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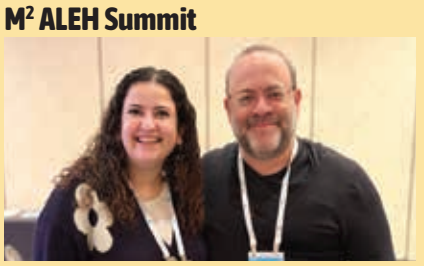
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Volume XXXV, Number 6 | November 2026 | Kislev 5787

## Newsworthy

### M² ALEH Summit



Cara Levine attended the M² ALEH Summit where she met with Lunch & Learn teacher Yakir Englander.

### Mah Jongg is Goingg Strongg!



Come hear what all of the clattering, tapping and clicking is about!

### General Assembly 2026




Frontline, the program for Jewish community relations professionals, had its own track at the General Assembly, where Gary Jones and Katie Aryeh were welcomed.

### Where Your Money Goes

NATAL
Israel Trauma & Resiliency Center

The UJA-JCC Board approved a $10,000 allocation for NATAL, an Israeli organization that offers psychological and emotional treatment and support to victims of trauma due to war and terror. It provides 2,800 people with clinical treatment each week in the aftermath of October 7.

# UJA-JCC Greenwich Creates New Jewish Community Relations Council and Hires Director Gary Jones and Associate Director Katie Aryeh

This fall, UJA-JCC Greenwich created a new Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), and tapped Gary Jones to direct it and Katiana "Katie" Aryeh to join him as associate director.

As the organization's community relations and public affairs arm, the Council will represent Jewish interests, strengthen relationships with civic and interfaith leaders, and serve as a resource for public officials, schools, the media and the broader community. The United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien, whose in-house JCRC Jones has helmed since 2024, is a partner in the Greenwich initiative.

By building trusted relationships before concerns arise, a JCRC fosters opportunities for collaboration and lays the groundwork for dealing with antisemitism and other problems productively. It bridges local Jewish residents with the wider civic community through engaging elected officials on issues of Jewish concern, conducting interfaith and intergroup dialogue, helping schools better understand Jewish identity and experiences, and promoting understanding of Israel and its significance to the Jewish people.

At UJA-JCC Greenwich, their mandate includes fighting antisemitism, supporting the safety and security of the Jewish community, acting as a resource to K-12 schools and forging partnerships around common values.

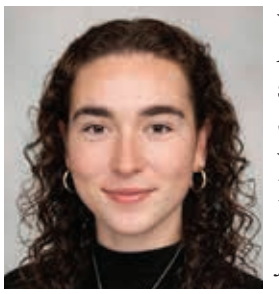
"Building interfaith relationships, serving as a resource to schools and responding to antisemitism are essential to fostering a community where Jewish life can thrive," said **Lindsey Kupferman**, co-president of UJA-JCC Greenwich.

CEO Pam Ehrenkranz added that both new hires "bring the experience, judgment and relationships to help us move this work forward."

Jones was previously CEO of the Jewish Federation of Western Connecticut and regional director of the ADL in Connecticut. For nearly 25 years, he has written and spoken on antisemitism, Israel's challenges and campus concerns. Before entering Jewish communal leadership, he practiced business and finance law.



*Gary Jones*



*Katie Aryeh*

Aryeh, a Greenwich native with a decade of congressional advocacy experience, has a background in public speaking and strategic communications. After October 7, she protested antisemitism at Columbia University and became a national spokesperson for Jewish students. She graduated and was a lead plaintiff in a federal lawsuit against Barnard College and Columbia. During the war, that followed the October 7 attacks, Aryeh worked with former Israel spokesperson Eylon Levy on international diplomacy. She has also built interfaith partnerships with groups such as Christians United for Israel.

*To get involved please contact Gary Jones at gary@ujajcc.org or Katie Aryeh at katie@ujajcc.org.*



*The Black Family Community Forum: An Evening with Ayaan Hirsi Ali. See more photos on pages 12 & 13.*

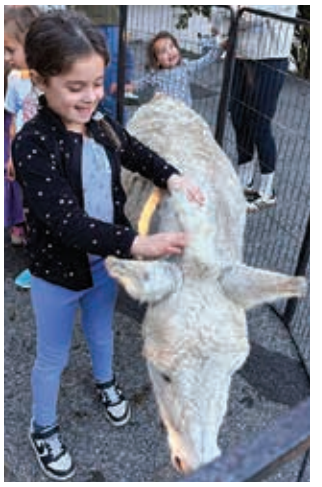
*Photos by Marilyn Roos Photography*



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# UJA-JCC Greenwich's Great Family Kickoff!

From singing and dancing with Tkiya to meeting adorable animals from Critter Caravan and Farm on Wheels, there was something for everyone at UJA-JCC Greenwich's Great Family Kickoff. As we read the story of Noah's ark, our 'Two by Two Zoo' brought the story to life, while children met various adorable animal friends. Families came together for an afternoon of hands-on activities, crafts, and plenty of opportunities to make new friends sponsored by the **Donna and Fred Nives Foundation**. It was a wonderful way to kick off a new year of Youth and Family Programs while bringing our Jewish community together. Thank you to our amazing event chairs **Julia Lifton, Elyssa Scharaga,** and **Becca Walters**, for helping make the day so special!
















# UJA-JCC Greenwich Strengthens Community Security

As part of UJA-JCC Greenwich's ongoing commitment to protecting and securing the local Jewish community, the Security Task Force convened a briefing at Greenwich Police Headquarters in advance of the High Holy Days. The meeting brought together representatives of the Greenwich Police Department, including Chief Heavey, who shared important department updates, including information about new police dogs currently in training. Security professionals also reviewed best practices, while local clergy and synagogue staff had the opportunity to discuss specific scenarios and address practical security considerations unique to High Holy Day services.

Through its Community Security Initiative, UJA-JCC Greenwich remains steadfast in its commitment to working collaboratively with law enforcement, security professionals, local congregations and other houses of worship to strengthen preparedness and enhance the safety and security of the entire community.



*Security Task Force Meeting at the Greenwich Police Department*



*Active Threat Training at First Congregational Church in Old Greenwich*

# Out and About in the Community

Cara Levine, UJA-JCC Program Associate, has been out and about, bringing Jewish joy and connecting families with UJA-JCC Greenwich and PJ Library! She visited the JCC preschool at GRS to read PJ Library books to the children celebrating Rosh Hashanah and Sukkot, and she joined families at Birch Bakehouse for a Rosh Hashanah challah braiding workshop. Through these visits, Cara is celebrating Jewish traditions and helping families discover new ways to engage with the broader Jewish community.

From sharing holiday stories with preschoolers to baking challah, Cara Out and About is all about building relationships, making connections, and strengthening Jewish community!







# Women's Philanthropy Meeting

The Women's Philanthropy Board September meeting was held in the sukkah of new board member, **Tammy Tavdy**. During the meeting the slate for the newly formed Executive Committee was announced and the new class of board members welcomed. The guest speaker at the meeting was Tara Cook-Littman, Executive Director of Jewish Federation Association of CT (JFACT) who spoke about the education omnibus package passed by the CT State legislature, which included a provision mandating the creation of an 11-member working group tasked with addressing antisemitism in K-12 public schools. She encouraged the women in attendance to build relationships with their state legislators and offered JFACT's help in facilitating constituent meetings.

