

The Jewish Journal

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Jewish Federation
of Ocean County
Celebrating 49 Years!

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Local News - see pages 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8

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Just Because You're Paranoid...



By Keith Krivitzky, Managing Director
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We recently sponsored an event that, unfortunately, touched on several of the challenges we deal with in our community. This was an event for teens at the BlueClaws. As we know, the demographics in Ocean County have changed – and there aren't many Jewish youth or teens in our area outside of the Orthodox community.

Several of our community rabbis wanted to do something and sponsor an activity to engage this audience and hopefully attract others in our area. The Jewish Federation was happy to help and sponsor the program.

When promoted on Facebook, this provoked a nasty response from some. One example: "The Jews are discriminating

We also should be proud of who we are and confident when we support members of our extended Jewish family.

against goy again... BlueClaws just held a free and for Jewish teens only day. When asked if non-Jews can go with a "chaperone" Jew they said absolutely not... Did you know there is a jewishoceancounty . Org... Wild"

Of course this isn't true. This was a private event that was paid for by private sponsors. Anyone in our country is free to do that – to host any sort of party or gathering for whomever they want. But here are some of the things that are true...

- There has been a significant increase in antisemitic sentiment in our society and in our community. And more people feel free to express themselves in this way.
- The Jewish Federation has invested in security preparedness and support with our partners at JFed Security, who work to ensure our local synagogues, Chabads, and other partners are as protected and safe as possible. They helped identify the potential concern with this event.
- Many in the Orthodox community in greater Lakewood don't make relations with our non-Orthodox nei-

ghbors easy. This is a largely insular community where there are some less concerned about derech erez or how you treat others from outside your particular community. This is largely due to being so inwardly focused, but it can leave a bad impression on others – even within the Jewish community.

- Additionally, many in this community look to take full advantage of "the system" – whatever that system is, be it local government, tax or welfare or education benefits. (Btw – as do many other communities and prominent individuals because, after all, that's part of the system.) Yet, while it is totally fair to have opinions about appropriateness or fairness – to be angry when people go too far or to be frustrated with trends or outcomes (like traffic in Lakewood or the school budget) – there are remedies to this. Also, this is also part of the system.
- What isn't acceptable is when one blames and labels an entire group for the bad behavior of a few or for what countless others have done before. That kind of double standard crosses a line. As it did here.
- And when it happens to a group that has been targeted and labeled an absurdly disproportionate number of times in seemingly countless instances of double standards... you can see why antisemitism provokes such concern and must be called out whenever and wherever we see it.

So, what can we learn from or do about this? What are they takeaways?

We should all be very careful about labeling someone just because they are part of a group – or labeling a group because of the behavior of a number of someones. Stereotypes, while they can be understandable, can also be dangerous.

We also should be proud of who we are and confident when we support members of our extended Jewish family. We get to have activities for our community and smaller circles of friends and family just like everybody else.

And we should be vocal and forthright about calling out those who wish to label us or throw double standards our way. Like in this case. Like what happens with much (though not all) criticism of Israel.

Additionally, our support – and, through us, your support – of security resources and programs like Heroes Against Hate are vitally important right now. We need to invest in more of these kinds of efforts.

So – let's be vigilant. Let's continue doing the important work we need to do in the community. Let's come together for support and to celebrate as a community. And thank you for being our partners.

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 – Irina's Okroshka Recipe with Kefir: A Cool Delight. Watch future issues of the Jewish Journal for more recipes or check them all out at www.jdc.org/learn/recipe.

"I love my community here in Kharkiv, and I love preparing this dish for them. Food binds us together."

~ Irina



Ingredients –

- 12–15 radishes
- Dill, to taste
- Parsley, to taste
- 10 scallions
- 1 cup sour cream, or more to taste
- 4 1/4 cups kefir (1 liter)
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- Juice from 1/4 of a lemon
- 5–6 hard-boiled eggs, diced (optional)
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions –

Finely chop vegetables and greens. Add salt, sour cream, and lemon juice. Add kefir and mix with spoon. Add salt and pepper and hard-boiled eggs (optional). Serve cold.

Share with our community your favorite Jewish recipe.

Help Jewish Ocean County share the warmth and magic of holiday and family recipes that helped shape your Jewish childhood and experiences. We are seeking members of our community to share recipes (kosher-style/friendly), along with possible pictures, that we can then print in our High Holidays edition of the Ocean JPages, which will be a calendar.



Send your recipe to
www.jewishoceancounty.org/recipes.

Jewish Federation of Ocean County Upcoming 50th Anniversary

50th Anniversary of the Jewish Federation of Ocean County – How Did We Get Here?

By *Richard Hammerman*
Rabbi Emeritus
Congregation B'nai Israel, Toms River

As we mark the USA's 250th year of Independence, we should note that 2027 will mark the "Golden Anniversary" of the Jewish Federation of Ocean County.

For many of us, "it's always been here." But how did it begin? What were the catalysts? Where did it start? Who were its earliest founders? I will attempt to answer these questions, as best as I recall them.

Lakewood's Jewish history can be traced to the 1920s where rooming houses and then hotels gave Jews from New York City clean pine – infused air and delightful lakeside walks, winter ice skating and affordable kosher (and some not so kosher) resort opportunities not too far from "the City." Lakewood's first synagogue, Sons of Israel, was founded in the first decade of the 20th century. Reform and Conservative congregations were formed later.

Jackson and Toms River's Jewish history is associated with two waves of Jewish farmers, the first in the early 1900s; the second post-World War Two; with the financial assistance of the Baron de Hirsch Fund. The earliest Jewish farmers soon learned that tilling the sandy land was futile. Nothing grew easily. However, the sand was optimal for poultry farming and egg production. The sandy soil provided natural drainage to lessen infection from poultry waste.

Dedicated to "the land," the early Jewish poultry farmers in Ocean and Monmouth counties readily identified with early Zionist and Socialist-leaning pre-Statehood Eretz Yisrael (Land of Israel), through the Labor Zionist movement and Keren Kayemet (later called "The Jewish National Fund.").

After the development of the Jewish Ce-

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community of Ocean County,
Israel and around the world
and plan for the philanthropic,
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advancement of the Ocean
County Jewish Community.
~ Original Mission of
The Jewish Federation
of Ocean County**

metry on Whitty Road in Toms River in the 1910s, the "Community of Jewish Farmers" was created as a home for Jewish social, cultural and, for some, religious activities. Looking for local Jewish education for their children and regular religious services, a more religiously oriented group from the Community of Jewish Farmers' Community House formed Conservative Congregation B'nai Israel in 1950. Later, Reform Temple Beth Shalom, which eventually merged into Beth Am Shalom, developed from the same "Jewish Community House."

Toms River Jewry created a "Council of Jewish Organizations" to help fundraise for Israel via the national United Jewish Appeal and manage Jewish concerns locally. In 1976, as the needs of Israel and World Jewry, and especially Soviet Jewry, became of greater concern, **Zev Rosen**, past-President of Congregation B'nai Israel (whose father, **Irving Rosen** was the synagogue's second President) called a meeting of six representatives of constituent Jewish groups in Toms River and Lakewood.

Chairman Zev Rosen convened a lunch meeting at Howard Johnson's Restaurant. Present were **Hans Ehrmann** representing the Toms River Jewish Community Center (formerly called the Community of Jewish Farmers); **Sidney and Bernie Boyarin** of Temple Beth Am, Lakewood; **Sid Troy** of Ahavat Shalom (Conserva-

tive), Lakewood; and **myself**, rabbi of Congregation B'nai Israel.

The goal was to try to assist the haphazard UJA fundraising on behalf of Israel which complemented JNF's long history in Ocean and Monmouth counties. Until then UJA fundraising was accomplished with the assistance of UJA fundraisers who came to town periodically. A new organization was needed to represent Jewish and Zionist interests internationally, politically, in Israel and locally in a professional manner. A "Federation" needed to be created, similar to those in most organized Jewish communities, to bring the community together to meet shared goals.

First called the "Ocean County Jewish Federation," and later "The Jewish Federation of Ocean County" in keeping with other national USA federations, it opened its first office in Lakewood. **Rabbi Paul/Pesach Levovitz** of Sons of Israel Congregation gave the "blessing" over the Mezuzah – in English, possibly out of concern that the Mezuzah wasn't kosher!

Marvin Relkin, a warm and dynamic leader, was hired as the first Executive Director of the newly formed Federation. Relkin's "watchword" was: "Whose side are you on? If you're on Israel's side, you have to donate your time and money on behalf of the OCJF." He was succeeded by another notable, creative leader, **Michael Ruvel** who helped to shape the Federation into a more organized full-time Social Service Agency, in addition to spearheading Zionist advocacy and philanthropy.

Women's Division of the Jewish Federation was created and actively advocated on behalf of education, Zionism and philanthropy and spearheaded an annual major community-wide program with a noted speaker. One of the first speakers on behalf of Women's Division was Esther Jungreis, flamboyant creator of the International Hineni Organization.

Some notable early achievements of the Federation, in addition to providing funds to National UJA for Israel, were trips to Washington, DC, to meet with AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and lobby our House and Senate representatives in person.

The creation of Ocean County's Jewish Family Service to meet social and personal needs was another early achievement. In 1987 our Federation organized buses from Ocean County to attend the "Freedom Sunday" rally in Washington, DC, on behalf of Soviet Jewry. There we joined 250,000 others on raising our voices on behalf of opening the gates for Soviet Jews long prohibited from leaving the USSR. Later, Federation volunteers helped to settle new immigrants from the Soviet Union in Ocean County.

Federation was a regular and critical supporter of Jewish education through our two Jewish Day Schools as well as local synagogue Religious Schools. In addition, Federation organized an important Interfaith Christian-Jewish Solidarity Mission to Israel after the 2001 Sbarro Terrorist event which killed 16 innocent people, including seven children and a pregnant woman. In addition, since its founding, the Federation has provided a regular newsletter to provide important news and views to help unite and educate the local Jewish community.

