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Celebrate Chanukah at NightWood

A Fantastical Journey Through Sound & Light



LENOX – On Saturday, December 5 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., Federation returns to The Mount to celebrate Chanukah at NightWood.

Participants are invited to stroll through an ethereal winter landscape and immerse themselves in sound, light, and color. NightWood 2026 combines innovative and immersive music, lighting, and theatrical elements to create unique scenes designed to evoke feelings of wonder and mystery while awakening the imagination.

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Festival of Lights 5787

A fool and his Chanukah gelt *are soon parted*



MORDICAI GERSTEIN, *HOW THEY PLAY DREIDEL IN CHELM*, 2000. OIL ON VELLUM. ©MORDICAI GERSTEIN. COURTESY OF R. MICHELSON GALLERIES, NORTHAMPTON, MA.

"The best way to convince a fool that he is wrong is to let him have his own way," wrote Berkshirite Josh Billings, but the Wise Men of Chelm, the legendary Jewish town of fools, were not going to see the light, even on Chanukah. The village *chachamim* are depicted here by Mordicai Gerstein in "How They Play Dreidel in Chelm," an illustration from *The Jar of Fools: Eight Hanukkah Stories from Chelm* by Eric Kimmel (New York: Holiday House, 2000) that is now on view at The Norman Rockwell Museum's *One Season, Many Lights: A Holiday Celebration*. For more on the exhibition and other happenings at the NRM, please see page 20.

Federation's Volunteers Make Community Happen



Introducing Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Circles of Service

By Heidi Katz / Coordinator of Volunteers

At Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, volunteers are vital to everything we do. Their time, talents, ideas, and care enable us to accomplish far more for our community than our staff could do alone. From caring for individuals and bringing people together to guiding our work and providing essential behind-the-scenes support, volunteers turn our mission into meaningful action. We are grateful for our more than 200 volunteers whose contributions make

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OP-ED

RABBI REFLECTION

In the Dark

By Rabbi Rachel Barenblat / Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires



I always look forward to Chanukah. For me it's not so much about the presents (though I do have fun looking for little things that might make my teenager smile) but rather the experience of kindling light.

Because I so dearly love the long daylight of summer, I struggle with the brevity (and attenuated quality) of winter daylight. I feel the way I imagine a houseplant might feel, yearning toward the sun and not entirely certain what will nourish me during the winter.

Of course, when we talk about "light in the darkness" we're not only talking about literal daylight. And the binarism of mapping "light" to good and "dark" to bad can feed a pernicious subconscious racism. So this year I want to ask: what spiritual gifts are available to us in the darkness – both literal and metaphorical?

That's the question Episcopal priest Barbara Brown Taylor explores in her book *Learning to Walk in the Dark*. She goes deep into the spiritual valence of darkness and light in our sacred texts, our religious traditions, and our lives. She is clear that in the common antipathy to darkness, we may also be manifesting a discomfort with everything that isn't simple and solar and bright… but a full human life contains both light and darkness. She writes:

> The way most people talk about darkness, you would think that it came from a whole different deity, but no. To be human is to live by sunlight and moonlight, with anxiety and delight, admitting limits and transcending them, falling down and rising up. To want a life with only half of these things in it is to want half a life, shutting the other half away where it will not interfere with one's bright fantasies of the way things ought to be.

Her words challenge me not only to embrace the literal darkness of the season, but also to embrace the spiritual "darkness" of difficult times and uncertainty about the future. She writes about the danger of spiritual bypassing, when one uses religion or spiritual life to "paper over" one's difficult emotions such as anxiety or fear. What are we reluctant to see: in our lives, or in our world, or in ourselves?

We all experience doubt, anxiety, and fear. And for many of us the world feels less safe than it used to. Antisemitism is rising, and even fortifying our synagogues (as Jews everywhere have done) will not bring a promise of complete safety. How do we sit compassionately with our own fear of what might come – honoring the fear and giving it space, but not letting it take over? This too is a kind of walking in the dark.

One of my answers is community. Judaism is a communitarian tradition. Many of our most sacred practices can't be done alone: think of reading from Torah, or all of the prayers that require a minyan. Judaism reminds us that we need each other to make community. We don't need to walk in the dark alone. And I think that companionship on the journey can transform our inner experience of being in the dark. It doesn't take away the obscurity, but it can change how we experience it.

We don't need to walk in the dark alone. And I think that companionship on the journey can transform our inner experience of being in the dark. It doesn't take away the obscurity, but it can change how we experience it.

In light of Barbara Brown Taylor's wisdom, Chanukah is landing differently with me this year.

In mainstream Jewish practice, each night the light increases (setting aside for the moment those who choose to kindle as did Shammai, going from eight lights to one). That theme is echoed in the story we read in Torah at this season: the Joseph novella. Joseph's name (Yosef) comes from a Hebrew root meaning to add, repeat, or increase.

But increasing light doesn't have to mean "fighting" or "defeating" the darkness. What if witnessing (and creating) Chanukah's increasing light could invite us to live into the darkness all the more deeply? As Robert Frost wrote in his poem "Choose something like a star," "Dark is what brings out your light."

This year I want to light my *chanukiyot* with renewed appreciation of the physical darkness that allows us to see the stars – and the times of obscurity when life's next step might not be clear. Imagine the wisdom we might receive if we can be patient with life's times of walking in the dark.

Rabbi Rachel Barenblat *is the spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires in North Adams.*



OP-ED

IN MY VIEW

The Magic of Jewish Summer Camp Just Got More Affordable!

By Dara Kaufman, Executive Director / Jewish Federation of the Berkshires



It might feel a little strange talking about Jewish summer camp as we enter the winter season. The leaves are falling, the days are getting shorter, and summer seems a long way away. But for families thinking about camp, now is actually the perfect time to start planning. And this year, there are some especially exciting opportunities to make Jewish camp more affordable for Berkshire families.

At Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, we are committed to making a Jewish summer camp experience affordable and accessible for every child in our community. Federation offers financial assistance to any Berkshire family interested in sending their child to an approved Jewish overnight camp. Whether your child is a first-time camper or returning for another summer, we encourage you to apply. **The Federation application deadline is January 16, 2027**. At our website jewishberkshires.org, navigate to Our Work >Nurturing a Jewish Future for links to apply for Jewish overnight and day camp assistance.

We are also especially proud to partner with the Foundation for Jewish Camp (FJC) to help them launch their Road to Camp initiative, bringing significant tuition savings to eligible Massachusetts families at 11 participating Jewish overnight camps.

Families earning under $200,000 annually can receive 40% off tuition, while families earning between $200,000 and $300,000 can receive 30% off. Both new and returning campers qualify. Families can apply for multiple children and receive assistance summer after summer. No financial documentation is required. Learn more at jewishcamp.org/roadtocamp.

Additional financial assistance is also available through the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's Jewish Overnight Summer Camping Grant (HGF.org).

There is something almost magical about summer camp. It is a place where children try new things, discover interests they may not have known they had, develop independence, build confidence, and form friendships that can last a lifetime. It gives them the opportunity to take on new challenges, step outside their comfort zones, and discover what they are capable of doing.

Jewish summer camp…is a place where children don't just learn about Judaism; they live it.

Jewish summer camp adds another dimension. It is a place where children don't just learn about Judaism; they live it. Shabbat comes alive through songs, shared meals, and celebrations with friends. Jewish values such as community, *tzedakah*, kindness, and caring for others are woven into everyday life. Children discover that being Jewish is not something they do only at home or in synagogue. It is something they share with hundreds of other young people.

And in today's climate, when our children are increasingly seeing and hearing antisemitism in the world around them, having a place where they feel safe, accepted, and comfortable being Jewish is especially important. At camp, being Jewish is simply part of everyday life. Children don't have to explain themselves or defend their identity. They can be Jewish organically and still be whoever they want to be. They can explore their interests, express themselves, and grow surrounded by friends and mentors who accept them for who they are.

There is a Jewish camp for almost every child, whether their interests are sports, theater, music, dance, science, technology, outdoor adventure, or leadership. Some camps are affiliated with particular Jewish movements or traditions; others offer broad, pluralistic experiences. What they share is the opportunity to build Jewish friendships, discover Jewish pride, and feel part of something larger than themselves.

Between these programs, there are meaningful resources to help make camp possible for every family out there! We want every Berkshire child who wants this experience to have the opportunity.

It may be winter, but somewhere a child is already dreaming about next summer. That is the magic of camp. The freedom to grow, the joy of belonging, and the opportunity to discover who you are.

It is an experience worth investing in.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What does it mean to invest in a vibrant Jewish community?

By Arlene D. Schiff / Board President, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

A vibrant Jewish community doesn't happen by accident. It is built, day by day, by people who choose to invest in it – and that investment looks different for each of us.

Here in the Berkshires – and really, anywhere in Western MA – we don't have to look far for the answer. We have a role model right here among us.

I know this personally, from two different vantage points. For twelve years, I sat on the staff of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF) and saw the giving from the inside. And for almost 40 years, I've been a member of the Berkshire Jewish community, on the receiving end of that same generosity. I've felt this investment in my own life, and I'd guess most of you have too.

The HGF's mission is to connect people to Jewish values, faith, tradition, and culture. I've watched that mission show up in very concrete ways for our Federation: professional development grants for our staff, support for the Berkshire Jewish Collective for Jews in their 20s through 40s, and steady backing for our summer concert every year.

HGF's support also helped Federation launch our Create a Jewish Legacy initiative, which gives individuals and families the chance to continue supporting the Berkshire Jewish Community beyond their own lifetime – so that the community we're building today stays strong and vibrant for future generations.

And Harold himself has been a major donor to Federation for as long as I can remember – not through the Foundation, but as a person who shows up for his community.



PHOTO BY JULIA KAPLAN

Harold Grinspoon at The Mount in 2021 with his sculpture, "Joy"

But here's something I've always understood: a vibrant Jewish community needs more than a strong Federation. It needs a whole ecosystem – congregations, organizations, and individuals – holding each other up. And that's exactly what HGF does through grants that support Jewish life at Berkshire Hills Hadassah, Chabad of the Berkshires, Congregation Beth Israel, Temple Anshe Amunim, Congregation Ahavath Shalom, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, the Jewish Resource Center at Williams College, and Knesset Israel. HGF has also partnered with Federation to bring Jewish programming into secular spaces we all love – Barrington Stage Company, Shakespeare & Company, and Close Encounters with Music.

Since 2024 alone, that support totals $240,000. And that figure doesn't even capture everything HGF has made possible, including opportunities for our

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Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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Your Federation Presents

Jewish Treasures of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg: Virtual Tour



On Thursday, December 3 at 10:45 a.m., Federation presents professional guide Evgenia Kempinski for a virtual journey through the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia, exploring its breathtaking art collection through a fresh and fascinating Jewish lens.

Joining our community for this exclusive presentation, Evgenia Kempinski will guide participants through hidden Jewish stories, symbols, and mysteries concealed behind many of the museum's most famous works of art.

This program is free and will be presented online via Zoom. Advance registration is required on the calendar of events page at jewishberkshires.org to receive the streaming link.

The Hermitage is one of the world's greatest museums – a place where you can get lost for days among breathtaking masterpieces. In this immersive virtual tour, participants will walk through the majestic, empty halls of the St. Petersburg museum to look closely at the paintings of European Old Masters.

From uncovering Hebrew inscriptions on Italian Renaissance artworks to analyzing the unforgettable Jewish portraits painted by Rembrandt, the presentation offers a moving exploration of how these hidden texts and artistic hints shaped Jewish self-identity and life centuries ago. Together, we'll reveal subtle Jewish motifs, untold stories, and historical threads that are often overlooked, even by seasoned visitors.

Evgenia Kempinski *is a professional Jewish tour guide, born and raised in St. Petersburg, Russia. With over fifteen years of experience guiding Jewish heritage tours in her hometown, she has developed a deep passion for uncovering and sharing the stories of the Jewish Diaspora. She spent six enriching years living in Israel with her family and now resides in Barcelona, continuing her mission to connect people with Jewish history and culture around the world. She is also the founder of the Online Jewish Travel Club, a vibrant community that brings together Jews from different countries through a shared love of travel, art, and Jewish heritage.*

Federation programs are made possible through the generous support of our community.

The Future Is Peace

Israeli and Palestinian Peacemakers to Speak at Hevreh

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Sunday, December 13 at 7 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire will host a historic evening of dialogue, personal testimony, and reconciliation featuring Israeli peace activist Maoz Inon and Palestinian peacemaker Aziz Abu Sarah. Titled "The Future Is Peace," this community presentation – co-sponsored by Jewish Federation of the Berkshires – offers an intimate look at how profound personal loss can be transformed into a shared commitment to global diplomacy.

Both men have experienced devastating personal losses connected to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Inon's parents were killed in the Hamas-led attacks of October 7, 2023, while Abu Sarah's brother died following his detention in an Israeli military prison. Choosing a path of shared advocacy over retaliation, the two co-founded InterAct International and co-authored the book *The Future Is Peace*. Together, Inon and Abu Sarah travel internationally to demonstrate how to build a future beyond hatred and division, challenging the assumption that cycles of violence must continue.

