

» GMAR CHATIMA TOVA

Jewish Observer of Central New York

A publication of the Jewish Federation of Central New York

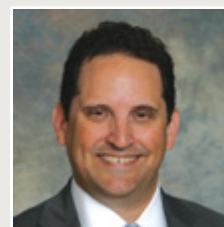
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October 2024

From the Editor



Barbara Davis

As heartbreaking as 5784 was, it underscored the vital importance of staying united, resolute and unwavering in our commitment to our shared values.

We learned both that we will always be “the other” to some people and that antisemitism is not something that happened in the 20th century and disappeared in the 21st. We also learned that we have allies and that there are good people everywhere who will stand up for us and stand with us to fight against hate and for what is good and just. We learned that we are not monolithic, that Jews have many different points of view and that we do not agree all of the time...perhaps not even most of the time. But we also learned that we need to be able to transcend our differences, stand together and be proud of what we have accomplished as a people, what we are accomplishing now and what we will accomplish in the future.

As we enter 5785, we do so with renewed energy and vitality and with a desire to, as we used to say in the 60s, “make peace not war” with one another. We are reminded each year, at the High Holidays, that nothing is static, that each year has an ending and a beginning and that, each year, the Book of Life is open for new entries. We are inspired as we begin the year with the stories that we share in this issue about new leadership in our community institutions and new initiatives in programming and philanthropy.

One of the expressions I have come to dislike with intensity is “We can’t change that because that’s the way we have always done it.” The truth of the matter is that what worked in the past generally is not as effective in the present and certainly won’t be as effective in the future. What if Moses had refused to leave Egypt because it had never been done before? What if the earliest Zionists had refused to create the State of Israel because such a state had never existed before? What if, closer to home, the founders of our Jewish Community Foundation had opted not to act, because such an institution had never been established before? Jews have always been a creative people, whether in science, music, philosophy, art, psychology, physics or literature. They have always pushed against limitations, against the status quo, against “the way we have always done it.”

We now live in an age that not only encompasses tremendous change, some good, some bad, but calls out for more change. We are experiencing wars, drastic climate transformation, political change, artificial intelligence and more. We need to address these issues in new ways and we need to engage all of the Jewish people – not just the ones who have always done it – in meeting these challenges. When the Jewish Federation of Central New York was incorporated in 1948, it was called the Syracuse Jewish Welfare Federation. The purposes of the organization were declared to be: “to solicit, collect and otherwise raise money for charitable, philanthropic, eleemosynary and benevolent purposes; to expend, contribute, disperse and otherwise handle and dispose of the same for such purposes; ...to assist in harmonizing and making more efficient the work of Jewish charitable, philanthropic and benevolent organizations of the city of Syracuse...; to participate in establishing cordial relations and goodwill among groups within and without the Jewish community of the city of Syracuse...”

Those worthy intentions are practically meaningless in the context of the Jewish community three quarters of a century later. The articles of incorporation made absolutely no reference to the State of Israel, established that very same year. They do not reference antisemitism, despite the Holocaust. They make no mention of the cultural and social life of the Jewish community or of interfaith matters or of issues of security and advocacy. They do not speak to the Jewish education of the community’s children. Imagine where we would be today if the Federation had not modified its mission, vision and values in the years since its incorporation.

The famous Rebbe Nachman of Breslov said, “If you are not a better person tomorrow than you are today, what need have you for a tomorrow?” We constantly need to change for the better. The High Holidays remind us of this, but we cannot forget that lesson during the rest of the year. Change does not come painlessly. Our experiences with the war between Israel and Hamas and Hezbollah and the increase in antisemitism in the United States and across the globe are not only disturbing in themselves but have revealed a very significant demographic split in the American Jewish community. A 2024 Pew Research Center study found that, compared with older U.S. Jews, younger Jews express less favorable attitudes toward the Israeli people and more favorable views of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority, and that Jews ages 50 to 64 are the only age group in which a majority (64%) express a favorable opinion of the Israeli government.

We ignore these facts at our peril. As older Jewish generations are replaced by younger generations with significantly different points of view and priorities, the Jewish community will change. If we want to assure that the values and traditions which have kept the Jewish people alive and vibrant for thousands of years continue in a meaningful way in the future, we need to be cognizant of the need to stop the polarization which is such a dominant feature of the present day, to reach out to one another in an effort to understand and respect deeply-held albeit differing opinions and to work together for the benefit of our community and the world.

As we approach 5785, may we and all Israel be blessed with peace, and may we nurture justice, kindness, hope, health and prosperity for all. *Shana tova!*

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From the Jewish Federation of CNY President/CEO

For over 100 years, the Jewish Federation of Central New York has been the voice and the backbone of the Jewish community. Federation develops and grows sources of funding, connects our community and supports Jewish educational and engagement opportunities locally, nationally and in Israel. In recent years our mission has expanded to include communal security, addressing antisemitism and bolstering our place in American civil society. Through the campaign and with the support of the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York, Federation is able to fund our organization and our agency partners, strengthen the pillars of community and inspire individuals to access Judaism in powerful and transformative ways.

When I look back on the year just ended, and when I consider all that we asked of our community, and all that our community expected from us, I am filled with pride at the commitment, accomplishments and generosity of Jewish Central New York. The numbers are compelling: the campaign raised over \$1.5 million this year. In addition, our community sent another \$1.5 million to Israel in the wake of the horror of October 7. We also raised an additional \$35,000 for security for our community and recently were successful in obtaining \$50,000 for security for the youngest members of our community from funding donated to the Jewish Federations of North America.

You did this. **You** recognized the continuing need to prioritize Jewish giving at this challenging time. Yet while providing security and fighting antisemitism are vitally important, they are not, nor should they be, the only experience of being Jewish in Central New York. We are justifiably proud of the fact that 500 people came together last summer to see “Rise,” a rock musical about the Holocaust by a local composer, that 800 people came together to an incredibly wonderful Chanukah dinner, that 600 people attended our fun-filled *Yom haAatzmaut* celebration. These numbers are powerful affirmations of Jewish life – and we can add to them the large numbers of community members who participated in our Shabbat and Havdallah family programs, the Camp Zeke shabbaton, Souper-Duper Sunday, the Purim Project, our NexGen programs and our Thank You event at the Zoo.

Our Jewish schools, camps and partner and beneficiary community organizations provide vitally important experiences for our community. The Teen Taste of Israel trip, our



Michael Balanoff

support for volunteers who help rebuild Israel, our support of the Food Pantry at Menorah Park, Kosher Meals on Wheels and the JCC Senior Lunch Program and our fostering of innovation and collaboration through our Philip L. Holstein Community Program fund grants all serve to keep our community vibrant, connected and forward-looking.

As you will read in the pages of this issue of the *Jewish Observer*, we are not resting on our laurels. There are very exciting initiatives in the works for 5785 and we look forward to again working with and for our community in the new year. But this is a partnership. Federation works with our synagogues, our communal leaders, our volunteers and our donors to make our community safe and strong, and we can only be successful **if you join with us**. We wish you the very best in the new year. *Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazek*. Let us be strong, let us grow from strength to strength, and let us strengthen each other.

From the Jewish Federation of CNY Board Chair

It's an honor to serve as chair of the Federation Board to do my part to ensure that we have a strong and vibrant Jewish community now and in the future. It is important to me that Federation honors and respects our past and continues to passionately and intelligently represent the concerns and hopes both for the present and the future of our Jewish community. I eagerly and humbly take on this position and responsibility having seen the passion and motivation of so many individuals, families and entities in our area. I am inspired to help build on the strong foundation that our community has built.



Todd Pinsky

These are unprecedented times for our Jewish community. With the anniversary of the devastating October 7 massacre upon us, let us turn to one another and draw strength from the power of our unity. While the challenges may seem daunting, I believe this is a time that our Jewish community can become even stronger. As chair of the Federation Board, I look forward to helping build the coalitions, partnerships and friendships that will ensure the stability of our Jewish community now and for the future. I look forward to bringing people and our local institutions together to communicate and work toward common goals that will provide support across the entire community. In the year ahead, Federation will continue its work to provide resources for increased programming, outreach to new community members, support for Israel, and strengthening our community's safety and security, which is paramount.

Federation has been an important part of my life over the past 13 years. After moving back to the area, my wife Sarah and I were introduced to Federation through the Federation's Young Leadership Program. In 2015, I was invited to serve on the Federation Board. I have since enjoyed serving on nearly all of the Board's committees. I've chaired both the Community Relations Committee and the Allocations committee, and for the past four years I have served as vice-chair of the Board.

I joined Federation because of its unique role at the heart of our local Jewish organizations and institutions in Syracuse. I love the breadth of Federation's mission. I continue to be in awe and am proud of Federation's inclusive and comprehensive support of organizations that serve our community's families across the entire spectrum of our lives, from the ECDP to the Community Hebrew School to Menorah Park, and the different ways we engage in our community, to the wonderful institutions such as the JCC, the Hebrew Day School, the Epstein School, Hillel, and the Judaic Heritage Center, and uplifting programs such as PJ Library, Kosher Meals on Wheels, the Beit Tikvah, JMAC, the community Chanukah celebration and so many others.

I also intend to help Federation continue to engage the younger generations of Jews in and around Syracuse by understanding their priorities so they feel good about supporting Federation the way so many previous generations have and continue to do so. It's not just about financial support; we need a new generation of leaders ready and willing to step forward (as many have done already) to ensure a strong Jewish community for the future. There are many exciting opportunities ahead of us with an expected population influx due to Micron, growth in programs from our established local Jewish institutions, and increasing interest and engagement from our children, teens and local college students. Federation will help encourage and support our community's collective efforts to foster and make the most out of these opportunities.

Despite the challenges that our and many other Jewish communities are facing, I am optimistic about our Jewish community's present and future here in Central New York and excited to help lead the work ahead.

Taking Stock

by Rabbi Moshe Saks, Temple Adath Yeshurun



We will mark the New Year with the holiday of Rosh Hashanah. Since we are supposed to take stock of ourselves with preparation for the new: new attitudes, new approaches to life, new initiatives for ourselves and the community, we first must take a serious look at our participation in society and how we can effect both personal and communal change.

The following reading is a clever way of framing the question—how does one change? After you read the following, you might find this meaningful enough to begin addressing those life questions that all should have.

We have taller buildings, but shorter tempers;
 Wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints;
 We spend more, but have less;
 We buy more, but enjoy it less.
 We have bigger houses and smaller families;
 More conveniences, but less time;
 We have more degrees, but less sense;
 More knowledge, but less judgment;
 More experts, but more problems;
 More medicine, but less wellness.
 We drink too much, smoke too much,
 Spend too recklessly, laugh too little,
 Drive too fast, get too angry too quickly,
 Stay up too late, get up too tired,
 Read too seldom, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.
 We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values.
 We talk too much, love too seldom and lie too often.
 We've learned how to make a living, but not a life;
 We've added years to life, not life to years.
 We've been all the way to the moon and back,
 But have trouble crossing the street to meet the new neighbor.
 We've conquered outer space, but not inner space;
 We've done larger things, but not better things;
 We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul;
 We've split the atom, but not our prejudice;
 We write more, but learn less; plan more, but accomplish less.
 We've learned to rush, but not to wait;
 We have higher incomes; but lower morals;
 More food but less appeasement;
 We build more computers to hold more information,
 To produce more copies than ever, but have less communication;
 We've become long on quantity, but short on quality.
 These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion;
 Tall men, and short character;
 Steep profits, and shallow relationships.
 These are the times of world peace, but domestic warfare;
 More leisure and less fun;
 More kinds of food, but less nutrition.
 These are days of two incomes, but more divorce;
 Of fancier houses, but broken homes.
 These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers,
 Throwaway morality, one-night stands,
 Overweight bodies, and pills that do everything
 From cheer, to quiet, to kill.
 It is a time when there is much in the show window
 And nothing in the stockroom.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year.

» BOOK REVIEW

Who Are the Jews – and Who Can We Become?

By Donniel Hartman

Reviewed by Chana Meir

It's a question that is at times amusing, at times confusing, at times a matter of life and death: Who are the Jews?

In *Who Are the Jews—And Who Can We Become?*, Donniel Hartman, president of the Shalom Hartman Institute and an Orthodox rabbi, proposes that the definition of Jewish peoplehood is in “the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves.” Key among these, he says, are the Genesis covenant and the Exodus covenant.

In Genesis 13:14-15 God tells Abraham, “Raise your eyes and look out from where you are...I give all the land that you see to you and your seed forever” (emphasis Hartman's). If one is a descendant of Abraham, one is a Jew. Jewishness is a state of being, no doing required, with the one exception of circumcision. The hallmark of Genesis consciousness, Hartman writes, is loyalty to other Jews – that we have a “claim” on one another.