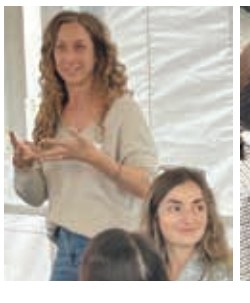














## COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

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(203) 552-1818

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy
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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

Mozaic Senior Services
(203) 365-6400

Temple Sholom
(203) 869-7191

Temple Sholom
Selma Maisel Nursery School
(203) 622-8121

## SHABBAT & HOLIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

*Fri., Nov. 27..... 4:12 pm*
*First Night Chanukah*
*Fri., Dec. 4..... 4:10 pm*
*Fri., Dec. 11..... 4:10 pm*
*Fri., Dec. 18..... 4:12 pm*
*Fri., Dec. 25..... 4:16 pm*
*Fri., Jan. 1..... 4:21 pm*
*Fri., Jan. 8..... 4:27 pm*
*Fri., Jan. 15..... 4:35 pm*
*Fri., Jan. 22..... 4:43 pm*
*Fri., Jan. 29..... 4:52 pm*
*Fri., Feb. 5..... 5:00 pm*
*Fri., Feb. 12..... 5:09 pm*

Greenwich Jewish News
Published by
**UJA-JCC Greenwich**
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# Timeless Wisdom

Our Melton class is relevant and enriching for any curious Jew. We explore life's most powerful and daunting questions. Our upcoming six session class, beginning in February, will focus on "Hineni: Responding to the Call of Leadership," within the context of Jewish texts and values.

***Interested in Jewish text learning? Reach out to pam@ujajcc.org***






# An Evening of Remembrance and Resilience




On October 6, UJA-JCC Greenwich gathered as a community to remember and honor the lives lost on October 7. The evening included a screening of *The Road Between Us: The Ultimate Rescue*, a moving documentary highlighting courage, determination, the strength of family, and the commitment to never leave anyone behind. Together, we took time to reflect, remember, and honor the strength and resilience of the people of Israel.









## Clergy's Corner

# ✡ What a Little Light Can Do ✡

*by Rabbi Yossi Deren, Chabad of Greenwich*

I hear the anger and worry in conversations throughout our community, and I recognize those feelings because I share them. When a headline has me arguing in my head with someone I have never met, I need to stop and think about what I can do or say that would actually help.

***"A little light dispels much darkness" – Tanya, chapters 12 and 28***

In Tanya, Rabbi Schneur Zalman (the founder of Chabad) explains that the wisdom and goodness of the soul can guide our choices even when our emotions are pulling us elsewhere. Just as a small flame lights a dark room, a little of that goodness can change how we respond.

Our people have faced terrible threats before, and that we are still here is a miracle of G-d's care. The Torah that helped our ancestors find their way can help us find ours, including – and especially – when fear and anger make it difficult to think clearly.

Later in the Tanya, the Alter Rebbe makes the same lesson very practical. When unwanted thoughts interrupt our prayers, arguing with them only draws us further into a futile and negative engagement, like "someone who wrestles with a muddy person and gets muddy too" (chapter 28). His advice is to put our attention back where we wanted it in the first place.

We should make that same choice in a difficult conversation. The challenge of this moment in our history is to keep the following question at the forefront of our mind in any difficult confrontation:

***What do we want people – the world – to hear from us?***

When someone accuses Israel of genocide in Gaza, we can easily spend the whole conversation answering the charge. We may get all the facts right, but the people listening may come away remembering only the accusation.

It hurts even more when leaders in either political party give people who traffic in antisemitism a respectable platform. I understand the urge to answer every word, but I also know how easily that anger can take over the time and energy I could have used to reach someone else.

Before we answer, we should pause long enough to ask ourselves who we hope to reach and what we want that person to learn.

***"Be a blessing" – Genesis 12:2–3***

G-d promises Abraham that He will bless those who bless him and deal with those who curse him. He asks Abraham to "be a blessing," telling him that "all the families of the earth shall be blessed through you."

That is our task, too, and the Torah gives us ways to do it through the commandments of Jewish life and the seven laws for all humanity. I believe most people are decent, and we can invite them to learn what Judaism has to say and to join us in doing good.

That opportunity might be an invitation to speak to our children's friends, a talk with a neighbor, a letter to the editor, or a social media short "interview" clip.

***Whenever we have the microphone, let's tell people what Judaism has given the world.***

We can say, "Let me share a Jewish teaching that guides the way I look at this." Then give the source and a simple example of how we try to live by it. Let's tell the Jewish story in words people can remember and share.

**Every human life is sacred!** The Torah teaches that every human being is made in G-d's image (Genesis 1:27), and therefore forbids the murder of a fellow human, who bears G-d's image. (Exodus 20:13). The human rights that are at the core of every decent society have deep roots in this teaching about the worth of every person.

**Justice applies equally to everyone!** The Torah tells judges to treat the poor and the powerful fairly (Leviticus 19:15) and to hear "the small just as the great" (Deuteronomy 1:17). Today we call this equality before the law, and we can show what it means by speaking up for a neighbor's fair treatment as readily as our own.

**Helping those in need is a moral obligation, not just a "nice" thing.** "You shall surely open your hand" (Deuteronomy 15:8) makes charity a duty, asking us to provide what a person actually needs. The idea that a whole community should care for its poor has a clear foundation in Torah, and it lives on whenever we feed a family or help someone get back to work.

**World peace is at the heart of Jewish destiny.** Isaiah foresaw nations beating their swords into plowshares and learning war no more (Isaiah 2:4). That Jewish dream has become a hope shared around the world, even pictured in a sculpture at the United Nations. We can work toward it here in Greenwich by bringing people together to help those who need us.

The next time we feel that rush of anger, let's pause long enough to remember how much we have to share. Those who are listening can carry that experience into conversations we will never hear. That is how a little light reaches further than we can see, and how, with G-d's help, we continue Abraham's work of bringing blessing to the world.

*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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# The Friendship Circle Getting Ready for Sukkot at the Nature Center



On Sunday September 10, Friendship Circle families and volunteers gathered for a Pre-Yom Kippur and Sukkot Holiday program at the Nature Center in Stamford. Everyone learned about the custom of *Betten Lekach*, where it is the tradition to ask friends for a taste of honey in the hopes that this will be the only thing one has to ask for in the upcoming year. Participants all decorated honey cookies to use for their own *Betten Lekachs*.

In honor of the holiday of Sukkot, friends created their own edible sukkah. All kinds of fun foods were used, including graham crackers, marshmallow fluff and more. While everyone was creating their sukkot, the holiday was explained, including the significance of the *lulav* and *etrog*. Friends also had the opportunity to visit with the animals and play on the playground.

*Friendship Circle is a recipient agency of UJA-JCC Greenwich. For more information about the Friendship Circle please contact Malya Shmotkin at malya@friendshipct.com.*

# The Greenwich Reform Synagogue Choir Adds Exquisite Harmony to Choral Shabbat Services!

Led by Cantor Michelle Rubin, the Greenwich Reform Synagogue choir echoes the Cantor's incredible voice, energy and love for Jewish music.

Join us for a tuneful Shabbat made even more delightful with dinner, wine, refreshments, and enjoyable conversation.