Aziz Abu Sarah *is a global advocate for peace who has implemented reconciliation initiatives in more than 80 countries. Turning his initial grief and desire for revenge into a lifelong commitment to diplomacy, he co-founded MEJDI Tours in 2009. The organization pioneered a Dual Narrative™ approach, utilizing joint Israeli and Palestinian guides to create opportunities for deeper cultural understanding from multiple perspectives.*

Maoz Inon *is an Israeli social entrepreneur who transformed his own grief after the October 7 attacks into a global call for reconciliation. Speaking before international forums, parliaments, universities, and grassroots communities, Inon champions the conviction that true hope requires action. His collaborative work alongside Abu Sarah demonstrates a strict commitment to pursuing a future where both Israelis and Palestinians can live with equal dignity, security, and peace.*

The evening program will feature a facilitated conversation moderated by Hevreh's Senior Rabbi Jodie Gordon, followed by an interactive audience question-and-answer session. Copies of the speakers' book will also be available for purchase at the venue.

The event will take place at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road in Great Barrington. Advance registration is required online at hevreh.org. Invited donation $25.

For additional inquiries, community members can contact the synagogue office at (413) 528-6378 or via email at info@hevreh.org.



Check out our website!
www.jewishberkshires.org
For calendar listings and events



COME WORK WITH FEDERATION!

Part-Time Food Prep and Kitchen Assistant

Looking for a few extra hours each week? Join the Federation team in preparing kosher meals for older adults and Kosher Meals on Wheels clients. If you're reliable, friendly, and enjoy making a difference, we'd love to hear from you!

Assist the Food Service Director with meal preparation and kitchen duties at our Pittsfield kitchen, preparing approximately 25–40 meals, 2–3 days per week.

Approximate Hours: 8:30 am-1 pm, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. During the summer, 8:30 am -1 pm, Monday and Thursdays.

Send resume to dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org
More info: tinyurl.com/BerkFedKitchen

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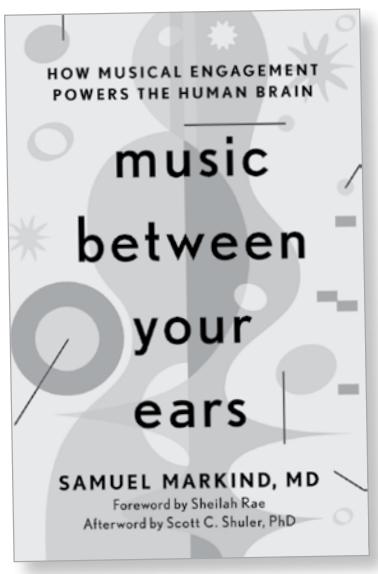
THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE. THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

Your Federation Presents

Music Between Your Ears: How Musical Engagement Powers the Human Brain



On Thursday, December 17 at 7 p.m., Federation presents acclaimed author Samuel Markind, MD for a virtual discussion of his new book, *Music Between Your Ears: How Musical Engagement Powers the Human Brain*, an intriguing exploration of the deep relationship between music and brain function.

Joining Dr. Markind in conversation will be Noah Palmer, conductor, pianist, and Artistic Director of Music at Trinity Lenox.

This program is free and will be presented online via Zoom. Advance registration is required on the calendar of events page at jewishberkshires.org to receive the streaming link.

Part of "Jewish Literary Voices: A Federation Series, in collaboration with the Jewish Book Council."

Why does music so deeply influence how we feel, and what is the science behind this phenomenon? In *Music Between Your Ears*, Dr. Markind uses evolutionary theory to illuminate the pivotal roles that music plays in human survival and procreation. From raising children and finding love to building community, music has molded the human species and continues to shape our lives in remarkable ways. Combining research, stories, and drawings, the presentation offers compelling evidence for music's life-enhancing potential and its ability to improve speech, movement, and memory at any age – whether we are healthy or recovering from illness or injury. Filled with straightforward and practical suggestions, this book will inspire anyone seeking to enrich their life through active musical participation.

Dr. Samuel Markind's *love of neurology and music fuels his passion for teaching communities about the connection between music and the brain, encouraging people to engage actively with the art form. He and his wife, Dina, have three grown children and became grandparents in 2022. They live in Connecticut and enjoy dancing together.*

Noah Palmer *is an active conductor and pianist in the NY Capital Region and the Berkshires. In addition to his leadership role at Trinity Lenox, he serves as Artistic Director of Saratoga Voices, Assistant Music Director of Albany Pro Musica, Assistant Conductor of Concerts in the Village, Kinderhook, and is an alumnus of the prestigious Merola Opera Program.*

Federation programs are made possible through the generous support of our community.

Celebrate Chanukah with the Berkshire Jewish Collective



The Collective enjoyed the warm October weather at Balderdash Cellars

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, December 10 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., the Berkshire Jewish Collective invites community members in their 20s, 30s. and 40s to join them for a Chanukah celebration at Hand Crafted Catering, 26 Dunham Mall, off North Street in Pittsfield.

Spread the light of the holiday with candle lighting, dreidels, games, latkes (and dinner food), and joy! Singles, couples and families with kids all welcome!

$10 per adult, kids 11 and under are free. RSVP by December 4.

For more information on the Berkshire Jewish Collective: Jewish 20's, 30's and 40's, email bjc@jewishberkshires.org

An initiative of Jewish Federation of the Berkshires with support from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

Hope to see you soon!

Berkshire JEWISH VOICE
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Your Federation Presents

Create a Jewish Legacy Campaign

Please remember the Jewish Community in your will.

Preserving the Opportunities – Preserving the Traditions



Joan Katter and Val Coleman

"Years ago, we heard a speaker at our synagogue in New York City," recalls Val Coleman. "I don't remember who she was or what the topic was, but one thing that stayed with me was her saying that the only people who give to Jewish organizations are Jews – *and there are not that many Jews.* And I thought, if you do anything, start with Jewish organizations."

That insight – along with a belief in working within one's local community – has helped guide the philanthropic direction for Val and her wife Joan Katter, leading them to join Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Legacy Circle this year. Over the years, both have been dedicated volunteers wherever they spend time – Val is assistant director of Team TLC NYC, an all-volunteer non-profit helping asylum seekers with a range of services, and both volunteer at their synagogue. In the Berkshires, both Val and Joan volunteer as tutors with The Literacy Network (LitNet), where they assist immigrants in Berkshire County who are trying to improve their English skills or are on the path to citizenship. They also volunteer at Shakespeare & Company and Berkshire Bounty.

The couple have had a second home in Otis for 16 years, and Joan says that the extended time they spent here during the Covid pandemic "without a lot of other things to do" got them more involved with the Berkshire community, although their main Jewish involvement was with their congregation in New York. In September, they attended a Newish & Jewish event at a neighbor's home and had an informative conversation with Federation's executive director Dara Kaufman "about what goes on in the Berkshires and the support Federation gives to the synagogues here," says Val. "And we were very impressed."

Issues of concern included the need for heightened security that affects all Jewish spaces and endeavors in the post October 7, 2023 climate of antisemitism. "Even in a small area like the Berkshires, threats exist," Val says, citing incidents like the 2024 protests outside the Jewish-owned restaurant Fuel in Great Barrington and vandalism of Federation's offices in Pittsfield. "But no matter what was going on in the wider world," says Joan, "we would have been just as inclined to donate to Jewish causes to preserve the opportunities and the traditions. Federation supports kids' camps and that seems to present lifelong ways for growing Jewishness, and not necessarily in a religious or observant way – just as community."

Val and Joan agree that because of Federation's involvement with the entirety of the Berkshire Jewish community (plus its institutions and social services), joining the Legacy Circle is a way to contribute to all the different expressions of Jewish life in the region. When doing their estate planning, they felt their contributions could make a bigger difference at smaller non-profits such as Federation and LitNet.

They were also surprised and pleased to learn that decades ago, the Berkshire Immigrant Center, where they connect with citizenship candidates they tutor, was originally a Federation initiative to resettle Jewish families from the former Soviet Union – one more example of how impactful a small organization in a small community might be.

The importance of legacy giving in a smaller community is to "to give opportunities to people who would not be able to access them otherwise," says Joan. "And to ensure support exists going forward."

"Wherever Jews go, they need support," Val adds. "It's vital that an organization like Federation be there to not only support the Jews who live here now, but to also be welcoming to those who may be looking to move here. It's important for Jews moving to the Berkshires to see that Federation exists. It sends a valuable message that this is a safe place for you and that there will be Jewish life for you here – and also assistance, if you need it."

Three Years After October 7, the "Surge" is the New Normal

Survey conducted by Jewish Federations shows Jewish connection deepening

Three years after the October 7, 2023, attacks on Israel, Jewish Americans are still showing up and connecting more to Jewish life. The data suggest this is no longer a temporary reaction to a single moment, but the new shape of Jewish life in America today.

Jewish Federations of North America's third survey of Jewish life since October 7, conducted May-June 2026 among 2,836 Jewish Americans, found that after a dip last year, the "Surge" in Jewish engagement grew or sustained over the past year, climbing seven points to 38%.

"Many people expected the increased interest in Jewish life to fade as time went on, but our data show the Surge sustaining and even building momentum since last year," said Mimi Kravetz, Chief Impact and Growth Officer at Jewish Federations of North America. "Jewish Americans are actively creating and seeking Jewish life in many different ways, and Jewish institutions, including Federations, are continuing to respond to this need."

What makes it stick

There are two factors clearly at play in the Surge: Israel and antisemitism. People in the Surge are more likely than those who never Surged to feel emotionally attached to Israel, and to say Israel makes them proud to be Jewish. "Surgers" are also more likely to say there is "a lot" of antisemitism in the US today and more likely to report being targeted online. Concern about antisemitism is high across the board (65% say there is "a lot" today, up from 45% in 2020), but it runs hotter among those who keep showing up.

For the first time, this year's survey also asked open-ended questions to understand Surge experiences directly, drawing on more than 700 responses. The clearest findings mirror what we know about building Jewish community in general: informal, social settings, like a Shabbat dinner with friends, were the single most-cited factors people said made them more engaged. Showing up repeatedly was the next most common (184), because the more people showed up, the more comfortable they felt over time. Peer connection mattered just as much and cut both ways: 117 respondents said a welcoming individual made the difference, while 45 said the absence of one sent them away.

The data also surface factors currently deterring people from staying more engaged. Political tension, around Israel and antisemitism alike, was the single largest barrier respondents named (140 mentions, more than three times the next biggest barrier). And, importantly, they name it from all different sides and perspectives, not just one. People described feeling too critical of Israel for their community, or too supportive of it; others said they were simply tired of the debate taking up space. But most didn't leave Jewish life. They moved within it, finding a different congregation or community that fit.

The Surge lands differently depending on where people started

While nearly all people in the Surge did more socially, the additional ways people connected depended largely on their prior communal engagement. For Jewish Americans who were already connected before October 7, the Surge has meant showing up more at their existing institutions and often taking on more, including through advocacy. Those who were previously less engaged have Surged differently, largely through education, often on their own, through podcasts, news, and other independent sources, as they feel more connected to Israel and to being Jewish than before.

The opportunity ahead

The data point to real opportunity. Many Jewish Americans who were less engaged before October 7 are still seeking a Jewish community that fits, even if they haven't found one yet. That's a sizable, motivated population Jewish communities can still reach, and this year's findings on what works and what gets in the way offer some insights on reaching them.

Awareness and confidence in community safety also grew in the last year, which may reflect the hard work the Jewish community has done. Fifty-eight percent of Jewish Americans now say they know where to turn if targeted by antisemitism, up from 46% in 2025. Awareness of specific security programs protecting Jewish institutions rose from 39% to 57%, and 60% believe Jewish organizations are effectively providing safety and security for their community, up from 47%.

"The Surge continues because, even amid deep concern about antisemitism and security, that concern is not keeping people away," Kravetz said. "People are still showing up, still learning, and still finding their way into Jewish community. There's a real opportunity to reach even more of them, and we now have lessons from individuals and institutions doing this work on how to sustain this new normal."

The survey was conducted May-June 2026 via text message recruitment among 2,836 Jewish Americans, weighted to be representative of the Jewish community.

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Your Federation Presents

Frontline: Federations Hiring 100 New Professionals to Combat Antisemitism



Jewish Federations across North America are strengthening our communities' response to rising antisemitism by adding 100 new professional positions to our frontline advocacy and community relations teams. Focused on local and state advocacy, K-12 and higher education, and interfaith and intergroup partnerships, these professionals join the experienced teams already on the ground, adding the depth and breadth of support needed to push back against the hate that is rearing its head in too many areas of civic life.

The 100 new professionals are being hired through the Jewish Federations of North America's Frontline initiative. With support from over 25 funders, this $35 million initiative is providing targeted grants to 120 local Federations, while also ensuring that Federations' local efforts are backed by training, shared tools and resources, and expert guidance to address this growing challenge.

