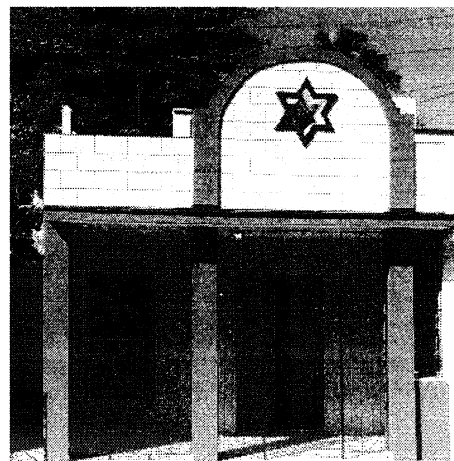


# Mitzvah Abroad: Support Jewish Life in Cuba

The Cuban Jewish community numbered 15,000 before Fidel Castro took power in 1956. It is now only 1,500 strong — 900 in Havana and the rest scattered among surrounding provinces. One of UJA-Federation's overseas beneficiary agencies, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Community (JDC), was allowed into Cuba in 1992, and gradually, with JDC's help, the community rebuilt from nearly zero. There are three surviving synagogues in Havana, one Orthodox, one Conservative, and one Sephardic, and the largest one — the Patronato, which we saw — also houses a Sunday school with 150 students, a Jewish library, and a community center. Throughout the year, a rabbi travels from Santiago, Chile, to perform group weddings, bar and bat mitzvahs, and baby-naming ceremonies.



With support from the North American Jewish community and missions like ours, JDC helps provide extra food and medicine, assists the synagogues and other community institutions, and provides for Jewish education, culture, and holiday observance. You would not believe how eager Cuba's Jews are to gather for these activities.

But, getting together is hard. In addition to persistent shortages of food and medicine, Cuba suffers from badly degraded infrastructure. Fewer than 10 percent of the residents own cars and gasoline is expensive. There is almost no reliable public transportation, and Jewish homes are widely scattered in Havana and throughout the island. To enable Jews to get to their synagogues and to the Patronato, JDC works closely with a transportation company that runs a flexible shuttle service, using minivans, cars, or buses. The cost is \$78,000 a year and we were told that funds are not yet in place for 2014.

I think that if we join together, we can keep Jewish life in Cuba going — by bus, car, and minivan. I would greatly appreciate if you would join me in supporting this important program by making a tax-deductible donation. Please note that 100 percent of the money you donate will go towards this project, and UJA-Federation will inform me that you have made a contribution toward this effort. If you have questions or would like more information about this project, **please contact Michael Vilarello at UJA-Federation of New York at 212.836.1419 or vilarellom@ujdafedny.org.**

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## L'Dor V'Dor Generational Mission to Cuba

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Parents, grandparents, and teens of bar/bat mitzvah age and over are invited to take a personal journey and discover Cuba from a Jewish point of view:

- **Discover** the rich history of the Jewish community in Cuba.
- **Tour** the Patronato Synagogue, including its community center, Sunday school, pharmacy, and full library with an impressive collection of Jewish books.
- **Learn** about the humanitarian work of our overseas beneficiary agency, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).
- **Meet** Cuban Jewish teens and do hands-on projects.
- **Visit** historic sites, including the Jewish cemetery and its Holocaust memorial, the first built in the Western Hemisphere; the Old Jewish Quarter; and Adath Israel, Havana's traditional Orthodox synagogue.

For more information or to register, please contact Larry Nathan at [nathanl@ujdafedny.org](mailto:nathanl@ujdafedny.org) or 1.914.761.5100 ext. 138 or contact Eve Rickles-Young at [rickles-young@ujafedny.org](mailto:rickles-young@ujafedny.org) or 212.836.1430.