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# Jewish Community News

News of the Jewish VA Peninsula Community

January/February 2025/5785

## Virginia Jewish Advocacy Day

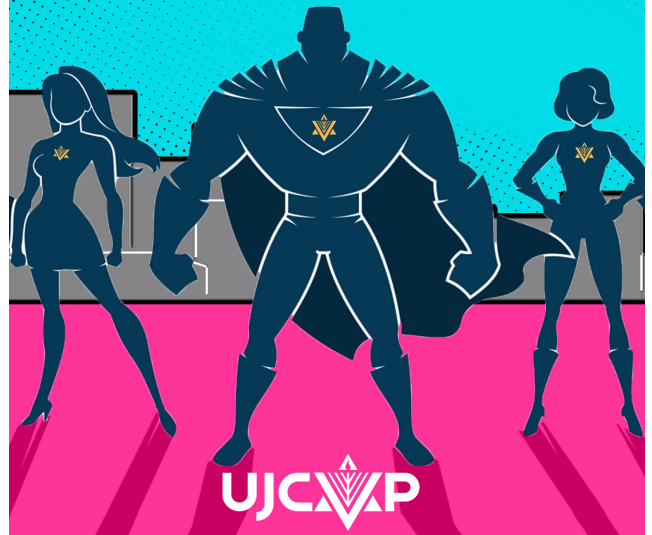


**JANUARY 29, 2025**

*Let's make our voices heard!*

**MORE INFO on PAGE 9**

**EVERYONE CAN BE A UJCVP HERO!**



**Super Hero Super Sunday 2025  
& Joint Sunday School  
Super Hero Edition**

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**Bagels  
& Fraylox**



**Klezmer  
Band**

**Winter  
Concert**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 12TH, 2PM**

Photo credit: Constantine Lukashin

**New updated tunes! Fun for the whole family! More info on page 10**

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## Eric & Jack Luckman Memorial Endowment Fund

In honor of Jeff Spigel's birthday  
Cynthia & Sidney Becker

In memory of Jodi Eligberg's father  
Lori & Jeff Luckman

## UJC Preschool Fund

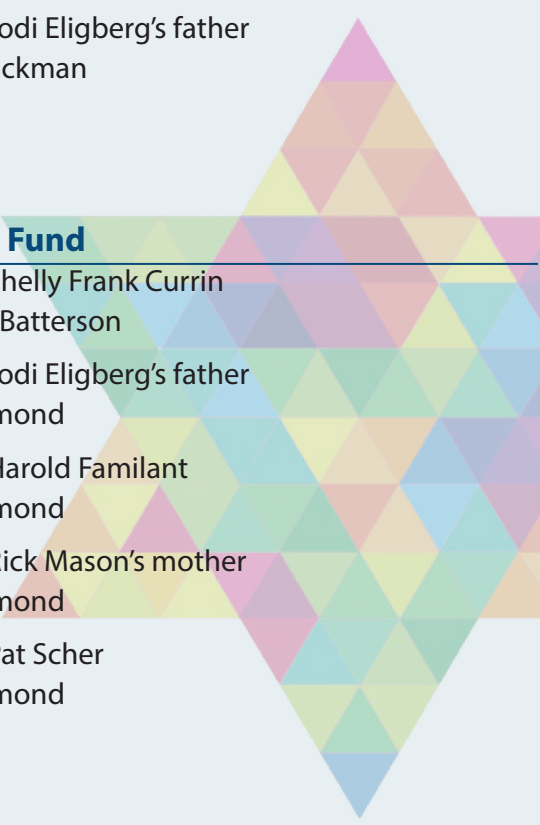
In memory of Shelly Frank Currin  
Jackie & Jim Batterson

In memory of Jodi Eligberg's father  
Rhonda Diamond

In memory of Harold Familant  
Rhonda Diamond

In memory of Rick Mason's mother  
Rhonda Diamond

In memory of Pat Scher  
Rhonda Diamond




**8th Annual Menorah Lighting at New Town**


Wed. January 1st  
6:00pm  
Main St. Gazebo

 Celebrate the 8th night of Hanukkah with donuts, and music from Bagels & Fraylox.

**AN EVENING WITH AVI MELAMED**



RSVP for this special event!



*more info on page 4*

# CEO's Message - Eric Maurer



The Talmud records a famous debate between two of our greatest sages, Shammai and Hillel, about the lighting of the Hanukkah candles. These two often held opposing views on matters of Jewish law, yet their disagreements were “*machloket l’shem shamayim*,” (arguments for the sake of heaven) rooted in profound respect and a shared commitment to sacred purpose.

Shammai argued that we should begin Hanukkah by lighting eight candles on the first night and decrease by one each subsequent night, ending with one candle on the final night. This perspective is based on the idea that the spiritual peak of the holiday lies in the miracle itself. After that moment, everything begins to decline. The best days are behind us. By lighting fewer candles each night, we honor the glory of the miracle, celebrating it with song, praise and joy. At the same time, we acknowledge that we are moving further away from that moment of divine closeness and wonder.

Hillel, however, argued that we should start with one candle on the first night and proceed to add one candle each night until all eight candles are lit on the last night.

For Hillel, the miracle is only the beginning of the story. We light an additional candle each night because we only increase in holiness. While God might have set the holiday in motion, it is human beings who have the power to add fuel and light, to tell and retell the story and to magnify holiness in the world. Our best days are yet to come because we believe that tomorrow can be even better than today, and that we have a critical role to play in making that happen.

Shammai lost the argument, which is why we light the Hanukkah today as suggested by Hillel. As humans, we must continually add light to the world, not diminish it.

This message resonates deeply with our work at the UJCVP today. A single spark can dispel darkness, but sustaining that light requires the collective effort of an entire community working toward a common goal.

Our united Jewish community serves as the *ner tamid*—the eternal light—dedicated to the sacred task of building a vibrant and evolving Jewish community where everyone is welcome. Together, we feed the hungry, lift the downtrodden, build resilient communities rooted in our values, and spread the joy of our tradition. Together, we ensure that every person counts and that no one is left behind. Like family—*mishpacha*—we care for one another, here, in Israel, and across the globe. Each act of kindness strengthens the light against despair.

This Hanukkah, I want to wish you and your loved ones all the joy and wonder of the season. On behalf of the UJCVP, I want to thank you for your dedication—and rededication—to increasing light in the world. May your light shine brighter with each passing day.



Happy Hanukkah!  
חנוכה שמח!