Since the October 7th attacks, antisemitic incidents have skyrocketed, with antisemitic physical assaults reaching a record high last year, and Jews targeted in 64% of religiously motivated hate crimes. In the U.S., 65% of Jews say that the country has "a lot" of antisemitism, up from 45% in 2020.

These professionals are our community's first line of defense, building strong relationships to represent our community's needs and address antisemitism wherever it surfaces, whether in city council meetings, in health care settings, on school boards or education curricula, or in other civic spaces.

"Federations have been deeply engaged in the work of community relations and civic engagement for decades. Today, we require new strategies and increased resources to address the dramatic rise of antisemitism that is permeating every facet of civic life. Federations are on the 'frontlines' of this work every day," said Shira Hutt, Executive Vice President of Jewish Federations of North America. "Frontline is a game-changing initiative that will equip Federations with the talent, support, and resources they need to confront the increasingly complex and growing challenges they face, whether in government, in educational institutions, in media, or our other civic spaces."

Strategically strengthening our communal ties is a critical element of fighting antisemitism, but we know there are other areas of work that must be addressed. We need to communicate our message effectively, to mobilize the community across important issues, and to start planting the seeds for the next generation. That's why Frontline also includes investments in the following programs to support Federation professionals in these efforts:

- Year-round training and learning: Aimed at strengthening the knowledge, skills, and network of these professionals and their Federations.
- The Project Halo messaging hub: Project Halo provides high-level, real-time, data-driven strategic messaging guidance on the key issues and narratives regarding our security and support of Israel.
- Student to Student: A high-school initiative that is now active in 50 communities, which helps engage young members of the Jewish community, build early bridges to non-Jewish teens, and strengthen our ties within school systems. In the last three years, Student to Student engaged over 60,000 non-Jewish teens, nearly half of them in the last year alone.
- One Mitzvah A Day (OMAD): An engagement and mobilization platform that has already reached a daily distribution list of 25,000 people, and is growing. Visit jewishfederations.org/onemitzvahaday.

"In the aftermath of October 7th, our community was very disappointed to see that many people we thought were our allies stayed silent. We learned the hard lesson that our civic engagement efforts must be more focused, more targeted, and more outcomes based, and that is exactly what Frontline is designed to do," said Julie Platt, Chair of Frontline and Jewish Federations of North America's immediate past Board Chair. "Only through deep, sustained, and strategic engagement can we ensure that antisemitism is neither tolerated nor normalized, and that our communities remain safe."

Frontline builds on a model Jewish Federations established with LiveSecure, the $130 million initiative to ensure that every Federation community has a professionally run security program. When a shooter attacked our community at Tree of Life in 2018, fewer than 20 communities had professionally-run Community Security Initiatives that met the necessary standards to protect their communities. LiveSecure built out a national security infrastructure, growing that number to over 140 in just four years and making communities measurably safer, more closely coordinated with law enforcement, and better equipped to respond to threats.

Frontline similarly works to scale and build out a system-wide infrastructure, community by community, to bolster our strategic civic relationships and equip our communities with the tools they need to fight antisemitism.

BERKSHIRE JEWISH CONGREGATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

Welcome to the Jewish Berkshires

Everyone is welcome to attend services and events at any of the organizations listed here. Please call the organizations directly to confirm service times or to inquire about membership. Learn more about our Jewish community and find great events on the community calendar at:

JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG

Berkshire Minyan
Lay-led, Traditional, Egalitarian Minyan
South County
berkshireminyan.org

Berkshire Hills Hadassah
P.O. Box 187, Pittsfield, MA
(413) 443-4386
Berkshirehillshadassah@gmail.com

B'nai B'rith Lodge, No. 326

Chabad of the Berkshires
17 West Street, Lenox, MA
(413) 499-9899
jewishberkshires.com

Chabad of Williamstown
292 Cole Avenue #2E, Williamstown, MA
(413) 770-1185
chabadwilliamstown.org

Congregation Ahavath Sholom
Reconstructionist
Now at Temporary Home:
1089 Main Street, Housatonic, MA
(413) 528-4197
ahavathsholom.com

Congregation Beth Israel,
Reform
53 Lois Street, North Adams, MA
(413) 663-5830
cbiberkshires.com

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire
Reform
270 State Road, Great Barrington, MA
(413) 528-6378, hevreh.org

Israel Philatelist Society
c/o Dr. Ed Helitzer, (413) 447-7622

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires
196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA
(413) 442-4360
jewishberkshires.org

Jewish War Veterans
Commander Robert Waldheim
(413) 822-4546
sellit4@aol.com

Jewish Women's Foundation of the Berkshires
Website: JWFB.org
Email: jwfberkshires@gmail.com

Knesset Israel
Conservative
16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, MA
(413) 445-4872
knessetisrael.org

Temple Anshe Amunim
Reform
26 Broad Street, Pittsfield, MA
(413) 442-5910
ansheamunim.org

JEWISH LITERARY VOICES



A Federation series in collaboration with the Jewish Book Council

Thursday, December 10 at 7:00 p.m. (virtual)
Hollywood vs. Nazis: How the Movie Studios Took on Nazis Infiltrating Los Angeles
with author and commentator Michael Benson

Thursday, December 17 at 7:00 p.m. (virtual)
Music Between Your Ears: How Musical Engagement Powers the Human Brain
with neurologist Dr. Samuel Markind

Thursday, January 14 at 7:00 p.m. (virtual)
Exceptional Hatred: Antisemitism and the Fight Over Free Speech in America
with Prof. of Modern Jewish History James Loeffler.

Thursday, January 21 at 7:00 p.m. (virtual)
To Life: Jews Exploring Nature with naturalist Joel Greenberg.

Thursday, February 11 at 7:00 p.m. (virtual)
A World We Share: Hannah Arendt and the Power of Friendship in a Broken World with Prof. of Politics, Philosophy and Human Rights Roger Berkowitz

Thursday, February 25 at 7:00 p.m. (virtual)
The Roots of the Guava Tree: Growing Up Jewish and Arab in Colombia with writer Sonia Daccarett

Jewish Federation OF THE BERKSHIRES
JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL

Your Federation Presents

CIRCLES OF SERVICE,

continued from page 1



Heidi Katz

a difference in the lives of so many. Through their service and generosity, they strengthen our community and enrich the lives of so many – including their own.

So, what does it mean to volunteer?

Volunteering with Jewish Federation of the Berkshires can look different from one person to the next. It might mean delivering a meal, welcoming guests at an event, serving on a committee, delivering the Berkshire Jewish Voice, helping in the office, reaching out to someone in the community, or helping shape the Federation's future.

While the tasks may differ, each is a way of strengthening our community.

That idea was at the heart of **Cheers for Volunteers**, a late summer celebration honoring the many people who give their time, energy, ideas, and care to the Federation. During the celebration, Federation introduced a new way of thinking about volunteer service: **Five Circles of Service**.

The Circles are not organized around job titles or individual tasks. Instead, they reflect the different ways volunteers contribute to a strong, connected Jewish community. In fact, many volunteers participate with more than one Circle.

Welcoming is about creating places where everyone belongs. These volunteers help with event support, hospitality, greeting, and registration. They may be the first person someone meets at a Federation event – or the person who makes a newcomer feel immediately at home.

Caring is about supporting people and strengthening lives through care, learning, and community. Meal delivery, holiday care packages, PJ Library and family programming, the Berkshires Jewish Collective, and camp and college scholarships all provide opportunities for people to feel supported, connected, and able to thrive.

Connecting is about building relationships and strengthening community. Through community outreach, newspaper delivery, public engagement, and special projects, these volunteers help people find one another and stay connected to Jewish life in the Berkshires.

Guiding is about helping chart our course and steward the Federation's future. Board members and committee members, as well as those involved in strategic initiatives, governance, and allocations, bring their experience, questions, ideas, and leadership to the work of Federation.

Sustaining is about providing the resources and behind-the-scenes support that make it all possible. Office assistance, administrative support, development, errands, logistics, and the many things that keep Federation running smoothly are essential to Federation's work and future.

The five Circles of Service – **Welcoming, Caring, Connecting, Guiding, and Sustaining** – are a way of looking at the whole picture of volunteering with Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. They remind us that community does not happen because of one program, one event, or one kind of volunteer. It happens because people contribute in many different ways, often without thinking of their individual efforts as part of something larger.

At Cheers for Volunteers, each Circle was represented by a different color. Volunteers chose the colors that reflected the ways they serve, creating a visual reminder that while our contributions may be different, they are all part of the same community.

I hope these Circles of Service will become more than a theme for one celebration. They can become part of the language we use to talk about volunteering at Federation – and perhaps a new way for community members to recognize the many possibilities for getting involved.

Whether you have volunteered for eighteen years or are considering volunteering for the first time, there is no single way to serve. There are many ways to strengthen our Jewish community.

There is a place for you in our Circles of Service.

Are you ready to volunteer? I would love to hear from you! Please let us know your interests by completing this short form: tinyurl.com/jfb-volunteers

If you have questions about volunteering or would like to explore ways to get involved, please reach out to me at federation@jewishberkshires.org or (413) 442-4360, ext. 10. I look forward to connecting with you!

GRINSPOON TRIBUTE,

continued from page 3

PJ Library families, our youth who head off to Jewish summer camp each year, and Western Mass residents who've had the chance to see Israel for the first time.

When I trace this back in my own memory, all the way to 2001, what strikes me isn't just the dollar figures. It's the breadth of it, the way this partnership has touched nearly every corner of Jewish life across Western Mass.

I don't have to look far for proof of that – I can look at my own daughters. They received teen leadership awards that helped them see themselves as people who could lead their community, not just belong to it. They went to summer camp with grants from HGF. They spent time in Israel on trips that HGF helped fund. And they grew up surrounded by Jewish life right here in Berkshire County, supported at every turn.

Because of all of that, they grew into proud Jews, shaped by a community that nurtured their identity instead of leaving it to chance. You can add up the grants. You can't really add up the ripple effects – on individual lives, and on the shape of our community.

So, what does it mean to invest in a vibrant Jewish community?

For me, it means this: that families get the support they need to raise their kids Jewishly. That a young adult can find a place to belong. That someone can stand in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv for the first time because someone else believed that mattered. It means all of us get to experience, firsthand, what it feels like to be part of something bigger than ourselves. It means recognizing that none of us builds a Jewish community alone.

Harold – and HGF – thank you for investing in individuals, in families, and in Jewish life here in the Berkshires. Your investment has created opportunities that will continue to shape our community for years to come. What you've made possible is more than I think even you may realize.





LOCAL NEWS

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Meet Marie Rudden, Founder of the Berkshire Community Diaper Project

By Dawn Rosenberg McKay / Congregation Ahavath Sholom



Marie Rudden

We come to synagogues to pray, but we also come to connect with community. What makes up that community are individuals, all with different interests, values, aspirations, and causes they hold dear. Here we feature Marie Rudden, MD, the founder of the Berkshire Community Diaper Project and a three-year member of Congregation Ahavath Sholom. Marie, a retired psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, moved to the Berkshires with her husband Peter Lazes, PhD, and their children in the summer of 2001.

In 2014, Marie learned of a talk at Austin Riggs Center in Stockbridge featuring epidemiologist Dr. Megan Smith, who had studied the circumstances that made parenting difficult for low-income families in the New Haven area. Her findings indicated that a significant cause of young parents' distress was their inability to afford diapers. This forced them to reuse diapers, resulting in their children developing infections. They were embarrassed to tell their pediatricians about this problem. Many of these parents scored high on tests that measured depression and anxiety. Given her professional background in psychiatry and psychoanalysis, Marie quickly realized that diaper need was leading to mental health problems in parents that could also affect their children. Marie wanted to find a practical way to resolve the root cause of what could become an intergenerational issue. She met with professionals at the Austin Riggs Center and The Berkshire Psychoanalytic Institute to suggest a solution.

With their help, a meeting sponsored by the Erikson Center at Austen Riggs was held to propose the creation of a Berkshire Community Diaper Project, which would distribute diapers to low-income families who struggled to afford them. Among the many attendees were nurses, parents, grandparents, and social workers who recognized the significance of this issue and who volunteered to help. A board of directors was formed from those who volunteered, eventually led by Marie. She held that role for eight years until Daltrey Turner, a social worker at Austin Riggs Center, took over in 2022, while Marie remained on the board. Her husband Peter has been its treasurer for the past six years.

Fittingly, the organization's tagline is "Change a Diaper. Change a Life," and the Diaper Project has changed many lives here in Berkshire County. After about a year, The Project became a member of the National Diaper Bank Network. The Network advocates for this issue and negotiates bulk orders at low cost with manufacturers, which member organizations can then obtain. In addition to serving as treasurer, Peter, some Board members, and several volunteers deliver the diapers to food pantries, parent-child agencies, and pediatric offices throughout the Berkshires (a list of distribution locations can be found at berkshirecommunitydiaperproject.org/need-diapers). What started with five agencies receiving and distributing diapers has grown to 27, and over fourteen years, the organization has distributed 3.2 million diapers.

