

Savannah JEWISH LIFE



FALL 2026- VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3

Savannah Jewish Life
5111 Abercorn Street
Savannah, GA 31405

Non-Profit
Organization U.S.
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Published by the
Savannah Jewish Federation
5111 Abercorn Street
Savannah, GA 31405
912-355-8111
www.savj.org

Savannah
JEWISH LIFE

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The objectives of the Savannah Jewish Life Magazine are to foster a sense of community among the Jewish people of Savannah by sharing ideas, information, experiences and opinions, and to promote the agencies, projects and mission of the Savannah Jewish Federation.

Savannah Jewish Life is published quarterly four times a year, with a deadline as follows:

Spring Issue- March, April & May- Deadline February 1

Summer Issue- June, July & August- Deadline May 1

Fall Issue- September, October & November- Deadline August 1

Winter Issue- December, January & February- Deadline November 1

Please send all Savannah Jewish Life materials to: savannahjewishlife@savj.org
Please send eNews newsletter submissions to: news@savj.org

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Letters to the Editor

Savannah Jewish Life is a community publication. Letters should be civil and considerate in tone and not contain personal attacks, random attacks on businesses, or defamation. All statements of facts must and may be edited for length, clarity, or factual content. The opinions expressed are always the writer's. All letters must include the author's full name, address, and phone number (only your name, and if appropriate, job title and organization or business name, will be published). No more than two letters from the same author will be published within 12 consecutive months. Submit letters to savannahjewishlife@savj.org. Savannah Jewish Life retains full and sole discretion about which letters to publish.

Savannah Jewish Federation Mission Statement

Charged with raising, collecting and distributing funds, the Savannah Jewish Federation seeks to advance the welfare of the total Jewish community. The Federation strongly supports Israel and world Jewry. Additionally, the organization strives to preserve the civil, political, economic and religious rights of all Jews to develop an articulate, intelligent, and constructive Jewish community and to promote mutual understanding with the community at-large.

Shalom Savannah

Sam Friedman, Chief Executive Officer



The High Holidays invite us to pause. In a world that rarely seems to slow down, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur give us permission to step back from the urgency of the moment and ask larger questions: Where have we been? Where are we going? And, perhaps most importantly, who do we want to become?

As I reflect on the past year at the Savannah Jewish Federation and the Jewish Educational Alliance, I am filled with gratitude and tremendous optimism about the future of our community.

By nearly every measure, our community is growing. Our annual campaign has increased, allowing us to invest more deeply in Jewish life here in Savannah, care for those in need, strengthen our local institutions, and respond to challenges facing Jews around the world. Membership at the JEA has grown, welcoming more individuals and families into a place that has served as a home for Jewish and civic life for more than a century. Enrollment in our preschool and camp programs has increased, filling our building with the unmistakable sounds of children learning, laughing, and forming friendships that may last a lifetime.

These numbers matter not simply because growth is good, but because of what each number represents.

Behind every new membership is a person looking for connection. Behind every preschool or camp enrollment is a family placing its trust in us. Behind every campaign gift is someone making a deliberate choice to invest in the future of Jewish Savannah. Growth is not merely about becoming larger; it is about creating more opportunities for people to belong.

That growth is also visible throughout our campus. Renovations and improvements are making the JEA more welcoming, more functional, and better prepared to serve our community for generations to come (if you haven't seen the new auditoriums they are a sight to behold!). New and expanded programming is bringing people together in ways that respond to the changing needs and interests of Savannah. Some people enter our doors for Jewish learning or cultural celebrations. Others come for preschool, camp, fitness, swimming, friendship, or simply to find a familiar face. However they arrive, our hope is that they leave feeling that this is their community and that they have a place within it.

None of this happens by accident. It is the result of the extraordinary commitment of our staff, board members, volunteers, donors, members, families, and community partners. It reflects years of careful stewardship, difficult decisions, generous philanthropy, creative thinking, and a shared belief that Jewish life in Savannah is worth building and sustaining.

The High Holidays remind us that renewal does not mean abandoning what came before. Instead, we carry the wisdom of our past into the possibilities of the future. For more than 100 years, generations before us built the institutions we now inherit. They could not have known exactly what Jewish Savannah would look like today, but they believed deeply enough in its future to make it possible.

Now it is our turn.

As we enter this new year, may we continue to grow not only in membership, enrollment, programming, and dollars raised, but in kindness, courage, generosity, and our willingness to care for one another.

May we build a community that honors those who came before us, embraces those who are here today, and creates a strong foundation for those who will come after us.

The Talmud teaches us that we are not obligated to complete the work but neither are we free to desist from it. I know there is still much work ahead, but there is also so much reason for hope. We are growing. We are investing. We are welcoming new people into our communal story. And together, we are shaping the next chapter of Jewish life in Savannah.

May the coming year be one of health, sweetness, renewal, and peace for you, your family, our community, and all the people of Israel.

L'shanah tovah u'metukah.

May we all be inscribed for a good and sweet new year.

Sam Friedman |
CEO Savannah Jewish Federation & JEA

WELCOME TO THE



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The Savannah Jewish Federation Gratefully Thanks Our Contributors

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In memory of Julie Spector
Judy Byck
Donna & Tony Eichholz

Donating to a Savannah Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah fund is a wonderful way to honor a special simcha or life cycle event, honor the memory of a friend or loved one, or recognize someone in the community.

Visit www.savj.org to see a complete list of funds and to make a donation.



Dayle & Aaron Levy
and their entire family
wish their friends and
family a new year filled
with good health,
happiness and peace.

Linda & Michael, Stephanie, Jonathan, Lilly,
Ameila, and Isabelle Zoller; Becca, Eric,
Adeline & Zachary Zoller Stone wish everyone
a happy and healthy New Year.

Wishing all a
Good New Year!
The Odrezin Families

Happy New Year to all.
From Marilyn and Jim Farley

L' Shana Tova from
The Biners
Stan & Peg
Walt & Melanie
Sarah, Karla, & Jonah

SHANA TOVA TO OUR FAMILY & FRIENDS. MAY WE ALL
HAVE PEACE, GOOD HEALTH, AND LOTS OF LOVE.
BEST ALWAYS,
TAMI & LENNY TISHBERG

Happy New
Year to all!
Kathy Levitt

The Samuels and
Loncon families wish
you a happy and
healthy New Year!

Scott and Lori
Jared, Danielle, & Abe
Allison, Emma, Zoey, Sarah

Wishing everyone a Happy, Healthy
and Sweet New Year
Sally & Steve
Greg, Susan, Eleanor, & Grant
Matt, Karina, Leo & Tomas Greenber

Leadership Greetings

Rabbi David Cantor, Congregation Agudath Achim



There is something odd about celebrating the beginning of the New Year on the first of the *seventh* month.

