



JEWISH  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES  
OF HAWAII



Summer 2024

## Making a Difference

By Peter Rosegg, volunteer journalist for JCS

*Each issue we will highlight someone in our community, focusing on interesting but little-known details of their lives, activities, and interests. If you know someone in our community, well-known or not, who deserves attention, send their contact information to [admin@jcs-hi.org](mailto:admin@jcs-hi.org)*

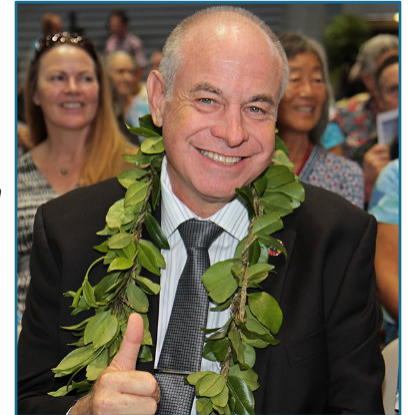
On his desk, Hawai'i Island Mayor Mitch Roth has a sign that reads, "Imua Emunah." Many know the first word, Hawaiian for "forward." Fewer recognize the second, Hebrew from the Torah which means "faith" or better, "trust in God."

"Three years ago, I had a heart attack," Roth recalls. "I believe a loving God does not make mistakes, so I knew it had to be for a reason."

At his first appointment with a cardiologist, he heard about delays in getting permits for a new cardiology lab. He made sure permits came through a few weeks later and the whole permitting process was streamlined. He discovered that cardiac rehab was only available in Kona, a long drive from Hilo. He talked to HMSA and a rehab facility for everyone opened in East Hawai'i. And he saw to it that every county first responder has an automated external defibrillator in their vehicle to deal with heart attacks.

Roth was elected Big Island prosecutor in 2012 and 2016, before winning the mayor's race in 2020. He is known for the many community programs to deal with social issues that he has launched or promoted.

*Note from JCS:* Thank you to Mayor Roth for being available. And we are grateful to Peter Rosegg for lending his many years of journalism experience to JCS!



Mayor Mitch Roth

## Mobile Museum of Tolerance Coming to Hawaii

In early 2025, the efforts of Brian Goldstein, Seymor Kazimirski, Mark Davis and many others will finally be realized. The Hawai'i Mobile Museum of Tolerance, which aims to inspire students to fight historical and contemporary injustices, will arrive. An extension of the efforts of the Simon Wiesenthal Foundation, the mobile museum will build on existing curricula that centers on antisemitism, the legacy of the Holocaust and racism, while adding bullying prevention, the Japanese American internment experience, and many other issues, including Native Hawaiian rights.

The mobile museum connects the legacies of the Holocaust and other historical injustices to current experiences of young people, creating continuity between past and future by keeping memories alive.

JCS is proud to partner with the Hawai'i Mobile Museum of Tolerance for their longer-term needs. Stay tuned for more information!



Conceptual rendering of Hawai'i Mobile Museum of Tolerance

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## Saying Aloha ‘Oe: the Hawai‘i Legacy of Peter Hoffenberg and Sandra Schwartz

This summer, we will be saying farewell to Peter and Sandra, who are moving to Colorado. Peter and Sandra are both retiring as professors in the UH Mānoa History Department, where Peter taught for three decades, and Sandra joined after starting at HPU.

Peter and Sandra were instrumental in helping found the O‘ahu Jewish Ohana, and Peter was faculty advisor for UH Hillel. He started the Jewish Community Relations Board to provide a united voice to represent our community by involving as many different Jewish organizations and views as possible.

Peter has been an ultimate connector, supporter and “go to” part of our community since 1995. He has brought guest speakers to town, helped organize events like Yom HaShoah, and more recently was helpful to JCS with media requests about the Israel Hamas war. He was recently seen in a series on the ‘Olelo channel by invitation from the Japanese Nisei Society (which came initially to JCS).

Peter thanks the Jewish community for supporting his family and helping him and Sandra raise their three wonderful kids. He invites the community to reach out if he can continue to be of help. Peter assures us that “we will be in touch, and I mean it.”



Peter and Saundi in Hawai‘i Kai, March 2024

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## Jewish Poverty in Hawaii



About 13% of JCS clients are unhoused, and well over 50% of our clients are struggling to make ends meet. And this is why JCS exists.

