

UJA-JCC greenwich | JEWISH NEWS

Volume XXXIV, Number 5

June 2025 | Sivan 5785

Teen Changemakers Announce Generous Contributions at 2025 Impact Celebration

On April 27, Teen Changemakers thrilled philanthropic and nonprofit circles by announcing a generous donation of \$61,000 to nonprofit organizations, ranging from local agencies in the Greenwich area to international programs in Ukraine and Israel. These allocations were announced at the Teen Changemakers Impact Celebration 2025, reaffirming for a fourth consecutive year, that participants in the two-semester program for 9th to 12th graders don't just talk about making a difference—they make it happen.

Held at the Greenwich Botanical Center in Cos Cob, the celebration drew a full house of community stakeholders. Representatives from eight recipient organizations shared brief insights about their missions and expressed gratitude to the 39 teen donors who supported them. The joint **Hirsch Family** and UJA-JCC Greenwich initiative, launched in 2021, gives teens an inside

look at how fundraising and grantmaking work, all through a Jewish lens. It further provides the budding philanthropists with real-world opportunities to grow as leaders and communicators, and to learn the skills of nonprofit executives.



Under the guidance of Teen Educator Mark Feller, the Changemakers met 13 times between October 2024 and April 2025. This year's curriculum introduced a key change: issuing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) earlier in the season. This adjustment allowed for longer lead times to conduct due diligence, including virtual interviews with all grant applicants. It also deepened the possibilities for group deliberation and consensus building. Among the issues that garnered the most attention were antisemitism, domestic violence, poverty and food insecurity.

"Teen Changemakers empowers teens to earmark the funds they raised to support the causes they care about most," said Cori SaNogueira, Chief Program Officer with UJA-JCC Greenwich. "Together, they learn what it means to give, lead and create change."

See photos on page 8.

SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday, October 28, 2025 | 9:30 a.m.

Women's Philanthropy Fall Brunch

Guest speaker

Melanie Phillips

Journalist, Broadcaster and
Author of *The Builder's Stone:*
How Jews and Christians Built
the West -- and Why Only They
Can Save It.



Event Co-Chairs:

Claudine Cohen | Jessica Hirsch
Anna Pratolongo | Karen Ross

Second Annual Black Family Community Forum With Bret Stephens



See photos on pages 10 & 11.

Our Mitzvah Makers Packed Some Good!



UJA-JCC Greenwich Is Grateful to the Greenwich Police for This Message Sent Out to the Community on May 21

Our hearts are with the victims, their families, and all those impacted by the tragic shooting outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C., on May 21.

In light of this event, and in recognition of the ongoing threats facing Jewish and Israeli-affiliated institutions—the Greenwich Police Department has taken proactive steps to support and protect our community.

Effective immediately, we are increasing patrols around Jewish places of worship and other community institutions throughout the Town of Greenwich. These enhanced patrols are precautionary and intended to provide visible reassurance and promote a sense of safety for all our residents. While there is no known local threat at this time, we remain fully committed to standing with our Jewish community and ensuring the security of all who call Greenwich home.

Women's Philanthropy Book Club: Where Minds Unite and Pages Come to Life

Our Women's book club gathered on May 6 to discuss the novel, *Songs for the Brokenhearted* by Israeli author Ayelet Tsabari. This fresh and engrossing novel explores the Yemini Israeli experience. It depicts a young Israeli woman's journey to understand her mother's secret romance through lost family stories. A big thank you to Hayvn Coworking for hosting the event and Women's Philanthropy board members, **Bonnie Citron**, **Silvina Knoll**, and **Randi Levy** for organizing the program.



UJA-JCC Greenwich Announces Newcomers Chair



UJA-JCC Greenwich welcomes **Rachel Barnwell** as its Newcomers Chair. Rachel takes the baton from **Ester Zolotnistky**, who chaired the committee in 2024. Rachel moved to Greenwich in 2023 with her husband, Brendon, and their son Logan. Since then, Rachel has become an active member of UJA-JCC Greenwich, PJ Library, and Chabad of Greenwich, where Logan attends preschool. Rachel is an avid equestrian and foodie and enjoys meeting new people. She is excited to take on this new role.

COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

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(203) 552-1818
Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy
Lower School (203) 329-2186
High School (203) 357-0850
Chabad Lubavitch of Greenwich
Gan of Greenwich Preschool
(203) 629-9059
Congregation Shir Ami
(203) 900-7976
Greenwich Reform
(203) 629-0018
Congregation Kehilat Shalom
Hebrew Wizards
(203) 249-4036
Jewish Family Services of Greenwich
(203) 622-1881
Jewish Riverside Old Greenwich
(203) 441-1137
Jewish Senior Services
(203) 365-6400
Temple Shalom
(203) 869-7191
Temple Shalom
Selma Maisel Nursery School
(203) 622-8121

SHABBAT & HOLIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Fri., June 20 8:12 pm
Fri., June 27 8:13 pm
Fri., July 4 8:12 pm
Fri., July 11 8:09 pm
Fri., July 18 8:05 pm
Fri., July 25 7:59 pm
Fri., Aug. 1, 7:52 pm
Fri., Aug. 8 7:44 pm
Fri., Aug. 15 7:35 pm
Fri., Aug. 22 7:24 pm
Fri., Aug. 29 7:13 pm
Fri., Sept. 5 7:02 pm
Fri., Sept. 12 6:50 pm

Greenwich Jewish News

Published by
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Save The Date

A Women's Retreat at Kripalu

Hosted by UJA-JCC Greenwich
Women's Philanthropy

Designed for and
focused on Jewish women
in our community

Refill your soul with
self-reflection, Jewish
study, and wellness
opportunities through a
Jewish lens.