The Bible is quite clear about the calendar: Nissan (when Passover is celebrated) “shall mark for you the beginning of the months; it shall be the first of the months of the year for you.” (Exodus 12:2) Rosh Hashanah doesn’t have a name in Leviticus’ list of sacred seasons (“In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts.” Leviticus 23:24), but Yom Kippur does (“Mark, the tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement.” Leviticus 23:27).

So what can we learn from our tradition of celebrating the start of a new year when—Biblically speaking—it’s already half over?

One of the tasks of Rosh Hashanah is *heshbon ha-nefesh*, taking an accounting of our souls:

Rabbi Kruspedai said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Three books are opened on Rosh HaShana before the Holy One, Blessed be He: **One of wholly wicked people, and one of wholly righteous people, and one of middling people** whose good and bad deeds are equally balanced. **Wholly righteous people are immediately written and sealed for life; wholly wicked people are immediately written and sealed for death; and middling people are left with their judgment suspended from Rosh HaShana until Yom Kippur**, their fate remaining undecided. If **they merit**, through the good deeds and mitzvot that they perform during this period, **they are written for life; if they do not so merit, they are written for death.** (Rosh Hashanah 16b)

The liturgy invites us to imagine ourselves to be on trial for our very lives:

On Rosh Hashanah it is written, and on the Fast of the Day of Atonement it is sealed: how many will pass on, and how many will be born, who will live and who will die, who will live a long life and who will come to an untimely end.”

And the assessment will be made according to the record of how we have lived our lives.

In psychological terms, on the days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we are being invited to reflect back upon how we have lived our lives, and to extrapolate from that what we may expect in the future. And we are reminded that “*t’shuvah*, *t’fillah*, and *tz’dakah* have the power to transform the harshness of the decree.”

My understanding of “*t’shuvah*, *t’fillah*, and *tz’daka*” is a process of self-review, self-assessment, and a commitment to better behavior in the future.

So what is the message that I draw from the Tradition’s assignment of this “New Year’s Resolution” activity after half the year has passed? That the dawn of every new day is like the beginning of a new year, and just as we are formally invited to take account of our actions on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we would be well-advised to extend that activity to every other day of the year. It’s not enough, one day each year, to resolve to be a better person: one should live each day as if it was their last:

Rabbi Eliezer’s students asked him: But does a person know the day on which he will die? He said to them: All the more so this is a good piece of advice, and one should repent today lest he die tomorrow; and by following this advice one will spend his entire life in a state of repentance. (Shabbat 153a)

This year as you observe Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I encourage you to engage in a process of self-reflection ... and make a resolution not to wait until the next new year to repeat the process.

May we all be written down and confirmed (sealed) for a good year, made even better by decisions grounded in self-awareness with a commitment towards continuous improvement.

Leadership Greetings

Rabbi Avi Nitekman, Congregation Bnai Brith Jacob



The High Holidays are a journey in our relationship with Hashem. Like any trip (and most things in life), the more you prepare for it, the more you'll be able to get out of it. A well planned itinerary created after thorough research will make for a great experience.

But, if your itinerary is made by a seasoned guide with intimate knowledge of the area, that would be even better. If we want to make the most of this High Holiday season, we would do well to seek out the advice of those who understand it best and follow their guidance.

A careful look though the words of our prayers would be a good place to start. The prayers were crafted by The Men of the Great Assembly, a unique group of our greatest scholars, with prophets among them. Every letter was placed with extreme precision, and contains immense power based on the deepest understandings of the universe and its running. The workings of all the channels of spirituality and their connections to our physical world were known to these great men, and they used this knowledge, and divine inspiration, to form our prayers. We can never understand the true depth contained within our services, but we can rest assured that the prophets and sages who compiled them embedded layers and layers of holiness into the text. By examining these prayers beforehand, we have a much better chance of connecting with them on these holy days. Additionally, this will help us gain much needed preparation to get the most out of this opportunistic time.

Understanding the general theme and direction of these holidays is also a key component. The month that preceded Rosh Hashana is called "Ellul". "Ellul" is an acronym for many things, most famously, "Ani Lidodi Vidodi Li." "I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me." (Song of Songs 6:3). A depiction of the unique and close relationship that exists between us and Hashem, and it is a description of the month of Ellul. As Rosh Hashana approaches, Hashem comes closer to us than ever before. The Day of Judgement can be frightening, and Hashem wants to help us prepare. Imagine, the Judge Himself is coming to us to help us prepare for our case, can we ignore the visit? Taking advantage of Ellul will certainly help us on Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and even Succos.

Rosh Hashana itself is the time to crown Hashem as our King. Although it is a day of judgement, there is no better way to be successful in the judgment than to spend the day recommitting ourselves to Hashem and to living in His service. Rosh Hashana also begins the Ten Days of Repentance that culminate with Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is an opportunity like none other. It is a day of honesty and regret, holiness and commitment, repentance and forgiveness. We can leave Yom Kippur with a sense of purity, innocence, and accomplishment if we are sincere, and that can be the catalyst for a year of growth and optimism.

After we've accomplished everything we could and grown so close to Hashem through Ellul, Rosh Hashana, the Ten Days of Repentance and Yom Kippur, we're now ready for Succos. A time that the Torah tells us "Just be joyous." It is a time that we take all of the spiritual growth from the previous month and a half and "run away with Hashem" into the hallowed walls of the Succah. We leave our physical comforts behind and enter a spiritual world here on Earth. It is only in this state that we are able to reach a true appreciation for what the Torah is to us, and we thus celebrate Simchas Torah after Succos.

May we all take full advantage of the opportunities that lie before us and enjoy the company of Hashem like never before.

Wishing everyone a K'siva Vachasima Tova, and a happy healthy sweet new year.



Leadership Greetings

Rabbi Zalman Refson, Chabad of Savannah

Imagine introducing yourself by saying, "Hello, my name is Laughter."

It sounds unusual. Yet the very first child born as a Jew, whose birth we read about on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, was given exactly that name. Abraham and Sarah named their son Yitzchak—"he will laugh." Even more remarkable, unlike Abraham and Jacob, Yitzchak's name was never changed. It never needed an upgrade. Why would the Torah choose laughter as the enduring name of the Jewish people?

Because Abraham understood something that has sustained our nation through every generation: Jewish joy is not the absence of pain, it is the triumph over it. Our ability to smile, hope, celebrate, and build even after heartbreak is one of the greatest expressions of Jewish faith. Every Rosh Hashanah, as we begin a new year, the Torah reminds us that before anything else, we are meant to be a people who face the future with confidence, hope, and joy.

We are living in difficult times that constantly test us. We continue witnessing antisemitism surge across college campuses, city streets, and social media with an intensity few imagined possible. Yet alongside these challenges, something extraordinary has emerged: Jews everywhere are standing tall, embracing their identity with renewed pride, courage, and faith. Instead of retreating, many

many have chosen to deepen their connection to Judaism and to one another.

