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MJCCA News

**OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST
PODKOPAYEVA JOINS MJCCA AS
GYMNASTICS COACH.** Ukrainian Olympic gold medalist Liliya Podkopayeva has accepted the position of team coach for The Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta's (MJCCA) Perimeter Gymnastics competitive teams.

"We are thrilled to introduce Liliya as a new coach in our gymnastics program," said MJCCA Perimeter Gymnastics Director Stacey Harris. "Liliya was an exceptional gymnast — her routines were artistically beautiful and powerful. She brings years of both competing in gymnastics and coaching experience to our program. We are pleased to welcome a coach with her level of experience and expertise to our MJCCA family."

Originally from Donetsk, Ukraine, Liliya has an extensive competitive resumé. Liliya competed at the 1993, 1994, and 1995 World Championships, as well as the 1994 Goodwill Games. She won the all around at both the 1994 Goodwill Games and the 1995 World Championships. At the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Liliya won the all-around final with a score of 39.255. She also won the floor exercise gold medal as well as a silver medal on the

balance beam.

Liliya was named to the Ukrainian team for the 1997 World Championships. However, injuries precluded her from competing and, later, to retire. She has twice appeared on Ukraine's "Dancing with the Stars," winning the competition in 2007. She was inducted into the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame in 2008. Liliya now lives with her two children in Atlanta and looks forward to sharing her gymnastics experience with Perimeter Gymnastics.

In addition to the Perimeter Gymnastics competitive teams, the MJCCA provides gymnastics classes for all ages, including Crawlers and Tots classes, Youth (elementary through high school), early childhood recreational classes, adult gymnastics, camps, birthday parties, and private lessons.

With 7,000 square feet of dedicated space and top-of-the-line Olympic gymnastics equipment in the Besser Gymnastics Pavilion, participants train in all four events — vault, bars, beam, and floor exercise. The MJCCA strives for each participant to enjoy gymnastics while safely developing skills.

For more information, call 678-812-4045, or visit atlantajcc.org/gymnastics.

HARRIS JACOBS DREAM RUN. The 26th Annual Harris Jacobs Dream Run/Walk (HJDR) is Sunday, May 5, at 8:00 a.m. The community is invited to run or walk in its family-friendly 5K road race, which begins and ends at the Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta's (MJCCA) Zaban Park Campus, 5342 Tilly Mill Road, Dunwoody, 30338.

"We are thrilled to invite the runners and walkers of all experience levels to join us on May 5 for our 26th Annual Harris Jacobs Dream Run," said MJCCA CEO Jared Powers. "Feel free to bring friends, neighbors, and co-workers to enjoy this fun 5K road race/walk through beautiful Dunwoody neighborhoods. Then, stay for family-friendly post-race activities. It's a great day for all ages."

The Harris Jacobs Dream Run, created 26 years ago, honors the memory of a past president of the MJCCA and influential member of the Atlanta Jewish community, Harris Jacobs. Proceeds support the MJCCA's Blonder Family Department for Special Needs, a unique and welcoming home where individuals of all backgrounds and abilities can socialize, learn, grow, and deepen their connections to one another and the community.

The popular community event features a 5K Road Race/Walk that follows a certified course, and post-race activities including an awards ceremony, Atlanta Hawks Flight Crew, a rock climbing wall, sports fun with Maccabi,



Liliya Podkopayeva (photo: Jennifer Sami)



Harris Jacobs Dream Run
(photo: courtesy of MJCCA)

children's games and crafts, ambulance and police car tours, complimentary massages, giveaways from HJDR's generous sponsors, and more.

The HJDR course is a 2020 Peachtree Road Race qualifier, allowing runners to use their time to qualify for a start wave in the 2020 Road Race; all participants will be chip-timed. Participants will receive a T-shirt.

Race/Walk fees are \$25 for adults through April 26; \$30 after April 26; \$35 on Race Day; and \$15 for children under 12. The fee for Phantom Runners is \$30. The Team Challenge discount is \$5 off each registration for teams of five or more.

There will be no HJDR parking at the MJCCA; the MJCCA's main lot closes at 7:00 a.m. on May 5. All parking will be at the Georgia State University Student lot on Womack, adjacent to Berman Commons. Shuttle service runs from 6:15-10:00 a.m.

Packet pickup is Thursday, May 2, from 5:00-9:00 p.m. at Dick's Sporting Goods, Dunwoody location, and Friday, May 3, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., at the MJCCA's Zaban Park Campus.

For more information, visit atlantajcc.org/HJDR or call 678-812-3981.

GORSETMAN RECEIVES AWARD. Talya Gorsetman, director of the MJCCA's Lisa F. Brill Institute for Jewish Learning (which includes the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning) was presented with the Director's Award for Excellence in Sustained Growth & Innovation, at the 24th Annual International Melton Directors Conference, in Boca Raton, Florida.