\$400 Registration fee
(includes meals and programs)
Accommodations booked
separately.



January 12-14, 2026
at Kripalu Retreat Center

Event Co-Chairs:
Joui Hessel and Carolyn Surgent



Federations and Birthright Israel Partner to Mobilize Volunteers 50 Years Old and Under

If you've been wanting to volunteer in Israel—and you're 50 or under—you're in luck. Jewish Federations of North America and Taglit-Birthright Israel have partnered to boost Jewish volunteerism supporting Israel's recovery and rebuilding efforts while also responding to the resurgence of Jewish pride, identity and solidarity that has emerged since October 7. **The one-week program, which includes airfare, is available for a highly subsidized cost of just \$600.** The joint initiative seeks to send at least 10,000 volunteers in 2025. It builds on both organizations' successful track records in organizing impactful volunteer programs in the aftermath of the attacks.

With tens of thousands of Israelis still serving in the reserves and a sharp decline in foreign workers, volunteer support is more essential than ever. Since October 7, volunteers have stepped in to fill critical gaps, bolstering Israel's economy, supporting food security, and lending hands where they're most needed. Along the way, many say they've formed a deeper, more personal bond with Israel and the global Jewish community. For countless participants, the experience has been nothing short of transformative.

Those interested in volunteering can learn more and apply at: www.birthrightisrael.com/volunteer-in-israel.



BE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER:
PACK 13,000 MEALS IN JUST 2 HOURS!

UJA-JCC GREENWICH MEAL PACKING PROJECT

Sunday, September 14, 3-5 PM
 (One-hour volunteer shifts available)

Cohen Eastern Greenwich Civic Center, Old Greenwich

No experience needed - you'll measure, fill, seal, and box meals that will go directly to local organizations serving our community.

This is hands-on community service at its best - in just one hour, you will make a real difference!

Community service hours can be earned.

Registration required.
 \$18/person per shift.
 Scan the QR code to secure your spot!

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Clergy Lobby Congress

In partnership with the Zionist Rabbinic Coalition, 200 Christian pastors and 100 Rabbis, including Pam Ehrenkranz, lobbied together on Capitol Hill to reiterate support for Israel, press for the release of the hostages, reminding our senators and congressional representatives that Hamas cannot remain in power in Gaza, and that Iran's nuclear program is a threat to both Israel and America.



Are you getting our emails?
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Clergy's Corner

☆ Harness Hope to Pursue God's Light! ☆

by Rabbi Mitchell Hurvitz, Temple Sholom

Our world has too much tragedy, loss, disillusionment, and despair. We struggle with what actions to take to re-engage with hope for a better future. When I feel overwhelmed by the sadness of current affairs, I try to think about role models who have demonstrated concrete actions that have brought God's light into our lives. One such individual was Vedran Smailovic.

Vedran was the principal cellist of the Sarajevo Opera when one morning in 1992, he heard a mortar shell burst in the street near his home, quickly followed by screams. The shell killed 22 people who had been standing in line to buy bread from one of the few remaining bakeries in the violence-ravaged city. When Vedran looked out his window and saw the carnage, he felt shock and overwhelming grief; but he also felt he had to do something.

The next day, Vedran dressed in formal concert clothes, took his cello, and sat exactly where the shell exploded. There, he played his cello every afternoon for 22 days — one day of music for every person who was tragically killed.

Afterward, Vedran continued to use his cello as an instrument of hope. His music served as a soulful balm that brought healing and hope to so many others. He inspired others to utilize their talents and passions to make a difference and remind us that God's light can never be extinguished even in the darkest times.

Vedran Smailovic's cello is one of many symbols reminding us of our power to bring love, comfort, and hope to the world. When

confronting disillusionment and despair, we must find the strength not to become paralyzed. Even when we walk in the valley of the shadow of death, we are to remember God's gifts that we still possess and refuse to give up hope for a better future.

Within our sacred liturgy, we recite the prayer: *Shall I cry out in anger, O God, because Your gifts are mine but for a while? Shall I be ungrateful for the moments of laughter, the seasons of joy, the days of gladness and festivity? When tears cloud my eyes and darken the world, and my heart is heavy within me, shall I blot from my mind the love I have known and in which I have rejoiced? Shall I, in days of adversity, fail to recall the hours of joy and glory you once granted me? Shall the darkness put out forever the glow of light in which I once walked?*

Tragedy and grief make us feel what we have lost. But it is precisely at this time that we must summon hope for the future. Hope is the power of visualizing a positive future, believing that tomorrow can be better than today. We must reach for hope to achieve the catalyst by which we can transform our world for the better. The first step toward hope is always the most difficult, but each subsequent step becomes easier.