In Exodus 19:3-5, however, God outlines a new covenantal relationship to Moses. “Thus shall you say to the House of Jacob, and declare to the Children of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me. Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully, and keep My covenant, [then] shall you be My treasured possession among all the people” (emphasis Hartman's). Now, Hartman says, only in exchange for doing—only if the people “keep” and “obey”—will God keep God's side of the divine covenant. At this point the Jews become obligated to “an aspirational system of beliefs and practices.” *Being Jewish* now requires *doing* as well. It was the Exodus covenant, he says, that eventually opened the door to conversion, as those not born Jewish could now become Jewish through the doing of Exodus obligations.

The dynamic tension between these covenants has both shaped and been shaped by history and evolving understandings of the Bible and secular philosophy. At times of threat, the Genesis covenant, expressed in loyalty to and protection of one another, is typically in ascendancy. As times when Jews are feeling relatively safe and at home as citizens of secular nations, the Exodus covenant, expressed by such behaviors as religious practice or a commitment to social justice advocacy, tends to ascend.

Seeing an urgent need for a synthesis of Genesis and Exodus sensibilities, Hartman provides detailed and well-reasoned analyses of the fraught relationships between ultra-Orthodox and more secular Jewish Israelis, between Israelis and Palestinians, and between Israel and North America, and suggests how such a synthesis could result in a much-needed realignment of these relationships.

The book was already in the hands of the publisher last fall, but after October 7, Hartman delayed publication but did no revisions. On the January 23, 2024 episode of the podcast “Identity Crisis,” he was asked to comment on what he felt Jewish reactions to October 7 and to Israel's response revealed. After acknowledging that there is a wide range of understandable reactions, he said that Jews engaging with groups like “If Not Now” are “building loyalties and communities with others who are avowed enemies and who really want to destroy Israel,” leaving open the question: have they forfeited their Genesis claim on loyalty?

With its deep dives into Torah, history, and philosophy, this is not an easy read. But Hartman is a lively writer, making liberal use of personal anecdotes and humor. Though sometimes challenging, *Who Are the Jews—And Who Can We Become?* provides an insightful framework for thinking about the questions we often wrestle with.

Chana Meir is a board member of Temple Concord, a former staff writer at the Auburn Citizen and staff writer and editor at the Finger Lakes Business Almanac.



Jewish Community Foundation of CNY Holds Annual Meeting



“God, in this age of anxiety, may we be privileged to come together year after year, as we do this evening, celebrating the growth and strength of a foundation upon which the Jewish community of Central New York will be better able to fulfill its promise of a vital Jewish life.”

With these words, Rabbi Daniel Jezer delivered the invocation opening the Jewish Community Foundation’s 2024 Annual Meeting, sponsored by the Charles Schwab Company, on August 15. Board Chair Howard Port welcomed the guests noting that this year the Foundation

passed a milestone of \$30,000,000 in assets. He pointed out that “It is important to realize that, even with a shrinking Jewish population, we are able to achieve record contributions to the Federation’s campaign. The Foundation now contributes almost 30% of the annual campaign funding.”

Cheryl Schotz presented the Nominating Committee report. David Horowitch and Jef Sneider were elected for a term on the Foundation board ending June 30, 2028 and officers of the board were also elected: Chair: Howard Port, Vice-Chair: Lynn Smith, Treasurer: Arthur Liberman, Secretary: Mark Field and Financial Vice-President: Neil Hoyt.

In his 2024 State of the Foundation report, Michael Balanoff reviewed the many accomplishments of the Federation during the past year and noted that “Federation could not do what it does without the Foundation.” He also announced that the Foundation now has the ability for fund advisors to use online portals, a major step forward in enhancing efficiency and transparency.

Balanoff described a new initiative that the Foundation will undertake in 5785, saying, “we have come to recognize the tremendous importance of sending our teens to Israel. If there is a lesson to be learned from the encampments and protests that occurred on so many college and university campuses this spring, it is that we must renew and strengthen our efforts to educate and engage Jewish teens about Israel and its importance to our Jewish people. Our goal must be to ensure that young Jews will become an integral part of a community dedicated to ensuring a strong, proud and Zionist future. The Jewish Foundation of Central New York, together with the Federation, are therefore embarking on a campaign to make a dream come true: to create a million-dollar endowment for our community’s Teen Taste of Israel program. This endowment will provide the funding for the Epstein School’s biannual trip to Israel for 10th and 11th graders enrolled at the school. The cost of the trip currently runs about \$100,000 and only a million-dollar endowment generating 5% annually can provide sufficient revenue to assure that this program can continue into the foreseeable future.”

In closing, Balanoff observed that “when the Foundation was started by Linda Alexander and Alex Holstein two decades ago, it did not seem possible that we would have an endowment of \$30 million and contribute almost one-third of the annual campaign achievement of the Federation. But their dream became a reality. We hope that this new dream can be realized also. In the words of Theodor Herzl, *Im tirtzu, ein zo agada* – If you will it, it is no dream.”

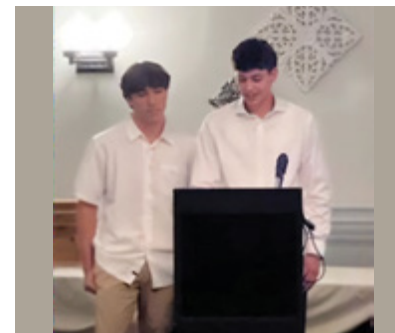
Balanoff’s words were echoed by Aaron Spitzer, head of the Epstein School of Jewish Studies. Addressing the meeting via video from Israel, Spitzer said, “For Jews living in Western democracies, the last ten months have shaken



us as we have faced levels of antisemitism unseen in generations. Our teens and young adults have been profoundly affected, as antisemitism has exploded across high school and college campuses. Students are afraid. One recent Epstein alum confessed that, while they feel a strong connection to Israel and are proudly Jewish among friends and family, they no longer feel safe talking about their Jewishness or about Israel on campus or on social media. They are hiding a fundamental part of themselves because they are afraid. This is the tragic reality for too many of our young people.

“The climate students face on campus is radically different from that which their parents and grandparents experienced. We need to do more to prepare our young people for this new reality before they arrive on campus. We need to root our teens in Jewish community and Jewish experiences throughout adolescence. We need to help them develop their resilience muscles by grappling with Jewish texts and moral dilemmas. We need to help them learn about their history and culture so that they can develop their own unique Jewish identities; and we need to provide them with opportunities to deepen their Jewish friendships that will provide support and sustenance as they move into the larger world of campus and work.

Spitzer said that “teen travel to Israel through programs like the Epstein School’s Teen Taste of Israel experience is even more critical now. The trip is the ultimate Epstein experience. Traveling together to Israel not only deepens students’ connections to each other, bonding them as a kehillah in profound and unique ways impossible in other educational contexts, but it deepens each student’s connection to their own personal Jewish identity, to Israel, and to Jewish peoplehood more broadly. This year’s students will also witness the impact that October 7 has had on Israeli society and will grapple with how to build resilience in the face of ongoing trauma. Unfortunately, this is a lesson that too many of them will need in facing antisemitism at home. They will spend time with Israeli teens and learn that while some things are different, they share many commonalities as well. They will live in Jewish time and will experience what many of their American school friends take for granted: what it is like to be in the majority. It will be a profound experience for our students.”



Two Epstein School graduates, Guy Juran and Logan Oppedisano, recent participants in the Teen Taste trip, then addressed the meeting. They said, “Our experience in the Holy Land was truly eye-opening. Being able to experience firsthand what we had been learning about for years took our interests, knowledge and enthusiasm to the next level. We believe every Jewish person should get that sort of experience early on in life, and we are so grateful to have been able to do it.” They added that “in light of the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict happening in Gaza, our time spent in Israel has become even more significant. Having had the opportunity to witness the beauty and culture of Israel, we now carry a sense of responsibility. We’re more informed, more empathic and more committed to standing with our fellow Jews and supporting our Jewish nation state.”

They concluded, “We recognize that without the support of the donations which funded our trip, this life-changing experience would have remained a distant dream for many of us. Such an investment in our education and in our journey to Israel has expanded our knowledge and shaped us into more thoughtful and engaged Jews. It has given us a deeper appreciation for our heritage any stronger sense of responsibility to carry it forward. As we move onward, we sincerely hope that the future classes of Epstein are able to create bonds and have as positive an experience as our class did. Our time at Epstein not only shaped our academic journey but also fostered lifelong friendships and a strong sense of community. We hope that future classes of Epstein can enjoy the journey and make the most of every moment just as we did.”

NEW LEADERSHIP FOR THE NEW YEAR

Todd Pinsky, Federation Board Chair



Todd Pinsky is the owner and Managing Partner of Pinsky & Skandalis, P.C., a law firm founded by his grandfather Norman Pinsky. He is proud to carry on the legacy of his grandfather, his father Roy Pinsky and uncle Philip Pinsky. His law practice includes counseling businesses and individuals in an array of litigation, corporate governance, and transactional/contract matters, with a focus on small to medium sized entities in the health care, transportation, and insurance industries, as well as advising on wills, trusts and estates issues. Todd is an active member of the New York State Bar Association and the Transportation Lawyers Association.

After growing up in Manlius and graduating from Fayetteville-Manlius High School, Todd received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan and then earned his Doctor of Law degree from Emory University School of Law. Prior to returning to the area to join Pinsky & Skandalis, Todd practiced law in Chicago, Illinois. He worked for the Office of the Cook County Public Guardian as an attorney and Guardian ad Litem representing neglected and abused children and later joined Leahy,

Eisenberg & Fraenkel, a civil litigation and insurance defense firm.

Todd is married to Sarah Pinsky, vice president of partnerships at KABOOM!, a national nonprofit organization that works to create equitable access to play for children. They live in Manlius and have two children, Charlotte and Nate. Both Todd and Sarah have been active in the Jewish community since moving back to the area in 2011. They are members of Temple Concord, serve on the Syracuse Jewish Cemeteries Association board and Sarah currently sits on the Jewish Community Foundation board. For his work in the community, Todd was honored as a Central New York Business Journal 40 under Forty, a graduate of Leadership Greater Syracuse, and also proudly received the 2017 Leslie Award from the Jewish Community Center of Syracuse. In his free time, Todd enjoys volunteering as a youth soccer coach, playing golf, watching his children perform and compete in their chosen activities, rooting on the Michigan Wolverines, and attending as many Syracuse University football and basketball games as he can.

Michael Gilman, Temple Adath Yeshurun Co-President



Michael Gilman is a senior business systems analyst at SCORE, an agency which, through a network of nearly 10,000 dedicated volunteers across the country, offers valuable guidance and no-cost business mentoring to the public. SCORE is also an official resource partner with the Small Business Administration. Michael's relationship with SCORE has come full circle: from being a client in the late '70s to becoming a committed volunteer. His roles evolved from mentor to chapter

training coordinator, and eventually, he took on leadership positions as Vice Chair and Chair of the Syracuse chapter. He also managed projects from SCORE headquarters, transitioning from a contractor to a full-time staff member. In 2010, Michael became a notary public, covering 16 counties in Central New York. Additionally, he teaches a preparatory class for the NY State notary exam at Onondaga Community College.

Beyond his professional endeavors, Michael's personal life is rich and diverse. As a divorced father of three adult children and grandfather of three grandchildren, family ties hold great significance for him. Over the past three decades, he managed over 500 housing units and owned and operated various businesses in Central New York. His commitment extended to the nonprofit sector, where he created and managed a community agency.

Michael is a lifetime member of Temple Adath Yeshurun. His parents' active participation in temple functions influenced his own dedication to the community. You'll often find him participating in morning and evening minyan, occasionally reading Torah. Since his father's passing, Michael and

his son have engaged in a seven-year Talmud study program. As a board member of Temple Adath Yeshurun since 2017, Michael takes on various roles. His passion lies in community building, recognizing that collective efforts are essential. Together, they can shape a vibrant and connected future for the temple community.

In taking on the co-presidency with Lauren Thirer, Michael hopes "to engage people and create a robust community team. Throughout my life, I've often been the go-to person during chaotic situations, relied upon to chart a new path toward success. As a community builder, my sincere hope is to actively engage our community. Just as the saying goes, 'It takes a village.' Here, it truly takes a united community to support one another. We seek active participation in family-oriented activities, attendance at minyan and coming together for Shabbat services and other together functions. Let's continue fostering connections and growth within our community, bringing people of all ages together!"



