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# THE JEWISH REVIEW

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## Dara Horn to visit Oct. 28

*The Jewish Review staff*

Author Dara Horn's sixth book, her first non-fiction book, is by far her most famous work and will be the crux of her upcoming appearance in Portland Monday, Oct. 28 at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center in "An Evening with Dara Horn: A Conversation About Antisemitism in a Post 10/7 World."

Horn's latest book is "People Love Dead Jews." It sprung from a 2018 piece in *Smithsonian Magazine* which included the sharp summarizing phrase, "People love dead Jews. Living Jews, not so much." The central concept is, as explained by a story of her sharing a hotel room with two fellow teens from Mississippi at a high school quiz

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An attendee at the "A Night to Remember" memorial service Sunday, Oct. 6, lights a candle for one of the 101 hostages still held in Gaza before the service at Congregation Neveh Shalom. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

## The 'sacred calling' to mourn

By ROCKNE ROLL

*The Jewish Review*

"A year ago, the Jewish world changed profoundly."

Congregation Neveh Shalom Senior Rabbi David Kosak started his remarks at Sunday's "A Night To Remember" memo-

rial service with that simple sentence. That profound change, sparked by Hamas' brutal assault on Southern Israel, has touched every corner of – and every person in – the Jewish world.

Twelve hundred dead on Oct. 7. One hun-

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On the latest Podcast:



"When Fasting Doesn't Fit" with Maddie Herrup

# A national perspective - one year later

JFNA's Eric Fingerhut looks back at the year - and ahead to the year to come

*The Jewish Review staff*

*Eric Fingerhut is the President and CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America. During his recent visit to Portland (See “‘We live in community’ - Fingerhut kicks off campaign,” The Jewish Review, Sept. 25, 2024, page 5), he sat down with Jewish Review Editor Rockne Roll for a conversation about how Jewish communities and Jewish life in North America have changed in the year since Oct. 7, a portion of which is transcribed below. This transcript has been edited for length and clarity. The full conversation is available in “One Year Later with Eric Fingerhut,” a special episode of The Jewish Review Podcast available on all major podcast platforms.*



Fingerhut (Jewish Review file)

**The Jewish Review:** From your perspective, how has Jewish life in North America changed in the 11 months since Oct. 7?

**Eric Fingerhut:** I think that it has changed in the sense that we understand that many of the issues about which we might have been concerned, or we might have differed, really aren't as important as the existential challenges that we're facing now: the continued thriving of the State of Israel and the continued safety and protection of the Jewish community here in North America. When you're faced with issues of such supreme importance, the differences fall away, and you must be unified. I would like to remind people there's a difference between unity and unanimity, right? We're not unanimous. We've never been unanimous. We're never going to be unanimous about anything that that the Jewish community might think about, but we are largely unified.

Since Oct. 7. I think we're largely unified about our utter determination to support our brothers and sisters in the State of Israel and its continued existence. Israel may not have made every correct decision in how to wage the necessary war to restore its security since Oct. 7, but there isn't anything that comes close to the horrors that were visited on it or that would be visited on it if it doesn't win the war against

Hamas and its other enemies. We're unified on that.

We're unified on our horror at the rise of antisemitism in America and our determination to stamp it out and our realization that it has nothing to do with what the government of Israel is doing. It is just pure, rank antisemitism. Thirdly, you see a surge of interest and desire to be involved in the Jewish community. I think this is partly in response to antisemitism that we want to be together, but there's also a realization that if we're going to be attacked just because we're Jewish, then we better know more about who we are and what we are and be more involved and be more committed.

**JR:** You're the former president of Hillel International and the former Chancellor of Ohio's public university system. Why is the dialogue around Israel on college campuses so toxic, and what can we do about it?

**EF:** The 'Why' is easier to answer. The 'What can we do about it,' unfortunately is there are answers, but they're going to take a little bit longer than we'd like. We'd like to be able to turn this off like a light switch. Universities are a unique subset of society. If there's a small minority of Americans overall who would support Hamas, that's going to be disproportionately represented on college campuses and

in college faculty. So, you have these organized global protests, and they are met with certain amount of support on campus. It's like opening the door and it's very hard for those who are responsible for the campus. Most of them don't even realize that they're actually under attack from external forces that some small group of internal people have invited onto their campus. Their first instinct is 'ohh, this is just students being students,' and then it takes them a while to realize that's not really what's going on.