Select Fridays from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Upcoming Dinner and Choral Shabbat evenings:

December 11th, January 22nd

*Please RSVP for dinner to Admin@GRS.org, 203-629-0018 or scan QR Code.*



*Scan QR for GRS calendar and RSVP*







**At Hebrew Wizards, we believe that giving back to our community is an important part of living our Jewish values.**

**This fall, our Wizards had a wonderful time visiting the seniors at The Mews, where we decorated pumpkins, shared stories, and sang songs together.**

**It was a beautiful afternoon filled with light, laughter, love, and meaningful connections between generations.**

**Through experiences like these, our students learn that even the simplest acts of kindness can make a difference in someone's life.**

# Temple Sholom: A Community in Song

Have you heard the buzz around Greenwich? Temple Sholom's brand-new Musical Shabbat Series is here!

"Everywhere we looked, people were smiling," said Cantor Sheldon Low. "Cantor Hadar and I, the musicians, the congregation – we were all in perfect sync, singing, clapping, moving as one (even some dancing!). And then, just a few moments later, you could hear a pin drop as Rabbi Mitch shared a beautiful lesson from one of his great teachers. It was just one of those powerful evenings when music, prayer, and community all come together."

Led by husband and wife Cantors, Sheldon Low and Hadar Orshalimy – alongside an exceptional ensemble of acclaimed musicians – this monthly Friday night Shabbat service blends familiar Shabbat traditions with extraordinary live music.

Added Cantor Hadar: "Thanks to the vision of our Sacred Music Leadership Council and the generous support of the Temple Sholom Music Fund, we've been able to assemble an incredible group of musicians, and the congregation has really responded. One of the things I love most is seeing how many different people and families were present – different generations, backgrounds, ways of connecting to Jewish life. And when we're all singing and celebrating Shabbat in the Sanctuary, it's just beautiful."

Temple Sholom President Meryl Sole echoed that enthusiasm.

"Our Friday Night Musical Service has quickly become a monthly highlight at Temple Sholom, full of joy, energy, and beautiful music," she said. "The sanctuary is full, the spirit is high, and it is wonderful to see so many congregants across all demographics gathering to pray and welcome Shabbat with our clergy."

Musical Shabbat is just one part of a growing emphasis on music at Temple Sholom. The synagogue's new Youth Choir, with more than 30 participants, began rehearsals this month, and adults will also have opportunities to make music together through programs such as "Jam and Sing" sessions with Cantor Sheldon.




"We're building something really special here in Greenwich," said Senior Rabbi Mitchell Hurvitz. "Musical Shabbat combines the beauty of our traditions, extraordinary music, and the joy of being part of a community. Our hope is that it becomes a destination for people near and far – a place where families and friends of every generation can come together to celebrate Shabbat."

*To see a list of upcoming Musical Shabbat dates, visit www.templesholom.com/musical-shabbat-series. To receive Temple Sholom's weekly newsletter, contact Gina Cristino at gina.cristino@templesholom.com.*

# About JCC Preschool at GRS

Guided by experienced and dedicated educators, JCC Preschool at GRS offers exceptional early education, sparks children's curiosity, and creates joy in learning.

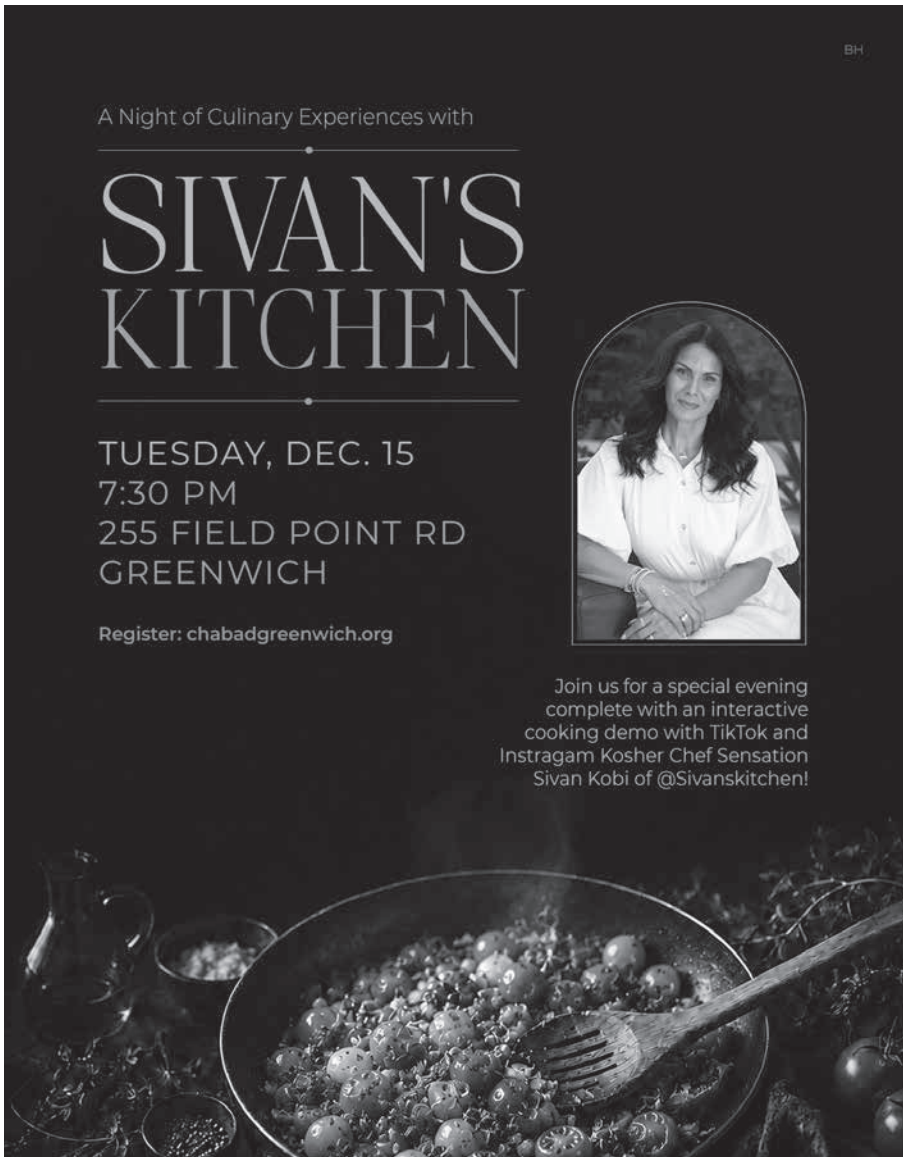
Programming for children aged 15 months to 5 years emphasizes play, exploration, and holistic development, within a licensed Pre-K environment.

Our curriculum, designed to nurture autonomy, self-confidence, and critical thinking, integrates STEM and nature-based learning with purposeful play.

To accommodate family schedules, we offer two to five days a week with flexible drop-off options along with enriching extension opportunities.

*For more information on the JCC Preschool at GRS, contact Sarah Collins (Director, The JCC Preschool) atscollins@stamfordjcc.org or 203-489-3084.*



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# Celebrating Torah With Our Wizards




**Our Hebrew Wizards Torah is 21 years old.** Our goal is to have our students understand that the Torah is much more than a sacred scroll. Its 5 Books with 54 Torah portions, and 613 commandments offering us invaluable lessons about kindness, compassion, love & responsibility. Each of the 5 Books tells an important part of our Jewish story. Most importantly, we want our Wizards to discover that the Torah is our blueprint for life – guiding us not only in what we believe, but in how we live, how we treat others, and how we make the world a better place.

