



Shalom10|26

The Journal of the Reading Jewish Community published by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

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- Jewish Education
 - Food Pantry
 - Friendship Circle
 - Community Shabbat
 - Reading Jewish Film Series
 - PJ Library
 - Jewish Family Service
 - Jewish Cultural Center
 - Israel & Overseas
 - Camp Scholarships
 - Israel Trips
 - Noontime Knowledge
 - Young Adults Division
 - Emergency Support
 - Richard J. Yashek Lecture
 - Transportation
 - Maimonides Society
 - Joint Distribution Committee
 - Meir Panim
 - Annual Campaign
 - Jewish Agency for Israel
 - Yemin Orde
 - School Education Programs
 - Greater Reading Unity Coalition
 - Israel Advocacy
 - Youth Events
 - Great Decisions Series
 - Community Holiday Programs
 - Women's Philanthropy
 - Counseling Services
 - Leo Camp Lecture
 - Lakin Holocaust Library
 - & Resource Center
 - Jewish Community
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 - Jewish Federations
 - of North America

Jewish Federation welcomes October 7th survivor, former hostage

By Richard Bradbury
Development Director

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks is honored and humbled to host Ziv Abud and Eliya Cohen, two young people from Israel who have endured the unimaginable, for an extremely special and emotional program, “FROM CAPTIVITY TO FREEDOM.”

On Oct. 7, 2023, approximately 6,000 Hamas and other terrorists from Gaza invaded southern Israel, killing at least 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting 251 hostages to Gaza in what became the deadliest single day for Jews since the Holocaust. The massive assault involved systematic brutality including torture, rape and the murder of babies, children and elderly victims across 20 communities, the NOVA Music Festival and military installations (*excerpt from the Anti-Defamation League’s report “The October 7th War” 04-28-2026*).

Eliya Cohen was kidnapped from the NOVA Music Festival and held hostage in Gaza for 505 days. His story is one of endurance and courage. Ziv Abud is a survivor of NOVA. She survived by hiding in a pile of bodies, and afterwards she

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

presents

FROM
CAPTIVITY
TO
FREEDOM

Wednesday, October 28

7:00 pm

Eliya Cohen
FORMER HOSTAGE
Photo credit: Shai Franco

Ziv Abud
NOVA SURVIVOR
Photo Credit: Shai Franco

Registration and Photo I.D. required for admittance. Registration deadline: October 14, 2026
Location will be provided upon registration

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

NOVA

fought tirelessly to bring Eliya home. Through their personal stories of pain, strength and hope, Eliya and Ziv offer powerful insight into the lasting impact of October 7 and the resilience of the human spirit.

Ziv and Eliya will speak on Wednesday, Oct. 28, at 7 p.m. in the Albert and Eunice Boscov Theater at GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, 201 Washington St.,

Reading. “FROM CAPTIVITY TO FREEDOM” is free and open to the public. Audience members are required to register by Wednesday, Oct. 14, by visiting ReadingJewishCommunity.org, scanning the QR code on this page or calling the Federation at 610-921-0624, Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm.

Please be prepared to present

a photo I.D. at the theater entrance on Oct. 28 to gain admission to the lecture.

GoggleWorks is completely accessible with ample parking. Parking lot entrances are located on Second Street and Walnut Street. Jewish Federation will provide security for the event.

This unique opportunity to hear Ziv and Eliya speak about enduring and overcoming the unthinkable and how the power of hope and resilience brought them back together, now as husband and wife, is presented by Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks and sponsored by: Victor and Dena Hammel, Sandy Solmon of Sweet Street Desserts, Radene Gordon-Beck of Kingsview Partners, Alvernia University and Dr. David Sacks, M.D. This important event would not be possible without their commitment and financial support.



SCAN ME

Jewish author, TV chef Pati Jinich coming to Reading in October

By Nancy Russo

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks is proud to continue its partnership with the Exeter Community Library and the Jewish Book Council as Literatour Berks returns for its eighth season of bringing nationally acclaimed Jewish authors to our community.

Over the past eight years, this collaboration has become a beloved tradition, connecting readers with extraordinary voices whose stories celebrate Jewish history, culture and identity and the many experiences that shape our world..

This year’s kick-off event will feature *New York Times* bestselling cookbook author and award-winning television host Pati Jinich on Tuesday, Oct. 20, at 7 p.m. in the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts in Reading. Jinich, host of the James Beard Award-winning PBS series “Pati’s



Mexican Table,” will share stories from her newest book, “Foods of La Frontera,” exploring the rich connections between food, family, culture, and identity.

Drawing on her Jewish heritage and her life in Mexico, Pati will discuss how her grandmothers influenced her understanding of tradition, resilience and the power of sharing stories around the table.

Guests will enjoy a screening of an episode from her television series highlighting Jewish life in Mexico City.

In addition to general admission, attendees have the opportunity to become VIP Sponsors, helping support Literatour Berks while enjoying an enhanced event experience. VIP Sponsorship packages include early admission at 6:30, an exclusive photo opportunity with Pati Jinich and priority access to the book signing.

Sponsorship levels are available for \$118 for one person, which includes one cookbook, or \$180 for two people, which includes two cookbooks. These sponsorships provide a wonderful way to support the continued success of Literatour Berks and ensure that exceptional literary programming remains available

to our community.

The eighth season of Literatour Berks is made possible through the generosity of many dedicated partners and supporters, including a grant from the Yiddish Book Center. This important funding helps bring nationally recognized Jewish authors and thought leaders to Berks County, allowing readers of all ages to engage with compelling stories, diverse perspectives and meaningful conversations.