Universities don't operate the way either a normal businesses nor normal communities operate. Presidents come and go. Trustees come and go. The students come and go. Who's the permanent presence of the university community? It's really the faculty, and the faculty self-governs and they self-perpetuate. They've created an amount of control over the campus that is very difficult to break.

Despite all the contentiousness and the protests and the negative publicity, an overwhelming majority of Americans support Israel. They understand Israel has to defend itself against Hamas. They understand that what happened was an outrageous attack on human decency, and they are supportive of the government of the United States helping support Israel in this fight. This is just true across the board, but it's also unfortunately the case that if you limit that same question to people under the age of 25, the support is about 20 points lower on every poll. Why is that?

We believe that it has almost entirely to do with where people get their information. Older people are more used to using traditional news and discerning between traditional news and social media. Younger people getting their news almost entirely on social media, which has nothing to do with the facts, has nothing to do with truth. In fact, it's deliberately manipulated and provably biased. So, we unfortunately have a generation that has been fed some very, very destructive and negative information about the Jewish community and

See **FINGERHUT**, page 4



# THANK YOU TO OUR PORTLAND COMMUNITY

On October 6, over 1,500 Jewish community members (in-person and virtually) came together for a “Night to Remember.”

We were joined by Micha Biton, a survivor of the October 7 Hamas terror attacks. He shared his family’s personal story through words and song.

Local clergy provided messages of hope and prayers of mourning.

We pray for the return of all the hostages and more peaceful days ahead.

**Watch the evening by scanning this QR Code**



**WATCH HERE**





## Young adults 'Level Up'

Nearly 80 attendees got their game on for the relaunch of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Ben Gurion Society at Level Up Arcade in Northwest Portland Tuesday, Sept. 24. The society, part of a national network of groups supporting young adult philanthropy, will hold a continuing series of events for its members throughout the year. (Jakob Rich-Levin / The Jewish Review)



## FINGERHUT (continued from page 2)

about Israel and we are going to have a long-term challenge to turn that around can be turned around.

**JR:** As extremism has grown in reach and intensity on both sides of the political spectrum and polarization has seemingly driven people in those two dichotomous directions - a frightening prospect, since we can see the antisemitism that's woven into the fabric of both the extreme left and the extreme right - What can Jewish communities do in the face of these trends that are, to put it bluntly, alarming?

**EF:** Within the Jewish community, we have to personally engage our young people. We have to make sure they're getting to Israel, that they're

getting the information that they need, that they have the safety and security they need to continue to flourish Jewishly. And we must recognize that for every, every moment that we're reaching out to them, there's 10 million messages that are hitting them through their phones and their other devices. Still, personal interaction trumps what people are experiencing on social media.

I think Oct. 7 is going to be for our work in civic engagement what the Tree of Life shooting was for our work in physical security. It was an alarm bell that went off that said that no matter what we had already been doing, it was nowhere near sufficient.

The same thing is true in our civic engagement. Everyone in the Jewish community has business associates, works on committees, engages in some way with people who are outside our community. We must engage them and share with them and not take for granted that they know what's going on, not assume that they have no questions to ask. We have got to engage them, and we have to help them understand that what's happening in this country is actually dangerous and that, if antisemitism gets out of hand, it starts to break down the social order. It will be not just about Jews; it will be about the entire way we operate as a civil society.

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# Panel informs parents at K-12 advocacy training

By ROCKNE ROLL

*The Jewish Review*

With schools back in session and antisemitism still a growing force in public life, questions naturally arise about how to address issues of antisemitism in education. For area parents, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland looked to provide some answers preemptively at a K-12 Parent Advocacy training session hosted Monday, Sept. 23 at Congregation Neveh Shalom.

On hand were Taylor Lewis, a civil rights specialist with the Oregon Department of Education, Julie Brin-Edwards, a member of both the Portland Public Schools Board and the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners as well as a parent, and Karen Twain, a retired Assistant Superintendent with Tigard-Tualatin School District.

A number of questions came up, including what limitations can be placed on the political speech of teachers.

“When we’re looking at political speech, teachers are, for the most part, able to say what they want outside of their classroom environment,” Lewis said. “In school, it’s a little different. When they’re actually in classrooms during school day, they’re considered public employees, and public employees do have fewer rights to be able to express themselves as they see fit.”

There are also limitations based on Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting discrimination based on a number of protected classes in any program which receives funding from the federal government.

As that would apply to Jewish students, Lewis said, “we’re looking at tertiary ancestry characteristics, so things that would be commonly associated with kids that are Jewish, Sikh, Muslim, Christian, anything in that vein, as opposed to religious practices.”