# Campaign Corner - Jessi Malkin



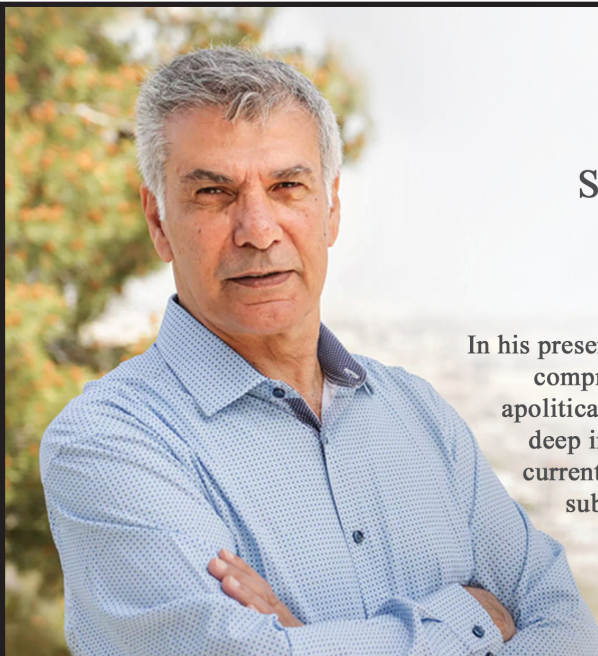
2025 is off to an amazing start! As you can tell from the left of this newsletter, we have all been super busy preparing.

The 24th Annual Holocaust Writing and Visual Art Competition officially launched at the beginning of December, led by Marley Keefer and Melissa Kashy. This is a fantastic opportunity for your 6th-12th graders to connect with our history. Students are welcome to enter on their own; no school connection is required. All submissions are due on February 28, by 4 pm. Find out more at [ujcvp.org/hwc2025](http://ujcvp.org/hwc2025).

Super Sunday is right around the corner on February 2. We are planning a Super Hero Super Sunday, starring and celebrating our best community feature... YOU! It is a really fun day made even better by the shared love, excitement and camaraderie of our people. UJCVP heroes volunteer on Super Sunday! UJCVP Heroes answer the call on Super Sunday! Everyone can be a UJCVP super hero! Learn more at [ujcvp.org/supersunday](http://ujcvp.org/supersunday).

Our Annual Campaign supports everything on our campus and so many things around our community. Security has become one of the greatest concerns in most Jewish communities. We are proud to provide each of our local institutions with access to our Regional Security Advisor, which is made possible by our Annual Campaign and partnership with Secure Community Network. We look forward to giving you all a glimpse into all that SCN does on February 16. We invite you to a special screening of *A Tree of Life: The Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting* followed by a panel of survivors from the attack and SCN professionals.

There is something for everyone at the UJC this winter! I look forward to seeing you soon!



## AN EVENING WITH AVI MELAMED

Sunday, January 5, 2025 | 6:30pm

**Join us for an enlightening evening with renowned geopolitical expert and educator, Avi Melamed.**

In his presentation titled "Inside the Middle East," Avi will provide a comprehensive briefing on the complexities of the region. This apolitical and nonpartisan educational session is designed to offer deep insights and a nuanced understanding of the Middle East's current geopolitical landscape. Whether you're familiar with the subject or new to it, this event will leave you with a broader perspective on one of the world's most intricate regions.

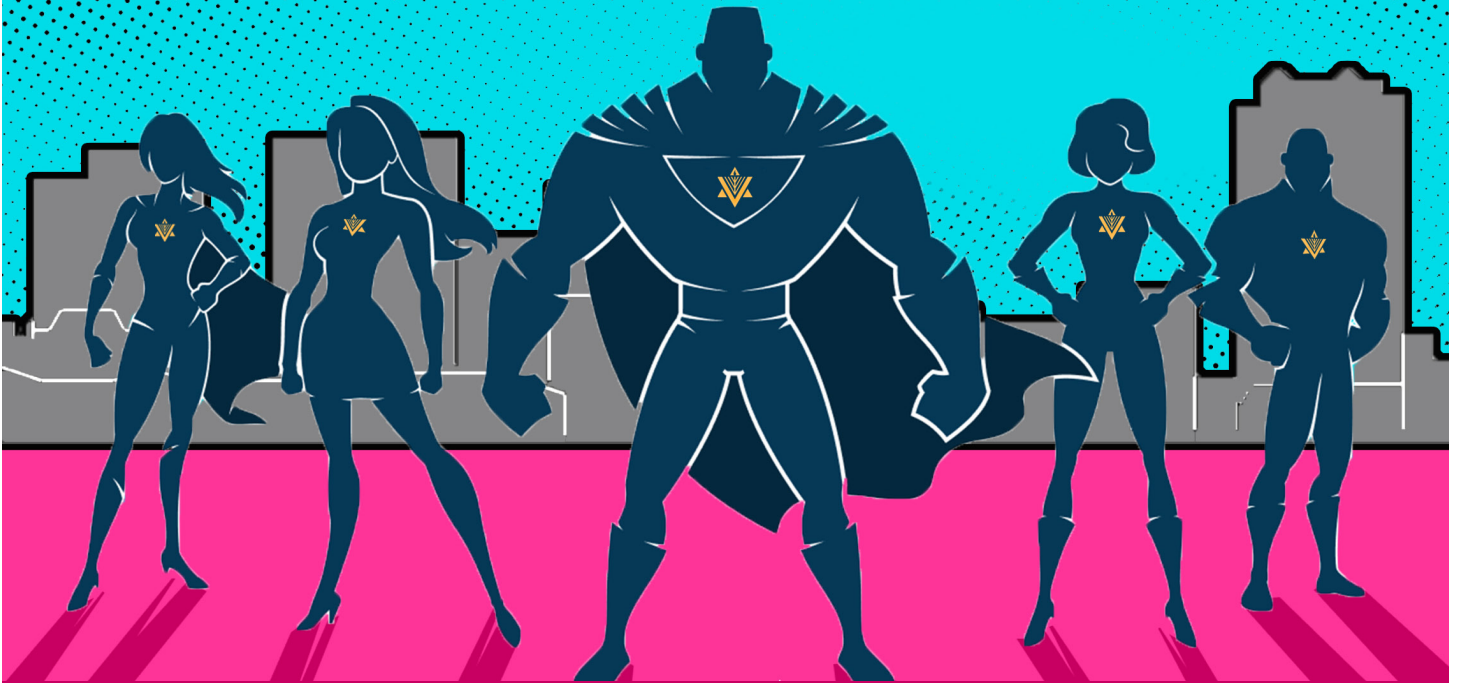
**Don't miss this opportunity to learn from one of the leading voices in Middle Eastern affairs.**

**RSVPs REQUIRED - [ujcvp.org/jewish-life](http://ujcvp.org/jewish-life)**

This program is made possible through the JCC Association in partnership with Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism.

**מתחברים CONNECTIONS** | JCC Association of North America | Ministry for Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism

# EVERYONE CAN BE A UJCVP HERO!



## SUPPORT THE UJCVP 2025 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN SUPER HERO SUPER SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 2, 2025  
9AM - 12PM

### YOUR HEROIC CONTRIBUTION WILL SUPPORT:

- Jewish Early Childhood Education
- Jewish Summer Camp Experiences
- Engaging Programs for Young Families
- Jewish Family Services
- Jewish Education & Culture
- Jewish Communities Overseas

Become a UJC hero  
and volunteer on  
Super Sunday!

[ujcvp.org/supersunday](http://ujcvp.org/supersunday)



## SUPER SUNDAY JOINT SUNDAY SCHOOL Super Hero Edition!

Feb. 2nd, 10am-12pm

Join all our community Sunday school  
students for a morning learning about  
Torah super heroes!

