



**WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT
YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT
FEDERATION**

Please watch your emails for a four-question survey.

**YOU CAN RESPOND ANONYMOUSLY OR SIGN YOUR NAME.
ALL ANSWERS WILL BE APPRECIATED.**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE THE SURVEY BY MAIL,
CALL SARAH AT 217-787-7223 #5.**



Karen Westbrook

Message From the President

From the Annual Meeting on May 1, 2024

Last year, I stood before you with lofty hopes and dreams. I spoke with you about my three “R”s; Rejuvenate, Reinvigorate, and Renew. The “R” I didn’t count on was Rollercoaster. And, as Bob will tell you, I literally hate rollercoasters.

Many people have said this has been a “different year.” Yes and no. I am a firm believer that you play with the hand that is dealt; there is no use in looking at someone else’s cards.

The rollercoaster began with a ride to the top. The summer started with a highly successful film series. The Education and Culture Committee took us on a great upward journey with four films. With and without masks, we had community members attending an activity, we were not on zoom. It felt reinvigorating.

JCRC collected over 150 pieces of art for the Art Makes It a Home project, a true representation of Tikkun Olam. I was privileged to be at the opening of one of the Helping Hands new facilities, and felt such pride in our community as we were recognized for our contribution. We don’t do these projects for the thank you, we participate because it is the right thing to do. The rollercoaster moved higher.

The Violins of Hope series of programs was nothing short of everything I expected. With the help of many volunteers, generous underwriting and in-kind donations, over 800 people experienced the stories of the Holocaust from a new perspective. I was awed by the performers’ commitment to provide the proper homage to the violins, their stories and the message of the Holocaust. It helped us remember who we are and regain some of our sense of community that was lost during Covid. It is fair to say, many felt rejuvenated and renewed.

I remember Nancy clearly saying, now all we have is moving and campaign.... Well

Barry Seidman and Rita Victor were planning the Annual Campaign. Through Rita’s vast network of “people,” they were able to convince Jeffrey Schoenfeld to visit Springfield as our speaker. Then, the horrors of the Hamas attack on Israel unfolded. The rollercoaster plummeted. Fear, trepidation, wanting to help, the need to know and the concern for our own safety were on everyone’s mind. One campaign became two, the Federation in Springfield and the Federation work in Israel. Latrice and Remi Benichou volunteered to contact their friend, Gil Hoffman of Honest Reporting, who brought firsthand knowledge of the ground situation to our community leadership team. Jeffrey Schoenfeld provided the community with an up-to-the-minute account of the work of Federation in Israel at our Annual Campaign Dinner.

Our community is not comprised of people who stay at the bottom and want to get off the ride. We stepped up to the plate. We met our pledge goals as well, as almost \$140,000 for the Federation efforts in Israel.

And the ride to the top began again.

The mission of the Jewish Federation of Springfield, Illinois, is to serve the Jewish people locally, in Israel and throughout the world through coordinated fund raising, community-wide programming, social services and educational activities.

Message from the President (continued)

Our programs and committees are functioning out of our new safe, accessible office space. Nancy, Wendy and Betsy have done wonders getting all our stuff into a bit smaller space. Thanks to many volunteers who help with PJ Playdates, Knosh and Knowledge, Outreach to Seniors, the Security Committee, the Education and Culture Committee and our social service initiative. Their efforts continue driving the rollercoaster toward the peak of the ride. Somewhere along the line, Sarah Cowan joined us, providing temporary support as we transition our records to an integrated program and assisting Nancy, Betsy and Wendy in material and program preparation. She is an asset on our journey.

And, then the rollercoaster took a dip. Acts of antisemitism continue to rise. We are fortunate to live in a community where there has been little outward exhibition of hatred. But we know it is there.

We were able to keep an anti-Israel referendum off the township ballot through coordination with many of our local non-Jewish friends and advice from other Federations.

