

Comunidad Ruaj Ami A PROGRESSIVE VOICE IN CHILE



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BRIEF HISTORY OF CHILEAN JEWISH COMMUNITY

Chile is a country of about 15 million people and stretches along the western coast of South America. Its capital is Santiago.

The first wave of Jewish immigrants to Chile was of Sephardic origin. These were Jews coming from the Ottoman Empire toward the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th. In the 1930's there was a large wave of Ashkenazi immigrants escaping the rising tide of fascism and anti-Semitism in Europe. The majority of the Jewish community today originates from this immigration.

There are 15,000-20,000 Jews in Chile, the third largest Jewish community in South America following Argentina and Brazil. The majority of the Jews live in Santiago where there are 10 synagogues, two Jewish day schools, and a large JCC. There are also important Jewish communities in Valparaiso/Viña on the Pacific coast and Concepcion in the South.



RUAJ AMI- A PROGRESSIVE VOICE IN CHILE

Chile is a Catholic, conservative country. This is reflected not only in the general culture but in the Jewish community as well. In the last 15 years there has been tremendous growth among the Orthodoxy, especially among youth. The Conservative (Masorti) communities are the largest and generally very traditional. For example, the three largest Conservative synagogues in Santiago are not egalitarian. This means that women are not counted in a minian and girls are not able to read Tora for their Bat Mitzva.

Ruaj Ami (meaning "Spirit of my People") was born in 2007 with the mission of offering a vibrant, egalitarian, and pluralistic alternative to those seeking to reconnect or deepen their connection with Judaism and the Jewish community. In just a few years, Ruaj Ami has grown from a handful of founders to a thriving community of over 100 families. It has become the home for hundreds of Jews seeking an authentic and spiritual encounter with the tradition and progressive Jewish values.

We welcome you to be a part of the extended Ruaj Ami family.



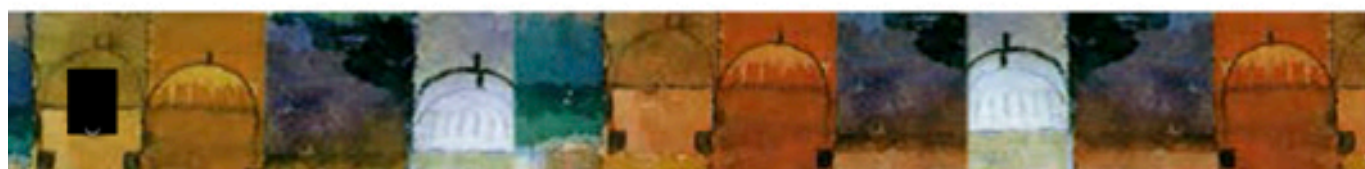
WUPJ AND VISITORS FROM ABROAD

Ruaj Ami has a strong connection to the World Union of Progressive Judaism (WUPJ). Thanks to the World Union and the generosity of the Asociación Israelitas de las Pampas (AIP), Ruaj Ami is the recipient of two beautiful Torah scrolls. Both were celebrated with great kavod (honor) and simcha (joy).



RUAJ AMI ALSO LOVES TO RECEIVE VISITORS AND STUDENTS FROM ABROAD

In August of 2012, Ruaj Ami had the privilege of receiving Rabbi Joel Oseran, Vice President of the World Union. In 2013, Lynn Lazar, the President of Women for Reform Judaism spoke at Ruaj Ami. Since its inception, many students studying abroad in Chile have found a home at Ruaj Ami for the High Holidays, Passover seders, and Shabbat services. If you find yourself visiting Chile, please let us know and ask us about our Jewish Tour.



MEKOR JAIM BNEI MITZVA PROGRAM

Mekor Jaim ("Source of Life") is Ruaj Ami's program for Bat and Bar mitzvah preparation. Over 30 students have successfully completed their bat and bar mitzvah training with Ruaj Ami. This includes a year-long learning experience with a special focus on Tikun Olam. For example, as a way to learn about and combat the terrible problem of smog in Santiago, Mekor Jaim students adopt and plant trees on a hill overlooking Ruaj Ami. They also have worked with orphan children and children with chronic illness as part of their bnei mitzvah experience.