Discriminatory acts which create a “hostile learning environment,” which is defined as “harassment that is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it’s restricting a student from enjoying the benefits or privileges of their educational programming,” are something ODE would get involved in, Lewis said.

As for displays in classrooms and buildings – a point of contention for



From left, retired Tigard-Tualatin School District Assistant Superintendent Karen Twain speaks at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland’s K-12 Parent Advocacy Training Monday, Sept. 23 at Congregation Neveh Shalom, as part of a panel that included Taylor Lewis, a civil rights specialist with the Oregon Department of Education, Julie Brin-Edwards, a member of both the Portland Public Schools Board and the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, and was moderated by Federation Chief Community Relations and Public Affairs Officer Bob Horenstein. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

many parents after some posters were displayed by a teacher at Grant High School accusing Israel of genocide – districts are handling that individually. Brim-Edwards explained that a new Portland Public Schools policy required materials to be related to curriculum.

“If any of you are in PPS, you’ll know there was a lot of things that were posted [last year.] It was a little bit like the wild west in the hallways and the cafeterias,” she said. “Hopefully this will provide guidelines so that individual parents don’t have to be the police.”

“Right now, there’s a variety of policies,” Twain said “I know a lot of the districts in Oregon are looking at all of this, especially this election year where there’s a lot of things being said and opinions being given, both by students and educators.”

The curriculum that is being taught, however, is much more tightly regulated. Adopting curriculum costs significant sums of money, both in materials and continuing education for the teachers implementing it, so school boards are naturally very careful with those decisions – and they aren’t the only ones.

“Over the last six years, I think we’ve approved over \$70 million,” Brim-Edwards said of curriculum adoption expenses in Portland. “But before it gets to us, it’s gone through a very extensive vetting process that the superintendent and the district office needs. Often on the curriculum committee, say it’s for high school science, you will have some high school science teachers who will provide sort of their classroom expertise to the larger curriculum committee.”

Twain elaborated that this process is not done frequently and is focused on adopting tools that enable students to meet state standards in the relevant subject areas.

“What I would underscore is when I’ve had these processes, we really focus on standards,” she said. “So it’s not people sitting down with a bunch of opinions and agendas, but it’s, here’s the standards for health, science, math, literacy, social studies, and from those standards you choose from different curriculum.”

That doesn’t mean it’s cut-and-dried.

See **ADVOCACY**, page 12

COME & JOIN US FOR AN

# EVENING WITH DARA HORN



*Best Selling Author of  
"People Love Dead Jews"*

A Conversation About  
Antisemitism in a  
Post 10/7 World



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Jewish Federation  
of Greater Portland

All attendees will be asked to make a gift to the 2025 Campaign for Community Needs.  
The minimum gift to attend is \$180 per household.  
Thank you to those who have already made their commitment.



## ***Suher honored with Stampfer Award***

Brian Suher, center, awaits his introduction as the recipient of the 2024 Rabbi Joshua Stampfer z"l Community Enrichment Award Sunday, Sept. 22, at Congregation Neveh Shalom. The award, created to celebrate volunteerism in Jewish causes, was presented for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic. (Solomon Cohen for the Stampfer Award Committee)

# **OHSU launches group for Jewish employees**

By **ROCKNE ROLL**  
*The Jewish Review*

While the past months have been difficult for Jews in academia and in medicine, progress has been made in a number of realms – including one right here at home.

Oregon Health & Science University, Oregon's only medical school and largest hospital, has approved the formation of a Jewish Employee Resource Group, with Dr. Avital O'Glasser as its chair and Dr. Eric Herman as its executive sponsor.

Dr. O'Glasser, a Professor in the School of Medicine, explained that a major goal of forming this group for Jewish employees, known by its acronym, JERG, is to connect the Jewish staff of OHSU with each other and with the rest of their community. OHSU is an enormous, multi-faceted enterprise, and without the kind of individual relationships the JERG can help foster, it's easy for facelessness and abstraction across communities to take hold.

"Our goal overall is to gain positive forward momentum and not just respond to any stressor or issue that we were having, but to build those proactive relationships, to put faces and names to people," Dr. O'Glasser said.

Working with Dr. Herman, OHSU's chief primary care and population health officer, as well as staff in the University's Civil Rights Office and Center for Diversity and Inclusion, the group officially launched in August and had its first full meeting last month, with immediate positive results.

