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On Resilience



By Keith Krivitzky, Managing Director
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I am usually able to focus on a particular issue or theme when I write these columns. At present, there are so many concerns wrestling in my all-too-limited-of-late brain to narrow down to one. So, I am glad to share this column from a colleague, Steven Windmueller, that was written for Rosh Hashana but sums up much of the angst and challenges we face as a Jewish community now and likely for the foreseeable future.

As always, your Jewish Federation is here to meet these challenges in the smartest possible way, leveraging what each of us can contribute to help make our Jewish community in Ocean County a better place, in terms of Jewish life, security, and the impact we can have in the world.

Thank you for your support.
Keith

At the Threshold of 5787: Eight Tests of Resilience



A Rosh Hashanah Reflection
By Steven Windmueller
September 9, 2026

The Jewish New Year arrives at a moment of paradox for American Jews. One finds our community deeply divided politically but feeling uniformly under attack. Eight challenges stand out. None can be met by nostalgia for a consensus that no longer exists. The focus for 5787 will be to turn disagreement into democratic practice, vulnerability into mutual responsibility, creativity into durable belonging, and the sense of common concern into collective action.

First is *the widening argument over Israel, Zionism, and the war in Gaza*. A July 2026 AP-NORC Study found that 52 percent of religious Jews, but only 21 percent of secular Jews, regarded Israel's ongoing Gaza operation as justified. Thirty-seven percent of Jews under 45 said Israel had committed genocide, compared with 23 percent of older Jews. About four in ten had blocked, unfollowed, or argued with relatives over Israel, and three in ten had stopped speaking to someone. Yet only about one in ten religious or secular Jews called themselves anti-Zionist.
The communal task is therefore not to force a binary choice between loyalty and dissent but to make room for attachment, grief, Israeli security, Palestinian rights, and moral criticism without treating every disagreement as betrayal. Understanding in the process, that the Jewish political divide is generating a new and different political realignment of American Jews around Israel, antisemitism, and this nation's domestic agenda and direction.

Second, *American politics increasingly pulls Jewish life into rival partisan camps*. Israel has lost much of its former bipartisan standing, while debates over antisemitism, universities, immigration, democracy, and religious liberty are routinely weaponized. Jewish institutions risk alienating liberals if they appear to excuse illiberal policies in Israel or America, and angering conservatives if they minimize threats emerging from anti-Zionist movements. Resilience requires intellectual consistency: oppose antisemitism from the right and left; defend civil liberties even for opponents; and refuse to let either party claim ownership over the welfare of the Jewish community.

Third *is antisemitism*. The danger is measurable. ADL recorded an average of 17 antisemitic incidents a day in 2025; although harassment and vandalism declined from the record highs of 2023 and 2024, by contrast assaults reached a record level. AJC's 2025 survey found that 31 percent of American Jews had personally encountered antisemitism in person or online and 91 percent expressed concerns about it, But the definitions and measures for defining antisemitism are being contested. The IHRA definition, the Jerusalem Declaration, and the Nexus Document draw the boundary between anti-Jewish prejudice and criticism of Israel differently. Institutions should judge context and conduct, protect open debate, and collect transparent data. Antisemitism must no longer be employed as a partisan tool.

American Jewish resilience has rarely been the absence of fracture but rather the art of building a future in the midst of adversity and uncertainty. ~ Steven Windmueller

Fourth is the *hidden economic diversity behind the stereotype of universal Jewish affluence*. Pew found that 23 percent of Jewish adults lived in households earning at least $200,000, but 10 percent earned under $30,000; younger adults, seniors, and people without college degrees were especially likely to have low incomes. In the 2023 New York Jewish Community Study, 22 percent of Jewi-

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The Many Miracles of Hanukah



By Rabbi William Gershon
Congregation B'nai Israel, Toms River
www.cbitr.org

Throughout the centuries, Hanukah has held a special place in the consciousness of the Jewish people. At each stage of our history, Hanukah took on new interpretations and dimensions.

To the rabbis of the Talmud Hanukah represented God's role in history through the miracle of a single cruise of oil burning for eight days and the victory of the few over the many, as God's hand in history allowed our ancestors to vanquish the Seleucid Greeks.

We are the Jewish people and our light in this world continues to burn brighter and stronger than ever. Am Yisrael Chai.

To medieval Jews Hanukah represented the eternal yearning of the Jewish people for the messianic age and the rebuilding of the Temple. This theme is captured in the famous song Maoz Tzur, Rock of Ages:
O mighty stronghold of my salvation,
to praise You is a delight.
Restore my House of Prayer (The Temple in Jerusalem)
and there we will bring a thanksgiving offering…
Then I shall complete with a song of hymn
the dedication of the Altar.

To the Sefat Emet, Rabbi Yehudah Leib of Ger, the Hanukah candles represented the light of the mitzvot as a way for each person to discover the hidden presence of God within themselves and in the world.

To the survivors the survivors of the Shoah, Hanukah served as an act of defiance in the face of despair and even more importantly, as a beacon of faith and hope – as flames of the Hanukah candles recall memories of a time we cannot and must not forget.

To the modern secular Zionist, Hanukah symbolized Jewish military prowess and political achievement. The early Zionists interpreted the Hanukah lights, as the torches of victory.

For me, Hanukah is ultimately about the miracle of Jewish survival. One of the most fascinating places to visit in Israel is what is known as the Kotel tunnels. Adjacent to the Western Wall, deep underground is an incredible labyrinth of tunnels, arches, passageways that remained untouched for centuries. The tunnels take you alongside a large portion of the Western Wall that was inaccessible until the tunnels were opened.

It is amazing to be standing in front of the cracks and scorched marks caused

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On Resilience

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sh households earned under $50,000. A 2025 JFNA analysis found that financially vulnerable Jews remained highly interested in Jewish life but were constrained by fees and donation expectations; six in ten were unable to engage in all the ways they wished. Affordability is thus not ancillary to continuity. Sliding scales, discreet aid, accessible housing and mental-health services, and a culture that separates belonging from purchasing power represent interventions essential to Jewish religious and communal life.

Fifth, if individual Jews are facing economic challenges, the *institutions of the community that were charged to support Jewish identity are under economic pressure*. Synagogues, schools, camps, community centers, and social-service agencies face new economic challenges in all areas of their operations. Security now competes directly with programming: JFNA estimated that Jewish institutions spend more than $765 million annually on security, about 14 percent of a typical organization's budget. Leaders and employees already reported understaffing before the post-October 7 surge in demands. The likely answer is not simply more fundraising but shared services, stronger governance, public security support, endowments, and strategic decisions about which institutions should merge, specialize, or collaborate.

Sixth is *the challenge of making communal life accessible across generations and family circumstance*s. High tuition, membership models, geography, disability, and assumptions about marriage or observance can put Jewish education and community beyond reach. Yet demand remains strong. Jewish camps engaged a record 198,730 campers and young-adult staff in 2025, even as families requested $56 million in aid and camps distributed $47.2 million. This combination – record participation and record need – points the way forward: people seek intensive Jewish experiences when institutions lower barriers and make participation meaningful.

Seventh is leadership! *Jewish women now lead prominent congregations, advocacy groups, foundations, educational networks, and cultural institutions, bringing a wider range of experience and authority into public Judaism*. That rise is real, but it is not completed. Leading Edge found that women were 80 percent of employees in participating Jewish nonprofits in 2023 but only 51 percent of CEOs and 47 percent of board chairs. Yet, studies note that racial, disability, and other inequities persist within the Jewish community. 5787 affords an opportunity to convert these exceptional appointments into equitable pay, family-supportive workplaces, mentorship, succession planning, and genuine authority for women and other historically underrepresented Jews.

Eighth, *American Jewish creativity must become more than a bright counterpoint to crisi*s. Artists, rabbis, teachers, writers, entrepreneurs, scholars, organizers, and volunteers continue to remake prayer, music, food, learning, comedy, mutual aid, and digital community. This creativity contributes to America far beyond Jewish institutions. Such public achievements serve to sustain the community's inner resilience.

What, then, might 5787 bring? Hope should not mean a belief that danger or division will vanish. Jewish hope must be translated into disciplined action, while experiencing conditions of uncertainty. It will be visible when a synagogue makes security welcoming rather than forbidding; when a school treats aid as inclusion rather than charity; when Jews who disagree over Israel remain in relationship; when women and emerging leaders receive appropriate recognition and compensation as well as titles; and when institutions measure vitality not by unanimity or wealth but by the number of people able to enter, create, serve, and belong. American Jewish resilience has rarely been the absence of fracture but rather the art of building a future in the midst of adversity and uncertainty.

Steven Windmueller is an Emeritus Professor of Jewish Communal Studies at the Jack H. Skirball Campus of HUC in Los Angeles. His writings can be found on his website, www.thewindreport.com.

Miracles of Hanukah

Continued from page 2

by the Roman Legions who eventually broke through the Temple compound's defenses and realize that there are no more Romans, there no more Greeks and no more Babylonians. All of the empires of the ancient world are gone. There is only one people with same name, the same God, the same land, the same religion that survived antiquity – and that is the Jewish People.

For me, the true miracle of Hanukah is that two thousand years after Roman soldiers destroyed our Temple, there is a Jewish army and a Jewish state with Jerusalem as its capital. The real miracle of Hanukah is that there is a Jewish people at all after two thousand years of exile and persecution. Well after the Maccabees, our people are still lighting our Hanukiyot celebrating Jewish redemption and resilience.

Whatever interpretation of Hanukah speaks to you, relish the experience. Let your heart soar with joy and your soul be illumined by the light of the miracle of the Festival of Lights.

The mitzvah of the Hanukah Menorah is pirsume nisa – to publicize the miracle. This year I have a suggestion. In solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Israel and with all Jews around the world, go out of your way to place your Hanukah Menorah in a window for all to see. Stand proud. We are the Jewish people and our light in this world continues to burn brighter and stronger than ever. Am Yisrael Chai.

The Jewish Journal is pleased to host a monthly Rabbi Column, rotating among our community's pulpit rabbis. The views and opinions expressed are those of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect those of The Jewish Journal, the Jewish Federation of Ocean County or the author's Congregation.