The MJCCA's Brill Institute for Jewish Learning, Atlanta's largest adult Jewish education program, offers classes to more than 450 students at MJCCA's Zaban Park and partner locations Congregation Etz Chaim, Intown Chabad, Age Well, The Center for Israel Education, The Temple, Young Israel of Toco



Rabbi Rachel Bovitz presents the Director's Award to Talya Gorsetman. (photo: courtesy of the MJCCA)

Hills, Congregation Beth Shalom, Atlanta Jewish Academy, Temple Sinai, Congregation B'nai Torah, Congregation Shearith Israel, Congregation Bet Haverim, The Weber School, and Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Emory University. Courses are taught by some of Georgia's most outstanding Jewish scholars, rabbis, and educators, with a range of daytime and evening options.

"Talya was specifically lauded for the work she has done to sustain the growth of her Melton community of learners and the innovative ideas she brings to her work," said Rabbi Rachel Bovitz, executive director of the Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning. The Melton School, a project of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was established in 1987. It is the largest global pluralistic adult Jewish education network, with Melton Schools in the U.S., Canada, U.K., Australia, and South Africa.

"Talya inspires her peers — Melton directors from around the world — with her innovative ideas, such as offering Melton's Jewish Denominations course in a cross-denominational format with students and faculty representing the spectrum of religious affiliation within the Jewish community," said Rabbi Bovitz.

"Talya deeply believes in Melton learning and has seen how it impacts the lives of her students," said Hope Chernak, MJCCA's chief program officer. "She continues to develop new ideas to reach different audiences of Jewish adults and bring them into her learning community. Talya and her staff provide the community with exciting courses, taught by gifted teachers.

"The Lisa F. Brill Institute for Jewish Learning provides an environment which encourages open discussion and engagement," continues Chernak. "Our learning environment is text-based, pluralistic, relevant, and is designed for people of all ages and denominations. This award that Talya has received exemplifies the growth and innovation that this department has seen by positively and inclusively enlightening people who are interested in exploring their Judaism."

For more information about the MJCCA's Lisa F. Brill Institute for Jewish Learning, call 678-812-4153, e-mail brill.institute@atlantajcc.org, or visit atlantajcc.org/brill.

JERRY'S HABIMA THEATRE PRESENTS XANADU, JR. Jerry's Habima Theatre, Georgia's only theatrical company directed and produced by professionals featuring actors with special needs, recently presented its 26th production, *Xanadu, JR.* The MJCCA's Jerry's Habima Theatre has received several prestigious honors in recent years, including the Spirit of Suzi Bass Award; it is also a three-time recipient of the National Endowment for the Arts Challenge America Grant.

For 26 seasons, Jerry's Habima Theatre, produced under the auspices of the MJCCA's Blonder Family Department for Special Needs, has brought together professional actors from the community and talented adult actors with special needs to present a musical theatrical production to sell-out audiences and much acclaim.

"Making art is a journey that includes overcoming obstacles and staying positive," explains Rachel Fox Weitz, chair of Jerry's Habima Theatre's 26th production. "This message is loud and clear in this lighthearted, campy combination of classic '80s tunes and Greek mythology. Audiences rooted for the power of the arts, the inspiration of love — all while singing along to 'I'm Alive,' 'Xanadu,' 'Magic,' and many more."

Cast members included Mark Boehm (Tubes and Ensemble); Bayley Bristow (Siren: Molpe and Ensemble); Jared Brodie (Centaur and Ensemble); Taryn Carmona (Andrews Sister and Ensemble); Bill Connell (Tubes and Ensemble); Michelle Cristal (Calliope and Sisters 9); Linda Danzig (Medusa and Ensemble); Luke Davis (Zeus and Ensemble); Julia Ervin (Thetis, Andrews Sister, and Ensemble); Philip Flores (Muse: Thalia, Sisters 9, and Cyclopes); Martha Haythorn (Muse: Erato and Sisters 9); Courtney Jones (Terpsichore, Sisters 9, and Siren: Peisonoe); Hannah Keen (Siren: Thelxiepeia and Ensemble); Sadie Levy (Andrews Sister and Ensemble); Evan Nodvin (Tubes and Ensemble); Cynthia Outman (Euterpe and Sisters 9); Patrick Robinson (Sonny); Katie Rouille (Aphrodite and Ensemble); Michael Silver (Tubes and Ensemble); Ali Sims (Hera and Ensemble); Jesse Thomas-Durden (Kira and Sisters 9); Margaret Whitley (Urania and Sisters 9); Bess Winebarger (Melpomene and Sisters 9); Marc Wollam (Danny); Sean Wyatt (Hermes and Ensemble); Googie Uterhardt (Polyhymnia and Sisters 9); and Mark Benator, Todd Besmertnik, Thomas Blackwell, Evan Dewey, Jenny Fluker, David Grayson, Robert Grollman, Davey Kilbourne, Emery Matthews, Michael Morie, Mike Pelta, and Carmine Vara (Esemble).



Michelle Cristal (Calliope), Bess Winebarger (Melpomene), Patrick Robinson (Sonny), and Jesse Thomas-Durden (Kira)