# Greenwich Reform Synagogue Celebrates Chanukah

GRS is preparing for Chanukah's eight nights,
To celebrate the miracles, the Maccabees, and the Festival of Lights.
We invite you to join any or all celebrations,
But please note there are no expectations.
Your presence would greatly enhance any event,
And you'll be happy you came, 100 percent.
Please find our lineup of happenings below,
Excited to celebrate with our community we love so!

Chanukah begins sundown on Friday night, December 4th and runs through Sunday, December 13th. Celebrate with Greenwich Reform Synagogue:



• Our prodigious hand-crafted Menorah will shine bright, as we light a candle for each night. Chanukah lightings will take place:

• Friday, December 4th: Family Service 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

• Sunday, December 6th: During religious school beginning at 10:30 a.m.

• Tuesday, December 8th and Wednesday, December 9th: 5 p.m.

• Chanukah Shabbat:

• Friday, December 4th: Tot Service, 5:15 p.m., Dinner, 5:45 p.m., Family Service, 6:30 p.m.

• Friday, December 11th: Special Choral Shabbat, 6:30 p.m., followed by Chanukah celebration, 7:30 p.m.

*For more info, or to RSVP for dinners, please contact Admin@GRS.org, 203-629-0018 or scan QR Code*

*Scan QR for GRS calendar and RSVP*












# Ladies' Night Out Gets Creative

What a great Ladies' Night Out! UJA-JCC Greenwich brought women together at *Make-Modern* studio for an evening filled with creativity, laughter, and connection. Our ladies got creative designing their own custom needle-felted tote bags, all the while catching up with friends and making new ones. It was a wonderful chance to try something different, share a few laughs, and connect with other women in our community. A special thank you to event chairs **Rachel Fryd** and **Marcel Schwarzberg**, for helping make the evening such a success!













# Golden Ticket Series Returns to Greenwich

Broadway rides to Greenwich this winter. On January 10 at 3 p.m. at the Milbrook Club (61 Woodside Drive), a musical theater celebration billed as *The Roller Coaster Era of Broadway: The Musicals of the 1950s* will offer performances of signature songs from *Guys and Dolls, West Side Story, The Music Man, My Fair Lady, Gypsy* and *The Sound of Music.*

The event, presented by UJA-JCC Greenwich and curated by Artistic Director **Rebecca Cooper**, is music-directed by Zachary Kampler. Broadway producer Jack Viertel will provide narration connecting the musical numbers to be sung by Cooper, Marissa Cortese, Daniel Frankel and Tyler Panek, accompanied by a live quartet.

"The 1950s were the most freewheeling era, when many of the Rodgers and Hammerstein-style musical plays shared the street with freewheeling musical comedies like *Guys and Dolls,* and even more serious shows like *West Side Story* were being born," said Cooper.

*The Roller Coaster Era of Broadway* steps back to a golden age when Jewish creatives whose kin had been pushed into the wings in Europe cast themselves as the starry composers of the national songbook, scoring its myths of patriotism, social justice and otherness for the American theater. *Tickets are available at ujajcc.org or by calling 203-552-1818.*

# General Assembly 2026 in Washington, DC

UJA-JCC Greenwich had a strong contingent at this year's JFNA's General Assembly in DC, which had potent messaging, ranging from combating and responding to antisemitism to investing in Jewish life and learning.



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**BETH CUTLER**
*Founder, President*

Beth F. Cutler is the Founder and President of Merritt Point Wealth Advisors and has over forty years of experience working with executives and affluent families. Beth's practice has over $3.479 billion under management as of March 31, 2026. Beth was recognized by Forbes for the "2026 Forbes Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State" award. Merritt Point Wealth Advisors was also named for the "2026 Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Management Teams" award. Beth helps clients and their families plan their financial goals while taking into consideration their income needs, tax-efficient investing strategies, and generational wealth transfer objectives. Beth specializes in multigenerational wealth planning and often advises multiple generations within the same family. Beth strives to maintain her reputation for helping clients achieve their long-term financial goals while building meaningful, lifelong relationships.

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*Investment products and services are offered through Wells Fargo Advisors Financial Network, LLC (WFAFN), Member SIPC. Merritt Point Wealth Advisors is a separate entity from WFAFN.*

*2026 Forbes Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State: Awarded February 2026; Data compiled by SHOOK Research LLC based on the time period from 6/30/24-6/30/25 (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.*

*2026 Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Management Teams: Awarded January 2026; Data compiled by SHOOK Research LLC based on the time period from 3/31/24 - 3/31/25 (Source: Forbes.com). The Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Management Teams rating algorithm is based on the previous year's industry experience, interviews, compliance records, assets under management (minimum variable by state), 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. 12,787 wealth management teams were considered for the rating; 6,149 (48% of candidates) were named 2026 Forbes Best-in-State Wealth Management Teams.*

# Lunch & Learn

WINTER SERIES 2026 / 2027

**Thursdays, 12:30–1:30 pm**
In person & on Zoom

THE LUNCH AND LEARN PROGRAM IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY RITA EDELSTON

UJA·JCC greenwich

NOVEMBER 26
## No Class - Thanksgiving

DECEMBER 3
## From Ayeka to Hineni
**Michael Feldstein**
Adam blamed things on Eve…Eve blamed things on the snake. Initially, it was not a good look for mankind in terms of taking responsibility. But some later Biblical characters said, *Here I am, ready to assume the task at hand.*

DECEMBER 10
## In a Time of Darkness, Spreading Light
**Rabbi Yonah Berman**
Chanukah represents a turning point in the Jewish calendar. We'll explore this pivot and how the holiday reflects on larger themes in Jewish life.

DECEMBR 17
## From the Depths: Suffering as a Catalyst for Spiritual Creativity
**Rabbi Joshua Rosenfeld**
What happens to a life of Torah when its foundations are shaken by poverty, grief or loss? Through the struggles of great Jewish leaders, we'll explore how adversity can transform faith, and what that teaches us about resilience, meaning and spiritual growth in our own lives.

DECEMBER 24
## When Does the Jewish Year Begin?
**Rabbi Francis Nataf**
Why the Jewish calendar doesn't start in January, and why Jewish tradition is torn between the spring and the fall. Hint: We're not sure when the world was created.

JANUARY 7
## The Second Generation: Next Steps for Humankind
**Daniel Mond, PhD**
After the first humans are chastised and expelled from the Garden, they begin their new lives together. Adam and Eve have two kids. Surely everything will now run smoothly.

JANUARY 14
## Jewish Storytelling and the American Jewish Novel
**Rabbi Benjamin Resnick**
Rabbi Resnick's debut novel, *Next Stop*, follows a Jewish family caught in the grip of antisemitic hysteria in an unnamed American city. Join him as we chart the trajectory of American Jewish fiction.

JANUARY 21
## Celebrating the New Year for the Trees
**Rabbi David Seidenberg**
Explore the meanings of Tu BiShvat, past and future, as we sample fruits in the order of the traditional seder. From the Torah to Kabbalah to modern ecology, we'll trace the cycle of blessings that we receive from and give to the world and the trees.

JANUARY 28
## The Ten Commandments: Ancient Words, Enduring Questions
**Rabbi Annie Tucker**
What can the Ten Commandments teach us about living a meaningful and ethical life today? From our relationship with God to our responsibilities toward one another, we'll discover how these ancient words continue to challenge, inspire and guide us.

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.

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# The Black Family Community Forum

Ayaan Hirsi Ali was the most recent speaker in the Black Family Community Forum series. Hirsi Ali spoke to a packed room followed by a lively Question and Answer session. Ali addressed our riveted audience about gender, freedom, religious identity and the ongoing struggle for human dignity. It was a memorable event.