Questions? Please contact  
Carmela Malkin Kuhn: [carmela@ujcvp.org](mailto:carmela@ujcvp.org)



For more information  
please contact  
Jessi Malkin  
[jmalkin@ujcvp.org](mailto:jmalkin@ujcvp.org)  
757-930-1422

# JCCY Celebrates Tu B'Shevat

Saturday, Feb. 8th, 7:00pm

Join your K-3rd grade JCCY friends for a birthday bash for the trees! Play tree-themed party games, make crafts, and enjoy cupcakes to celebrate.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
TREES



RSVP: [ujcvp.org/children](http://ujcvp.org/children)

# PJOUR WAY Game Night & Tu B'Shevat Snack Bar



Saturday, Feb. 8th - 7pm

Join your 4th-7th grade PJOW friends for an evening of fun, games, and a snack bar fit to celebrate Tu B'Shevat!

RSVP: [ujcvp.org/children](http://ujcvp.org/children)

Come to the UJC for a viewing of the documentary, *Screams Before Silence*.

Sunday, Jan. 26th, 4pm

Never-before-heard eyewitness accounts from released hostages, survivors, and first responders from the October 7th attack in Israel.

*This film is for adults only. The film contains scenes that viewers may find disturbing.*

RSVP: [ujcvp.org/jewish-life](http://ujcvp.org/jewish-life)



JCC Association  
of North America



Ministry for Diaspora Affairs  
and Combating Antisemitism

מתחברים  
CONNECTIONS

## Education Corner - Carmela Malkin Kuhn



### Shabbat Shalom at Home

Friday is an exciting day at the Sarfan Center as we share Shabbat together, complete with candle lighting, kiddush and the children's very favorite delicious challah.

Our students continue to share Shabbat at home with their families with Shabbat Bags. The tradition of our Shabbat Bag program began several years ago. Each week, one child from each class gets to bring the joy of Shabbat from the preschool to their home. We have found that all our families enjoy being included, finding it informative and fun.

At the beginning of the school year, each class decorates a tote bag to become their Shabbat Bag. The Shabbat Bag includes everything needed to celebrate: candlesticks, kiddush cup, grape juice and challah are the ritual items, along with a Shabbat story and a journal to document each family's experience.

This wonderful photo of our Sarfan Shabbat Shalom board in our preschool lobby showcases the many families who have celebrated this tradition together.

Our connections are strengthened when we can share and celebrate Shabbat and Jewish traditions at school and at home.

## Summer Camp Chaverim - Naioki Wood



### Countdown to the Start of Camp Has Officially Begun!

Camp Chaverim is ready to kick off our summer with the promise of creating lasting friendships and a slew of happy memories. We've managed to fill eight weeks of summer with activities designed to meet the needs of every camper. Campers will enjoy battling it out in our own version of Chopped, hand-building with clay, kayaking, discovering the science behind candy, Lego design challenges and so MUCH MORE! Join us for a day camp experience, unlike any other.

**Summer Camp registration for the 2025 season opens February 1st! To register for camp, visit: [ujcvc.org/camp-chaverim](http://ujcvc.org/camp-chaverim)**

## The 24th Annual Holocaust Writing & Visual Arts Competition



The Holocaust Writing and Visual Arts Competition is a competition put on by the United Jewish Community of the Virginia Peninsula for students in 6th through 12th grade. The competition is funded through the

generosity of the Sarfan/William M. & Gary S. Nachman Philanthropic Fund.

This competition allows students to gain a deeper understanding of the Holocaust through provided prompts and the student's own research, and allows the students to give their responses in an informative, emotional, or ethical way.

"We're in our 24th year of the contest and we are focused on providing students a way of understanding the Holocaust in a more in-depth way," said competition co-chair Marley Keefer. This year, the students will be given five prompts from which to choose to write an essay or create an original piece of art.

"Some of the prompts ask the student to research the Holocaust and get more information; other prompts ask them to explore their feelings and think about what they might do in a similar situation" shared Melissa Kashy, competition co-chair.

The essays and artwork are blind-judged by two individual panels of impartial judges. Monetary prizes are given to the top three winners in each category: High School Writing, High School Art, Middle School Writing, and Middle School Art. The students of the winning entries are recognized during the UJC's Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance program. This year's program will be held on April 23.

The link to the 2025 Holocaust Writing and Visual Arts Competition booklet can be found at:

[ujcvp.org/hwc2025](http://ujcvp.org/hwc2025)

To enter the competition, all components need to be submitted by February 28.

We hope you will consider entering or volunteering with this competition.

Sincerely,  
Marley Keefer and Melissa Kashy  
Co-Chairs, Holocaust Writing and Arts Competition  
[Holocaust\\_writing@ujcvp.org](mailto:Holocaust_writing@ujcvp.org)

## Guns, Pro-Terrorist Messages Found at a Virginia SJP Leader's Residence

by Elad Vaida, Campus Reform



Police officers found firearms and pro-terrorist signs in the home of two members of Students for Justice for Palestine (SJP) who attend George Mason University in Virginia.

The two sisters in question, Jena and Noor Chanaa, are leaders with the SJP chapter at the school, and may have been involved in an anti-Israel vandalism spree on the campus in August, The Washington Free Beacon reported.

Their potential involvement in that incident led to the police searching their home, at which time law enforcement officers discovered guns, flags from the terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah, and signs with messages such as "death to America" and "death to Jews," according to the Beacon.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, an organization that has been accused of engaging in "openly antisemitic and anti-Zionist rhetoric," has expressed outrage over the search of the Chanaas's residence, calling this an attempt to "silence or intimidate those who seek to end the Israeli genocide in Gaza," the Beacon wrote.

George Mason University's SJP chapter was suspended on Nov. 8, and the university also banned Jena and Noor Chanaa from the school for several years, The Jerusalem Post wrote.

The school's SJP has used pro-Hamas rhetoric in the past, and justified its use of terrorist violence against innocent Jewish civilians during the Oct. 7 massacre, expressing approval for the "the right to resist for Palestinians living under the Zionist occupation" the Beacon wrote.

The SJP has provoked controversies repeatedly on many American college and university campuses for acts of vandalism and disruptive protest, many of which have been characterized as anti-Semitic.

As a result, the SJP has found itself banned from multiple campuses, including the universities of Tufts, Columbia, Brown, Illinois, and Temple.

The Community Relations Council of the UJCVP invites you to

# Virginia Jewish Advocacy Day

**WEDNESDAY  
JANUARY 29TH  
7:30AM – 2:30PM**



Come together and advocate with members of the Jewish communities across the Commonwealth.

Meet with your State Delegates and Senators and hear from the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General.

Ensure that your voice is part of the larger voice of the Jewish communities!