The Jewish Federation of Ocean County holds as its original* mission: "To further the Jewish community of Ocean County, Israel and around the world and plan for the philanthropic, social, cultural, educational advancement of the Ocean County Jewish Community."

Happy 50th Anniversary to OUR Jewish Federation!

(Rabbi Richard Hammerman served as Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Israel, Toms River for 31 years, 1975-2006, and has been Rabbi Emeritus since 2006.)

(*Editor's Note: As the needs of the Jewish community of Ocean County have changed over the years, the Federation's focus and priorities have evolved as well, but we are still committed to this original ideal.)

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

Local News

Sisterhood of Congregation B'nai Israel, Toms River, Achieves a Major Milestone

After World War II, a group of Jewish farmers in Toms River created a new place of worship and learning for themselves, the Conservative synagogue of Congregation B'nai Israel. Before long, their wives, mothers and sisters were organizing their own communities within it, including a Sisterhood that has endured through multiple generations, providing services, events and support for CBI, as well as for the greater Jewish community and Israel.

This spring, CBI's Sisterhood was recognized by the Garden State Women's League for Conservative Judaism for reaching an anniversary milestone for the 2025-26 year: 75 years of affiliation with the state Women's League. "We are proud of your sisterhood for all that you have accomplished and the support you have for WLCJ, your synagogue, your affiliate, and for Israel," wrote Sheila Kaufman, president of the state league in April.

Sisterhood co-coordinators Janet Miller and Susan Schmied said they were grate-

ful for the recognition, even as they were busy planning and organizing activities and events for the coming months.

CBI's Sisterhood sponsors programs that include lectures and food demonstrations "from recipes handed down from generation to generation," according to the CBI website, cbitr.org. One recent visitor was "George Washington," the local historian Jeff Schenker, who provided a lively lecture on his life and times.

A popular event is the annual Chanukah gift wrap luncheon, as shown in the photo (l-r: Susan Schmied, Janet Miller and Wendy Ehrlich). Sisterhood also maintains a Judaica Gift Shop at CBI, carrying "items essential for holiday celebrations," including gifts.

Miller said the group was particularly proud of its success at raising money for the Torah Fund, the dedicated philanthropy of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism that supports scholarships and programs in the worldwide Conservative/Masorti institutes of higher

Jewish learning.

The state league said CBI first affiliated with them on January 29, 1951. Twenty years later, a young mother, Arlene Neugarten, showed up (sometimes bringing along her own mother) to meet other women and help support the CBI community. "Sisterhood opened the door to wonderful people," Neugarten said recently.

Neugarten, who now runs CBI's Tree of Life program, became president of Sisterhood in the early 80s. Activities in those days included a square dance, cake sales, support for the library and youth lounge, as well as for the gift shop. Sisterhood also provided catering for events, including the b'nai mitzvah of her own children, Neugarten said. (CBI now has a separate food committee that handles kiddush and food for special events.) "We had a lot of laughs in the kitchen," Neugarten recalled.

Most of all, Neugarten said, Sisterhood provided her with deeper connections to



the synagogue and introduced her to a group of lifelong friends. "I feel very at home in the synagogue. I love the people. It became my family," Neugarten said. "Let's put it that way."

For information about the congregation, call the CBI Office at 732-349-1244.

Temple Beth Or, Brick, Update

Sisterhood Shabbat was held on Friday, May 8 and was well attended. On May 12, Sisterhood elections took place and presented a new Board. The following is the new slate of Sisterhood officers: Co-Presidents are Rachel Zycband and Johanna Hann, Fundraising Vice-President is Joy Witt, Membership Vice-President is Johanna Hann, Corresponding Secretary is Susan Zwiebel, Treasurer is Rachel Zycband, Financial Secretary is Anne Katz and Recording Secretary is Anne Katz.

Mazal Tov to Rabbi Respes and family on the Bar Mitzvah of his son, Shai.

For information about the congregation, call the TBO Office at 732-458-4700.



Temple Beth Or

Real Torah.

Real Community.

Real Connection.

Engaging Shabbat services

Dynamic teen and adult learning

Thoughtful holiday experiences

Strong commitment to Israel

A welcoming, vibrant congregation

Discover Jewish life that speaks to today while rooted in tradition.

Join us.

Temple Beth Or

Call us at 732-458-4700 or email us at templebethorbrick@gmail.com.

Chaim Respes, Rabbi

Dr. Sharon Monter, President

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.

Local News

Jewish War Veterans of the USA Update

"A Jewish Voice for Veterans, A Veterans Voice for Jews since 1896"

By Al Adler

Love spring – the longer days, the green leaves on trees, the sweet smell of spring flowers and the knowledge that summer is on the horizon.

May also brings our Annual Legislative Breakfast. This year our 44th Annual Legislative Breakfast was on Sunday, May 3, at the Clarion Hotel in Toms River. At the JWV legislative breakfast we honor a legislator of the year and an organization of the year.

This year our Legislator of the Year is the honorable Melinda Kane, assemblywoman for the 6th District, New Jersey. Assemblywoman Kane is a passionate advocate for veterans and their families. Assemblywoman Kane is the daughter of a World War II veteran and her husband served as an army physician. Assemblywoman Kane is a gold star mother whose son LCPL Jeremy Kane was tragically killed in Afghanistan.

Prior to her assembly position Ms. Kane worked at the Camden County Veterans Affairs office. Assemblywoman Kane served eight years as Councilwoman in Cherry Hill and six years at Camden County Commissioner.

As a member of the General Assembly, Assemblywoman Kane serves as a member of the Assembly Appropriations Committee, the Consumer Affairs Committee, and Vice Chair of the Military and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Clearly Assemblywoman Kane has earned the honor of 2026 JWV Legislator of the Year.

The JWV Organization of the Year honoree is the Bob Woodruff Foundation. Twenty years ago, the Bob Woodruff Foundation was organized after ABC News Correspondent Bob Woodruff was seriously injured in 2006 while reporting on the War in Iraq. A roadside bomb caused him serious injury, and he was in a coma for 36 days. The Woodruff Family – Bob, his wife Lee and brother Dave – saw that not all veterans had the same access to care that Bob had received. The Woodruff Family vowed to help our nation's veterans to receive the care they need.

Representing the Bob Woodruff Foun-

ation at our Legislative Breakfast was COO Todd Duso. COO Duso is an Army veteran, who saw both combat and non-combat deployment. COO Duso has held previous leadership positions in the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, the State of Kuwait and in the Pentagon.

The foundation and bedrock of our Legislative Breakfast is our Agenda of Concerns and Legislative Priorities. Primarily, among these concerns is the issue of the rise of antisemitism in our communities and state. JWV opposes all forms of discrimination and bigotry but is especially outspoken on antisemitism.

JWV also supports addressing the issue of toxic exposure and the burn pits. We also support strengthening the Pact Act. Another priority is the Congressional passage of the Major Richard Star Act.

I would like to congratulate co-chairs Bob Jacobs and Fran Gimpel, the Legislative Breakfast Committee, The Staff and Management of the Clarion Hotel and all VSO's, Post Members and JWV Ladies Auxiliary Members who made this event a success.

On Thursday, May 7, members from JWV and JWV Ladies Auxiliary attended a "Remember The Veterans Luncheon" at the Katz Jewish Community Center in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. The program was a special occasion since the Islay Walden Education Alliance was honoring May Brill. May Brill is the oldest living veteran in New Jersey and a World War II Veteran. The program also celebrated May's birthday and was attended by many of her family members, friends and JWV/JWVA members. Mazal Tov to a very special lady and veteran.

As many of you know, my lovely wife Carol is the Jewish War Veterans Ladies Auxiliary National President and I am her schlepper. Carol and I will be traveling and visiting the following military academies: Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut; the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland; and the Air Force Academy in Colorado. During these visits Carol will be attending award assemblies and presenting a gift to an honored graduate. I will have more information on these visits in my next month's article.

On this 250th anniversary of our beloved country, God Bless the United States. God bless our men and women in harm's way and God bless our veterans and their families.



May Brill speaking at her luncheon



JWVA National President Carol Adler who was presented an engraved gavel from JWVA Department of NJ Co President Marlene Berger as her visitation gift



JWV Department of New Jersey Commander Michael Steinhorn and Legislator of the Year Assemblywoman Melinda Kane 6th district



JWV Department of NJ Commander Michael Steinhorn presenting the Organization of the Year Award to COO Todd Duso of the Bob Woodruff Foundation



Introducing: Ocean Inc. Veterans EZ Ride Transportation Program

The program provides a monetary credit in an EZ Ride account that veterans use to book Uber/Lyft rides to and from medical appointments, grocery/retail shopping, military organizational social and any other community event. A spouse/caregiver is able to ride with the veteran. Participants must own a cell phone to utilize the program. If you or someone you know is a veteran and requires transportation services, contact the Ocean Inc. Veterans Transportation Coordinator, Carmine Czaplak at (732) 496-3704 or via email at cczaplak@oceaninc.org. During the registration process, be sure to have available a Drivers License, Military ID or Veterans VA ID and a copy of your DD214 Form.

Local News

Not Just a Restaurant: Why Lacey Gave Its First Key to the City



Debbie Abrahamovic Kay holds the Key to the City and proclamation after being honored by Lacey Mayor Steven Kennis and other officials. (Photo by Stephanie Faughnan)

By *Stephanie A. Faughnan*
May 12, 2026
jerseyshoreonline.com

LACEY – At a recent Township Committee meeting, what began as a tribute to a well-known restaurant quickly became something more personal, a recognition of a woman whose quiet acts of kindness, steady presence, and lifelong commitment helped shape the heart of the community.

That became clear as Mayor Steven Kennis presented Debbie Abrahamovic Kay with Lacey Township’s first-ever Key to the City, an honor recognizing her decades at the helm of The Captain’s Inn, and the far-reaching impact she has had on the people who call Lacey home. “Thank you to all of you,” Kay told the Township Committee, pausing as she gathered herself. “It’s always been my pleasure. My whole family grew up in Forked River and we’re going to be here for a long time.” Her words were brief, but they carried the same sincerity that has defined her connection to the town for decades.