When I consider the path toward hope and a brighter future, I always think of my mother's Z'L favorite movie — *The Wizard of Oz* — which I watched countless times with her. I remember the "black and white" scene of Dorothy in Kansas as the tornado swept her away. Then, Dorothy wakes up in brilliant

Technicolor in the land of Oz, where all possibilities can become realities.

Dorothy learns to "follow the yellow brick road" along with the friends she meets: the scarecrow who lacks a brain, the tin man who lacks a heart, and the cowardly lion who lacks courage. Together, they have no clear idea of how they will get to the Emerald City, but each is filled with hope as they seek the wisdom of the Wizard of Oz. Hope beckons just over the horizon in almost every scene of the movie. None of them know how to get to Oz, but they keep singing and skipping along their "yellow brick road."

All of us are on a similar path. We know our destination is hope, even though we're not always sure of its location or the path from here to there. But we can recall how Vedran Smailovic used his music to create hope. Vedran was the musician of hope par excellence because he practiced his instrument of hope every day. Dorothy finally got to go home because her friends' support along the path of hope helped her reach her final destination.

We can help each other bring hope to the world; we need to take that first skipping step, and then the next, the next, and the next.

How different can the world become because of our steps to pursue God's light?

Editor's Note: The spiritual leaders of Greenwich alternate in providing messages for each issue of the Greenwich Jewish News. These comments are those of the authors alone and are not meant to reflect the opinions of UJA-JCC Greenwich

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Local Jewish High School Provides Excellent Opportunities for Greenwich Students in a Post 10/7 World

Over the past few years it has been incredible to see the amount of growth in the Greenwich Jewish community. With multiple Jewish pre-schools, active synagogues, and many Hebrew School programs, it is easy to understand why families choose to live in Greenwich. Any combination of pre-school, Hebrew School, and synagogue membership provides families with the opportunity for Jewish connection. However, in a post October 7th world, will these options continue to be enough?

If you listen to the leading voices in the Jewish world, the answer is resoundingly, “No.” In his recent State of World Jewry address at the 92nd Street Y, author and commentator Dan Senor emphasized the critical role that Jewish day schools will play in ensuring that the next generation of American Jews are “Jewish and strong.” He pointed out that the college students who have had the courage to stand up against Anti-Israel protests on campus largely shared a Jewish day school background. As a community with high expectations for our children, we have to ask ourselves what institutions will truly prepare our kids for leadership in the Jewish and secular world.

Thankfully, Jewish philanthropists are stepping up and doing their part. In fact, Bob and Trudy Elbaum Gottesman have recently pledged transformational support to the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy – a pre-K through 12th grade Jewish day school right here in Stamford. The Gottesmans learned about Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy after joining the Beit Chaverim Synagogue in Westport. Bob Gottesman commented “I met current and former High School students who were smart, *mensch*es, and deeply committed to their Judaism. They all spoke about the excellent education they were receiving or had received attending Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy and the role the school had played in preparing them for the future.”

The successes of the growing high school are impressive. The school offers 12 AP courses, and 100% of its seniors were accepted to the college of their choice, with the graduates attending schools such as Yale, Brown, Rutgers, Binghamton, and Drexel, among others. With a growing number of antisemitic incidents happening in Greenwich public schools and in our town’s leading private schools, it is time to question the combination of Jewish



experiences that will truly benefit our children. This investment in a thriving and growing local Jewish school provides our community with a much needed option and an exciting community for the next generation to be a part of. After all, if we don’t build it, who will?

For more information please contact; Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, Head of School: tbernstein@bcha-ct.org, Bonnie Marcus, Admissions Director: bmarcus@bcha-ct.org.

Temple Sholom Celebrates Israel Through Music

In celebration of Israel’s 77th Independence Day, Temple Sholom hosted a special multi-generational Yom Ha’atzmaut concert on Sunday, May 4. This inspiring afternoon of song, *ruach* (spirit) and Jewish pride featured Temple Sholom’s artist-in-residence Sheldon Low and Cantorial Soloists Mikhal Weiner and Ella Joy Meir. More than 75 people attended the performance, with many wearing blue and white, and holding Israeli flags as a display of solidarity.

“It was so meaningful to be able to gather in unity through music to honor Israel’s story of

resilience, hope and identity,” said Lori Baden, Executive Director. “Their powerful voices and energy transported us straight to the heart of Israeli culture.”

Following the concert, participants had the opportunity to experience the flavors of Israel with a falafel station, and to deepen their connection to Israel by purchasing items from Israeli artists and learning more about Israel-based organizations.

To learn more about upcoming programs this summer at Temple Sholom, visit www.templesholom.com.



Greenwich Reform Religious School Enroll Now for 2025-2026; Space Is Limited!

Under the leadership of Cantor/Education Director Michelle Rubin, the GRS Religious School has more than doubled in enrollment. School extends from pre-K through grade 7, plus a confirmation class for 8th, 9th, and 10th graders taught by Rabbi Gerson. Our post B’nei Mitzvah students also serve as *madrichim* (aides) in our Religious School.