By bringing celebrated Jewish authors to Berks County, Literatour Berks continues to inspire readers, promote lifelong learning, and celebrate the diverse voices that enrich our community. We invite everyone to join us for this unforgettable evening and to be part of another remarkable season of stories that educate, inspire, and connect us all.

Welcome to fall

By Richard Bradbury
Development Director

Welcome to fall, *Shalom* readers, as we celebrate the final days of Sukkot! I hope you had a wonderful, family-filled and meaningful High Holy Days season. Reflecting over the past year, I am truly thankful for the relationships I have formed with members of our community, and for being so welcoming and generous with your time and treasures. Looking forward, I am excited to continue building relationships and connecting with the community members I have yet to meet.

I certainly knew about New Year's resolutions — the ones you make on Jan. 1 — because I've broken many a resolution before reaching February! However, I never heard of Rosh Hashanah resolutions! Recently I received a message from Daniel Robbins, director of the film "Bad Shabbos." Daniel kicked off our 2025 Reading Jewish Film Series and made a personal appearance for the opening of his movie.

For Rosh Hashanah, Daniel's resolution was to TRY TO LIKE PEOPLE MORE. I find that hard to believe because being in Daniel's company he is witty, charming and immediately puts people at ease.

Daniel, in his search to "liking people more" shared a video from Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l talking about a young black man, Stephen L. Carter, whose family moved to a deeply segregated Washington, D.C., in the 1960s. The family moved into a predominantly white neighborhood where they immediately felt — and were — ignored. Mr. Carter states their neighbors made them feel invisible and that "they never should have moved here".

Later, a woman came to their doorstep bearing drinks and cookies and said, "How wonderful that you are here." Sara Kestenbaum, a Jewish neighbor, exhibited a foundational tenet of Judaism, *chesed* (kindness) She extended kindness — especially to strangers, and especially when it is difficult.

Rabbi Sacks continued by quoting Maimonides from the Talmud, "Act as if your next act can change the future of the world". Mrs. Kestenbaum's small but powerful act of kindness profoundly impacted young Stephen Carter and his family, showing that one act of kindness can indeed change the world. Stephen L. Carter is now a professor of Law at Yale University and credits his success to Mrs. Kestenbaum's simple, yet life-changing, pillar of Judaism, *chesed*.

A few weeks ago, you received a letter from me, CEO, Cindy Gerber Tomlinson and Board Chair Jonathan Avins asking you to consider making a gift to our 2026 Annual Campaign, and, if your situation permits, increasing your gift by 18% or as much as you see fit or can afford.

Asking people for money, especially people you have begun to know, is not easy. It's uncomfortable, and no one ever wants to appear "pushy." But as I was told by a fundraising mentor, quoting hockey great Wayne Gretzky, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." So here goes!

The needs of our Jewish community in our region (and everywhere) continue to grow as members age, become physically challenged or experience financial



hardships during these uncertain times.

Did you know our Jewish Family Service helps struggling community members with utility bills and rent? JFS can also be counted on for hospital and home visits, coordinating care and services, being a liaison for legal and estate planning assistance and delivering holiday meals, cheer and companionship to the homebound.

Jewish Federation is committed to supporting two essential organizations in Israel: Impact Israel (including Yemin Orde and Village Way), addressing the urgent needs of at-risk Jewish youth in Israel and around the world, and Meir Panim, helping disadvantaged populations break the cycle of poverty and eliminate food insecurity.

Here in Berks County, Jewish Family Service volunteers witness the ever-increasing need at our monthly food pantries. Last year, JFS distributed over 302,000 pounds of food to families

across Berks County who are struggling to put food on their tables.

A large percentage of our funding comes directly from **you**, dear reader, our Reading/Berks Jewish Community, and it supports these acts of kindness and the infrastructure and programming that bolster our mission.

You may not realize it, but through your acts of kindness, you are changing the world, little by little, one day at a time, one life at a time, one act at a time: "Change a life and you begin to change the universe."

Imagine if everyone gave what they could afford to give. Your *chesed* using the hands and hearts of your Federation would be able to do so much for so many. Each gift, regardless of the amount, is appreciated and has meaning.

I can be reached at 610-921-0624 or richardb@jfreading.org.

Wishing you and yours a happy, healthy and peaceful new year. Shalom.

Obituaries

Deborah Cieplinski, 74, died on Aug. 31. Debbie graduated from Mount Penn High School, class of 1969. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from Cedar Crest College and her Master of Education from Lehigh University.

For several years Debbie was a teacher for the Berks County Intermediate Unit, working with children who had special needs, until she stepped away from public education to raise her three daughters. Debbie continued teaching by privately tutoring students out of her home.

Debbie was a lifetime member of Keshar Zion Synagogue. She cherished

her pets. She was a lifelong reader and enjoyed needlepoint, crossword puzzles, music, the theater, the Reading Symphony Orchestra, and going out for dinner with friends and family. The heart of Debbie's life revolved around her family and family trips brought her much joy.

Debbie is survived by her children, Christine Cieplinski, Jessica Cieplinski (Tom Williams) and Stephanie Tutorius (Kevin), grandchildren, Piper, Phoenix and Evey, her sister Sue Farrara (Michael), nephew Steve Farrara (Erica), niece Emily Richardson (Aaron) and great nephew and nieces, Landon, Margot, and Eleora. She was predeceased by her husband Stanley Cieplinski, Jr.