"The common refrain we heard was, 'This is fantastic. I felt so alone in my life; not just at work, but in my life, in the last 9-10 months. I'm so excited to find a community that I didn't

even know existed or I didn't know how and where it existed at OHSU,'" Dr. O'Glasser recalled of that first meeting.

The creation of that kind of community was goal number one for the JERG.

"Our second goal is to increase visibility of what it means to be Jewish; to culturally be Jewish, religiously be Jewish, including more of visibility for the holiday calendar and cultural events," Dr. O'Glasser continued. "The third prong of this is being dynamic and responsive when there is a stress or when there is a concern about antisemitism or microaggressions."

The group is not only connecting itself and its constituents with each other and with the University's administration, but with outside elements of the Jewish community, including OHSU's Jewish Student Union, Greater Portland Hillel (which supports the JSU) and the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. Additionally, the JERG has already been in contact with other employee resources groups at OHSU.

"There is a Middle Eastern and North African employee resource group, and we are already actively in conversations about how to build bridges and how to come together for learning events or cultural events and to build relationships based on our shared humanity," Dr. O'Glasser said.

Overall, the results have felt like an enormous win for all involved.

"We know that there's been an incredibly tough year for many people," Dr. O'Glasser said. "The sense of strength through community is already palpable."

Learn more by emailing [jerg@ohsu.edu](mailto:jerg@ohsu.edu).

# A 'hug' from Rabbi Mayer - now on bookshelves

By ROCKNE ROLL

*The Jewish Review*

"I had a rabbi once say about me and I thought it was a wonderful compliment," Rabbi Brian Mayer said. "They said I turned the topic of God from a China shop into a playground."

Rabbi Mayer wrote what could be considered a guide to that playground, "Rabbi Brian's Highly Unorthodox Gospel," which is now available to purchase online through his website. The volume is available in hardbound, paperback and digital – Rabbi Mayer notes that the physical versions include a sticker chart and corresponding stickers.

The founder of Religion Outside the Box in Portland described his upbringing as anything but.

"I grew up a very rational reformed Jew on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, went to college thinking I was going to study architecture," he said.

A rabbi at the campus Hillel suggested that he might be a good candidate for rabbinical school. Rabbi Mayer swore at him, he recalled, but later asked for a recommendation letter. Following rabbinical school and congregational work, Rabbi Mayer took a different path and became a math teacher. This eventually brought him to Portland, where he founded ROTB and started the work that is synthesized in this book.

"It's all about love. It's everything that I learned that I could possibly teach about love," Rabbi Mayer said. "The book is me explaining how I came to this idea that we needed to prioritize love, acceptance, compassion over particularism, over saying, 'This is what we do as Jews.' I want to see more people being more loving to themselves and to other people than standing on their tippy toes at the right portion of the *Amidah*."

The book was launched on Kickstarter in mid-July and was fully funded by Aug. 5 – a total of 279 backers eventually pledged more than \$19,000 to ensure the book got off the ground. Its title feeds directly and intentionally into its central theme – the acronym of "Highly Unorthodox Gospel" is "hug."

It's a focus that he discovered not in rabbinical school but teaching math.

"If you don't love your inner city, high school math students, if you don't fully love them for who they are, they're

not going to do [math]. Ever," he said. "I really learned how to see people for who they are."

He sums it up succinctly, explaining, "I put in really big type in the book, 'I don't care about your belief in God. I want to know if the last five people you interacted with would all say you were kind.'"

Rabbi Mayer isn't much for belief in God himself – and was very concerned about saying so at his rabbinical school interview.

"I don't know much, but I know you don't lie about believing in God in a rabbinical school interview, like that's got to be a *shonda*," he said, using the Yiddish word for "scandal." "They never asked me, 'Do you believe?' So when I got the phone call from [Hebrew Union College's] Gary Zola saying 'You got admitted,' I said, 'Listen, you never asked me about belief in God' and he said, 'Yeah, you don't have to believe in God to be Jewish.'"

Rabbi Mayer takes it to the next step, saying that a "spiritualigious life" is defined by six aspects, and a relationship with a deity is not one of them. While the specific word he's defining is of his invention, the concepts come from Erich Fromm, a Jew who fled Nazi Germany and became one of the 20th century's foremost social psychologists, and Carl Jung.

"There's some really serious scholarship in there, but serious doesn't mean we can't have a sense of humor," Rabbi Brian said.

He illustrates his point with an old rabbinic story.

