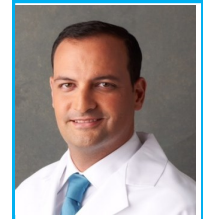




IN MY OPINION*

by David Alfonso



Dr. David Alfonso

As I complete the writing of this column we have witnessed some monumental events in the recent weeks surrounding Israel. First, the current administration has acknowledged what has been a de facto reality for some time by proclaiming Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and the plan to move the U.S. Embassy to its proper location in Jerusalem. This had been the policy of the U.S. since 1995 when the US Embassy act was passed. Various administrations from both parties prior to the current Trump administration have agreed with the act in principal but issued waivers delaying the move indefinitely. The theory was that any move would inflame tensions with the Palestinians and hamper the peace process. Unfortunately, here we are 22 years later no closer to a tangible peace deal.

One can debate the timing and intentions of the move but one of the interesting aspects of the move is that there is near unanimous support for the new policy from both sides of the political aisle in Israel. Very few issues, especially involving peace talks or deals, garner that degree of support from both the left and the right. Time will tell whether this move brings Israel and its neighbors any closer to peace, however, in very clear terms it symbolizes the willingness of the U.S. to exert its sovereignty over where it locates its embassy. This is a welcome change from the previous actions which have yet to yield any movement forward in forging a lasting peace.

Shortly after the announcement the United Nations held a vote to condemn the United States for its embassy announcement. Kudos to our UN Ambassador Nikki Haley for delivering an eloquent and powerful rebuke to the one sided resolution. Her defense of American and Israeli values and independence was a powerful message to the world that the US will truly stand up for its ally and combat the rampant anti-Israel bias at the UN. I hope that these moves will help to reinforce the support for Israel both here and among other like-minded allies throughout the world.

The official statement of Jewish Federation North America (JFNA) issued regarding the White House announcement on Jerusalem is reproduced below:

“Today, the U.S. administration announced a plan to move the Embassy of the United States in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, honoring a bipartisan commitment made over 20 years ago in the Jerusalem Embassy Act. The U.S. administration also proclaimed its recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The Jewish Federations of North America welcomes this decision, as it upholds our long-standing policy. We also welcome the affirmation of a two-state future negotiated between the parties in which Israelis and Palestinians live side by side with secure and recognized borders.”

***Disclaimer:** The views and opinions expressed herein above are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of JFGR and/or its Board.

Our Mission

Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids unites the local Jewish community to sustain and strengthen Jews locally, in Israel, and around the world.

This mission is accomplished by providing services to the community and through fundraising and allocation efforts.

Like Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids on Facebook!

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Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids

2727 Michigan NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
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616.942.5780 fax
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www.jfgr.org

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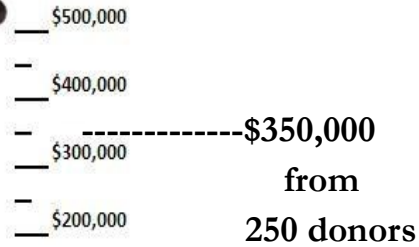
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Campaign 2017



Your donation to JFGR is tax deductible. Payments can be made by cash, check, credit card or stock. Pay in full or set up installments. You can even pay online at www.jewishgrandrapids.org

Any new gift or increase is matched dollar for dollar by a challenge grant
*Total does not include matching grants.

**Matching Grants
Campaign 2017**

The **Louis and Helen Padnos Foundation** has made a matching grant commitment for new gifts and increases in contributions. The **Hy and Greta Berkowitz Foundation** has also made a matching grant commitment for new gifts and increases in contributions from donors age 49 and under.

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ANNUAL CAMPAIGN



Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids
2727 Michigan NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
(616) 942-5553 info@jfgr.org
www.jfgr.org

Please cut out this pledge card, fill it in and send it to the Federation office.

I HEREBY PLEDGE TO THE FEDERATION ANNUAL CAMPAIGN THE SUM OF: \$ _____

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Live Generously.

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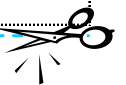
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CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT IT IS ALREADY TIME TO THINK ABOUT SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS!

Do you know a child who plans to attend a Jewish summer camp? They may qualify for a camp scholarship through the David and Susan Samrick Youth Scholarship Fund. Applications are available online at www.jewishgrandrapids.org or upon request, and are due by March 15, 2018.