The Jewish Federation of Ocean County wishes everyone a very Happy Chanukah!



Local News

Congregation B'nai Israel, Toms River, Guest Speaker: Educating American Jewish Youth is Key to Countering Antisemitism and Antizionism

(photo credit: Teri Abramson)

American Jews are bad at recognizing antisemitism. And their children are even worse. That was the message of Haviv Rettig Gur, the Israeli journalist, educator and commentator, during a lecture at Congregation B'nai Israel on October 14.

Gur was the speaker for the synagogue's annual Rosen Family Lecture, sponsored by The Rosen Adult Education Fund, with support from the Jewish Federation of Ocean County. The Rosen family has been sponsoring an annual talk on Judaism for 40 years, Rabbi William Gershon said, and he expressed gratitude to four members of the family sitting in the audience. About 165 people attended the talk at the synagogue at 1488 Old Freehold Road, which lasted about 90 minutes.

Gur is a Middle East analyst at The Free Press and senior analyst at The Times of Israel. He is also known for his podcast, "Ask Haviv Anything." His extensive knowledge and broad experience reporting in Israel and elsewhere have made him a popular speaker before Jewish groups and on college campuses.

Gur's talk covered a range of topics, including the then-upcoming Israeli elections, but mostly focused on Jewish and global history and the revival of antisemitism and antizionism in the United States.

Gur noted that antisemitism has come back with gusto, accompanied by a lack of shame – a swift and startling change for American Jews, who had largely been sheltered from centuries of persecution and fear that had been the predominant Jewish experience. The Gaza war, he said, has triggered a surge of antisemitism on the left and hostility toward Israel – a reaction that defies logic given there has not been a similar reaction now or in the recent past to the violence and dispossession that has been committed by other countries in other parts of the world.

He cited some of the far-fetched accusations being made against Israel, including that the government there has been instrumental in training officers from the N.Y.P.D., stoking racism in the department.

Gur walked the audience through ancient to recent events, covering world, American, Jewish and Israeli history and laying the groundwork for where we are today. He touched on early Christianity, immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries, the aftermath of the Holocaust, the founding of the Jewish state, and the "moral liberalism" that forged partnerships between Blacks and Jews in America and reflected American Jews' efforts to create a more just society that they hoped to share in themselves. He also talked about today's perceived crisis among young men in America and the climate on college campuses, where hatred is festering.

Gur said some $600 million is spent on organizations that focus on defending Jews from antisemitism. More effective, he said, would be for Jewish parents to educate their own children and lead them away from the "stupid garbage" undergirding the current anti-Jewish sentiment. Your job, he told the audience, is to teach your kids their story. Asked during the Q&A if education efforts should not be more broadly targeted, he insisted that educating American Jewish youth is the way to turn the tide. "This is our task, and it's time to get to it."









Cultural Festival 2026 – Something for Everyone!

By Lorna Klein, Festival Co-Chair

From babka baking and comedy films to a children's game show and moving stories from a Holocaust survivor, the 2026 Jewish Cultural Festival offered something for everyone.

The purpose of our Cultural Festival was not just to entertain or educate, but to encourage our Jewish community to be together. The offerings were different, but each one had the goal of getting people to come out, maybe laugh, perhaps learn something new or see something from a different perspective, and ultimately socialize with others.

The Festival kicked off on October 15 with "Fantasy Life" at Beth Am Shalom. This is a romantic comedy about a male nanny, set in New York. And, due to an unforeseen technical problem while the film was underway, everyone who signed up was sent a link so they could see the end of the movie!

On October 18, the JCC of LBI screened a very different kind of film: "Hold on to Your Music: A Mother's Legacy." The documentary features Mona Golabek, a child piano prodigy, telling the story of her mother's escape from Vienna on a Kindertransport. After the screening, attendees heard from Manny Lindenbaum, a child Holocaust survivor who also escaped on the Kindertransport. His moving and inspiring account brought the film's story to life.

Then back to comedy on October 25 at the Marquee Cinema for a double header: "The Everything Pot" and "Ethan Bloom." "The Everything Pot" featured Jewish characters and showed how something relatively insignificant could snowball and create chaos. "Ethan Bloom" had comic elements but touched on more serious themes of the essence of faith, navigating loss and grief and the bonds of family.

For anyone who had always wanted to learn how to make babka, the class at the Chabad of Toms River on November 1 was a huge success. Rabbi Moshe Gourarie, his talented wife Chanie, and several of their children, warmly welcomed participants and helped throughout the class. By following Chanie's demonstrations and guidance, each participant rolled out their own dough, chose chocolate or cinnamon filling, and added toppings. Everyone took home their own babka, ready to bake and then enjoy!

The PJ Library Game Show wrapped up the festival on November 5. The Federa-

Continued on page 5

Local News


















JEWISH 2026 CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Thank you to our sponsors:

Barbara Cohen

Cantors Ruth & Daniel Green

Annabel & Manny Lindenbaum

Shelly & Dennis Newman

Barbara & William Schulman

This program is made possible in part by a grant administered by the Ocean County Cultural & Heritage Commission from funds granted by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Cultural Festival

Continued from page 4

tion of Ocean County, in partnership with Mainstages, brought a fun, interactive game show to the community. Participating children and the audience got to test their Jewish-American cultural knowledge through trivia and physical challenges. It was truly an experience for the entire family!

We were delighted to welcome so many of you to the festival and hope you enjoyed the events. Thank you to everyone who helped make the festival a fun and meaningful experience for our Ocean County Jewish community.

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Local News

Happy 80th Birthday Rabbi Michael Klein

By Ellen Keller



Birthday party guests should be equivalent to the age of the birthday child. So when Michael Klein celebrated his 80th birthday on October 10, 2026, about 80 of us helped him mark the 67th anniversary of his Bar Mitzvah with a special event at Congregation Ahavat Olam in Howell. Just the right number!

Westlake residents know Rabbi Klein as the clergyman who has delivered an annual speech for 24 years at the 9/11 memorial even before becoming a resident a few years ago. Many of us know him as the Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Ahavat Olam. He is also a trivia buff. Many of us also know him as a dear friend. So when his beloved wife Annie decided to provide a Taste of Torah, a meal after services on his actual birthday, many of us were eager to share the occasion.

We saw beautiful collages of Michael's family sharing memorable times. There was delicious food and a lovely birthday cake, of course. Michael did not want any gifts, but many of us ignored that request. His daughter Melissa wrote an adorable poem, which was surely one of the best gifts. Personally, I thought the jar of peanut butter, his favorite food, was the best part of our group gift!

The most important thing was that we shared the Sabbath services with our rabbinical intern Oliver Abrams and with Rabbi Mike. Celebrating Michael was the proverbial icing on the birthday cake. May he celebrate many more years with his family and with us.

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One Ocean County Celebrated Fall Festival

This year, on October 18, the fifth annual Fall Festival was held at Common Grounds. The Jewish Federation of Ocean County and the Ocean County Cultural & Heritage Commission partnered with One Ocean County in creating the festival to bring neighbors together to fulfill One Ocean County's mission to build a diverse and mutually respectful Ocean County. This year over 800 participants enjoyed the afternoon with activities in the garden, community resources, a petting zoo, and pony rides.









Beth Am Shalom, Lakewood, Celebrating Simchat Torah









Many congregations are conducting prayer services and classes online which may be accessible from a computer or a telephone. Contact each congregation for further information to access these events.

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Jewish Federation of Ocean County Impact

Case Study: Federation Impact in Action - Dimona Missile Strike

Context

On March 21, a missile penetrated Israel's defense systems and struck a residential building in Dimona, injuring 60+ people, forcing the evacuation of 485 residents, and causing widespread damage.



Selected Responding Organizations

Or Movement

- Dimona volunteers and staff had participated in Federation-supported training exercises and were prepared to respond immediately.
- A Federation mobile situation room was rapidly deployed to coordinate assistance for evacuees.
- An emergency shelter was established in a sports hall using Federation-supplied equipment.

JDC | GRID

- Local emergency responders arrived 30 minutes before the IDF.
- Using Federation-funded first aid equipment, they treated and evacuated wounded and elderly residents from the building.

Lev Echad

- Building on experience developed during Operation Rising Lions, Lev Echad deployed 602 volunteers, contributing 1,700 volunteer days.
- Volunteers helped residents clear damage and return to normal life quickly.

Social Delivery

- Within hours, delivered essential supplies—including clothing and hygiene items—to evacuees staying in the Dead Sea area.

Fund For Victims of Terror

- Provided Emergency grants to those impacted by the missile strike and ongoing rehabilitation support to those requiring long term rehabilitation.

Access Israel

- Immediately dispatched a team with an accessible vehicle to Dead Sea hotels to support disabled

Jewish Federation of Ocean County Impact

YOU Made and Impact through the Jewish Federation of Ocean County – Jewish Relief Network Ukraine (JRNU)

From JRNU
October 20, 2026

On October 17 at night, a missile hit near the Or Avner Jewish School in Kharkiv, prompting an emergency rescue operation. The powerful explosion shook the neighborhood, sending thick smoke into the air and leaving significant destruction to surrounding buildings. According to the school's security guard, the building did not sustain a direct hit, and no injuries were reported on school grounds.

Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov issued an urgent update saying emergency crews were working to rescue civilians believed to be trapped beneath the debris of nearby damaged buildings. Volunteers from Kharkiv's Jewish community joined rescue workers at the scene, assisting in the emergency response.

The attacks on the country's power infrastructure have continued with at least six energy facilities being targeted in recent attacks. The latest explosion near the school follows a particularly difficult weekend for Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, which has endured repeated missile and drone strikes throughout the war.

Despite the dangers, our work with the local community continues, providing food, shelter, and other humanitarian assistance to residents who have stayed in the city despite years of bombardment. Over the past couple of days, dozens of volunteers traveled to damaged residential neighborhoods to distribute emergency supplies to affected residents. Wearing brightly colored identification vests, the volunteers moved through devastated areas, distributing bottled water, fresh bread, and essential food supplies to families whose homes had been damaged or who had been left without basic necessities.