The Diaper Project began with the knowledge that diapers are very expensive. Through her work with the organization she founded, Marie, and especially her successor, Daltrey Turner, have become experts at writing grants to fund the millions of diapers they distribute to parents in need. The community organizations that provide financial support are too numerous to list here, but can be found on The Diaper Project's website at berkshirecommunitydiaperproject.org/. Financial donations from many individuals in the community also supply 35 percent of the cost to the organization for diapers. A local business, Ray Murray, Inc., generously donates warehouse space to store the tremendous number of diapers that arrive almost monthly from the National Diaper Network. If you would like to help, please visit The Berkshire Community Diaper Project website.

Double the Light: Hevreh to Celebrate Two Chanukah Shabbats

GREAT BARRINGTON – With Chanukah spanning two distinct Shabbats this season, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire will host a pair of special worship services to welcome the Festival of Lights and bring it to a joyful close. Both Friday evening gatherings will feature music, holiday spirit, and opportunities for community connection led by spiritual leaders Rabbi Jodie Gordon and Cantor Emily Elenbogen-Siegel.

The celebrations begin on Friday, December 4, marking the very first night of Chanukah. The community is invited to gather early at 5:15 p.m. for a sweet Chanukah "pre-neg" reception, where attendees can pick up a special holiday gift from the congregation. A spirited Shabbat service will follow at 6 p.m., featuring the communal lighting of the first Chanukah candle to initiate the eight nights of the festival.

One week later, on Friday, December 11, Hevreh will mark the eighth and final night of Chanukah with an immersive "Eight Nights of Light" service at 6 p.m. Worshippers are highly encouraged to bring their favorite family menorahs from home to help completely illuminate the sanctuary. The musical service will include a few festive surprises and will be followed by a traditional community latke oneg.

Hevreh is located at 270 State Road in Great Barrington. For more information, visit hevreh.org.

Shir Hadash: A Poetry Salon with KI's Rabbi Pamela Wax

PITTSFIELD – Beginning Monday, December 7 at 10:30 a.m., Knesset Israel will welcome poets, poetry-lovers, and newcomers alike for "Shir Hadash," a recurring monthly poetry salon. Facilitated by published poet Rabbi Pamela Wax, who serves as Knesset Israel's Director of Adult Education and Programming, the virtual gatherings offer an accessible forum to build literacy in verse.

At each 90-minute session, participants will read and closely discuss a curated selection of poems written by Jewish poets. The interactive format balances literary analysis with creative expression, providing an opportunity for attendees to engage in guided generative writing exercises and voluntarily share their original pieces in a supportive environment. The program is designed to be welcoming to those entirely new to reading or writing poetry.

Attendees have the flexibility to attend single sessions or commit to the full seasonal run. Gatherings will meet on Zoom from 10:30 a.m. to noon on the following Mondays: December 7, January 11, February 8, March 8, April 12, and May 10. Pre-registration is required at knessetisrael.org/rsvp to receive the secure digital video link.

Chanukah Concert at Congregation Beth Israel

NORTH ADAMS – On Sunday, December 6 at 4 p.m., join the CBI choir and musicians for a celebration of the Festival of Lights with music both old and new!

Musical selections will include traditional Ashkenazi and Sefardi Chanukah songs as well as contemporary compositions, and will close with a family-friendly sing-along featuring some favorite Chanukah tunes.

After the concert, light Chanukah candles and enjoy refreshments (please bring a dessert or snack to share if you are able), dreidels and gelt, and kid-friendly Chanukah arts and crafts. All ages and faiths are welcome to attend this free community event!

Please RSVP at cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events. CBI is at 53 Lois Street in North Adams.

Jewish Federation OF THE BERKSHIRES
THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

We are almost there, but we need your help!

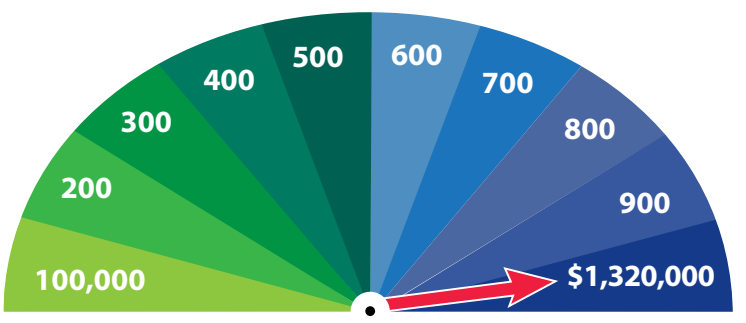
If you have not yet made your gift to the 2026 Annual Campaign there is still time to do so.

Your gift will help us engage the next generation, support the elderly and vulnerable, and sustain Jewish life all year round.

Donate online at jewishberkshires.org

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires 2026 Annual Campaign GOAL $1,600,000



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LOCAL NEWS

The Jewish Women's Foundation at 18: Celebrating Its Chai Year Through Giving

By Susan Friedman / JWF Board Member

This year marks the 18th anniversary of The Jewish Women's Foundation of the Berkshires (JWF). The number 18, "Chai" has special meaning in Jewish tradition. It is the Hebrew word for "life," and a most fitting theme for a foundation guided by the principles of Tikkun Olam, the Jewish commitment to repairing the world.

In 2009, a small group of women founded JWF to promote a shared goal - strengthening the quality of life for the Berkshires' most vulnerable neighbors. Eighteen years later, JWF has much to celebrate. Its membership has grown to approximately 200 women, both year-round and seasonal residents, who are dedicated to achieving JWF's mission of addressing critical needs in the Berkshire community, and supporting social action to create a more just and equitable society. Through grant funding, volunteerism and member engagement, JWF brings its mission to life, supporting and empowering local Berkshire nonprofits, which provide basic necessities, help people become more self-sufficient and create opportunities for young people. Its members contribute money, time and experience. That support is especially important as local organizations face growing needs and tighter budgets.

What the Grants Mean to People

At its annual luncheon this spring, JWF brought its grantees and members together for a morning of recognition and dialogue. Members learned that the challenges and financial shortfalls of the past year have further intensified, straining both the nonprofit sector as well as the vulnerable clients they serve. Although this trend is nationwide, Berkshire County, which has the unfortunate distinction of being the 3rd poorest county in the state of Massachusetts, feels these cuts even more keenly than in better resourced communities.

JWF's members repeatedly heard from their agency partners that in the current funding landscape, private philanthropy is more critical than ever. At the same time the stories that grantees shared offered a reminder that behind every funding decision are people whose lives can change for the better.

Morgan Ovitsky, executive director of Berkshire Bounty, emphasized that JWF's support is vital to its Food Purchase Program, which supplies fresh, nutritious food to local feeding assistance programs at a time when public resources are limited.

Divya Chaturvedi, executive director of The Elizabeth Freeman Center noted that with JWF funding its Money School, helps survivors of domestic violence gain financial knowledge and independence. Financial insecurity can make it difficult to leave an abusive relationship or begin again. "Money School is not just about money. It is about choices, freedom, and hope." One graduate shared what the program meant to her: "Money School impacted me so much that I was able to graduate with my bachelor's degree, and soon I will graduate with my master's degree."

Stories like these help explain why JWF has increased its giving substantially in recent years – from $70,000 in 2023/24 to $100,000 in 2024/25 and to $140,000 in 2025/26. This year, JWF was able to award $150,229 in local grants, up an additional 8% from the previous year. Members contributed additional dollars beyond their annual membership commitments. In 2026, this growth in resources allowed JWF for the first time to increase its maximum grant ceiling from $5,000 to $7,500.

While JWF grants are smaller than those that many large-scale funders award, Grants Committee co-chair and board member Jodi Nussbaum describes the impact this way: "Small drops in the bucket make a big difference. The grants we give out to smaller non-profits are helping them make a tangible difference in the lives of children and families in our community. That's incredibly meaningful to me because I can see the impact of my giving. With JWF I see what an organization hopes to achieve, and, as a grant liaison, I can draw on my own years of experience to help them get there. We're able to make a real difference with a relatively small amount of money. For me, that's the heart of JWF."

More Requests, Harder Choices

For the 2026–27 grant cycle, JWF received 44 applications, a 10% increase from the year prior, when grant requests already had increased by 20%. Forty-one percent of requests were new to the foundation, an encouraging sign that JWF's outreach is connecting with more organizations. Unfortunately, grant requests this year totaled more than $270,000, far exceeding the funds available.

JWF provides local grants in three areas: basic needs, self-sufficiency and empowerment. The following organizations awarded grants this year work on issues ranging from food and housing to education, legal assistance and opportunities for young people.

Basic Needs Recipients: AYJ Smiles; Berkshire Agricultural Ventures; Berkshire Bounty; Berkshire Community Action Council; Berkshire Community Diaper Project; Berkshire Grown; Berkshire Pride; Berkshire South; Construct; Greenagers; Pediatric Development Center; People's Pantry; Pittsfield Community Food Pantry; Roots & Dreams & Mustard Seeds; Roots Rising; and the Guthrie Center.



Self-Sufficiency Recipients: 18 Degrees; Berkshire Nursing Families; Blue Rider Stables; Community Legal Aid; Elizabeth Freeman Center; Literacy Volunteers; Literacy Network; RFK Community Alliance; UCP; and Volunteers in Medicine.

Empowerment Recipients: Berkshire Film and Media; Berkshire HorseWorks; Flying Cloud; and Railroad Street Youth.

JWF also supports programs through the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, including the Haifa Rape Crisis Center, Ethiopian National Project SPACE, Merhav Neshima BaEmek, B'emeitav and Changemakers for Good. The Hevreh Early Childhood Program and the Museum of Jewish Heritage are also among the organizations receiving support.

In all, these grants total about $50,000, bringing JWF's total giving for this year to approximately $200,000. Every year the JWF Grants committee starts its work anew, which gives both current grantees and new applicants an equal opportunity for their grant requests to be reviewed and considered. However, each year JWF's funds which support its grants must be raised anew, which is a necessary yet challenging responsibility JWF strives to meet.

The Grants Review Committee: Making Decisions That are Core to JWF's Mission

How does the JWF make difficult funding decisions, when the need is so great and there are so many worthy local nonprofits that seek the Foundation's support? Grantmaking is often viewed by non- profit applicants as shrouded in mystery, favoring those who have connections. However, in JWF's case the openness of its grant process, which is widely publicized in local media; the proactive role the foundation takes in outreach to and relationship building with local nonprofits, including its active membership in the Non-Profit Center of the Berkshires, and the thoughtfulness of its grants process, paint a different picture

JWF's Grants Review Committee is open to all members who wish to participate. Grants review provides JWF members the opportunity to draw from their life experiences, both professional and volunteer, and to participate in a process that is strategic, deliberative and has impact on entire organizations and communities. There are relatively few such sophisticated and compelling opportunities available in the world of volunteerism, which adds to the value of the experience

This year, 45 JWF members volunteered to participate in a carefully designed and choreographed process that was respectful of their time and provided them with the guidance and tools needed to actively engage in grants review. Committee members did not need to have any prior grantmaking or nonprofit experience to take part. They were supported by the Grants Committee and subcommittee chairs, and provided with an in-depth orientation to the nonprofit sector in the Berkshires and JWF's grants review. Long time JWF members brought a historical perspective to the learning and Grants Liaisons were at the table to share insights into the community context and the capacity of individual applicants.

Each reviewer was then assigned to one of three grants review subcommittees, each focusing upon a leg of JWF's mission. Each subcommittee developed a slate of recommendations that was presented to the full Grants Committee at their final meeting. At that meeting members voted on the grant recommendations. They also used that time to reflect upon what they learned from their proposal review about new and emerging needs and trends, and to identify issues for consideration related to the grants process and priorities.

"The range of experience, expertise and talent



LOCAL NEWS

of the members participating in the grants process is impressive," says Grants Committee co-chair and board member Wendy Jennis. "And the awards process provides Committee members with a volunteer experience that not only has an impact on local organizations and communities but also is engaging and meaningful in and of itself. Reviewing grant applications opens our eyes to the extent of existing need right here in Berkshire County."

JWF's involvement goes beyond writing checks. Volunteer Grant Liaisons, a role that is relatively unique in the world of grantmaking, keep in touch with JWF grantees, help them find resources and navigate grant reporting requirements. Grant Liaisons also work to build a closer relationship between each agency and JWF and its members. Other JWF volunteers pack food, tutor, mentor and lend a hand wherever they are needed.

As former Grants Committee co-chair Susan Abramowitz observed: "The greatest strength of JWF's grant strategy lies not simply in the individual projects it funds, but in the collective impact of its grant portfolio and volunteer endeavors. By funding projects that create stability, build independence, and develop potential, JWF supports a balanced community strategy that addresses immediate needs while investing in Berkshire County's future"

A Chai Year, and Work Still to Do

Although its resources have grown, JWF has yet to be able to fund all worthy requests. Hard choices have to be made which are not easy for applicants or for the Grants Committee members who must make these decisions. Geri Liemer, co-president of JWF underscored the challenge: "Our Grants Committee struggles each year choosing who should receive funds and for how much. Although we are giving just over $150k to 30 grantees, we did not grant others and we were unable to fully fund most of the requests. This is a most difficult task and all committee members are torn throughout the process. Our greatest joy would be to fund fully all of the grantees who are engaged in meaningful work in our county."