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

7:30am Depart UJCVP

8:00am Pickup in Williamsburg

9:15am Legislative Meetings

11:00am Meeting with Lt. Governor, Attorney General & Governor

11:45am Lunch

12:15pm Closing Session

## QUESTIONS?

Email Eric Maurer: [emaurer@ujcvp.org](mailto:emaurer@ujcvp.org)



**TO RSVP OR FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: [UJCVP.ORG](http://UJCVP.ORG)**



## Pearl Society Challah Bake Sale

*Pre-order now!*

January orders accepted now through 1/13  
February orders accepted 1/20-2/10

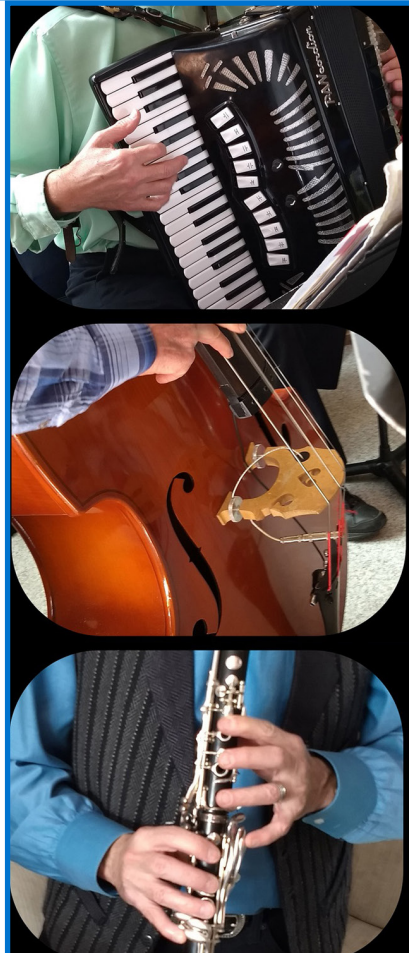
### To Order Visit

[ujcvp.org/womens-philanthropy](http://ujcvp.org/womens-philanthropy)  
(and scroll down to Pearl Society!)

or visit our UJC Facebook Page

Questions? Email [straster@ujcvp.org](mailto:straster@ujcvp.org)

## New updated tunes! Fun for the whole family!



**Bagels  
& Fraylox**



**Klezmer  
Band**

# Winter Concert

SUNDAY, JANUARY 12TH, 2PM

\$10 per person

*light refreshments will be served*

Klezmer is a lively mixture of wedding and party music of 19th century Eastern Europe with strains of Yiddish theater and American dance band music of the early 1900s. It borrows freely from Middle Eastern music and other sources as diverse as American folk music and rock 'n roll.

JOIN US AT THE J FOR AN INTERACTIVE AFTERNOON  
CONCERT WITH BAGELS & FRAYLOX!



RSVP: [ujcvp.org/arts-ideas](http://ujcvp.org/arts-ideas)

The Bagels & Fraylox Klezmer Band will host a community Klezmer Jam before the concert. Community members of all ages are invited to bring your instruments and play a few songs together with the band for a fun and interactive pre-concert experience.

Visit [ujcvp.org/arts-ideas](http://ujcvp.org/arts-ideas) to download the sheet music!



**January 4**  
Amber Barnes  
Sarfan Center Parparim  
3-year-olds teacher



**January 20**  
Dee Armstrong  
Sarfan Center Chaverim  
3-year-olds teacher



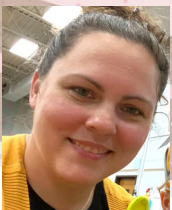
**February 26th**  
Gavrielle Bargash  
Sarfan Center  
Pre-K Teacher  
& UJC Youth  
Coordinator



**January 8**  
Carmela Malkin Kuhn  
UJC Director of  
Education & Program  
Development



**January 23**  
Corin Keller  
Sarfan Center Tziporim  
2-year-olds teacher



**January 10**  
Courtney Walden  
Sarfan Center Etzim  
2-year-olds teacher



**January 29**  
Martha Vogel  
UJC Office  
Manager

H A P P Y

Happy Birthday



## SAVE THE DATE!

**39th Annual  
Sarfan Center  
5K & 1 Mile Fun Run**

**Sunday  
May, 18, 2025**

more details to follow at  
[ujcvp.org](http://ujcvp.org)

### Evening classes at the J! Monday / Wednesday Evenings 5:30-6:30pm with instructor Kelli Paul

Bootcamp Fitness, LLC provides strength, cardio, core, and flexibility training (modifications are always provided). Choreography shifts between cardio intervals, fun cardio “air” boxing with hand pads, bootcamp stations, strength training with dumbbells, and adventurous fitness challenges! **Participants need to bring water and a mat.**

**Bootcamp Fitness provides all other equipment.**

**Passport Members - \$5/class | Community Members - \$10/class**  
Visit [ujcvp.org/wellness](http://ujcvp.org/wellness) to sign up!



2025  
**Youth New Year**  
MOVIE NIGHT

**JANUARY 18**  
**SATURDAY | 7PM-9PM**  
**UJC GYMNASIUM**

Drop your child(ren) off at the UJC gym for a fun movie night with friends to kick off the 2025 new year!  
*Squishmallows are invited to join the party, too!*

Entry: \$5/child - Registration Required  
 Drinks & popcorn included

Event is for all children grades K-10th  
[ujcvp.org/children](http://ujcvp.org/children)

JOIN IN ON THE FUN FOR THESE UPCOMING 20/30S EVENTS!



**Game Night - January 14th**  
 Meet up at Tradition Bewing Co. for a cozy winter night of board games, puzzles, drinks and snacks.



**Art Night - January 30th**  
 Join the group at the J for a relaxing evening expressing your creativity.



**Take & Bake - February 13th**  
 Gather together to make challah dough, then take it home to bake and enjoy for Shabbat.

MORE INFO / RSVP:

[UJCVP.ORG/YOUNG-ADULT](http://UJCVP.ORG/YOUNG-ADULT)

Photo from the 20/30s Bonfire on Dec. 14th.  
 Join the group for more winter fun!





# welcomes

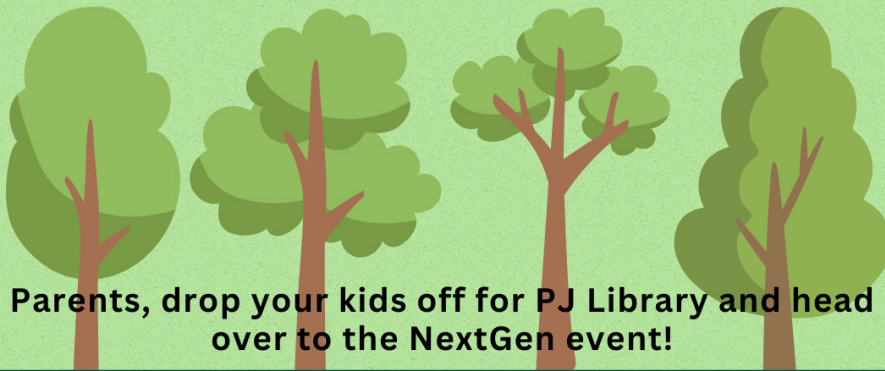
## TU B'SHEVAT

SUNDAY, FEB. 9TH  
2:00PM

Drop your kids off for a fun afternoon celebrating Tu B'Shevat, the birthday of the trees, with story time, crafts, activities, and a special treat!