The Black Family Community Forum was established by **Margie and Steven Black**, in memory of Susan and Eliot Black, z"l. Thank you to the Black Family for their sponsorship and to Temple Sholom for hosting.















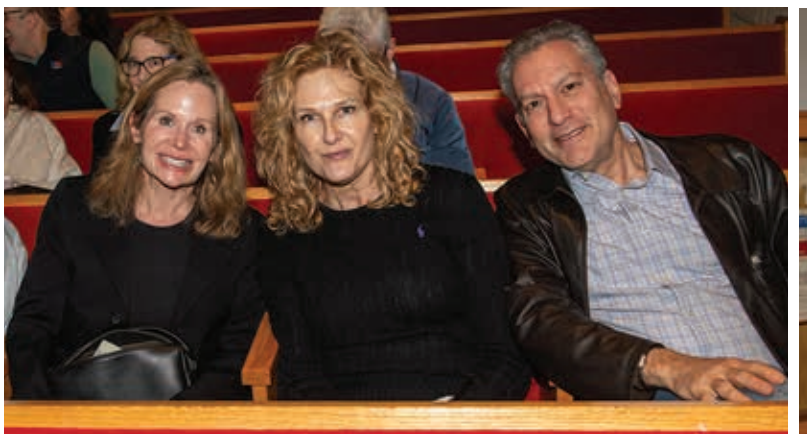
*Photos by Marilyn Roos Photography*

# An Evening with Ayaan Hirsi Ali











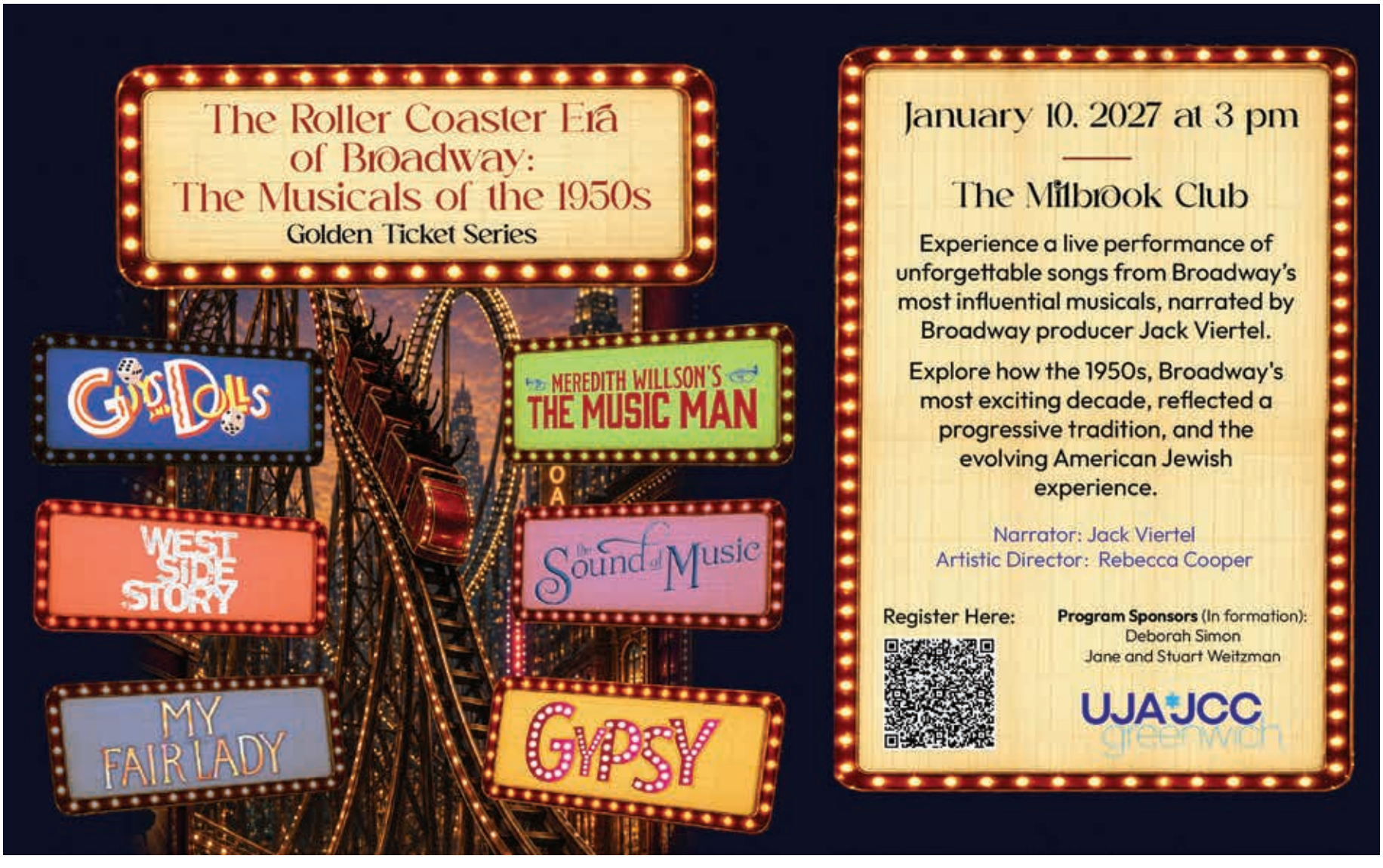

*Photos by Marilyn Roos Photography*

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# A Little Community Spirit, a Lot of Heart – and 10,000 Meals!

What do you get when you mix hundreds of pounds of food with grandparents, preschoolers, empty nesters, teens, a few folding tables, and a shared desire to fulfill the mitzvah of feeding the hungry? Answer: 10,000 meals for our neighbors in need!

It takes hard work and commitment to make something this special happen. An intergenerational committee brought together more than 100 volunteers for a meaningful afternoon of building community and supporting local food pantries. Volunteers of all ages rolled up their sleeves, worked side by side, and discovered that an afternoon of service can do more than fill plates – it can bring people together, create new connections, and strengthen our community.

A heartfelt thank you to UJA-JCC Greenwich committee members: **Chloe Angotta, Betsy Bernstein, Lexie Chernoff, Aviva Erickson, Samantha Himelman, Abby Levin, Mateo Marcus, Seth Niedermayer,** and **Keith Satter.** And an extra-special thank you to our "Committee Members in Training," **Lilah** and **Sophie Niedermayer**! We're so glad to have the next generation helping to lead the way.

Together, we turned a shared commitment of feeding 10,000 meals to those in need – and a wonderful reminder of what we can accomplish when we as a group come together.
















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## TAMIM ACADEMY - ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE MEETS JEWISH VALUES.

A warm, nurturing Jewish private school where children thrive academically, grow in character, and build a meaningful connection to their heritage in a community where every Jewish family belongs.

TAMIM ACADEMY OF GREENWICH

# is Expanding

COMING SEPTEMBER 2027

Our new home at the Chabad Center,
38 Field Point Road

MORE SPACE FOR OUR GROWING SCHOOL

- Brand-New Classrooms
- Culinary Space
- Sports Fields
- Playground
- Indoor Multipurpose Play Space
- Value based learning in a nurturing environment
- High student-to-teacher ratio
- Individualized and differentiated learning tailored to each child
- Integrated secular and Jewish curriculum







NOW EXPANDING TO

- Bridges K
- Kindergarten
- Grade 1
- Grade 2

WEEKLY SPECIALS

- Theater
- Outdoor Sports
- Art
- Music
- Culinary Arts

Tamim Academy of GREENWICH

## Open House

**MONDAY, NOV. 16:**
**9:30 AM AND 7:30 PM**

**WEDNESDAY, DEC. 9**
**9:30 AM**

Come tour our school, meet our team, learn about our expanding program, and discover what makes Tamim Academy of Greenwich special.