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

presents

FROM CAPTIVITY TO FREEDOM



Eliya Cohen
FORMER HOSTAGE

Photo credit: Shai Franco



Ziv Abud
NOVA SURVIVOR

Photo Credit: Shai Franco

Wednesday,
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7:00 pm

GoggleWorks
Center for the Arts

Registration and Photo I.D. required for admittance. Registration deadline: October 14, 2026

Thank you to our sponsors

Dena and Vic Hammel



Also, thank you to
David Sacks, M.D.



Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks



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OR CALL 610-921-0624



Development

Annual Campaign

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L'Chaim Society

Book of Life

Letter of Intent



DONATE NOW
TO OUR
JEWISH
COMMUNITY
CAMPAIGN

Please visit
ReadingJewishCommunity.
org

Make your gift
today!

JFR’s key tenets

By Cindy Gerber Tomlinson
Chief Executive Officer

As you know, we are in the last quarter of 2026, and now is the time for the final push to the Annual Campaign finish line. We are currently behind in meeting our goal of \$460,000.

I want to take a moment to remind you of the key areas on which we are concentrating.



Fighting Antisemitism

The team and I are working very hard every day to provide programming to address the rise in antisemitism. We are providing antisemitism education and resources to the non-Jewish Berks County community, including schools, colleges and universities, while partnering with the Anti-Defamation League, StandWithUs and the Berks Holocaust Education Center. We are also preparing to reopen the Lakin Holocaust Library and Resource Center and hiring a Director of Holocaust Education to expand programs for students and educators. Through interfaith partnerships and partnering with the new Berks Holocaust Museum, we are building understanding and turning neighbors into allies. Your support makes this vital work possible.

Investing in Security

JFR continues to strengthen the physical security of our Jewish community by enhancing buildings, security personnel, emergency preparedness, and partnerships with local law enforcement. Our JCC is protected by security cameras, ballistic-resistant doors and windows, controlled-access entrances and a security vehicle. We are investing further in threat assessment, security procedures, physical barriers, and emergency coordination. Your support makes this vital work possible.

Caring for Our Community

Through Jewish Family Service, JFR helps thousands of Berks County residents facing food insecurity and financial hardship. JFS distributes about 302,000 pounds of food annually to 6,000 residents through two monthly food pantries. It provides financial assistance, social work, hospital and home visits, housing guidance, help navigating medical insurance and bereavement support. Your support makes this vital work possible.

Building Our Jewish Future

This year, JFR awarded \$17,000 in Jewish education scholarships to 17 local children and presented 50 Jewish educational and cultural programs, including Berks Literatour, the Reading Jewish Film Series, Leo Camp and Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lectures,

Noontime Knowledge and Great Decisions. We also continued supporting humanitarian organizations in Israel, including Meir Panim and Yemin Orde. Your support makes this vital work possible.

I am asking you now, right now, to please make your gift TODAY. If you gave last year, please increase your gift this year. If you did not give last year, please start a new tradition this year. If you care about our Jewish community, and you want to see it flourish and grow, please provide us with the financial resources to do so. Costs go up every year. Jewish communities are shrinking. The only path forward, to be sure that the Berks County Jewish community survives AND flourishes, is to work with us by supporting us.

Next up is getting the Jews in our community who are in their 40s more involved. Then the 20- and 30-something’s. Going forward, I want to get to the new stuff. Like working with Drexel’s medical school to recruit Jewish students and the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance to recruit Jewish executives to come to Berks County, and helping Jewish students at our local colleges and institutions to find internships—all in an effort to grow our community.

Make a promise for the future. Be a community that cares. That gives. That ensures L’Dor v’dor — from generation to generation.

Take action. Join the effort. Let’s go!!!!

The importance of defining antisemitism

The Federation thanks Pennsylvania Attorney General Dave Sunday for recognizing the alarming rise of antisemitism across Pennsylvania and for standing behind the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism. At a time when Jewish communities face rising antisemitic rhetoric, harassment, and hostility, a clear and consistent framework for identifying antisemitism matters. We thank him for taking this issue seriously and standing with Pennsylvania’s Jewish community.



Pennsylvania Attorney General Dave Sunday is speaking out regarding antisemitism and the fears faced by Jewish communities around the commonwealth and in support of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism.

By Dave Sunday
Pennsylvania Attorney General

As attorney general, I meet frequently with faith leaders to understand what people are facing. What I’m hearing from members of the Jewish community is that they feel especially vulnerable. Their message is unmistakable: antisemitism is our present reality.

It is no surprise many Jews feel this way and why many felt particularly vulnerable during the High Holiday season. Over the last decade, we have witnessed the Tree of Life massacre in Pittsburgh, the events of Oct. 7, 2023, and the Bondi Beach attack in Australia, among other tragedies. Last year, the Anti-Defamation League reported a record number of physical assaults.

Indeed, FBI data shows anti-Jewish hate crimes comprised nearly 70% of all religious-based hate crimes even though Jews are only 2% of the American population. Tellingly, Jewish institutions spend over \$1 billion per year on security in North America.

We have seen harassment at Jewish institutions, intimidation of Jewish students, cancellations of Jewish speakers and rhetoric that targets Jews as a group rather than expressing political disagreement.

Antisemitic voices have been provided platforms on the right and the left, and too often these messages are not just from the fringes. Antisemitism has become

normalized and, increasingly, it is being tolerated and celebrated. This reality should concern every Pennsylvanian.

The fear is real, and it’s time for those who are appalled by this information to take a stand. In order to identify, condemn and fight something, though, you first must define it.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism provides a widely used framework for identifying contemporary antisemitism.

