to make sure they have referrals and happy clients. Get names and e-mail addresses," he said.

Across the board, meeting with your photographer is considered a definite must. "Eighty percent of a photographer is their personality, charisma," said Mr. Barry. "That's going to translate to their work, and to the experience of your wedding. You want to know that your guests are going to be happy and

not annoyed by the photographer. You'll probably want a photographer that is a little bit of a goofball, who can laugh and can make you laugh," he continued. "If the photographer acts nuts, or antiseptic and mundane, then that's what you're going to get at the party and in your photos."

Added Mr. Vallon: "I always tell people to meet with a lot of photographers and to make sure you find a photographer you mesh well with. If the photographer is annoying, then you're going to look miserable in your pictures."

Finally, the price has to be right. "Watch out for the fast talker, someone who sells you on a package before you're 100 percent confident," suggested Mr. Barry. "Look into the payment terms — do they ask for 100 percent up front? Do they stress quality, not speed? Do they leave a balance at the end of a contract? Maybe the full amount should be paid only once everything is delivered and you're thrilled."

Be sure to meet with your photographer and make sure you like their style and get along. Check your references and feel confident when it comes to payment terms. And as Mr. Barry stressed: "Don't be afraid to move on. It's the American way." □

Welcome To The Fold

Jewish organizations reach out to new parents

Jacob Berkman
 JTA Wire Service

It wasn't long ago that the Jewish organizational world came to grips with the idea that the best way to reach unaffiliated families was by getting them to enroll their toddlers in Jewish early-childhood programs.

But a new study says it's even better to get to them as soon as their babies are born.

Released in November by Brandeis University's Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, the study looked at programs in 10 Jewish communities aimed at engaging first-time Jewish parents.

Statistically, American Jews become parents later in life than the general population — often after both parents are professionally established — and new parenthood involves a certain amount of social isolation, according to Mark Rosen, who conducted the study.

Parents often need something to ground and assist them in the period of upheaval after childbirth, Rosen said, and if the Jewish community can provide proper programming, it can engage parents in the community long-term.

"It's at a point in their lives when you can seize the moment because their whole life turns upside-down," Rosen

told JTA. "It's a real opportunity, but it starts with giving them a sense of Jewish peoplehood, this sense that 'I belong.'"

Rosen conducted on-site interviews with some 100 professionals running programs such as Shalom Baby — through which federations give parents gift baskets shortly after their child is born — and Parents' Place, a drop-in resource center of the Jewish Family and Children's Services of San Francisco that serves about 30,000 people a year.

The most effective programs offer parents support from peers, Rosen said, since several sets of parents moving closer to Jewish involvement at the same time can provide momentum.

The key is creating programming that's engaging not just for children but for parents, he said.

The eight volunteers working the Shalom Baby program of the Lawrence Family Jewish Community Center in San Diego have contacted some 1,300 new parents since the program started five years ago, coordinator Judy Nemzer said.

Each year the volunteers distribute 270 to 300 baskets containing candlesticks, grape juice, toys, tzedakah boxes and a series of publications about raising Jewish children, along with information about JCC programming.

In a survey completed in September, the JCC found that 83 percent of those who received the baskets responded positively, 78 percent intended to enroll their children in Jewish preschools and 78 percent planned to join a synagogue.

Before the parents were contacted, only 29 percent had been affiliated, according to data from local gynecologists and word of mouth, Nemzer said.

The San Diego JCC has found that play groups are among its most successful infant programs. It now has 35 such groups, each with 15 to 20 mothers, Nemzer said.

In Denver, 50 out of the 200 children enrolled in the Robert E. Loup Jewish Community Center's preschool had been participants in Shalom Baby, according to Caron Blanke, who runs the program there.

Such programs can be cost-effective because they are volunteer-based,

families is greater than what the organized Jewish world may know.

The 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Survey suggested that there were about 45,000 to 50,000 Jewish families with newborns, according to Len Saxe, director of the Cohen Center. Allowing for methodological errors in the study and for differing definitions of what it means to have a Jewish baby, Saxe said the actual number of such families could be twice as high.

Reaching out to new parents has

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— Mark Rosen

Rosen said, yet few communities use the programs and they are often underfunded.

Rosen's study is being examined by a number of Jewish educational and outreach institutions as a way to bring empirical evidence — and attention — to a trend they've already noted.

The Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education, a foundation dedicated to improving Jewish day schools, has been working to develop "pipeline grants" to get day schools to form relationships with local early-childhood centers to feed children into the schools, executive director Rabbi Joshua Elkin said.

Doing so brings a Jewish child's potential entry point into the day-school system to about 2 years, 9 months, Elkin said. Rosen's research, though, brings the entry point down to birth.

"Mark's research points at a much bolder direction," Elkin said.

Still, the need to reach out to these

become a key tactic in bringing inter-faith families closer to the Jewish fold, according to Paul Golin, associate director of the Jewish Outreach Institute.

"The Jewish community is now recognizing this opportunity," Golin said. "If the community is open to these young families, it can make a connection that can last lifetimes. It's an opportunity we often miss."

But Donald Sylvan, president of the Jewish Education Service of North America, warns that the opportunity is valuable only if the community figures out not just how to bring in new parents, but how to guide them further into the community afterward.

"It's the best time if and only if there is an institutionalized follow-up to make sure the parents you are engaging have a road map to get to other engagements," he said. "Some communities have found that road map, and others have not." □



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