The significance of the moment extended well beyond a ceremonial gesture, as township officials confirmed that this was the first time Lacey had ever awarded a Key to the City. The distinction is traditionally reserved for individuals whose contributions go beyond expectation, and in this case, officials made clear that Kay’s impact reached far deeper than her role as a business owner.

According to the proclamation, The Captain’s Inn became “a cherished gathering place where friendships were formed, celebrations were shared, and countless memories were made.” The language captured what many residents already understood – that the restaurant functioned

as a cornerstone of community life, not just a place to dine. It also noted that Kay’s contributions extended well beyond the walls of her business, citing her “generosity, civic spirit, and steadfast support of local initiatives” as defining aspects of her legacy.

Kennis reinforced that message in his remarks, speaking not only as an elected official but as someone who recognized Kay’s long-standing role in shaping the town’s identity. “This is the very first key that we’re giving, and you’re such a huge part of the fabric of Lacey Township,” he said, underscoring both the rarity of the honor and the depth of her connection to the community.

“An Unsung Hero”

While the proclamation outlined the reasons for the dedication, Deputy Mayor Bob Laureigh reflected on a lifetime of memories tied to Kay and her family, noting that he had known her since their high school years and watched both her and The Captain’s Inn grow alongside the community. He spoke about the generations of local families connected to the restaurant, including his own, and credited Kay with elevating the business while remaining a caring employer and trusted friend to so many.

Laureigh said that while the restaurant will continue, it is Kay’s personal touch that will be most missed, the way she made every gathering feel special and every guest feel valued, before adding, “Not only do you hold the key to our town, you hold the key to our hearts.”

Committeewoman Peggy Sue Juliano added that although she hadn’t known Kay as long as some of the others, she was extremely grateful. “For me, personally, between my mom and my husband (the late Mayor Nick Juliano), you took care of me, and I will never forget that.”

Though she did not speak during the meeting, Township Administrator Veronica Laureigh was visibly emotional during the presentation and later reflected, describing Kay not in terms of accolades, but in terms of quiet, consistent acts of kindness that often went unnoticed by the broader public.

“When I think of Debbie, I think of her as an unsung hero in our community,” Laureigh said, explaining that Kay was



Debbie Abrahamovic Kay is joined by Lacey Township officials after receiving the municipality’s first Key to the City, honoring her longtime leadership of The Captain’s Inn and contributions to the community. (Photo by Stephanie Faughnan)

often the first to step in when someone needed help. “Whether it’s sending a meal to a family in need, contributing to a gathering, or supporting local fundraisers... she consistently gives of herself.”

Laureigh emphasized that what made Kay’s generosity especially meaningful was the way she carried it out, without seeking recognition or praise. “She does it without fanfare or expectation of recognition,” she added. “She simply serves.” That sentiment set the tone for the rest of the remarks, as speaker after speaker reflected on similar experiences, reinforcing the idea that Kay’s impact was measured not just in business success, but in personal connections.

Another official put it even more plainly, expressing admiration for the scope of her contributions. “I’ve never seen a person do what you do for a town,” he said, highlighting the rarity of the kind of impact Kay has had over the years.

A Place Rooted in History

The story of The Captain’s Inn itself adds another layer to the recognition, tying Kay’s legacy to a much longer history within the township. Long before it became the well-known waterfront restaurant it is today, the building served as the casino and annex for the Riverside Hotel, a popular destination dating back to the late 1800s.

That history took a dramatic turn in 1952, when a fire destroyed the main hotel. The structure that would become The Captain’s Inn survived, allowing it to remain part of the community even as the surrounding landscape changed. Over the years, the property changed ownership be-

What made Kay’s generosity especially meaningful was the way she carried it out, without seeking recognition or praise.

**~ Lacey Township
Administrator
Veronica Laureigh**

fore eventually being purchased in 1969 by members of the Abrahamovic family, including Kay’s parents, Sam and Elsa, who brought their own story to the business as immigrants from Czechoslovakia.

For 35 years, her parents operated the restaurant, building both its reputation and its connection to the community. Kay grew up surrounded by that environment, learning firsthand what it meant to run a family business that served as more than just a place to eat. After pursuing a career in Manhattan’s hotel industry, she returned to Lacey, eventually purchasing the restaurant herself 19 years ago and continuing the legacy with her own personal touch.

As Kay steps into retirement, the future of The Captain’s Inn is already taking shape, ensuring the landmark remains part of Lacey’s landscape even as ownership changes. The restaurant has been sold to Chef’s International, a Jersey Shore hospitality group with a broad footprint that includes The Wharfside Seafood & Patio Bar, Water Street Bar and Grille, 9th Avenue Pier, Marina Grille, Anchor Tavern, Rod’s Tavern, Frankie’s Bar & Grill, The Cabin Restaurant, and Moore’s Tavern & Sports Bar.

While any transition brings questions, the expectation expressed during the meeting was that The Captain’s Inn will remain a gathering place where residents celebrate milestones and come together, much as they have for decades. There is a shared hope that the sense of familiarity and connection that defined Kay’s leadership will carry forward in meaningful ways. All of the current employees will remain on staff.

For a town that has changed over the years, the moment offered something rare, a chance to pause and recognize someone who helped shape what Lacey has become.

Local News

Honoring Debbie Kay

By Annabel Lindenbaum, Co-Chair
Jewish Federation of Ocean County
Board of Trustees

In Lacey Township, Debbie Kay was recently presented with the first-ever Key to the City, honoring her “quiet acts of kindness” and her lifelong commitment to strengthening the heart of the community. For those of us in the Jewish Federation world, this recognition feels especially fitting.

Many in our community first met Debbie decades ago, when she was a young business owner running the Captain’s Inn in Forked River. Her parents, Sam and Elsa Abrahamovic – Holocaust survivors from Czechoslovakia – built the business with resilience and determination. Debbie inherited not only their work ethic, but also their deep sense of responsibility for others. Kindness, generosity, and community leadership became part of her identity long before anyone gave it a name.

Debbie’s connection to the Jewish Federation began, as these things often do, with a simple request: hanging a poster in her restaurant. From that small moment grew a relationship that has shaped our community for more than a generation. Debbie quickly became “our Debbie” – a partner, a leader, and a friend whose involvement brought energy and warmth to everything she touched.

Over the years, Debbie and I cochaired the General Campaign, often meeting late at night – the only reasonable hour for two committed night owls. We led a mission to Israel together, discovering along the way that even two people who struggle with punctuality can rise to the occasion when it matters. That mission became one of the most memorable in our Federation’s history, inspiring new engagement and strengthening our local community.

Debbie went on to serve as President of the Ocean County Jewish Federation, following in the footsteps of some of our most respected leaders – Herb Wishnick, Sydney Troy, Larry Lehman, Michael Levin, Marlene Pearlmutter, Zev Rosen, Dick Gaines, and Larry Simpson. With her gentle but steady leadership, Federation flourished and continued to be a beacon of Jewish responsibility.

She was among the first to introduce the Lion of Judah level of giving to our Women’s Division, helping expand our ability to respond to Jewish needs locally, in Israel, and around the world.

Kol hakavod, Debbie. May you continue to go from strength to strength.

Debbie and Bryan celebrated their wedding at the Captain’s Inn, surrounded by so many Federation friends that we may well have outnumbered the other guests.

Debbie’s commitment to Jewish life extended to her family as well. She and Bryan raised their daughter Alex with the same strong sense of Jewish identity and community. Alex attended Solomon Schechter in Howell, and later a Jewish high school in the South – choices that reflected Debbie’s belief in the power of Jewish education. Debbie and I attended many General Assemblies together, including the memorable year when baby Alex was photographed in the arms of Hillary Clinton.

What stands out most about Debbie is not the titles she held or the programs she helped build, but the way she has always shown up – quietly, generously, and without seeking recognition. She has been the person who notices what is needed and simply makes it happen. Her recent honor in Lacey Township mirrors the way she has served our Jewish community: with humility, kindness, and unwavering dedication.

One of the greatest gifts of my years in Federation has been the friendships formed along the way. Debbie is one of those rare friends who becomes family. Her leadership helped shape who we are as a Federation – proud, compassionate, and ready to stand up for Jewish people everywhere, especially in a time when antisemitism and hatred are again on the rise.

Kol hakavod, Debbie. May you continue to go from strength to strength.

(Editor’s Note: See the relevant article from jerseyshoreonline.com.)

Open House and BBQ at Congregation Ahavat Olam, Howell

Congregation Ahavat Olam will be hosting their annual "Open House and Barbecue" for members and prospective members on Sunday, August 16, beginning at 11:00 AM. Enjoy delicious food, entertainment and fun for all. The Conservative Synagogue is located at 106 Windeler Road in Howell. Anyone interested in information about the synagogue or 2026-27 Membership can contact the CAO Office at 732-719-3500, ext. 1.

Interfaith Effort to Rise Against Hunger

The Brick Clergy Association held an event on June 7 with Rise Against Hunger in which about 100 volunteers packed over 10,000 meals for later shipment to a location in the world where the food is needed. These meals are generally sent to be served in educational settings so that the students will be more encouraged to attend because of the meal provided.

The event was cosponsored by eight congregations in Brick – Brick Presbyterian Church, First Baptist Church of Lau-

relton, Living Faith Bible Church, St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church, St. Thomas Lutheran Church, Temple Beth Or and Visitation Roman Catholic Church, and was held at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church. Some volunteers also brought donations of non-perishable food and money for a local Brick food pantry.

For general information about Rise Against Hunger visit www.RiseAgainstHunger.org.

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Local News

Memorial Tribute from Beth Am Shalom, Lakewood – Jack Sabo z”l



Jack Sabo’s life was a blessing to many. May the memory of his life continue to be a blessing and a source of comfort to his wife Marilyn, his family, friends and community.

Born in Brooklyn, New York and raised in Paterson, New Jersey, Jack was the son of Nettie and Solomon Sabo, immigrants from Ukraine and China.