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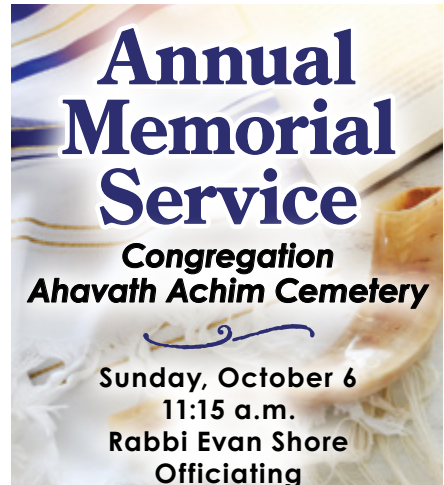
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Annual Memorial Service

Congregation Ahavath Achim Cemetery

Sunday, October 6
11:15 a.m.
Rabbi Evan Shore
Officiating

Dr. Robert Tornberg, Chair of the Board, Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas



Robert and Julie Tornberg moved to Syracuse 11 years ago after their children and grandchildren (Jim, Dina, Myah, and Rachel Pettiford) convinced them to join them in Central New York. One of the first things they did after arriving was to become members of CBS-CS. Julie also became the Director of Youth and Education, a position she held for five years. Their getting involved so quickly after coming to town was no surprise.

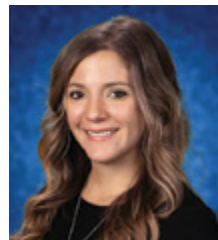
Both Bob and Julie have been involved in the synagogue world their whole lives. They both were active in Jewish youth groups, and they both started teaching religious school at very young ages. Bob's first 40-year long career, after earning a master's degree in Hebrew education, was as a Jewish educator. He headed synagogue schools for 20 years and Jewish day schools for 20 years. He also taught at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and the Jewish Theological Seminary and served as President of the National Association of Temple Educators. Having entered a Ph.D. program "just for fun," Bob earned a doctorate in educational leadership with a minor in program evaluation from the University of Minnesota in 2014, right after they moved to Syracuse. He got a position as an evaluation consultant in the School of Education at SU and worked there until last December. He teaches "Techniques of Educational Evaluation" at SU and "Judaism: Historical Perspectives" at SUNY Cortland. Last July, Bob established an L.L.C. called P.E.E.R. Collaborative Evaluation and Consulting, through which he provides evaluation and other consulting services (strategic planning, program design) to a variety of clients.

At CBS-CS Bob has served on the

board, the ritual committee, been V.P of adult learning and executive vice-president and chaired the 2023-24 strategic planning process. He is passionate about CBS-CS's values and the kind of congregation it is. He says, "CBS-CS is a 'people place' where all are welcomed and celebrated. I believe that with visionary leadership there is no limit to the positive impact the congregation can have on its members' lives and the community (Jewish and general). I hope that my years of experience as a Jewish professional and a volunteer leader will be put to good use as they harness their resources to make Judaism thrive at CBS-CS."

Bob hopes that he can "help all their members and their community see what an extraordinary place CBS-CS is. They have a truly outstanding new(ish) rabbi and a staff that is excited to provide opportunities to 'Jewish' (yes, I'm using this as a verb) their lives at a level appropriate for them. For some this means learning; for others, spirituality. Many appreciate the social opportunities, and others want to turn their Judaism into activism for social justice and Israel support. Given my background, I also am vitally interested in helping the congregation do an excellent job of helping their youth learn to love being Jewish and become knowledgeable Jews." Other goals include "ensuring a financially sustainable future, growing interest in synagogue leadership, providing leadership training, encouraging the professional leadership to be all they can be and giving them the resources to do that."

Melissa Klemperer, Interim Head of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School



Melissa Klemperer, the interim head of school at the Syracuse Hebrew Day School, is deeply rooted in the Central New York community, where she was born and raised. She holds a bachelor's degree in management from Syracuse University and a master's degree in elementary and special education K-6 from Le Moyne College. Mel and her husband, Mike, also a life-long Syracuse resident, are the proud parents of a five-year-old daughter.

Melissa recently completed YOU Lead, the signature program of Prizmah: The Network for Jewish Day Schools. The program provides a research-informed, cohort-based and highly personalized leadership development experience for school professionals from all over North America who aspire to deepen their leadership capacity. Over nine months of synchronous and asynchronous learning, Mel participated in expert coaching and mentoring, traveled to out-of-state conferences and gained practical tools, resources, skills and knowledge to advance her leadership skills.

Melissa's connection to the Syracuse Hebrew Day School is extensive. Her journey began when she did her student teaching there while pursuing her master's degree. She then joined SHDS as a teacher of grades 4 and 6. Her role in the school expanded over more than a decade as she moved from teaching to executive assistant, director of school affairs and now interim head of school. She accepted the position of interim head of school out of a profound commitment to the SHDS community and a strong belief in its mission to nurture innovative minds and compassionate hearts through academic excellence and Jewish values. Melissa is driven by "a desire to foster an environment where students can thrive academically, socially, religiously and emotionally." She aims to leverage her extensive experience and dedication to ensure that SHDS continues to flourish and uphold its mission of providing an enriching and supportive Jewish educational experience.

Melissa is committed to collaborating with the excellent staff and supportive parent community of the Day School to maintain and enhance the enriching and nurturing educational environment for which SHDS is known. She hopes that "through collective effort, resilience and unwavering commitment, SHDS will continue to learn about, support and love the country of Israel with all of her challenges and struggles. Through student research, parent programs and community events, SHDS will celebrate all of Israel's achievements and its work toward peace." She sees a bright future for the 65-year-old school in which SHDS "will continue to inspire a love of learning and a profound sense of community among its students."

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Five Star Bank Supports Federation's *Matan b'Seter* Food Pantry



The Federation's *Matan b'Seter*/ Giving in Secret Food Pantry was created in the midst of the COVID pandemic. Food stores were closing early and shopping was a challenge. People were losing their jobs. Federation put out a notice: "At this critical time, many people in our community find themselves without work. Families, as a result, are trying to figure out how to pay for rent and utilities in addition to purchasing basic food staples and household goods. In ancient times, in the courtyard of the Temple, there was a room set aside for anonymous giving and taking. Donors would deposit their gifts, and others would take what they needed, and it was all conducted in secret." Taking this as a model, the Federation created a special *Matan b'Seter* (Giving in Secret) box to enable friends and neighbors to obtain some basic staples.

The Food Pantry has been in existence now for four years. Several times each week, Federation fills it up with foodstuffs paid for by generous community donors as well as a subsidy from the Pomeranz, Shankman, Martin Charitable Foundation. Community members also donate. The Day School has run a food drive and Souper Sunday donors filled the cabinet

with nutritious soups for the wintery month of January. Federation President/CEO Michael Balanoff said, "Each week, the pantry is filled, and each week it is emptied. We do not know who puts in food or who takes it out, but we know that it is being used regularly."

At the recommendation of Jack Lyon, Federation contacted Five Star Bank, a community business bank which prides itself on "seizing opportunities, embracing challenges and valuing the intrinsic reward of serving others." Five Star is "grateful to be a source of strength for our customers and advocates for our community and our region's nonprofits" and believes "in action over words." The Bank focuses "on the health and success of our employees, shareholders, customers and community partners so that we may continue to fulfill our purpose as stewards of the communities we serve." Tim McLoughlin, First Vice President of Five Star Bank visited the pantry to present a generous subsidy of \$5,000, which will help keep it fully stocked for over a year. In accepting the gift, Michael Balanoff said, "Our tradition teaches that 'One who gives charity in secret is greater than Moshe Rabbeinu.' By enabling the Federation and the Jewish community to fulfill this mitzvah, Five Star Bank is not only helping us but is also helping those who need a little extra assistance each week to put healthful food on their tables for their families. We are very grateful to Five Star Bank for their generosity and support of the community."

Federation Receives Security Grant from The Tepper Foundation and JFNA to Safeguard Children and Promote Interfaith Bridge-Building

The Jewish Federation of Central New York is thrilled to announce that it is the recipient of a \$50,000 early childhood security grant from The Tepper Foundation through JFNA, the Jewish Federations of North America, which will help protect our most vulnerable population during a time when antisemitism is spreading across the nation. The funds are given with the intention of hiring security personnel to protect pre-schools, day camps and after-school programs, as well as supporting other faith communities' security needs. The JCC's summer camp and ECDP program and Temple Adath's summer camp and RECC program will each receive \$25,000.

Michael Balanoff, Jewish Federation of Central New York president/CEO, explained that "we received this generous gift to our community because of our ongoing efforts to sustain an outstanding security program and our ongoing and meaningful involvement with other faith communities, who will also share in the benefits of this grant, as it will provide them with security assessments and trainings."

The Tepper Foundation has been a major partner with Jewish Federations of North America in response to the growing number of antisemitic incidents in the United States since the October 7 Hamas terror attacks on Israel. The organization launched the Security Fund in November 2023 and has now made grants of more than \$12 million across the nation to support the security needs of the American Jewish community. "Right now, nothing is more important than protecting our children and giving them a safe environment where they can learn, grow and thrive as people," said JFNA chair Julie Platt. "We're thrilled that the Tepper Foundation continues on this journey with us during such difficult times."

The Tepper Foundation's current round of grants totaled \$9 million and was awarded to 76 local Federations across 30 states with a requirement that they be a recipient of Jewish Federations' LiveSecure

funding. Building on the success of the JFNA LiveSecure initiative – the largest philanthropic effort to support Jewish security in North American history – Jewish federations have become The Tepper Foundation's partner in continuing to ensure the safety of Jewish communities nationwide.

LiveSecure participating Federations, all of which have established comprehensive security plans under the auspices of JFNA, have committed to building and strengthening relationships with other religious leaders and faith-based institutions in their communities by sharing their security expertise. This is a new aspect of The Tepper Foundation's commitment to security, aimed at improving interfaith relations as well as enhancing safety for all populations confronting hatred. "Without basic security for our children, the Jewish community cannot flourish," said Shira Hutt, JFNA executive vice president. "We are proud of the immense progress we have made on securing our community through LiveSecure, but the unprecedented spike in antisemitism that our community has experienced since October 7 has created the need for both additional security resources and renewed outreach to our interfaith partners."

Lippes Mathias Provides Unique Israel-US Cross Border Practice

The “start-up nation” of Israel is a growing network of companies focused on capitalizing on global market opportunities, including entering or expanding in the U.S. market. Doing so successfully requires a law firm with sophisticated expertise to ensure compliance in various legal areas, including regulatory and compliance litigation, tax, employment and finance.

Lippes Mathias LLP, which recently combined with CCBLaw, a Syracuse-based law firm with a respected national reputation for innovative legal services, provides a unique multi-disciplinary Israel-U.S. Cross Border Practice Team which guides Israeli companies and individuals with existing U.S. operations and seeks to establish commercial opportunities in the United States.

Lippes Mathias attorneys help clients navigate complex U.S. laws and government regulations. Its Israel-U.S. Cross Border Practice Team is led by Dennis C. Vacco, former New York State Attorney General, partner and co-leader of the firm’s Government & Corporate Investigations practice. Through the firm’s strategic relationship with Tel-Aviv-based law firm Kan-Tor & Acco, Lippes Mathias has developed an extensive network of accounting, consulting and political relationships throughout Israel. Through these affiliations, its attorneys have a comprehensive understanding of the Israeli marketplace and can identify and maximize market opportunities and provide innovative, strategic and timely advice to clients seeking to enter or expand in the United States or Israel.

The *Jewish Observer* recently had the pleasure of speaking with Vacco, who has traveled to Israel eight times as part of his practice. In addition to representing Israeli firms doing business in the United States, Vacco also conducts seminars and makes media appearances to discuss the regulatory environment for Israeli businesses in the U.S. Vacco is a very strong supporter of Israel. “You don’t have to be Jewish to be Israeli,” he explained, “or to be totally committed to Israel.” In the 1990’s when Vacco was Attorney General of New York, he reluctantly missed a trip to Israel sponsored by AIPAC but finally made his first of 8 trips in 2017.



“I was naïve about Israel,” he recalls. “I only had a superficial understanding of the complexities of the politics of the Middle East.” After several more visits, Vacco “fell in love with Israel.” He was fascinated by its history and by the “confluence of Muslim, Christian and Jewish faiths colliding on a small patch of the globe that is mostly desert.” Vacco has met with many Israelis, including members of the Knesset and prominent lawyers. “I have come to know so many Israeli heroes,” he says. “Almost every encounter is with a veteran.”

His enthusiasm is infectious. “Israel is so edgy that it’s sexy,” he enthuses. “There is so much going on.” He is thrilled with “the vibrancy of Tel Aviv” and takes particular note of the “oneness” of the Israeli people, despite their political differences. He finds this “admirable and enviable” and says that “when Israel’s back is against the wall, Israelis come together and everybody grips the oar.”

