



Because Jews come in all colors!

## Many Shades, One Tradition Hamon G'Vanim, Masoret Achat

The Jewish Multiracial Network Newsletter

*Inaugural Edition Chanukah 2012*

*1 Tevet, 5773*

While the Jewish Multiracial Network is involved in advocacy and education, the most important work we do is community building among Jews of Color, Multiracial Jewish Families, and allies. Whether you've been involved with us from the very beginning or have just joined, odds are you're aware of the unique warmth and inclusiveness of JMN's community. Despite our differences in race, ethnicity, observance, education, socio-economic status, and age, we've always found ways to appreciate and value each other as we wrestle with and sometimes escape from Jewish diversity issues. As our organization grows and matures, we continuously seek new ways to create and maintain a sense of community amongst our members.

As such, we are happy to announce the creation of the new Jewish Multiracial Network Newsletter entitled "**Many Shades, One Tradition**" or in Hebrew, "**Hamon G'Vanim, Masoret Achat**". This name spoke to us as it reflects our commitment to the diversity of our Jewish community. Regardless of the shade of one's skin, language one speaks, or level of observance... we all have a space in the Jewish community and our communities should reflect and respect that diversity.

We hope that this newsletter will not only be a source of communication to our membership from the leadership, but an avenue for us to share in each other's *simchas* (joyous occasions) and pivotal milestones. We hope you enjoy the inaugural edition of our newsletter. Please look for this new publication to arrive in your inbox every two months.

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## *Letter from the President*

It is my pleasure and privilege to assume the position of president of the Jewish Multiracial Network. My involvement with the Jewish Multiracial network began almost a decade ago when I first signed up for the list serve. Three and a half years ago I finally attended my first retreat, and my involvement and passion for the organization has continued to grow; first by volunteering to help with programming, later by joining the Board, and now having the honor to serve as president.

I would like to sincerely thank the Board and our immediate past president, April Baskin, for their leadership. Over the course of my term, I look forward to continued successful annual retreats, more local programming initiatives, and expanded education and advocacy efforts. I intend to utilize my experience in corporate governance, program development, and management to continue to build on the successes of the organization. As I embark on this new and challenging journey, there are several goals I intend to focus on during my term as JMN president.

They include the following:

**Advocacy:** Throughout JMN's history we have supported our membership in their advocacy efforts in their local communities. We've offered guidance on approaching Hebrew schools to use more inclusive images and materials and continue to empower our members in efforts to ensure that clergy are developing rituals and lifecycle events that are reflective of the Jewish community's diversity. During my term, I want to position JMN to engage in more direct advocacy. As an organization, we are uniquely suited to communicate the needs of our membership to other communal organizations. We will be taking unprecedented advantage of our opportunities to create and engage in conversations with the larger Jewish community. To this end, we are also developing materials to facilitate those conversations and inform Jewish religious and communal institutions how they can properly create more welcoming and inclusive environments for Jews of Color and Multiracial Jewish families.

**Education:** Many obstacles and issues our members face can be resolved by education. Therefore, we have always highlighted educational and media offerings discussing and/or displaying the ethnic and racial diversity of the Jewish community. Our new education initiatives will be geared toward producing our own inclusive educational materials and offering training and

education to Jewish professionals and institutions.

**Programming:** Although, our largest organizational event is and will continue to be our annual summer retreat, I look forward to increasing the local programming we offer to our members. I hope to expand our programming both in its variety and geographically. We are a nation-wide organization and as such would like to offer increased programming outside of the New York metropolitan area. My goal is to facilitate the development of programs that can be replicated throughout the country.

I am thrilled and honored to have been chosen to lead this incredible organization and its extraordinary members. Moving forward, I will continue to report back to the membership in each newsletter in an effort to record our interim steps and accomplishments. I encourage you to reach out, to contribute, to volunteer, and get involved.

Your voice is important to me, and I welcome you to contact me directly with ideas or just to say hello at [chava.shervington@gmail.com](mailto:chava.shervington@gmail.com)

Thank you for entrusting me with this opportunity

Chanukah Sameach,

Chava Shervington

President, *Jewish Multiracial Network*

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### **Diversity Dvar**

An often discussed theme during Chanukah is that of light in darkness. Rabbis throughout history have explained the lighting of the menorah as a symbol of transformation, both spiritual and physical. This Chanukah I wanted to focus on the light each of us can be in our own communities. Too often many of us are intimidated by being a lone voice, a small boat battling against the crushing waves of the ocean. We're often the only (or one of few) Jews of Color or Multiracial Jewish Families in our synagogues or communal organizations. Like darkness, that isolation can be scary or intimidating, particularly when one recognizes the need for more inclusion efforts in your community. However, we should remind ourselves that one small candle can illuminate an entire room. With that tiny light, one small candle can completely transform a space. What was previously expansive and cold is now warm and comforting. As expressed in the

Chanukah song, Banu Chosech Legaresh, "We came to drive away the darkness...everyone's a small light, and all of us are a firm light." By willing to be that little light in our communities we too can transform them into warm and welcoming spaces for all Jews of Color and Multiracial Jewish families. So this Chanukah season, I hope that we can each reach inside and find that internal light we can share in the larger Jewish community.

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## Exciting Organizational Updates

### Website Revamp

After several months of work and significant contribution from some of our members (a huge *yasher koach* to Erika Davis for all of her work on this project), our revised website is almost ready to launch! We look forward to revealing the streamlined site with new capabilities, more content and up to date information on all JMN programming! Please check out our website [www.jewishmultiracialnetwork.org](http://www.jewishmultiracialnetwork.org) for the big reveal this January!

### Inclusion Handbook

We are pleased to announce the development of a handbook which provides synagogues and Jewish communal institutions with guidance on how they can be more welcoming and inclusive of Jews of Color and Multiracial Jewish Families. There will be a workshop introducing the handbook at our annual retreat and it will be released to the public late summer 2013.

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## Upcoming JMN Events

**Save the Date: The Annual Jewish Multiracial Network Retreat will occur June 7-9, 2013 at the Capital Retreat Center.** Full Registration and Program Details will be available on our website in the next few weeks. An announcement will be sent through Facebook, our membership list, and the list serve at the opening of retreat registration.

Additional Local Programming for the months of January and February 2013 will be announced through the list serve and our social media platforms.

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## Community News

**Mazal Tov!** Jewish Multiracial Network member Shais "Manishtana" Rison has a new book available January 7, 2013. Titled Thoughts From A Unicorn, this

snarky social commentary/memoir/"not autobiography" will be able for purchase in e-book form for the Nook and Kindle and in print on Amazon. See his website [manishtana.net](http://manishtana.net) for more information.

***We welcome you to contact us with any happy occasions or news you'd like to share with the community.***

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Contact Us: Please feel free to contact at us with kudos or comments, or if you would like to contribute to the newsletter at [manyshadesonetradition@gmail.com](mailto:manyshadesonetradition@gmail.com)

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