He was a graduate of Eastside High School, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, and Jefferson Medical College Philadelphia, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa and Alpha Omega Alpha honorary medical society. While at Rutgers he met Marilyn Padgursky whom he

married while in medical school. Their first child, Stephen, was born just prior to graduation. His residencies in General and Thoracic Surgery were completed at Kings County Hospital Downstate Medical Center, Brooklyn. During his residency years Robert and Elizabeth were born.

His writings on wound healing were published in numerous surgical journals. During the Viet Nam War Jack served as a Captain in the U.S. Army as Chief of Surgery at the 44th Surgical Hospital in Korea.

After completing his residencies Jack joined the Lakewood Surgical Group where he remained until his retirement serving on the staff of Kimball Medical Center in Lakewood and at Community Medical Center in Toms River. A caring, skilled physician who enjoyed his work with patients and coworkers, he served on the Board of Trustees of the Kimball Medical Center and as President of the Medical and Dental Staff and Chief of the Department of Surgery. He was a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a

Fellow of the American College of Chest Physicians. Upon retirement, Jack was a consultant to the New Jersey Board of Medical Examiners.

A former Brooklyn Dodger fan and a faithful New York Mets fan for many years, he and the entire family spent many hours cheering on the Mets. His weekly tennis games with “the guys” was a favorite activity as well as the many family tennis matches on the West coast of Florida and in Mexico. Jack played tennis until he was 80 in competitive team tennis in inter-community tennis competitions. Many enjoyable vacations and special times with Marilyn and dear friends were spent on trips throughout Europe, Israel and the Caribbean islands.

A member of Temple Beth Am of Lakewood (now Beth Am Shalom) for over 50 years, Jack was a past president and served on numerous committees throughout the years. A Past president of Lakewood Rotary Club, Jack enjoyed many warm friendships with community members.

Jack leaves his three wonderful children, their spouses and five wonderful granddaughters – Stephen (Gladys), Ariel, Alexis, Robert (Kimberly), Kayla, Ande, Scout, and Elizabeth (William). Jack’s dear brother of blessed memory, Alvin O. Sabo, has been deeply missed in recent years.

In honor of Jack's memory, please consider a memorial contribution to Beth Am Shalom (1235 Route 70, Lakewood, NJ 08701) or the Jewish Federation of Ocean County (1235-A Route 70, Lakewood, NJ 08701).





CONGREGATION AHAVAT OLAM

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AND BBQ

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Jewish Federation of Ocean County Impact

YOU Made an Impact through Your Donations to the Jewish Federation of Ocean County – Joint Distribution Committee

JDC (Joint Distribution Committee) is one of the core partners of the Jewish Federation of Ocean County that we rely on to make an impact. Their work around the world has them on the ground and able to serve in times of crisis. We have provided them with grants for Ukraine, Israel emergency, and food insecurity as a way of delivering aid and bringing hope.

Thank You message from Lucia Ben-Ary, Donor Relations Officer, Global Resource Development, JDC: On behalf of JDC and those we serve together, thank you. During these difficult days, your support helps provide hope and vital assistance to vulnerable Jewish communities around the world. Here are a few stories illustrating the impact of your generosity and partnership.

A Lifeline for Larisa

“Without JDC, I don’t know how I would survive,” she said. “Thank you for remembering us!”



Born in Lutsk, a small village in northwest Ukraine in 1952, 74-year-old Larisa grew up in the shadow of the Holocaust. Her father’s entire family was murdered, and that loss shaped her childhood. Antisemitism was rampant after the war, and as a young girl, Larisa faced cruelty and exclusion from classmates and teachers alike.

Life in Lutsk is still hard, especially amid Ukraine’s ongoing crisis. “The sirens are terrifying,” Larisa shared. “When they blare at night, I can’t sleep.” She lives alone in a small fifth-floor apartment, vulnerable and exposed. Her only income is a \$97 monthly pension. “Most of my money goes to pills,” she said, gesturing to cabinets lined with prescriptions.

The support of the Jewish Federation of Ocean County enables JDC to provide Larisa with a bank card which she uses to purchase food and medicines. JDC also helps her pay her high utilities bills, keep-

ping her warm during the winter. Larisa finds more than material aid at the local JDC Hesed welfare center. She participates in lectures, holiday celebrations, and Shabbat gatherings. “It’s like medicine for my soul,” she said of the shared meals and human connection.

Omer’s Journey from Heartbreak to Healing

Omer, a young father and teacher in the Gaza envelope, was in constant contact with his students on October 7. On that dreadful day, he lost both students and colleagues. When his kibbutz school eventually reopened, he tried to return to the classroom, but the weight of what had happened made it nearly impossible.



On his first day back, a flood of memories overwhelmed him and drove him from the room. He could still see the desperate messages his students had sent, pleading for help. Five seats in his classroom remained empty, five young lives taken in their homes. In tears, Omer told the principal that he did not have the strength to continue.

He soon connected with JDC’s Back on Track program and began meeting with a counselor, Gili. The program, which combines career coaching with trauma support and addresses the way trauma impacts employment and motivation, helped Omer find his footing. In their regular sessions, Gili helped him rediscover what sustained him, what brought relief, purpose, and even moments of strength. Through these conversations, Omer remembered leading physical training sessions for evacuated youth at a hotel in Eilat.

With Gili’s guidance, that experience sparked a new path. He went on to open a therapeutic gym for Gaza border communities, a place where survivors can rebuild physical strength, process cri-

pling trauma, and regain the confidence to live again. Today he continues to teach and help give mental and physical strength to those around him. “This help is life-sustaining. If I didn’t have something to aspire to, I don’t know what would have happened to me,” Omer says. “If I didn’t have that anchor, I don’t know where I would be today.”

Standing with José and Adriana



José and Adriana have been married for decades. Although not elderly, life’s hardships have aged them. Both live with developmental delays that left them isolated as their relatives have slowly pulled away, unsure how to support them. They spent much of adulthood on the margins, without the social or family connections most people rely on.

Support from the Federation enables JDC and the local Jewish community to assist this vulnerable couple, giving them a measure of stability as they enter retirement years. José was forced into early retirement after a workplace accident, leaving his disability pension as their only income for many years. Adriana had never held a formal job and learned at age 60 that she did not qualify

for a state pension. Yet with the guidance of Jewish community leaders trained by JDC, she navigated the complex bureaucracy and secured a small pension – easing their burden a bit, even as they continue to live with very limited means. They also receive food assistance from JDC and – just as importantly – a place where they are heard and cared for.

Thanks to the generosity of the Federation, José and Adriana are receiving the support they need to meet their basic needs with dignity, maintain stability, and remain active, valued members of the Jewish community that has become their extended family.



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FedBeat from JFNA – Jewish Federations of North America

jewishfederations.org

Seeing the World Through “Cabinet”: A Window into Federation’s Global Reach



By Gabe Marans
May 7, 2026
jewishlink.news

Before I joined Cabinet, I didn’t fully understand what it was – let alone how much it would shape the way I see the world.

Cabinet is Jewish Federation of North America’s (JFNA) national young leadership program, designed for Jewish communal leaders typically in their 30s.

It’s a five-year commitment that brings together emerging leaders from across North America through retreats, service missions and hands-on opportunities to learn how to make an impact in their communities. Members are expected to make a meaningful annual gift and invest personally in the experience, but what they gain in return goes far beyond any one program or trip.

What began for me as a leadership opportunity quickly became something much bigger. Through Cabinet, I’ve had the chance to travel to Jewish communities around the world – places like Hungary, Latvia, Greece, Azerbaijan, Uruguay and Argentina. These were immersive experiences. I met people where they are, heard their stories firsthand and saw both the challenges they face and the resilience that defines them. We visited Jewish schools, community centers and elder care facilities. We volunteered at soup kitchens, danced with Ukrainian refugees at temporary housing facilities and paid our respects at Holocaust me-

morials. And, most importantly, these experiences opened my eyes to the true scope of Federation’s global reach.

What struck me most was the depth of the work and the level of access. Through Federation connections, I’ve had the opportunity to engage with influential leaders – U.S. ambassadors, Israeli ambassadors, U.S. consuls, mayors and other key figures. These interactions reflect something powerful: While Federation is a philanthropic network, it is also a trusted connector operating at the highest levels, both locally and globally.

In many ways, this is one of Federation’s best-kept secrets. From the outside, it’s easy to see it simply as a fundraising organization. But once your eyes are opened – once you see the breadth of its relationships, its credibility and its ability to convene and influence across borders – what you discover is extraordinary. And that access isn’t reserved only for Cabinet members. It exists for anyone who meaningfully engages with Federa-

tion. Cabinet just happens to be a powerful entry point that brings it into sharper focus, faster.

At the same time, the impact is deeply human. Seeing the work of partners like JAFI, ORT and the Joint (Joint Distribution Committee) up close – supporting vulnerable communities, creating pathways for people to build new lives and, in many cases, helping bring individuals to this country – adds a dimension that simply can’t be conveyed from afar.

One of the biggest takeaways for me is that you don’t have to be on Cabinet to connect to this work, but Cabinet provides a unique lens. It accelerates understanding. It turns abstract ideas into lived experience. And once you see the impact in real terms, your relationship to Federation changes.

At a time when recruiting for Cabinet can be challenging – often because people simply don’t know what it is – I’ve

Continued on page 11

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FedBeat from JFNA – Jewish Federations of North America

jewishfederations.org

Jewish Federations Congratulate Nate Looney



From JFNA
May 5, 2026

Jewish Federations warmly congratulate our colleague Nate Looney, Director of Community Safety and Belonging, for being honored with the JQ Trailblazer Award at the 2026 JQ Impact Awards. “Our Jewish community has always believed that every person is made in the image of something greater than themselves,” Looney said. “The JQ International Trailblazer Award is a reminder that when we actually live that out, when we build communities where

belonging isn’t conditional, something extraordinary happens. People show up. Fully. And that changes everything.”