Maryashie Deren and Simone Zwany
maryashie@chabadgreenwich.org
simone@chabadgreenwich.org



# CAMP GAN HIGHLIGHTS

## SUMMER 2027

BH







- Trips: Legoland, Overnights for Boys and Girls! NYC Trip
- Krav Maga, Ninja on the Go, Crochet
- Sports Clinics - Flag Football, Softball, Basketball
- Mindful Movement Classes
- Strength and Conditioning Classes
- Trampolining
- Hula Hooping Classes
- Chicago Boys
- Mini Golf
- Swim Instruction
- Soccer with Aldwin
- Tennis
- Pottery
- Theatre
- Yoga
- Bungee Jumping
- Carnival

And so much more!

camp GAN ISRAEL of Greenwich

**MINI GAN**
**JUNIOR DIVISION**
**MIDDLE DIVISION**
**SENIOR DIVISION**

Door to Door transportation in Greenwich!

June 28 - August 13, 2027
Register for individual weeks or the full session.

Contact Maryashie Deren
Maryashie@chabadgreenwich.org
917.576.0615

**CAMPGAN.COM**

# Adult Education at GRS

**Lunch n' Learn**

Greenwich Reform Synagogue's Cantor Rubin invites inquisitive minds to discover, chat and explore over lunch (free to members).



Each class focuses on a stand-alone topic. Feel free to attend all lessons or pop-in for a single class.

Thursdays, December 3rd and 17th from 12 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.

**The Art of the Next Act, Facilitated by Meredith Gold, LCSW**

Join us for an interactive workshop series designed to foster thoughtful conversation, new perspectives and meaningful connection. Participants will examine the personal, relational, and cultural forces that shape how we navigate change and what's next.

*Scan QR to RSVP for The Art of the Next Act*

Upcoming sessions: Thursdays, December 3rd and January 14th, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m.

*Please scan QR code to register.*

**You Have Torah to Share! With Rabbi Joui Hessel**

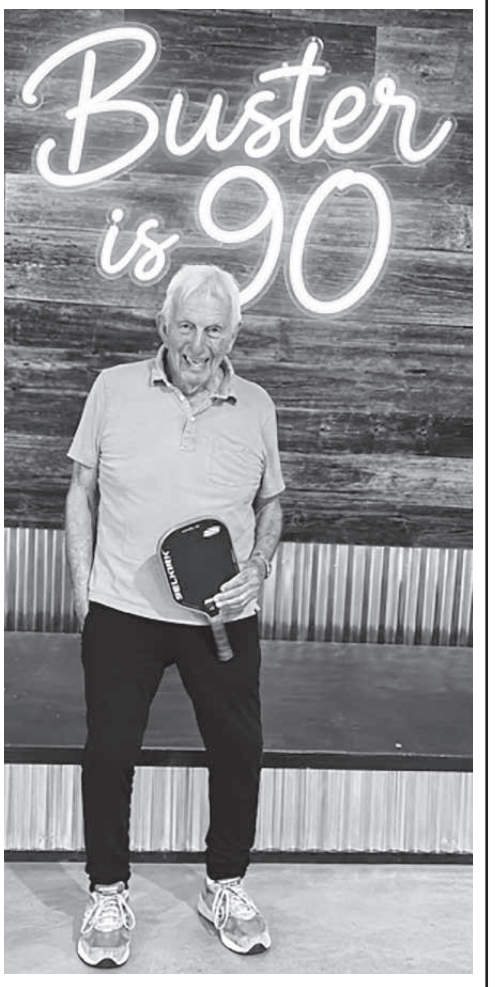
Joui Hessel, ordained rabbi and GRS Board member, leads this session on giving your own Dvar Torah. From ideation, to development, to completion of a meaningful Dvar Torah, Joui will guide you through a fun, interactive one-hour workshop. Come discover the Torah you have to share!

*Scan QR to RSVP for You Have Torah to Share!*

Upcoming session: Sunday, December 6th, 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.. Contact Rabbi Joui Hessel for additional information and sessions (joui18@gmail.com)

*Pre-registration required. Please scan QR code to register.*

# Buster Turns 90 Years Young!




Born to Jewish parents, Robert S Salomon, Jr. AKA Buster, never truly experienced the beauty of celebrating Judaism until we married 32 years ago. Since then, he has embraced our Jewish traditions with an open heart and unwavering devotion. For the past 22 years, he has been a constant presence at Hebrew Wizards, attending every service, ceremony, and Sunday school gathering, while generously supporting our community both financially and personally. His loyalty, dedication, and love have helped make Hebrew Wizards the special place it is today. Buster reminds us that being part of a community is not just about showing up, but about giving wholeheartedly and making a difference in the lives of others. I am proud to call him my husband.

*–Rabbi Deb*

# Lily Wachsman and Keren Roitman Friendship Circle Teen Board Members




On Thursday evening September 17, Friendship Circle held its annual Teen Kickoff at Sky Zone in Norwalk. Rosie Grossbaum began the evening, sharing about her life with Cystic Fibrosis. Teens then learned about the many ways to get involved with the Friendship Circle and were introduced to this year's Friendship Circle Teen Board. Volunteers had Sky Zone to themselves, and were able to take full advantage of all the activities while enjoying a chance to socialize with other teens.

Director Malya Shmotkin said "What a crowd! We are so excited for another year of volunteering and for such a great group of teens. It is wonderful to see all those returning, as well as new faces."

*Friendship Circle is a recipient agency of UJA-JCC Greenwich. For more information and to become involved with the Friendship Circle please contact Director Malya Shmotkin at malya@friendshipct.com.*



# JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES OF GREENWICH

*CEO's Corner*

## *Rooted in Greenwich. Growing Across Connecticut. Changing Lives.*



What a year it has been for Jewish Family Services of Greenwich!

When I reflect on all that we have accomplished this year, I am filled with an overwhelming sense of pride and gratitude. What began more than four decades ago as a small organization dedicated to caring for our neighbors has grown into a leading social service agency, reaching thousands of individuals and families across Connecticut. And while our footprint continues to expand, our heart remains exactly where it began, right here in Greenwich.

This year, we opened new offices in New Canaan and New London, expanding access to critical services and bringing the compassionate care that has defined JFS for more than 40 years into new communities. We strengthened our presence in southeastern Connecticut, expanded our school-based behavioral health services to reach students and families in Norwalk and Norwich Public Schools, and continued to grow our ability to meet people where they are, when they need us most.

We are a statewide leader in immigration and legal services, helping individuals and families navigate an increasingly complicated and frightening landscape. At a time when so many of our immigrant neighbors are facing tremendous uncertainty, JFS has stepped forward, building partnerships, expanding legal representation, and ensuring that families have somewhere to turn for trusted guidance, compassion, and support. Our recent merger with the Immigration Advocacy and Support Center in New London is yet another example of what is possible when organizations come together with a shared commitment to serving others.