They also provided emotional support to residents struggling in the aftermath of the attacks. Although the missile landed frighteningly close to the school, Chief Rabbi of Kharkiv, Moshe Moskovitz explained that there was no physical damage and operations would continue: "The school will open tomorrow morning as usual," he said. As rescue teams continued searching the damaged buildings into the night, Jewish community volunteers remained involved in the relief effort, assisting residents in the surrounding neighborhood.

The latest strike serves as another reminder of the dangers facing Kharkiv's Jewish community, even as its schools and communal institutions continue operating amid the war. Recently, a massive air attack left a family with nothing but the clothes on their backs. A strike destroyed their home and car, and virtually all of their possessions. Sadly, many others across Ukraine face similar dire situations, as the devastating assaults continue.

Each day, new families are forced to start their lives over from scratch, with nowhere to go. Our leaders, staff, and volunteers work with them to provide much needed financial and other support including temporary housing, clothes, food and other essentials. We know that no amount of aid can restore what has been lost, but we are addressing critical immediate needs and reminding people that they are not alone and not forgotten.

Together we save lives and restore hope.



FedBeat from JFNA – Jewish Federations of North America
jewishfederations.org

U.S. and Israeli Jews Are Drawing Closer Together

Jewish Federations of North America researchers find a deepening sense of shared identity on both sides of the Atlantic.



Campers celebrate Israel at a Jewish camp in New York's Rockland County. (Courtesy Ramah Day Camp in Nyack)

From JFNA
By Rebecca Caspi and Mimi Kravetz
October 26, 2026
jta.org

This is part one of a two-part analysis based on the Jewish Federations of North America's 2026 binational study of Jewish Americans and Jewish Israelis, exploring where the communities are aligned and where they differ. Part two will address where American and Israeli Jews see things differently, and why.

The last three years have been historic for both American and Israeli Jews. Israel has experienced the trauma and loss of October 7 and the ensuing wars firsthand. Many American Jews have worked to support Israel, while experiencing a dramatic rise in security threats, antisemitism and attacks on Zionism at home. It would be understandable, therefore, if the result was two Jewish communities less connected to one another, each struggling to deal with its own challenges. And indeed, many headlines have focused on division, distance and disagreement.

But our data, gathered in May and June, are clear: American and Israeli Jews feel closer to one another today than we have in years, and that closeness has grown alongside the "surge" – the sustained rise in American Jewish engagement we've tracked since October 7. To be sure, our research also found places where American and Israeli Jews see things differently. We'll take that on directly in an upcoming piece. But it is important to start with the reawakening of shared peoplehood since October 7, an important development that is the foundation upon which all other discussions should begin.

The share of American Jews who describe Israelis as extended family or part of their own community has climbed from 46% to 62% since 2021. Today, fully 71% of American Jews feel emotionally attached to Israel. In contrast, the share of American Jews who say they feel no real connection at all to Jews in Israel has dropped by more than half since 2021, from 28% to 13%.

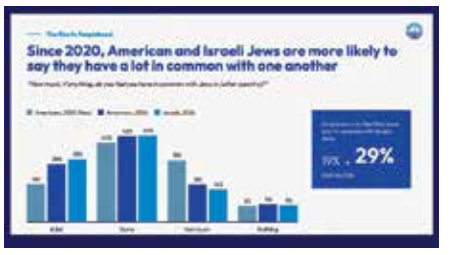
Israelis show movement in the same direction. The share calling American Jews extended family or part of their own community climbed from 45% to 53% over the same period, while the share saying they feel nothing in common with American Jews dropped from 14% to 10%.

Seventy-nine percent of Israelis and 56% of Americans affirm that Jews around the world, regardless of where they live, share a common fate and must act accordingly. Most also reject the idea that Jewish life in the diaspora is a "problem" to be solved through aliyah, or immigration to Israel. Early Zionist thought was built in part on the concept of shlilat hagalut, the "negation of exile," the belief that Jewish life outside Israel was inherently unsustainable and needed to be resolved through return to the land. That idea has receded sharply from mainstream Jewish and Zionist thought since the state's founding.

This deepening sense of shared peoplehood shows up in action, not just sentiment. In the first two years following October 7, the Jewish federation system raised $908 million through the Israel Emergency Campaign, funding more than 4,200 grants to 877 organizations across 208 communities in Israel. North American Jews made that giving possible. Israeli organizations and Israeli society did the work of turning it into recovery on the ground. Sixty-eight percent of Israelis said that American Jewish philanthropic giving after October 7 made them feel that Diaspora Jews genuinely care about Israel and Israelis. (Jewish federations raised and allocated $908 million in emergency support for Israel following the attacks, before shifting to a new giving framework to "Rebuild Israel").

As noted, the rise in a shared sense of peoplehood between U.S. and Israeli Jews closely mirrors the surge in Jewish engagement domestically that we've followed closely for three years. Engagement with Jewish life among American Jews is up 38% today, and that rise tracks with a rise in connection to Israel. That 38% reflects people who changed what they do. Another 12% felt a stronger pull toward Jewish identity and pride in peoplehood without yet changing their behavior. Together, that's roughly half of American Jews registering some shift in connection since October 7.

When we asked American Jews in open-ended discussion why they feel connected to Israel, the top reasons were remarkably consistent: seeing Israel as a safe place for Jews, including for themselves; seeing Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people; having a sense that Israel is where Jewish history began; believing that Jews are responsible for one another, and holding religious or biblical connection. Others pointed to feeling more whole in Israel, the belief that the Holocaust made a Jewish homeland necessary, that Israel is part of their own culture and simply feeling pride in Israelis themselves.



While much of this growing sense of interconnectedness emerges from the events of the last few years, especially the shock American Jews felt on October 7 and the pain Israelis feel watching antisemitism rise around the world, there are clear elements of the results that we can build upon, influence and encourage. American Jews who have traveled to Israel once are 1.7 times as likely to feel real commonality with Israeli Jews. American Jews who have traveled to Israel more than once are 3.8 times more likely to feel commonality with Israeli Jews. American Jews who have lived in Israel, perhaps not surprisingly, are 11.2 times more likely to share this sense of peoplehood.

According to a JFNA study, since 2020, the share of American Jews who feel they have "a lot" in common with Israeli Jews has risen from 19% to 29%, approaching the 32% of Israelis who feel similarly about American Jews. (Courtesy Jewish Federations of North America)

The same holds true in reverse. Visiting the U.S. as a tourist doesn't move an Israeli's sense of connection to American Jews. But compared to Israelis overall, those who participate in Jewish communal life while visiting are 2.8 times as likely to feel a sense of peoplehood with American Jews, and those who serve as emissaries, work at a Jewish camp or otherwise live inside an active American Jewish community while in the U.S. are 2.6 times as likely.

This is also true for Israeli Jews who encounter American Jews in Israel. Eighty-seven percent of Israeli Jews with real, engaged contact with American Jews feel commonality with us at far higher rates, compared to 52% among those with no contact. This gap holds even after taking into account religious practice and political ideology. Fifty-seven percent of Israeli Jews with real contact describe American Jews as siblings or extended family, compared to 45% among those with little or no contact.

We are in another challenging season for the Jewish people. Upcoming elections in Israel and the United States bring their own pressures and highlight disagreements both within and between our Jewish communities. It would be easy to conclude that we have more differences than we have commonalities, and to approach discussions from a place of distance and division. But there is opportunity in this tense moment to recognize our deep sense that we are one community.

Our data confirm that today we feel closer than ever, and we recognize that our lives are shaping each other's. Perhaps even more importantly, our data show what we can do to strengthen and perpetuate this trend. We need to keep investing in things we know build connection: more travel, more Israeli emissaries in North American communities and more programs that put people in real contact – especially partnership programs between

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FedBeat from JFNA – Jewish Federations of North America

jewishfederations.org

Frontline: Federations Hiring 100 New Professionals to Combat Antisemitism



From JFNA
October 21, 2026

(Editor's Note: The Jewish Federation of Ocean County combats antisemitism working year-round to strengthen community security, educate future leaders, combat hate, and build partnerships throughout Ocean County. Our efforts include locally sponsoring Secure Community Network (SCN), JFed Security, and Student Leadership Conferences, and encouraging people to be upstanders by recognizing our local Heroes Against Hate.)

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.

"In the aftermath of October 7, 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.



Become a Jewish Changemaker

From JFNA

Know a young Jewish leader ready to take the next step? Jewish Changemakers is a six-week virtual Fellowship for young Jewish leaders, ages 21 to 27, across the U.S. and Canada. Fellows meet on Zoom to build real leadership skills, explore Jewish values, and connect with peers driving change in their communities. Fellows join a network of 2,500+ young Jewish leaders and can receive up to $350 toward their next leadership opportunity. Know someone who should apply? Applications close December 13. Learn more at jewishchangemakers.org.

Jewish Community Calendar – December 2026

Compiled by the Jewish Federation of Ocean County based on submissions from the event hosts – Events can be submitted at www.jewishoceancounty.org/calendar. Most of the Jewish Virtual University webinars are emergent with only a few days' notice and are updated on the page www.jewishoceancounty.org/jvu and our facebook page facebook.com/jewishocean.

Tuesday, December 1, 1:00 PM (and every Tuesday) – **Grief After Loss** Group led by Rita Sason, Jewish Family and Children's Service, virtual online, 732-363-8010

Thursday, December 3, 7:30 PM (and the first Thursday of every month) – **Caregivers Group** led by Rita Sason, Jewish Family and Children's Service, virtual online, 732-363-8010

Friday night, December 4 – Saturday, December 12 – Chanukah

Monday, December 21, 6:30 PM – **Community of Caring / Heroes Against Hate**, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Ocean County; see pages 1, 16 and 17 for details

Friday, December 25 – Legal Holiday

For information, contact the event host or see related publicity in this issue of The Jewish Journal.

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U.S. and Israeli Jews

Continued from page 10

US and Israeli communities like Partnership2Gether, which has connected people and communities for more than three decades.

And we need to scale innovation that will enable shared volunteer projects, philanthropic partnerships across both communities, stronger business and professional ties and digital opportunities to learn from one another. These opportunities can ensure impact when travel is impractical, reach those who are less engaged and ensure that this sense of connection to and understanding of Jews across the world is accessible to everyone in our greater Jewish family and community.