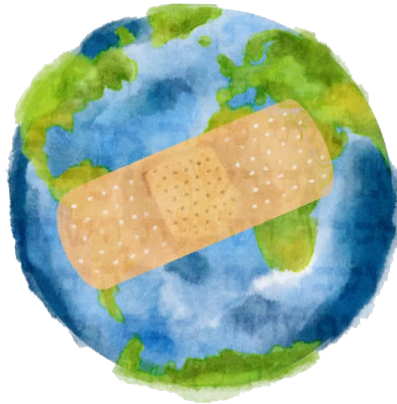
The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation and Jewish Funders Network established Together Ending Need (TEN), a national group focusing conversation on the under-recognized prevalence of poverty among Jewish individuals.

TEN found that 20% of Jews nationally experience poverty and struggle to find stable housing, dignified employment, affordable childcare, and to meet their basic needs.

JCS knows that there are more out in our statewide community who could use our culturally sensitive services. To increase our visibility and accessibility to those in need, we have been making presentations to referral partners like 211 and Aloha United Way. Many of their staff are surprised to hear about Jewish poverty. They ask us a lot of questions about being Jewish, not really knowing what it is. They ask if it's a race, a religion, and about our traditions. The conversations are wonderful and hopefully building bridges across all of our island's cultures and community.

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# A Brief History of Tikkun Olam



In Brandeis Professor Jonathan Krasner’s scholarly article published on Brandeis’ website, “The World is Broken, So Humans Must Repair It: The History and Evolution of Tikkun Olam,” he explains the story behind tikkun olam.

Most of us, and of course JCS, operate from the concept of tikkun olam. We have been learning since childhood that we must repair the world, often through social and ecological justice: giving tzedakah, recycling, etc. It is part of the mission statement of most Jewish organizations. But the concept is more nuanced than we think.

Krasner teaches that tikkun olam was not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, rather appeared in the Talmud during the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium CE. The concept was first used to “justify rabbinic interventions” such as forgiving debts every seven years. Beginning in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE, tikkun olam transformed into a spiritual-mystical concept, appearing in the prayer Aleinu as the messianic idea that fixing the world would bring about heaven on earth. Sixteenth century rabbi and father of contemporary Kabbala Isaac Luria, troubled by the notion that God would create an imperfect world, created a mythic story that: evil enters the world because sparks from God’s light are trapped in shards of broken vessels, and humanity must put the pieces back together.

Skipping ahead a bit, the trauma of the Holocaust shifted the burden of “repair” further onto humanity, as many Jews felt the need to re-evaluate our own accountability and duty to repair the world, instead of relying on God. Finally, the 1960’s and 70’s American Jews universalized the concept to speak to world crises, not only Jewish ones.

Many of us routinely incorporate tikkun olam into our Jewish identity. It is a concept that moves between our social, economic, human, and spiritual worlds.

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## Jewish Community Services of Hawaii and HANO



HANO fellowship 2023

This past year, our Executive Director Mimi Lind was chosen for a fellowship with the Hawai’i Alliance of Nonprofit Organizations (HANO) The program is designed to support leadership development, share nonprofit management principles, and foster peer relationships within the Hawai’i nonprofit community. The other organizations selected for this fellowship represented sectors advocating for the homeless, land rights and the environment, biking safety, health care, Hawaiian culture, the arts, and more.

As a result, JCS is even more rooted in the fabric of the Hawai’i nonprofit community – raising our profile and strengthening our partnerships with other service providers to get better care for our community. “This fellowship helped me think about rooting JCS in both the Hawai’i and Jewish community in more meaningful ways. Our cultures really have a lot of values in common,” she reflects.

# Sending Our Youth to Jewish Camp

Last summer, JCS helped Jonah Edelman attend Jewish summer camp for the first time. The Singer Scholarship is a small fund designated specifically for our keiki to attend camp or program in Israel.

Jonah writes:

“When my parents told me I was going to a Jewish camp, I almost cried. Why would I want to leave Hawaii for camp? But when I got there (Camp Ramah in Northern California), all those thoughts and feelings just disappeared. After camp ended, I felt more connected to Judaism than ever before. Thank you JCS!”



Jonah at Camp Ramah

# Starting Anew – Congregation Beth Or of Hilo



JCS joins with the Hilo Jewish community in celebrating the beginning of a new congregation for the eastern side of the Big Island. Congregation Beth Or recently organized its first event, a Purim celebration, in collaboration with JCS. That success was followed by Beth Or’s first self-organized event, a Passover potluck seder that welcomed 36 people. Beth Or is committed

to supporting Jewish life in and around Hilo, and welcoming members of all denominations.