It is very hard not to react publicly to vitriolic language and actions. Those hating us want to engage to provide them a forum. The War Against Hamas Response team consulted with national and local Jewish organizations for guidance. Every community is different. We believed that the best response in our situation was to not engage. As result, there has been little local media bringing attention to their antisemitism and anti-Israel stance. We are continuing to focus on completing the "Lighting the Path" educational materials highlighting how we are more the same than different and have several possibilities for training and presentations. It is our continued hope that this educational initiative will help bridge the gap between ignorance and acceptance. There just hasn't been enough time between the highs and lows to get this project to the end of the ride.

And, then a ride back up. Under Nancy's leadership, the Federation was notified that we received the 2023 FBI Director's Community Leadership Award (DCLA), which publicly acknowledged the achievements of those working to make a difference in their communities through the promotion of education and the prevention of crime and violence. Wow!

And, what a fabulous evening for wine tasting. I believe we had more attendees and sold more wine than in previous years. It is a special event that provides the community with the opportunity to feel a sense of comradery.

And then another plummet. Israel finds itself under attack from Iran. The war against Hamas remains unresolved and the hostages are not freed. We are in a period of tense coasting. Will the immediate future take us on a ride to peace or to further turmoil and strife? Regardless, we continue to support the JFNA efforts at home and abroad.

I will admit, at times the rollercoaster ride made me nauseous. However, the highs outweighed the lows. I have learned a lot about patience and the end outweighing the means. Most importantly, I have discovered the depth of commitment we have in our community to the Federation and more importantly, to each other.

I applaud each of you for your commitment, whether time and/or financial. I thank the retiring Board members, Pat and Susan, with all my heart. You have been a part of the Federation leadership for years. Each of your skills has contributed so much to our successes. Vera is stepping down from the Executive Committee, however she will remain on the Board. If we need a proofreader, we know where to find her. To those remaining on the Board and those newly elected, I express my gratitude. These are not easy times to commit to the important work of the Federation. I appreciate you jumping in with both feet.

Finally, we would not accomplish very much without our accomplished staff. We could not ask for a staff more willing to commit the time and energy over and above what is necessary to make our organization a success.

And, for all of us, I hope for a smoother ride next year.

Springfield's recurring social and educational series for active retirees.

Knosh & Knowledge

Wednesday, June 26, 2024

9:30 am

Field Trip to Atlanta, Illinois

We will visit the R.G.W. Candy Company, founded by Bob Wertheim in the 1940s.. We will learn about the candy company's Jewish roots and see how the candy is made today.

We will also tour the American Giants Museum. This new museum (Grand Opening is May 26th) tells the story of the kistchy and quirky "Muffler Man/Bunyan Giant" statues that sprang up across the US highways in the 1960s and became cultural icons.

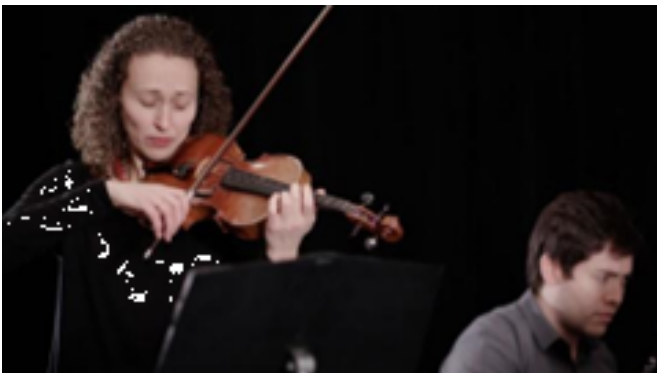


RSVP by Mon., June 24,
to (217) 787-7223 x 18
or rsvp@shalomspringfield.org

VIOLINS OF HOPE

Julie Staley has devoted 1 segment of **InFocus | Julie Staley, Violins of Hope Segment** on WUIS to the Violins of Hope. It has yet to air, however the version is currently available online at the WUIS website.

The longer version is available at <https://spencerfilmsllc.com/music-of-hope/>



Music of Hope - Spencer Films, LLC

Music of Hope: Produced and Directed by *Spencer Films LLC*, featuring *Dr. Yona Stamatis - UIS Music Program, Karen Westbrook - Jewish Federation of Springfield, IL, and Nancy Sage - Jewish Federation of Springfield, IL.*
spencerfilmsllc.com

Thank you to Julie for continued support of our program!