Our tradition teaches that "kol yisrael arevim zeh bazeh," all Jews are responsible for one another. That responsibility isn't theoretical. It is the reason we show up for each other in moments that matter. Three years after October 7, our data tell us we are still showing up.

Rebecca Caspi is senior vice president for Israel and Overseas and director general of Jewish Federations of North America's Israel Office. Mimi Kravetz is chief impact officer for Jewish Federations of North America. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.



The flame of Jewish life needs us. For Jewish children discovering who they are. For communities uniting against rising antisemitism. For Israeli communities rebuilding. In every generation, our people have chosen to keep the flame burning. This Chanukah, that responsibility falls to us. Make your gift today to keep the flame alive.



Chanukah reminds us that one small flame breaks through the darkness, but our collective light illuminates the world. Your generosity keeps the flame of Jewish life burning at camps where children make lifelong memories, in the synagogues and community centers where Jewish life thrives openly, and in Israel, where communities rebuild and families find their way home. As One, we keep the flame alive.

Advertise in The Jewish Journal 732-534-5959

Securing Our Community

Secure Community Network Update – October Report

By Michael G. Masters
SCN National Director & CEO
November 4, 2026
securecommunitynetwork.org

Eight years ago last week, a gunman murdered 11 members of our community in Pittsburgh. As we remember those we lost, we stand with their families and the survivors and recommit ourselves to protecting Jewish life.

As Jeffrey Finkelstein, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, and I wrote in the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle, "No amount of preparation can undo the tragedy of that day. But preparation does save lives, and the lessons from Pittsburgh have helped influence how Jewish communities across the country approach security."

Those lessons live in the investments communities have made in security, the professionals who protect them, and the partnerships that help turn preparation into action.

Earlier this month, security professionals from across North America and, for the first time, around the world, gathered in Coral Gables, Florida, for the 2026 Secure Community Network (SCN) Security Summit to share lessons, strengthen partnerships, and prepare for emerging threats. Individuals who protect our community across five continents, over a dozen countries, and representing 95% of the Jewish communities across North America gathered.

The Summit highlighted the courage of security professionals like Danny Phillips who stepped into the line of fire to protect more than 140 preschool children during this year's attack on Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, Michigan. His actions are proof that preparedness and vigilance save lives.

Preparedness also means leaders know what to do when a crisis unfolds. This month, SCN and Jewish Federations of North America released a joint Crisis Communications Guide to help Jewish organizations prepare for critical incidents and guide their communities through difficult moments.

Readiness also means spotting threats. Through SCN's Duty Desk and National Threat Management Network, community security professionals and law enforcement work together to identify threats and support investigations. This past month, suspects in two cases, one in Jacksonville and one in Utah, were federally charged after SCN de-anonymized threatening posts targeting the Jewish community.

The lesson of Pittsburgh is not that preparation can prevent every tragedy. It is that we cannot afford to be unprepared.

We honor the 11 lives taken in Pittsburgh not only through remembrance but through the work we do today. Security must be an enabler, not a barrier, to living a Jewish life.

Stay safe.

The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) established the Secure Community Network (SCN) in 2004. The SCN is a nonprofit organization that works to ensure the safety and security of the Jewish community in North America. The SCN's mission is to help individuals and organizations develop a culture of awareness, preparedness, and resilience through training, consultation, and information sharing. The SCN works with over 300 independent communities, 146 federations, and 50 partner organizations, as well as with partners in the public, private, academic, and non-profit sectors.

War with Iran
Weekly updates are available
at www.jewishoceancounty.org/israelupdate.

Donate now: www.jewishoceancounty.org/IsraelEmergency.

Jewish Federation of Ocean County is now on Facebook
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Respect difference
Say no to hate
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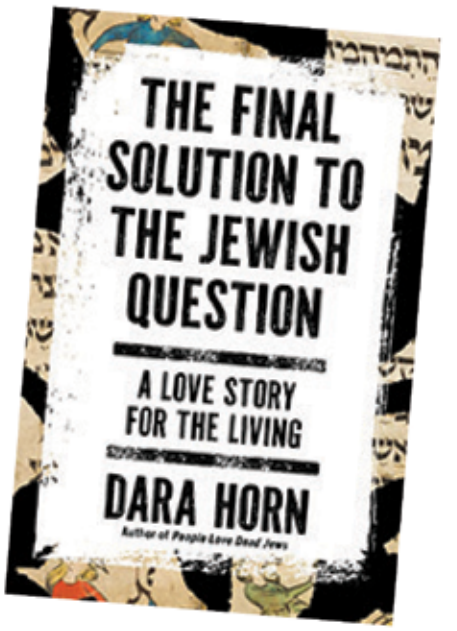
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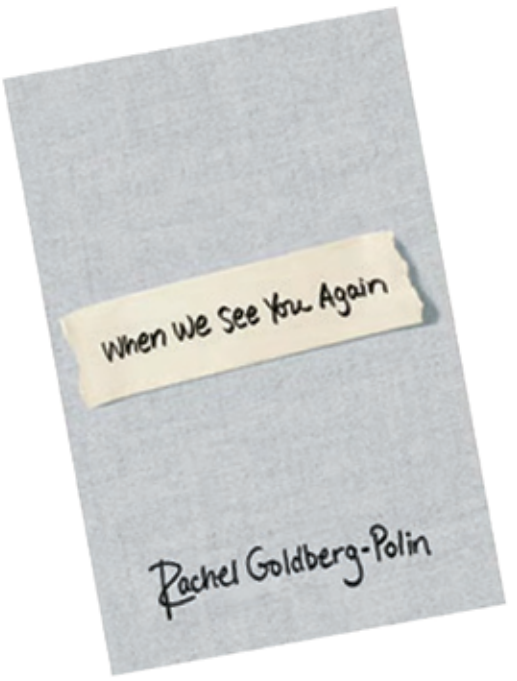
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT US ONLINE AT www.OHINJ.org

We are offering our community the opportunity to receive one of these two books for free:

When We See You Again, by Rachel Goldberg Polin and The Final Solution to the Jewish Question: A Love Story for the Living, by Dara Horn

You can join a book club on one of these two books





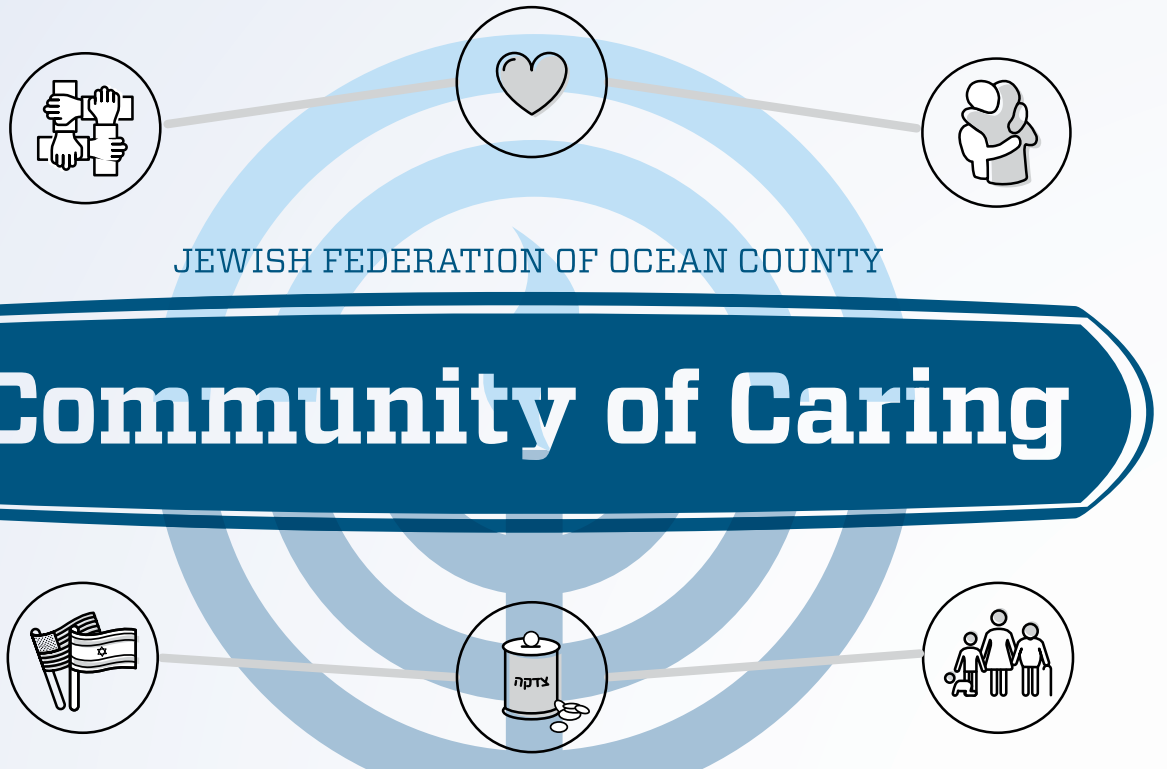
and receive the book for free. Sign up here for more information or to join a group. www.jewishoceancounty.org/israelbooks Or you can make a new contribution of $72 or more to our Israel Resilience Fund, which is continuing to assist those in need in Israel especially after October 7. www.jewishoceancounty.org/israel2026

About the two books . . .

In **When We See You Again**, Rachel Goldberg-Polin pours her pain, love, and longing onto paper, giving voice to the broken among us, and reminding us that even when the world feels choked with darkness, light exists in a different way. How do we find it? Her own experience has been extreme, but at its essence, this is a universal story of trying to live with grief. It is a story of how we remember and how we persevere, of how we suffer and how we love.

Combining deep historical research, investigative reporting, and storytelling bravado, **The Final Solution to the Jewish Question: A Love Story for the Living** is both diagnosis and prescription. Dara Horn explores and exposes the failures of Holocaust education, the long history of the antizionist movement, the compromises of the American Jewish "Golden Age," and the organized plot to poison artificial intelligence with anti-Jewish propaganda, and weaves it all into an erudite, audacious, and convincing series of arguments that invites readers of every background and inclination to become curious about their blind spots and to absorb new and uncomfortable truths. From there, she proposes a dramatic solution rooted in a new understanding of freedom and responsibility and clears a path toward a shared future.