Visit [bethorhilo.org](http://bethorhilo.org) for more information or contact David Freedman at [bethorhilo@gmail.com](mailto:bethorhilo@gmail.com) to find out about future events like their bagel brunch in June. The leadership also plans to work toward Shabbat gatherings and monthly events for the community. David adds, “We love JCS and we’re very thankful for all their support.”



Congregation Beth Or of Hilo - Passover Pot Luck



Congregation Beth Or of Hilo - Passover Pot Luck





JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES OF HAWAII

SCAN FOR MORE INFO





**OAHU  
KEIKI  
HAVURAH**

**JOIN US FOR MONTHLY FAMILY PLAY DATES**

**AGES 0-10 WELCOME**

RSVP HERE OR SCAN ABOVE- [TINYURL.COM/3F8RRYH2](https://tinyurl.com/3F8RRYH2)

JEWISH COMMUNITY SERVICES OF HAWAII

**JCS Teen Community**

Come do fun stuff with other Jewish teens across Oahu!


For more info contact:  
[admin@jcs-hi.org](mailto:admin@jcs-hi.org)

**A SMART WAY TO GIVE:  
DONATE STOCK TO JCS**

Just takes minutes to donate and NO capital gains tax!



<https://donatestock.com>



**Donate to JCS in honor of an event, person, or memorial - and we'll send a beautiful acknowledgement to the honoree!**

**Send Tribute to:**  
**PO Box 235805 Honolulu, HI 96823**  
**or make the tribute at [jcs-hi.org](https://jcs-hi.org)**

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# What's on Your Mind about the Israel-Hamas War?

We invited perspectives on relevant topics for the Jewish community for this newsletter. Letters are kept anonymous and edited for length. Read below to find out how to submit your letter for the next topic!

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For many decades I have worn a gold Jewish star necklace. The size of it is about 1/2 inch across. My star has occasionally invited a question or comment from someone nearby. It has never occurred to me to not wear it or to hide it from view UNTIL NOW! I travel within and outside the US sometimes, and it has recently begun to concern me that this display of my Jewishness might/could invite unpleasantness, discrimination or even an extreme expression of antisemitism. Should I leave it at home now? I feel sad and anxious about this.

-Kailua, O'ahu

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**I find it hard to engage in a meaningful ongoing interactive dialogue with my 17-year-old grandson. We hurl phrases at each other. I am in awe of my kid sister, who is good with words and loves to argue. She was able to engage him in a long ongoing conversation after the seder last Monday night. I don't have that talent. These youth do not have the facts or know the history; they are just angry, so I feel frustrated trying to communicate facts, history, and what might actually help Palestinians. I know social media has a lot of this and I am not on social media. I am 82 and retired but professionally active. I authored a book review before the October 7<sup>th</sup> attack of a recent biography of Golda Meir. It was rejected because of the political climate. I was not surprised, I got it, but I did not like it. I joined J Street because I believe in a 2-state solution even though I see that this is unlikely.**

-Kula, Maui

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I write letters to the Star Advertiser newspaper to correct spoken or written public misinformation about the war. At meals with friends at my retirement community, I do not initiate discussion about the war and the larger issues surrounding it. I have undertaken a deeper study of Jewish history, philosophy, and spirituality as well as religious thought and practice. I have gained a greater appreciation for my Jewish heritage, and the glory and agony of being Jewish. I am looking for solutions to ideological based anti-Israel and antisemitic sentiments, rhetoric, and terror. Depending on the circumstances, I either ignore people with different opinions about Israel's right to its homeland, reason with them, or suggest that they are advocating for my death and the death of all that I hold dear. I do not seek common ground. I review the facts and tell them why I think that they are wrong. If they are fellow Jews, I suggest that they are in immediate peril. If they are non-Jews, I mention that they are in peril as a successive step after the genocide of Jews and that civilization itself is at stake.

