

## What's Happening at the RCWC?

### A Lasting Inspiration *by Hanna Baum*

"Through the power of story, shared with food, laughter and love, each woman joins in the chain of our tradition and is inspired to realize their power in creating the future." Powerful words indeed and this is the raison d'être of the Rosh Chodesh Women's Circle where women from all sections of the Jewish community can meet together and share their experiences in a truly dignified manner.

So, what is different about the RCWC? Describing the Rosh Chodesh Sivan evening on relationships and in particular the mother-in-law daughter- in-law relationship, gives an idea of what caring and planning with a whole heart can achieve. Rebbetzin Sara Gutnick the founder of the Rosh Chodesh Women's Circle introduced the theme of exploring relationships through the Book of Ruth, and making a deep connection between Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi. Although there were many attributes in both Naomi and Ruth that we can take to heart, the characteristic of loving kindness stood out as the thread that connected them and the key ingredient paramount in every relationship.

Then, Rivkah, Esther Malka and Shoshana Groner painted a picture of their mother-in-law Rebbetzin Devorah Groner as a woman cast in the moulds of both Naomi and Ruth, a rare combination indeed. She had the humility, the keen interest in any and every human being. Her capacity for remembering the details of your life despite it being decades ago was a phenomenon that all recognised. She was unique. She cared for absolutely everyone she was in contact with, and she never spoke any 'lashon hara', they said, as she always managed to concentrate on the positive. This is an achievement which is a testament to her love of life, Torah and mitzvot with her smile and her infectious laugh.

This year's RCWC theme of Jewish birthdays revealed that Rebbetzin Groner was born on the third day of Sivan, and her third Yartzeit too was imminent. Beautifully connected from every angle, the evening continued with a harvested, magnificently decorated grazing table - a feast of colour, dignity, and grace appealing to all the senses. We were transported to Eretz Israel and its produce of figs, dates, pomegranates, wheat and barley. Mini pavlova with your choice of toppings of fruit and cream, mulled wine non-alcoholic - all alluding to aspects of the book of Ruth.

Dragging ourselves from the supper and all its delicacies we joined one of the three circles, workshops, on various topics of relationships and meeting life challenges. The workshops were ably led by Chana Bromberg, Timmy Rubin and Nicole Kornhauser each with their own style of presentation and engagement with the participants, but they all left us with a lovely warm feeling and confidence in our journeys. The laughter that arose from the circles and the deep insights the women gained was evident.

It was indeed a night that few would forget, and the feedback was extremely positive. Women said they had experienced something very special and would take the inspiration from the circles and the whole essence of the evening with them in their daily lives. Many said it was very different from any other they had participated in.

The next communal Women's Rosh Chodesh Women's Circle event will be the Eshet Chayil series where daughters remember their mothers. Women of the wider community are invited to participate.

The women's Rosh Chodesh Circle is a registered not-for-profit charity. It is a multi-communal organisation which acts as a resource for women to start their own groups with inspiration and joy - and lots of material. It seeks to empower women to gather and share their stories. The charity not only reconnects and integrates women in the community but supports people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, families, the very young as well as seniors and all ages in between.

*Hanna Baum, arriving in Melbourne in 1988 from the UK from a Baghdadi family, was inspired to write this piece after attending the Sivan RCWC community event. A lecturer and tutor in Communications and English as a Second Language, Hanna enjoys her involvement in radio broadcasting originally with Radio National Religion and now with J Air Radio "The Baum Interviews".*



### A Significant Day - Your Jewish Birthday

How empowering is the thought that the day you were born is not only special to you and your family but for all of us too. You have been given specific tools and talents to add something to this world that only you can do, and we want to celebrate that. We're happy to help if you'd like to find out when your Jewish Birthday is. For the month of Av, we wish happy birthday to Evelyn, Judy and Timmy and wish you good health, happiness, nachas and all that you wish for. With love from the RCWC.

Each month since the start of our project, we have been celebrating with our birthday girls in a different manner. Last month Tammuz we had six birthdays registered. Each birthday celebrant received a single beautifully wrapped and ribboned rose for their birthday together with a birthday scroll describing their special birthday. Each of these women responded with expressions of warm delight and some added why this flower meant a lot to them on this particular day. One lovely lady sent me some of her birthday inspiration and thoughts which are worth sharing.

### Help us Reach our Goal

Right now we have just over 50 birthdays registered among women across communities. Our goal is to reach 250 women from all walks of life, across many sectors of many communities. If you'd like to share your birthday with us or help us reach our goal, we would love to hear from you. Contact the RCWC if you'd like to find out when your Jewish birthday is.