



The Jewish Community grows strong in Puerto Vallarta

Rabbi Shneur Hecht

Photos by Adrian Tenser and Josef Kandoll

When I looked up and saw the sheer number of people standing there, I had to blink my eyes a few times to make sure I wasn't dreaming! Last Sunday, December 23rd, 150 people came to welcome a brand new Torah scroll to its permanent home in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

The Torah was dedicated by local community members, Mila and Felix Brener, who grew up in the Soviet Union under the Communist Regime, where they were unable to openly study the Torah and connect to their faith. It was dedicated in memory of their dear parents, who instilled within them a sense of Jewish pride despite the challenging circumstances.

The new Torah was a first for our community, and the large crowd dancing through the streets of Puerto Vallarta was symbolic of the growth of the local Jewish community. It has been two years since my wife Mushkie and I arrived here with our children to set up Chabad of Puerto Vallarta, to establish a community center to care for the spiritual and material needs of the local



Jewish community, as well as the numerous tourists who visit each year.

In this short time, we have been overwhelmed by the enthusiastic and warm response by locals and visitors alike. Our programs and services offer them long-awaited avenues to connect with their heritage and express their deep yearning for spiritual growth. There are some 150 full time Jewish residents of the city, with a few hundred more who live here during the winter months. Combined with the many Jewish vacationers, the Jewish community is a diverse, eclectic group, but one that is united and cohesive.

Shabbat meals bring together dozens of people

of every background and nationality imaginable. It is impossible to describe the uplifting inspiration that arise when people of all walks of life sit at one table together, joining in song, cheer and gratitude to G-d.

Jewish holidays have become days of great communal festivity. More than 300 people celebrated Chanukah in Downtown with the lighting of a giant 20-foot menorah, and more than 100 joined the annual sunset cruise on Purim. The Jewish community is eager to show off their Jewish pride, and always looking for ways to grow and develop.

We are humbled and honored to be a part of this remarkable journey. Seeing the keen excitement from people of all ages, stripes and affiliations constantly reminds us of our central mission; to reach out to, and help, every individual that we can, in any way that we can. For more information, schedules, activities, etc., please visit our web site at www.chabadvallarta.com Tel.: 322 141-7279.

Editor's Note: Over 500 people attended the Passover Seder celebrations in PV this past spring.

Grace Vineyard Church
Marina Vallarta

Formerly Paradise Church-Marina
nondenominational Bi-Lingual Christian Church

9:30am
Message
in **English**

10:30am
Mensaje
en **español**

10:00am
Worship *Bi-Lingual*
Adoración

A Community of Grace and Hope
Una comunidad de gracia y esperanza

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