Founded in 2020, the Jewish Federations’ Center for Jewish Belonging convenes, mobilizes, and empowers the Jewish community to create a culture of belonging for all Jews and our loved ones. The Center supports and amplifies the voices of Jews from underrepresented backgrounds, working to ensure that every North American Jew feels seen and valued.

Established in 2004, JQ is the premier LGBTQ+ Jewish organization in Los Angeles. JQ celebrates the lives of LGBTQ+ Jews and their allies by transforming Jewish communities and ensuring inclusion through community building, educational programs, and support and wellness services, promoting the healthy integration of LGBTQ+ and Jewish identities.

“I couldn’t be more proud of my friend and colleague Rabbi Mike Uram, who I know will bring a wealth of knowledge, insight, and experience to JTS as Chancellor,” said [Jewish Federations of North America](#) president and CEO Eric Fingerhut. “At a time when the Jewish people face so many challenges, we are thrilled that Rabbi Uram will be assuming this important position of leadership. We look forward to working with him to build flourishing Jewish communities.”



Seeing the World

Continued from page 10

come to believe that the key isn’t just explaining it. It’s showing it. The power of Cabinet lies in the experience: the travel, the relationships, the access and the sense of being part of something much larger than yourself.

Cabinet is more than a program. It’s a

gateway – to leadership, to global connection and to a deeper understanding of what Federation makes possible.

Gabe Marans is a member of Jewish Federation of North America’s Cabinet for young Jewish leaders.

Jewish Federations Mourn the Passing of Abe Foxman z”l

From JFNA
May 10, 2026

Jewish Federations of North America mourn the passing of Abe Foxman z”l, a towering voice against antisemitism and a lifelong champion of the Jewish people. A Holocaust survivor who transformed personal tragedy into moral courage, Abe dedicated his life to defending Jewish communities, advancing human dignity, and strengthening the bonds between people of all backgrounds. We extend our deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, and all who were touched by his extraordinary legacy. May his memory be a blessing.



Jewish Federations mourn the passing of Barney Frank, a trailblazing public servant whose decades of leadership helped shape a more just, inclusive, and equitable America.

Jewish Federations Statement on San Diego Islamic Center Shooting

From JFNA
May 18, 2026

Jewish Federations of North America mourn alongside the community of the Islamic Center in San Diego following the horrific shooting on May 18. No one should ever fear for their safety while gathering in prayer, community, or worship. This tragedy comes as more than 400 Jewish Federation leaders from across the country arrive in Washington, DC, to advocate lawmakers for \$1 billion in security funding to help protect houses of worship and faith-based institutions nationwide. This attack is yet another painful reminder that the threat facing religious communities in America is real, urgent, and growing.



War with Iran - Weekly updates are available

at www.jewishoceancounty.org/israelupdate.

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Securing Our Community

Secure Community Network Update – May Report

By Michael G. Masters
National Director & CEO
June 1, 2026

Across faith lines, houses of worship, schools, and gathering spaces continue to be targeted by individuals motivated by hate and intent on violence.

In March, a Hezbollah-inspired attacker rammed his car into Temple Israel’s preschool in West Bloomfield, Michigan, where guards engaged and stopped the threat. Weeks later in San Diego, neo-Nazis opened fire at an Islamic Center, where a guard was killed protecting students and staff. In both cases, staff, educators, and children had trained for exactly the potential for violence.

The outcomes were measured in inches:

the time and distance provided by security guards that allowed teachers, students, and faculty to evacuate as well as the physical inches that stopped a vehicle or provided shelter. These inches were created by intentional planning and preparation, and by people willing to act when seconds matter.

From onsite security personnel to local law enforcement, and from public safety partners to teachers and parents, we are all committed to working together to protect religious freedom, our institutions, and our community — from seniors to children.

This is the work we are all engaged in together.

Today, thanks to investments of time and energy, we are able to undertake that

work with the most sophisticated security apparatus to ever protect any faith-based community in the United States at the ready. We have built a connected and capable security posture across the Jewish community, closing the gaps where those critical inches are created and protected in real time. That progress is reflected across both our physical and virtual shields.

We continue to see the expansion of standardized security programs nationwide, strengthening a shared foundation of training and preparedness. This is reinforced by strong community commitment as institutions invest, adapt, and embed security into daily life.

SCN’s Regional Threat Capabilities now operate in partnership with more than 40 Federations, strengthening real-time threat identification and coordination across jurisdictions.

As part of our shared obligation to ensure that every resource is being dedicated to our efforts to protect the community, this past month, hundreds of Jewish leaders, security professionals, and public officials gathered in Washington, D.C., as

part of the Jewish Federations of North America Security Fly-In.

This effort sought to ensure that key public officials and stakeholders understand the reality that our community is facing — and the urgent need for resourcing from the government to support efforts to protect our institutions and support key partners, notably law enforcement.

With a rapidly evolving threat environment, we are focused on the steps we must take together to proactively deal with it.

We are keenly aware of what is at stake. One year later, we continue to carry the memory of Yaron Lischinsky Z”L and Sarah Lynn Milgrim Z”L, murdered outside the Capital Jewish Museum, in our thoughts and hearts.

As we move forward, we do so with clarity about the challenges ahead, confidence in our community’s resilience, and a shared commitment to the investments we must all continue to make.

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.



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Helping Kids Welcome Guests

Let your house be open wide. – Pirkei Avot 1:5

Our community is doing great hosting Get Togethers, we should hit our 100th for the year shortly! Let's help prepare the kids for being great hosts. When guests come calling at your front door, you're about to practice the time-honored value of hachnasat orchim.



Welcoming Guests – In the early part of the Torah, Abraham and Sarah go out to meet the unexpected guests that arrive at their tent and work to make them feel comfortable. The mitzvah of welcoming guests, or hachnasat orchim, is not just about inviting people in but also making them feel honored, relaxed, and at home. Explore this concept further with the stories, activities, and videos below.



Write Invitations – Whether you're organizing a play date or having a friend over for dinner, let the kids create a special invitation to mail or hand to your guest. Your child will get to flex their creative muscles. Plus making the invitation will help build anticipation for the event.



Practice Being Good Hosts – Kids are naturally pretty adept at honoring hachnasat orchim; they like to play with friends and enjoy time with family. Tap into their natural enthusiasm by reinforcing good "hosting behaviors" during play time and when guests come over. Encourage your kids to greet guests,

offer to take their coats, or tell them about what's for dinner or snack.



Give Guests First Pick – When your child has a friend over for a get together or play date, encourage them to let their friend choose the activity. Part of being a good host is taking turns and being open to a guest's interests. Reminding kids that a guest gets to pick first helps reinforce hachnasat orchim in a fun, organic, and age-appropriate manner.

Read – Here are some suggestions.

Emma's Poem by Linda Glaser
Recommended for children 7 to 8 years old

Emma Lazarus was raised in a wealthy Jewish American family in 1880's New York City, where she was moved by the plight of immigrants. As a young woman, asked to write a poem to raise money for a pedestal for the proposed Statue of Liberty, she composed "The New Colossus" and so became the voice of the Statue of Liberty. This is the story of the difference she made in her world.

Fridays Are Special by Chris Barash
Recommended for children 2 to 3 years old

For this child's family, Fridays aren't like other days. On Fridays, the hustle and bustle is a little different. Everyone seems to be getting ready for something special – something cozy and wonderful. What could it be?

The Friday Nights of Nana by Amy Hest
Recommended for children 3 to 4 years old

In this contemporary intergenerational tale, Jennie and her grandmother find happiness in their joint preparations for the Sabbath.

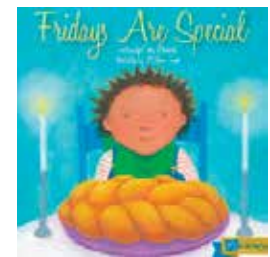
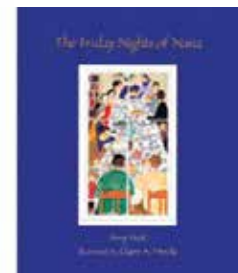
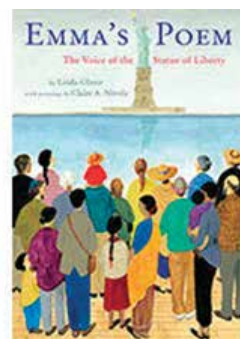
The Mitten String by Jennifer Rosner
Recommended for children 6 to 7 years old

Ruthie loves to knit – and to help people. When her family gives shelter to a deaf woman and her baby, Ruthie realizes the-

re's a way for her to do both at once!

Welcome by Stephane Barroux
Recommended for children 5 to 6 years old

Polar Bear and his friends have lost their home. Will they find a safe place to stay? After several animals turn them away, the polar bears find an empty spot where they can settle. And now someone else needs a home...



Jewish Community Calendar – July 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](https://www.facebook.com/jewishocean).

Tuesday, June 30, July 7, 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, July 2 – Fast of the 17th of Tammuz
Thursday, July 2, 12:15 PM (and every Thursday) – **Torah with the Times: Timeless Torah, Timely Wisdom**; study and discussion of the weekly Torah portion with Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein, see www.jewishoceancounty.org/jvu for details

Thursday, July 2, 1:15 PM (and every Thursday) – **Queering the Parsha: A Weekly Study Group toward an LGBTQ+ Perspective on the Weekly Torah Portion**, with Rabbi Nikki DeBlosi, Ph.D., a Laasok program cosponsored by Keshet and A Wider Bridge, see www.jewishoceancounty.org/jvu for details

Thursday, July 2, 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

Saturday, July 4 – U.S. Independence Day
Tuesday, July 7, 11:00 AM – **Yiddish Book Discussion**, about "A Jewish Refugee in New York" by Kadya Molodovsky; at the Lakewood Branch of the Ocean County Library, 301 Lexington Avenue, Lakewood, see ad on page 30

Sunday, July 12, 12:00 Noon – **Coming Together: A Conversation with the Counseling Center for Women**, related to the situation in Israel, see www.jewishoceancounty.org/jvu/programs

Wednesday night-Thursday, July 22-23 – Fast of the 9th of Av / Tisha B'Av
Tuesday night-Wednesday, July 28-29 – The 15th of Av / Tu B'Av

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



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214 Robots Take the Field at US National Competition for Jewish Schools

Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education hosts annual tournament in New York, highlighting the growing importance and challenges for STEM programs in Jewish education.



