

Putting Old Baby Gear To Good Use

Nicole Goodman
JN Intern

Lainie Roth of Southfield has turned her basement into a makeshift warehouse for all things baby.

After moving here from Passaic, N.J., last year, Roth saw an opportunity to take a successful organization she had seen in Passaic and bring it to Detroit's Jewish community.

When her first daughter, Shayna, now 15 months, was born in Passaic, she borrowed a baby carrier from the organization there and realized the amazing things they were doing. Roth also has a daughter Adina, who is 2 months old. The family attends Ahavas Olam in Southfield.

Detroit Baby Drive (DBD) is a donation and lending program for baby items — high chairs, strollers, play yards and more — within the Jewish community.

"I think it gives a sense of community, *v'ahavta l'reacha kamocho*, love your neighbor like yourself," Roth says. "Other Jewish people are an extension of us, and we would want other people to benefit from these things and enjoy them the way that we did."

DBD currently operates from Roth's basement, with the help of some of her friends, including Leslie Ungar, Ariella Rubin, Jessica Goodwin and Marianna Feldman, all of Southfield. On average,

Roth spends approximately 15-20 hours a week on DBD. The group accepts donation drop-offs as well as going to pick-up donations; aiming to make the donation process as easy as possible.

"People are very excited an organization [like this] exists," says Roth, who has run DBD since last August. "[It's] amazing how people are so thrilled to donate; they feel great knowing that someone in their community, even if they don't know them, is receiving the donations."

In addition to providing items for people to keep, DBD also provides the Bubbe Basics Bundle, a free service that loans baby items to grandparents or others who have younger family members or friends coming to visit, and who do not need to keep the baby items for a long period of time.

Roth was inspired to do this after hearing about businesses in Florida that made enormous profits from rental services of baby items, and realizing that many of the people calling about receiving items from DBD only needed the items short-term. Although this lending service is free, Roth says many give a donation after receiving one.

One such recipient of a Bubbe Basics Bundle was Nacha Leaf of Oak Park. As Passover neared this year, she had eight grandkids under age 5 coming to stay with her — four had been born since Rosh Hashanah. She put out multiple



Lainie Roth's basement houses Detroit Baby Drive, a lending and donation organization of baby items.

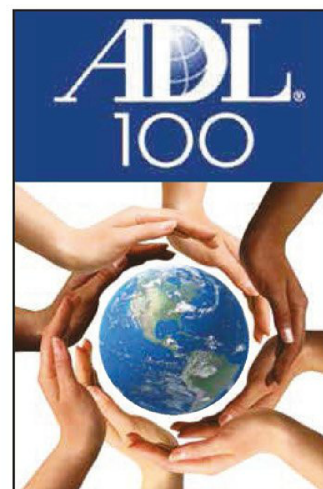
Facebook messages and calls to her friends trying to find enough equipment for all her grandkids to stay comfortably, and was eventually referred to DBD and Roth.

"Lainie [is doing] *gemach gemilut chasadim*, 'acts of kindness,' Leaf says. "I sent my kids to go pick up the stuff and they came back with rave reviews. It left such an impact."

Roth hopes to expand DBD and eventually turn it into the go-to organization for baby items in Metro Detroit, while still retaining the cozy, family-run feeling.

"Raising a family is a really expensive endeavor," Roth says. "It's nice if we can take away the financial burden so people can focus on the more important things."

Detroit Baby Drive currently is accepting donations of baby items and/or monetary donations as well as taking requests to receive baby items. If you would like to arrange a pick-up or drop-off, or make a request to receive baby items, email detroitbabydrive@gmail.com. For more information, go to www.detroitbabydrive.com or call director Lainie Roth at (917)-684-4347. □



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Shabbat Lights

Shabbat: Friday, June 14, 8:53 p.m.
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Shabbat: Friday, June 21, 8:55 p.m.
Shabbat Ends: Saturday, June 22, 10:07 p.m.

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