A child once asked a rabbi, "Why do we blow the shofar from the narrow end instead of the wide one?" The rabbi handed him the shofar and invited him to try the wide end. No sound came out. Then he blew from the narrow end, and its powerful call rang through the room.

The lesson is timeless. When we stay true to who we are—our Torah, our traditions, and our mission—our voice carries farther than when we try to blend into the crowd. The world needs Jews who live their identity with confidence, kindness, and joy...

As we enter a new year, may we respond to darkness with light. Let us deepen our Jewish learning, support one another, stand proudly as Jews, and celebrate our heritage with renewed enthusiasm.

On behalf of our family and everyone at Chabad of Savannah, I wish you and your loved ones a sweet, healthy, and meaningful New Year. May you be inscribed for a year filled with good health, happiness, peace, abundant blessings, and countless reasons to smile.

May we all live up to our name—like Yitzchak—with faith, pride, resilience, and joyful confidence. Shanah Tovah!



Matthew Allan, Savannah Jewish Federation President



It should surprise no one that the 2026-2027 session of the Savannah Jewish Federation kicks off on September 9th, just days before Rosh Hashanah. Like our high holidays, the kickoff meeting is a time to reflect upon the prior year, to consider the good and the bad of the prior year, and to make plans for the future.

The Federation is guided by a volunteer board of directors who are both community-based and community-minded. The community entrusts us to raise and allocate campaign funds to be used for social welfare programs, supporting local Jewish institutions, taking care of Jews world-wide, and providing for the security needs of our community.

Last year's Federation campaign raised over \$1,170,000, with nearly \$140,000 of that amount specifically earmarked for security purposes.

Our sages remind us that during the Days of Awe, we stand before G-d not just as individuals but as a community. We feel the strength of communal prayer, and we pray together and speak as one. Consider Avinu Malkeinu, where we ask "Our Father, Our King" to "hear our voice." Contributing to the Savannah Jewish Federation, whether by attending our events, volunteering for our community programs (or suggesting new programs), and through participation in our annual campaign, is the way for our voices to be heard throughout the community.

I invite you to join us for our annual meeting on September 9th, at 7:00, at the JEA, as we begin our new year at the Savannah Jewish Federation, and of course, I wish you all a happy and healthy new year. As always, please feel free to contact me at SJFPresident@SavJ.org, or at 912.401.4663 with your suggestions or concerns.

Leadership Greetings

Rabbi Robert Haas, Congregation Mickve Israel



When we speak of the word redemption, we often reference the Messiah and a future world of peace on earth. We may also speak of the redemption from Egypt and the freedom that followed, but as we know, redemption for us as human beings should probably first center on our own personal aspirations.

Instead of worrying about the world, shouldn't we first focus on redeeming ourselves?

During the story of Joseph, we find this idea of personal redemption reflected in the most unlikely of places, with Joseph's brother Judah, the one who sold Joseph into slavery and told his father a tale of Joseph's death. We later find Joseph keeping his daughter-in-law in Jewish limbo, forbidding her from truly marrying his son or having a child, effectively ostracizing her for life. When Judah then hears rumor of Tamar's pregnancy, he immediately calls for her execution. Judah is the guy that we tip toe around, the one who argues too much on the basketball court.

Once Judah learns that Tamar acted a harlot and slept with none other than him, a metamorphosis occurs. Think of him as Ebenezer Scrooge with Tamar representing the ghost of Hanukah past. He learns to forgive his father for the favoritism he showed Joseph. He feels guilt for his deception over his father and his betrayal of his brother and Tamar.

Andrew Walcoff, JEA President

As I sat down to write in this High Holiday letter, I found myself awash with gratitude.

Gratitude for being offered the chance to serve this community as head of the JEA Board.

Gratitude for getting the chance to work with a brilliant and devoted JEA staff. Gratitude for being part of a Jewish community blessed with a keen sense of philanthropy.

It occurred to me that giving through service just feels like a Jewish thing to do. Why?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks wrote this about communal giving:

He becomes the leader of the family we hoped he would become, promising his father that he will protect Benjamin, his youngest and favorite at all costs. When the family arrives in Egypt, the grand vizier (Joseph in disguise) falsely accuses Benjamin of theft and sentences him to prison. Whereas the old Judah sacrificed others for his personal gain, this new redemptive Judah sacrifices himself for the good of others. He offers up himself in place of his brother, and it is this sacrifice that convinces Joseph to reveal himself to his family and eventually reunite with this father, Jacob.

Rabbi Neal Loevinger at the Canadian KOLEL writes, "Judah's defense of Benjamin is one of the most heroic moments in the Torah; Judah seems to be selflessly sacrificing himself for the sake of his brother and father." We have all acted at times selfishly in our past, even if not to the degree of Judah, but we must always believe that conscious redemption awaits us if we only can find a metamorphosis akin to the one Judah eventually found. After all, the Messiah will stem from the line of Judah, in no small part, because of the redemption he chose. Rabbi David Wolpe concludes, "Redemption is the continuing call to heal a broken world. We are charged with uplifting the sparks, helping those who despair or are in need, innovating in ways to move humanity forward, summoning the courage needed to make peace."



"Countless men, women and young people [] by quiet acts of kindness or hospitality give Jewish life its humanity and grace." He added, "We survive by what we are given, but we achieve dignity by what we give."

In this season of renewal, I invite you all to embrace the joy of gratitude and to recognize that we live a communal life, that we depend on one another. As Rabbi Sacks said so well, "We survive by what we are given, but we achieve dignity by what we give."

Security Quarterly

Richard Ray



The High Holidays are only a few weeks away! We are all looking forward to spending this time with family and friends in synagogues throughout Savannah. During this time, the Secure Community Network (SCN) would like to encourage everyone to exercise situational awareness, to ensure the safety and security of our community.

Situational awareness allows a person to better understand what is taking place around them, and to determine if what they see or hear is normal for their environment. Focusing on behaviors rather than appearance of a person can often reveal important clues.

Some key indicators to look for, nervous behavior, not interacting or engaging in conversation with anyone, and a lack of familiarity with the community and customs. Situational awareness can allow someone an opportunity to act if needed and reduce risk for themselves and fellow congregation members.

The High Holidays also provide security committee members with a valuable opportunity to review safety and security plans. Security committee members should test existing safety devices and equipment (locks, cameras, lights, alarms, walkie talkies, AEDs, and first aid material).

Additionally, security staff should ensure that congregation members are informed on what to do in case suspicious activity is witnessed or an incident occurs. Hiring additional off-duty police officers is recommended for services and large events.

Threatening or harassing emails should be reported to law enforcement immediately. SCN team members will also be on standby to assist with recommendations for next steps to reduce risk regarding threats and follow up communication with law enforcement. Additional precautions should be taken to protect against cybersecurity threats that can target information disclosures and system modifications.

SCN offers practical resources to help our community prepare. Before the High Holidays, community members are encouraged to review these tools and share relevant guidance with family members, staff, volunteers, and security committees.