The most challenging aspect of Vacco’s job is aligning clients’ needs and expectations with the regulatory environment in the U.S., which is “so textured and multi-layered.” He says it is important “to be there, to be seen, to build relationships.” In the future, Vacco would like to see a Tel Aviv office of Lippes Mathias with Israeli lawyers being members of the Lippes Mathias team. With a champion like Vacco, it is easy to foresee the realization of this prospect.

L'Shana Tova and High Holiday Wishes

L'Shana Tova!
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From Aaron Lerner
at Sky Top Coffee

**Happy
Rosh Hashanah
& Yom Kippur!**
From the
Malzman Family



**Happy Rosh Hashanah
and Yom Kippur**
Marty and Elaine Birnbaum
& Family
Joel and Linda Friedman
& Family



L'Shana Tova
From Steve Stern
& Fredda Sacharow



**L'Shana
Tova!**
From Barbara Davis

**L'Shana
Tova!**

From the Jewish Observer



L'Shana Tova
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Sunday Cinema Series Offers Jewish and Israeli Movies

Three years ago, the Federation made a *shidduch* with ChaiFlicks to obtain yearlong licenses for ten families so that, each month, they can watch a Jewish or Israeli movie at their convenience and then meet via Zoom to discuss it together. Sam Young, a knowledgeable movie buff and excellent discussion leader, directs the conversations, which are always stimulating and informative.

Below is a list of the movies selected for 5785. The movies deal with a wide variety of issues but all are fascinating. The hundreds of movies and television series that are at chaiflicks.com are also available to participants at no charge, to be watched at their convenience.

To participate in the Sunday Cinema Series, please email bdavis@jewishfederationcny.org. The first ten people to respond will be given licenses. If more are interested, we can expand the group. (The licenses are only for the participant's household; they cannot be shared with others.)

October 13: GREEN PRINCE - Set against the chaotic backdrop of recent events in the Middle East, this extraordinary documentary recounts the true story of the son of a Hamas leader who emerged as one of Israel's prized informants, and the Shin Bet agent who risked his career to protect him.

November 10: BETHLEHEM - Shuttling back and forth between conflicting points of view, the film is a raw portrayal of characters torn apart by competing loyalties and impossible moral dilemmas, giving an unparalleled

glimpse into the dark and fascinating world of human intelligence.

December 8: THE LEVYS OF MONTICELLO - When Thomas Jefferson died in 1826, he left behind a mountain of personal debt, which forced his heirs to sell his beloved Monticello home and all of its possessions to the Levy family, which owned and carefully preserved Monticello for nearly a century. The remarkable story of the Levy family also intersects with the rise of antisemitism that runs throughout the course of American history



January 12: GOLDEN VOICES - Raya and Victor have built a shared career as the Soviet Union's most beloved film voice actors. As the USSR collapses, the Jewish couple must immigrate to Israel and reinvent themselves to find new jobs—and new lives. A charming comedy about disrupting old dynamics, starting anew, and rediscovering yourself in the most unexpected places.

February 9: SHOELACES - The story of a complicated relationship between an aging father and his special-needs son. Reuben's kidneys are failing, and his son Gadi wants to donate one of his own kidneys to help save his father's life. However, the transplant committee objects to the procedure, claiming that Reuben does not have the right to authorize such an invasive procedure.

March 9: LIVE AND BECOME - The magnificent, epic story of an Ethiopian boy who is airlifted from a Sudanese refugee camp to Israel in 1984 during Operation Moses. Shlomo is plagued by two big secrets: he is neither a Jew nor an orphan, just an African boy who survived and wants, somehow, to fulfill his Ethiopian mother's parting request that he "go, live, and become."

April 6: AN ISRAELI LOVE STORY - 1947. 18-year-old Margalit from a village in northern Israel loves theater and dreams of becoming an actress. She falls in love with 24-year-old Eli from Kibbutz Beit Keshet. She tries to get close to him, but things don't go so smoothly. He has a girlfriend and is busy with the dramatic events preceding the birth of Israel. Slowly the barriers come down and they set up a date for their wedding. But then, Israel's harsh reality steps in.

May 18: THE TESTAMENT - Yoel, a meticulous historian leading a significant debate against Holocaust deniers, discovers that his mother carries a false identity. A mystery about a man who is willing to risk everything to discover the truth.

June 8: A BORROWED IDENTITY - The story of Eyad, a Palestinian Israeli boy given the chance to go to a prestigious Jewish boarding school in Jerusalem. As he desperately tries to fit in with his schoolmates within Israeli society, he falls in love with a Jewish girl and discovers that he will have to sacrifice his identity in order to be accepted.

July 13: WELCOME TO KUTSHER'S - Kutsher's Country Club was the last surviving Jewish resort in the Catskills. Kutsher's was family-owned and operated for over 100 years, until its sale and demolition in 2014. Exploring the full Dirty Dancing-era Catskills experience through a close up look at Kutsher's rise and fall, this award-winning film captures a last glimpse of a lost world as it disappears before our eyes

August 10: COVERED UP - The personal journey of Rachel, an ultra-Orthodox film director, through marriage, divorce, matchmaking, and family life. Rachel unveils the world of ultra-Orthodox women and gives voice, for the first time, to their concealed inner world through the wig that covers up women's hair.

September 14: KISS ME KOSHER - Moran Rosenblatt ("Fauda") and John Carroll Lynch (" Fargo") star in a romantic misadventure crossing all borders. Two generations of Israeli women - one who falls for a German woman and the other a Palestinian man, and chaos follows. What happens with lovers who don't fit but do belong together?

GOOD NEWS! **GOOD NEWS!** **GOOD NEWS!**

TELL US YOUR GOOD NEWS!!

Introducing *Hadashot Tovot/Good News*, a new column (with thanks to Leah Goldberg for the concept).

The *Jewish Observer* would like to share all sorts of glad tidings (milestones, awards, achievements, accomplishments, et al) with the community in this new column.

Readers are invited to share good news of all sorts by emailing jo@jewishfederationcny.org or using the form that appears in Community Happenings.

Maximum 25 words with option of a photo (at least 1MB).

Giving Opportunities for 5785

“But *teshuvah*, *tefilah*, *tzedakah* – repentance, prayer, charity – can alleviate the negative decree.”

The week between *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur* is considered an auspicious time to give *tzedakah*. Some say that giving *tzedakah* during this time, along with repentance and prayer, can help people elevate their spirituality and help others rise as well. In our Jewish tradition, *tzedakah* is rooted in the values of justice and righteousness and focuses on the impact generosity can have on others and the world. For those who might wish to consider some local projects deserving of support this year, the *Jewish Observer* is reporting on three fundraising campaigns worthy of consideration.

SYRACUSE HEBREW DAY SCHOOL 65TH ANNIVERSARY

“Why should I give to the Syracuse Hebrew Day School? My kids didn’t go there. I’m sure it’s a good school, but what’s it to me, even if it is their 65th Anniversary?”

The answer is that maybe you are receiving the benefits of our community day school even if your children did not attend. Maybe your orthopedist is Dr. Max Greenky, SHDS ’99 or your dentist is Dr. Josh Wolhandler, SHDS ’03. Maybe one of your children or grandchildren is a patient of psychologist Dr. Stephanie Rabin Scher, SHDS ’96 or pediatrician Dr. Moshe Roberts, SHDS ’20 or Dr. David Kanter, SHDS ’88. Perhaps your attorney is Alex Fischer, SHDS ’04 or Sarah Steinman, SHDS ’03 or Ross Greenky, SHDS ’01. Maybe you loved KlezFest, directed by Alec Erlebacher, SHDS ’99 or you’ve seen a show directed by Mookey VanOrden, SHDS ’04 or been enlightened at a presentation by Hughie Stone Fish SHDS ’01. Perhaps you know someone who receives Kosher Meals on Wheels, run by Deborah Ellis, SHDS ’03 or you’ve connected with Juliet Maloff, SHDS ’04, at the Community Foundation of Central New York. Were your children or grandchildren inspired by teachers like Phyllis Zames, SHDS ’86 or Joe Goldberg, SHDS ’92 or Alea Smith, SHDS ’05 or Elyssa Rosenbaum, SHDS ’99?

In all of these instances, you have seen how the Day School has not only touched the lives of its students but has enriched our community as a whole. **Maybe the 65th anniversary of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School is a cause you would like to support in 5785? To donate, go to shds.org and click the donate button.**

EPSTEIN SCHOOL TEEN TASTE OF ISRAEL

“How can we combat the false narrative about Israel that has overtaken Jewish students on college campuses?”

If there is a lesson to be learned from the encampments and protests that occurred on so many college and university campuses this spring, it is that we must renew and strengthen our efforts to educate and engage Jewish teens about Israel and its importance to our Jewish people.

The Jewish Federation of Central New York and the Jewish Community Foundation of Central New York are embarking immediately on a campaign to create a million-dollar endowment for our community’s Teen Taste of Israel program. This endowment will provide funding for the Epstein School’s biannual trip to Israel for 10th and 11th graders enrolled at the school. The cost of the trip currently runs at about \$100,000 and only a million-dollar endowment, generating 5% annually, can provide sufficient revenue to assure that this program can continue into the future.

We need to educate our teens about Israel and we need to do it on the ground. Books and classes are wonderful, but they are not enough. Only by going to Israel, only by seeing and feeling for themselves what Israel is like, will our young people come to truly comprehend Israel’s significance as a homeland for the Jewish people.

Community support is vital to the creation of an endowment for Teen Taste of Israel. Donations for this purpose will enable our Jewish community’s teens to have a transformative educational experience, helping them better understand what we Jews believe in and enabling them to make informed choices about Israel, Judaism, faith, politics and culture. As a teen from 2023 trip wrote, “The Teen Taste of Israel trip was life-changing for me. It gave me the opportunity to further explore my Jewish identity and to see how to continue my life

as a Jewish adult. It helped me see how Israel is where I can truly call home no matter where I am.”

Your generosity could help make this dream a reality. In the words of Theodor Herzl, *Im tirtzu, ein zo agada* – If you will it, it is no dream. **Maybe the Epstein School Teen Taste of Israel is a cause you would like to support in 5785?**

AHAVATH ACHIM MIKVAH

“I’m in an interfaith relationship. What possible reason would I have to support the mikvah?”

What physical act could a person perform to symbolize a radical change of heart, a total commitment to something new and different? Jewish tradition prescribes a profound experience: immersion in a radically different physical environment—in water rather than air. Ritual immersion is the total

submersion of the body in a pool of water. The water of the mikvah is designed to ritually cleanse a person from the past, leaving only the future. A major function of immersion in the mikvah is for conversion to Judaism. The sages declare that a person who wishes to become a Jew must undergo the identical process by which Jewish ancestors converted. As Jews performed immersion at Mt. Sinai to complete the conversion process they had begun with circumcision as they left Egypt, so converts in every age immerse in a mikvah.

Syracuse’s Ahavath Achim Mikvah is regularly used in our community for those who are converting to Judaism, as well as for ritual purity. At present, however, the mikvah is in poor condition due to mold and deterioration. It is undergoing renovation and repair at an estimated cost of \$100,000. Knowing about the vitally important functions of the mikvah in a Jewish community, **maybe the Ahavath Achim Mikvah is a cause you would like to support in 5785?**

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Presenting The 2025 Campaign Cabinet

by Anick Sinclair

The Jewish Federation takes great pride in announcing its new Campaign Cabinet for the forthcoming year, 2025. What is a Campaign Cabinet? Its members are the volunteers who will solicit prospective donors for the annual campaign of the Jewish Federation of Central New York. They provide leadership, increased awareness and passion. The Cabinet is separate from the board of directors and concentrates solely on raising money for the campaign. These are people who are willing to go the extra mile, make phone calls, support our staff, attend meetings, show up, roll up their sleeves and do the hard work of kicking off and aiding the Annual Campaign.



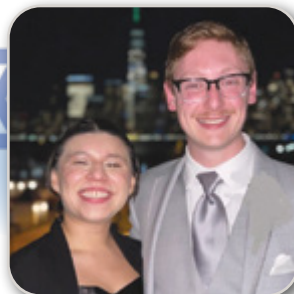
Heading up the 2025 Cabinet is **Nan Fechtner**, who is the vice-chair of the board of the Federation as well as a member of the Luminary Society and the Lions of Judah. For the past 30 years, Nan has held many volunteer positions, including developing strategic plans, chairing finance committees and serving on executive boards. When Nan, her husband and three mostly grown boys moved to Syracuse in the summer of 2016, she looked forward to contributing to her new community in positive ways through volunteer work. To Nan, the Federation fundraises to meet its mission of supporting the community and she is honored to be spearheading the 2025 Annual Campaign. "I am excited to chair this first-rate cabinet," she says, "We are well placed to bring awareness and much-needed funds to the Federation which supports countless Jewish agencies and programs, enriching Jewish life in Syracuse and beyond."



