



Attendees at last year's RJCF charity ball.

Russian gala set for Sunday

Dershowitz to be honored at event

By Rachel L. Axelbank

On Sunday, the Bay State's own Russian Jewish Community Foundation (RJCF) will hold its 3rd annual charity ball, at which it will present activist and Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz with the Soviet Jewry Freedom award.

"Alan Dershowitz was a big part of the Soviet Jewry Freedom movement," said Greg Margolin, a member of the RJCF board of directors. "Specifically, he was instrumental in helping to secure Natan Sharansky's freedom."

According to Margolin, Dershowitz has said that his most rewarding work was that on behalf of Sharansky, an emblematic figure of the Refusnik movement.

"I spent so much of my life during the 1970s working with Soviet Jews that the honor is very meaningful to me," Dershowitz told the *Advocate*.

"I can't think at this point of anyone who would be a better candidate for the honor," said RJCF President Ary Rotman, who estimated that this year's gala will see some 400 guests. RJCF will also present its Lifetime Achievement Award to Ellen Feingold, president of Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly (JCHE), its Community Leadership Award to Dr. Mila Magitsky and its inaugural Young Leadership Award to Masha Rifkin.

And while the majority of those in attendance will be members of the area's Russian-speaking Jewish community, the non-Russian Jewish community is expected to make a good showing as well, according to Rotman. He and his co-organizers have received RSVPs from Combined Jewish Philanthropies President

Barry Shrage and Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston Executive Director Nancy K. Kaufman. A number of JCHE board members and friends of Ellen Feingold, who is not a part of the Russian-speaking community, are expected as well.

According to its Web site, RJCF was created for charitable purposes and with the mission "to preserve and enhance the Jewish identity among Russian Jews."

"The Jews that came from the former Soviet Union were not taught there to be charitable," said Rotman. "One of the purposes of RJCF is to teach our countrymen to be charitable – in the past, some of our peers donated a few dollars here and there, but it was never institutionalized. RJCF is definitely the nucleus that unites the Russian-speaking Jewish community of the Greater Boston area."

According to Margolin, RJCF is the only self-funded and self-managed Russian Jewish charitable organization in the U.S.

"This is shaping new generations," he said. "The gala will be the moment when the community will see what was accomplished over the last year. We remember good pages in our history and it helps us in our current work and our future plans – it's a little like a stockholders' meeting."

The black tie option event will not be excessively meeting-like, however.

"There will also be dancing and a good time – lots of people will be really happy to be together," Margolin added. "It's going to be like a Super Bowl of the Russian Jewish community."

The upcoming conference in Annapolis presents an opportunity to make progress towards achieving peace and security for Israel.

Join Brit Tzedek v'Shalom in telling Congress that we stand by those who seize this opportunity.

We commend this U.S.-led initiative to bring together Arab and Israeli leaders to discuss ways to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We call on the American Jewish community to rally support for all of those in this country and abroad who are working to make this endeavor a success.

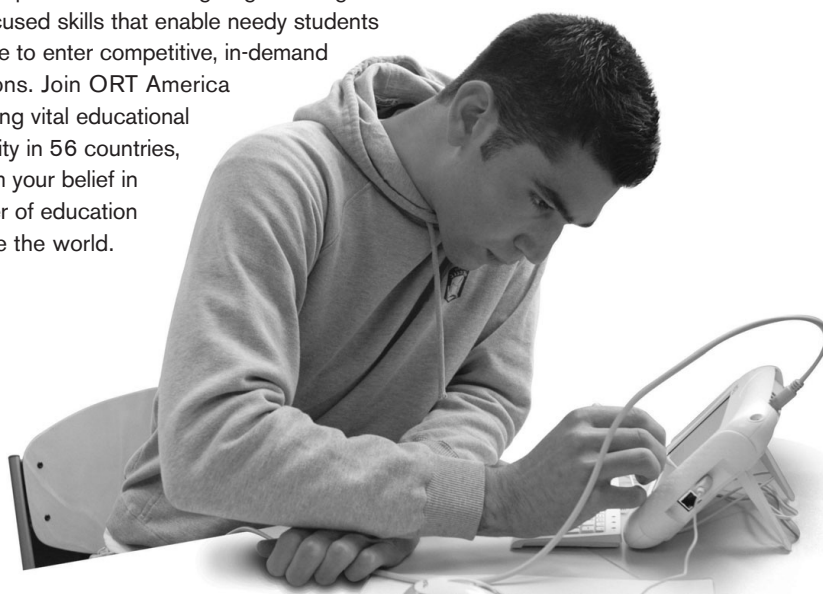


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