



RHODES HILLEL

NEWS FROM THE RHODES COLLEGE CHAPTER OF HILLELS OF MEMPHIS

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Rhodes Hillel President Sophie Enda: **Vision for Jewish Life on Campus**

Dallas native Sophie Enda was drawn to Rhodes College with its small campus, Jewish presence and the proximity of the Memphis Zoo.

Sophie, who wants to become a veterinarian, was also aware of the “gateway to Jewish life on campus,” which was important to her. “I was interested, because the campus was small but in a city, and I would be close enough to be hands-on with the zoo animals.”

She entered Hillel life immediately following the opening reception at the Peabody Hotel during her first semester. “I met people, connected with the community, and became public relations chair,” she said.

When it came time to pass the torch, past president Ellie Barmish thought

she’d make a smooth transition into the role of president.

As a Jewish Community Fellow who participates in regular meetings and programs, Sophie has become the natural connector between both Jewish worlds on campus. “Being in the Fellowship makes it easier to plan and encourage others to participate in Hillel activities,” she said. “Our long-term goal for Rhodes Hillel is to increase participation in multiple events. We have been planning social events as well as Jewish-related activities, and we invite Jewish and non-Jewish people to all of our programs.”

Other goals include connecting with Hillel students at the University of Memphis, and assisting organizations with their tikkun olam (community

(ABOVE) RHODES HILLEL STUDENT BOARD: MIRA GREENBERG, ELLIE BARMISH, SOPHIE ENDA, EMMA JANE HOPPER, LEAH GOLDSHALL, EMMA FIGARSKY AND SARAH GINSBERG

service) activities. “We want the community to know that we are willing hands for volunteering.”

This semester, Hillel students participated in Baron Hirsch’s Great Sandwich Make, a Rhodes Fellows Tu B’Shvat Seder, weekly Bagel Brunches, bi-weekly Shabbat dinners and more.

A new interfaith lounge gives Jewish students a great place to meet. Sophie and the board are continuously reaching out to Jewish students to increase membership and participation, and encourage those looking at colleges to check out Rhodes. ✨

HILLEL STUDENT BOARD

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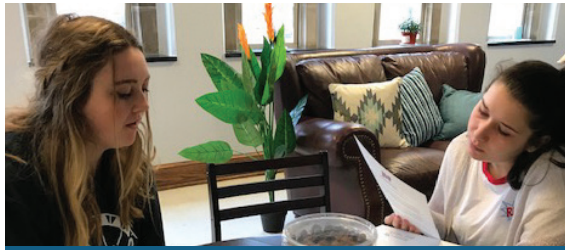
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JEWISH LEARNING FELLOWSHIP STUDENTS
ELIZA LEIBERMAN AND DAVI HERTZ

Inaugural Jewish Learning Fellowship Inspiring Students

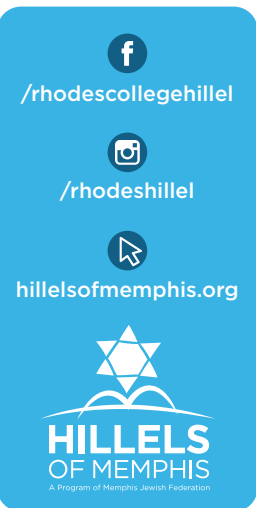
Each week, a select cohort of students meets on campus to discuss Jewish identity, community, and continuity. Hillels around the country use the same core curriculum about navigating college through a Jewish lens to spark meaningful conversation between Jewish students on campus, deepening their connection to one another, and to Jewish peoplehood. For some, the Jewish Learning Fellowship seminar is the first time they have engaged in text study since their Bar or Bat Mitzvah; for others, the seminar is their one break during the week when they get to learn for the sake of learning without having assignments or tests hanging over their heads. The sacred time of the Jewish Learning Fellowship extends beyond the class itself now too — students often opt to arrive early and enjoy dinner together or linger afterward and play board games with their new friends. ✨



ISRAELI VISITOR ZEHAVA SHNEOR
SPEAKS TO RHODES STUDENTS

Tu B'Shvat Seder Hosts Special Israeli Guest

The Jewish Community Fellows at Rhodes planned and led a Tu B'Shvat Seder, which combined the spirit of rebirth of the Jewish holiday of Tu B'Shvat and the environmentalist passions of the larger Rhodes community. Students learned about Kabbalistic beliefs behind Tu B'Shvat, and explored how it is celebrated in Israel from special guest Zehava Shneor. Zehava is a member of Memphis's sister city in Israel, Shoham. She came to visit Memphis this winter to share her story of how Shoham has memorialized her daughter, Sarit, killed in a 2002 terrorist attack, through an annual relay race that has become a rite of passage for Shoham high school seniors. With her visit coinciding with Tu B'Shvat, Zehava spoke about how the holiday is celebrated in Israel at several Tu B'Shvat celebrations throughout Memphis. ✨



Shabbat Shul Hop Builds Community

This semester, Hillels of Memphis launched the Shabbat Shul Hop, a community partnership initiative connecting students to a Memphis synagogue for Friday night Shabbat services and a meal hosted by a congregation member. We piloted this program in partnership with Baron Hirsch Congregation after they approached Hillel about bringing together our students with their visiting Memphis Jewish Federation-funded Yeshiva University Fellows. For some, this was their first Shabbat experience in an Orthodox setting, and they left feeling inspired to reconnect to their Jewish roots.