See above about obtaining these books.



JEWISH FEDERATION OF OCEAN COUNTY

Community of Caring

Monday • December 21, 2026 • 6:30pm
Clarion Hotel

815 Route 37W, Toms River, NJ

KOSHER DINNER – $54/PERSON $100/COUPLE

LIMITED CAPACITY. REGISTER EARLY: WWW.JEWISHOCEANCOUNTY.ORG/COMMUNITYCARING

Heroes Against Hate recognizes Ocean County upstanders who confront antisemitism, racism, bigotry, bias, discrimination, and hate directed at others.

Heroes Against Hate are not superheroes. They are neighbors, students, educators, clergy, public servants, volunteers, and organizations that choose action over silence. Help us recognize them.

Heroes Against Hate

This year, with the spread of hate, antisemitism, and delegitimization of Israel, it is more important than ever to recognize those Heroes who stand up to hate. Help us honor them and build a stronger community at our Community of Caring celebration. Become a sponsor!

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Contributor – $54
1 Line Messgae to Honorees

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Jewish Federation
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Jewish Federation of Ocean County
Community of Caring

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Please list your name/business exactly as you prefer it to appear: _____

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Send form to: Heroes Against Hate – Jewish Federation of Ocean County
1235A Route 70 · Lakewood, NJ 08701 · 732-363-0530

What's the Recipe for Vibrant Jewish Life?

By Heather Morgan, Managing Director
JDC Global Marketing & Communications

At JDC (Joint Distribution Committee), this question is at the heart of our 111-year mission – lifting lives and strengthening communities in 70 countries. Though the ingredients for cultivating a proud Jewish future differ from place to place, the timeless value of arevut – the Talmudic notion that all Jews are responsible for each other – is always part of the mix. For the many Jews we serve around the globe, food is a crucial way they put this value into action. From JDC volunteers delivering challah to elderly, isolated Jews in Ukraine to a young leader in India making her grandmother's fish curry, Jews everywhere draw physical, spiritual, and emotional sustenance from dishes passed down generation to generation. I want to give you a taste of this dynamic Jewish world – as well as some much-needed joy – with this delicious cuisine. I hope you find the recipes as delightful as I do. Let's take inspiration from the rich and diverse culinary traditions that unite Jews everywhere.

*Editor's Note: Here is one of the recipes – **Marcelle's Delicious Sfenj (Moroccan Doughnuts)**. Watch future issues of the Jewish Journal for more recipes or check them all out at www.jdc.org/learn/recipe.*

"It wouldn't be Chanukah without sfenj. I'm happy to share my family's recipe with you!"
~ Marcelle Azoulay, Jewish community member in Casablanca, Morocco





Ingredients –

1 ½ tsp. yeast
1 ½ tsp. salt
½ kg. flour (about 4 cups)
1 cup warm water
Oil, for frying

Instructions –

1. In a mixing bowl, mix the flour, yeast, and salt, then add the water. Mix until smooth. Cover your dough and let it rest for 3-4 hours until it rises.
2. Heat enough oil to deep-fry the sfenj. The oil should be very hot. If possible, your frying pan should be placed on a slight incline.
3. Dip your hands in water, then pull the dough into a tennis ball-size sphere. Stretch the dough to make a hole in the middle. Repeat process with remaining dough.
4. Place each ball in the oil on the tilted side, with less oil. When it begins to darken, push it to the side with more oil and fry until golden-brown.

Serve sfenj hot, sprinkled with sugar, drizzled with honey, or plain. Consider pairing these tasty treats with a hot cup of mint tea.

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Israel Elections Update

By Rabbi Robert Rubin
November 10, 2026

On October 27, Israelis voted in their national election. They vote for party lists and not for individual candidates. The results can be summarized as follows:

a) The Benjamin Netanyahu bloc with 5 party lists had 68 seats before the election, now after the election has 53 seats.
b) The Opposition/Change bloc (led by Gadi Eisenkot) with 4 party lists had 42 seats before the election, now after the election has 48 seats.
c) The Arab parties bloc with 2 party lists (though one of the two party lists included three parties running jointly in one list) had 10 seats before the election, now after the election has 19 seats.

The goal now is for someone to form a majority coalition of various parties in order to govern with 61 or more of the 120 Knesset seats.

The various parties met with President Herzog after the election to give him their recommendations for prime minister. The parties in the Opposition/Change bloc and the Arab parties bloc all recommended Eisenkot, thus giving him 67 recommendations. One faction of one party (with 4 seats) of the Netanyahu bloc did not recommend any candidate for prime minister. The remaining parties in the Netanyahu bloc all recommended Netanyahu, thus giving him 49 recommendations.

The one political role of President Herzog is to choose the candidate for prime minister who he thinks has the best shot at forming a governing coalition. Sometimes that is the leader of the party with the most seats, but it does not have to be that way. Netanyahu's Likud party has 27 seats, while Eisenkot's Yashar party has 21 seats. However, Eisenkot received more recommendations (67) than Netanyahu (49). On November 1, Herzog appointed Eisenkot with the first mandate to form a governing coalition within a time frame of four weeks. If requested, a two-week extension can be granted.

If no governing coalition is formed by the first candidate (in this case, Eisenkot), then another candidate (presumably Netanyahu) can be chosen by the president and given four weeks to form a governing coalition. If no governing coalition is formed after two attempts, then a new election could be called, and the whole election process starts all over again.

Israel is a robust democracy, though it works differently than the United States. Watch for developments as they happen and stay informed.



"For the Lord thy God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and grapevines, figs and pomegranates; a land of oil olives and date honey."
Deuteronomy/Devarim 8:7-8

The Jewish Federation helped to build Israel. Today, we help keep it strong.

Am Yisrael Chai - The people of Israel lives!

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Jewish Federation of Ocean County is now on Facebook
Like us at:
www.facebook.com/jewishocean

Respect difference Say no to hate
Stamp it out!

Chanukah – What's the Mitzvah?

By Sarah Rochel Hewitt
Jewish Treats by NJOP

Here's a quiz:
What is the primary mitzvah of Chanukah?
a) Eating latkes (potato pancakes)
b) Giving Chanukah gifts or gelt (money)
c) Publicizing the miracle of the oil that lasted 8 days
d) Playing Dreidel

The correct answer is C. While the customs of Chanukah include eating latkes, giving monetary and other gifts and playing dreidel, the primary mitzvah of Chanukah is to light the menorah and display the lights, thus publicizing the miracle when the oil in the menorah in the Holy Temple burned for eight days instead of one.

In order to fulfill this mitzvah of publicizing the miracle, the menorah/chanukiah should be lit where it can be seen by the public. Chanukah lights were originally lit only in the doorway of the home, opposite the mezuzah, facing the street. However, it is now common practice outside of Israel to place the menorah in a window facing the street.

In order to make certain that the lights are visible, the menorah is lit after dusk. (There are two opinions regarding the correct time to light, so please consult your local rabbi.) On Friday evening, however, the menorah is lit before the Shabbat candles and extra oil (or longer candles) are used so that the Chanukah lights remain lit after nightfall.

If one is unable to light at the appropriate time, one may light later in the night, as long as there is someone else in the house who is awake (thus fulfilling the requirements of publicizing the miracle). If it is very late and no one is awake, one should light the menorah without the blessings.

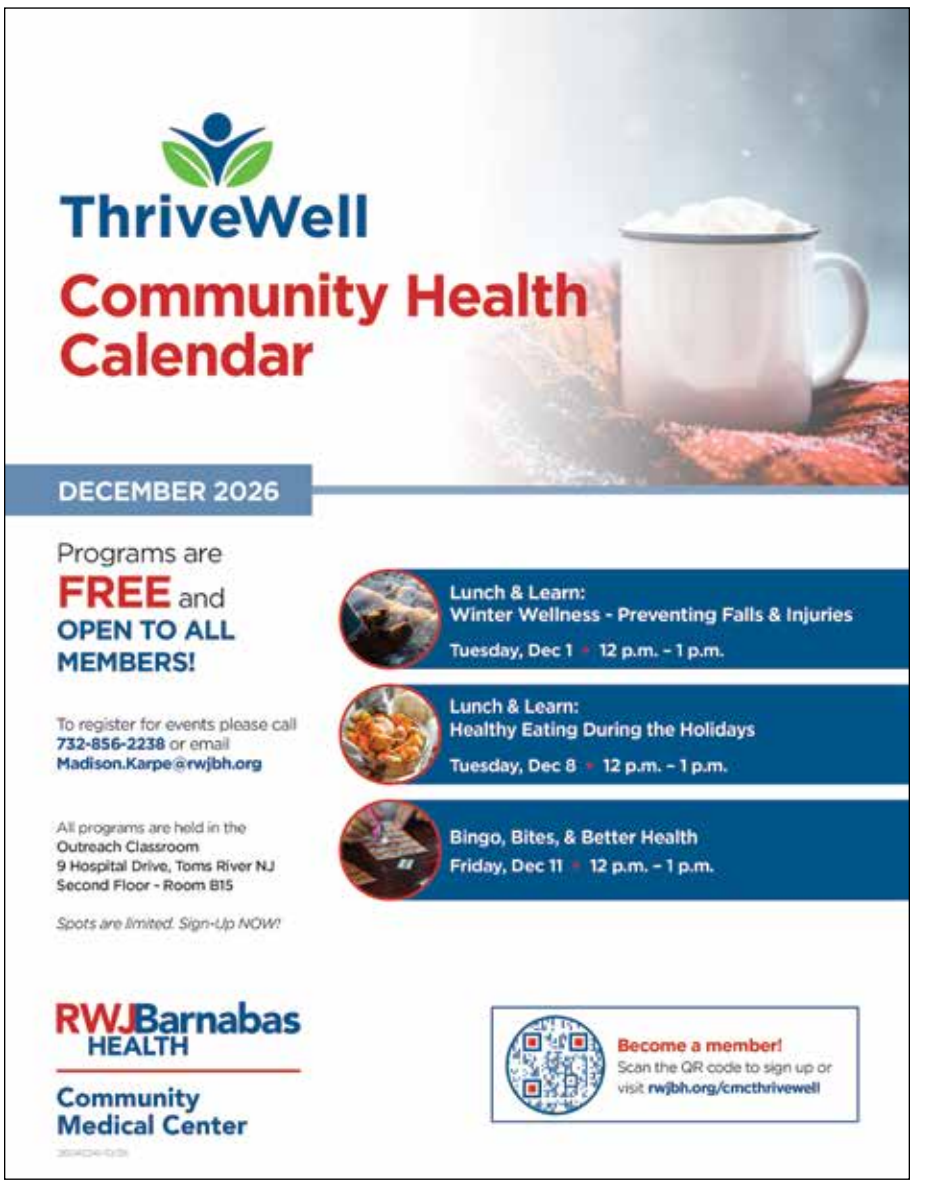
If there are still people in the street or in the apartments of a facing building who would see the lit menorah, it is permitted to light and say the blessings. If the menorah was not lit at all during the night, there is no "make-up" lighting during the day.

