

GRAPEVINE

• By GREER FAY CASHMAN

■ THE RECENTLY announced winners of the Knesset Speaker's Prize for Quality of Life include American-born Jerusalemite Prof. **Eliezer David Jaffe**, founder of the Israel Free Loan Association. The prize focuses on activities bridging differences between population groups and promoting tolerance to reduce social gaps in Israel. This year's prizes, to be awarded by Knesset Speaker **Reuven Rivlin**, will also be awarded to Dr. **Adi Kohl** and to two organizations: **Besod Siach**, which promotes dialogue between groups in conflict within Israel, and the **Ma'ase** organization for young volunteers in peripheral communities. The total value of the prize is NIS 150,000, which will be divided between the four recipients.

Jaffe, father of four and grandfather of 17, who hails from Cleveland, Ohio, has been living in Israel since 1960, was one of the founders of the School of Social Work at the Hebrew University. In 1990 he set up the Israel Free Loan Association, which offers interest-free loans to new immigrants and veteran Israelis to meet a wide range of needs such as adapting a family's living space to accommodate the special needs of a disabled family member, developing small businesses or setting a failing business back on its feet, student loans for disadvantaged young people entering higher education and so on. The association has helped tens of thousands of people over the years, filling a gap in the range of services to meet pressing needs.

Since its inception, the association has awarded over 40,000 loans, totaling more than \$130 million.

Jaffe is a highly respected academic who has published many books and papers, including *Giving Wisely*, which attests to the authenticity of charitable organizations that raise funds from the public. He recently stepped down from heading the IFLA and was succeeded by British expatriate **Edward Cohen**, who says he is in awe of even trying to fill Jaffe's shoes.