"It's a story about this goatherd who says to God, 'If you had goats, I'd take care of them for you, for free,' and a rabbi, hears the guy saying that prayer and he says, 'Listen, let me teach you the proper Hebrew prayers.' And so, he teaches them the proper Hebrew prayers and the goatherd uses those until he forgets them and then stops praying altogether, and the story goes that the heavens were sad that they were denied a pure prayer," Rabbi Mayer said. "I'm in the minority of rabbis. I don't really care if anybody learns one more Hebrew prayer. I want to know if their hearts are in the right place."

Preorders for the currently sold-out physical copies, as well as the digital and audio versions of "Highly Unorthodox Gospel," are available online at [rabbibrian.com/store](http://rabbibrian.com/store).



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## ***Generations mark the new year together***

Holocaust survivors gathered at the Portland Kollel Wednesday, Sept. 25, to prepare for the new year with a Pre-Rosh Hashana challah bake and lunch. The event, sponsored by Jewish Family & Child Service, recruited dough-making assistance from middle school students at Maayan Torah Day School. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)



## MEMORIAL (continued from page 1)

dred and one still in captivity in Gaza a year later. Tens of thousands evacuated from both ends of Israel as one front of a war enters its second year and another one begins to open. Waves of antisemitism and hatred, on a scale not yet seen this century, rolling over Jewish communities like the stones on the shore.

In the face of these tragedies, the 1,500 in attendance, both in person – filling Neveh Shalom’s main sanctuary to the back wall – and online, had one job Sunday night.

“Our sacred calling tonight is to mourn,” Rabbi Kosak said, “to reflect on the lives that were taken too soon and the pain that we as a community share together.”

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“Oct. 7 has left its mark in our hearts and our memories,” Jewish Federation of Greater Portland President and CEO Marc Blattner said. “We remember where we were, what we were doing, and the sinking sense of horror and loss on what should have been a day of celebration during Simchat Torah.”

The Federation co-sponsored the event alongside the overwhelming majority of Jewish organizations in the Portland area. Blattner laid out the accounting of the year’s tragedies.

“We also recognize that this war has unleashed many tragedies over the past year,” he explained. “Rising waves of antisemitism, hundreds of Israeli soldiers who’ve fallen in battle, widespread bombings and evacuations in Israel’s north, and the unfortunate consequences of any war on terror: the loss of innocent lives in Gaza and now Lebanon.”

Blattner then introduced Micha Biton – an Israeli singer-songwriter who, one year ago, spent 14 hours huddled in a safe room with his family on a kibbutz near Gaza.

“I have learned to tell my story from a place of light and faith,” Biton said.

For much of the next hour, he held the synagogue-sized crowd transfixed in his accounting of the day, interspersed with song.

“Libby, my daughter, received a message from her friend that her father and his brother were killed when they went out to fight with the terrorists and we felt like it was the end of the world,” he said. “They were my two best friends.”

A total of 20 people from the kibbutz were murdered by Hamas that day.

“There is nothing more heartbreaking than burying your friends, parents, children and grandparents,” Biton said. “The tears from crying were used up, and the grief was too much to bear.”

The funerals began – daily. On Oct. 19, Biton buried his best friend and then went to stand with his son as he celebrated his bar mitzvah. Biton had thought to postpone, but a friend told him to do no such thing. Biton remembered looking up at the crowd that had joined the celebration as he placed his hands on his son’s head in a traditional blessing.

“I felt the tears were mixed between joy and sadness,” he said. “I looked around and I saw how the people of Israel, in all their glory, lifted us up from the darkest place, gave us support, hugged us and surround us with love. They told us that ‘you are not alone. We are with you.’”

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Rabbi Michael Cahana, Senior Rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Portland, recalled his own “one year ago.” About 36 hours after Biton and his family emerged from their safe room, Rabbi Cahana stood in the same spot he occupied Sunday night, on the *bima* of a synagogue not his own, speaking to a crowd trying to process a horror.

“We didn’t know even how to find words for the experience that we have just seen,” he said of a year ago. “We didn’t know how we would move forward, and it has been perhaps the most difficult year in my Jewish life, my rabbinic life, certainly the most difficult year in modern Jewish history.”

Rabbi Cahana prayed for peace for the dead and for the hostages, present and former. He prayed for the soldiers of Israel, and for the leaders of the world. He saved a last prayer for the assembled crowd.

“Bless us all with hope for the day when peace, at long last, comes for the people of Israel, for all the inhabitants of the land, for our neighbors, for all of the Middle East and throughout the four corners of the earth,” he said.