Please be sure to review fire safety procedures with your family.

Editor's Note: Chanukah is 25 Kislev through (this year) 2 Tevet which is Friday night-Saturday, December 4-5 through Saturday, December 12.

(For other "Jewish Treats: Juicy Bits of Judaism, Daily" and many other Jewish resources visit www.jewishtreats.org and www.njop.org.)

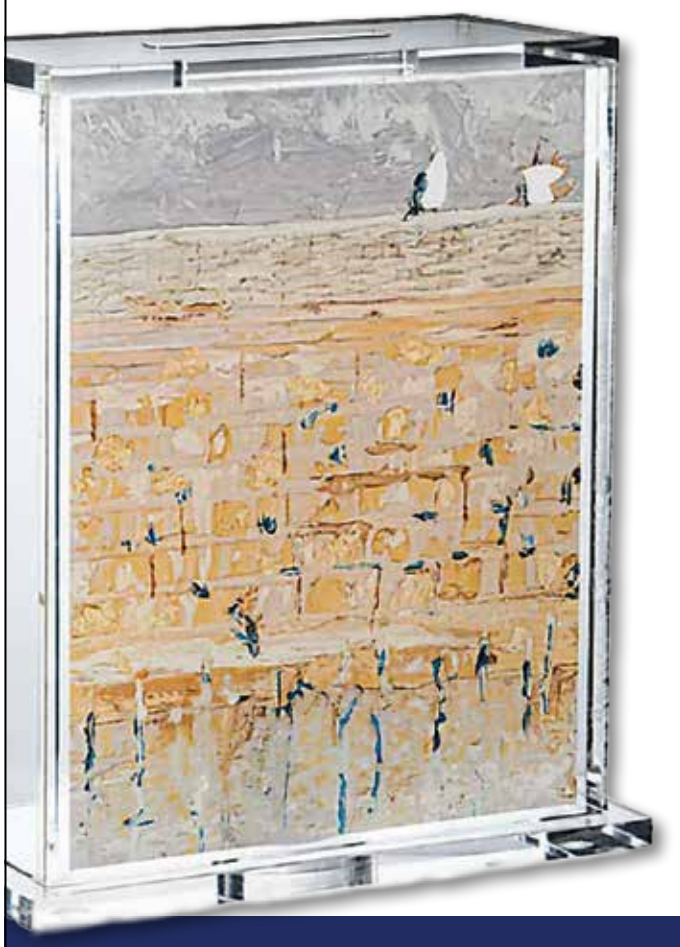






Ah Yes, We Remember it Well

Do you have historical recollections or reflections from fifty or more years ago about the Jewish Federation of Ocean County or the Jewish Community that you want to share as we approach JFOC's 50th anniversary? Send them to: jewishocean@gmail.com. Submissions will be reviewed for possible publication by the Jewish Journal Editorial Committee.



Help support our local Holocaust Survivors in Ocean County ***live at home with dignity.***

We now have two matching grants that provide over $7 million dollars in home health care services, glasses, dental care, hearing aids...

ועידת התביעות Claims Conference
Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany

Jewish Federation of Ocean County

KAVOD SHEF
Survivors of the Holocaust Emergency Fund

2026 MATCH REQUIREMENT
$230,000

THREE WAYS TO DONATE

1. Donate online at jewishoceancounty.org
2. Call the Federation office at 732-363-0530 and talk with our staff about donation options.
3. Make a monthly gift to support these critical services.

We continue our prayers for Israel:

May those who are wounded have a complete recovery.
May the memories of those who died be forever a blessing.
May all have peace.

Jewish Holiday Family Photos

We invite our community members to submit a few photographs of their family's recent holiday celebrations. Include a one-line caption describing the activity in the photo. You may include everyone's name or just your family's name or without any names at all. All submissions are subject to our editorial review, and we do not promise that all submitted photos will be published. Email your submission to jewishocean@gmail.com.

We invite our community members to submit original poetry or short essays (500 words or less) to the Jewish Journal. All submissions are subject to our editorial review, and we do not promise that all will be published. Email your submission to jewishocean@gmail.com.

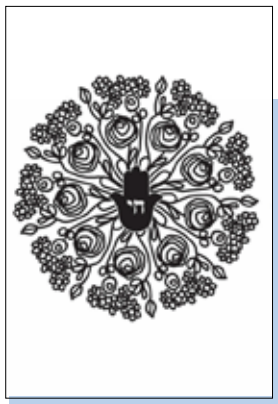


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FULFILL THE MITZVAH OF TZEDAKAH WITH AN INDIVIDUAL TRIBUTE CARD FOR $18 EACH.

Jewish Federation of Ocean County accepts a minimum donation of $18 and sends a Tribute card as well as lists your tribute in the Jewish Journal to anyone you may want to acknowledge; a simcha, graduation, an award, new grandchild, starting a new adventure, get well, loss of a loved one, or any other life-altering event. Call the Jewish Federation of Ocean County at 732-363-0530, email federation@ocjf.org or visit our website www.jewishoceancounty.org/tribute.





Special Offer

A Tribute Card Pack

You can purchase a dozen blank assorted tribute cards to send on your own for a $36 contribution to the Jewish Federation.



Send an email tribute for a minimum donation of $10

Mazel Tov, In Honor of You, Birthdays, and in Memory of - e-mail cards sent on your behalf and listed in the Jewish Journal.

NEW - purchase 10 birthday postcards for $18



JFOC Tributes

October 6 – November 9

In Honor of

Rita Sason by Leslie Zwain

In Memory of

Dr. Brian Cogan
Jack & Lenore Matin and Bradley Mauel by Linda Mauel
Lois Pollinger by Dorothy Smyth
Eric Wayne Sherman by Pauline Sherman
Barbara & Howard Zwain by Leslie Zwain



PJ Library

PJ Library Photos with Children

Do you have a photo of your child reading or holding a PJ Library book? We would like to publish some of them. We omit the names of children. The names of any adults in the photos could be included or omitted based on the guidance of the adult submitting the photo(s). Email them to jewishocean@gmail.com.

Here is How You Can Support Our Holocaust Survivors and Seniors

Please contribute to:

- Friends of JFCS
- The Holocaust Survivors' Special Fund
- The Seniors Lunch Program Special Fund

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Sign up now: sfi.usc.edu/new-survivor-testimonies

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Managing Editor

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The Jewish Journal of Ocean County is dedicated to the dissemination of information concerning significant events; social, cultural, and educational, that impact upon the Jewish community of Ocean County.

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Holocaust Survivors Alert

If you are a Holocaust Survivor who has never applied for compensation, or was turned down previously, there are new funds and guidelines. For more information, you may call the Claims Conference in NY at 646-536-9100 or go to their website: www.claimscon.org.
Click on survivor resources,
then click on compensation programs. They have a FAQ (frequently asked questions) section which should be read prior to applying.

The Federations We Need Now



Credit: Robert Lichtman

By Robert Lichtman
October 20, 2026
blogs.timesofisrael.com

(Please note that the posts on The Blogs are contributed by third parties. The opinions, facts and any media content in them are presented solely by the authors, and neither The Times of Israel nor its partners assume any responsibility for them.)

Dear Federations,

I have known you for most of my adult life. One of my first interactions with you was in the mid-1970s when my friends and I would drive from Queens College into Brooklyn to operate a storefront on Pitkin Avenue that we called The Brownsville Jewish Center. There we engaged with the elderly Jewish poor who could not flee the crime and squalor when their wealthier neighbors did. We provided Jewish holiday programs, a kosher food pantry, and took them on trips to remain engaged with the Jewish community. On Fridays some of us picketed the NY Federation of Jewish Philanthropies because it was one of their agencies that pulled out of Brownsville, taking the last semblance of Jewish communal infrastructure with them. One night while we were demonstrating at a fundraiser for the recently created UJA-Federation Joint Campaign, we created a bit of a disturbance and I made off with the podium banner as a trophy.

In the course of my Jewish communal career in Federations and Federation-funded agencies I came to NY UJA-Federation, where that banner held a prominent place on my wall, in my line of sight at all times, keeping me honest, true to myself and to the needs and dreams of the Jewish community. That banner became more of a memento than a moral North Star because while the work at Federations was always challenging, the Jewish ethos of the workplace never was.

Federation is where I saw how Jews of all kinds love and care for one another. Federation is where I met volunteer and professional activists who dreamed, sweated, and celebrated together in overcoming challenges that might have crushed another system that did not stand atop a 3,000-year-old foundation of interdependence while focusing its optimistic vision on an infinite horizon.

Every generation believes that the times they are living in are historic. That the challenges have never been greater. That failing to meet those challenges will have generational consequences. At the same time, every generation for the past century had one table around which everyone was welcome. A table where troubles were aired. A table where responsibility was shared. A table as central to the Jewish community today as the altar was to the Jewish community in Temple times.

One JFNA leader recently wrote that Federations cannot be everything to everyone. That is true, and that never was the goal of any Federation. But the unique role and the holy obligation of every Federation are to be at least something to everyone.