*Program is for children ages 4-9.*

RSVP:  
UJCVP.ORG/  
PJLIBRARY



Parents, drop your kids off for PJ Library and head over to the NextGen event!

**ART WITH ABBY**



TAUGHT BY NNPS  
ART TEACHER:  
**ABBY PARRISH**




Join the fun afterschool at the J for a 4-week art series. Kids will finish the series with two completed winter-themed art projects!

**THURSDAYS**  
JAN. 16, 23, 30, FEB. 6  
5-5:45PM

A 4-WEEK GUIDED KIDS ART SERIES FOR AGES 6+

[ujcvp.org/children](http://ujcvp.org/children)

Passport Members - \$40 (\$10 per class)  
Community Members - \$60 (\$15 per class)



## THIS WAY TO AN UNFORGETTABLE SUMMER

There's a perfect camp for every Jewish camper. Find yours today at [ONEHAPPYCAMPER.ORG](http://ONEHAPPYCAMPER.ORG).

Plus, you can get **UP TO \$1000 OFF** your camper's first summer.




For more information about overnight camps and camp scholarships, please contact **Jessi Malkin**

[jmalkin@ujcvp.org](mailto:jmalkin@ujcvp.org)  
757-930-1422

# Jewish Family Services - Libby Batten



*Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Hanukkah outreach program. Your generosity and support made it a huge success, and together we were able to bring light and happiness to children in our community. We are deeply grateful for your involvement, and we look forward to continuing this meaningful work together next year.  
Wishing you all a happy, healthy, and prosperous year ahead.*

## What's Next After Hanukkah? A Season of Reflection and Connection!

As the menorahs are carefully packed away and the last traces of gelt are enjoyed, the question arises: What comes next after Hanukkah? The Festival of Lights may be over, but its themes of resilience, hope and connection can guide us into the weeks ahead.

Now is the perfect time to reflect on how we can continue bringing light into our lives and others. Consider acts of kindness like volunteering at a local shelter, checking in on a neighbor, or contributing to a community cause. Plan family gatherings to stay connected with loved ones or take time for personal reflection by setting achievable goals for the upcoming year ahead. While Hanukkah's glow may fade, its message endures - reminding us to bring light to the world through kindness, connection, and hope.

If you need assistance after the holidays, Jewish Family Services provides help with referrals, support and guidance. Contact Libby Batten at [lbatten@ujcvp.org](mailto:lbatten@ujcvp.org).



 <p><b>GRAND CLUB</b></p>	<p><b>Lunch &amp; Bingo on Thursdays</b></p> <p>Lunch for ages 60+ - \$2.50 Lunch for Passport Members - FREE! <i>Additional charge for bingo cards.</i></p> <p>Bingo begins at 11am, lunch is served at 12:00pm</p> <p>Email Carmela: <a href="mailto:carmela@ujcvp.org">carmela@ujcvp.org</a> for more info or to RSVP</p>
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**The UJC & Sarfan Center will be closed:**  
**Monday, January 20th**  
for Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
**Monday, February 17th**  
for Presidents' Day

# Program Team - Sara Traster



## Knitz-vah Project: Weaving Warmth, Love, and Mitzvot

Our local community members have come together to perform a knitzvah—a creative blend of knitting and mitzvah. This special initiative has brought the warmth of handmade scarves, hats, and blankets to women and children at a local shelter, embodying the Jewish values of chesed (kindness), tzedakah (justice and charity), and tikkun olam (repairing the world).



Knitting may seem like a simple act, but for those creating these items, it's a labor of love. Each stitch carries intention, each row builds on the hope that these creations will bring comfort to someone in need. As one participant shared, "Every time I knit, I think about the person who will receive this, and I pray that it makes them feel cared for and less alone."

Judaism teaches us the profound importance of clothing the naked. The Talmud underscores that providing clothing is among the highest forms of charity because it addresses a fundamental human need. The Knitzvah Project embodies this principle by ensuring that individuals facing difficult times feel the warmth—both physical and emotional—of their community's support.

The project was about more than knitting; it was about weaving a stronger community. The Knitzvah Project is a beautiful reminder that even small actions, when done with intention and love, can make a big impact.

Thank you to all the knitters, crocheters, weavers and crafters who have wrapped those in need in our community in the warmth of love, compassion, and mitzvot.



Knit so far...  
Baby Sweaters - 2  
Kids Hats - 20  
Adult Hats - 34  
Scarves - 68  
Blankets - 16





ב"ה

# SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES.



**Services – 10:00AM**



**Light kiddish – 11:30 AM**



**ChabadWilliamsburg.org**



**757-929-4999**



Congregation  
**Emet V'Or**

*Truth and Light in the Reform Tradition*

Office.CEVO@gmail.com  
www.emetvor.com  
757-952-3737

Rabbi Scott Gurdin  
Cantorial Soloist Dr. Jonathan Rathsam  
Musical Accompanist Dr. Ben Corbin

## **Shabbat Services**

*Erev Shabbat services are held Friday evenings at 7:00pm unless otherwise noted.*

**January 3<sup>rd</sup>** – Lay led services

**January 10<sup>th</sup>** – Rabbi led services

**January 17<sup>th</sup>** – Cantor led services

**January 24<sup>th</sup>** – Rabbi led services

**January 31<sup>st</sup>** – Lay led services

**February 7<sup>th</sup>** – Lay led services

**February 14** – Rabbi led services

**February 21<sup>st</sup>** – Rabbi led services w/cantorial accompaniment

**February 28<sup>th</sup>** – Lay led services

## **Special Events & Other News**

January 12<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> – Religious School  
10:00-12:00

February 9<sup>th</sup> – TuB'Shevat event for the AlefBeits and Religious School – 9:00-10:00, followed by religious school at 10:00. Please RSVP to Lisa Stern

February 23<sup>rd</sup> – Religious School 10:00-12:00

CEVO Board Meeting – January 13<sup>th</sup>, February 10<sup>th</sup>

All are welcome to visit! Our location:  
101 Production Drive, Suite 101, Yorktown, VA 23693



[fb.me/CEVOcommunity](https://fb.me/CEVOcommunity)

Congregation Adath Jeshurun  
401 City Center Blvd., Newport News, VA 23606

Telephone # 757-930-0820 | Website: [www.ajshul.com](http://www.ajshul.com)  
Rabbi Gershon Litt, 757-559-1836



TuB'Shevat, the Jewish New Year for trees, is a holiday of hope and optimism. In the winter, most trees lose their leaves and look dreary. Yet, in the early spring, they are revived and sprout new leaves. A custom of TuB'Shevat is to eat fruit, but there is no fruit on the trees. When we celebrate this custom, it is not premature. It symbolizes optimism and hope that the fruit will appear at a later time. The message of TuB'Shevat is look to the future for a new positive start.