Returning to the Cabinet this year are the incomparable **Steve Volinsky** and Melissa Harkavy. Steve is a proud native of Syracuse who began his career as a CPA at PricewaterhouseCoopers before becoming chief financial officer at Ethan Allen and Raymour and Flanigan respectively, for a total of 38 years. Today, Steve is happily retired and sits on the Federation board, is treasurer of the Syracuse Community Hebrew School and is tremendously active with Temple Concord. This will be his third year serving on the Cabinet, where he has been, hands down, the most persistent, tenacious and successful solicitor ever.



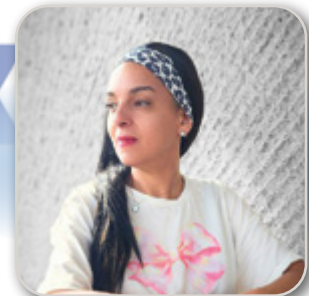
Melissa Harkavy is the executive director of Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas. Before starting her career in Jewish education, Melissa took a winding road through the field of geography, where she discovered her passion for education and social justice. One of her prized accomplishments was serving as research coordinator for Black Women's Blueprint. She studied geography and Africana studies at Penn State and earned a master of arts degree in geography from the University of Colorado. Melissa serves on the Federation Board, the faculty of the Rabbi Jacob H. Epstein School of Jewish Studies and is a proud member the Gender Equity Advocates and Training Network.



Ben Fechtner and Sandra Malinowski will be this year's Super (Snooper) Sunday co-chairs. Ben moved to Syracuse from New Jersey in 2016, originally worked in industrial engineering within automotive sector and now is a process engineer technician in the field of aerospace and defense. He always felt that Judaism was a key part of his identity and finds fulfillment in helping others and serving the community. Ben's partner Sandra Malinowski is in marketing and is thrilled to be a Super Sunday Co-Chair, "As a recent transplant to Syracuse, I was looking for a way to be a part of the growing Jewish community here. Taking part in Souper Sunday last January was lots of fun and the opportunity to head up the event this year felt right." Both are excited to be heading up the campaign's signature event, Super Sunday, known this year as SNOOPER SUNDAY, a fun morning of crime-solving themed activities on January 5, 2025.



Mark Levy is an attorney with his own law practice, focusing on business, estate planning and real estate law. He is an adjunct professor at Martin J. Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University teaching commercial real estate development law. Mark graduated from the Syracuse University College of Law where he met his wife, Jill, who is also a lawyer. Jill is originally from the area and Mark grew up in Canada. Mark and Jill are blessed with two beautiful daughters who keep them busy with sports, school and religious school. Mark brings with him a wealth of knowledge on the local Jewish community, having sat on the boards of the Jewish Community Center, the Syracuse Community Hebrew School and Temple Adath Yeshurun. He served on the Temple Adath Yeshurun executive board and as TAY co-president. He looks forward to continuing to serve his community in his new role within the Jewish Federation of Central New York.



Gali Moodie is the co-founder of Momentous Media Group and is a seasoned social media strategist with a proven track record in driving engagement across the political and tech sectors. Her award-winning work, including a Gold Pollie Award from AAPC, highlights her expertise in innovative campaign strategies. As a member of the cabinet, Gali is eager to apply her skills to the Federation campaign which brings about community impact.



David Jumbelic Safran, a resident of Syracuse, works at Oneida Air Systems in downtown Syracuse with his wife Kelsey. He is a graduate of the Massachusetts College of Art and Design with a degree in sculpture, studied welding in BOCES, and now works in the R&D team innovating dust collection for woodworkers. He went to Camp Seneca Lake for a decade and became bar mitzvah and was confirmed at

Temple Concord. He also spent a semester in Israel through the EIE program in high school. David is “excited to be part of this cohort of innovative thinkers engaged in moving the campaign forward”.



Davia Moss lives in Manlius with her husband and three children, Eliana, Cason and Asher. She is a nurse practitioner in adolescent medicine at SUNY Upstate specializing in eating disorders and medical care for transgender youth. She is incredibly passionate about developing more resources for members of our community struggling with eating disorders and created an annual fundraiser called Feeding the Mind, Funding Recovery. Davia is a member of Temple Adath Yeshurun, has served on the JCC board of directors and is now on the SHDS board of directors.



Katherine Zhou-Rubinstein grew up in southern China and in 2013, moved to the United States for her studies. Since then, she has lived in various places around the country. She re-located to Syracuse a year ago with her husband David, whom she met at Cornell. Here, Katherine works as a veterinarian. In a city far away from home, the Jewish community here “gave me a sense of being home. I am looking forward to the opportunity to give back to the local community as a member of the cabinet”.

This year’s cabinet is rich in diversity and enthusiasm. Every year, Jewish Central New York raises money for the Jewish Federation’s campaign for Jewish needs and to help ensure our community’s vitality and vibrancy. The Cabinet is built to help facilitate this very important annual endeavor.

Jewish Federation
Marking One Year
October 7th

COMMUNITY COMMEMORATION

Please join us as we honor this moment and look toward a brighter future.

Pomeranz JCC Auditorium
10:30 AM

Registration Required
RSVP@JEWISHFEDERATIONCNY.ORG

October 7 Commemoration

On October 7 at 10:30 am, the Jewish Federation of Central New York will hold a solemn commemoration of the October 7 attack on Israel in the auditorium of the Pomeranz Jewish Community Center. The event is open to the public by registration only.

The program will include reading of the names of the hostages by community’s rabbis and four moving musical selections. Michael Balanoff, Federation president/CEO, explained the purpose of the program: “Israel is engaged in an existential war. The commemoration of October 7 is a reminder of why Israel is fighting. Those who accuse Israel of genocide want to conveniently block from memory the reason that Israel is in Gaza to begin with: the horrific massacres committed by Hamas when they invaded and slaughtered the innocents of Israel. We remember October 7 as a reminder, even as we fight antisemitism locally, nationally and globally, even as we pray for the return of the living hostages and the recovery of the hostages who have come home, even as we pray for the souls of the hostages and the 1200 others killed on October 7, that the Jewish people and the Jewish State need always to remain vigilant and strong. The program that we are presenting asserts in the strongest possible terms: *Am Israel Chai.*”

The program will last half an hour. To register, email RSVP@JewishFederationCNY.org and list the names and email addresses of all who wish to attend.

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Samantha Garelick

Samantha Garelick is the executive director of Pro Israel America, a national organization that works to ensure that American leaders - from town halls to the hall of Congress - are committed to strengthening American's alliance with Israel. Pro Israel America works in a bipartisan way to educate and empower the public and leaders to stand up and speak out against antisemitism and to support Israel and the Jewish people at this critical moment in time.

Garelick has strong ties to Syracuse, as the granddaughter of two prominent Jewish families: Norma and Bernard Goldberg and Marian and Irving Rifkin. Her parents, Cantor Hal and Marti Rifkin, hail from Syracuse and were married at Temple Adath Yeshurun, further rooting her in the local Jewish community.

Garelick is a distinguished professional with a diverse background and a strong academic foundation. An alumna of Cornell University, she launched her career as a financial analyst in high-yield capital markets and private wealth at Goldman Sachs. Over the years, she has successfully founded and managed several ventures, including a kosher culinary business and a jewelry line. Her entrepreneurial spirit led her to a fulfilling role as an art educator at Camp Ramah in California, where she taught for five years, and at Shalhevet High School, a modern Orthodox Jewish high school in Los Angeles. During her six-year tenure at Shalhevet, she taught various art disciplines, including art history, visual art, art composition and digital and studio art, eventually becoming the chair of the art department. She also led the Pro-Israel Activism club, fostering a culture of advocacy among students.

In addition to her professional career, Garelick was an avid lay leader in Los Angeles. She served as the vice president of development at Temple Beth Am in Los Angeles, successfully overseeing



a \$2 million annual campaign. Her commitment to the Jewish community was evident as she participated in her children's day school education committee and engaged actively in local initiatives. She is a Wexner Fellow, an AIPAC national council member, and a participant in the Israel Economic Forum, a global peer group of influential business leaders dedicated to enhancing Israel's economic standing and security. Recently, Garelick and her husband Jeremy moved their family back to Syracuse, where Jeremy had founded American High, a movie studio and established the Academy at American High, a school focused on digital media and content creation.

Samantha embodies the Jewish principle of *tzedakah*—the obligation to assist others—through her philanthropic endeavors and community involvement, with a strong focus on Israel and her local Jewish community. She and her husband Jeremy are proud to raise their four children with a deep sense of Jewish identity and pride. She currently resides in Fayetteville, NY, where she continues her commitment to community service and activism.

» BOOK REVIEW

Judaism Disrupted: A Spiritual Manifesto for the 21st Century

by Rabbi Michael Strassfeld

Reviewed by Rebekah Tanner

"Manifesto: a written statement declaring publicly the intentions, motives or views of its issuer." ~ Merriam Webster

Published in 2023, this work by Rabbi Michael Strassfeld is intimately tied to the full body of his work, beginning with his collaborative project (with Sharon Strassfeld and edited by Richard Siegel) of 1973, *The Jewish Catalog: A Do-It Yourself Kit*. Two additional volumes of the *Catalog*, published in 1976 and 1980, had an impact not expected by Rabbi Strassfeld when he began putting the *Catalogs* together. Many regard these books as among the most significant popular Jewish writings of the late 20th century. Modeled on the equally famous *Whole Earth Catalog* (1968) and *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1970), the emphasis in the *Jewish Catalogs* was on the practical and lived aspects of a kind of democratic Judaism which evolved in the context of the *Havurah* (Jewish religious fellowship) movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

With his new book Rabbi Strassfeld is still dealing with the question *How do we actually do it?* with the "it" being how to live an authentically Jewish life in the present. The perspectives and challenges of this first quarter of the 21st century are of an entirely different nature than those of the last quarter of the previous one. That is at the heart of the differences between these writings. What Rabbi Strassfeld is offering now is a manifesto rather than a toolbox, but his concerns remain remarkably consistent. There is less humor here and fewer practical guides, but there are suggestions for implementation which Rabbi Strassfeld places within the context of well-known holiday traditions and celebrations.

The book uses a framework of 11 core principles and rests on introductory materials written to explain something of the rabbi's personal journey and what he means by "Judaism Disrupted." The book also has an excellent introduction, "Why Bother?," written by Sylvia Boorstein who describes her own Jewish experience as "nourished and supported by the study and practice of Buddhism and mindfulness." She describes Strassfeld's new book as being "for people who are complicated with Judaism either by ancestry or by

choice and would like it to be more alive to them, more central to their lives." She says he "re-presents Judaism as a dynamic and transformative vehicle for creating wiser individuals who can be part of a wiser, kinder world."

The core principles identified by Rabbi Strassfeld, that enable a wiser way of being, all rest on the foundational concept of what it means to be "created in the Image of God," which is the first principle. The list goes on: Living in a Moral Universe, Living in Awareness, followed by Engaging in Social Justice" (focus on Passover), "Finding Holiness Everywhere," Caring for the Planet," Wrestling with God, Working on our Inner Qualities, Turning and Returning (High Holidays), Be a Lifelong Learner and finally, Living in an Open Society.

As one might expect from something subtitled "A Spiritual Manifesto," this is detailed, scholarly and at times extremely complex writing. This is not a book for the unserious. Rabbi Strassfeld says that Judaism "was never intended to be only a system of commandments and laws. The law isn't the ultimate goal -- being a mensch is." It is in "going beyond the letter of the law" that the practice Rabbi Strassfeld wishes for his readers is to be found.

I would love to bubble with enthusiasm for *Judaism Disrupted* inasmuch as the Rabbi's earlier work had such a tremendous impact on my teen-aged self. However, there are some flaws here. Perhaps he felt a need to be repetitive so that readers would really hear his message, but I found it a bit too much. There are also the rabbi's personal connections to the teachings of many Hasidic thinkers and theologians that at times became bogged down and somewhat difficult to follow. Needless to say, I missed the way humor was used to drive home important concepts in the *Jewish Catalog*. But maybe it's me, 50 years older now. So I rate the book good, not excellent.

Rebecca Tanner, retired librarian and member at Temple Adath Yeshurun, now spends some of her time as a volunteer at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and is an active Senior at the JCC.

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This column features businesses owned by members of our community, as well as artists and musical programs and is generously sponsored by RAV Properties.

