



Our Big Kitchen CEO Rabbi David Slavin and Minister for Citizenship, Communities and Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello helped Moriah College students Mia Herrman (left) and Arielle Gold bake cookies last Wednesday.

## In the kitchen cabinet

CASSILEE KAHN

OUR Big Kitchen (OBK) adopted MP Victor Dominello as the organisation's "honorary minister" for a day last Wednesday.

The Minister for Citizenship, Communities and Aboriginal Affairs was on hand at the kosher kitchen to help volunteers bake cookies for people in need.

OBK founder Rabbi David Slavin said that while the initiative was quite tongue-in-cheek, it was also a symbolic move.

"We're sure this will develop into a very real relationship, as so much of what we do crosses over

into Victor Dominello's portfolio," Rabbi Slavin said.

Rabbi Slavin said the kitchen has many community partnerships.

"We want to be relevant to the people of Australia and to be able to provide the services and support that are most needed, and what better way than to join forces with the elected state government," the rabbi said.

Dominello praised the school-children who volunteered, as well as OBK's ongoing work.

Watch the minister's visit:  
[jewishnews.net.au/jntv](http://jewishnews.net.au/jntv)

## An artistic vision of survival

CASSILEE KAHN

WHEN Thea Weiss began listening to her mother-in-law's Holocaust stories, she never imagined she would spend years turning them into art.

"The Holocaust was a topic that I only read about in books or saw on television, so when I met Lotte and my late father-in-law Alfred, they made it real for me," Weiss said.

The exhibition, *Fire and Ice: Survival of the Spirit*, was inspired by Lotte's book, *My Two Lives*, and stories from her time in the Auschwitz-Birkenau and Theresienstadt concentration camps.

It was first on display in a Sydney art gallery in 2008 to celebrate Lotte's 85th birthday, before going on show at the Jewish Museum of Australia in Melbourne, and was then exhibited in Virginia and Texas in the US.

Now the original 10 pieces, as well as 17 recently completed artworks – which include a wide range of artistic materials and mediums, including oil paint, wax, linen canvases, wafer board and etchings – are on display at the Sydney Jewish Museum.

"This exhibition has taken on a life of itself, and it's different to the previous ones because it is my interpretation of her experiences rather than relating the actual stories.

"The many layers of Lotte's life resonate in my work with the overlapping of forms and textures.



Thea (left) and Lotte Weiss standing in front of paintings that depict Lotte before she was taken to Auschwitz.

Photo: Cassilee Kahn

"The recurring symbols found in the miracle of her survival, such as eyeglasses, particular phrases and numerals, and the memories of her beloved family, are repeatedly woven throughout the collection," Weiss said.

The artist hopes that people who see the exhibition will grasp an idea of Lotte's courageous story of survival, her enduring spirit and love of life.

"I want people to realise the horror that she experienced, and that she's a survivor whose spirit has never been crushed by the Nazis, she lives for every day and is happy to be alive."

Lotte, who was the only survivor

from her five siblings and parents, was almost speechless after seeing Weiss's works based on her life.

"Every portrait and picture reminds me of something, and Thea brought it out so beautifully and naturally, with so much feeling. I will be forever grateful for what she did for me and my family," 87-year-old Lotte said.

*Fire & Ice: Survival of the Spirit* is currently on exhibition until the 31st January 2012.

Watch Thea Weiss explain her inspiration:  
[jewishnews.net.au/jntv](http://jewishnews.net.au/jntv)

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