-Makiki, O'ahu

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**As someone who went to a Zionist camp for 10 years as a child, worked at Nachal Oz for a summer which is the kibbutz that was overrun by Hamas, has visited Israel as an adult, sent both of our children to spend summers in Israel as teenagers, has supported both Hadassah University Hospital and one in the West Bank, I found myself needing to do something, but what? On the one hand, I am fortunate to live in Hawai'i, which is relatively untouched by the campus uprisings and virulent antisemitism of the mainland, and on the other hand I feel disengaged and helpless to make a difference. So, I wanted a way to support Israel while being extremely concerned about the incredible tragedies that are occurring.**

**That is why I appreciated Peter Hoffenberg's opportunity to contribute to buying an ambulance for Israel, which will aid people of all nationalities, gifted by Hawai'i's Jewish community. It is not too late to contribute by contacting the American friends of Magen David Adom. It's not much but it's something!**

**-Waialae Iki, O'ahu**

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On common ground: We can think of the conflict in a logical way. It doesn't matter who you are (which side you are on). Make a list of the good and bad things done to and suffered by each side, but don't allow retribution to count as good. The result looks like a chessboard. This can be studied by anyone. It contains all the "opinions," no need to fuss and fight. The morality of retribution is a separate highly relevant topic!

**-Hawai'i Resident**

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**I have been perplexed by how few of my non-Jewish friends have reached out to me. I do not feel angry, but I feel less at ease about being Jewish in America. I no longer take for granted the safety I have felt for my entire life. I still don't feel personally in danger, but I do fear the future of what it will be like to be a Jew in United States -- that as the younger generation takes on more positions of power, Jews will be primarily viewed as aggressors and the centuries of our hard history will be overlooked and trivialized.**

**-Hawai'i Resident**

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I'm an Ashkenazi Jew. Witnessing the devastation in Gaza has been overwhelming. The unbearable grief over seven months, seeing Palestinians displaced, children murdered, and aid restriction leading to famine, is heart-wrenching. Witnessing a modern-day holocaust is enraging. It's even more disheartening that many in the Jewish community fail to acknowledge that these violent acts are being committed in the name of Jewish safety. Even in Hawai'i, the ongoing tragedy in Palestine is uncomfortably close. I find comfort and hope in the relationships I've built with other people who are speaking out against the genocide of the Palestinian people.

**-Honolulu, O'ahu**

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## **Next issue's question:**

Tell us about a funny, unique, surprising, or concerning experience that you had being Jewish in Hawaii. To respond, email: [admin@jcs-hi.org](mailto:admin@jcs-hi.org)



Kamala Trotter, JCS  
Community Care Manager

## JCS Community Care Services: An Example of What it Means to our Clients

Kamala started with JCS last year and has already helped many of our clients in Oahu and some of the wildfire survivors in Maui. She helps problem solve during times of crisis and concern, connects to resources for basic needs like food and ways to keep the lights on, and navigates access to mental health care, housing, and home health. Our case managers stay with clients until they are connected and are there if they need them again. We refer to it as “concierge care management.”

Kamala told us about a recent success with an isolated kupuna struggling with depression and unable to care for herself anymore. Until Kamala got involved, the woman was embarrassed to talk to her kids about her needs. Kamala made it ok and supported her in that journey. She was able to connect with the client’s family and guided them through the home care process. Now our client is living at home independently but with the care she needs. This was a simple intervention that made a world of difference for that family.

New to the Hawaii Jewish community, Kamala says, “I find the community, board members, staff and clients very welcoming. The Hawaii Jewish community is generous, compassionate, and very service oriented. This is the first time I’ve been in a job where we give out financial assistance. It took a bit to get used to – but it’s so satisfying to see the real difference we can make in someone’s life.”

*Social Isolation: "Many thanks to Kamala (JCS O'ahu case manager) for her efforts to find my elder mother activities in the Westside community."*

Mainland daughter

*Social group: "The secular activities put on by the JCS are great because I was raised in a nonobservant Jewish home. At this stage of my life, although I am pretty much an atheist, yet I have a strong sense of my Jewish identity."*

Group participant

*Crisis intervention:  
"Thank you very much for reaching out today. It helped me get out of my head and I feel so much better."*

Suicidal client



**KUPUNA ZAHAV - SENIOR GROUP ON ZOOM  
FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH  
10-11AM**

Join us for stimulating topics, support, and just talk story with peers in our Jewish community across the state. They have been meeting by Zoom since the start of the pandemic and don't want to stop! (Please have Zoom capability)

RSVP here or email  
[admin@jcs-hi.org](mailto:admin@jcs-hi.org)