For several years, RAV Properties has been a major supporter of the Jewish Observer, as a column sponsor featuring local businesses owned by members of our community. RAV Properties is also deeply committed to supporting and adding value to the Syracuse community, focusing keen interest in the arts with a natural affinity for music. RAV Properties increasingly moves into philanthropic spaces and actively supports the Federation and its many programs, as well as many other community endeavors such as the Rosamund Gifford Zoo and the CNY Food Bank. For the upcoming year, 5785, the RAV Properties column will continue to feature locally owned businesses and will also shine a spotlight on artists and musical programs which merit community support for their excellence. The JO and RAV hope you will find joy in the new focus. Please email jo@jewishfederationcny.org to schedule a feature article on your business.

The Syracuse Orchestra presents the highest quality performances of a wide variety of symphonic and chamber music in diverse styles, maintaining a balance between stewardship of the great symphonic traditions of the past while also presenting under-represented voices from the past and present and the best new music written for orchestra. The orchestra brings world-renowned guest artists to Central New York to collaborate with the fabulous musicians who are residents of the CNY community. The orchestra presents eight Masterworks concerts at the Crouse Hinds Theater from September to May.

MICHELLE CANN PLAYS BEETHOVEN – September 21, 2024

The season opens with “The Lovely Sirens” by Stacy Garrop. Then Michelle Cann performs Beethoven’s “Emperor Concerto” and the orchestra performs Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 4.

MASTERWORKS AND THE MOVIES – October 19, 2024

The Syracuse Orchestra and violinist Will Hagen perform music written for films, written by film composers and music so great it had to be included in films.



SCHUMANN & BRAHMS – November 16, 2024

The Syracuse Orchestra explores the musical connections between composers Schumann and Brahms and contemporary composer Unsuk Chin and Beethoven.

BEETHOVEN’S FIFTH – January 25, 2025

A fate-filled evening features Beethoven’s Symphony No. 5 and Carlos Simon’s “Fate Now Conquers.” Principal oboist, Eduardo Sepúlveda is featured, and composer Polina Nazaykinskaya delivers a world-premiere.

NEW WORLD SYMPHONY AND MORE – February 15, 2025

The Syracuse Orchestra presents music inspired by the Americas from Aaron Copland, John Adams and Antonin Dvorak. Violin soloist Leila Josefowicz performs Adam’s violin concerto.

JON NAKAMATSU PLAYS BRAHMS – March 8, 2025

Jon Nakamatsu returns for Brahms’s Piano Concerto No. 2, the orchestra performs Mendelssohn’s “Scottish Symphony” and is joined by the Youth Orchestra for “Groovebox Fantasy” by Bunch.

ALL MOZART – April 26, 2025

The program spans the entirety of Mozart’s adult life. He was 18, 26 and 35 respectively when he composed Symphony No. 29, “Maurerische Trauermusik” and Requiem. The Syracuse University Oratorio Society sings for this all-Mozart event.

LISZT AND MAHLER – May 17, 2025

The season ends with Mahler’s epic Symphony No. 1, which features variations of the famous French folk tune “Frère Jacques.” The concert begins with a performance of Liszt’s Piano Concerto No. 1 by Sara Davis Buechner.

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Three Weeks in Eretz Israel

by Rabbi Evan Shore

After being away from Israel for over a year, I had no idea what to expect when I landed at Ben Gurion Airport this summer. The airport was noticeably less busy than in June 2023. As I approached passport control, I was overcome with emotion seeing over 200 posters of innocent Jews taken hostage by the accursed Hamas terrorists on October 7. Many posters had a ribbon or mementos left below, and many had handwritten notes or cards from friends or family. When I left the airport, I was met by my grandson and told him what I had seen. He explained that wherever you go, there are pictures or posters of the hostages. Everyone prays for them, cares for them, longs for them and hopes for their quick and safe release.

During my 35 years in Syracuse, I have experienced many spiritually moving moments. My interaction with a battalion of soldiers on the Golan Heights, visiting a farm there and meeting families displaced by rocket attacks in the north, would make the top ten. Our group of five toured an army base half a mile from the Syrian border. Seeing firsthand how close the border is, along with the fortifications and weapons, was breathtaking. At the STOCS minyan, we recite Tehillim daily for the IDF. Seeing the brave young men and women (mostly reservists) in person, all with smiles and positive attitudes, gave me a renewed sense of pride and optimism regarding Israel's fighting forces.

We joined soldiers for a BBQ



sponsored by a STOCS member. The soldiers mentioned that the food was a welcome change from their regular army diet. Most importantly, they were unanimously grateful that so many Jews in America think about and care for them. Their smiling faces while eating the food said it all. I will always remember the hugs and shouts of "Shalom U'Bracha" (peace and blessings) we received upon our departure. Many also asked when we planned to make aliyah. About ninety minutes after we left the Golan, we received news that fifty rockets had been launched towards the area by Hezbollah, some landing near the base we had just visited. Thankfully, many were intercepted by the Iron Dome, and others fell in open areas. All the soldiers at the base are unharmed, Baruch Hashem.

I visited a farm on the Golan Heights, captured from the Syrians during the Six Day War. Standing on a bunker, I could see where Syrian soldiers once fired at Israelis below. Many bunkers like this one were bombed and destroyed by the Israeli Air Force in June 1967, thanks to the intelligence provided by the famous Israeli

spy, Eli Cohen. Cohen advised Syrian commanders to plant eucalyptus trees near all the bunkers to provide shade for the soldiers, inadvertently signaling the locations of these bunkers to Israeli pilots. Today, Israelis farm this land, raising goats and planting hundreds of olive trees. They are assisted by dozens of Israeli teenagers who spend their summer vacations helping on the farm. These teenagers are the heart and soul of the agricultural success of Israeli farmers.

I went to the Kotel on Sunday morning. As we traveled down Yaffa Street, I noticed many Palestinians eating and drinking alongside Israelis at the outdoor cafés. The light rail was also full of Palestinians. This makes it hard for me to understand the claims by Israel's detractors who argue that it is an apartheid country.

An announcement was made on the light rail about a backpack left at Center One. If anyone had left it there, they were asked to call immediately; otherwise, sappers would blow it up—just a part of daily life in Jerusalem. Sadly, the Kotel area was not busy at all. The war is definitely impacting the Israeli tourist industry. However, the spirituality of the Wall was palpable. I recited Tehillim for the continued success of the IDF. Despite the war, life goes on. Schools are in session, stores are open, and people are moving forward.

The following day, after spending two hours learning in the Beis Midrash, I took my granddaughter out for shopping and lunch. While we were enjoying a delicious falafel with french fries, eggplant, and salad, she pointed out the window and said, "That is where the rocket exploded in October!" She continued, "We were in the shelter while the siren was still sounding. We heard a big boom. The house shook, and then it was quiet." I was amazed and moved that my thirteen-year-old granddaughter could recount the incident so calmly and matter-of-factly.

I returned to Ramat Beit Shemesh to participate in a celebration marking the completion of writing a new Sefer Torah. I had the honor, along with many others, of sitting beside the sofer (scribe), as he wrote one of the final letters. Afterward, the new Torah was taken to the site of the new shul building. It was carried under a mobile chuppah, followed by hundreds of people singing and dancing. A sound truck blasting music led the procession, with traffic detoured in

honor of the festive occasion. What is so important to note is that, though Israel is at war, life goes on. The accursed Hamas wanted to diminish joy and happiness, yet when events like this take place, it proves the inner strength and fortitude of the Jewish people.

I spent Shabbat in Ramat Beit Shemesh. It was an amazing Shabbat. Friday night, I stood on the terrace overlooking parts of the city, and not a car was in sight. For nearly 25 hours, the roads and streets were free of moving vehicles. The day passed without the sound of motors rumbling or horns honking, creating a unique silence that enhanced the spirituality of the day. Many members of the shul have served considerable time in the IDF. One person, who was in Gaza for sixty days, delivered a moving d'var Torah at the conclusion of Shabbat morning services. On Sunday morning, an IDF soldier in uniform sat next to me, his Galil rifle resting just a foot away. Praying in shul with a gun so close was an experience I am not accustomed to. During the Amidah, I offered an extra prayer to Hashem for the soldier, asking that he return home safely to his family. I wish there was a way to preserve the tears that streamed from my eyes during that moment.

We went to Ammunition Hill, the site of an intense yet crucial battle during the Six Day War. The fighting at the police academy and Ammunition Hill commenced on June 6, 1967, at 2:30 AM. We walked through the trenches and bunkers, where the battle scars from bullets serve as a grim reminder of the intense fighting that took place here. In every generation, Israel's bravest are called upon to defend the nation. Jews around the world should be grateful for those who made the ultimate sacrifice, as well as those who survived to see another day. Today, the IDF is filled with courageous soldiers who don't see their service as an obligation but rather as a desire to be counted among the many who have protected Eretz Yisroel.

In Jerusalem, I witnessed numerous acts of kindness. On the bus and light rail, people frequently gave up their seats for older individuals and pregnant women. Soldiers in line for coffee had their bills paid by others. When someone's shopping bag broke and items scattered, many stepped in to pick up the items and offered to replace the bag. There is so much good in the world; we just need to see and appreciate it.



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Angelini Appointed 3GNY Upstate Regional Coordinator



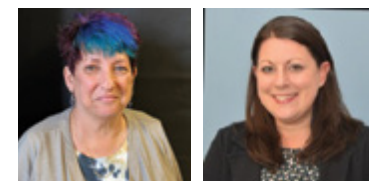
Dr. Eileen Angelini has been named Upstate Regional Coordinator of 3GNY, an educational organization founded by the grandchildren of survivors that preserves the legacies and lessons of the Holocaust. Angelini holds a B.A. from Middlebury College and master's and doctoral degrees from Brown University. She is a Fulbright scholar and because of her work with Holocaust survivors documenting the events of the WWII Occupation of France was recognized by the French government with the award of *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques*, an award created by Napoleon Bonaparte to recognize devotion and accomplishment in teaching.

In her new position, Angelini will manage the outreach to schools and community groups across

Upstate New York, with a primary focus in Onondaga County, while building a supportive community among the descendants of survivors. 3GNY Executive Director Dave Reckess said, "We're thrilled to have Eileen join our team at a time when countering antisemitism and hate is more crucial than ever. Her energy and experience will be invaluable as we continue educating students through the powerful testimonies of Holocaust survivors' grandchildren, fostering greater understanding and empathy in our communities." Dr. Angelini added, "It is a privilege for me to serve in this position as a way to honor all the survivors who have shared their stories with me."

TAY'S New Religious School Team

Cantor Esa Jaffe concluded her tenure as education director of the Temple Adath Yeshurun Religious School last spring after many years of dedicated service. TAY is pleased to introduce its new Religious School leadership team: Director Arlene Laut and Curriculum and Instructional Specialist Kimi Sisskind.



Arlene Laut recently retired after spending 37 years in Hannibal Central School District as a Resource Room teacher and has co-taught nearly every subject. She has a master's degree in reading and another in holocaust and genocide studies. She is a long-time member of TAY and joined the TAY Religious School teaching staff in 2023. She will oversee the Religious School teachers and the daily operations of the school and will also be a classroom teacher.

Kimi Sisskind has an undergraduate degree in psychology and Judaic studies, and a master's degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). She was an ESOL/ENL teacher for 12 years and spent the last three years as a resource specialist/teacher trainer. She and her family are members of TAY and her two daughters attend the religious school. She will oversee the curriculum for the school.

"Kimi and I are excited to take on this new adventure," says Arlene. The theme for this school year will be community. Parents, grandparents, Temple Adath community members are encouraged to participate. The *madrichim* will be kicking off each Sunday by teaching through music, dance and games. The Temple Adath Yeshurun Religious School is open to children in Pre-K (4 years) through 7th grade.

New at Hillel



Jared Stern is the new assistant director of Syracuse Hillel. Jared was born in Philadelphia and raised in South Florida. He is passionate about leadership, all things Philadelphia sports and being in nature. He comes to Syracuse Hillel after serving for the past three years at Ohio University Hillel, including the past year as the Director of Jewish Student Life. He graduated with a BA in political science from Florida Atlantic University, where he was involved as a student leader in Hillel and student government and holds a master's degree in Jewish nonprofit management from Hebrew Union College's Zelikow School. Stern is very excited to come to Syracuse Hillel and to get to know all of the amazing people in the community.

SHDS Kindergarteners Enjoy Orientation

by Phyllis Zames

Incoming Syracuse Hebrew Day School Kindergarten families enjoyed a special orientation program in their classroom on August 11. They were welcomed by their teachers, Pamela Sequin (General Studies) and Rosie Glasser (Jewish Studies) and interim Head of School, Melissa Klemperer. Each kindergartner was given an SHDS Class of 2031 t-shirt.