Please contact the Jewish Federation at 616-942-5553.

-Ann Berman

Director of Social Service Resources

Note: All applications will be reviewed by a Scholarship Committee and held in the strictest confidence.





Hey Moms/Dads/Grandparents Join us at the Jewish Federation Playgroup

The Jewish Federation Playgroup is a great place to connect with new friends!

Playgroup : Wednesdays (no classes 1/3 & 1/10)
Time: 11:00am
Location: Temple Emanuel, Gan Katan room.

Please join us for some family story time, crafts and open play. This program is for parents and grandparents with children 6 and under. Please RSVP to info@jfgr.org or call 616-942-5553.

Ravitz Foundation supported event

LUNCH BUNCH!

December Lunch Bunch met at Charley's Crab for a Chanukah luncheon and story presented by Toby Dolinka.



January Lunch gathering:

When: Thursday, January 25

Where: Houlihan's - 1968 Breton Rd SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Time: 11:30am

Cost: \$10

RSVP a MUST! by calling the office at 616-942-5553 or ann@jfgr.org. In the event of inclement weather a decision will be made by 10am and those on the rsvp list will be given a call.

December Chanukah Celebrations in Grand Rapids

YAD "rocked" the month with a rock climbing gathering at Higher Ground Gym.

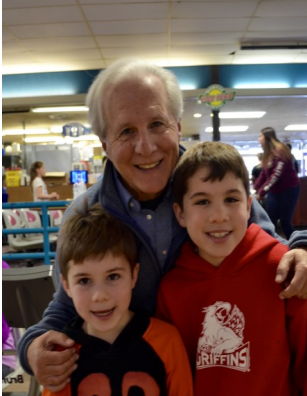
Young adults gathered for latkes, sufganiyot and fun. Josh Cohen and Nick Reider



were on hand to make sure everyone enjoyed themselves! Watch the Shofar for more Young Adult events upcoming events in 2018, including the Israeli Wine Tasting. (see page 6)

It wouldn't be Chanukah in West Michigan with out the annual community Chanukah Bowling Party!! Another successful afternoon of fun, food and friendship! Thank you Avi Forstein for keeping the party rolling with your trivia games and emcee humor. Thank You Chabad House and Weingarten family for the wonderful food!

It truly was a community event!



Chanukah Bowling Party



ORLY WAHBA

Parents & Grandparents a MUST SEE!

Educator, entrepreneur, author and founder of **Life Vest Inside**, a non-profit whose mission is to empower, educate and unite the world with KINDNESS.

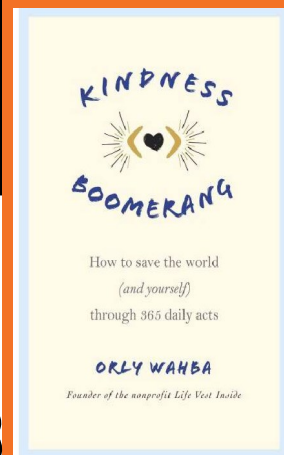
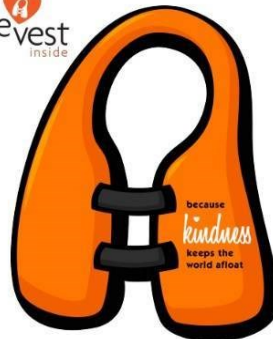


Why Kindness?

Happiness

Kindness = **Health**

Success



Self-Value

A Call to Kindness: Don't just do it...LIVE IT!

Empowering

Join us for an UPLIFTING & INSPIRING discussion by educator, author and CEO of Life Vest Inside (LVI), ORLY WAHBA.

Parents with kids of all ages will be impacted by Orly's program on how being kind, respectful, and compassionate can help us and our children lead happier, healthier and more successful lives.

Orly will also be talking with United Jewish School students and faculty during an all school assembly on January 21.

Orly and her amazing work have been featured on: [TED](#), [The TODAY show](#), [NBC](#), [CBS](#), [ADWEEK](#), [International Business Times](#) and more.

Orly's newly released book *Kindness Boomerang: How to Save the World (and Yourself) Through 365 Daily Acts** has been receiving some exciting press.

