

center scene

J C C O F

S H I N G T O N

RIPPLE EFFECTS

Gudelsky Exceptional Swim Program
Page 1

DINNER OF CHAMPIONS

The Night in Review
Pages 3-4

INVESTING IN JCCGW LIFE

The Seldin Family
Page 5

MAMA DONI

Rocks the House!
Page 7

FITNESS COUP(ON)

for Member Sandy Laden
Page 10

Address Service Requested

6125 Montrose Road
Rockville, MD 20852

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Rockville, MD
Permit No. 91

Partner Agency of
The Jewish Federation
OF GREATER WASHINGTON



Jewish
Community
Center of
Greater
Washington

center CAMP, YOUTH, TWEENS & TEENS

Dynamic Performer Mama Doni Returns to the JCCGW by Popular Demand

Read all about her!



Get ready to rock with Mama Doni!

Following her spectacular shows for Camp JCC in August, The Mama Doni Band returns to the JCCGW on Sunday, February 6 at 2 p.m. for a command performance, co-sponsored by Capital Camps. For details, see page 8.

Get to know a little more about Mama Doni (Doni Zasloff Thomas) by reading the following interview:

Please tell us about your background and your ties to the DC area.

I have been immersed in Jewish life and music since I was child growing up in the Greater Washington area. I have always loved music! Wherever I went, whatever I did, I was always singing...music has always been part of me!

I went to Hebrew Day Institute and then Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School. My family moved to Philadelphia when I was 13. Having spent most of my childhood in Greater Washington, I consider it home in many ways. I was a member of Beth Tikvah Congregation, which is where I had my bat mitzvah. I performed in school plays, sang in the JDS choir, attended Camp Moshava, and took Israeli dance classes at the JCCGW.

I found my Jewish spirit as a young girl in DC. I will always be so grateful to that community for giving me such a strong connection.

How did The Mama Doni Band come to be?

It has been such an amazing journey! Three

years ago, I became trained as a Music Together teacher (an internationally-recognized early childhood music program) and began teaching at my daughter's preschool. I wanted to find music that shared Jewish culture in a hip and fun way, so I decided to try to write my own. The next thing I knew, I was producing an album and was headed to the International Jewish Music Festival Competition in Amsterdam where we won the "Simcha Award" for inspiring joy through music!

How do you describe your music?

I describe my music as "funky music with a Jewish twist." I love exploring all genres of musical styles as a way to celebrate Jewish culture. I write the music with the hope that it will resonate with people of all ages and backgrounds, and make people feel more connected to their roots, their *ruach* [spirit], and their identities.

What and/or who inspires you?

I am inspired by so many things — laughing with my kids and my grandmother, quiet moments, dancing, crying, cooking, driving, reading...

I was influenced by the music I grew up with — James Taylor, Led Zeppelin, James Brown, The Rolling Stones, classic rock and, of course, Jewish music. I was also really touched by the music my family sang at Jewish holidays.

Ruth Newhouse, my first music teacher, was an amazing musician and teacher. I had the coolest experience last year going back to Beth Tikvah (now Tikvat Israel). I invited her onstage and asked the audience to give her a big round of applause for her great work. It was one of the highlights of my journey so far. [Coincidentally, Ruth Newhouse has been a JCCGW School of Music teacher for more than 20 years.]

What is your favorite aspect of performing?

I absolutely LOVE connecting with people of all ages and backgrounds, and feeling the *ruach*. It is exhilarating and so special. I also love being in a rock band. It's super cool to go crazy and jump around and sing my heart out!

I loved performing at the JCCGW for camp last summer. I felt like I was coming home. It really is a special place and I am so excited to be returning!

What has been your biggest challenge as a performer?

Balance is ALWAYS a challenge. Between carpool, soccer, dance classes, new albums, band practice, traveling for shows, making lunches and dinner... it's tough! BUT, every day, I try to make sure I do the best I can, and give whoever needs me the most the most love I can.

What do your children and husband think about having a rock star in the family?

My children, who are 6½ and 5, are huge fans. They love the music and I use them as testers — if they sing along to the song and dance around, I know I have a good one. If they look at me with a confused expression, it's back to the studio! My husband is incredibly supportive. I feel so blessed in many ways.

“I loved performing at the JCCGW for camp last summer... It really is a special place and I am so excited to be returning!”

JCCGW's Gessner & Gugerty Recognized for Excellence



Jill Gessner and Kyle Gugerty

Camp JCC Office Manager Jill Gessner received the William "Bill" McLeod Award from the Chesapeake section of the American Camp Association in November. It is given in recognition of dedication to improving the quality of camps. Jill received the award upon meeting the criteria of being a staff member of an accredited camp for at least 3 years; having rendered outstanding service beneficial to camp; having rendered creative and/or administrative contributions to camp; and having good moral and character standards.

Kyle Gugerty, youth and teen program coordinator, has been selected for the JCC Association's Merrin Teen Professional Fellows Program. The Fellowship's mission

is to give those working with Jewish teens the skills to better serve this critical sector of the Jewish community, to enhance the profile of those working with teens in their respective organizations and throughout the movement, to enrich and deepen the Jewish identities of the participants, and to build a stronger professional network of teen service providers. As a Merrin Fellow, Kyle will attend five seminars — including one in Israel — over an 18-month period.

We congratulate Jill and Kyle on their respective honors and for exemplifying the high standards for which Camp JCC and our teen programs are known.

Funky Music with a Jewish Twist

Mama Doni Family Concert • Sunday, February 6 • 2 p.m.

"Mama Doni makes a zany musical chicken soup of reggae, rock, Latin, klezmer, and other styles." —Boston Globe

The Mama Doni Band returns to the JCCGW by popular demand, following her spectacular performances for Camp JCC in August 2010. Doni Zasloff Thomas grew up in the Washington DC area; now she tours the country with the Mama Doni Band!

This concert is cosponsored by Capital Camps. Individual tickets are \$10.

A group of four tickets is \$35. For tickets, or more information, visit jccgw.org/mamadoni.org or contact Fara Gold at 301.348.3880 or fgold@jccgw.org.

Hey, Camp JCC!

Remember all the rollerin' and rollarin' we did with Mama Doni over the summer? Join your friends at the Camp JCC 2011 reunion concert on February 6. All current and future Camp JCC campers will take home a Camp JCC reunion souvenir.

To read more about Mama Doni, see page 7. And be sure to check out her website: mamadoni.com.

JCCGW Receives Community Service Award



JCCGW Special Needs and Inclusion Director Heather Strauss and JCCGW Special Needs Program Coordinator Katie Mackenzie accept The Arc of Montgomery County's Community Service Award from Arc President Frank Zappala.

The Arc of Montgomery County is an organization whose mission is to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities with lifelong opportunities to live, learn, work and play with dignity, freedom, and full inclusion in the community. At their annual recognitions event held last month, Arc presented the JCCGW with its Community Service Award for performing an outstanding service on behalf of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Thank you to Amy and Mark Miller, whose daughter Chloe receives support through the Stanley S. Bender Camp JCC program, for nominating the JCCGW for the award.

Camp JCC Information Night

You're invited to join us for an intimate gathering on Sunday, January 9 at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Marlo Greenspan (14302 Gate Dancer Lane, Boyds, Maryland) to learn about the exciting programs planned for Camp JCC 2011. You will hear from camp families and the Camp JCC staff.

Each family in attendance will receive a Camp JCC gift! Admission is free, but please RSVP to campjcc@jccgw.org or 301.348.3883.