

Trillium Foundation grant boosts BBYO

By CAROLYN BLACKMAN
Staff Reporter

Kelly Isidajit, BBYO regional president of B'nai B'rith Girls (BBG), and Josh Harendorf, regional president of the boys' wing of BBYO, Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA), are thrilled that BBYO recently received a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The \$73,500 grant, which will be dispersed over two years, will be used to hire more staff, seek out alumni, advertise, and generally boost the organization's programming.

Mark Harendorf, Josh's father and chair of BBYO board for Lake Ontario region, began working with the organization when his son got involved with it.

He said that BBYO needs more members – it currently has about 250 – and needs more money. "Youth programming has been declining in general because kids these days are pulled in many different directions.

"We want to help kids grow up and give back to their community and expand programs, which are all youth-led."

He said up until now the organization has been completely self-funded. "We're on our own, and we want to reach out to alumni who may get involved and give donations. The grant will allow us to develop a data base."

BBYO is planning an alumni kickoff event and a massive mailing, he said. "We haven't had any manpower to do this. The grant will allow us to take staff to do media relations and alumni affairs."

Until now, he said, BBYO's big fundraiser has been the annual golf tournament, but that only covers one-quarter of the budget.

Josh, 16, who spent the summer on various BBYO leadership programs, said that once young people join BBYO, they realize how important they are to the community. "They really grow up."

Kevin Goodman, BBYO regional program director, said the grant will allow the organization to reach more teens through fun and effective programming. "We empower teens to be leaders through social action, Judaic studies and social programming.

"It will also allow us to reach out to the more than 20,000 alumni, who can rekindle their passion for BBYO."