TIKUN OLAM AND YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP

The Jewish value of Tikun Olam (improving the world) is a central pillar of our community. It permeates all of our activities, the way we celebrate holidays, and the manner in which we express our Jewish identity.

Following the devastating earthquake in Chile in 2010, Ruaj Ami and Rabbi Chaim were at the forefront of recovery and rebuilding efforts. Ruaj Ami held a benefit concert to raise money for Jewish young adults to travel to the south of Chile to construct temporary houses for families who lost their homes. Rabbi Chaim accompanied the group twice to the South, participating in the construction process and providing spiritual and emotional support to the young leaders and also to the families impacted by the tragedy.

Over the last several years, a growing number of young adults have been attracted to Ruaj Ami and its mission of Tikun Olam. In response, a group has been formed to provide a structure for more programming and leadership. This group is currently deepening its connections with Tamar, the WUPJ program for young adults.



CEJIMO

THE CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES, ISRAEL, AND THE MIDDLE EAST (MEDIO ORIENTE)

Founded in 2010 by well-known sociologist and professor Isaac Caro, this Center of Jewish Studies organizes programs, activities, and lectures on topics relevant to the larger Jewish and non-Jewish community of Chile. Past programs have included book launchings, interreligious dialogue, and movie screenings. In 2012, CEJIMO sponsored the screening of "Other among Others" a powerful documentary demonstrating the challenges of acceptance of gay men in the Argentinian Jewish community.



WELCOMING INTERRELIGIOUS COUPLES

Ruaj Ami is a place where Jews married to non-Jews feel at home. The welcoming atmosphere puts both the Jewish and non-Jewish partner at ease. In this environment, both parties can enjoy, explore, and grow in their connection to Judaism and the Jewish Community. In 2010, Rabbi Chaim co-led a workshop for interreligious couples together with leading psychologist and Ruaj Ami board member Patricia Thal.

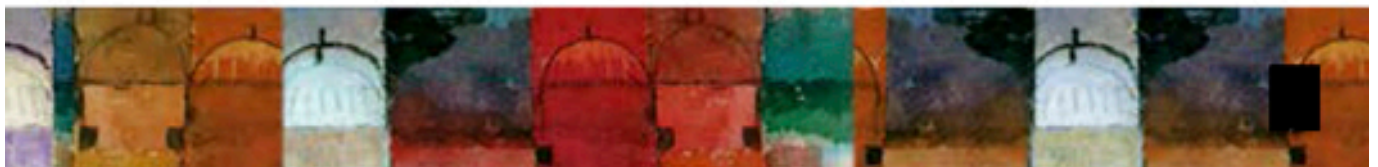


CHAGIM (JEWISH HOLIDAYS)

The celebration of Shabbat and the holiday cycle is central to the building of community in Ruaj Ami. Music plays a key role in the services and holiday celebrations, creating the warm and inviting atmosphere that characterizes Ruaj Ami.

Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur at Ruaj Ami are more than services—they are experiences. With the captivating voice of chazzanit Mimi Levy and the musical leadership of Javier Lewin, the Yamim Noraim in Ruaj Ami attract close to 500.

The second night community seder has become a tradition in Ruaj Ami. Over 150 people attend this dynamic, interactive, and creative seder led by Rabbi Chaim.





HOW TO SUPPORT RUAJ AMI

Ruaj Ami is a proud member of the World Union of Progressive Judaism.
If you would like to help support Ruaj Ami or become a
Friend of Ruaj Ami, a tax-deductible donation can be made through
the World Union by one of the following two methods:

1. Check

Made out to World Union of Progressive Judaism
633 Third Avenue, 7th Floor, New York, NY 10017
(Please write Ruaj Ami, in the memo section)

2. Credit Card:

Through the Web site: www.wupj.org (click on "Contribute" tab)
(Please write Ruaj Ami in the Descriptions box)
In either case, please send us an e-mail to contacto@ruajami.cl
to inform us of your donation

Thank you very much and we look forward to hearing from you!

