

### A Challenge To Congregations

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the United Jewish Federation and the Pittsburgh Conference on Soviet Jewry, Rabbi Mark N. Staitman of Rodef Shalom Temple called together all congregations in Pittsburgh to ask them to appoint volunteer coordinators.

Through the coordinators, "mentor families" were solicited in each congregation that accepted responsibility for helping new Soviet arrivals find apartments, arrange for utilities and make appointments with volunteer and government agencies and educational and health care institutions.

When a Russian family is due to arrive in the area, information on the family's background, including the number and ages of family members, is forwarded by the Jewish Federation and Children's Service on a rotating basis to one of the synagogue coordinators. The coordinator tries to find a matching "mentor family" — one whose characteristics and interests are similar to those of the emigre family. If no match is found, the request goes to the next congregation on the list.

The other functions of the "mentor family" in-

clude inviting the new arrivals to their homes for dinner, showing them how to shop at a grocery store and use a bank and taking them to museums, movies, sporting events, synagogue services and other Jewish community events.

The effectiveness of the Pittsburgh approach, says Rabbi Staitman, stems not only from the practical benefits it provides for the new family to become "acculturated" to American society, but also from its value as a vehicle for offering positive Jewish role models to people who, in their past lives, were kept isolated from Jewish influences as a matter of Soviet policy.

While the program has made a significant contribution to the resettlement of Russian Jews, Rabbi Staitman observes, it has also brought dividends to the Jewish community of Pittsburgh, particularly to the "mentor families" that have agreed to "adopt" the emigres.

"It is an excellent opportunity for our people to feel that they have made a tremendous difference in people's lives," he explains. "And the cost is modest in terms of time and effort."

### Five Israeli Workers Held Captive, Then Released, In San Salvador

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Five Israelis, employees of the Tahal Water Engineering Co., were held captive for several hours recently by Salvadoran rebels who occupied part of the Sheraton Hotel in San Salvador.

They were released unharmed when the guerillas realized the Israelis were not foreign military advisers, according to Hen Harpaz, Tahal's director for overseas planning, who spoke to the workers by telephone recently.

He said they told him they were well treated by

their youthful captors. They will return to their jobs in the Salvadoran capital after a week's vacation, Harpaz said.

At first, the Israelis were mistaken for soldiers, like the U.S. Green Berets from Fort Bragg, N.C., who were found at the luxury hotel armed but in civilian clothes.

The Israelis were released speedily, after it was found they were water engineers. According to reports from San Salvador, the rebels gave up their siege of the hotel, and the Green Berets left unharmed.



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