SCN Resources

Find Your Security Professional

<https://www.securecommunitynetwork.org/regions/>

High Holidays Security Planning Checklist

<https://www.securecommunitynetwork.org/resources/high-holidays-security-planning-checklist/>

Threat Overview Checklist

<https://www.securecommunitynetwork.org/resources/threat-overview-checklist/>

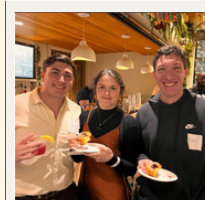
Community Guide for Event Security:

<https://www.securecommunitynetwork.org/resources/community-guide-for-event-security/>

For additional information regarding situational awareness training or threat vulnerability and risk assessments, please contact me at rray@securecommunitynetwork.org. The SCN family wish everyone a wonderful and safe High Holiday season. Please remember, security is the responsibility of all members within our community, not just law enforcement or community leaders. If you see something, say something!

New to Savannah? Looking for Your Jewish Community?

Whether you're new to Savannah or have been here for years, Young Jewish Savannah is a place to connect, make friends, and feel at home in the Jewish community.



Connect with us!

Instagram: [@youngjewishsavannah](https://www.instagram.com/youngjewishsavannah) Email: yjs@savj.org

AmiciMusic Returns For Jewish Broadway

AmiciMusic, the award-winning chamber music organization now based in Savannah, returns to the JEA on Sunday, October 25 at 2:00pm with a very fun program entitled "JEWISH BROADWAY." Singer Cass Panuska, who recently moved to Savannah, will join pianist and Artistic Director Daniel Weiser in a toe-tapping showcase of some wonderful Broadway music composed by Jewish composers.

As Sir Robin sings in the Monty Python musical, Spamalot, "you won't succeed on Broadway if you don't have any Jews." Most of the early Broadway composers (Berlin, Kern, Arlen, Gershwin, etc) were Jews, often first-generation immigrants who essentially helped to create "the American musical". Indeed, the most famous non-Jewish composer, Cole Porter, once admitted to Richard Rodgers that he had discovered the secret to writing hits-- "I need to write more Jewish tunes." This program will include favorite songs by Arlen, Gershwin, Bernstein, Sondheim, Loesser, Kern, and more. You won't want to miss this great afternoon of fantastic songs from Broadway!

Dramatic Soprano, Cass Panuska, has enjoyed solo appearances with many organizations such as Berkeley Opera, Solo Opera, Pocket Opera, Opera Orlando, First Coast Opera, and most recently as Ortlinde in Die Walküre with TUNDIProductions in Brattleboro, VT. Also well-versed in contemporary music, Ms. Panuska has recorded albums of new compositions, highlighted on two John Bilotta pieces for "The Life Before Us," produced by ParmaRecordings on their Navona Records label as well as in "Meditations," by Chaz Underriner. In addition to excelling in opera and contemporary music, Cass is a passionate recitalist and producer, organizing – and sometimes performing in – intimate Porch Concerts held at her home. She has also co-founded an eclectic cabaret group, The Pinnacle Singers, performing unusual opera and music theatre shows in a range of venues. Cass earned her Bachelor of Music at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, and her Master of Music Degree in Vocal Performance from Colorado State University.

Daniel Weiser, piano, has a Doctorate in Piano/Chamber Music from the Peabody Conservatory, where he studied with Samuel Sanders and Robert MacDonald and won the Richard Franko Goldman prize for outstanding contribution to musical and educational life. He has performed on many great stages, including the Weill Recital Hall of Carnegie Hall, the National Gallery of Art in D.C., and on the Dame Myra Hess Concert Series in Chicago. He has also concertized around the world, including Israel, Thailand, Holland, and France and was the 1996 U.S. Artistic Ambassador Abroad, for which he performed on an eleven-country tour of the Middle East and Asia. He has been on the music faculty of Dartmouth College and the prestigious St. Paul's School in Concord, NH. Besides founding AmiciMusic, he co-founded and still serves as Artistic Director for Classicopia, a similar type of chamber music organization based in New Hampshire. He was also a founding member of the Adirondack Ensemble, which won a Chamber Music America award for inventive programming and outreach. He has participated in the New Hampshire Music Festival, Musicorda, and the Apple Hill Chamber Music Festival and has been the Music Director of the Da Corneta Opera Ensemble, the Opera North Young Artist program, and Opera New England. A phi beta kappa graduate of Columbia University with a degree in American History, he also spent a year at Harvard Law School at the same time as President Obama. A native of Buffalo, NY, he currently lives in Savannah, GA with his wife, Dr. Kisha Weiser and their twin daughters, Rose and Sophie.





Savannah Jewish Federation

We Are

2027 CAMPAIGN KICKOFF

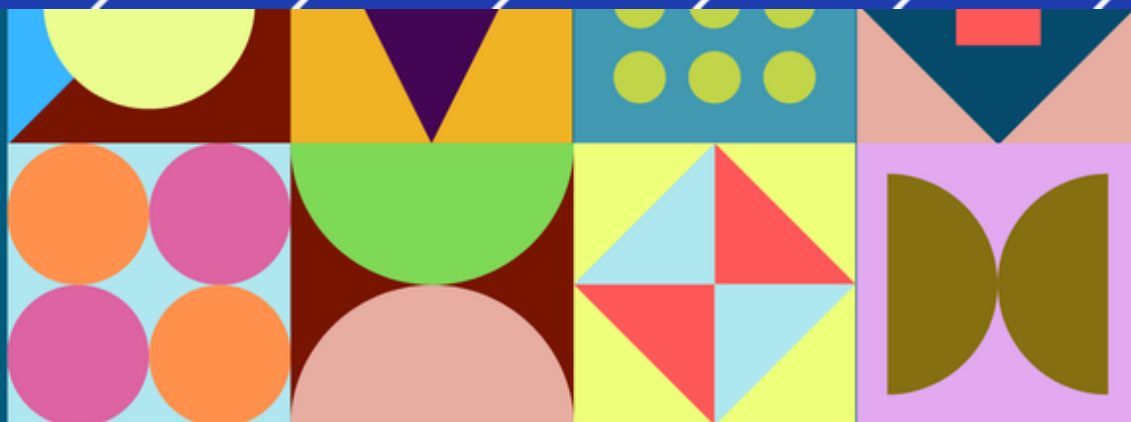
Thursday, October 8, 2026

7:00 pm

Dessert
and
Cocktails

JEA Large Auditorium

Please RSVP at
www.savj.org
912.355.8111



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December 2026
in the Montag Gallery

Gala at the Goal Line

Jen Friedman & Leslie Walcoff, Co-Chairs

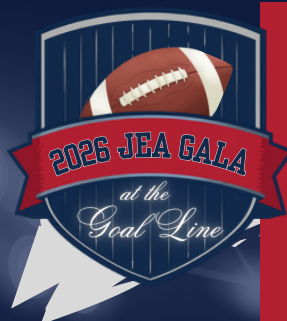
It has been over two years since the JEA hosted its last gala. We thought it was time to bring it back—and bring it back in a big way. We're making some changes while keeping the heart of the JEA at the center of it all.