This definition explains that antisemitism includes hatred or discrimination against Jews and outlines how discussions about Israel can cross into antisemitism when they target Jews collectively — such as by denying Jewish self-determination, applying double standards not used for other nations, attributing dual

loyalty to Jews abroad, or holding all Jews responsible for Israel’s actions.

These examples help distinguish legitimate policy criticism from rhetoric that targets Jewish identity.

The definition also makes clear that criticism of Israel, like criticism of any country’s policies or leaders, is not inherently antisemitic.

Political protest that does not deny Jewish self-determination or rely on anti-Jewish tropes remains fully protected. A clear definition helps institutions separate protected expression from conduct that discriminates against or endangers Jewish communities.

This work is urgent. Jews across Pennsylvania deserve security, and any society that tolerates antisemitism undermines its own integrity and safety.

This opinion piece originally was published in the Philadelphia Jewish Exponent.

Shalom

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The opinions expressed in Shalom are of the writers and not the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks



Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks

Remembering 9/11: Standing together

By Margo Levin
JCRC Coordinator

The Federation joined local clergy and interfaith community leaders at an interfaith commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. The program was hosted by Alvernia University's Interfaith Ministry.

Together, we remembered the thousands of lives lost and honored the courage and sacrifice of the first responders, military personnel, and countless individuals who came together in the days and years that followed.

As a Jewish community, this remembrance held special meaning as Sept. 11 coincided this year with Shabbat and Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year and a time of reflection, remembrance, and hope.

The gathering was a meaningful reminder of the strength found in coming together across faiths and communities, especially in times of loss and uncertainty.



"ART, CULTURE & IDEAS"

THE HIGHLANDS AT WYOMISSING

MON OCT 5
1:30PM

CULTURAL CENTER AT THE HIGHLANDS AT WYOMISSING
2000 CAMBRIDGE AVE.

MAH JONGG 2026: INSIDE THE NMJL NEW CARD – STRATEGIES, SECRETS, AND WINNING HANDS
PRE-RECORDED PROGRAM

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks Art, Culture & Ideas is a monthly series. Upcoming dates: Nov 16

All Around the Town

Mazel Tov to **Anzie Golden** on the birth of her new grandson.

Mazel Tov to **Michael Pardo** on the birth of his granddaughter, Aurelia Bonnie.

Mazel Tov to **Jeff and Jan Gernsheimer** on the birth of their granddaughter, Molly Gernsheimer.

Mazel Tov to **Josh Williams and Samantha Gogets** on the birth of the daughter, Abigail Sue Williams.

Send good news to Marknem@aol.com or call 610-921-0624.

Until next time: Shalom!



Literatour KICK-OFF EVENT

SEASON 8



Featuring PATI JINICH

New York Times bestselling cookbook author and host of the James Beard Award-winning PBS series, *Pati's Mexican Table*.

Pati's Jewish identity has been shaped in a large part by her grandmothers from whom she learned how to weave her Jewish heritage from the countries they came from with their new home in Mexico.

Pati will be presenting family stories and recipes and we will screen an episode of Mexican Jewish life in Mexico City from her TV series.



TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20TH AT 7:00 PM

GOGGLEWORKS CENTER FOR THE ARTS
201 Washington St., Reading, PA 19601

TICKETING

1 GENERAL ADMISSION & 1 COOKBOOK: **\$36**

VIP SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

(INCLUDES EARLY ADMISSION AT 6:30PM, PHOTO OPPORTUNITY AND BOOK SIGNING)

\$118 – 1 PERSON & 1 COOKBOOK
\$180 – 2 PEOPLE & 2 COOKBOOKS

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT LITERATOUR BERKS, A PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH JEWISH FEDERATION OF READING/BERKS, EXETER COMMUNITY LIBRARY AND JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL.

THIS PROGRAM MADE POSSIBLE BY A GENEROUS GRANT FROM YIDDISH BOOK CENTER.

REGISTRATION: <https://www.readingjewishcommunity.org>

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Jewish Film Series kicks off in October

By Richard Bradbury
Development Director

Mark your calendars now for the 2026-2027 Reading Jewish Film Series. Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks will screen five absorbing, entertaining and enlightening films. Come to all of them or attend the films that speak to you! All films will be shown in the Albert and Eunice Boscov Theater at the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts, 201 Washington St., Reading. The parking lot is well lit, and the building is fully accessible. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for senior citizens, first responders and students. Order your tickets at ReadingJewishCommunity.org. Click on the Reading Jewish Film Series in blue ribbon and choose your movie! Visit Thorn Alley Café at GoggleWorks for dinner or drinks before the movie!

Jewish Federation kicks-off the Series on Saturday Oct. 10, at 7 p.m., with “THE NEW JEW: Days of War.” The events of Oct. 7, 2023, didn’t just shake the Middle East — it sent shockwaves through living rooms, campuses, and synagogues across America. This documentary film

explores the impact of recent events on Jewish identity and community in the United States, following Israeli comedian Guri Alfi’s journey through personal stories and challenges.

Through raw, intimate encounters— with families awaiting hostages, individuals facing surging antisemitism, and young Jews torn between generations over Israel — Alfi captures a community at a crossroads.

Other films in the series:

- **“One Big Happy Family,” Thursday, Nov. 12, at 7 p.m.**

On her 40th birthday, Rachel is grappling with a looming mid-life crisis and the nerve-wracking task of delivering a speech at her daughter’s Bat Mitzvah. But when a DNA test unexpectedly reveals that she’s only half-Jewish Rachel’s life is thrown into disarray. Suddenly, she’s on a wild ride of family chaos and embarking on a journey with her mother. The film stars Lisa Brenner (who also wrote the screenplay) and the late, legendary Linda Lavin.