With all of this in mind, I ask you to consider my perspective in pursuing your mission at this moment. Some ideas may sound retro. Some may sound naïve. All are expressed in a spirit of respect and admiration, and with the certainty that our collective will and historical experience will carry us forward.

Stick to the knitting. It is said that "there are things that only a Federation can do." While this is not the absolute litmus test for committing or withholding political and financial capital, we count on you to focus on those things where a Federation's role is pivotal. There will always be other issues on your radar. They will be compelling to Federation leaders as human beings and as Jews. They will be domestic and Israeli issues. They will be political and cultural issues. Just because Federation is an important entity, it does not follow that every important issue needs to be heaped onto your agenda. There are other excellent organizations that have the expertise and the track record to address these, some created by you to represent the Jewish community's interests and obligations. Resist the temptation to own every issue. Resist the pressure to meet every need. When we say that "there are things that only a Federation can do," it is because no one else is doing them. If you get distracted, you will be doing these things less well when the goal is to become better. Yielding to other expert organizations does not mean that you don't care. It means that you trust them to do their job. As you would wish they trust you to do yours.

The poor of your city take precedence. Our community is shackled by unacceptable poverty. Not in a relative way, but in an existential one; people are living paycheck to paycheck, if they have a paycheck at all. One of the hallmarks of the Jewish community for centuries has been to joyfully take hold of every outstretched hand and help. We have become far too reliant on government to fulfill our obligations. Especially now when government funding is ever more tentative, it is time to free up additional philanthropic dollars to provide more direct assistance to people in our community who may seem okay but are being crushed financially. Can we promise that every Jew has food, a roof over her head, or is assisted in a job search? This is the wealthiest Jewish community in history. Let us be the first Jewish community in history that says "Yes."

Combating antisemitism should not be the organizing principle of Jewish communal life. Too many communities live under the genuine threat of antisemitism. Some Federations may be well positioned to coordinate responses, support victims, or advocate for policy changes. But too many Federations focus fundraising on the specter of Jew hatred. Let's not mislead people to believe that the more money they throw at you, the more antisemites will repent.

Leverage the passion of fighting hate to promote joy. When Abraham met God for the first time, God did not say, "Abraham, your mission is to fight antisemitism." Our mission as a People is to learn and to live as Jews, however each of us understands it, and to set an example of holiness for others to emulate. Unleash funding and other resources to promote Jewish literacy, to instill love of Israel and her people, and to build Jewish pride. Increase baseline allocations to Jewish day schools. Liberate gifted rabbis and the finest Jewish educators by giving them stipends to leave their buildings and to teach in private homes and in public spaces. Reimburse anyone who is enrolled in a Hebrew language program for 100% of the cost. Advise any donor who wants to make a mega-gift to "fight antisemitism" that 10% of the gift will be used to promote Jewish pride by investing in local Jewish education. That's how we fight antisemitism.

Keeping us safe is not your job. It's not the responsibility of the Jewish community to safeguard the Jewish community. It is the bedrock responsibility of every level of government to provide for the physical safety of its citizens. You were caught off-guard and had to fill a gap; you did it admirably. But we cannot bankrupt our future because the government is abdicating its responsibility. We will continue to do our part. We can shovel the sidewalk, but we cannot plow the street. For every private security grant, donors should be aware that you will allocate 10% to lobbying the government to do its job so that you can do yours.

You are funded by donors but live among people. In most communities, there are more Federation non-donors than donors, but every single Jew is a citizen of the community, worthy of your care and your love. "Of course!" you will say. Indeed. Keep that in mind every time you make a decision that will affect "the community." The community is more than the rabbis. More than the donors. More than the agencies. More than the Federation itself. Your community includes people you do not know and may never know. They, too, may not know you, but they have an innate awareness that there is a Jewish community that's supposed to be helping them. Go out and find them. They are waiting.

The best way to predict the future is to invent it. (Alan Kay, Computer Scientist) You are fortunate to be in this seat at this time. You have remarkably dedicated and outrageously generous lay leaders. You have talented professional colleagues who wake up every morning thinking of ways to help people and to strengthen the stitching that holds us together. The ongoing and emergent issues are as unrelenting as the ocean's tide, and you are engulfed in the urgencies of the day. Do not get stuck treading water. One of the things that only a Federation has the perspective to do is to plan and to build for the future – not the future of my shul, not the future of my school, not the future of my agency – but the future of a community that encompasses more and is greater than the sum of all those things. Yet, Federations are so inescapably mired in the turbulence of today that you cannot disentangle yourself to plan the future. Your Jewish Community Foundations are built for the future. They prepare for the future. They are funded for the future. Re-imagine the partnership: Federations will get us through today, while Foundations will envision, test, and invest in what comes next. Don't wait for the future. Build it.

Continued on page 30

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JFCS
Jewish Family & Children's Service
Jewish Federation of Ocean County



JEWISH FAMILY AND *changing lives...*

Resilience – Are You a Resilient Person?

By Drew Staffenberg
Holocaust Survivors Service Manager
Jewish Family and Children's Service

Today, we live in an era marked by economic instability, political division, technological disruption, and environmental crises. These pressures affect both our personal and professional life, making flexibility and resilience more critical than ever. **Resilience** is not just about "bouncing back" – it's about finding meaning in challenges, adapting to change, and using setbacks as learning opportunities and growth.

So, do you consider yourself a resilient person?

Research notes that a resilient person is someone who can bounce back, adapt, and grow after facing stress, failure, or hardship, instead of breaking or giving up. They manage adversity with a steady and flexible mindset. Some of the traits of a resilient person include being tough, strong, adaptable and tenacious; being a problem-solver; being resourceful; and optimistic, yet realistic.

Behavioral Scientist researchers note that resilience is a skill that can be learned and developed. A resilient person should aim to learn and cultivate some of the following qualities that have been observed in resilient people.

- **Flexibility** – Overcoming significant challenges and having the need to persevere, learning to adapt to change and bounce back from difficulties.
- **Positive outlook** – Not taking the posture of a victim. throwing off a victim's mentality and forging a view of the future full of faith and hope for what is to come.
- **Emotional intelligence and regulation** – Emotionally aware people intentionally allow their thinking and behavior to guide their emotions rather than allowing emotions to take the lead. By taking the time to cultivate empathy, compassion, self-awareness, active listening, renewing our minds, and becoming lifelong learners, we empower themselves to navigate the challenges in front of us.
- **Embrace and build community** – Trauma researcher Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D., said, "Social support is the most powerful protection against becoming overwhelmed by stress and trauma." We find strength through embracing solid social networks, cultivating close relationships, maintaining communication, learning to be vulnerable and loving diversity. The situations and circumstances that require resilience are best walked through inside a community.
- **Problem-solving** – Resilient individuals develop healthy and robust ways of problem-solving. Problem-solving includes defining and analyzing a problem, finding and evaluating options, making decisions, taking action, reflecting, and learning from the problem-solving process.
- **Practice healthy disciplines** – These disciplines include rest, diet, and exercise, ensuring that we seek counsel and have good coaches, worship, instructors, counselors, and people in our corner encouraging us to be healthy.

Resilient people share a core set of psychological and behavioral traits that allow them to adapt, recover, and grow through adversity rather than breaking under pressure.

Holocaust Survivors show remarkable resilience.

I have the honor of working with an incredible group of extremely RESILIENT people - our community's Holocaust Survivors. Research indicates that Holocaust Survivors show remarkable psychological resilience, indicating that up to 65% score high for resilience traits and roughly 78% engage in active, transcendent coping processes.

Organizations such as the ***Center on Aging, Trauma, and Holocaust Survivor Care*** highlight core practices from Survivors, include adapting to unchangeable circumstances, maintaining hope, prioritizing self-care, and finding purpose through helping others. Key factors in their continued resilience are: social support and family bonds, staying connected to family groups, forming deep friendships; finding a clear purpose or reason to live – such as fulfilling a promise to loved ones or witnessing to the world.

Survivors utilized a mix of self-reliance, spiritual faith, cognitive compartmen-

Continued on page 27

CHILDREN'S SERVICE
...making a difference

PJ Library

Jewish Federation of Ocean County October Statistics

1968 books sent to PJ Kids 0-8 years old
116 books sent to PJ Our Way Kids 9-12 years old
7 approved Get Together events
About 800 participants at the Fall Festival

NATIONAL EXCITING NEWS:

We're thrilled to share that PJ Library's original podcast, Beyond the Bookcase won FOUR awards at this year's Signal awards!

Our episode, "A Very Mashal Bat-Mitzvah" took home Listener's Choice in Best Scripted Fiction as well as Gold in Best scripted fiction!! The episode also earned a bronze in the overall Kids category.

Our episode, "Mr. Saifair's New Golem" won a Silver for voice acting.

For both scripted fiction and voice acting we were in the general category up against shows for all audiences (not just kids) and across the industry. Listen to each episode wherever you get your favorite podcasts.

Resilience

Continued from page 26

talization, and openness to outside aid (including help from others). In later decades, many Survivors rebuilt stable families, maintained careers, and channeled their experiences into community legacy, education, and human rights advocacy.

Our Ocean County Jewish community, like most others, views the care and support of Holocaust Survivors as a core moral and communal obligation to ensure they live out their final years with comfort and dignity.

We honor this sacred obligation through assisting with homecare services, food, medical and financial assistance, and connecting them with community to counter isolation and more. The median age of our Holocaust Survivors is 93 years old – all living in their own home.

If you want to learn more about personal, real-life stories about resiliency, talk with a Holocaust Survivor. Their stories, individual fortitude, passion for life, and positive outlook are awe-inspiring and provide insights for all of us.

In closing, one of our Survivors, a 92-year young Survivor, shared with me her philosophy of life: "When people ask me about happiness in the face of so many changes, I say, that happiness is what you make of it. When the time comes, you have to be realistic and accept and make the best of things. Don't ask if you're happy, create your happiness. And always tell yourself, I can and I will. I will, and ***I can. Can't is a four-letter word and makes you an invalid. Can keeps you young."***

Together with the **Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference)** and a grant from the State of New Jersey, the Jewish Family and Children's Service of the Jewish Federation of Ocean County has been providing the sacred obligation of pikuach nefesh (saving a life in jeopardy) to Holocaust Survivors for many years. We realize that unless you are impacted directly, you may not fully appreciate how important this work is. **Every dollar you contribute will be matched 25 times!**





HELP WANTED

Volunteer Opportunities — You can make an IMPACT!