Prior to the recitation of *El Malei Rachamim*, the traditional prayer for the souls of the dead, Rabbi Jonathan Seidel added on to the divine plea for peace, addressing the prayer’s recipient by the prayer’s own name - *El Malei Rachamim* means “G-d, full of mercy.”

“*El Malei Rachamim*, bring this conflict to an end soon,” Rabbi Seidel prayed. “*El Malei Rachamim*, help us to metabolize and transform hatred on this planet and its violent outposts. *El Malei Rachamim*, help us come together as a Jewish community in times of joy and *simcha* again.”

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Before leading the recitation of the Mourner’s Kaddish, Neveh Shalom’s Associate Rabbi Eve Posen mentioned another traditional grief ritual.

“When one of our close relatives dies, we take a black ribbon, we rip it and we wear it over our hearts. We wear that ribbon as an outward sign of our grief,” she said. “A year ago, we gathered and started to wear ribbons blue and yellow, because we are all Israel. We are all the people of Israel. And each day for the last year, we have gathered in different ways, in mourning and in grief, outwardly walking in a world that sometimes felt like no one knew what we were carrying except those others wearing the same ribbon.”

Those same people recited the prayer, then together joined Biton and Cantors Eyal Bitton of Neveh Shalom and Rayna Green of Beth Israel in song – a joyous rendition of “Salaam,” with its recurring lyric, “Od yavo shalom aleinu,” meaning “Peace will come upon us, yet,” followed by Ha-Tikvah – powerful in its connection as Israel’s national anthem and a nearly 150-year-old elegy of Jewish aspiration, but also in its title alone.

“The Hope.”

A recording of the service is available at [youtube.com/watch?v=17TTSCbeALO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17TTSCbeALO).



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Both pages: Community leaders join Israeli musician Micha Biton at the "A Night to Remember" memorial service Sunday, Oct. 6. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

## ADVOCACY (continued from page 5)

“Understand that teachers have a lot of leeway in terms of what books they use and those kinds of things,” Twain said, “even if there’s an accepted curriculum and textbook adoption.”

That’s where parents come in.

“We really do rely on parents letting us know if they have a concern that something doesn’t seem aligned with the curriculum, or they have a concern about it,” Brim-Edwards added.

This is also the case with concerns about educators posting antisemitic or discriminatory content on social media, something that has become an issue in the last year. While Lewis explained that established judicial precedents dictate a balancing test between free speech rights and the disruption of the educational environment, Twain encouraged parents and students to speak up if something is bothering them and that the wellbeing of students should come first.

“Paramount to everything is that our kids, Jewish and otherwise, need to feel safe when they’re in school,” she said. “When I talk to families, I say, ‘how does your child feel?’ If a kid ever comes to me and says, ‘I don’t feel safe,’ that’s a huge red flag.”

Connections with educators – and administrators – are vital to facilitating those conversations, explained Mel Berwin, Neveh Shalom’s Director of Congregational Learning and a Portland Public Schools parent. The same goes for relationships with other Jewish parents – connections which have been facilitated through parent advocacy groups like the one Berwin helps lead for Portland.

“Do you know your principal? Have you had a conversation with them before there’s a challenge so that they kind of know you as a parent. Do you know your school board members or members to know the other Jewish parents in your children’s schools?” she said.

Parents looking to connect with an advocacy group in their child’s district, or looking to discuss an issue that hasn’t been handled adequately by school staff, can contact Federation Chief Community Relations and Public Affairs Officer Bob Horenstein at [bob@jewishportland.org](mailto:bob@jewishportland.org) or Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations Rachel Nelson at [rachel@jewishportland.org](mailto:rachel@jewishportland.org).



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## HORN (continued from page 1)

bowl tournament, that the primary thing most people know about Jews is that people kill them.

In talking about antisemitic acts of murder throughout the world and history, Horn points out the societal obsession with deceased Jews stems from the simple fact that, in her words, “it’s much easier to mold dead Jews into martyrs and morality tales than it is to coexist with living ones.”

Horn’s work and message is so important, explained Wendy Kahn, Chief Development Officer at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, because it gives Jewish people a sense of personal agency amidst a narrative that seeks to take that away.

“She is arguing that it’s not negative motives but unspoken assumptions about Jews that feed into the tropes and thinking about Jews as a people. It’s not always the fault of people sharing the story about the dead Jews but a perverse expectation of society that they need to eliminate agency or power of the Jews and this is how,” Kahn said. “She documents, identifies and provides strategies for taking agency.”