Jewish Federation is thrilled to announce that the star, writer and

producer of “One Big Happy Family,” Lisa Brenner, will be our guest for the screening. She will speak about the film and take questions from the audience. Lisa Brenner is best known for her role as “Anne Howard” in the classic American Revolutionary War film, “The Patriot.” She starred in many indie films such as “Cesar Chavez,” “Finding Home,” “What Boys Want,” “Bad Samaritan” and “The Remains.” Aside from acting, Lisa has produced films such as the romantic comedy “Say My Name” as well as the Roku Original “The Deal.”

“One Big Happy Family” is Lisa’s personal, true story about her tumultuous journey after taking a DNA test. The film is a female-forward film presenting a woman’s voice that resonates between three generations – a grandmother, a mom, and a soon-to-be bat-mitzvah daughter.

- **“Monument,” Tuesday, Dec. 22, at 7 p.m.**

Based on a true story. In 1999, as Israel’s occupation of southern Lebanon nears its breaking point, renowned Israeli architect Yacov Rechter is commissioned to design a monument honoring fallen soldiers of the Christian South Lebanon Army. His idealistic son and apprentice, Amnon, challenges him to build something radically different: a memorial for all victims of the war — Christian and Muslim alike. As father and son clash over loyalty, complicity, and art, their creative journey mirrors that of a divided nation, and the monument becomes a haunting symbol of a peace that never lasts. Bryan Singer (“Bohemian

Rhapsody,” “The Usual Suspects” and “X-Men”) directs. The film stars Jon Voight and Joe Mazzello.

- **“Swedishkayt, YidLife Crisis in Stockholm,” Thursday, March 11, at 7 p.m.**

Get ready to laugh and kvell with “Swedishkayt: YidLife Crisis in Stockholm” as self-proclaimed international Yiddish-ish icons YidLife Crisis — Montreal-based comedy duo Eli Batalion and Jamie Elman — bravely step onto Swedish soil to unearth a hidden treasure trove of Jewish culture. From the moment they arrive in Stockholm, our heroes, like gefilte fish out of water, prepare for a big live show while unraveling the little-known history of Sweden’s Jewish community in their hilarious and heartfelt journey.

- **“Hold on to your Music: A Mother’s Legacy,” Wednesday April 7, at 7 p.m.**

An extraordinary, multi-generational story of Lisa Jura and her daughter, Mona, two brilliant concert pianists, whose lives are so deeply intertwined it’s hard to tell where one begins and the other ends. In this heartfelt and epic documentary, Mona Golabek shares the story of her mother, a child prodigy pianist, and her escape from Vienna on a Kindertransport as one of 10,000 unaccompanied children rescued and brought to England in 1938-39. The film features rarely seen archival footage of wartime Vienna and London, along with moving voice interviews and piano recordings. A life-affirming story, this captivating film is a powerful testament to survival, artistry, and the enduring strength of a mother’s love.



Monthly film screenings at Goggleworks
New Jewish films
October 2026 to April 2027
No Films will be screened Jan/Feb 2027



The New Jew: Days of War
Saturday, October 10, 7pm

A documentary film that explores the impact of recent events on Jewish identity and community in the United States, following Israeli comedian Guri Alfi's journey through personal stories and societal challenges.



Learn more and buy tickets at ReadingJewishCommunity.org or scan the QR code.



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Our approach to memory support emphasizes connection, engagement and joy. Residents thrive in a nature-connected neighborhood where they’re supported by life-enriching activities tailored to personal interests and abilities. It’s all about purposeful living for your loved one, and peace of mind for you.



See for yourself — scan to learn more or call 610.775.2300 to schedule your tour.



Jewish Family Service extends our gratitude to the following individuals who donated households items to a client in need!



Paul Cohn
Vicki Graff
Nan Kurlancheek
Vicky Sokoloff
Jeremy Wasserman
Laurie Waxler
Amanda Wertz



A new face at Jewish Family Service

By Stephanie Rotenberg
Jewish Family Service

I am delighted to have returned to my role as a social worker with Jewish Family Service. More than 20 years ago, I had the good fortune of working with Sari Incledon. I learned so much from her and was always impressed with her compassion and dedication. I am thrilled to once again have the opportunity to serve our Jewish community, this time alongside Carole Robinson.

I graduated from The University of Maryland at Baltimore with my MSW in 1997 and have been a licensed social worker since 1999. Throughout my career, I have



had the privilege of working in a variety of clinical and community-based settings. For the past seven years, I worked as a medical social worker for a skilled home healthcare agency where I helped clients access community resources, provided advocacy, and supported them as they navigated the emotional and social challenges that often accompany illness and medical conditions.

I am the very proud parent of Eli, Talia and Joshua, who are truly the lights of my life. When I'm not working, I enjoy going to concerts, having fun in Ocean City, N.J., and Philadelphia, working out at Orangetheory, reading, and most importantly, spending time with my family. You will always find me cheering on the Philadelphia Eagles! I'm especially excited to be attending my first in-person game at The Linc this season.

My role at Jewish Family Service began just a few weeks ago, but I've already had the pleasure of making several hospital

and home visits, helping a client navigate medical and insurance issues and attending my first Friendship Circle. It's been a meaningful start, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to connect with our community in such tangible ways.