ENGAGING ADULT COMMUNITIES

The goal here is to find ways to engage the Jewish populations in adult communities/Shalom Clubs with the Jewish Federation and to connect them to other Jewish activities/opportunities.

- Identify contacts and key "network nodes" in these communities to serve as influencers, networkers, and communicators
- Manage and follow through on ongoing communications and sharing opportunities with these networks
- Help identify/explore/shape opportunities that can be offered/delivered to these communities to help strengthen ties with the Federation/Jewish community
  - Films
  - Speakers
  - Topics
  - Sponsorships of programs

HELPING PROMOTE FEDERATION ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

We can always do a better job promoting our activities and impact, through media, email/other engagement, and delivery of promotional materials.

- Identification of new places to deliver materials
- Ongoing updates/communications to local papers and adult community newsletters
- Ongoing updates/communications/promotions through local synagogues/Chabads

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- info@renewal.org 718-431-9831

PLANNING EVENTS

We organize approximately 3 in-person events a year, to enable our community to come together, connect, and celebrate (hopefully) with each other.

- We are looking for people to help spearhead the framing and organizing of these events
- While this can include logistics and actual set-up, prep...this ideally includes positioning, promotion, and framing of these events
- This also can include volunteering on-site and engaging with guests/others at these events... ideally to help build affinity and connection to the Federation and Jewish community

HEROES AGAINST HATE

The opportunity for this program goes beyond just event promotion and set-up. This can be a platform for expanding reach in the broader community and engaging other groups/individuals in the mechanism of countering hate, spearheaded by the Federation.

- Sticking with the framework for Heroes awards discussed thus far...help identify other groups, organizations, places to look for and nominate Heroes
- Explore ways to expand awareness of the awards and the event
- Expand recruitment of participants and sponsors for the event/program

PJ PARENT AMBASSADOR

We now have over 1700 kids participating in our PJ Library program. We're looking for some parents who can commit to:

- Identify the needs of families, and develop engagement opportunities that meet their needs
- Develop, plan and organize intimate small-scale engagement opportunities at family friendly destinations or home-based gatherings
- Encourage parents to be involved in planning and organizing programs and gatherings

Contact Avi at kotleram@gmail.com for more information and to get started!

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www.jccoflbi.org

SHABBAT CANDLE LIGHTING IN LAKEWOOD

November 20	4:18 PM
November 27	4:15 PM
December 4	4:13 PM
December 11	4:13 PM
December 18	4:15 PM
December 25	4:18 PM



For Shabbat:
Blessed are You, Ad-nai our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the light of Shabbat.

For Chanukah:
Blessed are You, Ad-nai our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us to kindle the light of Chanukah.

Blessed are You, Ad-nai our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, who has done miracles for our ancestors in those days in this season.

(On first night) Blessed are You, Ad-nai our G-d, Sovereign of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and enabled us to reach this moment in time.

Chanukah begins on Friday night, December 4.
On Fridays, December 4 and 11, Chanukah candles are lit before the Shabbat candles.

Here is How You Can Support Our Holocaust Survivors and Seniors

Please contribute to:

- Friends of JFCS
- The Holocaust Survivors' Special Fund
- The Seniors Lunch Program Special Fund

It is easy to donate a little each month, to make a big impact!

- Go online to **www.jewishoceancounty.org**.
- Send a check, use your credit card, transfer stock.
- Call the office and talk with our staff.
- **Bring in your Tzedakah box. We will count it for you.**
- Consider making a monthly gift to support your community.

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"He made Black Jews not invisible anymore; he was the bridge"

Chicago Rabbi Capers C. Funnye, Jr., who has Died at 74, Will Be Remembered as a Trailblazer in the Jewish Community



Rabbi Capers Funnye Courtesy of Jewish Free Loan

By Aviya Kushner
November 2, 2026
forward.com

Rabbi Capers C. Funnye, Jr. rabbi and spiritual leader of Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation in Chicago, and the Chief Rabbi of the International Israelite Board of Rabbis, died November 2 at the age of 74.

A cousin of Michelle Obama and an important leader for Black Jews in America, Funnye was raised in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and converted to Conservative Judaism. He held leadership positions in Chicago's Jewish community and was a consultant to many cultural institutions throughout the United States.

"I've known him my whole life," said Rabbi Tamar Manasseh. "There is nothing that prepares you for this. I think it's really important for people to know that he made Black Jews not invisible anymore. He was the bridge. At that time it was not the priority for other Black Jews, but for him it was the priority. There were a million times that he was uncomfortable to one day bring comfort to us all."

Funnye was born in 1952, in Georgetown, South Carolina, and attended Howard University. He received a B.A. in Hebrew literature and a rabbinic ordination from the Israelite Board of Rabbis, Inc., in Queens, New York, and a B.A. in Jewish studies and an M.A. in human services administration from the Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, in Chicago.

In 1995, Funnye, Michelle Stein-Evers and Robin Washington (an editor-at-large at The Forward) founded the Alliance of Black Jews. Funnye became the first African American member of the Chicago Board of Rabbis in 1997 and was named Chief Rabbi of the International Israelite Board of Rabbis, in New York in 2015. He also served as a rabbi for congregations in Nigeria, Uganda, and other sub-Saharan African nations.

"Rabbi Capers Funnye was my 'rebbe' for connecting with the Black community and for understanding how important it is to bring the Black Jewish community to the very center of the Jewish community," said Asher Lopatin, rabbi of Kehillat Etz Chayim of Detroit. "I was inspired as he fought hard to gain acceptance as a full member of the Chicago Board of Rabbis and then succeeded in getting full membership in the New York Board of Rabbis and opening up the New York Board of Rabbis to graduates of the Israelite Rabbinical Academy," Lopatin said. "I will never forget his passion, his brilliance, his insight and his love for Judaism, the Jewish community and Israel. May his memory be a blessing."

"It was an honor to welcome Rabbi Funnye and members of the International Israelite Board of Rabbis to become part of our rabbinic family. His steadfast commitment to group relations helped us to better understand the dynamics of the Black Jewish community," said Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, executive vice president of the New York Board of Rabbis. "May we continue to perpetuate his legacy."

"Rabbi Funnye was important to Chicago as a prophetic Jewish voice and leader," said Jane Ramsey, longtime Executive Director of the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs. "He doggedly ensured that the dignity and stories and histories of Black Jewish communities were honored, heard, and learned. For many years, Rabbi Funnye fought to overcome resistance from white Jewish faith and organizational leaders unwilling to accept the Black Jewish community's legitimate existence. Determined, Rabbi Funnye advocated, grew, and led the movement, expanding its reach and connecting with allies from Chicago's diverse faith, racial, and ethnic communities, ensuring that its existence was, after decades of denial, acknowledged, accepted, and celebrated. Rabbi Funnye helped grow Chicago's diverse progressive movement for justice, connecting his congregants with members from Mosques and churches to collectively battle social, economic and political injustices."

"Rabbi Funnye has touched countless lives with his spiritual leadership, wisdom, and unwavering commitment to our congregation and the broader Hebrew Israelite community. His legacy of faith, service, and dedication will continue to inspire generations," Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation wrote on its Facebook page.

Aviya Kushner is the Forward's language columnist and the author of Wolf Lamb Bomb *and* The Grammar of God.

Federations

Continued from page 24

A mentor of mine, himself a senior Federation professional, once told me that I get disappointed sometimes because I expect too much of Federations. Let's prove him wrong.

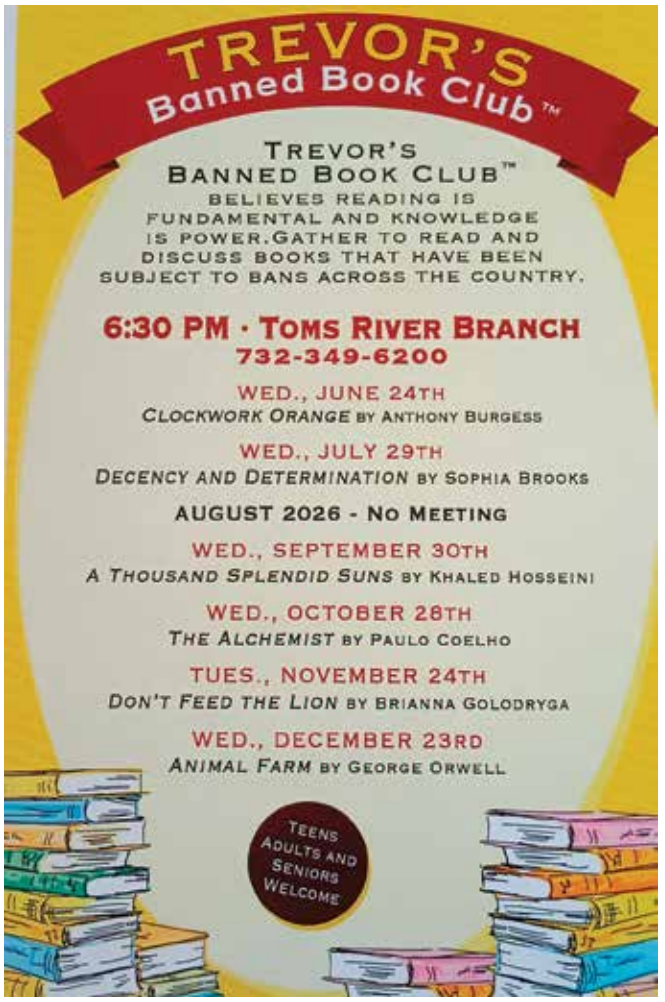
About the Author: Robert Lichtman has devoted his career to securing a vibrant future through Jewish leadership, learning, and community. He has served in senior roles at major Jewish organizations including UJA-Federation of New York, Hillel International, and the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest, where he was Chief Jewish Learning Officer. Now an essayist, mentor, and teacher, he explores the challenges and possibilities of Jewish communal renewal in his writing and teaching.

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