

**UNITED JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF METROWEST AND JCC METROWEST PRESENT
WOMEN AND JEWISH RENAISSANCE IN UKRAINE
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOAN ROTH**

**An exhibit in connection with Project Keshet
At the Leon & Toby Cooperman JCC in West Orange**

United Jewish Communities of MetroWest (UJC) and JCC MetroWest present *Women and Jewish Renaissance in Ukraine*, a photo essay by internationally acclaimed photographer Joan Roth portraying women in countries of the former Soviet Union who are engaging in social activism through the work of *Project Keshet*. Roth's photographs capture "ordinary" women who are creating extraordinary change in their own lives and in the lives of their communities.

With this exhibit, UJC and JCC MetroWest also celebrates the commitment of their members who annually support the work of Project Keshet, in the Ukrainian city of Cherkassy, our sister City, and who have participated in the journey behind these photographic images by giving their time, commitment and compassion to *Project Keshet* and the communities it serves. Their work informs and enhances the content of these photos.

"Having been part of our UJC of MetroWest long-standing relationship with the Cherkassy community, I have witnessed a beautiful growth in their commitment to Jewish renewal. In particular, I have developed a strong connection with the women of Cherkassy and am a personal supporter of the Project Keshet Women's Center there to insure its continuity in providing opportunities for these women. Through their involvement in the center and its activities, they continue to be empowered and embrace their Jewish roots," said Lori Klinghoffer, Chair of the Israel and Overseas Committee of UJC MetroWest.

Founded in 1989, *Project Keshet* is one of the fastest-growing women's advocacy and human rights organizations in the region. There are 165 *Project Keshet* Jewish Women's Groups and 90 multi-faith/multi-ethnic coalitions established by *Project Keshet* in Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, and Kazakhstan, spanning 9 time zones. This unique network has recently expanded to include Russian-speaking women who have relocated to Israel.

The organization provides innovative leadership training programs for women and girls; job training at ORT/Keshetnet Computer Centers and Jewish educational programs. It supports social advocacy initiatives tackling health and social ills that affect the larger society, including breast cancer, HIV/AIDS, domestic violence, human trafficking, anti-semitism and other forms of ethnic intolerance.

This exhibition, which features more than two dozen striking and often haunting black and white photographs, grew out of Roth's longstanding commitment to the mission and goals of *Project Keshet*. In 1994, she documented *Project Keshet*'s first International Conference of Jewish Women in Kiev, Ukraine. In 2006, she returned during a worldwide campaign against domestic violence that *Project Keshet* leaders implemented throughout the region. Traveling to the cities of Rovno, Lviv, Lutsk, Kamenets-Podolskiy, Khmelnytskyi, and Kiev in Ukraine, Roth met with *Project Keshet* activists and their local partners, to capture their lives and activism on film.

Please join UJC of MetroWest, Joan Roth, and the women of Project Keshet for a wine and dessert opening on Thursday evening, September 16, 7:00pm -9:00 pm at Gaelen Gallery East Arts Lobby, Leon and Toby Cooperman JCC, 760 Northfield Avenue, West Orange. For more information, , please contact Lisa Suss, curator at LSuss@ujcnj.org.

This exhibition is free and open to the public and will be on view at the Roland Exhibition Corridor and Arts Lobby September 13 – October 25. at the Leon & Toby Cooperman JCC.