High school competitors at the Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education's annual robotics competition, in New York City, April 29, 2026. (Luke Tress/Times of Israel)

By Luke Tress
May 1, 2026
[timesofisrael.com](https://www.timesofisrael.com)

NEW YORK – The students crowded around the rink, shouting encouragement at the robots racing to scoop up red- and blue-colored balls. As the scoreboard showed the clock winding down, the robots scooted to park in a designated spot for bonus points at the end of the round. The referee shouted out the score – 45 points for the blue team to red team's 15 – and commanded the contestants, “Take your robots,” as the clock hit zero. The blue team cheered.

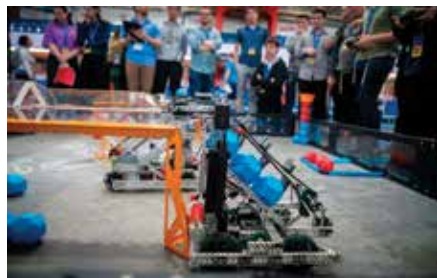
The event was an annual robotics competition for Jewish students held by the Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE), a nonprofit that boosts science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) programs in Jewish day schools, as the field becomes more of a priority – and faces challenges – in the expanding Jewish school system. “They don't realize that they're learning because they're having fun, but it's so educational,” said Philip Brazil, the vice president of development at CIJE. “The amount that they're learning on lift and power and measuring and coding and driving and teamwork, there's so much there.”

CIJE saw a need for the tournaments five years ago because the mainstream robotics competitions often held events on Saturdays, so Shabbat-observant schools could not attend.

The competitions are modeled on and use technology from VEX Robotics, an educational program that holds tournaments for students around the US.

Robot mode

The April 29 event, called the CIJE VEX IQ & V5 Robotics Tournament, was the culmination of 17 smaller competi-



A robot deposits balls in a “chute” to score points at the Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education's annual robotics competition, in New York City, April 29, 2026. (Luke Tress/Times of Israel)

tions throughout the year that were held around the US, Brazil said. The competitors make the robots throughout the school year, often rebuilding them repeatedly.

Around 1,100 students from 60 middle and high schools fielded 214 robots at the New York competition. Schools traveled to the event, held in Manhattan's Nike Track and Field Center at the Armory, from New York, Connecticut, Florida, Texas, Maryland, Ohio and Georgia.

Fourteen students from the Modern Orthodox Brauser Maimonides Academy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, brought five robots to the competition. The students in Florida woke at 4 a.m. to make the trip, while the team's eighth graders cut a senior trip to Washington, DC, short to get to New York. “It's honestly crazy. I didn't even know there were this many Jewish schools,” said 7th grader Ronen Lazar, whose robot, named the Cookie Monster, had met mixed success in its first three bouts. Other robots also had anthropomorphic touches – one was named “Webby” and another had “googly eyes” affixed to its front.



Ronen Lazar with the Cookie Monster, in New York City, April 29, 2026 (Luke Tress/Times of Israel)

Lazar's robotics coach, Hanna Shekhter, said the development process was more open-ended than most problems the students encounter at school. She shepherds the students but does not provide them

solutions because “it's important they work through frustrations,” she said. “There's no answers and they have to work through it. I see growth in critical thinking to figure it out on their own,” she said, adding that learning teamwork was central to the process.

Shekhter's 8th-grade students help incoming 6th graders, and at the competitions, teams from different schools are paired into alliances by random selection, compelling them to collaborate on the spot. Academic studies have found that teaching students robotics has benefits compared to other subjects.

Lazar said his team had decided to ditch the suggested robotics models offered by CIJE to field something different. “We got inspiration online, but there was no manual, so for months we tried perfecting and perfecting, and finally we got it to work well,” he said, also highlighting how the group had collaborated. “There were people I wanted to be with this year that I wasn't with on a team, and then you learn to work with people,” he said.

The atmosphere at the competition was frenetic. Students rushed to their rinks with their robots in hand, while others workshopped on tables strewn with metal and plastic, test drove their robots on the sidelines or checked scoreboards for the latest rankings. There were some minor mishaps during the bouts – a remote failing to immediately connect with a robot and a mechanical arm that broke off – but otherwise, the robots held together and kept moving.

Held on a massive indoor track field, the feel was similar to a sports competition, which is part of the point, Brazil said, because the tournaments provide a competitive outlet to students who are less inclined to sports. For middle schoolers, two teams, paired together for each bout, cooperated to achieve a joint score. Their robots stacked “pins,” cone-shaped plastic objects, to score points. At the start of the bout, the drivers shouted across the rink to the other team to ask about their robot's strengths and work out a strategy. In the high school division, four robots, randomly assigned to two teams, went head-to-head. Unlike the middle schoolers, the high school matches had winners and losers, the robots racking up points by scooping up balls and depositing them in “chutes,” clear tubes arrayed around the rink.



Middle school competitors at the Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education's annual robotics competition, in New York City, April 29, 2026 (Luke Tress/Times of Israel)

STEMming the tide

Sydney Altfield, the head of Teach Coalition, a Jewish group that advocates for non-public schools, said STEM education has been a growing priority, and a challenge, for Jewish schools. Employing knowledgeable STEM teachers is costly, and Teach Coalition has been pushing for legislation to help nonpublic schools field those costs, Altfield said, citing a 2017 program passed in New York state to reimburse nonpublic schools for STEM programs that has helped cover costs. “When we're competing with the public schools for teachers, with benefits, with pay, with everything, STEM is probably the hardest thing for them to fill,” she said, adding that non-Jewish nonpublic schools face similar challenges.



A workshopping area at the Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education's annual robotics competition, in New York City, April 29, 2026 (Luke Tress/Times of Israel)

The challenge comes as Jewish schools have seen a steady increase in enrollment in recent years, according to state-level data. In New York, Jewish schools grew by 4,537 students in the 2024-2025 school year, an increase of 2.7%, according to data compiled by Teach Coalition. Overall, attendance at non-Jewish nonpublic schools in New York has declined over the past decade, the data indicated.

Jewish educators have reported an in-

Continued on page 30

Combating Hate

Heroes Against Hate

NOMINATE A HERO!

Who belongs on this year's list? At the Jewish Federation's annual Community of Caring celebration in December, we will be honoring local "Heroes Against Hate". We are seeking your help in identifying and nominating possible Heroes to recognize.

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- Stepping up to respond to a crisis dealing with hate, bigotry, or bias
- Working to build bridges between different groups in our community, especially those where there may be differences or lack of understanding

When it comes to hate, bigotry, and discrimination no one community stands alone. Intolerance and attacks may be targeted to one particular group, but they seldom stop there; hate metastasizes and can spread easily. It takes people of faith and principle to step up, be upstanders, and to say: enough. That is the aim of honoring these Heroes Against Hate...to encourage more in our community to stand up, to speak out, and to make a difference. Please help us by identifying some of these local Heroes.

www.jewishoceancounty.org/communitycaring/nominations

JFOC is proud to honor our county's Heroes Against Hate each year at our Community of Caring Celebration held in December.

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Daniel Hoffman

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Ariel Ifrah

2023 HONOREES

Prosecutor Bradley Billhimer
Caroline Winn
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2022 HONOREES

Trevor Kalb
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12-year-old Finds Ancient Gemstone in Galilean Jewish Village Cursed by Jesus

Sixth-grader Alon Horowitz finds rare "Nicolo" stone, likely dating back at least 1,500 years, during community excavation at Korazim National Park.



Six grader Alon Horowitz finds a rare 'Nicolo' stone, likely dating back at least 1,500 years, during a community excavation at Korazim National Park, in a discovery announced on June 1, 2026. (Korazim excavation team/Israel Nature and Parks Authority)

By Rossella Tercatin
June 1, 2026
timesofisrael.com

A 12-year-old schoolboy recently discovered a precious gemstone dating back at least 1,500 years in the Korazim National Park in the Upper Galilee, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority said Monday. Korazim was an ancient Jewish village that, according to the New Testament, was cursed by Jesus for rejecting his teachings.

The stone, a prestigious variety of agate known as "Nicolo," which was probably set in a piece of jewelry from Roman or Byzantine times (1st-6th centuries CE), was found by Alon Horowitz during a community excavation carried out by the Parks Authority in cooperation with Ariel University in the West Bank. "After three days of excavations, about 10 minutes before we finished, I was digging with a pickaxe and suddenly saw something blue, round, and special," Horowitz, who is attending Ramat Korazim Regional Elementary School, said, according to a statement by the Parks Authority. "I picked it up and showed it to the archaeologist. When I realized it was something rare, I felt really happy and proud."

Located a few kilometers north of the Sea of Galilee, Korazim was the site of a Jewish village for about a millennium, starting from the end of the Second Temple Period around 2,000 years ago until the 11th century CE. The town is mentioned in both the gospels of Matthew and Luke as one of the locations that did not heed his teachings. "Then [Jesus] began to rebuke the cities in which most of His

mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 'Woe to you, Chorazin!'" reads a passage from Matthew (11:20-21, New King James Version).

Remains from the Byzantine period, when the Talmudic sages lived, include an impressive synagogue, a ritual bath, a winepress, an olive press, and other agricultural installations. According to Director of Excavation Achia Cohen Tavor of Ariel University, the Nicolo stone was popular in Roman times as a clear status symbol of prestige and high social standing, suggesting that Korazim was also home to wealthier individuals. "Small finds like this open a large window into the personal lives of the residents of ancient Korazim, not only its buildings and streets, but also to their world of beauty, personal status, and connections," he said in the statement.

