



Like many business startups, **Paper Goods Plus** began in a basement. Today, **Nechama and Nachy Soloff** have a storefront in Oak Park that stocks large varieties of party supplies and home basics.

It began when Nechama, pregnant and asked by her doctor to stop working, was looking for a gentle way to occupy herself. "We saw a need for nice party goods, and Nachy had wholesale contacts," she said. "We started with two wooden shelves in our basement, and the community has been unbelievable in coming to us when they have events."

In turn, Nachy says their staff takes time with customers and helps walk them through their needs. "It's personalized service," Nachy said. "We stock unusual items, patterns and colors you can't get easily, and once people come in, they're hooked. They come back to show friends."

But carrying all the sizes and varieties of the products isn't cheap, said Nachy, "and we needed to move out of the house and find more space." The couple came to Hebrew Free Loan's **Marvin I. Danto Small Business Loan Program** to help expand in a new location.

"An HFL Neighborhood Project loan helped us purchase our home, so we jumped when we read about the business loans," Nachy said. "They were so encouraging to us."

"Beyond the check, there's a real support system there," Nechama said. "The mentorship program is a great resource, a great help with our growth. The money is interest-free and the community is with us."

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