At GRS, kids have fun while learning about and experiencing Judaism. Students particularly enjoy Shabbat Table, *Tefillah* (prayers) and *Shira* (music) as well as special holiday programming. At Friday night family Shabbat services, students rush to the bimah to lead the congregation in prayer. In short, our children love being Jewish! By the time of their B’nei Mitzvah, they

confidently lead the congregation in prayer and song.

Our primary goal is to provide our students with a nurturing and experiential school environment that fosters an enthusiasm and love for Judaism and Jewish learning, while supporting different learning styles and abilities.

The GRS curriculum is geared toward fluency in Hebrew reading, as well as comfort and familiarity with the *Siddur* (prayerbook),

synagogue rituals, and a basic understanding of our prayers. We strive to foster a positive Jewish identity in our students, as they develop an understanding and appreciation for the holidays and Shabbat, Israel, *Tefillah*, Jewish values, and lifecycle events. Students attend religious school on Sunday mornings from 9:30-11:30 am; students in grades 3-7 attend Hebrew school on Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons.

If you have questions about enrolling your children for the 2025-26 school year or would like to schedule a tour, please contact Cantor Michelle Rubin, Director of Education, at 203-629-0018 (ext. 3) or cantorrubin@grs.org.

For more information, visit www.grs.org/learning or give us a call!



An Evening with Israeli National Security Expert Col. (Res.) Kobi Marom

This April, UJA-JCC Greenwich hosted a Men's Sushi and Beer Night with Israel's National Security Expert Col. (Res.) Kobi Marom. Marom is a decorated veteran from an elite commando unit of the IDF. Closely connected to IDF top brass and members of the nation's war cabinet, Col. (Res.) Marom presented high-level insights about the conflict in the region. Many thanks to **Deborah** and **Geoffrey Erickson** for hosting and committee members **Stuart Berni**, **Joe Cohen**, **Michael Delikat**, **Geoffrey Erickson**, **Jordan Rubin**, and **Jeff Toback**.



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From Sinai to
SEINFELD:
EXPLORING JEWISH HUMOR

Join Rabbi Pam Ehrenkranz for a ten-session Melton class on Jewish humor that reveals a treasure trove of irresistible Jewish jokes, wit, and wisdom. From the ancient Israelites' relationship with God to contemporary life, there's a Jewish joke for every moment and issue.

Take a serious look at being
Jewish—and being funny!
Sign up today and join the
laughter!

TEEN CHANGEMAKERS



TEEN CHANGEMAKERS

High School Philanthropy Program FALL 2025 - APRIL 2026

CALLING STUDENTS READY TO MAKE CHANGE!

Teen Changemakers isn't just another youth program—it's your chance to direct funding to causes that matter. Join a select group of passionate high school students who:

- Evaluate nonprofit organizations
- Raise and allocate funds through a Jewish lens
- Develop leadership skills that last a lifetime

PROGRAM DETAILS:

- 13 Sunday sessions at UJA-JCC Greenwich
- Opportunity to earn 18+ community service hours
- No fee to participate

APPLICATION REQUIRED

Scan QR code to apply
Applications due first week of September



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THE CENTER FOR
JEWISH COMMUNITY,
CULTURE & CARING

\$160,000 allocated by teens
in just four years!



QUESTIONS? CONTACT CORI AT CORI@UJAJCC.ORG

IMPACT CELEBRATION 2025

With Thanks...

From Schoke JFS

"Teen Changemakers, you are truly inspiring. We are so grateful for your support of our Anachnu program. Keep up the amazing work!"

From Yad Ezra V'Shulamit

"By helping feed Israel's neediest families and especially babies who are the most vulnerable, your teens beautifully exemplified 'Kol Yisrael arevim zeh bazeh' (all Jews are guarantors for one another)."

2025 Recipient Organizations

Elayne and James Schoke Jewish Family Service
\$6,200

Emunah Afula Children's Centre
\$4,000

The Haifa Rape Crisis Center
\$5,000

Jewish Association Serving the Aging
\$5,000

Joint Distribution Committee
\$7,000

Kids In Crisis
\$2,000

Leket Israel
\$5,650

Neighbor to Neighbor
\$2,500

ReGrow Israel
\$7,000

The Rowan Center
\$5,000

Yad Eliezer
\$6,000

Yad Ezra V'Shulamit
\$5,650

From Neighbor to Neighbor

"Thank you for the generous contribution from the Teen Changemakers for the Milk Program, in support of Neighbor to Neighbor's efforts to create access to nutritious food and necessities for families and individuals in our community."

From Yad Ezra B'Ezri

"This is so beautiful! Thank you for your help and for building such a special program. You are doing something that is so powerful at such an important time."

From Kids in Crisis

"Thank you again for such a wonderful opportunity – really enjoyed being a part of the ceremony and having a teen introduce us! It was such an impressive group of nonprofits really doing essential work in the community here and abroad in Israel."

From Leket Israel

"The grant from the Teen Changemakers will enable the rescue and redistribution of 26,476 lbs. of produce, which will provide all the produce needs for 220 families of four for an entire month."

From ReGrow Israel

"Knowing that we have friends like you standing with these devastated communities brings us both strength and hope. Restoring agriculture is about so much more than the land - it's about resilience, renewal, and building a shared future."