The magic that Orly spreads is undeniable!

*Orly will be available to sign copies of her new book which will be available for purchase at the event.

Supported by Rosenzweig-Coopersmith Foundation.



THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE. THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.



lifestestinside.com/film

Date: Sunday, January 21, 2018

Time: 10:00am
Cost: \$15

Location: Temple Emanuel - 1715 East Fulton St.

To RSVP or for more information call 616-942-5553 or email info@jfgr.org



SAVE THE DATE

Jewish Comedy Night

Avi Liberman

Saturday, February 3, 2018

Time: 8:00pm Location: TBA



Avi Liberman's quirky style has made him a favorite in comedy clubs from Los Angeles to New York. Born in Israel, raised in Texas, Avi has performed on the CBS *Late Late Show* with Craig Ferguson, on Comedy Central's *Premium Blend* and *Make Me Laugh*, as well as NBC's *Friday Nights!*

Avi has been overseas to Iraq and Afghanistan to perform for our troops. Since 2003, Avi has brought world-famous comedians to Israel to help boost morale through his *Comedy for Koby* tour. This tour benefits the Koby Mandel Foundation, a nonprofit organization that runs therapeutic healing programs for those who have lost a family member to terror attacks.

Avi recently released the documentary *Comedy Road*, a funny and poignant account of more than a decade of touring Israel with America's finest stand-up comedians.

Israeli Wine Tasting

Who: Join other Young Jewish Adults (ages 21-45) for an evening of Israel Wine tasting paired with cheese and chocolate, with wine specialist Peter Eizel.

Where: Congregation Ahavas Israel
2727 Michigan NE

When: Saturday, January 27

Time: 7:00pm

Cost: \$10/person; \$18/couple.

Reservations are required by January 20. contact Stephanie Jesin, stephaniejesin@gmail.com or 616-633-5309.



Jewish Business Network Lunch

The Jewish Business Network, JBN, meets monthly for lunch on the third Thursday (except holidays) for networking and socializing. Throughout the year, we will occasionally invite guest speakers to present on relevant topics in our local and Jewish communities.

Thursday, January 18, 2018

Palio Grand Rapids

545 Michigan Street NE
12:00pm

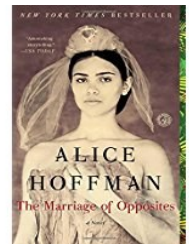
We will have a private meeting room there to accommodate the speakers we have scheduled. There is ample free parking adjacent. If you use the parking ramp bring your ticket for validation at the restaurant.

Hadassah Book Club

Thank You to Diane Broomberg for hosting our November Book Club gathering!
We will be taking a winter break and returning on April 11th, 2018.
See you all in the Spring!!

Meeting date..... April 11th, 2018
Where..... Karen Haight's home
130 Maryland N.E.
RSVP toKaren (616)304-3117
Book to read.....*The Marriage of Opposites*
By Alice Hoffman

Find your books at the Library or Schulers at their 28th Street store.
Looking forward to see you in the Spring time.
We are always your loyal Book Ends
Sue Remes &
Flory Silverstein



A Happy End
September 6-17

TORCH SONG TRILOGY
Act III: Widows and Children First
March 1-11

Olive & the Bitter Herbs
June 14-24

Jewish Theatre Grand Rapids

You don't have to be Jewish to Love Jewish Theater

All performances are held at GRCC Spectrum Theater
Thurs. & Sat. at 8 p.m. Sundays at 3 p.m.

Tickets: **616-234-3946** or **jtgr.org**





Beit Sefer B'yahad / United Jewish School

1715 East Fulton Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Hasia Monselise School Director 616-459-5976

UJShasiamonselise@gmail.com www.unitedjewishschool.org

School closings: Please tune in to WZZM 13 and WOOD TV 8 for UJS closings. It will be listed as United Jewish School. You may also check their websites.

School Calendar

December 24-January 7 No School Winter Break

January 14 Marc Rossio

January 21 Orly Wahba – anti-bullying program

January 28 Tu'b'shevat (special program for Tu'b'shevat)

January 31

Plant Your Roots in Israel with trees for Tu B'shevat

On Tu'B'shevat we celebrate the New Year for trees. We eat wonderful fruits that grow in Israel and we pray for a fruitful year. Please join students all over the world by planting a tree in Israel through Jewish National Fund. Tzedakah monies at UJS for the month of January and February will be sent to Israel to plant trees.

www.jnf.org for more info.