First, we've moved the date. Rather than our usual late summer or early fall timing—when we're often dodging hurricanes and working around holidays—we've pushed things to November. Second, it's happening on a Saturday night, so there's no rushing off to work or getting the kids ready for school the next morning (except maybe for Shalom School!). And since Saturday nights in the South belong to football, we decided to embrace it rather than fight it. (Don't worry—in-home babysitting services will be provided!)

Introducing Gala at the Goal Line! We'll have four "living rooms" set up around the auditorium, each playing the biggest games of the night. If football isn't really your thing and you'd prefer more traditional seating, you can grab "box seats" as a Club Level Sponsor—an 8-top table with reserved seating just for you and your friends. Come dressed in your best tailgating attire—think nice jeans and your favorite team jersey!

Beyond the games, we'll have our 1st & 10 Game Zone, where you can play football-style games for prizes, plus our traditional silent and live auctions. If you'd like to sponsor an area, donate an auction item, or help out in any way, reach out to gala@savj.org.

We can't wait to celebrate the JEA with you!



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

TIER LEVELS	INVESTMENT	TYPE
Championship Winner (1)	Starting at \$10,000	Presenting Sponsor
Touchdown Tribute (4)	Starting at \$5,000	Living Room Areas
Tailgate Tap (2)	Starting at \$5,000	Bar Areas
Grill Master (1)	Starting at \$5,000	Buffet Area
1st & 10 (2)	Starting at \$5,000	Game Area
Highlight Reel (1)	Starting at \$2,000	Photo Booth
Sugar Bowl (1)	Starting at \$1,000	Dessert Bar
Club Level Sponsors (6)	Starting at \$1,800	Table Sponsors
Kickoff Sponsor (unlimited)	Starting at \$500	General Sponsors

For more information and additional opportunities contact us at: Gala@savj.org

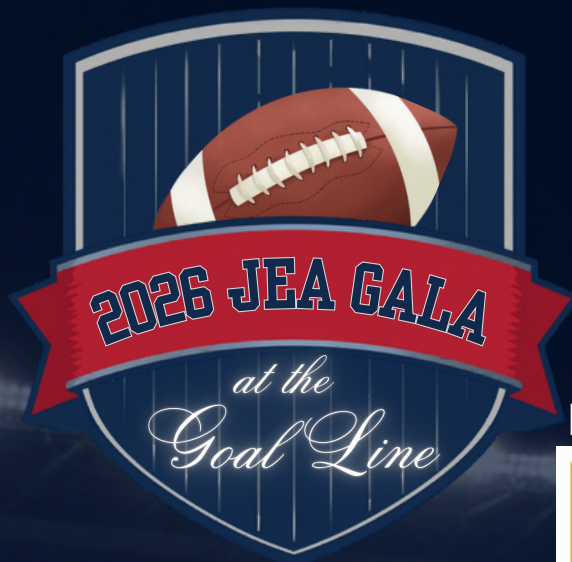
All sponsorship levels offer admission, advertisement, and a feature in the digital program, with other options available by donation type.



<https://savannahjewishfederation.givingfuel.com/2026-gala-sponsorship>

Savannah Jewish Educational Alliance 2026 Fall Gala
5111 Abercorn Street, Savannah, GA 31405





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**JOIN US SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2026, FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE EVENING
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You may have noticed renovations throughout our building, including important repairs after recent flooding. As our programs and community continue to grow, your support helps us keep creating memories at the JEA for years to come.

Join us in our renovated auditorium for the game (or a few)! Enjoy kosher-style tailgating, easy viewing from box-seats to living-room comfort, an auction, games, prizes, swag, and more!



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Savannah Jewish Educational Alliance | 5111 Abercorn Street | Savannah, GA 31405 | www.savannahjea.org
or gala@savj.org for more details

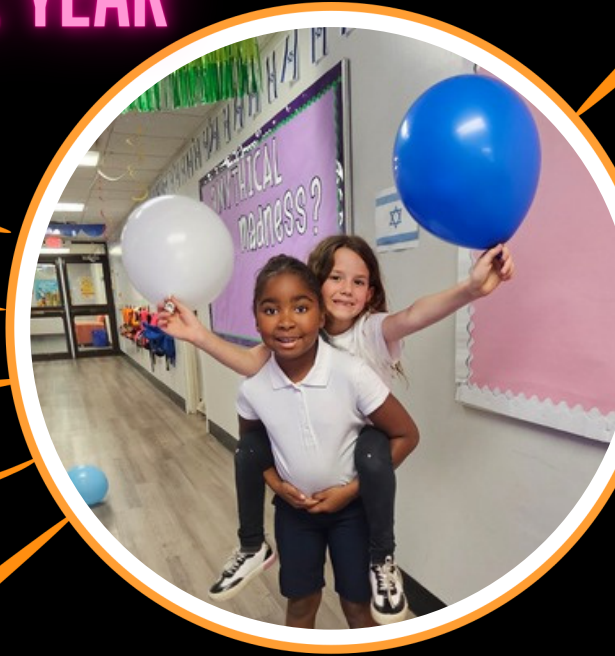
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Rabbi David Cantor



Cantor Ben Mernick

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Please join us for the High Holidays.

Children's Programs Included.

Break the Fast, Sept 21, 8:00PM, With Reservation

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SEPT. 11 - SEPT. 13

ROSH HASHANAH DINNERS

Community holiday
brisket dinners

ROSH HASHANAH SERVICES

Morning services
Children's program
Shofar in the park

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OR CALL 912-844-2477

FOR FULL SCHEDULE

YOM KIPPUR:

SEPT. 20 - SEPT. 21

YOM KIPPUR EVE

Kol Nidrei Service

YOM KIPPUR SERVICES

Morning services
Children's program
Neilah & Break-fast

- Open to all! No Affiliation Necessary
- Traditional and Inspirational Services
- Warm and Friendly Atmosphere



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rabbij@jewishsav.org

Wishing you and yours a happy,
healthy and sweet new year!