Sold Out Crowd Captivated by Bret Stephens at the



Second Annual Black Family Community Forum



Photos by Marilyn Roos Photography

Helping Jews in a Post-October 7 World

UJA-JCC Greenwich has announced its allocations for 2025. Thank you to allocations co-chairs **Andi Fern** and **Rebecca Tipermas**. Due to the extraordinary generosity of our donors, we can continue what we’ve done for decades: care for fellow Jews locally and around the world. This year, contributions from the Greenwich community have been directed with particular attention to the far-reaching impact of October 7.

Support for **UConn Hillel** is intended to strengthen its efforts in standing strong against antisemitism on campus and helping youth feel safer, as well as serving as a haven for Jewish students. Other funding recipients include **Camp Laurelwood** and the **Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy of Connecticut**. As the state’s only overnight Jewish camp, Camp Laurelwood offers children a chance to build lifelong memories in an immersive Jewish environment. Bi-Cultural, a Stamford-based Jewish day school serving students from pre-K through 12th grade, is open to students from all Jewish backgrounds. As Bret Stephens warned us at the Black Family Community Forum last month, we must support Jewish day schools in this volatile time for Jews.

Monies for **JFS Greenwich** came from two UJA-JCC Greenwich channels: directly through the allocations pool, \$25,000 for the Jewish Health and Healing network, and indirectly through UJA-JCC’s investment in and leadership at the **Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut**. Through JFACT’s lobbying efforts, \$110,831 was

secured in calendar year 2024 to support JFS’s citizenship work. In response to the unique needs emerging from October 7, UJA-JCC Greenwich has also earmarked funds for new charitable initiatives in and for Israel. These include:

-**The Israeli Children’s Fund**, which supports children in Israel who have lost one or both parents due to the October 7th terrorist attacks, or whose parents are currently held hostage, by offering them the stability and care necessary to flourish from early schooling through college.

-**Dvora Institute**, which documents what women and children endured at the hands of the Hamas attackers, and how families were specifically targeted.

-**Zionist Rabbinic Coalition**, an interdenominational group of rabbis and rabbinical students working collaboratively to support the State of Israel, and each other, as antisemitism grows, even in rabbinical schools.

These allocations are made possible through unrestricted gifts, as well as funds raised through the Israel Emergency Campaign.

“As in years past, our current fundraising efforts have fueled remarkable acts of kindness, life-saving resources, community bonds in a time of brokenness, investments into future Jewish generations, and essential prescription for a wounded Israel,” said **Christine Toback**, UJA-JCC Greenwich Co-President.

Approved Allocation of 2023 Funds for Use in 2025:

Greenwich Community Security Program.....	\$75,000
Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy	\$50,000
Jewish Federation of North America (dues).....	\$41,073
Jewish Family Services of Greenwich.....	\$25,000*
UConn Hillel.....	\$25,000
SNEC Partnership2Gether Afula Gilboa.....	\$16,000
Stand with Us.....	\$15,000
Israel on Campus Coalition.....	\$15,000
Yad Ezra V’Shulamit	\$10,000
Mozaic Senior Life	\$10,000
JDC Ukraine Chesed Centers	\$10,000
Friendship Circle.....	\$10,000
Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut (JFACT)	\$9,000
Wheel it Forward	\$5,000
Teen Changemakers	\$5,000
Camp Laurelwood.....	\$5,000
Zionist Rabbinic Coalition.....	\$5,000
Dignity Grows.....	\$5,000

Approved 2025 Allocations from the Israel Emergency Fund:

Israeli Children’s Fund.....	\$18,000
Dvora Institute.....	\$15,000
Jaffa Institute.....	\$10,000
Shalva.....	\$10,000
Emunah Children’s Center	\$5,000

*Plus \$110,831 through JFACT



GENERATION GIVES

MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAM

Give your middle schooler the gift of purpose,
Jewish connection, and fun!

Generation Gives brings together Jewish students for meaningful community service experiences rooted in Jewish values. Meeting six Sundays in the 2025-2026 school year.

- Make a difference in our community
- Connect with Jewish peers in a relaxed, fun environment
- Learn why service is a core Jewish value
- Discover local organizations making an impact

REGISTER TODAY!

Secure your child's spot.
Space is limited and
filling up quickly!



Both new and returning participants welcome, \$500
program fee (financial assistance is available)

Questions? Contact Cori at Cori@ujajcc.org



We are pleased to announce

Forbes 2025 Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-In-State



Beth Cutler
Founder, President

2025 Forbes Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State: Awarded February 2025; Data compiled by SHOOK Research LLC based on the time period from 9/30/23 - 9/30/24 (Source: Forbes.com) The Forbes Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State rating algorithm is based on the previous year's industry experience, interviews, compliance records, assets under management, revenue and other criteria by SHOOK Research, LLC. Investment performance is not a criterion. Self-completed survey was used for rating. This rating is not related to the quality of the investment advice and based solely on the disclosed criteria. Investment products and services are offered through Wells Fargo Advisors Financial Network, LLC (WFAFN), Member SIPC. Merritt Point Wealth Advisors is a separate entity of WFAFN.