This is what *Tikkun Olam* looks like in action. Not simply recognizing the challenges facing our communities, but rolling up our sleeves and doing something about them.

And none of this happens in isolation.

Every new office, every child receiving counseling in school, every family finding food on their table, and every immigrant receiving critical legal support is made possible by the generosity, trust, and unwavering commitment of the community that built us.

I often say that at JFS, we lead with yes. Yes, we will help. Yes, we will find a way. Yes, we will show up. We may not always have the answer in that moment, but we will never stop working to find one.

As we close this remarkable year, I am reminded that our greatest accomplishment is not simply how much we have grown, but how many more lives we can touch because of that growth.

To our Greenwich Jewish community, thank you for believing in us, investing in us, and allowing us to carry the values of compassion, dignity, and service far beyond the place where our story began.

As you consider your year-end giving, I hope you will continue to invest in the extraordinary work we are doing together. Every gift helps us say yes to the next person, the next family, and the next community that needs us.

Our roots are in Greenwich. Our reach is growing. And our commitment to repairing the world has never been stronger.

With immense gratitude,
Rachel Kornfeld, LCSW, SBL
Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Family Services of Greenwich

## JFS of Greenwich Celebrates Legacy and Leadership

Jewish Family Services of Greenwich recently welcomed past and current board members for its annual Legacy & Leadership Breakfast, a special gathering honoring the dedication and generosity that have helped guide the organization over the years.

The event offered an opportunity to reflect on the growth of JFS, from the launch of Supermarketing for Seniors in 1984 to the expansion of behavioral health services, food security programs, immigration legal services, and supportive case management. Throughout that growth, JFS has remained grounded in its core values of compassion, dignity, and service.

Guests reconnected, shared memories, and celebrated the leaders who helped build a strong foundation for the organization. The breakfast also highlighted the important role board members continue to play in supporting the mission and future of JFS.

"We are deeply grateful to the leaders who helped build the foundation of JFS and to those who continue to invest their time and passion in the future," said CEO Rachel Kornfeld.

The Legacy & Leadership Breakfast served as a meaningful reminder that the strength of JFS comes from the dedicated community of volunteers, supporters, and leaders who continue to make a difference.



## Winter Wellness: Prioritizing Connection

As winter approaches and the holiday season begins, many people experience a mix of emotions. While this time of year can bring joy and celebration, it can also bring stress, loneliness, or grief.

One of the best ways to support emotional well-being during the colder months is to stay connected. Reaching out to a friend, attending community events, maintaining routines, and practicing self-care can help reduce feelings of isolation and improve overall mental health.

Remember, the holidays do not have to be perfect. Giving yourself grace and seeking support when needed can make the season more meaningful and manageable.

If you or someone you know could benefit from additional support, JFS Bennett Center for Behavioral Health is here to help. Visit https://www.jfsgreenwich.org/counseling or call 203-622-1881.

**Visit Our Tribute Page**
Honor a Loved One. Celebrate a Life.
JFS CARING FOR CONNECTICUT Greenwich to Norwich
Visit jfsgreenwich.org/tributes or scan the QR code to view our Tribute Page.




As we began our 22nd year of Hebrew Wizards, our High Holiday services were especially beautiful and meaningful.

Our students filled the services with heartfelt poetry and prayers, while our Teen Wizards were honored with the symbolic passing of the Torah from generation to generation, reminding us of the importance of carrying our Jewish traditions forward. Led by Rabbi Deb and the Musical Ensemble, we brought the spirit and joy and community.

It was especially heartwarming to welcome back our alumni, reconnect with longtime families, and to embrace new families as we came together as one congregation, united in faith, community, and love.

Together, we prayed for peace, renewed hope, and the promise of a beautiful New Year. L'Dor V'Dor – from generation to generation.

## The Gift of Donating Blood

Donating blood embodies the highest ideals of Jewish beliefs,
In less than an hour, which includes free apéritifs,
You are preserving life, acting with kindness, and caring for others,
You are saving the lives of strangers, friends, sisters and brothers.
Greenwich Reform Synagogue hosts blood drives six times a year,
Because every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood and lives in fear,
We partner with the American Red Cross® who enables crucial care,
You could be the answer to someone's lifesaving prayer,
So, join GRS and American Red Cross® to volunteer,
And help make the despair of others disappear.

If you need more motivation, in Judaism donating blood is a *mitzvah*:

*Pikuach Nefesh* (Saving a Life): Over-riding almost every other Jewish law, blood donations are life-saving. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 37a) teaches: "Whoever saves one life, it is as if they saved the entire world."

*Chesed* (Kindness): Donating blood is a selfless act of kindness, because donors are not compensated. Helping strangers in need follows the Torah's commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18).

*Lo Ta'amod Al Dam Re'echa* (Do Not Stand Idly by the Blood of Your Neighbor): We can't ignore when someone's life is in danger (Leviticus 19:16); donating blood is essential when lives depend on a safe blood supply.

Greenwich Reform Synagogue's next blood drive is Monday, December 7th, 1:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

*For more information on donating blood or to schedule a time, visit www.redcrossblood.org*




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Every day is meaningful.
Every moment is filled with care.**

**Now enrolling ages 18 months - pre-K**

Maryashie Deren
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*BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!*

Temple Sholom

Itsy Bitsy
YOGA



**FRIDAYS, 9:15-10:00 AM
AT TEMPLE SHOLOM**

**January 8, 15, 22, & 29
February 5, 12, 19 & 26**

This free winter offering for parents and littles (10 months and younger) blends gentle movement, breathwork, music, sensory play, and co-regulation practices to support connection and grounding.





Contact Gina Cristino for the registration link at gina.cristino@templesholom.com.

Led by Music Specialist Joanna Levine

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WWW.TEMPLESHOLOM.COM







***Did you know that you can donate a used vehicle (car, truck, van, SUV, or boat) in ANY condition to UJA-JCC Greenwich?***

We are accepting vehicles in CT at this time. All you have to do is head to **ujajcc.org** and fill out our donation form! Proceeds from the sale of your vehicle help care for those in need here in Greenwich, in Israel and around the world.

UJA-JCC greenwich
THE CENTER FOR JEWISH COMMUNITY, CULTURE & CARING

## Mini Wizards: Where Jewish Journeys Begin!




At Hebrew Wizards, we believe that a love of Judaism begins with wonder, curiosity, and joy!