Congregation Mickve Israel

20 E GORDON STREET, SAVANNAH GA 31401
912-233-1547 | WWW.MICKVEISRAEL.ORG

HIGH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

SELICHOT: Saturday, September 5

Dinner | Program | Dessert & Coffee | Selichot Service

EREV ROSH HASHANAH: Friday, September 11

Dinner | Rosh Hashanah Service

ROSH HASHANAH DAY 1: Saturday, September 12

Morning Services I & II | Youth Program | Tashlich

ROSH HASHANAH Day 2: Sunday, September 13

2nd Day Service | Luncheon

SHABBAT SHUVA: Friday, September 18

Shabbat Service

SHABBAT SHUVA: Saturday, September 19

Shabbat Service | Luncheon

EREV YOM KIPPUR: Sunday, September 20

Kol Nidre Services I & II

YOM KIPPUR: Monday, September 21

Morning Service | Youth Program | Themed Discussion
Service of Renewal | Traditional Torah Service
Family Service | Memorial (Yizkor) Service
Concluding Service | Break-The-Fast

SUKKOT: Friday, September 25

Sukkah Decorating | Dinner | Sukkot Service

SUKKOT: Saturday, September 26

Sukkot Shabbat Service | Luncheon

SUKKOT: Sunday, September 27

Sukkah Hop

EREV SIMCHAT TORAH: Friday, October 2

Dinner | Consecration | Erev Simchat Torah
& Rockin Shabbat Service

SIMCHAT TORAH: Saturday, October 3

Simchat Torah & Yizkor Service | Luncheon

For the most up-to-date information, including service times, meal reservation links, High Holiday Service Passes, and other important details, please visit our website at www.mickveisrael.org. We encourage you to check the site regularly, as it will be updated with the latest schedules, registration information, and announcements.

Shalom Y'all Jewish Food Festival

Save The Date

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2026

Join us in beautiful Monterey Square for the Annual Shalom Y'all Jewish Food Festival! Enjoy a day of authentic Jewish cuisine, live entertainment, and family-friendly fun as we celebrate Jewish culture and community. Whether you're a longtime local or visiting Savannah, there's something for everyone. We look forward to welcoming you!

JEWISH COMFORT FOOD

Chicken Soup with Matzah Balls
Noodle Kugel (slice)
Noodle Kugel (full pan)
Israeli Salad (w/ or w/out Couscous)
Blintz Soufflé (slice)
Potato Latkes with Toppings
Cholent
Knishes (Potato or Spinach)
Hummus with Pita Chips or Carrots
Barrel Pickles
Shalom Fries

MEATS AND SUCH

Corned Beef on Rye
Pastrami on Rye
Tongue on Rye
Chicken Shawarma
Chopped Liver with Pita Chips
Hot Dogs

BEVERAGES

Traditional Egg Cream
Sodas
Bottled Water
Dr. Browns
Beer (with Souvenir Cup)
Wine
Coffee, Hot Chocolate or Tea
(with Souvenir Cup)

HOLIDAY SWEETS & SAVORIES

Honey Cake Loaf
Hamentaschen
Challah
(WMI) Sisterhood Sweet Shop

the
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Jewish Food Festival™
Congregation Mickve Israel

AMERICA 250 EXHIBIT

MAY 2026

TO

JANUARY 2027

FORGING OUR SACRED LIBERTY

The Declaration of Independence
and Religious Freedom
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REGULAR TOUR 50-60 Minutes
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SPECIAL EXHIBIT ONLY

12:00PM - 12:30PM | 3:30PM - 4:00PM

30 MINUTE GUIDED EXHIBIT TOUR
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REGULAR TOUR + SPECIAL EXHIBIT

11:00AM - 12:30PM | 2:30PM - 4:00PM

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SCAN
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My Summer Camp Experience

Sofia Tillinger

Camp Ramah Darom is a not-so-small camp tucked away in the mountains of Clayton, Georgia. After the six-hour drive, you pass through the front gates, step out of the car, and take your first breath of mountain air. Some people would say it's just regular air, but to me, it's the smell of memories, laughter, tears, and pure joy.

Only about 11% of America's children attend sleepaway camp, yet nearly 43% of those campers are Jewish. At Ramah, being Jewish isn't something that makes you stand out—it's simply part of everyday life. Being welcomed into a community where everyone shares that part of your identity is something not every Jewish teen gets to experience.

I still remember my first year at Ramah when I leaned over to one of my friends and whispered, "Is everyone here Jewish?" The answer was obviously yes, but it felt almost unbelievable to be surrounded by so many people who understood that part of who I was.

Throughout the year, we spend about 340 days counting down until camp begins. Then, before we know it, the countdown changes. The moment we arrive, the clock starts ticking: 600 hours. Just 600 hours to catch up with old friends, create new memories, meet new people, and make every moment count.

At camp, I found a part of myself I didn't know I was missing. I realized that home isn't always a place you live year-round. Sometimes, home is somewhere you get to call yours for just 25 days. For those 25 days, Ramah is my home, and the people there become my family.

This summer, I accomplished more than I ever expected. I spent my days with my camp family. My best friend and I were constantly finding ourselves doing things we probably weren't supposed to be doing, running around getting into harmless trouble, and laughing until we couldn't breathe on the back porch of our bunk late into the night. Every morning, we'd wake up to our counselors cheerfully calling, "Boker tov, banot!" as the opening notes of "The Only Exception" by Paramore drifted through the cabin.

Those moments may seem small, but they're the moments that become the memories you carry home. They're the reason that, every year, saying goodbye never gets any easier—and why, after leaving, all you can think about is counting down the days until you're back at Camp Ramah Darom once again.



Dovi Goldberg



My first summer at camp was so much fun, and it really changed me. I got to meet a lot of new friends, and I liked that the best. On the very first day I was kind of nervous, but by the end of the week I already had friends from all over, and some of them even became like my best friends.

Camp also taught me a lot about being Jewish and about Israel. Every night we sang Shema together with my new friends and our counselors, all in one big room, and it felt really special to sing it with so many people at once. During davening I learned new tunes I never heard before, and now I like singing them even at home. We also learned some Hebrew words and sang Israeli songs, and one of my counselors told us stories about Israel that were really cool. I also tried a ton of new foods I never had before. Some of them I didn't think I would like, but I

tried them anyway because everyone else was trying them too, and it was fun to be brave about it. A few of them are actually my favorites now.

The best part of camp was just being with my friends all day — swimming, playing games, singing at meals, and davening together every morning. It made me feel like I was part of something bigger, like a whole community of kids who were all Jewish together and having fun together.

I'm definitely going back next summer. It was so fun, and I got to meet so many friends, and I want to thank the Savannah Jewish Federation for your generosity in making this summer happen for me and so many other southern Jewish kids in the Savannah community.

Shalom School Welcomes Interim Director

Laney Berman



After more than 26 years in education, the new interim director of Shalom School comes to Savannah, bringing with her a lifelong passion for teaching and a personal commitment to Jewish education.

Originally from New York, Valerie Seldes has spent the last few decades teaching in special education programs of the Beaufort County Schools while also serving as the Director of Education at Congregation Beth Yam in Hilton Head for the past nine years. Now, she is taking on a fresh experience in her new role at Shalom School. "This position felt like the right next step," Seldes said. "I love using my background in education, but I also love delving deeper into Jewish education and my spiritual life. Being able to blend those two worlds is incredibly rewarding."

Although she resides in Bluffton now, her journey in Jewish education began long before she stepped into the classroom.

