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## Jewish Federation in the Heart of NJ Oct. 7 Event Draws Capacity Crowd

- [By Harry Glazer](#)
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Efrat Rosmarin from Ocean Township, Marissa Lambert from Ocean Township, and Jennifer Levin from Freehold stand with NJ State Senator Vin Gopal.

If you were looking for an example of how to meaningfully commemorate the massacres, the heroism, and the aftermath of the attacks of October 7, 2023, I can think of no finer tribute than the event held on Sunday October 6 by the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey.

Held in the large auditorium of the Marlboro Middle School, the Jewish Federation’s “Marking One Year” event attracted a large crowd of community members of all ages and denominations. The event was cosponsored by 21 synagogues in Middlesex and Monmouth counties and five Jewish communal organizations.

The event started with a welcome from Dan Rozett, the community relations director of the Jewish Federation, and a collective Tekiah Gedolah herald on shofars by congregational rabbis. Marlboro Mayor John Hornick greeted the crowd, saying: “I’m the proud Jewish mayor of Marlboro and I’m so proud to host this rally in our town.” He shared an official proclamation to mark the occasion.



A view of the crowd at the Jewish Federation event.

Susan Antman, executive director of the Jewish Federation, spoke and said, in part: “We’re here because of the hatred of Jews. Why do we face this? Our rabbis tell us that this question cannot be answered. But we must make something good from it.” Antman shared stories of the heroism and sacrifice of Israeli soldiers and pledged that our Jewish communities will keep their legacies alive.

Shye Klein, a Nova music festival survivor, shared some of his experiences on that fateful day. Originally from Toronto, Canada, he made aliyah in 2023 and works as a photographer. He attended the Nova festival, which attracted 4,000 attendees and a few hundred staff, with a group of friends. He wandered around the festival grounds and took photos of different people he encountered and their roles there.



Mordechai and Debra Berman of Monroe Township view a photography exhibition of Oct 7 survivors, hostages and their families.

Klein shared the surprise, shock and confusion he and his friends experienced as it dawned on them that the festival was coming under attack from Hamas terrorists in the early morning. He and a few of their group managed to drive out of the area and were fortunate to survive unscathed, physically; they did so by ignoring police advice at times, driving off-road, and not stopping until they got home. He recalled seeing bodies and bullet-ridden cars at various places on the road and, at one point, seeing large plumes of black smoke arising from different points in the horizon; he learned later that these were each coming from devastated kibbutzim.

Klein said that of his original group of eight friends at the festival, which split into two groups, all eight survived. The other group hid in a forested area, underbrush, for 6 ½ hours until the IDF arrived. Klein showed a collage of the photos he took at the festival and noted that he tracked what happened to the 54 people he met; he reported that 52 survived. He closed his presentation by stating: "Being able to share this with you, and share your support back home, is very important to us."



Jewish Federation Executive Director Susan Antman, right, with New Jersey's First Lady Tammy Murphy.

Nathaniel Kingsbury-Neuschoetz of the Highland Park Conservative Temple-Congregation Anshe Emeth then led those assembled in reciting the Kel Maleh prayer.

Antman announced the Jewish Federation's launch of the Center to Combat Antisemitism and Reinforce Multiculturalism (CARMA), led by Dr. Stacy Gallin, and introduced Gallin to the audience. (See article on page 46 for more information on CARMA.) CARMA will offer workshops for educational officials at high schools and colleges in Middlesex and

Monmouth counties as well as training and a helpline for students on how to combat antisemitism.

Rozett spoke last and declared: “We will never stop advocating for Israel’s right to defend itself,” and ended his talk by stating: “Long live the nation of Israel. Long live the State of Israel. May God bless the State of Israel. And may God bless the United States of America.” A children’s choir, which led the crowd at the start of the event in the “Hatikvah” and “The Star-Spangled Banner,” concluded the event by singing “Od Yavoh Shalom.”



Congressman Andy Kim views a photography exhibition of Oct 7 survivors, hostages and their families.

On my way in and my way out of the event, I noted the elaborate security measures and abundant volunteer and police security presence. These facets of the event, all coordinated expertly by the security arm of the Jewish Federation, were a welcome reassurance to all attendees. At the same time, they were a sobering reminder of the continued reverberations of the October 7 attacks and their aftermath in our area.



Shye Klein speaks at the event.