“Our Yeshiva University Fellows have had such an impact throughout the community, from our day schools to our senior facilities,” said Baron Hirsch Executive Director David Fleischhacker. “The one group that seemed the most obvious was the one we hadn’t touched — college students. We are thrilled that students from Rhodes and University of Memphis enjoyed spending Shabbat together. Our Fellows look forward to getting together again.”

“I was thrilled when Baron Hirsch reached out with this incredible opportunity for students who observe Shabbat to host their friends at one of their home synagogues,” said Hillel Director Sophie Bloch. “I’m grateful to Baron Hirsch for inspiring this sort of partnership as well as to the Somer family for hosting our Shabbat meal — the students are still raving about the brisket!”

We will replicate this program based on the incredible success we had at the inaugural Shabbat Shul Hop, hopefully partnering with each of the Memphis congregations at least once a year. ✨



HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR SAM WEINREICH SPEAKS IN THE RHODES' MCCALLUM BALLROOM

Holocaust Survivor Sam Weinreich Shares His Harrowing Story

For the first time in Rhodes history, a Holocaust survivor gave his testimony to a ballroom filled to the brim with students, faculty, staff, and community members. Beloved Memphis Holocaust Survivor Sam Weinreich shared his incredible story to a mesmerized audience of over 500 people. Special guests in attendance included Memphis City Councilman Ford Canale, U.S. Attorney for West Tenn., Mike Dunavant, and District Director for Congressman David Kustoff, Marianne Dunavant. Hillels of Memphis collaborated with the Chaplain's Office and the faculty of the new Jewish, Islamic, Middle Eastern Studies minor to bring Weinreich to Rhodes.

"I was thrilled when the Rhodes administration understood the importance of making this event happen," shares Hillel Director Sophie Bloch. "The Memphis Jewish community has an incredible partner in Rhodes as the college continues to bridge the gap between the students on campus and the larger communal and historical context in which they reside."

Reflecting on the evening, Rhodes Chaplain Beatrix Weil said, "As a Presbyterian-related college, Rhodes is dedicated to educating whole people for the whole world. Jewish history, and stories and accounts of the Holocaust in particular, are key to nourishing spiritual, social, and civic maturity in our students. I think Mr. Weinreich's talk helped students grapple with the role each of them individually plays in our communal commitment to 'never forget.'"

Jewish community member and Rhodes Alum Eric Trotz was the catalyst for making this



SAM WEINREICH TELLS HIS STORY OF SURVIVAL

event a reality. He explains: "Mr. Weinreich is not only the oldest Holocaust Survivor in Memphis, he is one of the oldest Survivors anywhere. I have taken Mr. Weinreich to speak at other schools in the past, but speaking at Rhodes College has been on Mr. Weinreich's bucket list for as long as I can remember, which was one of the main reasons I was so passionate about making the event happen. My first thought was that Mr. Weinreich would be speaking to a small gathering of students and maybe a few faculty, and we would have been very much pleased with that. But little did I know how much work Rev. Weil and Sophie were going to put into making Mr. Weinreich's event so overwhelmingly successful.

"Mr. Weinreich knows all about Rhodes College and in particular about the passion of its students and leaders regarding social justice and treating others right," Eric continued. "I knew that by taking Mr. Weinreich to speak at Rhodes, the event wasn't going to be just another speaking engagement. When you have a 100-year-old friend who is willing to give up some of his time to speak to others about his Holocaust experiences, it's hard to say no. Mr. Weinreich feels as if it is his duty to talk to as many people as he can about his experiences, and about the only thing he needs is a little help arranging the event. Something like that is the least I could do for one of our treasured community members. I know Mr. Weinreich is making the world a better place one speech at a time, and it's my obligation to help him as much as I can in that regard." 🌟

Jewish Community Fellow Highlight: Robbie Musicante

I never had a doubt that I would stay in Memphis. Even though many of my friends moved, I love it here.

I'm actually following in my sister's footsteps. She went to Rhodes, and is in medical school, as I plan to do.

I learned about the Jewish Community Fellowship at Rhodes through my high school counselor at Memphis University School. I was very connected to my Jewish friends while attending elementary school at Margolin Hebrew Academy, but when I reached high school, I lost those connections. I look back now and regret not participating in more Jewish-related high school programs. That's what's been so great about being part of the Fellows.

I met my two best friends, Sara and Haley, who are both from Texas, at the first Fellows Meet and Greet. It's been great to connect with other Jewish students. We meet monthly in the new Interfaith Lounge to discuss Jewish values, and plan events and programs. Often we talk for an hour or longer. We always invite Hillel members to attend



events and programs. We recently hosted a Tu B'Shvat Seder, participated in Hamentaschen baking, and have been talking about ideas for tzedakah projects.

Rhodes is such a safe campus in our city. If you're looking for a small liberal arts college, then just come visit. When you come here and see it, you'll love it too. 🌟



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