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## GRAPEVINE

• By GREER FAY CASHMAN

■ MANY PARENTS and teachers believe that adolescence is the worst time in a young person's life. It's a period in which uncertainty and a yearning for independence dance a grim tango with each other, often turning adolescents into moody, uncooperative individuals.

Some 20 years back, Beit Hatfutsot - The Museum of the Jewish People, through its International School for Jewish Peoplehood Studies, came up with a partial cure for this malady. It created an annual international contest called the Manuel Hirsch Groskopf My Family Story International Competition, in which 12- to 15-year-olds were asked to research their family stories against the broader backdrop of Jewish history. This year the competition attracted 20,000 students from 155 schools in Israel, USA, Canada, Argentina, Morocco, Georgia, France, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Costa Rica, Spain, Austria, Greece, Colombia, Paraguay and Australia. The competition is a fun thing for pupils, teachers and parents, and the exploration of family stories, genealogy, and traditions paves the way for new bonding.

Based on the information they are able to glean, participants prepare installations, the best of which are exhibited at Beit Hatfutsot, and the youngsters who made them are given a free trip to Israel. As a teacher and a Jewish mother, **Julie Fisher**, the wife of US Ambassador

**Dan Shapiro**, was curious to see what youngsters from different countries had produced and showed up at the awards ceremony at Beit Hatfutsot this past Wednesday. Accompanying her was **Polina Levy Eskenazi**, the cultural program specialist at the US Embassy in Tel Aviv. They were welcomed by Beit Hatfutsot CEO **Dan Tadmor**; **Enia Zeevi Kupfer**, director of the Israel and Europe desk; and Dr. **Orit Shaham Gover**, the chief curator of the museum, who also guided Fisher through the new wing of the museum.