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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **DENVER YOUNGSTER TEAMS WITH RENOWNED ARTIST GARY ROSENTHAL TO MAKE 'POWERFUL' CANDELABRA**

*Hand-Made Candlestick Holders and Candles to Be Sent to Ukraine for Rosh Hashanah*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. & DENVER, COLORADO, June 1, 2005** – A Denver sixth grader will be partnering with an internationally known artist this weekend to create 60 pairs of hand-made candlesticks and candles conceived and designed with a powerful mission: helping to reignite Judaism in Eastern Europe.

Sarah Rockford, 12, is working with artist and sculptor Gary Rosenthal to develop a unique community-based activity in which she will donate one-of-a-kind candlesticks and hand-rolled candles to Jewish communities in Ukraine. The preliminary event, which leads up to her Bat Mitzvah this August, will take place at the Gart Companies Building (**299 Milwaukee Street in Cherry Creek North**) on Sunday, June 5 from 9 to 11 a.m.

The activity is part of a special program known as The Gary Rosenthal Collection Hiddur Mitzvah Project, which is designed to teach Jewish youngsters about religion, social responsibility, and arts enrichment. Rosenthal, a recognized leader in the American craft movement, teams up with Jewish groups around the country to create functional Jewish artwork, such as Torah pointers, Menorahs, Mezuzahs, and Sabbath candlestick holders.

“In school, Jewish youngsters are taught about the Torah and Jewish laws and rituals, but oftentimes, the importance of Judaic art is overlooked,” Rosenthal said. “Moreover, they learn about the importance of doing a mitzvah, but may not have an opportunity to participate in one. Through the Hiddur Mitzvah Project, Sarah and her family and friends will be ensuring an appreciation for the role art plays in Jewish ritual, taking part in a mitzvah, as well as taking on the responsibility of helping others.”

The participants will construct a cut glass mosaic that will be sent to Rosenthal’s workshop in Kensington, Maryland, near Washington, D.C., where it will be melted at 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit, fused into a solid piece, and mounted onto candlestick holders from The Gary Rosenthal Collection. Sarah and her mother Renee will travel to the Washington, D.C. area this July to work in Rosenthal’s studio and help him complete the works of art.

Half of the 60 candlestick sets will be sent back to Denver, and the other half—with help from the Jewish Community Development Fund—will be sent to the Ukrainian communities of Chernigov and Priluki, near where Sarah’s grandfather David Bram (**Colorado Springs, Colorado**), a Holocaust survivor, was born in Poland. The candlesticks being sent to Eastern Europe will arrive in time for Rosh Hashanah.

**(more)**

## Denver Youngster, Well-Known Artist Create ‘Powerful’ Candelabra

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The eldest of six children, Bram was taken from his family when he was 13 years old, after he volunteered to work in place of his father. Bram survived five different concentration camps before being liberated by the U.S. Army on May 5, 1945. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1947 and became a businessman and real estate developer. Bram, along with his wife Zita and Sarah’s other grandmother Marion Rockford (**Chicago, Illinois**), will be underwriting the project.

“My Hiddur Mitzvah Project completes a circle for my family; what the Holocaust took away from us, we are putting back together, one light at a time,” said Sarah Rockford, who attends Graland Country Day School in Denver.

Rockford added: “I hope that my friends and family enjoy this event, and I believe that this experience can inspire other kids and teach them that one person can make a difference. It’s also neat to think that we will have a connection to other Jewish people halfway around the world. ”

In addition to her Hiddur Mitzvah Project, Sarah has asked not to receive gifts for her Bat Mitzvah in August; instead, she would like to collect money for The Hiddur Mitzvah Foundation, a designated foundation of The Shefa Fund created by Rosenthal to encourage *Tzedakah* (charity) projects and facilitate Hiddur Mitzvah philanthropy. The money she collects will be used to purchase Torah scrolls for a needy community in Eastern Europe.

“Our family has been deeply impacted by the Holocaust,” Renee Rockford said. “With Gary Rosenthal’s support, we are teaching the next generation that there can be healing and rebuilding, and that Judaism can thrive in a place where we thought it would not survive.

“If we are able teach children in such a beautiful and rewarding way that they can be the spark of that new light, then we as Jewish people can say that we survived, that we ensured continuity,” she said.

### **About The Gary Rosenthal Collection and the Hiddur Mitzvah Project**

Gary Rosenthal has been sculpting in welded metals for almost 30 years. Together with a team of talented craftspeople, he creates one of the most popular and unique lines of Judaic art in the country: The Gary Rosenthal Collection. Combining copper, brass, and steel with brilliant fused glass, the collection has a contemporary style rooted in tradition.

Work from The Gary Rosenthal Collection ([www.collectgaryrosenthal.com](http://www.collectgaryrosenthal.com)) has been presented to Presidents from Jimmy Carter to George W. Bush and can be found throughout the world in many fine galleries, private collections, and museum shops, including the American Craft Museum, the B’nai B’rith Museum, the Smithsonian’s Renwick Gallery, the Corning Museum of Glass, and The Jewish Museum.

The Gary Rosenthal Collection is committed to helping others perform *hiddur mitzvah* (“beautification of the commandment”) and is pleased to offer the Hiddur Mitzvah Project as an entertaining and functional way to perform a service as well as teach invaluable lessons about arts enrichment and community building. For more information about the Hiddur Mitzvah Project, visit [www.hiddurmitzvah.org](http://www.hiddurmitzvah.org) or call 1-800-962-1545.

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