I came across a quote a few years ago that said, "Be the reason someone feels welcomed, seen, heard, valued, loved and supported." Those words have become an intention of mine — not only professionally but in my personal interactions as well. If you find yourself at Jewish Federation, my door is always open. Please stop in to say hello. I'd love the opportunity to connect, hear your story, and share in community.

My hope is to continue the beautiful legacy of caring that Sari and Carole have so wonderfully established. I'm honored and grateful to be part of that legacy and look forward to carrying it forward with the same warmth, compassion and care.

Food pantry volunteers hard at work



Above, students from MPowerment School volunteering at the JFS pantry Sept 2. Below, some of our regular volunteers getting ready to distribute food.



JewishFamilyService

- Food Pantry
- Friendship Circle
- Counseling Services
- Transportation
- Financial Assistance
- Hospital and Home Visitations
- Living with Loss
- Information and Referral
- Case Management
- Holiday Programs

Many thanks to our September Food Pantry volunteers who distributed food to over 600 households.

Marsha Adelman

Allison Althouse

Mary Anne Avins

Cindy Balchunas

Marc Filstein

Raymond Gehring

Sharon Gernsheimer

Patty Hartman

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Elaine Jones

Sid Lempiner

Alan Levine

Lisa Levine

Jenn Reilly

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Paul Schwartz

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Oleg Umanov

Preparing for a sweet New Year around our community



Left and center, the JFS Rosh Hashanah service and meal held at the Jewish Federation on Sept. 3. Gloria Isman, Sharon Brown and Christine Verzi; Paul Schwartz leading the service and Scott Bram blowing the shofar. At right, Esther Bratt and Rabbi Prosnitz during the Rosh Hashanah program held at the Highlands on Aug 31.

A BIG thank you to our Rosh Hashanah volunteers:

- Paul Schwartz for leading the JFS service and Rabbi Prosnitz for leading the program at the Highlands
- Jon and Mary Anne Avins, Jeff Bornstein, Sheila Bornstein, Scott Bram, Judy Copeland, Sharon Syret, and Gail Tomrell who helped set up and serve the meal
- Scott Bram for blowing the shofar
- Sheila Bornstein for baking fabulous Rosh Hashanah desserts
- Robert Schneier, Pete Jacobson, Paul Schwartz, Sharon Syret, Sari Incledon, Joan Walden and Debbie Goodman for delivering meals and apples to our seniors who were unable to attend
- Thank you to Table 13 Catering for cooking our delicious holiday meal.



FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

October 1- "Sukkot Celebration"

Although we won't be in the sukkah, join Keshar Zion's Rabbi Prosnitz to shake the lulav and learn about the fall harvest of Sukkot.

October 15-"Bruce Feiler in conversation with Rabbi Angela Buchdahl"

12:00 pm Lunch 1:00pm program

Join us for a live zoom with author Bruce Feiler in conversation with Rabbi Angela Buchdahl from Central Synagogue as they discuss his book, *A Time to Gather: How Ritual Created the World-and How It Can Save Us*.

Please note the change in time: 12:00pm



Friendship Circle is held twice a month on Thursday afternoons at 1:00 p.m at the JCC. An optional lunch is served, followed by an entertaining or educational program or holiday celebration.

Programs are free; optional lunch is \$7. Contact Carole at 610-921-0624 to make lunch reservations.

What was lost can come back

By Rabbi Yosef Lipsker
Chabad Center of Berks County

My daughter called me the other day and told me the following story.

She was walking down a street in Brooklyn when she noticed a closed envelope on the ground, beaten up from being stepped on countless times. She picked it up, but there was no name, address or identifying information on the outside. Holding it up to the light, she could tell there was cash inside.

She realized that if she had any chance of returning it, she would have to open it.

Inside was more than \$1,000.

There was no phone number or address. The only clue was a small piece of paper with a name, some hours written down, and what appeared to be the name of a store.

So she started investigating.

Eventually, she figured out that the store was a grocery store in Borough Park. The problem was that she had found the envelope in Crown Heights.

She called the store, but carefully. She certainly wasn't going to announce, "I found an envelope with over a thousand dollars in cash. Does anyone know who it belongs to?"

Instead, she simply asked whether someone by the name written on the paper worked there. When they asked why, she explained only that she had found something in Crown Heights with this person's name and the name of their store, and she was trying to return it.

One question led to another, and eventually she got his phone number.

When she called and he realized what she was talking about, he could hardly believe it.

"You found it?"

Think about it from his side. He had lost an envelope containing more than \$1,000 somewhere in Crown Heights. There was no phone number,



no address, and practically no way for anyone to trace it back to him.

As far as he was concerned, the money was gone.

And then, out of nowhere, his phone rang.

"I think I found something that belongs to you."

They arranged to meet.

Up until that point, it was a beautiful little detective story: a lost envelope, a few clues, and the mitzvah of returning something that was lost.

But when my daughter met the man, the story changed.

He was in his 30s, a father with young children.

Suddenly, this wasn't just an envelope filled with cash. This was money someone had worked hard for. Money that could mean groceries, bills, and the everyday needs of a family.

My daughter handed him the envelope.

With tremendous relief, he looked at her and said, "You made my day."

One of his little children, who had been watching, called out after her:

"You made my dad's day!"

When my daughter told me that, I stopped.

There was something about those words coming from a child that touched me deeply.

A little child may not understand what \$1,000 means. He may not understand paychecks or household expenses.

But he understands his father.

He knows when his father is worried. And he knows when his father is relieved.