Lunch & Learn

Thursdays, 12:30–1:30 pm, in person & on Zoom. Register at ujajcc.org for Zoom access. To attend in person with lunch, register online or call 203.552.1818 no later than the day before the program.



June 26

David, King of America?

Rabbi Dr. Stuart Halpern

A look at how the Jewish monarch inspired the United States.

July 3

Off With Our Head!

Robert Lichtman

Academics, poets, historians, national leaders and even rabbis can discuss Judaism for hours without mentioning G-d. What's behind this lack of clear references to the divine?

July 10

The Duality of the Jewish Holidays and the Mysterious Workings of the Hebrew Calendar

Rabbi Michael Hattin

The Jewish calendar contains leap years, but why? Let's probe this sun- and moon-driven calendar along with the mechanics of synchronization and their spiritual implications.

July 17

Teaching “The Rabbi” Humility

Rabbi Irwin Huberman

What happens when a rabbi comes off his “high horse” as he learns a lesson in humility from an “ugly” peasant? And how does this affect the “implement” we use to write a Torah?

July 24

Making Meaning of Tisha B’Av Today

Rabba Claudia Marbach

How do we think of this day of mourning when Jerusalem is rebuilt but Israel is in crisis?

July 31

Collective Forgiveness

Yakir Englander

What does Judaism teach us about harnessing communal strength to heal trauma?

August 7

What a Shame!

Robert Lichtman

“Shame” is Hebrew for ‘name,’ and Judaism teaches that our names describe and sometimes determine who we are. How did Biblical figures get their names—and live up to them?

August 14

America’s Best Hope: Parsha Eikev

Alex Troy

In Parsha Eikev, Moses says that faith and humility keep a civilization healthy, while arrogance brings ruin. Do we believe him, or has time left those virtues behind?

August 21

The Biblical Meaning of Forty

Rabbi Menachem Leibtag

With the month of Elul approaching, let's delve into the number associated with the Days of Favor.

August 28

I’m Right. You’re Not.

Rabbi Moshe Edelman

Korach challenges Moshe. Shammai and Hillel disagree on just about everything. Why do Jews argue with each other, even with G-d? How does the Talmud guide us?

Friendship Day 2025 Shines Brightly

Sunday May 4, 2025 is now known as the most successful Friendship Day in the organization's history. The friends of Friendship Circle of Fairfield County and participants showed up over 700 strong to Westhill High School to support the organization's biggest fundraiser of the year. This year's walk raised more than \$150,000 to date!

The day's festivities bookended the traditional walk around the track, with the starting line marked by a red ribbon-cutting ceremony under the Friendship Circle arch. Both before and after the walk, families and friends enjoyed a wide variety of entertainment, as well as lunch catered by Kivi Attar from Accents Grill.

Many of the activities were run by Friendship Circle volunteers. Teen volunteers enjoyed the fun day out with their special friends,

participating in the different events together. Adult volunteers helped to run the bumper ball station, as well as face painting, carnival games and sports. Community Families and supporters also enjoyed the fun family day.

Crowd favorite Inventor Mentor returned once again with his variety of live science experiments. Critter Caravan, beloved at both Children and Adult Circles during the year, brought their animals. Super hero laser tag was open to all. In addition, a sports item auction run by volunteer Jared Casden helped to raise additional funds for Friendship Circle and add even more excitement to the day. News 12 covered the event and ran the segment on the 6 o'clock news to help further spread the word about the mission of Friendship Circle.



Friendship Circle Director Malya Shmotkin said: "What a special day! Each year I am inspired and uplifted by all of our friends and supporters who come out to show their belief in our shared mission. It is wonderful to see the mix of old and new friends coming together and celebrating the beauty of friendship. I am so grateful for all of our teen volunteers and the amazing parents who support them. To me, there is nothing more beautiful than the friendship shining so brightly today and all year around."

To learn more about the Friendship Circle and how you can become involved, please contact Director Malya Shmotkin at malya@friendshipct.com.

Shabbat Beachside Service

Congregation Shir Ami will be holding its annual beachside Shabbat Service at Tod's Point on June 27. Please join us for our group picnic at 6pm, followed by a musical Shabbat service.

The summer beach service is a longstanding tradition at Shir Ami. There's something magical about praying and singing amid the sights and sounds of nature and watching the sun set at the culmination of the service. If you'd like to participate, please call 203-900-7976 to learn more about the logistics of the evening and to enable us to welcome you when you arrive.

Please visit congregationshirami.org to learn more about our community and programs.



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JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES OF GREENWICH

Saying YES: JFS Greenwich Leads with Compassion and Action

by Rachel Kornfeld, CEO, Jewish Family Services of Greenwich

The sun is shining, and summer is upon us, bringing both reflection and renewed energy at JFS Greenwich. The first half of the year brought challenges we could scarcely have imagined—but also moments of immense gratitude. In the face of adversity, one thing has remained constant: our community's unwavering support for compassion, justice, and humanity.

Rooted in the Jewish value of *Tikkun Olam*—the obligation to repair the world—JFS Greenwich has continued to meet the moment with resilience and resolve. In 2024 alone, we delivered more than 49,000 intentional, compassionate, expert acts of care. This year, we are on pace to do even more—minimizing suffering, uplifting lives, and building bridges of hope.