### **Adath Jeshurun Camp Shabbat Mini-Grant Opportunity**

Congregation Adath Jeshurun will host a Camp Shabbat to celebrate the impact of Jewish overnight camps, supported by a \$250 mini-grant from One Happy Camper. This initiative aims to inspire families with children aged 6–16 to explore Jewish camping experiences, fostering community connection and tradition. The event will feature a Shabbat lunch and outreach to local families, with the grant covering event costs. Participants are encouraged to share their enthusiasm for camp, inviting others to join this meaningful Shabbat. This program runs through February. *If interested, contact Rabbi Litt at [rabbi@ajshul.com](mailto:rabbi@ajshul.com) for more details.*

### **Candle Lighting Times:**

Jan. 3 - 4:43pm	Feb. 7 - 5:19pm
Jan. 10 - 4:50pm	Feb. 14 - 5:27pm
Jan. 17 - 4:57pm	Feb. 21 - 5:34pm
Jan. 24 - 5:04pm	Feb. 28 - 5:41pm

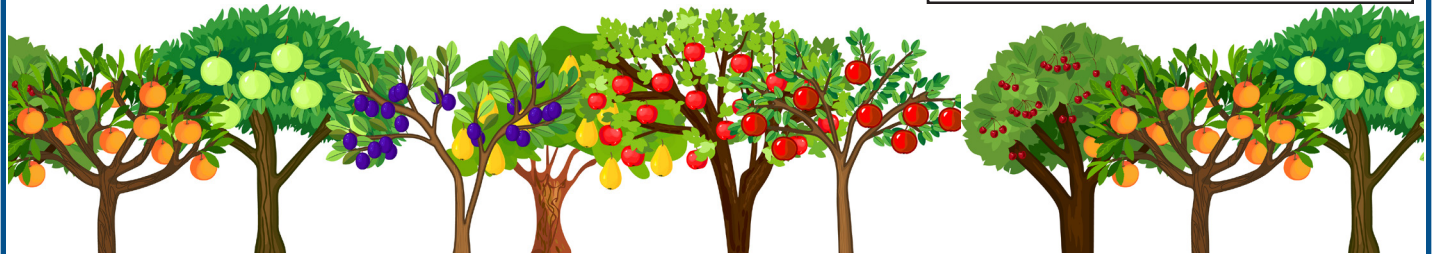
### **Rabbi Litt's Shabbos Schedule:**

Jan. 17th, Feb. 21st, Mar. 21st,  
Apr. 25th, May 23rd, June 20th

*Shabbos lunch in January is sponsored by Eric & Becca Maurer in honor of their son Matan's birthday.*

*Shabbos lunch in February is sponsored by Robert Shapiro & Leslie Frank in honor of their 80th birthdays.*

*Mazel tov to Bob & Meryl Kessler on the marriage of their grandson Ben to Kayla.*



 **HBO ORIGINAL**  
*a Tree of Life*  
**THE PITTSBURGH SYNAGOGUE SHOOTING**

**FILM SCREENING & PANEL DISCUSSION**  
**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16**  
KIMBALL THEATER, WILLIAMSBURG  
428 W DUKE OF GLOUCESTER STREET  
Admission: \$10 per person  
Registration Required: [ujcvp.org/jewish-life](http://ujcvp.org/jewish-life)

 **VIRGINIA PENINSULA JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL**

# RODEF SHOLOM TEMPLE

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*We are: Warm, welcoming and steeped in the rich traditions of Judaism...Egalitarian and Eclectic  
Living personal Jewish journeys across a spectrum of participation...Looking forward to seeing you!*



## Upcoming Events:

Tuesdays at Noon - Ethics of Our Ancestors  
January 11th - Mini Minyan Youth Program & Shabbat Shmooze  
Adult Program  
January 12th - Hebrew Reading Marathon  
January 17th - Congregational Dinner & Youth Program  
January 24th - Sisterhood Shabbat Happy Hour  
January 26th - Sisterhood Book Club & Adult Education  
February 8th - Shabbat Shmooze Adult Program  
February 9th - Men's Club World Wide Wrap  
February 14th - Congregational Dinner  
February 15th - Mini Minyan Youth Shabbat Program  
February 23rd - Sisterhood Torah Fund Brunch

## In-Person and Zoom Services:

Minyan: Monday & Thursday @ 7:45am  
Kabbalat Shabbat: Friday @ 6:00pm  
Shabbat Morning Services: Saturday @ 9:30am

Contact the Temple Office for Zoom information.  
Please see our website for more information.

401 City Center Blvd. Newport News, VA 23606  
757-826-5894 | [www.rodefsholomtemple.org](http://www.rodefsholomtemple.org)  
[office@rodefsholomtemple.org](mailto:office@rodefsholomtemple.org)

**Kibbitz & Create**  
Thursday, January 30th  
Thursday, February 27th  
10am-12pm

Join our group at the J for a morning of  
chatting, crafting, and snacks.  
All fiber arts crafts welcome!

**RSVP at [ujcvp.org](http://ujcvp.org)**  
Questions? Email Jessi Malkin  
[jmalkin@ujcvp.org](mailto:jmalkin@ujcvp.org)





## Temple Beth El of Williamsburg 600 Jamestown Road

### Book Club with Rabbi David—January 12

Rabbi David will lead the Book Club discussion for *The Jew in the Lotus* by Rodger Kamenetz, on January 12<sup>th</sup>, starting at 2pm.

### Shabbat Kulanu 2025 Dates

Join us for Shabbat Kulanu in 2025, on Friday nights, at 6:30 pm—  
January 24, February 21, March 21, April 25, and May 16.

This family-oriented service features guitar playing, a puppet show, and pizza!  
Participate in person – in the synagogue Sanctuary – or online, via Zoom.  
Contact [office@tbewilliamsburg.org](mailto:office@tbewilliamsburg.org) for the link.

*We celebrate Jewish life all year!*

*Learn more at [tbewilliamsburg.org](http://tbewilliamsburg.org)*

## Temple Sinai Founded 1955

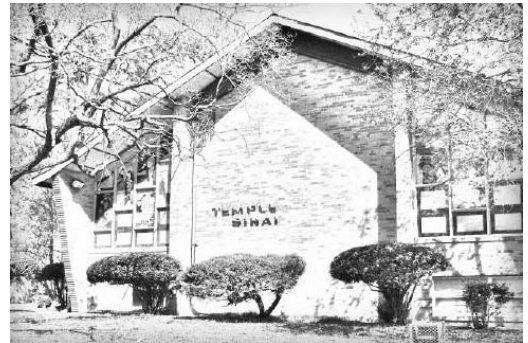
11620 Warwick Boulevard  
Newport News, VA 23601  
757-596-8352

*Rabbi Severine Sokol*

### Reform Jewish Temple of the Virginia Peninsula

Our warm, inclusive congregation  
welcomes all guests, including Jews by  
heritage, Jews by choice, secular Jews,  
interfaith families, couples, singles,  
children, and LGBT+ members.

If you would like to attend services,  
contact Mary Beth in the Temple Office  
757-596-8352.



