



# The Everett Jewish Life Center in Chautauqua

THE INCLUSIVE CENTER OF JEWISH LIFE IN CHAUTAUQUA



*“There is no place like it. No resort. No spa. Not anywhere else in the country, or anywhere in the world—it is at once a summer encampment and a small town, a college campus, an arts colony, a music festival, a religious retreat and the village square—and there’s no place—no place—with anything like its history.”*

*David McCullough, Pulitzer prize-winning author and historian*

*The Everett Jewish Life Center would like to thank the following for their kind contributions in making this brochure possible:*

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## A Vacation in Eden

Since 1874, visitors have come to this peaceful lakeside community in southwestern New York, seeking intellectual and spiritual growth and renewal. More than a vacation, time spent at the Chautauqua Institution is an experience; it is a place where everyone, according to the Institution's belief, "has a right to be all that he can be—to know all that he can know."



### The Chautauqua Experience

For nine weeks each year, from late June through late August, the Institution offers more than 200 activities available for all ages in an environment removed from day-to-day cares. Within walking distance, residents and visitors alike have access (via a gate pass) to lectures, concerts, and seminars. Topic themes change each week, and previous speakers have included past presidents, cultural icons, and such thought-provoking personalities as Al Gore and Eli Weisel. In addition to recreation on Lake Chautauqua, the grounds feature two 18-hole golf courses, a learning center, a tennis center, two fitness centers, and four public beaches that cater to visitors.

### Jewish Life at Chautauqua

For many years, religious openness at Chautauqua was practiced among the different Christian denominations. Attracted to the Institution's adult education and cultural programs, early Jewish visitors were persistent in their desire to be full participants. Barriers were slowly broken, leading to a community that is now truly inclusive.

By 1960, the sizable Jewish population of Chautauqua led to the founding of the Hebrew Congregation (Liberal Reform), which plays a significant role in the religious life of the community, conducting weekly Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat and Saturday morning Shabbat services, as well as offering weekly educational and social venues. Chabad Lubavitch Chautauqua (Orthodox) was formed in the late 1990s and offers Shabbat services and educational lectures.

In 2002, the Institution founded the Abrahamic Program, an initiative to teach about and build relationships among the Family of Abraham: Jews, Christians, and Muslims.



### IT'S ALL RIGHT HERE

*Regular visitors to the Institution praise both the intellectual stimulation and the relaxing atmosphere. Truly a place to recharge one's batteries, a stay at Chautauqua offers exposure to a wide range of subjects, opinions, and people from all walks of life in a low-key and informal setting.*

*You can create whatever kind of vacation you want at Chautauqua. There are programs to entice those with even the most eclectic tastes, as well as sports and recreation for those who are more physically inclined. From country music to light opera, films and art exhibits, Chautauqua offers so much—and all within an unspoiled atmosphere.*

*Many find that their Chautauqua experience stays with them all year: enriched by their visit, they return home reinvigorated and inspired to bring what they have learned to their everyday life and work.*





## A Place for Community

As an outgrowth of the Abrahamic Program, and in response to the Jewish community now representing more than 20 percent of the Chautauqua summer population, the time had come for a Jewish House to join the 15 officially recognized denominational houses that support the interfaith commitment of the Institution.



### And Now, a Jewish House at Chautauqua

The Everett Jewish Life Center provides a focus for Jewish and inter-religious events on the grounds. Built with a generous gift from New York businessperson, activist, and philanthropist Edith Everett and her family in honor and memory of her husband Henry Everett and dedicated in July 2009, the Center adds another dimension to Jewish life at Chautauqua and provides a visible presence for the Jewish community.

"With a significant Jewish population here in the summer, there was no headquarters for Jews to assemble and enjoy things that such a place can offer, like a Jewish library and kosher kitchen," says Mrs. Everett. "A Jewish house adds to the feeling of belonging."