The need is clear, and the foundation hopes to do more. Despite JWF's increased giving this year, more than $100,000 in requests had to be declined. Reflecting on this shortfall Carol Striker, JWF co-president put it personally, "JWF has identified this gap in giving as a challenge that we hope to meet in this our 18th Chai year. JWF's willingness to rise to such challenges is why I feel that my membership in this remarkable organization is a gift that I give myself"

JWF's 18th anniversary is a chance to celebrate what its members and nonprofit partners have accomplished together. It is also a reminder of how much work remains. As JWF enters its Chai year, its commitment to improving life in the Berkshires continues.

For more information about JWF grants or membership, please use the **QR code** (right) to link to the JWF website or visit **jewishberkshires.org/Jewish-womens-foundation.**

Family Chanukah Celebrations at Hevreh

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Saturday, December 5 at 9 a.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire will host a holiday-themed Tot Shabbat tailored specifically for young children and their families. The morning program offers an accessible, interactive introduction to Jewish tradition for the synagogue's youngest demographic.

Led by Cantor Emily Elenbogen-Siegel, the Chanukah-themed morning will be filled with energetic singing, holiday storytelling, and age-appropriate movement. The program concludes with a special seasonal Shabbat snack. All families with toddlers and young children are welcome to attend, regardless of congregational affiliation. The event will take place at Hevreh, 270 State Road in Great Barrington. Additional event details can be found online at hevreh.org.

Yachad Chanukah Celebration Features Gift Drive and Bowling

On Sunday, December 6 at 10:30 a.m., Hevreh will host its annual Yachad Chanukah celebration, bringing together religious school families and community members of all generations for a festive morning of tzedakah and socializing.

The morning begins at the synagogue with a holiday service project. In keeping with the spirit of seasonal giving, each participating child is asked to bring a new, unwrapped toy or gift to contribute to the Chanukah Gift Wrap initiative. The collected presents will be wrapped by the families and distributed to local children in need through Volunteers in Medicine. The synagogue festivities will conclude with a festive Chanukah snack and a holiday singalong.

Following the morning program, the celebration will move offsite at noon to The Cove bowling alley, located at 109 Stockbridge Road in Great Barrington. The multigenerational bowling party is open to community members of all ages and skill levels as an opportunity to connect outside the synagogue walls. A donation of $18 is suggested for the bowling event.

More information and registration details are available at hevreh.org.

Adamah Offers a Uniquely Berkshire Way of Being Jewish

By Adam Sher, Chief Strategy Officer, Adamah & Janna Siller, Farm Director and Advocacy Coordinator at Adamah Farm



FALLS VILLAGE, CT – The refrain repeated in Genesis after each day of creation is easy to relate to here in the Berkshires. *Vayar Elohim Ki Tov* "And G-d saw that it was good."

As the nights lengthen here in the mountains and we prepare for the light of Chanukah, we hold the fresh memory of being surrounded by autumn slopes painted with golden birch and fiery maple leaves. Soon an intricate lattice-work of bare branches outlined in glimmering ice crystals will make way for snowmelt rushing into creeks and, eventually, birdsong breaking winter's delicate quiet.

Many of us live in the Berkshires because of the inescapable sense of awe, peace, and connection we find in this lush, biodiverse, ever-changing landscape. These blessings are often experienced alone or with close friends and family-driving along curvy roads with majestic mountains in the distance, listening to crickets during an evening on the porch. When we connect to the natural world in a wider community, bringing in the wisdom of our tradition, our holidays, our texts, our cuisine, and our rituals, the experiences deepen.

Modern Jewish life is not always known for being lived outside. Most American Jews pray in synagogues, study in classrooms, celebrate in social halls, and associate our meals with kitchens and dining rooms. Adamah invites communities to live Judaism as an ecological experience.

The Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village, CT (just a half hour south of Great Barrington) is home to the Adamah Farm and educational programs. Gathering on its four-hundred acres of forest, farm, pasture, agroforestry, lake, and community spaces makes it easy to see the connection between people and planet, between *Adam* (the human) and *Adamah* (the earth).

The farm came into being in the 1990s among educators hosting outdoor education trips for Jewish Day Schools and taking retreat participants into the woods here at Isabella Freedman. Guests were coming to our campus on a kind of pilgrimage – an inquiry into living harmoniously, Jewishly, with the earth. Educators wanted to help participants know what it feels like to follow the commandment "*l'ovdah u'l'shomrah*, to work and to protect the earth;" to live the words of the Talmud, "I found a fruitful world, because my ancestors planted it for me. Likewise, I am planting for my children."

Today, the Adamah Farm Fellowship has graduated over five hundred alumni who each spent three months here learning and working together to grow food for food pantries and local CSA members. Adamah's Teva program has taken thousands of middle schoolers into the farm's compost yard to marvel at the transformation of an apple core from garbage to magical fertilizer. Isabella Freedman's holiday retreats and rentals have offered hundreds of farm tours and allowed over one hundred thousand guests to encounter Jewish farmers sustaining themselves and the retreat center with the gentle work of their hands.

We are excited to continue to open up more widely to our local Berkshire neighbors. We want to be a center of Jewish life for the Berkshire Jewish community, offering opportunities that complement the vibrant Jewish life in our region in partnership with beloved Berkshire Jewish institutions. We are your Jewish educational farm and retreat.

The inscription on the ceramic tiled gateway above the Adamah farm reads *Vayar Elohim Ki Tov* – G-d saw that it was good. We understand that creation is already enough, that abundance is here, that we are humble partners with the land. As you light candles this Chanukah, we hope you feel that sense of *shefa*, abundance, that the landscape here teaches us to believe in. And we hope you will join us at Adamah through this year's seasons.

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LOCAL NEWS

Winter at Congregation Beth Israel

NORTH ADAMS – Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires (CBI) continues its rich schedule of Shabbat worship, learning, and community programs in the winter, with offerings both in person and on Zoom.

Shabbat Services

Regular Shabbat Morning Services will be held on the Saturdays of December 5 and 12 at 9:30 a.m. at CBI. Hear some words of Torah (and some words about Torah) and bask in Shabbat's sweetness. These services will include traditional liturgy, contemporary poetry, chant, Torah study, and song as well as spectacular views from the sanctuary, which connect with the natural world and with our Source. Onsite and online; Zoom participants will need their own copy of *Mishkan T'filah*, available as an e-book.

Kabbalat Shabbat Services take place on Friday, December 18 at 7 p.m. at CBI. All are welcome to usher in Shabbat with prayer, music, poetry, and Torah teaching. On some weeks, the CBI choir and musicians will join Rabbi Rachel Barenblat in leading services, offering a reflective transition from the week into sacred time. Onsite and online; digital liturgy will be shown via slideshare, no siddur required for Zoom participants.

Jewish Journeys Shabbat on December 19 at 10 a.m. Join CBI for a special family Shabbat service to celebrate Shabbat in community. Interweave the morning service with opportunities for Jewish Journeys students to share what they have learned over the course of the semester. Please consider bringing a vegetarian dish to share following the conclusion of services. All are welcome; please RSVP via the website if your family plans to attend. (Please note that this service will be held onsite only.)

RSVPs for all services are requested at cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events. Some dates may be subject to change; congregants are encouraged to check the calendar for updates.

Zoom "Soul Spa" Torah Study will convene via Zoom at 10 a.m. on the Saturdays of November 28 and December 5 & 12. Jointly led by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat (CBI) and Rabbi David Markus (Congregation Shir Ami), this year's learning is entitled *Paths of Peace: Modern Spirit, Timeless Wisdom* and will explore the weekly *parsha* through the lens of Hasidic commentary, dipping into some of our tradition's richest sources of wisdom and spiritual nourishment. If anyone is observing a *yahrzeit*, the session will close with Mourner's Kaddish.

Congregation Ahavath Sholom to Welcome Shabbat and First Night of Hanukkah

HOUSATONIC – On Friday, December 4 at 5 p.m., Congregation Ahavath Sholom will host a special joint Kabbalat Shabbat and Hanukkah service to welcome the arrival of both the Jewish Sabbath and the first night of the Festival of Lights. The evening will blend traditional Shabbat melodies with festive seasonal liturgical additions, placing Jewish soul music at the center of the communal worship experience.

The service will feature new musical arrangements introduced by Rabbi Jennifer Rudin, who is currently participating in the River of Song Ba'al Neginah Program. Led by renowned musician Joey Weisenberg, this specialized two-year training program in *Neginah* – traditional Jewish soul music – is designed for experienced prayer leaders, clergy, and musicians to foster a deeper, song-filled connection to sacred prayers and texts. In keeping with the congregation's standard practices, the evening will also incorporate interactive dialogue, personal reflection, and quiet meditation.

Following the conclusion of the service, attendees are invited to stay for a community Oneg Shabbat. The social hour is designed to foster community connection and will feature a variety of traditional Hanukkah treats and refreshments. All community members are welcome to attend. The service will take place at Congregation Ahavath Sholom at its current home at the Unitarian Universalist Meeting of South Berkshire (UUMSB), 1089 Main Street in Housatonic. For additional information, inquiries can be directed to the synagogue office via email at CASOffice15@gmail.com.

Klezmer Concert, Menorah Lighting, and Chanukah Celebration in Lenox

Hester Street Troupe to headline free community Chanukah party



LENOX – Chabad of the Berkshires invites the entire Berkshire community and visitors to come together for a special celebration of Chanukah on Sunday, December 6 beginning at 4:30 p.m., with a public menorah lighting at Lilac Park in Lenox, followed by a festive Chanukah dinner and live concert at 5 p.m. at the Chabad Center, 17 West Street.

The celebration will begin with the lighting of a large public menorah at Lilac Park, joined by local dignitaries, community leaders, and guests from near and far. The gathering will offer a meaningful opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to stand together in unity, celebrate Jewish pride, and share Chanukah's timeless message of light, hope, and perseverance.

At 5 p.m., everyone is warmly invited to the Chabad Center for a festive Chanukah dinner and live klezmer concert featuring the acclaimed Hester Street Troupe. Guests will enjoy a delicious holiday dinner, including traditional Chanukah favorites such as potato latkes and *sufganiyot* (jelly donuts), along with a variety of other dishes.

Having performed at New York City's prestigious Lincoln Center, the Hester Street Troupe is known for its spirited performances of traditional Jewish and klezmer music. Their engaging musical style brings Jewish heritage to life, promising an uplifting and entertaining experience for audiences of all ages.

"Chanukah reminds us that even a small light has the power to overcome tremendous darkness," said Rabbi Levi Volovik, co-director of Chabad of the



LOCAL NEWS

Berkshires. "At a time when Jewish pride and unity are more important than ever, gathering together to light the menorah sends a powerful message of hope, strength, and togetherness. We invite the entire community to stand with us, celebrate proudly, and help spread the light of Chanukah throughout the Berkshires."

There is no admission fee, and everyone is welcome, regardless of religious background, affiliation, or level of observance. Individuals, couples, families, and seniors are all encouraged to participate. Whether Chanukah is a cherished family tradition or a new experience, the celebration promises an evening of warmth, friendship, music, and community spirit. Sponsorship opportunities are available to help support the celebration and Chabad's ongoing efforts to make Jewish life and programming accessible throughout the Berkshires.

The event is co-sponsored by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. For additional information, contact Chabad of the Berkshires.

"Foundations of American Jewish Civics: A Framework for Strengthening Democracy Through Jewish Teachings"

A six-week online course with Knesset Israel led by Rabbi Pamela Wax

On Monday, December 14 at 6:30 p.m., Knesset Israel will launch a comprehensive six-week evening course exploring the interface between ancient Jewish ethics and contemporary civic responsibility. Titled "Foundations of American Jewish Civics," the online series will be taught by Knesset Israel's Director of Adult Education and Programming, Rabbi Pam Wax.

The class utilizes a specialized text curriculum developed jointly by the Shalom Hartman Institute and A More Perfect Union: Jewish Partnership for Democracy. Rabbi Wax will guide students through select classic Jewish concepts to frame a modern approach to democratic engagement and social harmony. Key topics slated for analysis include *mipnei darkei shalom* (acting for the sake of peace), *machloket l'shem shamayim* (principled argument for the sake of heaven), and *dina d'malchuta dina* (the binding nature of secular law). Every 90-minute session will transition from collective text study into small virtual breakout groups for highly interactive, guided peer discussions.

The course meets on Zoom on six Monday evenings from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on December 14, 2026 and January 4, January 25, February 1, February 22, and March 1, 2027. Tuition for the full series is $50 for non-members of Knesset Israel and Temple Anshe Amunim; the program is free for members of both congregations. Secure links will be distributed via the registration confirmation email.