#### Worship Services

- Friday, Jan. 3rd, 7:30 p.m. – Kabbalat Shabbat Service of Healing
- Saturday, Jan. 11th, 10:00 a.m.- Shabbat Tzedek (MLK) Service with HPD Chaplain Vernita Baldwin & light Kiddush luncheon
- Saturday, Jan. 18th, 10:00 a.m.- Shabbat Service/ Fred Levy's naming & Bar Mitzvah Torah Reading & light Kiddush luncheon
- Friday, Jan. 24th, 7:30 p.m. – Kabbalat Shabbat Service with Guest choir & Dr. Vered Sakal (Holocaust Remembrance) & Oneg

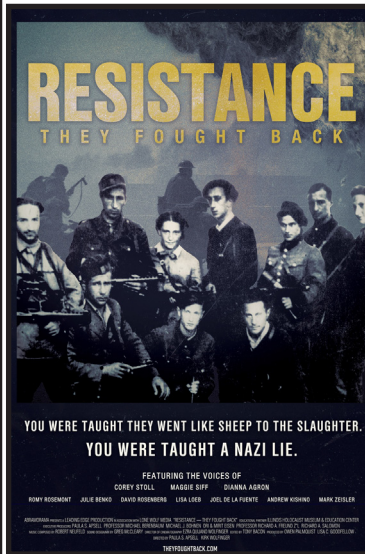
- Saturday, Feb. 1st, 10:00 a.m.- Shabbat Service with Poetry Reading by Fred Levy & light Kiddush luncheon
- Friday, Feb. 7th, 7:30 p.m. – HIAS Refugee Kabbalat Shabbat Service & Oneg
- Saturday, Feb. 15th, 10:00 a.m.- Tu B'Shevat Seder
- Friday, Feb. 21st, 7:30 p.m. – Repro Kabbalat Shabbat Service & Oneg
- Friday, Feb. 28th, 5:00 p.m. – Abridged Kabbalat Shabbat Service, Dinner & Movie

#### Adult Education Program

Sunday, Jan. 19th & Feb. 16th, 11:00 a.m.  
- Come and join Joanna Homrighausen and Fred Levy at the Temple for an informal Torah discussion and a delicious bagel nosh! Zoom option available.

# Temple Beth El's 24th Annual Virginia Peninsula Jewish Film Festival

at the Williamsburg Regional Library Theater - 515 Scotland Street, Williamsburg VA



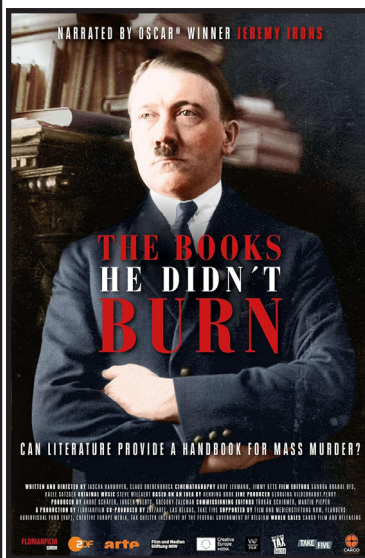
**RESISTANCE: THEY FOUGHT BACK**  
**Sunday, January 26, 2025 at 2:00pm**  
 2023, 1 hr 40 min, Documentary (USA)

Did the Jews go as “lambs to the slaughter?” Paula Apsell, producer of the NOVA series, made this riveting new feature describing the various ways of resistance, from armed to daily life resistance, using rare archives and the most important scholars of Holocaust research, and remaining survivors, to answer this question. This is a must-see documentary, especially for youngsters growing in today’s world where info is not always reliable. The film chronicles the Eastern European archaeological work of the late Dr. Richard A. Freund conducted on behalf of Christopher Newport University. Dr. Freund was the inaugural Bertram and Gladys Aaron Professor of Jewish Studies at Christopher Newport University from 2019-2022.



**ALL ABOUT THE LEVKOVICHES**  
**Sunday, March 2, 2025 at 2:00pm**  
 2024, 1 hr 25 min, Drama

Told with delightfully mordant humor and a genuine warmth, this appealing domestic story from Hungarian filmmaker Adam Breier follows a Jewish family on the winding path toward reconciliation. Tamas is an aging boxing coach in Budapest whose relationship with his son, Ivan, has frayed to the point of estrangement. After converting to Orthodox Judaism, Ivan moved to Israel, where he had a son, Ariel, whom Tamas has never met. Now, Ivan and Ariel have come back to Budapest for the funeral of Tomas’s wife, forcing father and son to face one another. Breier’s film is masterfully acted and directed, maintaining a perfectly balanced tone between comedy and pathos.



**THE BOOKS HE DIDN'T BURN**  
**Sunday, March 23, 2025 at 2:00pm**  
 2023, 1 hr 31 min, Documentary

A critical look at the history of Western thought by examining the remains of Adolf Hitler’s private library. The dictator and mass murderer owned 16,000 books at the end of his life, 1,200 of which are kept in the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. today. Bredendbrock and Jascha Hannover’s gripping, provocative documentary narrated by Academy Award winner Jeremy Irons, follows Timothy W. Ryback, an eminent historian and expert on Hitler’s library, as he tries to make sense of the historical meaning of this collection.

*All films are free. Light dessert & beverages will be provided afterward.*  
**The Virginia Peninsula Jewish Film Festival Committee greatly appreciates the support and loyalty of our audiences Sponsored by Temple Beth El**



## Join us for our NextGen Peninsula Event!

February 9th, 2pm

If you are Jewish, or Jewish adjacent, and in your 20s, 30s or 40s and want to socialize and make a difference, NextGen Peninsula is where you want to be!

### NextGen Tu B'Shevat

We will explore a unique look at Tu B'Shevat.

More details to follow!

RSVP: [ujcvp.org/nextgen](http://ujcvp.org/nextgen)

## Red Cross Blood Drives at the UJC

Tuesday, Jan. 14th, 10am-2pm

Friday, Feb. 21st, 10am-2pm

*One pint of blood can save up to  
three lives!*

Schedule an appointment at [ujcvp.org](http://ujcvp.org)

Questions? Email Sara Traster  
[straster@ujcvp.org](mailto:straster@ujcvp.org)

The need for blood  
doesn't take a snow day.

American Red Cross

[RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org)

A graphic with a dark blue background featuring white snowflakes. The text "The need for blood doesn't take a snow day." is in white. Below the text is the American Red Cross logo and the website "RedCrossBlood.org". The bottom half of the graphic is red with a white blood drop icon and a white heartbeat line.



**Thank you for your support of our Pushke Pour Out!**

# What the fall of Bashar Assad in Syria means for Israel

by Ben Sales, Jewish Telegraph Agency



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (right) and other Israeli officials at the Syrian border on Dec. 8, 2024.

Syrian dictator Bashar Assad has fled the country and his government has fallen to rebels, a swift and stunning collapse after more than a decade of civil war. The country is now enveloped in joy and

targets in Damascus, the capital. Beyond that, Israeli leaders are broadcasting optimism about the fall of Assad, a key Iranian ally, while girding themselves for the ascension of the jihadist-linked group that toppled him.

Events are still unfolding rapidly in Syria and the region. But in the immediate wake of Assad's ouster, here's what this means for Israel.

Oct. 7 likely contributed to Assad's downfall. To remain in power during the Syrian civil war, Assad relied on several allies — including Hezbollah, Iran and Russia.