Somehow, the loss of that envelope had affected him too. And now he saw his father happy again.

"You made my dad's day."

I've been thinking about those words since.

My daughter didn't give this man \$1,000.

She gave him back his \$1,000.

There is a big difference.

In Judaism, there is a mitzvah called Hashavas Aveidah — returning something that has been lost to its owner.

And coming right after Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I keep coming back to that idea:

Returning what was lost.

Because money isn't the only thing we lose.

Sometimes we lose time. Sometimes we lose opportunities. Sometimes a relationship that was once close becomes distant. Sometimes we lose confidence, joy or the sense of purpose we once had.

Sometimes we lose some of the excitement we once felt about Judaism, or the closeness to G-d that once felt so natural.

And sometimes, somewhere along the road of life, we lose a little bit of ourselves.

Perhaps the hardest part is when we finally convince ourselves: It's gone. I'm never getting it back.

That man probably thought exactly that about his envelope.

And then his phone rang.

"I found what you lost."

During these days, we speak so much about Teshuvah. It is often translated as repentance, but its deeper meaning is simply: Return.

To come back.

Maybe some things in our lives are not as lost as we think.

Maybe a relationship can still be repaired.

Maybe there is a phone call we need to make.

Maybe we can forgive someone, or ask someone to forgive us.

Maybe some of the joy can return.

Maybe some of the faith can return.

Maybe we can find our way closer to G-d again.

And maybe a part of ourselves that we thought was gone is still there, waiting to be rediscovered.

Not everything can come back exactly as it was. Life does not always work that way. But even then, something can be rebuilt. A new relationship can be created. A new path can be found.

There can still be a road home.

My daughter thought she had simply found an envelope on a Brooklyn street.

But perhaps she found a reminder for all of us:

Lost does not always mean gone forever.

Sometimes you have to search.

Sometimes you have to follow a small clue.

Sometimes you have to make the phone call.

And sometimes, against all expectations, something precious finds its way home.

So in addition to asking G-d to bless us with new things this year, perhaps we can also ask Him to help us recover some of the precious things we have lost along the way.

To find our way back to the people we love.

Back to our faith.

Back to Judaism.

Back to G-d.

And perhaps even back to ourselves.

And for those things that cannot come back exactly as they were, may G-d give us the strength and courage to build something new.

The words I keep hearing are the simple words of that little child:

"You made my dad's day."

May this be a year when something we thought was lost finds its way home.

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God is present at all times in our lives

By Rabbi Ted Prosnitz
Keshar Zion Synagogue

Moadim L'simcha!
Joyous festivals!
While we are now,
in October, past the
Yamim Noraim/the
High Holidays of Rosh
Hashanah and Yom
Kippur, the holiday
season is not over. We
are celebrating Sukkot,
the Festival of Booths,
ending on Oct. 3 with Sh'mini Atzeret.

On Rosh Hashanah, we presented our
case in court, for our fate to be judged. We
approached Dayan Ha'emet / the True
Judge with fear and trembling. Therefore,
we greeted one another with L'shanah
tovah tikateivu / may you be inscribed for

a good year. Between Rosh Hashanah
and Yom Kippur we pled our case before
El Emunah /the Faithful God, and greeted
each other, hoping for a good verdict, with
G'mar chatimah tovah / may you be sealed
for good. Once the gates of prayer were
closed at Neilah, the end of Yom Kippur,
our fates were sealed / chotam. Afterwards,
since the trial was over and the decision
sealed, we greeted one another with g'mar
tov / may it be a good conclusion.

But wait! The paperwork for the
decision has not been finalized. There
is still time, until Sh'mini Atzeret, for the
decision to be changed. During Sukkot, we
greet each other with Moadim L'simcha.
And now, rather than approaching our
Judge with fear and trembling and in awe,
we approach Avinu Malkeinu / our Father,
our King with joy and gladness and in



love. On Yom Kippur we can achieve a
closeness with Hamelech Hakadosh /the
Holy King through fasting and prayer; on
Sh'mini Atzeret/Simchat Torah we can
achieve that same closeness / deveikut
with our Creator through joyous feasting
and dancing.

Chag Sameach / Happy Holiday!

Yet, it seems our joy is always
tinged with sadness. It was on
Simchat Torah three years ago that
Hamas attacked Israel — the nation,
the people, and all Jewry, three years
ago. We have been victimized, but we
are survivors, and resilient. Whereas
the Holocaust during World War II
found Jews without a nation to protect
them, today, Jews have a sovereign
State of Israel and Defense Forces

to fight for them. How appropriate to
remember those killed and kidnapped,
martyrs and heroes, Jews and non-
Jews, anyone the terrorists found in
the Land of Israel, at Yizkor services
on Saturday, Oct. 3. There will also
be a separate community memorial
on Oct. 7.

In the wilderness, Hashem provided
a pillar of cloud to protect the Israelites
during the day, and a pillar of cloud to
protect them at night. We have moments
of joy and moments of sadness, but
Hashem is present for us at all times.
Kavei el Adoshem, chazak v'ya'amez
libecha; Kavei el Adoshem / Put your
hope in the Lord, be strong and let your
heart take courage; Look to the Lord
(Psalm 27:14).