Chanukah Celebration at KI

PITTSFIELD – On Saturday, December 5, Knesset Israel will host a vibrant community Chanukah celebration blending traditional liturgical melodies with historic social customs. The programming begins with Shabbat morning services on the first day of Chanukah, immediately followed by a community kiddush luncheon.

A central highlight of the afternoon will be a guest musical performance by the choir of Congregation Beth Israel in North Adams, under the direction of Adam Green. The ensemble will present a diverse selection of a cappella arrangements celebrating the Festival of Lights. The repertoire spans centuries of Jewish tradition, featuring regional musical variations of the classic "*Maoz Tzur*" hymn from both Ashkenazi and Sephardi lineages, alongside a series of spirited contemporary Jewish choral arrangements.

Following the concert, the celebration shifts to an interactive social hour with Shabbat-friendly games, and attendees are highly encouraged to bring along their personal favorite board games or card decks to share with neighbors.

The gaming circle nods to an ancient tradition – historical records indicate that Jewish communities throughout Europe regularly gathered to play cards and dice during the nights of Chanukah starting as early as the 15th century.

The celebration will take place in person at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.

Cafe Kehilah Brings Jewish Wisdom to Today's Challenges, One Wednesday at a Time

Congregation Ahavath Sholom invites both synagogue members and local neighbors to participate in "Cafe Kehilah," a casual, weekly virtual gathering dedicated to building community and exploring modern applications of ancient Jewish teachings. Facilitated by Rabbi Jennifer Rudin, the discussion group meets online every Wednesday morning from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. via Zoom.

At its core, the program emphasizes *kehillah* – the Hebrew word for community – by providing an informal and accessible space for participants to bring their questions, personal insights, and curiosity to the table. Attendees are invited to pour a cup of coffee and log on to explore how historical texts can offer guidance through modern societal and personal dilemmas.

"Two thousand years ago, the sage Ben Bag Bag said of the Torah, 'Turn it and turn it, for everything is in it,'" noted Rabbi Rudin. "So we turn it. We turn it toward the worries we carry, toward the news we wake up to, toward the question of how to be a good neighbor right now. And again and again, these ancient words have something to say to us. Come and turn it with us."

The weekly series is open to all Berkshire community members, regardless of congregational affiliation, and there is no cost to attend. For more information, or to secure the weekly Zoom registration link, inquiries can be directed to Rabbi Rudin via email at rabbirudinahavathsholom@gmail.com.

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One Story

Each year, a meaningful portion of Federation's annual campaign dollars are donated to our overseas partners doing vital work in Israel and around the world. Here is one story about how World ORT has invested in the education of Jewish students in Venezuela during an unsettled time for that South American nation.

World ORT Welcomes First New School to Its Global Network in Four Years

CARACAS – In September, World ORT affiliated a new school to its global network for the first time in four years, welcoming Colegio UE Moral y Luces "Herzl-Bialik" in Caracas, Venezuela. The milestone arrives as Venezuela's Jewish community works to rebuild after the earthquakes that struck the country in June.



Founded in 1946, the school serves a Jewish community of some 4,000 people and enrolls 332 students from preschool through high school. The affiliation will strengthen its academic offering and raise its profile within the local community.

The relationship predates the formal affiliation as students from the school have previously taken part in World ORT's Ecology Summer School. World ORT had also been active in Venezuela previously, running education and vocational programs across the country, training students and craftsmen in trades including plumbing, electricity, and oil-industry crafts.

Dov Ben-Shimon, World ORT Chief Executive Officer, said: "This affiliation has been years in the making, but its timing could not be more meaningful. Venezuela's Jewish community is still recovering from the earthquakes that struck in June, and this school no longer has to face that recovery alone. It now has the full strength of a global network behind it, exactly when it's needed most."

Deborah Mizrahi de Sananes, the school's Board President, said: "We are deeply honored to become part of the World ORT network, connecting our students and educators with a worldwide community that shares our values of excellence, innovation, Jewish identity, and social responsibility.

"This year, as we celebrate 80 years serving the Jewish community of Caracas, joining the World ORT network is a natural next step: it connects our legacy with a global vision for the future, creating new opportunities for our students, educators, and families."

The affiliation comes after years in which Venezuela's Jewish community, and the country more broadly, has navigated significant political and economic challenges. In June, two devastating earthquakes struck Venezuela; while no members of the school community were physically harmed, the disaster affected many families and caused serious damage to the school's facilities.

About World ORT



For more than 145 years, World ORT has been a source of continuity and strength for Jews and Jewish allies worldwide. Through war, displacement, and renewal, we have remained a constant, delivering ever-evolving science, technology, and entrepreneurial training to Jews wherever they live. Today, World ORT's educational network spans 30+ countries and five continents, serving 80,000+ students and 200,000+ beneficiaries annually. Learn more: ort.org

OBITUARIES

Cecily Joan Levine, 100, beloved matriarch of her family, teacher, gentle spirit

GULFPORT, FL - Cecily Joan Levine, 100, beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, and friend, passed away peacefully at her home on Wednesday, October 14.

Born September 21, 1926, in Boston, Cecily was the daughter of Sally and Max Lenhoff. She grew up in Dorchester, graduating from Jeremiah E. Burke High School in 1943 and from Boston University in 1947. A gifted student, she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

After college she joined her parents in Pittsfield, meeting the love of her life, Murray Levine, a Pittsfield native. Married July 4, 1948, they shared a wonderful partnership for 50 years until Murray's passing in 1998.

Cecily embraced every opportunity to serve others. She worked as a substitute teacher in the Pittsfield Public Schools, taught French at Pittsfield High, supervised summer programs for the Pittsfield Park System, taught English to Russian immigrants, and devoted countless hours to Girl Scout leadership. Later, she joined Murray in operating Jim's House of Shoes on North Street, where they worked alongside Cecily's sister, Helen, and her husband, Irving Shulman. The two couples shared not only a successful business but also a lifetime of friendship, family celebrations, vacations, and eventually retirement together in Gulfport.

Faith, family, and community were at the center of Cecily's life. A lifelong member of Knesset Israel, she was active in Sisterhood, a life member of Hadassah, and belonged to Jewish Women International, formerly B'nai B'rith Women.

Cecily was a regular blood donor, volunteered as a reader for the visually impaired through Recording for the Blind, and spent many years volunteering at the Gulfport Public Library. Finding joy in simple pleasures, she was an avid reader, loved keeping up with current events, and had a deep appreciation for nature and animals, especially dogs. Her beloved dog, Cammie, was a cherished companion for almost 18 wonderful years.

Family was Cecily's greatest joy and proudest accomplishment.

She was predeceased by her husband, Murray; daughter, Joyce Levine Abecassis in 2008; sister, Helen Shulman; and nieces, Margie and Nancy Shulman, whom Cecily loved as if they were her daughters.

Cecily is lovingly survived by her devoted daughter, Amy Levine, of RI and Gulfport, FL; grandsons, Ron Abecassis and his wife, Leah, of Stoughton, MA, and Adam "Avi" Abecassis of Nashville, TN; treasured great-grandchildren, Gabrielle and Sam Abecassis, whom she adored; son-in-law, Marc Abecassis; nephew, Jim Shulman; niece, Jackie Shulman; nephew Frank Bonnevie and niece Susan Bonnevie; and many grand-nieces, grandnephews, and their families.

Cecily became the beloved matriarch of her close-knit family. She had a remarkable gift for making everyone feel welcome and valued. Her warmth, generosity, gentle spirit, and genuine interest in others drew people to her wherever she went. She delighted in spending time with family, sharing stories, offering encouragement, and celebrating life's everyday moments. To those who knew her, Cecily's kindness was unforgettable, and her quiet grace left a lasting impression. She will be deeply missed, lovingly remembered, and forever carried in the hearts of those who were fortunate enough to know her.

A graveside funeral took place on Tuesday, October 20 at Knesset Israel Cemetery.

Donations may be made to the Cecily and Murray Levine Endowment Fund at Knesset Israel, Suncoast Hospice, The Berkshire Humane Society, or the charity of your choice.

Dorienne "Dori" Sorter, 92, social worker, loved music, art, and travel

SOUTH EGREMONT – Dorienne "Dori" Sorter, 92, died peacefully at home on Wednesday, August 25, after a two-year struggle with cancer.

Born October 2, 1933, in Detroit, daughter of Samuel and Minnie Lachman and the younger sister of Sidney Goldman, Malcom, and Donald Lachman, Dori grew up in Honolulu, and graduated from Punahou School.

She earned a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. in Clinical Social Work from New York University. She established a thriving private practice, served as a faculty member and supervising analyst at the Institute for the Psychoanalytic Study of Subjectivity, and published seminal articles and books in her field. Her patients, colleagues, and students around the world benefited from her thoughtful insight and guidance.

An avid tennis player, Dori continued to play until she was 90. She enjoyed classical music, especially concerts at the Marlboro Music Festival and Tanglewood, visits to art museums, and traveling with George and friends. She loved to read and took NYU literature classes every semester for many years through this past summer.

Family remained central to her life. She and George especially enjoyed gathering family and friends for annual Thanksgivings in the Berkshires, family vacations, holidays, and birthdays, and she warmly welcomed new family members.

Dori is remembered by her son, Ivan Lindgren (Patti) of Syracuse, NY; daughter, Adrienne Fisher (Zac) of Brooklyn, NY; and six grandchildren, Samantha, Kathryn, Michael, Daniel, Julia, and Eli. She was preceded in death by her husband of more than 52 years, George H. Sorter; her son, David Sorter (Amy); and her parents and brothers. She also leaves many dear friends and colleagues.

A graveside funeral was held on Sunday, August 30, at Hillside Cemetery in Egremont. Donations may be made to the Institute for the Psychoanalytic Study of Subjectivity for the Dorienne Sorter Scholarship Fund.

Michael Symons, 90, fought for a fair and just society, community of friends

GREAT BARRINGTON – Michael Symons, 90, a gentle man who was a fierce fighter for social justice his entire life, died on Tuesday, October 27, at his home.

Born in Brooklyn, NY on April 10, 1936, he graduated from Brooklyn College, where he met his future wife Arlene. Michael would laugh about his courtship of Arlene and their "cheap dates," which often included riding the Staten Island Ferry across New York Harbor for five cents each way.

Michael began a 38-year career in the New York City public schools, first teaching middle school English and later, working as a guidance counselor and faculty supervisor in Special Education. Michael and Arlene worked at a series of progressive, interracial summer camps; first at the Educational Alliance camp, followed by 20 years at Camp Trywoodie.

In 2000, Michael and Arlene moved to the Berkshires, first to Otis and then to Great Barrington, where they found a rich community of new friends. Michael loved sitting on the lawn at Tanglewood, played poker most weeks, and served as a hospice volunteer for 20 years. At age 90, he was still protesting for a fair and just society.

Michael and Arlene were married 65 years before she died in 2023. Michael was lucky enough to find love a second time with Elizabeth Young, his partner until the end.

Those who met Michael were instantly charmed by him. He was guileless; always curious about who you were and where you came from. If you were a server, a tradesperson, a bank teller, a postal worker, or a librarian, Michael wanted to know your story. He left a lasting impression on anyone who met him.

A funeral service took place on Monday, November 2, at Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, Great Barrington. Donations can be made to HospiceCare In The Berkshires.

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BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES FROM ISRAEL

"Don't judge a fellow Jew until you reach his place"

By Howie Stier / Special to the BJV

JERUSALEM (10/7/2026) – At first known by the military term *Cherevot Barzel*, the Hebrew designation for 10/7/2023 evolved – first into the poetic "*Ha'Shabbat Shachor*" (Black Saturday) and now, on the third anniversary of the Hamas invasion and massacre, the accepted appellation is *Ha'Shevah B'October*.

Today in Jerusalem, shops are closing early. the usual Israel Pop tunes are not broadcast from bars in the Shuk. Solemnity is palpable. But in a corner of Nachlaot, a 19th century neighborhood that's a warren of low-slung stone and cast iron, there's an anomaly. An unassuming man in *frum* attire stands aside a digital era boom box, blasting Chassidic *niggunim*. Passersby are baffled, unaware he is the vanguard of a *Haknassat Torah* – a celebration of a newly-finished *Sefer Torah* scroll. This is how Beis Hashem, a sprawling shul/yeshivah and social center, is acknowledging the day.

The Torah and entourage arrive. A band strikes up, piano and violin and horns, and a pair of *chazzanim* go through both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi repertoire. The Rabbi orders the *aron kodesh* emptied and six scrolls join the frenzied dancing.

Dancing are Chassidim of all stripes clad in black hats with brims both up and down, Na Na Nachman tasseled kippahs, white shirted yeshivah *bocherim*, and (curiously) a crew of Israeli stoners, all streetwear and dreadlocks. A couple of them are embraced by the Rav – he grabs a mic and sings with them the Karlin Chassid *niggun* to "*Lavo El Hamelech*" with them in the spotlight. I ask a Chassid next to me, "Why these guys? They couldn't bother with yarmulkes and are given the *schus* (honor) of carrying the Torah?" He claps back in a heartbeat: "Don't judge a fellow Jew until you reach his place, says the Alter Rebbe," Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad, whose *Tanya* explains that if you don't know someone's personal struggle, you can't judge. These two, it turns out, are survivors of the Nova Festival.