### Everett Jewish Life Center Programs

Chautauqua strives to create a climate in which people who hold various points of view and beliefs can exchange ideas, discuss their differences, and ponder the significance of their diverse experiences and insights. The Everett Jewish Life Center fully participates in the Institution's nine themed weeks with a program of numerous activities that will inspire Jewish visitors and engage the broader community. Our own Jewish Film Festival is held throughout the summer with screenings and discussions held on a weekly basis. Brown bag lunches, book reviews, and an array of wonderful speakers are presented.



### AN INTEGRATED HAVEN

*Edith Everett and her late husband Henry first came to Chautauqua more than 30 years ago. They considered their vacations at Chautauqua some of the most enjoyable weeks of the year. It seemed natural for Edith to contact the Chautauqua Institution to discuss the possibility of building a Jewish denominational house in memory of Henry. "The Institution's response was extremely enthusiastic," Mrs. Everett says. "They encouraged us to move forward and did all they could to help facilitate the building's construction. At every step they made it clear that they wanted us to be here."*

*For Mrs. Everett, one of the most critical reasons for The Everett Jewish Life Center to exist at Chautauqua is the atmosphere of community that is fostered here. "Many of us have few chances to interact with people who are different from ourselves. At Chautauqua, the opportunities to interact are very natural; you can share with others in a pleasant and open manner. That's very important to me: we need to know more about one another and meet in a way that is positive."*

*Her hope for The Jewish House is that it creates an opportunity for the exchange of various points of view—within the Jewish community itself and with the broader community of Chautauqua.*



# A House to Enlighten and Entertain

The Everett Jewish Life Center is already beginning to have a great impact on the culture of Chautauqua. A major part of the original vision for The Jewish House was that it be a good Chautauqua neighbor. The house now stands as an eco-friendly building incorporating the latest in building efficiencies and design and in its first year received a Chautauqua Institution Green Merit Recognition Award.



## A 21st-Century House in a Victorian Landscape

Many of the houses of Chautauqua feature large and inviting porches that foster community and welcome casual and spontaneous conversation. Designed by Newton, Massachusetts, architect and life-long Chautauquan George W. Schnee, AIA, the three-story, 7600-square-foot building that houses the Everett Jewish Life Center continues this great tradition while incorporating strategies to ensure energy efficiency and low maintenance and operating costs.

A place of welcome for the Jewish community and visitors to gather, the House displays a magnificent art collection and includes a large community room, a dining room, a dairy-vegetarian kosher kitchen, host couple apartment, library, and seminar room. Five guest rooms with private baths on the second floor will play host to guests, lecturers, and performers and, as capacity allows, be available for rental. And our 1300-square-foot porch is always open for conversation.

## The Everett Jewish Life Center Needs Your Support

The Everett Jewish Life Center in Chautauqua was built and furnished with the Everett Family's generous gift, but the continued operation of our facility depends on contributions from the community. We rely on support from donations for on-going operations, maintenance, and—most importantly—programming to help maintain a vibrant center for Jewish life in Chautauqua. Your generous donation is greatly appreciated.



## PROGRAMS FOR ALL

*The Everett Jewish Life Center is the physical evidence of the growing Jewish community at Chautauqua, and it is also home to a lively program designed to educate, entertain, and provoke discussion.*

*Citing the “wonderful program committee,” Edith Everett is enthusiastic in her description of the goals of the summer schedule. “We want to have speakers and programs that promote understanding and knowledge within our community. The topics may be serious,” she says, “dealing with education or politics, but they will run the gamut and include cultural events, like our film series, and musical performances. And while we will be focused on developing insights into Jewish-related topics, everyone will be welcome.”*

*Mrs. Everett notes that, in addition to featured speakers, there will be brown-bag lunches held during the week, and many of these will be topics of interest to the entire Chautauqua community.*



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For more information and program updates, visit our website:  
[www.JewishCenterChautauqua.org](http://www.JewishCenterChautauqua.org)