At JFS Greenwich, every service we offer is a moment of hope, dignity, and healing. Because at our core, we are the “YES” agency:

- We say **YES** when the Public Schools call about a homeless family that no one else can help—we find them safe housing within weeks.
- We say **YES** when the Connecticut Department of Social Services needs help in underserved regions—we open satellite offices reaching hundreds of new clients.
- We say **YES** to isolated older adults—delivering groceries, providing rides to medical appointments, and offering companionship.
- We say **YES** thousands of times through our Bennett Center for Behavioral Health—bringing clinicians into public schools, religious institutions, and community centers across Greenwich, Stamford, and Norwalk.
- We say **YES** through our immigration legal services—providing more than 1,000 vital services in just six months to help keep families safely together.
- We say **YES** with every *Bikur Cholim* visit and phone call to those hospitalized or in nursing homes.
- We say **YES** with every flash-frozen meal delivered in partnership with Meals on Main Street and the Friendly Fridge Network—feeding hundreds of children and families in Greenwich and Stamford.



Clients access fresh groceries through the JFS Mobile Pantry, in partnership with Meals on Main Street, hosted by UJA-JCC Greenwich.

Amid financial constraints and increasing demands, our team remains undaunted. Because the work we do is not just a job—it's a test of our ethics, empathy, and collective resolve to stand for what's right, even when it's hard.

Looking ahead, the second half of 2025 promises bold innovation. With strong partnerships at the national, state, and local levels, we are expanding workforce development initiatives, increasing behavioral health services, and maximizing every dollar, every ounce of expertise, and every act of care.

Our services reach people of all backgrounds, at all ages, and through every stage of life—because that's what true community looks like. And wow did our community show up for our largest annual Spring Celebration last month! With more than two hundred attendees on a perfect spring day at the Stamford Museum and Nature Center, we celebrated the work of JFS Greenwich and all those who contribute to improving the lives of others.

As the Torah commands 36 separate times: **“You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”**

This is more than ancient wisdom—it is our moral imperative. Our roadmap. Our mission. So we invite everyone to continue walking this path with us:

- Say **YES** to compassion.
- Say **YES** to justice.
- Say **YES** to standing shoulder to shoulder with those in need.
- Say **YES** to repairing the world—one act of altruism at a time.

Thank you for believing in JFS Greenwich. Thank you for believing in the power of YES.



Rachel Kornfeld with Spring Celebration Gen Z Honorees Will Chasin, Jessie Colin, and Katie Rube



Spring Celebration Honorees Lynn and Vernon Schwartz with Rachel Kornfeld

Tribute Contributions to Jewish Family Services of Greenwich

Tracy and Keith Grossman in honor of Lynn and Vernon Schwartz

Karen Richard in honor of Lynn and Vernon Schwartz

Lisa Sorensen in memory of Dee Sorensen

Ashley Crohn in honor of Greenwich Reform Synagogue

Jill Weiner in honor of Jessie Colin

Stacey Clarfield Newman in honor of Lynn and Vernon Schwartz

Cheryl Dunson in honor of JoAnn Messina

Leslie Brandeis in honor of Lynn and Vernon Schwartz

Lenora Felderman in honor of Morgan Caspi

Alicia Gould in honor of Morgan Caspi

Beth Cutler in honor of Rabbi Mitchell Hurvitz

Marla and Gregg Felton in honor of Will Chasin

Irving Goldstein and Ellen Keats in honor of Barbara Epstein

Gloria Fields in honor of Joshua Fields

Kyle Silver in honor of Jessie Colin

Rachel Doneger in honor of Morgan Caspi

Bradley Hamburger in honor of Peter Furth

Matthew Skaarup in honor of Rachel Kornfeld

Felice Robinov in honor of Rachel Kornfeld

Stacey Delikat in memory of Adam Marmor

If you would like to honor or memorialize someone special in your life or community, please do so by donating to Jewish Family Services, and we will send a note of acknowledgment to the person or family involved, informing them of your generosity.

Camp Gan Israel of Greenwich Helps Jewish Identity Take Root — and Thrive

There are many ways a Jewish community grows and thrives — but few have proven as powerful or enduring as Jewish summer camp. More than just a place to spend the summer, Camp Gan Israel of Greenwich has become a community hub — where children are challenged, supported, and inspired to take pride in who they are.

What began with a small group of local parents looking for a meaningful camp experience for their children has grown into one of the region's most trusted and joyful premier day camps.

From competitive sports and hands-on science to *mitzvah* missions and improv games, campers spend their days active, engaged, and surrounded by joy. This summer also introduces a new Theatre Arts program led by Lori O'Driscoll, a seasoned educator whose background includes work with Blue Man Group and the Arthur Miller Foundation. The camp-wide theme, "Jewish Pride & Israel Pride," feels especially resonant this year — and runs through everything the campers do. According to Maryashie Deren, Camp Director, "We bring in top instructors, the best sports and programs, but at the end of the day it's the counselors — their love,



their attention — that's what makes our campers come running in every morning with bright smiles."