The recent find does not mark the first time a young visitor has come across a rare artifact by chance at the Korazim National Park. In 2021, a girl found a 1,500-year-old bronze coin on the ground.




Schoolchildren taking part in a community excavation at the Korazim National Park in the spring of 2026 (Hadar Quint Nature and Parks Authority)



The site of an excavation at the Korazim National Park, where a winepress and mosaic have been unearthed in March 2019. (Achia Cohen-Tavor/Israel Nature and Parks Authority)

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Jewish Communities Can Help Save Trans Lives – Here’s How

Clergy from all movements are coming together to insist on stronger policies to support LGBTQ+ Jews



Protesters supporting transgender rights gather outside the Supreme Court on January 13. Photo by Heather Diehl/Getty Images

By *Eliana Kayelle and Jonah Dov Pesner*
 March 31, 2026
forward.com – *opinion*

In the 16 months since the 2024 election, the lives of hundreds of thousands of transgender, nonbinary and intersex people in the United States have been upended. A new survey shows that, during that time period, 9% of the country’s transgender population moved from one U.S. state to another over concerns for their personal safety. And just today (March 31), as we celebrate Transgender Day of Visibility, the Supreme Court released a decision that harms transgender

people, as well as the entire LGBTQ+ community, by striking down a state law that protected LGBTQ+ youth and their families from so-called conversion therapy, a dangerous, disproven practice.

Jews have a religious obligation to protect transgender lives; a key tenet of our faith is the belief that to save a life is to save the whole world. Research shows that religious groups can play a particularly significant role in the lives of transgender youth. With the support of such groups, trans kids experience dramatically lower rates of depression and suicide. Conversely, when social support is stripped away, the risks rise.

That’s why more than 1,000 rabbis, cantors, and other spiritual leaders representing all major Jewish denominations – Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and Renewal – from 48 U.S. states and the District of Columbia recently signed an open letter publicly declaring that Jewish tradition compels us to support the full equality of transgender, nonbinary and intersex people.

The letter was spearheaded by Keshet,

the leading national Jewish organization dedicated to LGBTQ+ equality, and the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism – the organizations for which we respectively work. For us, the need for Jews to make a strong statement of support for the trans community was urgent.

In recent years, almost every state in the U.S. has proposed or passed legislation to take away the rights of transgender, non-binary and intersex people. In the first quarter of 2026 alone, politicians in 42 state legislatures have introduced a staggering 740 laws targeting transgender people. At this horrifying rate, they’re on track to surpass last year’s 1,022 anti-trans bills, proposed in 49 states.

Only some of these bills will become law. But all of them aim to take away rights and erase transgender people from public spaces – by ending gender-affirming healthcare, restricting restroom use, forcibly outing students at school, banning books, and more. Kansas passed a particularly terrifying example of this sort of legislation in February, with a law that revoked the IDs of transgender peo-

ple – passed in the dead of night, and put into effect the very next day.

Jewish communities are painfully aware of the dangers of policies and laws that try to legislate minority groups out of the public square. That clarity gives us a particular mandate to combat such efforts.

So many American Jews have ancestors whose lives were shaped by exclusionary laws, scapegoating, censorship and attempts to erase us from public life. So many of us who immigrated to this country have firsthand experience of that same torment. This strategy of disenfranchisement and persecution has appeared repeatedly throughout Jewish history, often preceding profound tragedy.

As Jewish leaders, we see echoes of those dangerous patterns today in rhetoric that portrays LGBTQ+ people as a threat to society. We know, from our own history, that these are not the actions of a functioning democracy.

Our congregants and community members have been asking us what they can do to support our trans youth in their cir-

Continued on page 30



"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

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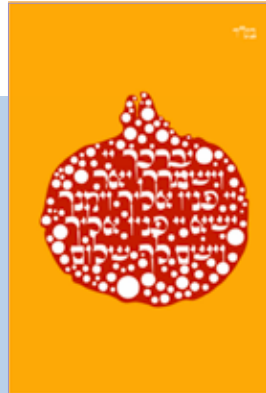
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If you are a Holocaust Survivor who has never applied for compensation, or was turned down previously, there are new funds and guidelines. For more information, you may call the Claims Conference in NY at 646-536-9100 or go to their website: www.claimscon.org.

Click on survivor resources, then click on compensation programs. They have a FAQ (frequently asked questions) section which should be read prior to applying.

Four Years after Russia Invaded Ukraine, Philanthropy is Dwindling, even as Needs Grow



February 25, 2026
ejewishphilanthropy.com

Rescue workers arrive at the site of a Russian missile and drone attack that struck Kyiv, Ukraine, on February 22, 2026. (Oleksandr Magula/Suspilne Ukraine/JSC "UA:PBC"/Global Images Ukraine)

Four years into the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Jewish human service organizations are struggling to maintain funding. “The Jewish community stepped up philanthropically in very significant ways, but four years in, it’s hard to continue to maintain that interest and attention,” Dyonna Ginsburg, CEO of OLAM, a network of Jewish organizations and individuals working in international aid, told eJewishPhilanthropy.

As early as four months into the war, which began on February 24, 2022, Jewish organizations feared the rush of funding wouldn’t last, and they wouldn’t be able to provide the services Ukrainians needed, according to a July 2022 OLAM study. At the time, 16 OLAM partners worked in the region. Today, the number has decreased to six. Many OLAM partners now refer to the war as “a forgotten crisis,” a designation normally used to refer to far-off conflicts like those in Sudan or the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the immediate aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Jewish Federations of North America raised and distributed more than \$100 million for Ukrainian aid projects. In 2025, JFNA allocated roughly \$5.2 million in emergency funds for Ukraine, according to

the organization.

Cuts in philanthropic donations are occurring alongside a decline in international aid overall, after the Trump administration slashed 83% of U.S. Agency for International Development programs last year. Even if an organization never depended on USAID, when one organization struggles to maintain services, others need to step up, international aid organizations told eJP.

Even as much of the philanthropic and American federal funding has dried up, the needs of Ukrainians have only increased, Alena Druzhynina, country director of IsraAid Ukraine, told eJP. Even though life is a struggle, Druzhynina, who lives in Ukraine and rushes almost nightly into a bomb shelter with her family, said that she is grateful. “We are still alive,” Druzhynina said. “This is already a positive thing to start with.”

Ukraine, like the U.S., is dealing with the coldest winter in years. But unlike most of the U.S., many Ukrainians are doing it without electricity, compounding the community’s needs, especially around mental health. Temperatures in Ukraine have plummeted as low as minus-8 degrees Fahrenheit. At the same time, there have been increased Russian attacks on power plants, power stations and the country’s energy infrastructure, and many Ukrainians are unable to heat their apartments and houses. They sleep in hats and jackets. When a home is not welcoming, it feels like there is no safe place in the world, Druzhynina said.

IsraAid has provided in the country’s most vulnerable areas heaters and power

stations along with watering stations providing clean water which have become hubs for socialization. “It’s like circles on the water,” Druzhynina said of the effects. Since the war began, IsraAid has provided communities with 122 water stations, including mobile and stationary reverse osmosis water filtration systems, pumping stations and solar panels to filter water. The stations allow schools to run, providing children with mental health support and learning. Heating and water sites cultivate locations for friends and family to meet up, improving mental health. Through such initiatives, IsraAid has reached more than half a million people.

Because of the winter’s brutality and the power outages, Chabad’s Jewish Relief Network Ukraine has established shelters in Odesa and Zhytomyr, where more than 100 people are living indefinitely. Overall, JRNU provides food, medical care and social services to over 50,000 Jewish Ukrainians. “More people need food” than ever, Judi Garrett, the chief operating officer of JRNU, told eJP. Families have drained their savings, and women are carrying the brunt of the struggle at home and work, while men ages 18-62 are serving in the military, unless they are disabled or wounded. “More people need help paying for medicine. More people need help with their utilities.”

Chabad rabbis serving the community are struggling, too. “It’s exhausting and it’s difficult and it’s scary,” Garrett said. Last weekend, to offer rabbis respite, JRNU held a retreat in Dnipro, one of the centers of Jewish life in the country, with over 50 rabbis attending, some driving 18-plus hours to attend. The rabbis decompressed as their families played together. “There are more people coming to religious events than ever before because [Jewish Ukrainians] are desperate for support, for fellowship, for help,” Garrett said. Jews come to Chabad events for the heat and a hot meal and stay for religious services. They volunteer and send their children to Chabad after-school programs.

To meet the country’s needs, Jewish organizations are working together, Garrett said. JRNU works closely with other Jewish organizations in the region, including the Joint Distribution Committee, which is also partnered with OLAM. “This is an anniversary we hoped we would never see,” Amos Lev-Ran, external relations director of JDC’s Former

The Jewish community stepped up philanthropically in very significant ways, but four years in, it’s hard to continue to maintain that interest and attention.

~ Dyonna Ginsburg,
 CEO of OLAM

Soviet Union Division, told eJP. “I have been in Ukraine every year since this crisis began and the compounding effect is devastating – prices are skyrocketing, goods are hard to find, work is hard to get and education and social life have been totally upended.”

Over 34,600 people – more than a quarter of the estimated 120,000 Jews in Ukraine – depend on JDC services, including mental health support, housing assistance, home care for the elderly, trauma support, educational opportunities and financial and employment assistance. “This transition from short-term crisis to a protracted, underfunded struggle is the defining characteristic of the current situation,” Lev-Ran said.

But Jewish organizations are in for the long haul in Ukraine, Ginsburg said, even as the Jewish world has been bouncing from crisis to crisis – pandemic to war in Ukraine to October 7. Although it’s frigid and Ukrainians are rushing from bomb shelter to shelter from the cold, Druzhynina is emboldened by the work the Jewish community is doing. Even on the toughest days, she tells herself, “Your life matters,” she said. “Things you do in life matters for someone.”

Druzhynina believes that the international Jewish community still cares and has compassion for Ukrainians, but “it is very important that compassion will not be the background noise,” she said. “That it will turn into action, to tell people what is going on, to donate, to support, to volunteer. We understand that the world is tired from the Ukraine crisis. Unfortunately, we’re also tired.”