“People Love Dead Jews” received a 2021 National Jewish Book Award and was named one of the best books of the year by both *Publishers Weekly* and *Mosaic* magazine. Yaniv Iczkovits wrote in *The New York Times* that “People Love Dead Jews” is “an outstanding book with a bold mission” which “criticizes people, artworks and public institutions that few others dare to challenge.”

When the author of such a work comes to town, Kahn explained, it’s not to be missed.

“There’s no experience compared to when you hear an author talk about their work,” she said.

Especially when it’s an important Jewish work being discussed before the Jewish community. Her talk will be followed by an interview with JFGP’s Chief Community Relations and Public Affairs Officer Bob Horenstein.

“The opportunity to be in community and actively demonstrate our commitment to building a thriving, strong, and vibrant community cannot be underestimated,” Kahn continued.

Horn, from Short Hills, N.J., holds bachelor’s and doctoral degrees in comparative literature from Harvard University and a master’s in Hebrew literature from Cambridge University. She’s won a total of three National Jewish Book Awards, the Edward Lewis Wallant Award and the Harold U. Ribalow Prize for her published works. She’s previously taught Jewish literature at Sarah Lawrence College and the City University of New York, as well as holding the Weinstock visiting professorship in Jewish Studies at Harvard and serving as Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Yeshiva University.

Tickets are \$60 per person and include drinks, hors d’oeuvres and one copy of “People Love Dead Jews” per household. Attendees who have not already done so will be invited to contribute to the Federation’s 2025 Campaign for Community Need. The minimum gift to attend is \$180.

Tickets can be purchased online at [jewishportland.org/darahorn](http://jewishportland.org/darahorn).

[jewishportland.org/subscribe](http://jewishportland.org/subscribe)

# Show Us Your Sukkah!

The Jewish Review is holding a Sukkot photo contest - send us a picture of you and your family building or enjoying your sukkah for a chance to win a Sukkot-themed prize pack and be featured in The Jewish Review!

Email entries to  
[editor@jewishportland.org](mailto:editor@jewishportland.org)

**Deadline:**  
**Oct. 28**



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## NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

OCT 23

OCT 16  
(early  
deadline)

By JESSICA ANDERSON

As many of us are keenly aware, on Oct. 27, 2018, a Pittsburgh synagogue housing the congregations of Tree of Life-Or L'Simcha, New Light and Dor Hadash was attacked, and 11 worshipers were killed. This event was a frightening wake-up for many Jewish communities who heretofore had only informally addressed security issues in their communities. Portland and many other communities began realizing that they were under-prepared for such an event. This awareness was coupled with an increasing number of bias incidents that organizations were ill equipped to handle. Most Jewish communities had never had a community security director nor an organized, methodological approach to safety and security practices.

Areas with large and long-time Jewish communities, like those in New York, New Jersey, Chicago and Los Angeles (just to name a few) have employed security directors for years. These directors were mostly retired law enforcement professionals and worked directly for individual Federations. That model is still true today, where many of the largest Federations in the US directly employ their security directors. Their functions were largely the same as today – community training, promoting an organized approach to safety practices, and liaising with law enforcement.

In 2004, the Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations started a sepa-



*Jessica Anderson is the Portland-area Director of Community Security. She was previously an FBI agent for 24 years. This position is funded by SCN (the official safety and security organization of the Jewish community in North America) and a local three-way partnership of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, Oregon Jewish Community Foundation Endowment Fund and multiple Jewish organizations in the region.*

rate non-profit organization, Secure Community Network (SCN), to serve as the central organization dedicated exclusively to the safety and security of the American Jewish community. At the time, SCN was led by former law enforcement professional Paul Goldenberg. Its function was to watch for threat activity, to train community members on how to keep their organizations and members safe, and to serve as a clearinghouse for security sharing information with the broader Jewish community, including security directors at individual Federations. At the time SCN was headquartered in lower Manhattan and Goldenberg led a small team in this effort. This model stayed relatively static until 2017.

In December of 2017, the current CEO, Michael Masters took the helm from Goldenberg. His vision was that every single Jewish community in the US, no matter how small, would have direct access to a security professional hired and employed by SCN on behalf of a specific community. He imagined a dome across the entire US of networked security professionals, equipped with safety and

security best practices, supported by a team of analysts who research and monitor for threat activity.