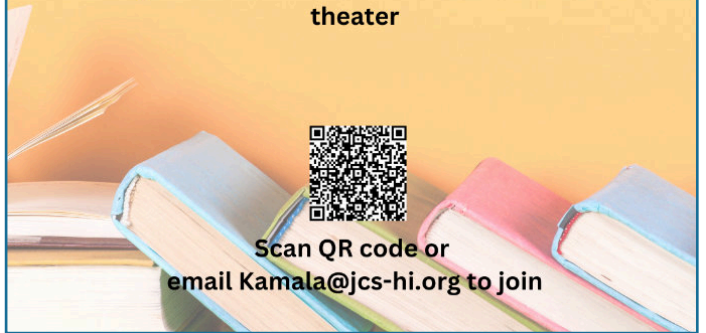
**JCS of Hawaii Book Club**

Last Sunday of every month

at  
a private Kaka'ako residence near Ward theater



Scan QR code or  
email [Kamala@jcs-hi.org](mailto:Kamala@jcs-hi.org) to join




# Perception is Everything

Understand how perception impacts your feelings, thoughts, and mood. Decrease symptoms of depression and anxiety.

A 6-week workshop with  
Mimi Lind, LCSW

Meets weekly on Zoom starting  
**Tuesday June 25, 2024**  
6:30 – 7:30 PM

Scan QR code to RSVP and receive Zoom link

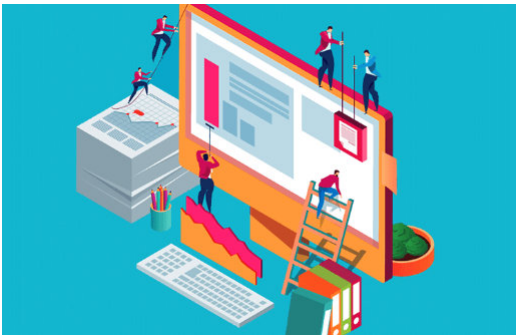


## Volunteers Always Needed

We are always looking for help to give essential support to members of our community in need. Help could include delivering food, providing supportive phone calls, giving rides to the doctor, and more. If you are interested, please contact [admin@jcs-hi.org](mailto:admin@jcs-hi.org) to discuss ways you may want to be of service.



## Website Redesign- Wait 'til You See It!



- Island-specific Calendar
- All things Jewish in Hawai'i – yellow pages
- How to report an antisemitic incident
- Listing of congregations across the islands
- Congregations will list their own events on the calendar

## Who is your Jewish neighbor?

Soon we will launch a way to connect with other Jews in your neighborhood. Carpool to events, give each other rides to colonoscopies, see who is free for a movie...

Look for an eblast announcement and those who respond will be grouped by neighborhood and notified of your new neighborhood hui!



If you want to start now – send us an email at [Tonya@jcs-hi.org](mailto:Tonya@jcs-hi.org) and get this effort started!



## **'We Remember Them' by Sylvan Kamens & Rabbi Jack Riemer**

**At the rising sun and its going down; We remember them.**

**At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of winter; We remember them.**

**At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring; We remember them.**

**At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer; We remember them.**

**At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of the autumn; We remember them.**

**At the beginning of the year and when it ends; We remember them. As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us as We remember them.**

**When we are weary and in need of strength; We remember them.**

**When we are lost and sick at heart; We remember them.**

**When we have decisions that are difficult to make; We remember them.**

**When we have joy we crave to share; We remember them.**

**When we have achievements that are based on theirs; We remember them.**

**For as long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them.**



### **Coping with Rising Antisemitism**

Support group for Hawaii's Jewish  
community

1st and 3rd Wednesday of the Month  
7pm  
On Zoom

RSVP to: [Kamala@jcs-hi.org](mailto:Kamala@jcs-hi.org)  
or 808-861-7801



### **Need support or know someone who does?**

Call, text, or email us for help with:

- Support and referrals for seniors
- Help with basic needs
- Crisis intervention and mental health referrals
- Social isolation and loneliness
- Intimate partner violence
- Substance misuse

O'ahu:	<a href="mailto:Kamala@jcs-hi.org">Kamala@jcs-hi.org</a>	808-861-7801
Maui/Moloka'i, Lāna'i:	<a href="mailto:Aiko@jcs-hi.org">Aiko@jcs-hi.org</a>	808-723-0575
Kaua'i:	<a href="mailto:Bianca@jcs-hi.org">Bianca@jcs-hi.org</a>	419-967-6693
Hawai'i Island:	<a href="mailto:Raquel@jcs-hi.org">Raquel@jcs-hi.org</a>	808-365-9292



Jewish Community Services of Hawaii

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**Working to keep the Hawaii  
Jewish community safe, healthy  
and connected!**

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