After time for free play and mingling with their new classmates, the soon-to-be kindergartners enjoyed circle time and learned about plans for the first day of school. They shared their favorite things to do in summer as well as things they wanted their new friends to know about them. Then they enjoyed working on crafts, using their English and Hebrew names, as well as one very special activity: they were invited to decorate



learning community with such a positive, fun experience. I am very excited to see the kindergartners' reactions to their teachers' dresses on the first day of school."

white dresses with fabric markers which their teachers will wear on the first day of school.

The teachers were very appreciative that families took the time to gather before the fall. "It was a nice time to connect before school starts and allow the children to see and enjoy our space," Sequin said. Klemperer agreed, and added, "It is an absolute pleasure to welcome our newest students to their



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As a New York State Senator, I passed legislation to...

- **Require the State Education Department to ensure proper education of students in public schools on the Holocaust**
- **Require museums to acknowledge art stolen from the Jewish community by the Nazis in Europe**
- **Secure \$120 million in funding for Synagogues and religious institutions to prevent hate crimes**
- **Secured \$100,000 for the Safe Haven Holocaust Refugee Shelter and Museum in Oswego.**

As your Representative in Congress, I will...

- **Champion the Jewish community by advocating for robust protections against antisemitism**
- **Enhance educational initiatives that honor Jewish history, and secure vital resources to preserve our cultural heritage and safety**
- **Always stand with Israel, our Partner in Democracy in the Middle East**
- **Never forget the atrocities of October 7th**

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COMMUNITY

Temple Concord Goldenberg Authors Series Announced

by Chana Meir

Temple Concord's Regina F. Goldenberg Series returns this fall with authors discussing a wide range of Jewish-themed books and a Kids' Book Fair Weekend in the spring. If you've ever put down a book and said to yourself, "I wish I could talk to this author," here's your opportunity. Despite being virtual, these talks are interactive, and a Q&A and discussion follow each author's brief presentation.

Here's the lineup for the 2024-2025 Authors Series. Mark your calendars now, and watch future issues of the *JO* for further information about each event.

November 7, 2024: Derek Black will discuss *The Klansman's Son*, a memoir of his journey from white nationalism to antiracism sparked by his friendship with a Jewish classmate in college.

December 12, 2024: Barry I. Schwartz will speak on *Open Judaism: A Guide for Believers, Atheists, and Agnostics*, described as a "dynamic exploration of the remarkable array of thought within Judaism today."

January 2, 2025: Israeli author Maya Arad will discuss *The Hebrew Teacher*, a set of three novellas about crises faced by three women who have immigrated from Israel to the United States.

February 6, 2025: Steven Ujifusa will speak on *The Last Ships from Hamburg: Business, Rivalry, and the Race to Save Russia's Jews on the Eve of World War I*, a history of Eastern European Jewish immigration to America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

April 4-6, 2025: Kids' Book Fair Weekend, to which all of the community's religious schools are invited. The weekend will include age-appropriate sessions for the kids with the authors as well as opportunities for parents to interact with the authors. In attendance will be Lori Dubbin, author of *Perfect Match*, *The Story of Althea Gibson and Angela Buxton*; Bonni Goldberg, author of *Dona Gracia Saved Worlds*; Joshua S. Levy, author of *Finn and Ezra's Bar Mitzvah Time Loop*; and Sarah Holly Ackerman, author of *Challah for Shabbat Tonight*.

All presentations, aside from the Book Fair, are virtual and all are free. Virtual talks begin at 7:30 pm. Links can be found each month in the calendar section of TempleConcord.org, in the Temple's weekly E-Bulletin and in Community Happenings.

High Holiday Services at CBS-CS: Where Tradition Meets Innovation

by Yolanda Febles

This year, CBS-CS's High Holiday services embody its commitment to two core values: meeting people where they are and enhancing Jewish life by blending innovation and tradition. At CBS-CS, the belief that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in High Holiday services is paramount, which is why there are no tickets—everyone is warmly welcomed at no charge. For non-members, all that is required is advance registration.

The High Holidays have been thoughtfully planned to ensure a meaningful experience for all ages and stages. Rosh Hashanah begins with a traditional service on the first day, followed by a more innovative second day featuring an abbreviated service with meditations, reflections and sensory engagement suitable for all ages. Yom Kippur continues with a traditional format, with emergency snacks and beverages available for those who need them.

Both holidays will include special youth programming and babysitting for parents who wish to focus on services. Flexible spaces will be available, offering a relaxed setting to stretch, meditate, or take a break. For families with young children, the "Prayground" provides space where kids can enjoy toys and books under the watchful eye of their parents in the main sanctuary. For Sukkot, a New Member Shabbat Dinner will welcome both new, current and prospective members with a lovely service, a delicious menu, and meaningful conversations.

To attend services at CBS-CS and to receive more information, go to: tinyurl.com/cbscshh2024.

Local Teen Selected As Shalom Hartman Institute Teen Fellow



The Shalom Hartman Institute's Teen Fellowship is an extraordinary opportunity for Jewish high school students in grades 10-12 from across North America to cultivate their Jewish identities and worldviews. During this historic and difficult time for Israel and Jews around the world, young people continue to show up with strength, courage, and pride in their Jewish identity.

They have big questions, face challenging dilemmas, and are searching for a place that takes their ideas seriously. Julia Zames, a 2021 graduate of the Syracuse Hebrew Day School and a current student at the Epstein High School of Jewish Studies, is one of 200 Fellows chosen for this selective program.

Hartman Teen Fellows study with the Institute's preeminent faculty as they explore critical questions related to new perspectives on Jewish identity, peoplehood and values. They grapple with pressing questions related to identity and belonging, their relationship to Israel and important issues facing the Jewish people. In a community of Jewish peers, Fellows cultivate a desire and the capacity to lead meaningful Jewish lives and the tools to build an informed, meaningful and bright Jewish future.

The Fellows develop the capacity and the confidence to wrestle with questions that matter to teens, such as: What does it mean to be a part of a global Jewish people? What unites us and what divides us? How should we, as young Jews, respond to the challenges we face in a polarized society? The Fellowship runs from October to May and involves four components:

Community and Mentorship: Jewish tradition values learning in community. Fellows are assigned to a *shevet* (home-group) of approximately 15 teens that will anchor key components of their experience. These groups are facilitated, in part, by college-age madrichim (facilitators) who are alumni of Hartman's *Hevruta* gap year program. Fellows will also form *chavruta* (partner) learning groups, which meet in on-going learning sessions throughout the Fellowship program. Select regional areas will also host local gatherings for Fellows in October and January.

Shabbatonim: Two in-person, weekend programs with immersive Jewish living, learning and community include study sessions, pluralistic Shabbat observance, student-led discussion and social programming.

Virtual Community Batei Midrash: Five times throughout the program Fellows gather as a community for virtual learning sessions with international Hartman Institute scholars.

Trimester Elective Classes features a catalogue of classes within a thematic framework. Courses meet once a week for four weeks.

"I am so thrilled to be chosen to be a Hartman Fellow," said Julia. "I am looking forward to a new and enlightening Jewish experience."

The Shalom Hartman Teen Fellowship Experience

by Milo Sinclair

Last summer, while working as a counselor for kids with disabilities at Camp Ramah, I sought advice from the camp director as I was looking to broaden my involvement in the Jewish community. He introduced me to the Shalom Hartman Institute, and I was invited to apply to be a *madrich*, or program leader, as part of their Teen Fellowship. Little did I know what a close-knit community and truly meaningful experiences lay ahead of me.



The Shalom Hartman Teen Fellowship is an opportunity for Jewish high schoolers across North America to cultivate their Jewish identity through grappling with pressing questions related to identity and belonging, relationship with Israel, and important issues facing the Jewish people. As a *madrich*, I had the privilege of watching this creation of a Jewish community unfold.

The year I joined was the Fellowship's second year and, given that the number of participants had tripled from the program's inaugural year, everyone on the team was gearing up for an even more interactive program that could cater to a lot more people. We started in the fall, with the first of two in-person *Shabbatonim* taking place in New Jersey, where teens from across North America flocked, to come together to learn and build community. There were lectures from a variety of program faculty, discussing issues of Jewish identity, pluralism and how to balance the secular and religious parts of our lives.



Then came three trimesters of virtual learning and engagement. I TAed three unique electives and led a small group of teens, or a *shevet*, in their learning throughout the year. I got to TA under some incredible teachers, including Yossi Ben Harush, an engaging thinker and speaker, whom I enjoyed so much that I decided to TA the rest of his classes for the year.

Topics covered throughout the year were thought-provoking: Jewish life on college campuses, our relationship with Israel, how to think critically about our religion and ways in which the Torah can be applied to our everyday lives. The wide variety of class options gave me and the program fellows the opportunity to properly focus on material we

were actually interested in, taught by people with relevant subject experience.

The program culminated at the final in-person *Shabbaton* in New Jersey, where all participants, after a year of virtual learning and interaction, got to meet for one final weekend. The *Shabbaton* was a beautiful, full-circle way of ending the program. While the first *Shabbaton* seemed slightly like a middle school dance, with teens sheepishly meeting one another and being fairly resistant to participating, the final *Shabbaton* felt like a high school reunion. Fellows sprinted into the hotel, hugging new-found friends they had only seen virtually for the past eight months. Participants were engaged and vocal, excited to learn and spend time with equally eager teens. Especially with the backdrop of October 7, occurring only a few days after the first *Shabbaton*, there was a feeling of real togetherness at the last one.

My experience with Hartman was fantastic. I found myself interested in the material being taught in the classes I was TAing. I've made great friends in my fellow *madrichim* and made the decision to reapply as a *madrich* this year. I flew to Chicago in the middle of August for an introduction to this year's plans, I couldn't be more excited for the year ahead.

School Age Programming Returns to JCC

by Erin Hart

Heading back to school can be a stressful time. Children experience a new environment with different expectations and responsibilities and parents are stressed about whether their children are safe and being challenged in a productive way. In a world of constant changes, one thing you can rely on is quality programming and experiences at the JCC for all ages. Whether it's before or after school care, vacation camps or enrichment classes, there is something for everyone at the JCC.



The JCC's Licensed After-School Program offers a choice-based program allowing children the flexibility to choose their experiences each afternoon. "Children may choose from educational and recreational activities such as arts and crafts, sports, games and even a space for them to receive additional help with their homework," says Amy Bisnett, Associate Director of Children's Programming. "We offer parents the flexibility to choose their own schedule knowing their children are being cared for in a safe environment while they finish their workday." The JCC provides busing from JD, FM and Ed Smith in the City School District. The JCC offers before school care for school-age children attending JD Elementary Schools and the Syracuse Hebrew Day School with drop off as early as 7am. To attend the Before and After School Program, JCC membership is required.

The After-School Program also runs vacation camps for school-age children to attend on holidays and other days off



from school. Age-appropriate activities are planned and longer breaks from school typically include field trips and exciting themed days.

Outside of the After-School Program, the JCC offers youth athletic classes 5-days per week. Children are bussed directly to the JCC and participate in a wide array of classes, from Gymnastics to dance, karate and ninja warrior, we have it all. "We continue to offer many

great classes for kids of all abilities at the JCC," says Sherri Lamanna, Director of Youth Athletics. "We work on age-appropriate skills that challenge each child while also focusing on safety."

Vacation camps and Youth Athletic classes are available to both members and non-members at the JCC; members receive a discount. For more information on children's programming at the JCC, visit www.jccsyr.org or call 315-445-2360.



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JCC receives Donation from Matthews Children's Foundation



The JCC of Syracuse received \$1,000 from the Matthews Children's Foundation. The Foundation awards grants to nonprofit organizations whose purpose is to support children. The JCC's Children's Programming has received continued support for a number of years from the Matthews Children's Foundation. Pictured is the JCC's Executive Director, Marci Erlebacher and Immediate Past President, Steven Sisskind.

Meet Fitness Goals at the JCC



by Carlett Spike

It's always the right time to get serious about fitness goals. Whether stuck in a rut or looking to shake things up, the JCC offers a variety of opportunities to get active. Open 7 days a week, members can play pickleball either indoors or outdoors, sign up for a class, pump some iron in the fully-equipped fitness center, and more. Those looking for more personalized attention, can sign up to work with one of the JCC's personal trainers.

Get a taste of what working with a personal trainer can look like with this month's spotlight of the JCC's newest personal trainer Suellen Simmons and receive 10% off your personal training purchase by mentioning this article. Applicable to new training clients only. Offer expires 11/30/24.

JCC: What sparked your love of fitness?

Suellen: I fell in love with fitness when I joined track and field in the seventh grade. I joined my first gym at 19 and began my lifting journey. All this came to a halt when I had kids, but I learned a lot about diet because I became insulin resistant after giving birth, which resulted in me struggling to lose 60 pounds, suffering from ligament issues, and nearly diabetic. Fast forward, I've reversed a lot of these issues through diet, dropped the weight and am active again. I've run multiple half marathons, completed Spartan Races, and more. I got into personal training about a year ago and started at the JCC in April.