To donate to help in Ukraine through the Jewish Federation of Ocean County, go to www.jewishocean-county.org/ukraine.

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JEWISH FAMILY AND *changing lives...*

School's Out for Summer

By Deborah Sason, Guest Writer
 Jewish Family and Children's Service

School's out for the summer, and for many parents, caregivers and grandparents the pressure is on to become activity planners, chauffeurs, camp coordinators, and entertainment directors all at once. Between balancing work schedules, managing screen time, and keeping children engaged during the long summer days, the season can quickly feel overwhelming.

The good news is that summer does not need to be perfectly planned to be meaningful. With some structure, realistic goals, and a little creativity, families can make the most of the summer months while creating enjoyable experiences together.

One helpful place to start is by thinking about what you hope your child gains from the summer. Instead of focusing only on filling every hour, consider setting a few simple goals for the season. These goals can help guide your activities and create a sense of purpose and balance. For example, you may want your child to spend more time outdoors, read regularly, learn a new skill, volunteer, strengthen friendships, or simply enjoy more family time without the usual school-year rush.

Goals work best when they are realistic and measurable. Examples might include:

- Spending at least one hour outside each day
- Reading several books over the summer
- Learning how to cook a new recipe each week
- Trying one new activity or local event every week

- Reducing unnecessary screen time during the day

Having goals in mind helps parents focus less on constant entertainment and more on creating meaningful routines and experiences.

While children benefit from free play and downtime, they also thrive with structure and consistency. Summer schedules do not need to be rigid, but having predictable routines can reduce stress for both parents and children. Set regular times for activities such as reading, outdoor play, chores, meals, and quiet time. A loose daily routine helps children know what to expect and minimizes the constant question of "What are we doing now?"

Technology and screens are often part of summer routines, especially during hot or rainy days, but balance is important. Educational programs, creative apps, and family movie nights can all have a place, while also making room for physical activity, social interaction, and imaginative play.

It can also help to create a "summer activity list" ahead of time so parents are not constantly scrambling for ideas. Local communities often provide excellent free or low-cost opportunities during the summer months. Public libraries frequently offer reading programs, crafts, performances, and family events. Parks and recreation departments may host concerts, outdoor movies, sports programs, and community festivals.

Simple activities at home can be just as meaningful. Cooking together, gardening, arts and crafts, baking, board games, nature walks, or teaching children hobbies from your own childhood can create lasting memories and valuable bonding time. Children often remember

Continued on page 27

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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!**

CHILDREN'S SERVICE

...making a difference

School's Out

Continued from page 26

the small moments of connection more than elaborate plans.

Summer can also be an opportunity to slow down. In today's fast-paced world, children and adults alike benefit from moments of rest, flexibility, and unstructured family time. Not every moment needs to be productive or scheduled. Sometimes the best memories come from spontaneous conversations, evening walks, backyard games, or relaxing together after a busy day.

By setting a few thoughtful goals, maintaining simple routines, and using the resources available in your community, families can approach summer with greater confidence and less stress. Most importantly, remember to enjoy the time together. Childhood summers pass quickly, and even ordinary moments can become treasured memories for years to come.



Correction: The JFCS counseling article in the May issue, "Far Away, Yet Deeply Connected: Navigating the Emotional Connection to Israel During Wartime," was written by Judith Sason, LCSW, Guest Writer for the Jewish Family and Children's Service. The byline was inadvertently omitted and we apologize for that.

Refer a friend.

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The Yiddish Book Center's Public Libraries Program brings Yiddish literature in translation to libraries nationwide, encouraging connections and sparking cross-cultural dialogue. As a participating library, the Lakewood Branch of the Ocean County Library will be hosting a series of book discussions centered on a curated selection of Yiddish literature in translation. **Adult Program.**

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Once you have registered, please pick up the books from the Lakewood branch.



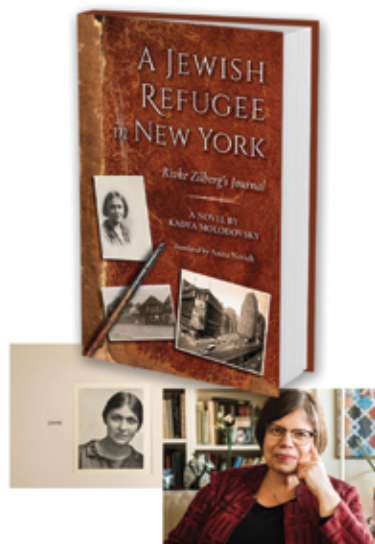
The dates are as follows, at 11:00 AM:

May 12th – Tevye the Dairyman by Sholem Aleichem

June 9th – The Zelmanyaners by Moyshe Kulbak

July 7th – A Jewish Refugee in New York by Kadya Molodovsky

August 4th – The Life and Crimes of Hoodie Rosen by Isaac Blum



Presented as part of the Yiddish Book Center's Public Libraries Program, in partnership with the ALA and funded by the Lilly Endowment, Inc.

Trans Lives

Continued from page 19

cles. And LGBTQ+ Jews want to know how Jewish organizations are working to stand up for their existence, dignity and safety. We must answer both questions more vigorously and decisively.

Even as we work to protect and advance LGBTQ+ rights in the public square, we have the power – and the responsibility – to make our Jewish communities safe havens. We have a unique role to play.

There are things all of us can do to create Jewish communities of belonging and affirmation for our transgender, nonbinary and intersex community members:

- Commit to using the names and pronouns that LGBTQ+ members use for themselves.
- Push your Jewish community leaders to take proactive steps to turn your community into a safe and affirming space for all transgender and LGBTQ+ people.
- Establish gender-neutral restrooms. Then, create and post a policy that encourages people to use the restroom, locker room or other gendered facilities that align with their gender.
- Implement anti-harassment, anti-bullying and non-discrimination policies that affirm the dignity and safety of all community members.

The rights and lives of our neighbors are in our hands. As many of our political leaders fail to protect members of our community, we must lead by example to build a world of affirmation and belonging for all.

Rabbi Eliana Kayelle is the Bay Area education and training manager at Keshet. Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner is the director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. The views and opinions expressed in this article are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Forward. Discover more perspectives in Opinion (<https://forward.com/opinion/>). To contact Opinion authors, email opinion@forward.com.

Robots

Continued from page 15

creased interest in Jewish schools since the start of the Gaza war and ensuing surge in antisemitism in the US, but comprehensive national data for the post-war period is not yet available. "Schools are in desperate need of robust, better STEM programs," said Altfield, whose group is separate from CIJE. "The STEM field is always evolving and our students need to catch up to that. They need to be prepared for the future of the workforce that they're going to enter into."

Back at the arena, two high school teams faced off on a rink the size of a small bedroom. "Drivers ready? Starting in 3-2-1. Go!" a referee said at the start of one match. One of the robots lifted the balls with pincers on a mechanical arm, another sucked them onto a conveyor belt, and a third used a pair of wheels, rotating inward, to inhale the balls into its maw. Other students crowded around, cheering and shouting advice — "Go for that one! Forty-five seconds!" "Which robot did that?" a latecomer to the match said, seeing a chute

Continued on page 31

Memorial to a Brave Soldier

Jewish Treats by NJOP

David Rosenkrantz is one of the many unsung heroes whose lives, cut short by the horrors of war, are honored on Memorial Day. Born in 1916, Staff Sergeant Rosenkrantz joined the army in January 1942. Volunteering for the Airborne, he was part of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) and trained at Fort Benning and Fort Bragg.

Sergeant Rosenkrantz first experienced major action in the capture of Sicily from the Italian armed forces. Actually, in what could have been a major tragedy, he became a hero. During their parachute jump onto the island, Sergeant Rosenkrantz and Corporal Lee Black were separated from their company. They landed in a remote area and came upon 200 Italian soldiers who immediately surrendered. The prisoners were brought to camp and, after Sicily was secured, the 504th PIR went on to fight in Italy. There they played such a significant role in battle near Anzio, that the Germans nicknamed them “the Devils in Baggy Pants.”

After recuperating in England from heavy losses in Italy, the 504th PIR was assigned to “Operation Market Garden,” which sent them into Holland. Their mission was to capture bridges near the towns of Grave and Nijmegen.

On September 28, 1944, Rosenkrantz’s H Company arrived at a farmhouse called Den Heuvel. Noticing enemy troops in the distance, Sergeant Rosenkrantz

stood up to fire, but he had not realized that there were enemies behind as well. He was hit by machine gun fire. Although the fatal encounter was witnessed by other soldiers, Sergeant Rosenkrantz’s remains were lost in the heat of the battle, and he was officially listed as “Missing in Action.”

While Sergeant Rosenkrantz’s body was not initially recovered, and after being lost for over 68 years, Sergeant Rosenkrantz’s dog tags were returned to his family in 2011. It is interesting to note that the tags are marked with a “J” for Jewish, emphasizing how frightful it must have been to a young Jewish soldier to put himself in Nazi territory.

Miraculously, after 73 years of being “Missing in Action,” the Army identified the remains of Sergeant Rosenkrantz, and returned them to his family. His remains arrived at Los Angeles International Airport with an honor guard on July 17, 2018, and his funeral was held on July 20, 2018.

On Memorial Day (and every day), take a moment to recognize the heroic actions of American soldiers and the Jewish soldiers among them who have valiantly and heroically fought on our behalf to protect the freedoms that we hold near and dear.

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

Robots

Continued from page 30

chock-full of red balls. The time elapsed, the referee counted points and declared a winner, and the victorious squad held their robot aloft as another team prepared to take the field in the next bout.



On the sidelines at the Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education’s annual robotics competition, in New York City, April 29, 2026 (Luke Tress/Times of Israel)



Competitors check the scoreboards at the Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education’s annual robotics competition, in New York City, April 29, 2026. (Luke Tress/Times of Israel)



The Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education’s annual robotics competition, in New York City, April 29, 2026 (Luke Tress/Times of Israel)

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