Dedicating a new Torah scroll at Beis Hashem

I am instantly humbled. Beis Hashem reaches out to just this type of Jew, many from observant homes who went off *ha'derech* (the path) and who struggle with dependency and now the trauma of war.

Among all murderous rampages targeting Israeli civilians in villages adjacent to Gaza, the Nova outdoor trance music gathering incurred the largest number of casualties, and Nachlaot is home to many devotees of the genre. And so the neighborhood was hard hit by *Ha'Shevah B'October*. Eitan Mor, now 27, volunteered to be a security guard at the festival and was taken hostage by Palestinians. He survived 738 days in captivity, and was released on October 13, 2025, on Hoshana Rabbah. His *chaverim*, however, didn't return. And this *Sefer Torah* was written in their memory.

The 'Succah of Shalom,' an expansive permanent structure at Beis Hashem where during the day Rabbi Nachman of Breslov's Chassidic wisdom is pored over, is tonight transformed into a white linen set dining hall. A platoon of waiters file through the tablescape sequentially serving platters of fish, meat and *kubeh* – Jerusalem's ubiquitous Iraqi Jewish dumplings. I watch the servers hoisting trays overhead move on past a *mechitzah* into the *nashim* (women's) section. And amid women in the height of multi-layered Bnei Brak fashion, many standing aside baby carriages and flaunting colorful *tichlech* (head coverings), there are the immodestly dressed young Israeli hipsters in jeans, neon-dyed hair, and tattoos. They too are the Nova survivors, witnesses to the killing, hunting, kidnapping of Jews, the sounds and sights of which will live with them the rest of their days. But today, taking in the dancing from windows in the *mechitzah*, they are *b'simcha*.

There are no long speeches, no podium for a shul president to expound from. Just a short acknowledgment and the music pumps again, the dancing continuing until the time for *Tikkun Chatzot* ('the Midnight Rite,' a nightly kabbalistic prayer of mourning for the *Beit HaMikdash*). A Beis Hashem habitué shapes up late.



Poster for a rave in Jerusalem

Pesach Fogelman eschews food, dancing. He takes in the scene and looks for a *minyan* to *daven Ma'ariv*. "I'm numb today," the retired accountant tells me. Of the trance music aficionados, he says, shaking his head in compassion for what they endured: "I see the *bocherim*, sitting on the steps near the shul at the end of Giv'on Street near their shul before *Shekiyah* (sunset), lighting up a joint. Sometimes I linger."

He adds: "I was onetime, long ago, a liberal," but that years of living in Israel moderated his outlook. "I was shouting at the radio when Vivian Silver was interviewed," he says of the pro-Palestinian activist and Kibbutz Be'eri resident, who spoke to a reporter by telephone from her home's safe room while the October 7 attack was in progress. Although at first it was assumed that she had been taken as a hostage, weeks later her torched remains were identified only by DNA. "When they slaughtered her, what little ember of liberalism that remained harbored in this poor heart of mine, died out."

There's a tzadik at my shul in the Berkshires, big donor, and given an opportunity to speak to the *kohel* never fails to mention "I left (a previous shul) because it was too cliquey." In the embrace of this glorious mosaic of *Yidden*, I can appreciate how profound it is that there are no cliques here, not on this day of national loss anyhow.

The festivities continue well into the night. It's past the time *Tikkun Chatzot* when I hit my bed and still sounds of *niggunim* echo through the stone walled streets.

Thank you volunteers Ellen Rosenblatt and the BJV delivery team, Dave Halley, Colin Ovitsky, Megan Dopson and Roman Rozenblyum.

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CULTURE & ARTS

The Cabaret Comes to You in the Berkshires

Singer, actress, and puppeteer Yael Rasooly evokes the Paris and Berlin of a century ago

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor



"The power of cabaret," says Yael Rasooly, "is what, with minimalistic means, you can get away with saying. It is made for times when people are on the move, or have to do with very little, and is always that magnificent dance of entertainment shining a light on things we don't want to look at, or giving people courage in a certain way, making them feel seen and that their emotions are valid."

Rasooly, who has staged her work around the world, will be bringing her music, storytelling, and puppetry to the Mahaiwe Theater in Great Barrington on December 13, when Close Encounters With Music (CEWM) presents "Come to the Cabaret! Paris and Weimar Berlin." The Jerusalem native will be joined onstage by longtime collaborator, Israeli pianist Daniel Rein, and trumpeter Rafael Castillo-Halvorssen.

CEWM is known for its eclectic and illuminating programs – some take deep dives into an aspect of a musical artist's work, while others juxtapose works of several composers and sometimes different art forms to explore connections and influences. High art compositions performed at symphony halls and recital stages might seem a world away from the often outrageous music hall numbers of the 1920s and early 1930s that were conceived for louche dives like the Kit Kat Club immortalized in Kander and Ebb's *Cabaret*. But, as CEWM's artistic director Yehuda Hanani points out, the European high culture and subcultures of the interwar years emerged from the same ferment of ideas and anxieties that preoccupied all manner of creative types following World War I.

In the 15-year period from the end of the war until the rise of the Nazis to power in 1933, Hanani explains, Berlin was "a goulash of cultures" in which writers, visual artists, composers, architects, filmmakers, and philosophers were trying to process the war's devastation and find a way forward. The city brought together refugees from the Bolsheviks, communists trying to replicate the Russian revolution in the West, monarchists dreaming of restoring Germany to greatness, modernists trying to remake modes of expression and representation, and bohemian outsiders of every stripe looking for excitement. The economic situation was dire and the atmosphere during this 'Age of Anxiety' felt dangerous and often hopeless. Boundaries between the elite and the demimonde were fluid. "Strangers converged in Berlin for this brief period, which was aesthetically unique," says Hanani. "High culture was trying to make sense of things. Cabaret is the underbelly of that same culture of angst, cynicism, sarcasm, and doom. All of it was part of the same picture, all in dialogue with one another."

The songs from Germany tended toward the provocative and satirical, while the songs from France largely emerged from the poetic chanson tradition. Yael Rasooly will be performing in both styles, using likenesses of both Edith Piaf and Marlene Dietrich that she helped design and that were crafted by Israeli-born puppeteer Revital Arieli. Rasooly has been working with the Piaf character for the last four years, first in her cabaret act and then in the full-length show *Edith and Me* that emerged from her own dark places. "It's my personal story of how Edith Piaf saved my life, a story of overcoming violence and darkness and silencing and finding your voice again and healing and reclaiming your life and your love," she says. Her Marlene puppet is a newer character for Rasooly, who is developing a show around her. Rasooly will ventriloquize both divas.

The songs from both singers' repertoires were chosen for their "exquisite lines for an emotional journey. Edith Piaf, especially, could sculpt a narrative and a story in her songs, the main characters of which were mostly about people on the outskirts of society that she's giving a voice to. And there is always a power and a force in them. And then, there's the Marlene Dietrich songs, which are much more frosty and detached and gigantesque. I flourish where these things meet."

Modern cabaret, she adds, is "still about people taking risks and showing something very surprising and individual and independent. It's normally short numbers and short formats, and I am a great believer in things being concise and saying things in the short time that you have. [Cabaret] runs deep and is about subversive culture and resistance and resilience. In these dark days that we're in, these meeting points are what they always used to be. They still come with all the light and all the shine and all the heartbreak and all the daring."

Originally trained as a classical singer and pianist, Rasooly felt stifled in that world and gravitated to performance art. To interest investors in the full-scale productions she had in mind, she started to create miniatures to convey as sense of what she wanted to appear onstage or in a film. At a certain point, Rasooly began to consider that maybe these objects she was creating in her living room were actually going to *be* the show she was going to be able to stage – and that she was going to be the one to act out all the characters she could not afford other actors to portray. That developed into a one-woman show *Paper Cut*, with which she toured in 35 countries for more than 17 years and that you can watch parts of on YouTube (along with other purely cabaret performances filmed around the world).

"But the music and the sound universe is always the base for me," says Rasooly. "Music and the voice is the connecting element." She will be backed by versatile accompanist Daniel Rein, who was trained at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and the Royal Academy of Music in London, and who work in both the classical and jazz idioms and who served two years as music director for the European tour of *Cats* and as an associate conductor on productions of *Les Misérables* and the Radio City Christmas Spectacular. Together, they've performed in clubs and at sold-out performances at the Neue Galerie in New York City since 2019.

"My big inspiration when I started was early jazz and swing," says Rasooly. "The Neue Galerie asked me to make a program of Weimar era songs, mostly Brecht and Weil, and sometimes I have evenings of only this repertoire, or only the chansons, or only the English-language song. But me being who I am, why not to have it all, to be honest? Because everything is so connected in this era, reflecting different cultures and countries. And then, you know, the best actor in the world is a great puppet. And I do have some great puppets in my hands – they have their own personality by this time. In the Berkshires, we are going to be moving between all the worlds I love."

Close Encounters With Music presents "Come to the Cabaret! Paris and Weimar Berlin," on Sunday, December 13 at 4 p.m. at the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center, 14 Castle Street in Great Barrington. For tickets, visit cewm.org.



As my parents planted for me before I was born, so do I plant for those who come after me.
– Talmud

Thank you to these individuals who through their gift to the Legacy Circle will ensure that the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires thrives long into the future. May your name be a Blessing, and may the example you set inspire others to create their own Jewish Legacy.

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Kosher Meals to Go—Meals on Wheels

ALL ARE WELCOME: Kosher lunch will be prepared on Mondays, Tuesdays (starting October 20), and Thursdays. Meals to go will be ready by noon for pickup at the Knesset Israel kitchen door, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield. All meals-on-wheels will be delivered by Federation volunteers in the early afternoon. Suggested donation of $3 for adults over age 60; $7 for all others.

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED BY 9 A.M. THE DAY BEFORE THE LUNCH: Call Federation's kitchen at (413) 442-2200 the day before to reserve a meal for pick-up or to arrange delivery.

What's for Lunch?

(GF) Gluten-Free entree • (DF) Dairy-Free entree

NOVEMBER

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23
Noon, Lunch...Grilled cheese sandwich, tomato soup, French fries, California blend vegetables, cranberry orange muffin, and butterscotch pudding.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24
Noon, In Person Thanksgiving Lunch...Roasted turkey (GF)(DF), celery, cranberry, and apple salad, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce, green beans, sweet potato souffle, pumpkin bread and challah, and apple crisp.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26
Closed for Thanksgiving

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30
Noon, Lunch...Vegetable frittata (GF)(DF), cream of mushroom soup, hash browns, roasted Brussels sprouts, bagel, and cinnamon coffee cake.

DECEMBER

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1
Noon, Lunch...Salsa chicken (GF)(DF), salad, rice with beans, fiesta corn, multi-grain bread, and tropical fruit cocktail.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3
Noon, Lunch...Cranberry barbecue turkey meatballs (GF)(DF), salad, sweet potato, meadow blend vegetables, whole wheat bread, and applesauce.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7
Noon, Lunch...Meatloaf (GF)(DF), salad, mashed potatoes, four blend mixed vegetables, hearty white bread, and fruit cocktail.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8
Noon, Lunch...Tuna and shells, cream of mushroom soup, baby carrots, green beans, rye bread, and snickerdoodle cookie.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10
Noon, In Person Chanukah Lunch...Holiday brisket (GF)(DF), chicken noodle soup, potato latkes, roasted root vegetables, challah, and gingerbread bundt cake with poached pear.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14
Noon, Lunch...Rigatoni Bolognese (DF), minestrone soup, broccoli, spinach, garlic bread, and brownie.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15
Noon, Lunch...Spinach pie, Greek salad, lemon potatoes, yellow squash, multi-grain bread, and chocolate chip cookie.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17
Noon, Lunch...Turkey casserole (DF), butternut squash soup, California blend vegetables, Brussels sprouts, white bread, and fruit compote.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21
Noon, Lunch...Mushroom and potato strudel (DF), split pea soup, zucchini, roasted sweet potato, dinner roll, and pineapple upside down cake.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22
Noon, Lunch...Chicken Shwarma (GF)(DF), Israeli salad, eggplant, couscous, pita bread, and tahini cookie.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24
Noon, Lunch...Vegetarian chili (GF)(DF), honey lime coleslaw, rice, fiesta corn, green chili corn muffin, and tres leche cake.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28
Noon, Lunch...Sloppy Joe pasta (DF), salad, Italian green beans, garlic spinach, Italian bread, and peaches.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 29
Noon, Lunch...Potato pierogies, Borscht, sautéed cabbage, cauliflower, rye bread, and rice pudding.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31
Noon, Lunch...Black eyed pea and sweet potato stew (GF)(DF), purple cabbage and pineapple salad, braised collard greens, quinoa, corn bread, and New Year 2027 chocolate cake.