JCC: What's your specialty and your availability?

Suellen: I'm a NASM certified personal trainer, and also have certifications in spin, mobility training, kettlebell, HIIT, and bootcamp. I work with a variety of clients of different ages and with various goals. I particularly love to work with people who are working toward improving functional, stability, mobility, strength, and cardio training.



I'm available Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays between 8 am to 2 pm.

JCC: Why should a new client consider working with you?

Suellen: I help clients get from A to Z, and guide them the entire way. I offer a balance of what you want, but also give clients what they need to be successful. I do like to make fitness fun and work hard to educate my clients. I don't just give generic routines, I personalize my approach for each client.

JCC: Why should someone start their fitness journey now, instead of in the new year?

Suellen: It's never too early or too late to start. If you're focused on your summer body, the fall is the perfect time to start. Since I also work with people on mobility and stability, it's great to start working on this before the winter—when people tend to slip and fall.

JCC: To learn more and sign up for personal training at the JCC email PersonalTraining@jccsy.org. For other gym inquiries, email gym@jccsy.org or call 315-445-2360.



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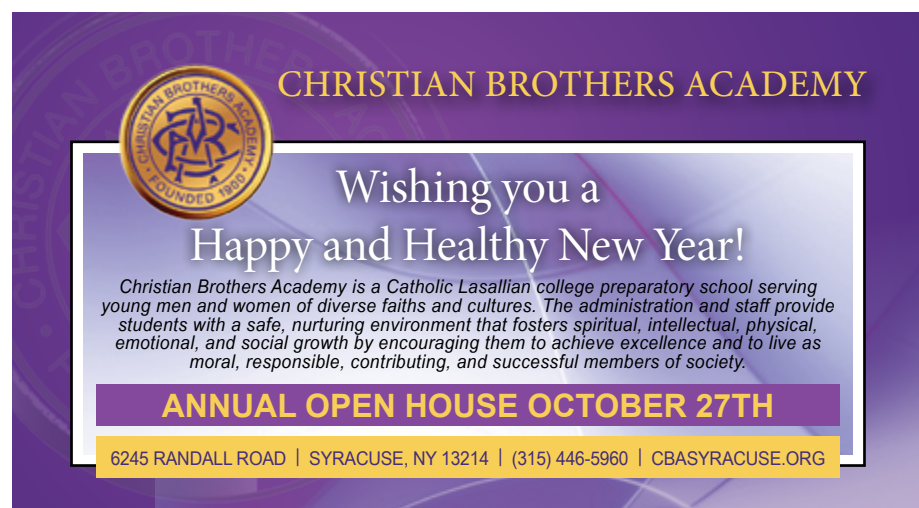
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5784: My Year of Jewish Mourning

Death has always been on the periphery of my life. That's not to say I haven't experienced loss of people near and dear to me. However, none of these losses were considered a *shiva* relationship. *Shiva* relationships are parents, siblings, spouses, and children.

Last September, death was in my direct line of sight. I traveled over 8500 miles from New York to Sri Lanka to be with my father, Sunil Wijesuriya, in the last days of his life. My siblings and I were able to be at his side when he passed on September 9, 2023. We held the man who was there for our first breaths as he breathed his last. The days that followed were a blur of planning and executing details in a place that is quite foreign to us. We were all born and raised in the U.S.

In the midst of everything, my siblings and I, all with different faith backgrounds, began wading through our emotional needs, as well as practical and religious obligations. My siblings had researched and asked many questions about Jewish mourning customs. To help me during this period, they did not play music if I was in the same room as them; they covered the mirrors for me; they shielded me during the cremation. During these early days of loss, I was comforted by finding similarities between Buddhist and Jewish funeral customs. It helped me to feel closer to my dad, who was suddenly so far away.

Knowing that our father was nearing the end of his life, I packed what I needed to honor his Buddhist traditions, while also honoring my Jewish ones. Here in the States, we are accustomed to mourners donning black clothing, representative of respect, solemnity, and sadness. Even our *kriah* ribbons are often made of black fabric adhered to a black pin button. In

stark contrast, Buddhists believe wearing white symbolizes purity, freedom, and peace - helping the deceased to leave from this life and begin a new one.

Buddhists are firm believers in reincarnation, which is rooted in their belief of *samsara* - which means "wandering" and represents the karmic cycle of life, death, and rebirth until Nirvana (enlightenment) is attained. To offer merit and purification to the deceased, the monks asked us to pour water into a vessel seated on a sacred object until it overflowed. While we did this, they chanted prayer that translates to:

*As water raining on a hill
flows down to the valley,
even so does what is given here
benefit the dead.*

*As rivers full of water
fill the ocean full,
even so does what is given here
benefit the dead.*

These are familiar themes in Judaism as well. Prior to burying a body, the ritual of *tahara* is fulfilled. It is an act of purification performed by the funeral director with assistance, or the *chevra kadisha* - a sacred society, who are specially trained Jews caring and preparing the body for burial. During *tahara*, very specific and important instructions are prescribed for cleansing the body and carrying out the ritual. During this time, the *Chamol* prayer is recited.

Both Judaism and Buddhism prescribe



specific days to be significant during the mourning period.

In Buddhism, activities or rituals generally take place on the third, seventh, forty-ninth, and one hundredth days following death, however, the total mourning period lasts forty-nine to one hundred days, depending on the deceased's personal beliefs and karma. Buddhists believe that the deceased face seven trials every seven days, culminating on the forty-ninth day. Depending on the relationship, three months after the funeral (roughly 100 days after death), survivors will hold a *dhane* (almsgiving) on behalf of their loved one. Food offerings are made to the monks by the survivors and other laypeople, and it is met with *pirith* (sacred chants).

In Judaism, immediate relatives will observe *shiva* for seven days. It is the time when we talk about our loved ones, share memories, and lament our loss. We wear our *kriah* to signify we are mourners. After the seven days, we resume many of our normal social and professional activities. Then we continue into *shloshim* - the thirty-day period, which is less intense than *shiva*. During this time, mourner's don't cut their hair and male mourners do not shave. Additionally, social events and religious celebrations are restricted, though the ritual ceremonies are permissible. At this point, the mourning period ends, unless one is mourning a parent. Jews are obligated to mourn eleven Hebrew months (which includes *shiva* and *sheloshim*) of a parent, which is a reflection to honor the commandment to respect parents. It is also a time to reflect and appreciate the role our parents play in our lives. Annually, we observe our loved one's *yahrzeit* and recite Kaddish, and at the conclusion of four holy days a year (Yom Kippur, Shemini Atzeret, Passover, and Shavuot), we are all mourners remembering the deceased.

I will continue to mourn the loss of my father for the rest of my life; however, my Judaism allowed the transition to a healthier mental and emotional place. There was never a more powerful 'Amen' for me than the one said on Rosh Hashanah, during the first section of the Mourner's Kaddish. The robust collective sound of hundreds of congregants reminded me that I had a tribe to help me stand when I felt like falling. Nearly

every day, twice a day, I recited the Mourner's Kaddish for my father. Without a *minyan*, we are not able to recite this and other prayers in the service. Day in and day out, I was able to fulfill this obligation, thanks to the dedicated members of Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas and Temple Adath Yeshurun. The time I committed to saying Kaddish gave me a dedicated time each day to be in my feelings, fall apart if necessary, and connect with people of all ages who have experienced the same loss.

At the three-month mark, my siblings and I hosted a *dhane* at a Buddhist temple in Albany and invited friends and family who were not able to be in Sri Lanka. In September, we again held a *dhane*, this time in San Diego to mark the anniversary of his death. We made all of his favorite foods and shared our memories. It was emotional and cathartic. Another cathartic moment for me was after completing my *Shnat Ha-Evel* (mourning period of 11 Hebrew months), I cut my hair. It was the first time I had done so since the day before my father's funeral. I let go of so much pain and grew around my grief. I will celebrate his life rather than mourn my loss.

Now, I will dedicate as much time as possible to remembering my father, but also being part of the ten, allowing others to fulfill the obligation of saying Kaddish and remembering their loved ones. Syracuse Conservative Daily Services are Sunday through Thursday at 5:30 pm, Monday to Friday at 7:30 am, and Sunday mornings at 9:00 am via Zoom. Please join us, it's a mitzvah.

Sonali McIntyre is the Communications Manager at InterFaith Works of CNY and a member of the Syracuse Jewish community.

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RITA L. WELLS
August 10, 2024



Rita passed peacefully at her home surrounded by her family after battling a long illness. Rita was born and raised in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, where her father Irwin Krim was an inventor of many soft drinks including Pennsylvania Dutch Birch Beer. After graduating from Syracuse University School of Education, Rita taught first grade. Rita met her husband "Hank" on the last day of classes. Their love story was magical: they were married for sixty-five years, together raising four children.

Although Rita volunteered actively with a number of community organizations, she always prioritized spending time with her children and grandchildren. She was past president and lifetime member of Hadassah Syracuse; past member of the Temple Adath Yeshurun Sisterhood; Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority house mother at Syracuse University; and aid to former U.S. Representative George Wortley in admissions for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. She and her husband, Henry, were members of Temple Adath Yeshurun, Temple Society of Concord, The Century Club, Cavalry Club, and the Palm Beach Yacht Club. They were also members of Congregation Beth Israel in Lebanon, Pennsylvania and Temple Anshei Shalom of Palm Beach, Florida. Rita and Henry were proud supporters of Israel, having donated two ambulances to Magen David Adom, and also supported Chabad of Syracuse.

She will be forever remembered as the warmest, sweetest, and most gracious to all those blessed to have known her.

Rita was predeceased by her father, Irwin Krim, and her mother, Dorothy Krim. She is survived by her husband, Henry Wells, her children Martin (Michele) Wells, Steven (Pamela) Wells, Victoria Wells (Jon Guisbond) and Alison Cowen (Dan Travers), and her grandchildren Ted Wells, Greg Wells, Ethan Habib-Wells, Rachel Habib Wells, Madelyn ("Happy") Cowen, Jack Wells, Sam Wells and Abbie, Sammie and Will Guisbond.

Donations in Rita's memory may be made to Congregation Beth Israel - Lebanon, Pennsylvania. <https://www.congregation-beth-israel.org/support/make-a-donation>.

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RONALD KAMENY, MD
August 21, 2024

Ronald Kameny, MD, died peacefully on August 21 at Menorah Park. Born on June 30, 1934 to Joseph and Pearl Kameny in Brooklyn, he had been a resident of Syracuse for more than 60 years.

After graduating from Bates College and then medical school in Vienna, Austria, Dr. Kameny served his internship at Kings County Hospital, followed by a residency at St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse. He was in private practice in Lyncourt for more than 25 years; followed by practicing at North Medical for 25 years until retiring. Ronnie always felt he was blessed to have been a practicing physician and care for people. He was respected and beloved by his patients and the medical community as well.

His family includes his wife Deborah, his sons David and Sam, his daughter Dr. Marla (Dr. Daniel) Kameny Sage, Deborah's daughters Amy Dimauro and Beth (John) Murphy; his sister Joan Gelch and grandchildren Oscar, Ruby, Eli, Katherine and Gavin.

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PAUL ANDREW SILVERMAN

Paul Andrew Silverman passed away from natural causes at home, just shy of his 60th birthday. Born on July 27 in Brooklyn to Robert and Harriet Silverman, he had been a resident of Syracuse since 1965.

He attended J-D schools and was a BOCES student as well. Paul worked in many places and enjoyed his participation wherever he worked. Most recently, he was working at the Syracuse Marriott. Though Paul had many health challenges, partially due to his Legg Perthes disease, they never defined or limited his life. Paul was a member of and celebrated his bar mitzvah at Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas. He loved to fish, music and attending concerts in the local music scene. He never met a stranger; his warm and outgoing personality drew people in no matter where he went.

His family, whom he adored, includes his parents Robert and Harriet Silverman, his brother David and his wife Jessica; his sister Stephanie, his niece Raia and his nephew Samuel.

Contributions may be made to Access CNY or Congregation Beth Sholom-Chevra Shas.

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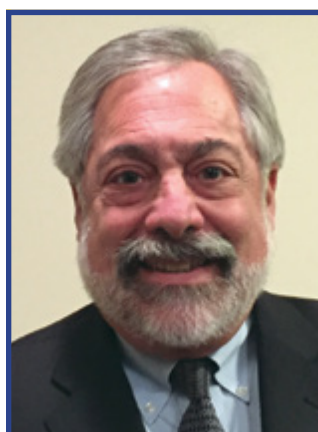
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Start 5785 off right by calling Michael Balanoff, Foundation Executive Director, at 315-445-0270 to create your legacy endowment.