8TH ANNUAL JEWISH FEDERATION FILM SERIES

Thursday, June 6

Winner:
Best Film - Sofia International
Film Festival 2024

ALL ABOUT THE LEVKOVICHES

Hungary (2024) Drama

Directed by Elise Otzenberger
Hungarian—English subtitles



The generous but stubborn boxing coach, Tamás gets along well with everyone but his own son. They have not spoken since the boy, Iván moved to Israel and became religious in an orthodox community. When Tamás' beloved wife dies, Tamas agrees with his son that he can come and sit the Shiva in his house as long as he brings his grandson, Ariel with him. As past conflicts resurface, they embark on an unexpected journey of self- reflection and reconciliation.

Thursday, June 13

Winner of 19 U.S. Film Festival
Audience Awards!

FAREWELL, MR. HAFFMANN

France Belgium (2024) Drama

Directed by Fred Cavaye
French—English subtitles



Occupied Paris, 1941: all members of the Jewish community are instructed to come forward and identify themselves to authorities. Dedicated jeweler Joseph Haffmann, fearing the worst, arranges for his family to flee the city and offers his employee the chance to take over his store until the conflict subsides. But his own attempts to escape are thwarted, and Haffmann is forced to seek his assistant's protection.

Thursday, June 20

Winner:
Best Film—Toronto Jewish Film
Festival (2023)

LESS THAN KOSHER

Canada (2023) Musical Comedy

Directed by Daniel M. Rosenberg
English



At 20, Viv was a promising young singer. At 30, her failing music career has forced her back into her mother's basement. But when this self proclaimed Bad Jew lands ass-backwards into a job as a Cantor at her family's synagogue, she's thrown into a wild ride of illicit affairs, drug trips, tense family drama, self discovery and some serious Jewish bops.

Thursday, June 27

Best Narrative Film—Jewish
International Film Festival Australia
(2022)

WHERE LIFE BEGINS

Italy (2022) Drama

Directed Stephanie Freiss
Italian/Franch— English subtitles



An ultra-orthodox Jewish family from Aix-les-Bains comes to a farm in Calabria for a brief stay every year to carry out a sacred mission: harvesting citrons. Here Elio, the farm owner, meets Esther, the rabbi's daughter, who is tired of the constraints imposed by her religion. Through this relationship, Esther will understand the importance of freedom and find her path, and, in the same way, Elio will find the peace he had lost for a long time.

SAGE NOTES



Nancy Sage
Executive Director

Looking back over the past year, with all its challenges and accomplishments, it is a year that has gone by in warp speed. As a person who generally embraces change, I have to admit that a bit more of routine would have been welcome. However, I do know this for sure, that we are very fortunate. I am grateful to our community - to you - for your caring, for your generosity, for your support. For taking the time to talk about what matters to you, because it matters to us. Federation volunteers give selflessly of their time and share their smiles regardless of the task. I especially thank the Legacy, JCRC and the Federation Boards. And, of course, Betsy, Wendy, and Sarah, the Federation staff. Everything our Boards, volunteers and staff do reflects their dedication to the Federation's mission, and to serving it selflessly in so many ways.

We have all lived with the challenges over this past year: October 7th and the ensuing War against Hamas, the rise in antisemitism at home and across the globe, Iran's attack on Israel, and challenges within our own community. These challenges have touched all of our souls -- and they are still with us -- ever changing and ever staying the same. It has been a difficult year; yet and through it all, our leadership, the Boards, Executive Committee, and Response Team have been brilliant, guiding lights at every twist and turn, considering all options, every time with the best interests of our community at heart -- as that is our calling and drives all we do.