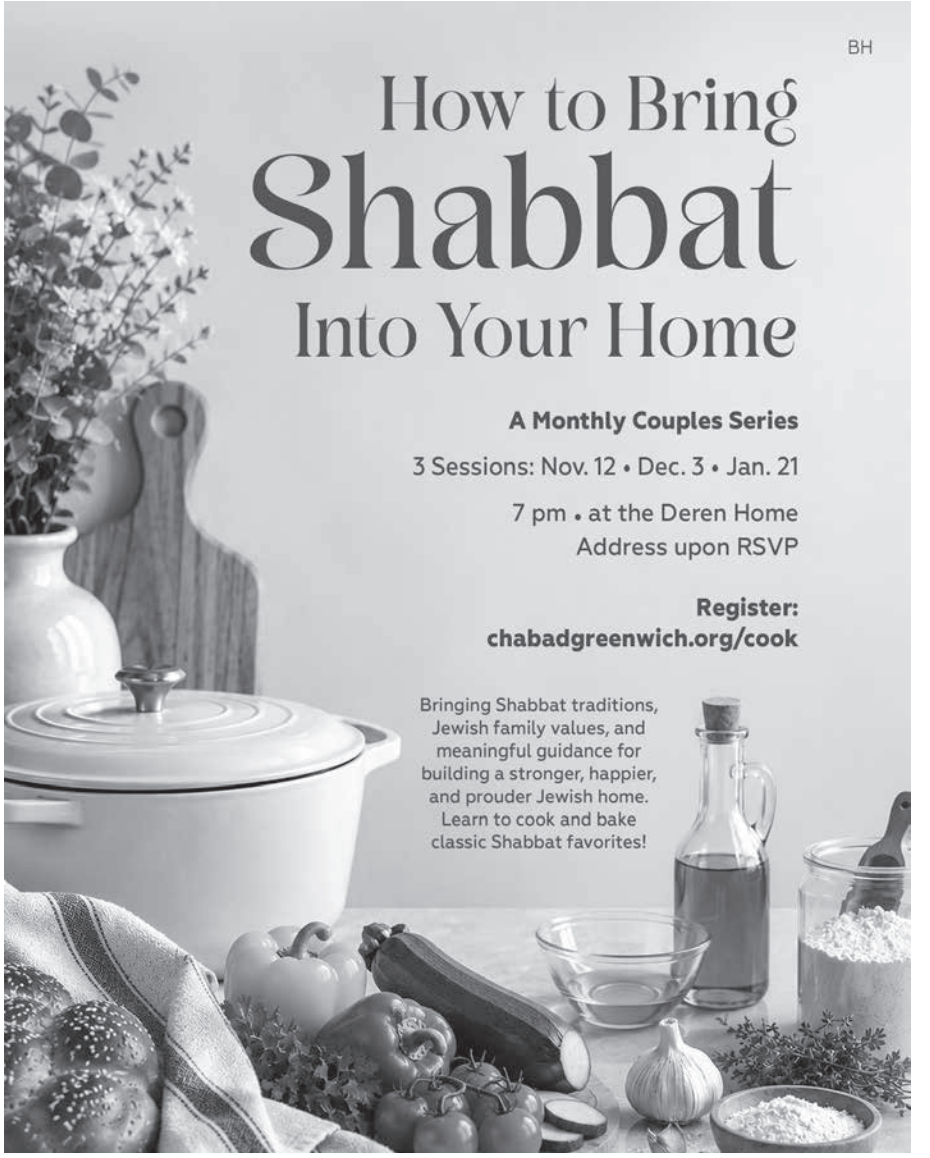
Our Mini Wizards, ages 2–6, take their very first steps into Jewish life through a magical blend of learning, laughter, and discovery.

From celebrating Jewish holidays and learning their first Hebrew words to singing songs and creating imaginative art projects, every experience plants a little seed of Jewish identity.

The most meaningful lessons our youngest Wizards learn is that you're never too young to make a difference.

Through hands-on community service projects, even our littlest Wizards discover the joy of helping others and making the world a kinder place.

We're not simply teaching children about Judaism. We're nurturing a sense of belonging, building Jewish memories, and inspiring the next generation to bring light into the world. Little hands, big hearts, and a lifetime of Jewish connections!






Temple Sholom
Selma Maisel Nursery School

Schedule a tour! 203-622-8121

**Learning is active, joyful, and intentional at the Temple Sholom Selma Maisel Nursery School (SMNS)!**

***Come see firsthand how our nurturing teachers, engaging classrooms, and play-based curriculum help children grow with compassion, curiosity, and confidence.***

**Preschool Enrollment Begins Nov. 18th!**

**300 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich CT**

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# Generation Gives: Greenwich Middle Schoolers Turn Creativity into Compassion

How can a few cans of food, a little creativity, and a lot of teamwork make a difference in the community? For the middle school participants in UJA-JCC Greenwich's Generation Gives program, generously sponsored by the **Shohet family**, whose support helped make this meaningful experience possible. This hands-on project combined learning, Jewish values, and meaningful acts of giving. Generation Gives kicked off its first session with Canstruction, an engaging and creative project designed to raise awareness about food insecurity while putting the Jewish value of caring for those in need into action.

Before the building began, students were invited to reflect on a simple but powerful question: Think about a time when you were hungry. How did you feel? How did it affect your body, your mood, or your ability to concentrate? Then came a more challenging thought: Imagine experiencing that hunger regularly and the uncertainty that would bring.Through this discussion, students explored the realities of food insecurity, including its different levels and the many people and families across the United States who experience it. They learned that hunger is not always visible and that food insecurity can affect anyone, creating challenges that extend well beyond an empty stomach.

Students discussed the Jewish obligation to feed the hungry and the Torah's instruction to leave the corners of one's fields unharvested so that those in need could gather food for themselves. This ancient practice offers a powerful lesson in both generosity and dignity: helping others is not simply about providing necessities, but also about respecting their independence and humanity. Client choice food pantries were discussed as another way to provide dignity.

Then it was time to put their learning into action. Armed with approximately 1,500 cans, a few rubber bands, double-sided tape, and plenty of imagination, the students got to work. The middle schoolers' creations included sneakers, a can with an opening, a castle, and an array of other inventive designs. Using only the cans and a handful of simple supplies, the students discovered that transforming an idea into a freestanding structure required creativity, collaboration, patience, and perseverance.

Once the project was complete, the cans were donated to local food pantries, turning the students' hard work into tangible support for community members facing food insecurity. Two weeks later, Generation Gives continued its commitment to hands-on service through UJA-JCC Greenwich's Meals That Matter event. The middle school students helped unpack hundreds and hundreds of pounds of supplies, organize materials, and set up an ambitious community-wide effort to pack 10,000 meals for local food pantries. They then helped run the three production lines, working alongside community members of all ages who had signed up to participate.

Through both Canstruction and Meals That Matter, Generation Gives is helping young people connect Jewish values with real-world action. The message is clear: making a difference begins with understanding others – and recognizing that we all have a role to play in building a stronger, more caring community.















# Teen Changemakers Launch a New Year

UJA-JCC Greenwich's Teen Changemakers, a high school philanthropy program, is kicking off a new year with 48 students ready to make a difference in their community and beyond.

This year's cohort is already demonstrating leadership in an exciting way. On their own initiative, the teens formed an executive committee to help guide the group's work. The committee includes Co-Presidents **Aviva Erickson** and **Matias Roitman**; Vice Presidents **Simi Lidenbaum** (Fundraising), **Jolie Vasquez** (Operations), **Emma Vogelhut** (Engagement), and **Olivia Breiner, Isaac Citron, Oliver Frankel, Jamie Leader,** and **Abby Levin** (Topic Areas).

At the first session, the students put their creativity to work with Canstruction and began selecting the social issues they want to explore throughout the year. At their next gathering, they reviewed the year's plans and dove into researching their chosen topic areas.

Through Teen Changemakers, students learn to look beyond the issues themselves and consider how philanthropy, thoughtful research, and collective action can help create change. With 48 voices, plenty of ideas, and a student-led executive committee already taking shape, this cohort is off to a promising start.

*UJA-JCC Greenwich looks forward to seeing what these young leaders accomplish together this year.*








# Generation Gives @ Meals that Matter!





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Light the way

# A BRIGHTER JEWISH FUTURE BEGINS WITH YOU.

This Chanukah, your gift to UJA-JCC Greenwich helps **Light the Way** for Jewish life to flourish in Greenwich, in Israel, and around the world.



SUPPORT THE *Light the way* ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

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