Seldes explained how growing up in New York caused Judaism to be naturally woven into everyday life. While her family was not especially observant, Jewish culture and community surrounded her. Summer camp and weekly b'nai mitzvahs made her Jewish identity come effortlessly.

It wasn't until she moved to the Lowcountry that she realized how important that community was. "When I first moved here, I was uncomfortable," Seldes recalled. "I didn't know where I fit in. Once I found a Jewish community, I realized I wasn't alone. Becoming involved helped me reconnect with Judaism in a much more meaningful and spiritual way."

That connection became even more important after the births of her twin daughters, Leia and Lily, now nine years old. Raising Jewish children in the South prompted her to dive deeper into finding and becoming active with her community. "I wanted my daughters to grow up with a larger Jewish community," she said. "I wanted them to have opportunities to build friendships with children from many different Jewish backgrounds, similar to what I experienced growing up."

For Seldes, Jewish education extends beyond just learning Hebrew letters or celebrating holidays. She believes it gives children a foundation of belonging and identity.

"One of the most important things we can teach our children is to advocate for themselves—to be loud and proud about who they are," she said. "When they're surrounded by other Jewish children, they develop that confidence and sense of pride."

As interim director, Seldes wants families to feel welcome and seen as Shalom School is a place that recognizes the realities of modern family life.

"Whether it's scheduling challenges or different learning needs, we want families to feel supported and know we're here to meet them where they are," Seldes explained.

She hopes the school's transition will create a renewed sense of excitement for the community. Above all, Seldes wants Shalom School to be a valued place for children where they associate Judaism with happiness rather than obligation.

"There should be joy in learning," she said. "There should be joy in practicing Judaism. If children are excited about coming here, they'll carry those experiences with them throughout their lives."

Valerie Seldes believes Jewish education is more than preparation for the next holiday. It is about nurturing roots to support a lifetime of growth.

"As parents, teachers, and a community, it's our job to help grow those roots," she said.

"Then it's their turn to spread their branches in whatever direction life takes them."

Have questions about Shalom School?

You can contact Valerie at
theshalomschool@gmail.com



SHALOM SCHOOL

Please join us for FOOD FOR THOUGHT

serving up something new every week!



**Thursdays at 12:30 PM
Jewish Educational Alliance**

Enjoy a delicious meal,
conversations with friends,
and an engaging speaker.

All meals are served with
salad, vegetable and dessert

**Reservations are required
by Tuesday of every week.
Call 912-355-8111 to RSVP!**

SEPT 3

Chris Silber-The Secret
Lineage of Jewish Laughter

SEPT 10

Second Harvest Field
Trip

SEPT 17

Dr. Linda Sacks- Holiday
Minhagim/Customs

SEPT 24

Film for Thought
Fiddler on the Roof -Movie
Secrets You Didn't Know

OCT 1

Rabbi Haas- Somthing About
Sukkot

OCT 8

Treasures and Tales:Part 2

OCT 15

Field Trip to the Mighty Eighth
Museum

OCT 22

Cantor Rachel Kohlbrenner
Exploring Psalms through Music

OCT 29

Leigh Rich-
The History of Health Care Reform

NOV 5

Trivia Challenge

NOV 12

Film for Thought-
"A Jew Walks into a Bar"

NOV 19

Motti Locker- Israel Update

NOV 26

No FFT- Thanksgiving

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Jewish Educational Alliance
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Chabad of Savannah



Savannah Jewish Federation



*This is my chosen fast...
Share your bread with the hungry
Take the homeless into your home.
Clothe the naked when you see him,
Do not turn away from people in need.
- Isaiah 58:6-7*

Welcome Back to a New School Year!

Ester Rabhan, Principal



There is something truly special about the beginning of a new school year. The classrooms are ready, the hallways are welcoming, and each student will walk through our doors with new opportunities to learn, grow, and discover their unique potential.

At Rambam Day School, we are privileged to provide an education that nurtures the whole child. Our students receive a strong academic foundation while also growing in Torah, mitzvos, character, and a deep connection to their Jewish heritage. Every lesson, every tefillah, every act of kindness, and every interaction helps shape not only knowledgeable students, but compassionate and responsible ones.

Alongside our commitment to academic excellence in both our Judaic and secular studies, we recognize that students thrive when they feel safe, supported, and emotionally connected. Social-emotional learning is an essential part of a child's success. When children develop resilience, empathy, self-awareness, and healthy relationships, they are better equipped to meet challenges, build confidence, and reach their full potential both inside and outside the classroom.

We are thrilled that Morah Chavi Rabhan will again be leading our Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program this year. Through engaging lessons and meaningful conversations, she helps students develop practical skills that strengthen their emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships, and overall confidence.

We look forward to partnering with our families throughout the coming year. Together, we will continue to inspire a love of learning, support their academic growth, and nurture their social and emotional well-being.

We would like to welcome our new three year old teacher, Mr. Jared Sclar. Mr. Sclar was involved with Rambam this past school year, doing music and movement with our younger students, and sports with our older students. We are so excited to have Mr. Sclar teach our three year olds. Joining Mr. Sclar as his assistant, also new to our staff is Ms. Christine Souzzo. Ms. Souzzo's daughter was an art teacher in the school several years ago. We love new people joining the Rambam family.

May this school year and the new Jewish year, be filled with endless blessings for our students, families, faculty, and the entire Savannah community. We wish everyone a year of growth, learning, friendship, and success.

Savannah Jewish Federation and
Jewish Educational Alliance invite you to join the joint

ANNUAL MEETING

September 9

7:00PM

JEA Large Auditorium



Celebrating New Beginnings: A Milestone Year at the Preschool

Amy Blechman, Director



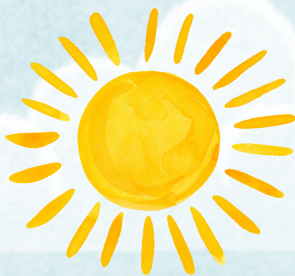
As the summer comes to a close, the halls of our preschool are once again filled with excitement, laughter, and the joyful sounds of children discovering the world around them. We are thrilled to welcome both new and returning families as we begin another wonderful school year together.

This year is especially meaningful as our preschool celebrates its 13th anniversary—our very own B'nei Mitzvah year! In Jewish tradition, turning 13 marks an important milestone: a time of growth, responsibility, and embracing one's place within the community. As we reflect on the past thirteen years, we are filled with gratitude for the village of community members who put in countless hours to take this preschool from a dream to a reality. We are grateful to those ECE Committee members whose passion made it all possible. Today, we have a thriving, high-quality program with 10 classrooms as a result of their hard work. (Lynn Reeves, Marcy Konter, Degi Ruben, Michelle Allan, Sharon Sand, Morgan McGhie, Kasey Berman, Jennifer Rich, Eva Locker, Sally Greenberg, Hilary Kronowitz, Suzanne Konter, Skye Cossio, Robyn Carroll).