Now, those allies have been weakened or are fighting elsewhere. Russia, which shored up Assad in 2015 at a key moment in the civil war, has focused its firepower on Ukraine since invading that country nearly three years ago.

Hezbollah, the Lebanese terror group that is also funded by Iran, sent thousands of its fighters to Syria to battle on Assad's behalf.

turmoil as hundreds of thousands of refugees stream home, political prisoners go free and Syrians — along with the rest of the world — wonder what's next. Also wrapped up in uncertainty: Syria's neighbor and longtime adversary, Israel. Assad's fall came after several of his regional partners have been weakened in Israel's multi-front war, which began with Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, invasion.

Israeli troops entered a buffer zone with Syria over the weekend and its planes have reportedly begun bombing Syrian chemical weapons facilities and other

*continued on next page*





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- We have a crematory on-site since 1997, so your loved one never leaves our care.
- We were the first funeral home on the Peninsula to put our price lists (service and merchandise) online.
- We are one of the few if only, Peninsula funeral homes to offer Virginia residents 30 days to pay for services after the actual service date.

Like the families we serve, we are unique individuals. Our diverse staff of men and women are dedicated to funeral service, bringing together more than 100 years of licensed experience in this one organization. We are open to all faiths and customs and can quickly and professionally adapt to the needs of our community. Our goal is to fulfill your family's wishes in every way possible.

# Happy New Year

FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS



**IT TAKES  
A FAMILY  
TO COMFORT  
A FAMILY.**



11144 Warwick Blvd, Newport News, VA  
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peninsulafuneralhome.com

Following Hamas' invasion of Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, Hezbollah began shelling Israel's northern border area. That conflict escalated sharply a few months ago and ended with a ceasefire two weeks ago, after Israel destroyed much of Hezbollah's capabilities and leadership.

Iran, too, has engaged in a few rounds of direct conflict with Israel, during which Israel bombed its air defenses.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Assad's defeat "the direct result of our forceful action against Hezbollah and Iran, Assad's main supporters." President-elect Donald Trump, too, credited "Israel and its fighting success" contributing to the chain of events.

On Sunday, President Joe Biden also said the Oct. 7 attack and Israel's response led to Assad's ouster. Iran, Hezbollah and Russia are "far weaker today than they were when I took office," Biden said. After the Oct. 7 attack, he added, "Iran and its proxies chose to launch a multi-front war against Israel. That was a historic mistake on Iran's part."

Another Iranian ally is down. Iran is widely seen as Israel's chief adversary, and it funded and coordinated extensive efforts in the region to counter Israel. For Israel, Assad's ouster means that yet another node of Iran's so-called regional "Axis of Resistance" has been taken out.

But since Oct. 7, that alliance has been decimated.

To both sympathizers and opponents, Assad's downfall is a huge setback for Iran and its regional influence.

That doesn't mean the rebels are an ally of Israel. The group that has led the offensive is Hayat Tahrir al-Sham or HTS, an Islamist organization that evolved out of the Nusra Front, a group that was affiliated with the terror group Al-Qaeda and with the Islamic State. A standard piece of that ideology is opposition to Israel.

Israel and Syria haven't fought for half a century — and probably won't start now. That's one reason why, despite instability and violence on yet another one of its borders, Israel likely will not find itself at war with whomever takes power in Syria. The countries haven't fought a major conflict since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, though Israel has bombed weapons shipments to Hezbollah in Syria numerous times.

Right now, the future of Syria's government is unclear, different rebel groups control different areas and military positions have been abandoned. In response,

Netanyahu said, Israeli forces have entered the buffer zone between the two countries "to take action against possible threats."

He said that Israel wants "neighborly relations and peaceful relations with the new forces emerging in Syria" if possible. He added, "The Syrian army abandoned its positions. We gave the Israeli army the order to take over these positions to ensure that no hostile force embeds itself right next to the border of Israel. This is a temporary defensive position until a suitable arrangement is found."



*A rusting tank on a hill in the Golan Heights overlooking Syria is a vestige of an earlier war. The area last saw serious fighting during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.*

In a statement, the Israeli military said that the presence of troops in the buffer zone doesn't mean that Israel is getting involved in whatever fighting is to come. "We emphasize that the IDF is not interfering with the internal events in Syria," it said.

Full article can be found at:  
<https://www.jta.org/2024/12/08/israel/what-the-fall-of-bashar-assad-in-syria-means-for-israel>



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# UJCVP Community January/February 2025 Calendar

**Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025**  
UJC CLOSED  
SARFAN CENTER CLOSED  
6pm - Hanukkah at New Town

**Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025**  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo

**Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025**  
6:30pm - Inside the Middle  
East with Avi Melamed

**Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025**  
4:30pm - Hebrew School

**Thursday, Jan. 9, 2025**  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo

**Sunday, Jan. 12, 2025**  
2pm - Bagels & Fraylox Concert

**Tuesday, Jan. 14, 2025**  
10am - Red Cross Blood Drive  
4:30pm - Hebrew School  
5:30pm - 20/30s Game Night

**Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2025**  
7pm - UJC General  
Board Meeting

**Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025**  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo  
5pm - Art with Abby

**Saturday, Jan. 18, 2025**  
7pm - Youth New  
Year Movie Night

**Monday, Jan. 20, 2025**  
UJC CLOSED  
SARFAN CENTER CLOSED

**Tuesday, Jan. 21, 2025**  
4:30pm - Hebrew School

**Thursday, Jan. 23, 2025**  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo  
5pm - Art with Abby

**Sunday, Jan. 26, 2025**  
4pm - *Screams Before  
Silence* Film Screening

**Tuesday, Jan. 28, 2025**  
4:30pm - Hebrew School

**Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2025**  
VA Jewish Advocacy Day

**Thursday, Jan. 30, 2025**  
10am - Kibbitz & Create  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo  
5pm - Art with Abby  
6pm - 20/30s Art Night

**Sunday, Feb. 2, 2025**  
Super Sunday  
10am - Joint Sunday School

**Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2025**  
4:30pm - Hebrew School

**Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025**  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo  
5pm - Art with Abby

**Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025**  
7pm - JCCY Tu B'Shevat  
7pm - PJOW Game Night

**Sunday, Feb. 9, 2025**  
2pm - NextGen Tu B'Shevat  
2pm - PJ Library Tu B'shevat

**Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025**  
4:30pm - Hebrew School

**Thursday, Feb. 13, 2025**  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo  
5:30pm - 20/30s Take & Bake

**Sunday, Feb. 16, 2025**  
A Tree of Life Film &  
Panel Discussion

**Monday, Feb. 17, 2025**  
UJC CLOSED  
SARFAN CENTER CLOSED

**Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2025**  
4:30pm - Hebrew School

**Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025**  
7pm - UJC General  
Board Meeting

**Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025**  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo

**Friday, Feb. 21, 2025**  
10am - Red Cross Blood Drive

**Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2025**  
4:30pm - Hebrew School

**Thursday, Feb. 27, 2025**  
10am - Kibbitz & Create  
11am - Grand Club/Bingo