Needed by January 28

Tu'b'shevat (please send clean 2-liter bottles for Tu'B'shvat program)

January 21 -School assembly for faculty, middle and upper grades.

Orly Wahba –

KINDNESS WORKSHOP FOR KIDS

Orly is an educator, entrepreneur, speaker and community activist passionate about motivating people to make the world a kinder place. She began her career as a middle school educator empowering children to see their power to influence the world for good.

In 2011, Orly founded [Life Vest Inside](#), a non-profit that inspires, empowers and educates people of all backgrounds to lead a life of kindness.



Now infant through age 12!


Thank you to the Ravitz Foundation and Rosenzweig-Coopersmith Foundation

WHAT?
PJ Library® in Grand Rapids offers the gift of free, high quality Jewish books and music each month to children ages 6 months through 12 years all across North America.

WHY?
Our books celebrate important aspects of Jewish culture, values and tradition, and become cherished stories.

HOW?
Signing up is easy! To sign up for PJ Library, visit www.pjlibrary.org

PJ Library in Grand Rapids is a gift from Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids in partnership with Ravitz Foundation, Rosenzweig-Coopersmith Foundation and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.



What's Happening Jewish Grand Rapids

January 2018 Calendar of Events

3	No JFGR Playgroup
5	Kabbalat Shabbat Ahavas Israel 6:00pm
8	Conversation Hebrew class begins at Ahavas Israel 7:00pm
10	No JFGR Playgroup
14	Your Opinion Matters at Temple Emanuel 10:00am
16	Chabad Kids Club 4:30pm
17	JFGR PLAYGROUP RESUMES! 11:00am
18	Jewish Business Network at Palio 12:00
21	Cultural Council event - Orly Wahba 10:00am at Temple Emanuel CTeen 1:00pm Lunch and Learn at Temple 12:30pm CTeen Jr. 4:00pm
24	JFGR PLAYGROUP 11:00am JLI begins at Chabad House 7:30pm
25	Temple Book club 7:00pm
27	YAD-Israeli Wine Tasting 7:00pm
28	Vegan Comfort Foods Cooking program Temple Emanuel 10:15am
29	Jewish Woman's Circle 7:30pm
30	Ahavas Israel for a Potluck Tu B'shvat 6:00pm
31	JFGR PLAYGROUP 11:00am

* is a Jewish Federation sponsored event.

Editor's Note – 'What's Happening' is a calendar that includes Jewish programming open to *all* members of our West Michigan Jewish community, whether offered by Federation, one of our congregations, cultural organizations, or others. More information about these events can be found in *The Shofar*, on the Federation website, or from the other Jewish organizations.

Ahavas Israel

Ahavas Israel invites all young adults (21-45) in the Jewish community to our next special community event, an evening of **Israeli Wine Tasting** (paired with cheese and chocolate), with wine specialist Peter Eizel from Russo's International Market on Sunday, January 27, 7:00pm. Reservations are required to Stephanie Jesin, stephaniejessin@gmail.com or 616-633-5309

Ahavas Israel is offering a class in Conversation Hebrew! Beginning Monday, January 8, 7:00-8:30, learn Conversational Hebrew with Michal Ravid. The ten week course, will cost \$150 per student (\$15 per session). Text books are not included. You can purchase the beginning text (\$15.95 plus shipping) from Amazon - *Hebrew: A Language Course Primer*, by Lois Rothblum. There is a minimum enrollment of 6 students. Please enroll by sending your name/email to office@ahavasisraelgr.org. We suggest you do not buy the book until we confirm that we have sufficient enrollment to offer the course.

Join Ahavas Israel for a Potluck Tu Bishvat Seder - Tuesday January 30, 6:00pm. Bring something featuring fruit or one of the seven species of fruits or grains of the land of Israel from Deuteronomy 8:8, wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. If the food needs to stay warm, please bring a warming tray. We'll celebrate a brief Seder ceremony and enjoy the New Year for trees by focusing on the mystical properties of Biblical foods.