Recovering from an illness or injury? Cooking becoming difficult?



KOSHER MEALS ON WHEELS:
Meals are available for delivery to qualified individuals to help extend their home independence and health. There is no income requirement, just a simple assessment through Elder Services will get your meal deliveries started, if you qualify.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Contact Jill Goldstein at (413) 442-4360, Ext 17, j.goldstein@jfswm.org.

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?
Meals-on-wheels drivers are always appreciated. Contact Heidi Katz, (413) 442-4360, ext. 10, federation@jewishberkshires.org to inquire.

Meals and programs are made possible by the generous support of our community. The kosher lunch and meals on wheels program is in collaboration with Elder Services of Berkshire county.

Knesset Israel – 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield



ONGOING MINYANS

Saturday, ... 9:30 a.m.
Sunday, ... 8:45 a.m.
Friday, ... 5:45 p.m.

CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Friday, November 27 ..... 4:04 p.m.
Friday, December 4 ..... 4:02 p.m.
Friday, December 11..... 4:02 p.m.
Friday, December 18 ..... 4:03 p.m.
Friday, December 25 ..... 4:07 p.m.

MAZEL TOV!

Ellen and Stu Masters on their 60th wedding anniversary.

Cantor (Buzzy) Bernard and Ellen Walters on their 60th wedding anniversary.

Aileen Bliss on the marriage of her granddaughter **Mackenzie** to **Markel Wade**.

NIGHTWOOD 2026,

continued from page 1

Menorah Lighting and Holiday Glow Fun

After the NightWood tour, the community will gather at 6:15 p.m. at the Mansion Forecourt to kindle the Chanukah menorah lights. The celebration will feature live music, holiday songs, treats, and outdoor heaters to keep everyone warm.

Purchase of timed entry tickets is required, and spaces are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Federation group tickets are $15 for adults (service charge possible), and admission is free for children ages 0 to 18. Advance registration is required on the calendar of events page at jewishberkshires.org to reserve your timed entry slot.

If You Go

This event is exclusively outdoors, so attendees are advised to dress warmly. Trails can be uneven and require secure footing. The self-guided route spans three-quarters of a mile through the woods and gardens, incorporating both paved and unpaved pathways.

Federation programs are made possible through the generous support of our community.

Create a Jewish Legacy Campaign

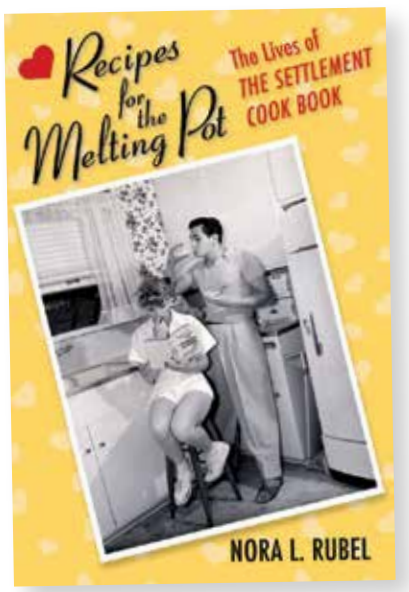
Please remember the Jewish Community in your will.

BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

TRAVELING WITH JEWISH TASTE

Culinary Pluralism in the American Melting Pot

By Carol Goodman Kaufman



Save the Date! *Nora Rubel will present an online program on her book for Federation on Thursday, March 4, 2027. More info in a future BJV.*

Despite its title, Nora L. Rubel's new book, *Recipes for the Melting Pot: The Lives of the Settlement Cook Book* (Columbia University Press) is not a cookbook. While several recipes do appear in its pages, with 27 pages of references, this book is more a heavily researched academic treatise than simply a fond look at an iconic piece of Americana. It features chapters with such headings as "Dietary Reform as Moral Identity" and "For the Defense of Our Own Nationality."

An avid collector of cookbooks, I have found that those produced by schools, sisterhoods, and charities tend to contain recipes with easily obtainable ingredients. In fact, many of my family's favorite dishes are from recipes in the Our Best cookbooks produced by the Jewish women's organizations in Pittsfield. That is decidedly not the case for many written by famous chefs that call for exotic ingredients and dozens of steps to completion.

But it is the history of *The Settlement Cook Book* that captured my heart. The quaintly titled *The Way to a Man's Heart* of 1901 was originally a simple pamphlet used as a fundraiser for the settlement house in Milwaukee. Rubel writes that it was aimed at two distinct audiences: The well-off members of the volunteer corps and Milwaukee community who could afford to buy the book, and the immigrants themselves.

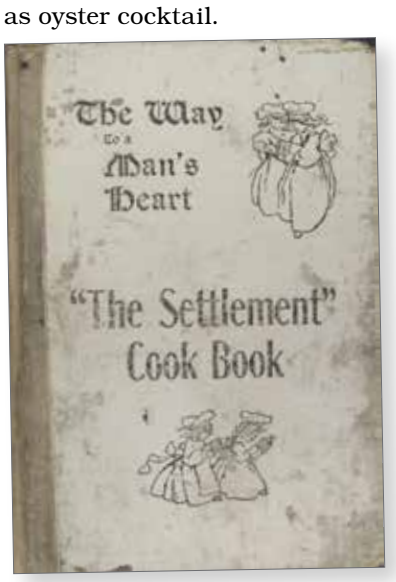
The dynamo behind the project was Elizabeth "Lizzie" Black Kander. Kander taught cooking to new immigrants with the aim of acculturation into America, but because cookbooks available at the time featured "American" food, they weren't relevant to large waves of Italian and Jewish immigrants who came to our shores. So, she adapted dishes her students would recognize to include available ingredients.



Lizzie Black Kander

With the goal of "culinary pluralism," Kander included dishes of many ethnic groups, with recipes ranging from Ashkenazi gefilte fish to Anglo-Indian mulligatawny to Irish O'Brien potatoes.

Because the classes were held in a synagogue kitchen, every recipe in early cookbooks was kosher. Later editions included treif, such as oyster cocktail.



The Settlement Cook Book wasn't just about the recipes. It also include sections on the rules for setting a table, dining etiquette, and hygiene.

Immediately upon ratification of the 21st amendment, the 1933 cookbook came with the subtitle, 'The Repeal Edition.' For the first time, the committee included recipes for cocktails (e.g. mint juleps, gin fizzes), reinforcing the need to appeal to a moneyed audience, not just poor immigrants.

Aside from the few actual recipes, *Recipes for the Melting Pot* is sprinkled with advertisements, articles, and photographs. My favorite illustration is the newspaper ad from the Goldblatt Brothers department store. The Chicago-based chain offered a sale on several classic texts, including *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, *The Bible (King James version)* – and *The Settlement Cook Book*.

The cookbook was so popular that, according to a study done at the University of Rochester, more than two million copies have been sold since its first printing in 1901.

The highlight for me in reading *Recipes for the Melting Pot* was finding a piece of my own family history. My parents were young and poor when they married in 1938. Their circumstances were such that the marriage ceremony took place in the house and my father baked the wedding cake. I had always wondered why it was a fruit cake he made, not the popular tiered construction with white frosting and intricate design. And then, in the pages of *Recipes for a Melting Pot*, I found a recipe for "Fruit or Wedding Cake" from the 1915 edition. My Bubbie and Zayde Goodman married in 1915. I'll wager that the cookbook was a wedding gift to them, and I'll also bet that's where Dad found the recipe for it.

While I would love to include the recipe for this cake, with its over-ten pounds of ingredients, I don't have a cake pan large enough to prepare it. So, instead:

Liberty Candy

From the 1915 edition

INGREDIENTS:

2 cups seeded raisins

¼ cup honey

1 cup nut meats (Brazil nuts good)

DIRECTIONS:

Grind nut meats and raisins in food chopper.

Mix with honey.

Pack under a weight for twenty-four hours.

Cut into small squares.

Roll well in granulated sugar.

Will keep well packed in layers between paraffin papers.



Carol Goodman Kaufman*, has just published her second mystery book,* Crak, Bam, Dead: Mah Jong Mayhem *(Next Chapter Press). The collection of cozy mystery short stories features food writer/aspiring investigative reporter Kiki Coben and her Mah Jong group as they follow clues from a "Black Widow" murder at sea to a suspicious death at a senior home charity event. Armed with a curious mind and her formidable group of friends, Kiki is ready to prove that the only thing you need to catch a killer is persistence – and maybe just a little bit of luck.*

Crak, Bam, Dead *is is available in stores and online.*



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CULTURE & ARTS

One Season, Many Lights: A Holiday Celebration at The Norman Rockwell Museum



Barbara McClintock, Dancing, *1998. Illustration for* When Mindy Saved Hanukkah *by Eric Kimmel (New York: Scholastic Press, 1998) Pen, ink, watercolor and gouache.* ©Barbara McClintock

STOCKBRIDGE – The Norman Rockwell Museum rings in the winter holidays with *One Season, Many Lights: A Holiday Celebration*, brings together the warm and familiar holiday imagery of Norman Rockwell with the work of an inspiring group of visual storytellers whose distinctive perspectives illuminate the richness and diversity of seasonal traditions.

From Thanksgiving and Christmas to Chanukah, Kwanzaa, and New Year's, the original illustrations in this exhibition were created for magazines, books, greeting cards, and other publications. Together, they explore the rituals, stories, and shared moments that make the holidays meaningful, from gatherings with family and friends to acts of generosity, reflection, celebration, and renewal.

Rockwell's beloved images of winter, Christmas, and American life are presented alongside the unique visions of Katie Atkinson, Leo and Diane Dillon, Thea Kliros, E. B. Lewis, Jacqui Morgan, Jerry Pinkney, Wendy Popp, Anna Mary Robertson (Grandma Moses), Helen Farr Sloan, and William Steig. Chanukah illustrations include works by Mordicai Gerstein (see page 1), Karla Gudeon (whose work PJ Library families might recognize from *Haiku Hanukah*), and Barbara McClintock, whose illustration *Dancing* is reproduced here.

Bringing together artists from different generations, backgrounds, and artistic traditions, *One Season, Many Lights* invites visitors to discover both the particularity of individual celebrations and the experiences they share: coming together, remembering what matters, giving thanks, and looking forward with hope to the year ahead.

One Season, Many Lights: A Holiday Celebration will be on view through February 22, 2027. It appears alongside three new shows: an expanded *Norman Rockwell: The Human Touch*, the much-anticipated comic art exhibition *Exploring Calvin and Hobbes*, and its companion installation, *George Herriman, Krazy Kat, and the Path to Calvin and Hobbes*. For more information, visit nrm.org.

Hanukkah @ Hand Crafted

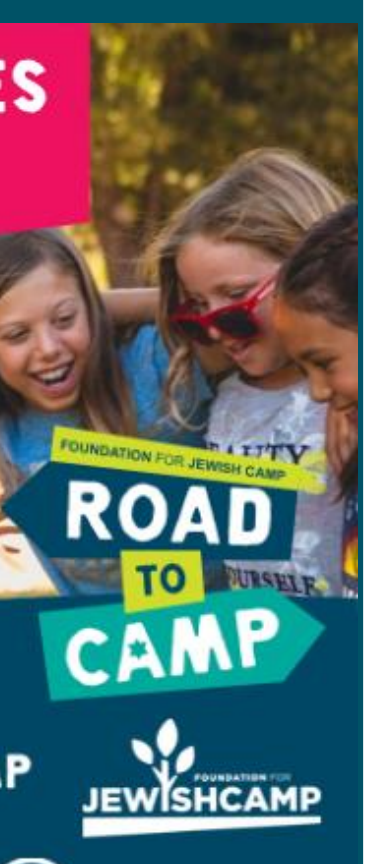
Jewish 20s, 30s, and 40s, join us for a light-filled Hanukkah dinner and celebration. We'll enjoy good food and good company as we share the light of Chanukah together

Bring your own Menorah to light. Singles, couples and families are all welcome!

Thursday, December 10
Drop-in 5:30-7:30 pm
At Hand Crafted
26 Dunham Mall, Pittsfield, MA

$10 per person
Kids 11 and under are free
RSVP by December 4
tineyurl.com/BJCHanukkah2026

An initiative of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires with support from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.



Jewish Overnight Camp. Lifelong Friendships. A Stronger Jewish Identity

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The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is committed to making Jewish overnight camp affordable and accessible for **EVERY** local child.

Every child deserves the magic of Jewish overnight camp! The friendships, adventures, independence, and unforgettable experiences that create memories and Jewish connections that last a lifetime.

- **MA Families** can apply for tuition break through the Foundation for Jewish Camp's new **Road to Camp initiative.**
- **ALL families** can receive additional financial assistance directly from the **Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.**

That's right! Two opportunities for assistance to help make an unforgettable summer possible for your child(ren).

APPLY FOR FEDERATION ASSISTANCE ONLINE TODAY!
tinyurl.com/JewishFedCamp2027
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Additional assistance may also be available through the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Visit hgf.org for details.

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