The implementation process of this vision was accelerated following the shooting in Pittsburgh. As noted, the event became a catalyst for Federations to think about addressing their security gaps. In 2018, Memphis became the first Federation to partner directly with SCN to identify and hire a security director for its community. This was followed by a few others, including Portland, that partnered with SCN and hired its first director in late 2019. In this model, a Federation works with SCN, which identifies and hires a local former law enforcement officer with knowledge and a network within that community. The hire is vetted both by SCN and the local Federation to ensure a good fit. Communities that are too small to make use of a full-time director have access to Regional Directors who travel to conduct training, address threats, and provide policies and procedure consultations. In our area of the country, I cover all of Oregon, Seattle Fed-

See SECURITY, page 16

# Empowering Youth through Tzedakah

*Oregon Jewish Community Foundation*

The Oregon Jewish Community Foundation's B'nai Tzedek Program kicked off with enthusiasm as six youth, along with their parents, joined the JFGP's Dignity Grows Packing Event Sept. 22. This inaugural gathering marked the beginning of a series of quarterly programs designed for young people aged 12-18 who hold a B'nai Tzedek Charitable Youth Fund.

The program focuses on instilling the values of tzedakah, community service, and the collective power of making a positive impact. Participants engaged in hands-on activities that highlighted the importance of giving back and fostering a sense of responsibility within the community.

Looking ahead, the next B'nai Tzedek Program is scheduled for December 8 at Cedar Sinai Park, featuring a theme centered on "Being a Light in the World."

For those interested in establishing a B'nai Tzedek Fund and receiving a \$250 match from OJCF, please visit <http://www.ojcf.org>, email [youth@ojcf.org](mailto:youth@ojcf.org), or call 503-248-9328, Ext. 105.



Participants in the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation B'nai Tzedek Program pack totes with Dignity Grows at the group's packing party Sunday, Sept. 22 at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center. (Alana Cogan/OJCF)

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# Events

More upcoming community events online at [jewishportland.org/community-calendar](http://jewishportland.org/community-calendar)

See our High Holy Day Events Calendar online at:

[jewishportland.org/highholidays](http://jewishportland.org/highholidays)

# Obituaries

Submit obituaries online at [form.jotform.com/JFGP/jr-obituary](http://form.jotform.com/JFGP/jr-obituary)

## JERRY WEINBERG

It is with sorrow that Congregation Kol Ami announces the death of our member Jerry Weinberg, z”l, the husband of Andrea Weinberg.

A memorial service was held at Congregation Kol Ami Monday, Oct. 7.

We send our condolences to Andrea and to her extended family on this difficult loss.

## SECURITY (continued from page 14)

eration directly employs an individual who covers King County and Regional Director Gene Moss (my boss and Portland’s first Security Director covers Alaska, Eastern Washington, Idaho, and Montana). The system has been extremely effective. As of July 2024, there are now 30 SCN-led security programs and 37 independent security programs. All the Security Directors work together as needed and independent security programs have full access to SCN training and security assessment products.

One of the most effective aspects of the SCN program is its Jewish Security Operations Command Center (JSOCC) also known as the

“Duty Desk” – a cadre of analysts with high-tech open-source search capabilities and the clearinghouse for all the threat and incident information that is reported from individual security directors. JSOCC provides timely, credible threat and incident information to both law enforcement and community partners. This team also serves as the community’s formal liaison with federal law enforcement and coordinates closely with state and local law enforcement partners. Since its inception, the Duty Desk has identified thousands of threat leads and shared them with the FBI and other law enforcement partners for investigative action.

When you report an incident to me, I report it up to the Duty Desk (I also share it with the ADL and the Oregon DOJ Bias Incident Hotline). Statistics are collected nationally and reported to Congress and other policy-making entities. If the incident includes potential threat information, we’re researching that and sharing it with local police or FBI. The Duty Desk can link individuals who may be making threats to synagogues in Cleveland as well as Tampa whereas before SCN, those dots may not have been connected.

Success means all the layers of this process, from individuals who report the incidents to security directors

up through JSOCC are critical. With any one of these missing, we’re all less effective and sharing the responsibility of safety and security. I personally want to thank everyone who has taken the time to report incidents, and I assure you it matters. Even if it’s not a crime that can be investigated, by reporting the information, you help ensure policymakers at every level of society have a sense of the ubiquity of antisemitic activity.

As always, incidents can be reported to me at 872-273-9214, [janderson@securecommunitynetwork.org](mailto:janderson@securecommunitynetwork.org) or online at the JFGP security page: <https://www.jewishportland.org/security>.

# Jobs Board

See the latest Jewish jobs at [jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/jewish-jobs](http://jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/jewish-jobs)