Welcome Shabbat on Friday evening, January 5, 6:00pm. Join Ahavas Israel for a monthly Kabbalat Shabbat service on the first Shabbat of each month at 6:00pm.
Ahavas Israel's nest Torah Study Shabbat and Abbreviated Shabbat service will be January 27.

Beginning this month, for scheduling reason, The Torah Study Shabbat/Abbreviated Shabbat service moves to the 4th Shabbat of the month. Please join us for the first Torah Study and abbreviated Shabbat service of 2018 on January 27.

The schedule is: 9:30am Torah Study
10:30am Service
11:55am (approximately) Kiddush

Save the Date: Join Ahavas Israel at Broadway Grand Rapids to see "The Bodyguard" on Sunday, March 11, 2018. This award winning musical is the story of former Secret Service Agent hired to protect a musical superstar. We'll meet at the Synagogue at 4:30pm for a pot-luck dinner then travel to the theater together. The show starts at 6:30pm. We will return to the Synagogue by 9:30pm.

Chabad House

Chabad Kids Club Tuesday January 16, 4:30pm - 6:00pm. Edible Fruit Trees - Tu B'Shvat - Celebrate the birthday of the trees. Create your very own edible fruit tree! Chabad kids club is a place for Jewish children to have a great time, be proud of their Judaism & make a difference! For Jewish boys and girls ages 5-11

CTeen Grand Rapids - Sunday January 21, 1:00pm - 3:00pm. CTeen Day - Tu B'Shavat Smoothie Showdown - Will you crush the winning smoothie?! The place for ALL Jewish high school teens! Part of the Fastest Growing Teen Network in the World!

CTeen Junior - Sunday January 21, 4:00pm-6:00pm. Enrich your Jewish Pride & Explore Essential Milestones within the Jewish Lifecycle while giving back to the Community.

For more information or to RSVP for CTeen, CTeen Jr., Kids club, please contact Rivka at 616-206-9654

Jewish Woman's Circle - Tu B'shvat A Time to Grow, an evening of color and creativity. Monday January 29, 7:30pm. Listen to the message of Tu B'shavat and let your inner-self blossom. Learn how to create your own beautiful flower arrangement. Hostess: Shari Faler

Chair: Michele Benjamin

For more info or to RSVP contact Nechamy, at 616-828-2340 or Nechamy82gmail.com

JLI ~ "The Art of Communication"

In the era of social media, the value of healthy communication between family, friends, and associates is widely appreciated, even as its form now undergoes a drastic shift. How do we find suitable paths for effective communication? This course explores Judaism's insight into forging positive, effective, and fruitful interactions. Please join us for a remarkable six-week course from the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute.

To register today, visit myJLI.com

Six Wednesday Evenings 7:30 - 9:00 p.m. | Begins Wednesday, January 24th, 2017

At the Chabad House 2615 Michigan St. NE Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506 Fee: \$99 (textbook included) \$180 Sponsor

For more Info or to register, please contact Rabbi Mordechai at 269-903-2770 or Rabbihaller@chabadwestmichigan.com

CTeen International NYC Shabbaton

SIGN UP TODAY!

FEBRUARY 23RD - 25TH

The International CTeen Shabbaton is an annual weekend retreat for Jewish teens from around the world. To find out more about this amazing trip or to sign up, call or message Rivka at 616-206-9654.

Temple Emanuel

Eat Your History: Ladino learning and lunch, Sunday January 21st 12:30pm

Did you know that Fish & Chips is a Jewish dish? Or that Spanish Crypto-Jews ate *ropa vieja* (beef) while passing it off as pork, and had macaroons during Passover while passing them off as cookies? Join us for lunch and learning on Sunday, January 21, immediately after UJS. Enjoy the spicy flavors of Spain and the Caribbean and a taste of our shared history. There is no charge for lunch, but we will happily accept donations to the Roseman Education Fund. RSVP no later than January 19th to Cat Finney in the Temple Office. Cat@grtemple.org or 459-5976.

Your Opinion Matters & Brunch will be held on **Sunday, January 14th at 10:00am** in the Lewis Social Hall. Each month chef and moderator Jim Siegel prepares a hot meal to go along with a hot topic of debate. This month the discussion will be on President Trump's declaration that the United States will move its Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Was this a show of support for Israel, a shrewd negotiating tactic or yet another obstacle on the road to peace in the middle east? All are welcome to join the debate and it is free of charge. RSVP to Jim Siegel at jims@siegeljewelers.com so that he knows how much food to prepare.

