

# NEW JERSEY JEWISH NEWS



JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Vol. VII No. 11 | Tuesday, May 1, 2007 | 13 Iyar, 5767 | www.njewishnews.com

\$1.00

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## Teens' clown act is serious mitzva for nursing home residents

by Debra Rubin  
NJNJ Bureau Chief/Middlesex

Five Edison brothers and a friend decided to use their spring break to do more than just hang out or catch up on sleep.

The six — dressed in colorful clown costumes — juggled, made balloon animals, jumped on pogo sticks, walked on stilts, and performed tricks to entertain residents of local nursing homes.

On April 6 the five Siegel brothers and their friend, Ephraim Sherr of Highland Park, were at the Cedar Oaks Care Center in South Plainfield. Residents smiled and applauded as the clowns performed their hijinks.

Earlier that day they visited the JFK Hartwyck Center in Edison. Ephraim, 16, also known as “French Fry,” said he and his fellow clowns decided to volunteer their talents at senior centers and nursing homes as a mitzva.

“This is great,” he said as he rushed to switch props. “It’s a good feeling to make someone’s day.”

Moshe Siegel, also 16, who goes by the stage name of “Fuzzy Wuzzy,” echoed that sentiment, noting, “It makes me feel better, too.”

Terry Guy, Cedar Oaks’ director of activities, said the boys’ visits are always a highlight for residents.

“They are looking forward to them coming again and again,” she said as residents laughed and clapped. “You hear this? They love them.”

As she sat in her wheelchair, resident Elsie Hall said, “Oh, I really like them. Gee whiz, I wish they would come more often. They just never seem to tire.”

Winifred Taylor was just as enthusiastic.

“I thought they were marvelous to get in front of us like that,” she said, including “this little one,” pointing to nine-year-old Yaakov



The young clowns after their April 6 performance at the Cedar Oaks Care Center with residents Elsie Hall, left, and Frances Stewart are, Yaakov Siegel, front, and, from left, Menachem, Chaim, and Avi Siegel; Ephraim Sherr; and Moshe Siegel. Inset, Yaakov Siegel takes a bow following his clown antics for Cedar Oaks residents.

Photos by Debra Rubin

stories — and those used by the others — was made by his mother, Aviva, and the lone Siegel sister, 19-year-old Sara, who is studying in Israel.

The oldest Siegel brother, 21-year-old Chaim, a student at Lan-der College for Men of Touro College in Queens, is known as “Smiles.” He described himself as “just the older brother” who joined the troupe while on vacation from school because clowning around “is a good family activity.”

Fourteen-year-old Avi, known as “Loco” to his fans, said performing for the seniors is “a good deed that is fun for me,” while Menachem, or “Chubby,” 18, added that being a clown gave him “a good feeling.”

Yaakov and Avi Siegel are students at Rabbi Pesach Raymon Yeshiva in Edison, and Ephraim Sherr and Menachem and Moshe Siegel are students at Rav Teitz Mesivta Academy in Elizabeth.

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