

## 2011-J578

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION commending RAJE, the Russian American Jewish Experience, upon the occasion of its Third Annual Dinner on March 2, 2011, and honoring Erik and Rimma Yankelovich, recipients of the Builders of the Future Award

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to recognize and commend organizations and individuals of high purpose and worthy accomplishment whose endeavors have a significant impact on the lives of others; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern and fully in accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend RAJE (Russian American Jewish Experience), the Russian Division of Gateways, upon the occasion of its Third Annual Dinner, to be held at Bridgewaters on Fulton Street in New York City on Wednesday, March 2, 2011, and to honor Erik and Rimma Yankelovich, recipients of the Builders of the Future Award; and

WHEREAS, Since 1998, the Gateways Organization has dedicated itself to education in values and ethical living, and to reconnecting people with their Jewish heritage; and

WHEREAS, Nearly a million Jews from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) have made their home in America, including thousands upon thousands in New York City and New York State, and given the opportunities of our great nation, many have flourished; and

WHEREAS, Yet the seeds of spiritual and communal destruction implanted by the Soviet regime helped create a crisis of Jewish and communal identity which, if left unabated, could jeopardize the survival of this important Russian American community; and

WHEREAS, To address this monumental challenge, RAJE, a comprehensive educational umbrella organization, whose goal is to spark Jewish life

and ensure Jewish continuity for the next generation of Russian American Jews, was created to train and inspire a new generation of community leaders; and

WHEREAS, Erik and Rimma Yankelovich, who exemplify and support this worthy goal, will be honored with the Builders of the Future Award at the dinner; and

WHEREAS, Erik and Rimma Yankelovich immigrated to the United States with their families in 1990 from Ukraine; Rimma's parents, who are from Odessa, and Erik's, who are from the Carpathian area of Ukraine which was devastated by the Holocaust, were fortunate to survive World War II, the Holocaust and the communist regime but not without losing loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Rimma Yankelovich attended Edward R. Murrow High School and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science from Brooklyn College; she has been working for Citigroup as a banker since 2006; and

WHEREAS, Erik Yankelovich graduated from Sinai Academy High School and the State University of New York at Stony Brook where he too earned a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science; he has been a Commercial Real Estate Broker with GFI Capital for almost 10 years, specializing in Apartment Building Sales in New York City's five boroughs; and

WHEREAS, Erik and Rimma Yankelovich were married in August 2009 and are happily awaiting the birth of their first child; and

WHEREAS, Erik and Rimma Yankelovich got involved with RAJE after taking a random group trip to Argentina in 2007; after the trip, they became friendly with some of the staff, started attending classes and Shabbat services and got involved in community programs; and

WHEREAS, Their bond with RAJE is a natural one, as they both feel the need to rebuild what had been for years wiped out and kept away from their community's ancestors; and

WHEREAS, Erik and Rimma Yankelovich are spearheading the Jewish

Enrichment for Parents and Children Program, a joint venture between RAJE and Mazel Day School which, on Sunday mornings, gives parents and children ages 3-10, exposure to Judaism and its customs in a fun, interactive and entertaining way; and

WHEREAS, Erik and Rimma Yankelovich are also active members of The Shteible in Manhattan Beach where they have found a home and become involved with the synagogue's outreach to the Russian Jewish community as well; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to honor Erik and Rimma Yankelovich and to commend RAJE for its purposeful endeavors and commitment to the preservation and enhancement of the rich religious, ethnic, and cultural heritage of the Russian American Jewish community which has become such a valued and integral part of the community of the City and State of New York; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend RAJE upon the occasion of its Third Annual Dinner on March 2, 2011, and to honor Erik and Rimma Yankelovich, recipients of the Builders of the Future Award; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to RAJE and to Erik and Rimma Yankelovich.