Just as a young person entering their B'nei Mitzvah year begins a new chapter, our preschool continues to grow while remaining grounded in the Jewish values that have guided us since the beginning. Every day, our classrooms come alive through hands-on, play-based learning that encourages curiosity, creativity, kindness, and a love of Jewish life. Whether children are exploring science, creating art, building friendships, or celebrating Shabbat, they are developing the confidence and compassion that will serve them throughout their lives.

As we enter the fall season, our children will also begin learning about the richness of the Jewish High Holidays. Through stories, music, sensory experiences, and meaningful classroom traditions, they will explore themes of kindness, gratitude, forgiveness, and new beginnings. Together we'll celebrate Rosh Hashanah, reflect during Yom Kippur, build and decorate sukkot for Sukkot, and rejoice with singing and dancing on Simchat Torah. These celebrations help our youngest learners build a joyful connection to Jewish traditions while creating lasting memories with their classmates.

As we celebrate thirteen incredible years, we are excited for all that lies ahead. Thank you to our families, staff, alumni, and the entire Jewish community for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are building a strong foundation for the next generation—one child, one family, and one joyful moment at a time. Here's to a sweet new year and another wonderful chapter in the life of our preschool!



Tuition Cost:
\$1,119 Monthly

Annual Registration Fee:
\$150 (non-refundable)

**Serving families with children
aged 12 months and walking
through Pre-K**



**2026-2027 School Year
REGISTRATION IS
NOW OPEN !**

Limited spaces still available!



**Call 912-556-0124 or
email amy@savj.org to
set up a tour.**

Mah Jongg and More

Robin Rackoff

With the High Holy Days approaching, I can't help thinking about my mother, Yetta, who passed away five years ago at the age of 104½. She was a tiny woman with an enormous presence—feisty right up until her last breath.

She loved to entertain and began preparing for the Jewish New Year weeks in advance. My mother never owned fancy china or crystal; our drinking glasses came from that exclusive collection known as Yahrzeits-R-Us. If a glass was sturdy enough to hold a memorial candle for 24 hours, it was certainly strong enough to serve juice to our family.

As she cooked for Rosh Hashanah and Break the Fast, she would entertain us with stories from her childhood, back when the fish destined to become gefilte swam happily in the family bathtub for days before the holiday. Thankfully, our Brooklyn home had a refrigerator, so I was able to bathe in peace with nary a cod or carp in sight.

On Yom Kippur evening, my father and the other men went to shul while the women stayed home, eagerly waiting for the final blast of the shofar to signal the end of the fast. We neighborhood kids served as lookouts, glued to the windows until someone finally yelled, "I see them!"

The moment my mother heard those words, she sprang into action. Within minutes, the table overflowed with enough dairy to make a cardiologist shudder: bagels, lox, cream cheese, cheese blintzes, noodle kugel, and, for dessert... cheesecake. Because apparently, after fasting all day, there is no such thing as too much cheese.

It was my mother who gave me my love for the Jewish holidays. My menus are a bit healthier these days—just a bit—and my drinking glasses have never housed memorial candles, but the heart of the tradition remains the same. I still love gathering family and friends around my table, just as she did.

I didn't inherit her love for cleaning (I definitely missed out on those genes), but I did inherit something far more valuable: her love of Mah Jongg.



Some of my happiest childhood memories are of standing beside her, listening to the rhythmic click of the tiles, and falling in love with the game. Mah Jongg became one of the strongest bonds my mother, my sister, and I would ever share.

Rosh Hashanah is a time for looking back as much as looking ahead. As you dip your apple into honey and wish those you love a sweet New Year, I hope you'll also take a moment to honor someone who helped shape the person you've become. For me, that person will always be my mother.

And after the brisket is gone, the honey cake is eaten... get out the Mah Jongg tiles.

My mother would have wanted it that way. Shanah Tovah!

FALL INTO DAYS AT THE



SEPTEMBER 4

OCTOBER 8-9, 12-13

NOVEMBER 3, 11, 23, 24, 25

8AM-6PM

****7AM EARLY DROP OPTION****



**WHEN SCHOOL IS OUT, CAMP IS IN
FOR ALL CHILDREN 4 YRS OLD TO 8TH GRADE!**

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Montag Gallery: Fall Artist Spotlight

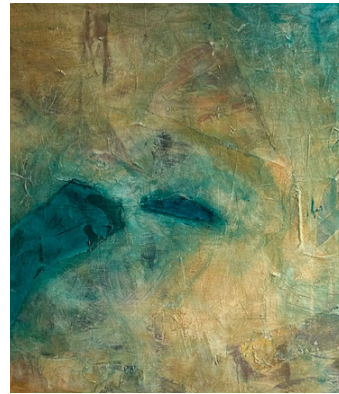
September 1-30: Mona & Robert Segall

Reception Thursday, September 10, 6-8 pm

Mona Segall's work is an exploration of color, movement, nature, and emotion. Living by the ocean and her love of florals influence the vibrant energy and organic forms in her paintings, where she works intuitively and freely, building layers with acrylic paint, ink, collage, and other materials. She hopes to create work that captures attention, sparks emotion, and invites the viewer to pause, connect, and feel joy.



Robert Segall grew up in Savannah and spent most of his life here. The overall landscape and surroundings provide an abundance of subject matter and inspiration for his art, particularly landscapes and seascapes. Lately, his paintings have included the addition of abstract, portraiture, and fantasy adventures. Art for him is a happy combination of commitment, expressionism, and the love of just doing.



October 1-31: Angela Hopper-Lee Reception Thursday, October 8, 5-7 pm

Music has a way of becoming part of who we are. It is found in the countless hours of practice, the moments of frustration and growth, the confidence built through performance, and the quiet connection between a musician and their instrument. Young artists spend years developing their skills, finding their voices, and learning the discipline required to pursue something they love. The show, **Simply Music**, was created to honor this connection, celebrate the commitment, and remind us that these moments of growth are worth remembering.

Through this fine art portrait series, photographer Angela Hopper-Lee wanted to capture young musicians not only as performers, but as artists. Each image celebrates the dedication, creativity, and individuality behind the music — the person who exists beyond the notes on a page.

Using timeless black-and-white portraiture, she sought to create images that feel both powerful and intimate. Her goal is to highlight the emotion, personality, and passion that each musician brings to their craft while preserving this meaningful chapter of their journey as a work of art.



November 1-30: Janet Bailey

Reception Wednesday November 4, 5-7 pm



Janet Bailey studied art, specializing in watercolors, and soon after, she was hired by Hallmark to create scenes for their cards. She typically works with acrylics, graphite, and oil pastels; mediums that can encourage layers.

For this show, she has painted a large series of colorful trees, woodland fireflies, and swaying beach grasses. Also featured are tree ink/ graphite drawings, including owls, a favorite bird, which come from the privilege of seeing them in their habitat.



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