Andrew, a Greenwich native who spent 18 summers at Camp Gan — ending as a staff member — now leads Israel programming on his college campus. He put it simply:

"Camp Gan gave me my best friends, my confidence, and my Jewish pride. I still wear my camp hoodie on campus. It never really leaves you."

Camp Gan is located at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy in Stamford. Mini Gan, for children under 3, runs at 75 Mason Street in central Greenwich. For more information, visit CampGan.com or email maryashie@chabadgreenwich.org

Be Part of Shaping Our Future

The Jewish community is at a crossroads. We face unprecedented challenges that demand decisive action and a unified response. Your presence at the 2025 General Assembly is crucial. Join the most influential voices from the Jewish world in Washington, D.C. this November 16-18, 2025 as we work together to mobilize continued support for Israel's recovery, secure our communities against the rise in antisemitism, and inspire deeper engagement in Jewish life across North America. Join us to be part of shaping our collective future. *Register now: generalassembly.org.*



Behavioral Health Services

JFS of Greenwich Bennett Center for Behavioral Health provides quality, accessible therapy and medication management for all ages and stages.



Offerings:

- Individual & Group Therapy
- Psychiatric Assessment & Medication Management
- In-Person & Telehealth Appointments
- Locations in Greenwich & Stamford
- All Major Insurance Accepted

For more information :

Call: 203-622-1881

Visit: www.jfsgreenwich.org

Scan: QR code >





TEMPLE SHOLOM LEARNING CENTER'S LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

A Taste of Israeli Culture

Students at the Temple Shalom Learning Center (300 East Putnam Avenue) were given the opportunity during the last day of religious school on May 18 to immerse themselves in Israeli culture in recognition of Israel's 77th Independence Day.

Wearing blue and white beaded necklaces, the Pre-K through 7th graders participated in several interactive experiences highlighting the "sights" and "sounds" of Israel. At one station, students sampled Israeli cuisine including falafel, pita, and hummus while listening to Israeli music. Another activity included decorating sun visors to wear as a display of Jewish pride.

Throughout the day, groups were encouraged to snap pictures in front of iconic Israel locations, featured on photo backdrops around the building. The unique learning experience concluded with the students taking home a treat bag with 18 blue and white Hershey's kisses (to represent Chai), in addition to beach balls and sunglasses to enjoy during the summer break.



Religious school enrollment for the 2025-2026 School Year is now underway!
 Contact David Cohen, Director of Schools, at 203-869-7191 or david.cohen@templesholom.com for details.

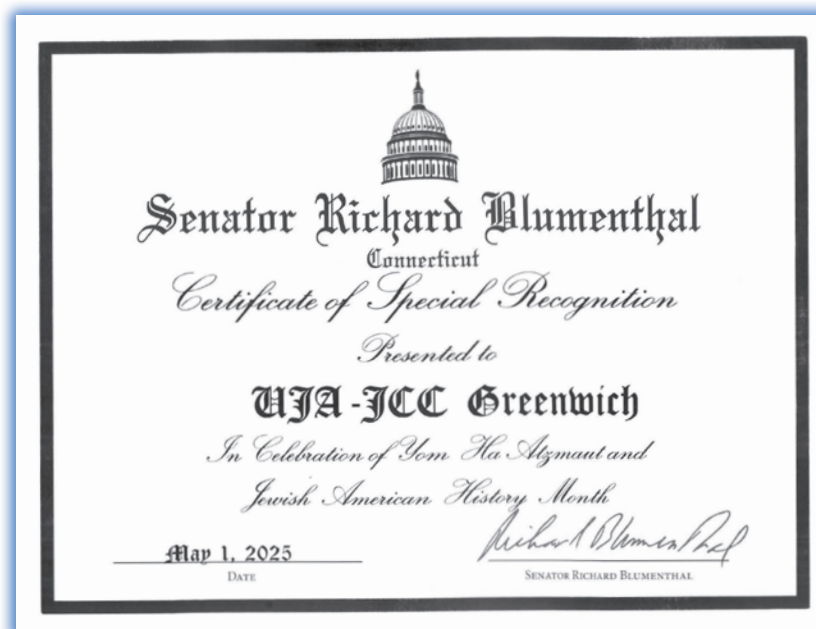
Remembering the Six Million

On April 23, the Jewish community came together at Greenwich Reform to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust with a Survivor testimonial from Ernest Brod, and memorial candle lighting and prayers.



Celebrating Israel's Independence & Jewish American Heritage Month

We celebrated our Jewish pride and raised the Israeli flag on May 1, in honor of Yom Ha'atzmaut! Co-sponsored by American Jewish Committee, our community enjoyed gathering at Greenwich Town Hall on a beautiful spring day to listen to statements of encouragement and support for Israel and the Jewish people, and to converse with one another, all capped off by flying saucers and popsicles. The most touching part of the celebration was watching the blue and white flag fly high over downtown Greenwich for all to see.





This is a defining moment for the Jewish people.

We face complex challenges demanding decisive action and a unified response. UJA-JCC Greenwich is uniquely positioned to meet this pivotal moment. But, we cannot do this without you. Your support doesn't just meet the needs of today; it shapes a vibrant Jewish future for tomorrow.

Donate now

ujajcc.org