The Temple book group will meet **January 25th at 7pm** in the library to discuss Alice's Piano by Melissa Muller, an account of how Alice Herz-Sommer's skills as a pianist helped her survive in Theresienstadt. The group is open to everyone interested in reading books by Jewish authors or of Jewish interest. Bring a friend and join us.

Vegan Comfort Foods Cooking Program

Learn how to veganize your favorite comfort foods like macaroni and cheese, French toast, brownies, brisket and more, without sacrificing taste or nutrition. You'll leave a more confident cook, with recipes, a bibliography of the best vegan cookbooks and a list of vegan resources in Grand Rapids. Join Kris Siegel in the kitchen on **Sunday, January 28th at 10:15**. Bring your appetite! This class is free of charge, but please RSVP to Cat@grtemple.org so that Kris can plan for the right number of people

Endowment

Life cycle times, both happy and sad, are traditional times to make donations to Jewish causes. You can make a donation of \$10 or more to the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids in honor or in memory of members of our community. We then will acknowledge that donation with a card to that individual or family. This is a wonderful way to send your good wishes and be able to fulfill the mitzvah of tzedakah.

Please be sure to indicate what the occasion is and who is to receive the card. Please specify which of the following funds you would like your donation to be credited to:

Woman of Valor Fund To honor the women in our lives who have made a difference personally, locally or nationally.

Federation General Endowment/L'Dor Vador Fund To help ensure the continued work of the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids for now and the future.

Julian and Judith Joseph Fund To provide for local programming and events through the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids.

David and Susan Samrick Youth Scholarship Fund To provide scholarships to Jewish sleepaway camps and experiences.

Chuck and Maxine Shapiro Fund To help ensure long-term aid to Israel and Jews around the world.

Louis and Louise Weiner Fund To help ensure local programming for seniors in the Grand Rapids Jewish Community.

Jerry and Judy Subar Fund To help ensure funding for overseas Jewish communities' needs.

Leven Family Fund To establish and provide Jewish facilities, and support for cooperative programming among the congregations that support Jewish education for our youth.

Sam and Jane Kravitz Social Services Fund To support Jewish social services in Grand Rapids.

Donna G. Boorstein Memorial Fund To help ensure funding for Jewish arts, culture and history in Greater Grand Rapids

Lois and Sheldon Kahn Health Help Fund To support health services for Jewish community members not covered by other financial resources

Thank you for supporting the Grand Rapids Jewish Community

Louis & Louise Weiner Fund

In memory of Margit Sarne
From Lynn Brens

In memory of Margit Sarne
From Mimi Sarne

In honor of Ann Berman
From Toby Weiner Dolinka

In honor of Cathy Winick
From Toby Weiner Dolinka



Limited Spaces available!

Contact Marisa Reed to learn more or place an ad!

Deadline is January 15, 2018.

marisa@jfgr.org or

Promote Your Business



Advertise Here

616-942-5553



JFGR Endowment Fund Donation Form

Donation from: Name _____ Fund (pick from list) _____

Donor Address _____ In honor of _____

Donor City/St/Zip _____ In memory of _____

Send card to: Name _____ Notes: _____

Send card to address _____ **Send your donation and this form to:**

Send card to City/St/Zip _____ **2727 Michigan NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506**

The Shofar

A monthly publication issued 12 times a year.

Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids
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**Next Issue's Information Deadline:
January 15, 2018**

We're on
Facebook!



Jewish Federation[®]
OF GRAND RAPIDS

THE **STRENGTH** OF A PEOPLE.
THE **POWER** OF COMMUNITY.

2018

**Start the year by
Marking your calendar
To attend these exciting
programs.**



**Cultural Council of
The Jewish Federation
of Grand Rapids**

Sunday, January 21, 2018

**Tikkun Olam Through the Power of
Kindness** (see page 5)
Orly Wahba

Saturday, February 3, 2018

Jewish Comedy Night
Avi Liberman

Tuesday, April 17, 2018

**Behind the Headlines: Middle East
& Israeli Politics**
Micah Halpern