Challenges aside, this past year has been a year of accomplishments for Federation. In graduate school, not a management class went by without referencing, reading, or quoting Warren Bennis so I borrow his words: "Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality." Our President Karen Westbrook saw Violins of Hope as a gift to the community, using music to tell the history of the Holocaust. Similarly, she recognized the need for a program that described Jewish life and Judaism in ways that would resonate in smaller and more rural areas and developed "Lighting the Path: Celebrating Commonalities and Understanding Differences." In both instances, she drew on the expertise and support of community members who rolled up their sleeves with her to do the work.

We have resumed many of our "old routines," most with new twists. The Education and Culture Committee's Film series, PJ Play date -- bringing parents and pre-schoolers together once a month to read PJ books, play and sing. JCRC's New Initiatives Committee brought us the Healthy Foods Distributions that continue to this day. They also embarked on a new project -- collecting Art to decorate the walls of the new Helping Hands housing facility. We're back to visiting and delivering very clever holiday packages and continuing to do senior check-ins.

If the Federation can assist you in any way, if you have questions or concerns, or are in need of financial or social service assistance, please contact Nancy Sage, Executive Director, at (217)787-7223, ext. 12. All calls are confidential, and your privacy will be respected.

SAGE NOTES

(Continued)

Last June, between Rita Victor and Barry Seidman, we “landed” Jeffrey Schoenfeld, Jewish Federation’s Israel and Overseas Chair, as our campaign speaker. We had total confidence that he would be the best of the best, and he was. His words still stick with me, “Federation is a unique philanthropy - community taking care of community.” And you did just that, your generosity made the Annual Campaign and the Israel Emergency Campaign a success. You do save and change lives.

I am thankful that community outreach and community relations have been a hallmark of Federation and JCRC over the years. It is what we do. In these challenging times, the relationships you’ve helped build are critical. So, I congratulate each and every one of you for Federation receiving the FBI Director’s Community Leadership Award from the FBI. It is yours. I was honored to represent Federation in Washington, DC to accept the award on your behalf. It really didn’t hit me exactly what this meant until I read about the company we are keeping. Individuals and organizations involved with survivors of human trafficking, organizations that mentor those who are disadvantaged. St. Louis NAACP, Louisville YMCA, organizations involved with youth mentoring, as well as Jewish community organizations and professionals from Phoenix, Kansas City, Denver and New York City. I wish each of you could have been with me when the FBI presented colors and a soloist FBI employee sang the “Star Spangled Banner.” It was truly an inspiring occasion, and I congratulate you for your part in receiving this award, and for all of the achievements over the past year. May we go from strength to strength.



Shalom Springfield is generously underwritten with support from the following community partners:

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Feuer-Brozgold Legacy Fund

Notes



LEGACY FUND

Hexter Fund

In Memory of:

Bernice Blitstein, from Harvey Rothschild

Neal J. Feldman Fund

In Memory of:

Bernice Blitstein, from Howard & Lori Hammel

Camperships

Honor of:

Zoe Blitstein, on her Bat Mitzvah, from the Westbrook Family



CONDOLENCES

Condolences to the families of

Marcia & Alan Blitstein & Mike & Marisa Blitstein on the passing of

Bernice Blitstein, mother of Alan Blitstein
May her memory endure as a blessing.

Thank You To Our Volunteers

Annual Meeting: Sam Gorden, Karen Westbrook

Yom Hashoah: Yona Stamatis, Rabbi Baroff, Laura Call, Pamela Cohen, Eil Goodman, Eva Muller, Rabbi Stern, Karen Westbrook

Understanding Israel's Complex Realities: Sam Gorden, Caleb Melamed, Natalie Silverman, Karen Westbrook



Jewish Federation
OF SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS

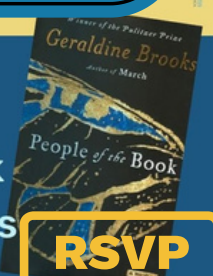
BOOKCLUB

June 9, 2024
12 pm

Join us for a discussion
about the book

People of the Book
By Geraldine Brooks

RSVP





1999 Wabash Ave., Suite 206
Springfield, IL 62704

Phone: 217.787-7223
Website: www.shalomspringfield.org
Email: sjf@shalomspringfield.org

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