KESHER ZION
K SYNAGOGUE

OCTOBER AT KZ

OCT. 1 - MINYAN
7PM

SATURDAY OCT. 3 - Shemini Atzeret
9:30AM
YIZKOR - 11AM

SATURDAY OCT. 3 - SIMCHAT TORAH
7:00PM

SUNDAY OCT. 4 - SIMCHAT TORAH
9:30AM

MARKING OCTOBER 7TH
7PM

OCT. 15 - MINYAN
7PM

OCT. 16 - KABBALAT SHABBAT
6:30PM

Marking
October 7th

Wednesday, October 7
7pm
Keshar Zion Synagogue

Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks

46TH ANNUAL
LEO CAMP
MEMORIAL LECTURE

The Afro-Semitic Experience

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2026, 7:00 P.M.
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Upcoming events offered by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks (listed as JCC, JFS, JFR), Keshar Zion Synagogue (KZ), Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom (RCOS), and Chabad-Lubavitch of Berks (Chabad). To learn more about any event listed here, read articles throughout the Shalom or see our online calendar at readingjewishcommunity.org/calendar. Contact 610.921.0624 or info@jfreaing.org with questions.

OCTOBER 2026

SUN	MON	TUE
4 Simchat Torah Simchat Torah Celebraion	5 Arts, Culture, Ideas at the Highlands	6 JCC ROMEO Lunch
11	12 Columbus Day	13
18 StandWithUs Workshop	19	20 Literatour Kick -off Pati Jinich at Goggleworks
25 KZ Fundraiser Bingo	26 Movie Monday- " Golda "	27

TISHREI-CHESVAN , 5787

WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1 Sukkot JFS Friendship Circle JCC Evening Mahjong -	2 JULIET Lunch - at Wyomissing Family Restaurant	3 Shimini Atzeret Shemini Atzeret & Simchat Torah program “We Will Dance For Them” Simchat Torah Celebraion
7 October 7 Commemoration at KZ	8	9	10 RJFS: The New Jew: Days of War at the Goggleworks
14	15 JFS Friendship Circle - 12 PM at JCC	16	17 PJ Havdalah with RCOS
21	22 JCC Noontime Knowledge at JCC	23	24
28 Former Hostage Eliya Cohen and Nova Survivor Ziv Abud at Goggleworks	29	30	31

Acclaimed British pianist to perform at RCOS

Editor's note: This is being republished to correct errors in the version printed in the September Shalom.
By Susan Weiser

British pianist Simon Mulligan has been described by *The Times* of London as “the most abundantly gifted of pianists,” by Yehudi Menuhin as “one of the finest pianists I have ever had the pleasure of performing with” and by Herbie Hancock as “phenomenal.”

Mulligan will perform at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom on Nov. 15 at 4 p.m. in the annual Kozloff-Rotenberg Night of Music

Following his debut with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Mulligan has performed and recorded with the BBC Symphony, Detroit Symphony (under Leonard Slatkin), English Symphony Orchestra (William Boughton), Warsaw Sonfonia (Yehudi Menuhin), Hong Kong Philharmonic (DavidAtherton), Malaysian Philharmonic and the Royal National Scottish Orchestra (Jose Serebrier) to name a few.

Mulligan recorded his first compact disc at age 19 under the direction of Menuhin, which led to a seven-year collaboration and friendship, culminating with Lord Menuhin's final concert in Dusseldorf, Germany. Mulligan has gone on to record albums for Sony, Universal, Decca, Nimbus and Naxos, and 14 solo releases for the Steinway label.

As a chamber musician, Mulligan collaborates with many notable artists. While a student at London's Royal Academy of Music, he began worldwide recital tours with cellist Lynn Harrell. He soon began touring with violinist Joshua Bell, performing at every major international venue, including live broadcasts from

Lincoln Center and at the Grammy Awards. Mulligan has performed for three US presidents and Queen Elizabeth II and the royal family. He has enjoyed collaborations with Dame Shirley Bassey, Liza Minnelli, Van Morrison and Sting.

Alongside an extensive solo repertoire and almost 60 concertos, Mulligan's focus on contemporary music has led to first performances of works by Hans Werner Henze, James MacMillan, Paul Moravec, Tobias Picker, Mary Anthony Turnage and Alexis Weissenberg. Mulligan's passion for paraphrases and improvisation has been featured in *Downbeat*, *Billboard*, *JazzTimes*, *International Pianist* and *Gramophone*.

Mulligan enjoyed a close friendship with film composer Michael Kamen, featuring on several of Kamen's scores, most notably the HBO television series “Band of Brothers,” produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks. As a jazz pianist, Mulligan has performed at festivals in Europe, Asia, South America, and Barbados.

The Simon Mulligan Quartet comprises saxophonist Frank Walden, drummer Justin Woodward and Andy Hamill on bass. His U.S.-based trio The Simon Alliance features bassist Gene Perla and drummer Adam Nussbaum. Mulligan is the most prolific Steinway artist, having recorded in all genres and advised in the development of the Steinway Spirio piano since its inception in 2014.

A music scholar of St. Paul's School in London, Mulligan began his studies with Bobbie Howlett and Andrew Pledge. At the age of 13 he received a scholarship to study with Alexander Kelly at the Royal Academy of Music, leading to classes with Jacques Rouvier in Paris and

Alexander Satz in Austria. Mulligan also studied Beethoven in London at the personal invitation of Alfred Brendel. Mulligan was awarded a further scholarship to the International Piano Academy at Italy's Lake Como, where he began private study with

Alexis Weissenberg. He additionally counts among his mentors Charles Rosen and Murray Perahia.

Mulligan holds the Fellowship of the Royal Academy of Music and is Artist-in-Residence at the prestigious Moravian University of Pennsylvania.

LET'S GET READY FOR THE KESHER
ZION SECOND ANNUAL

BINGO!
Fundraiser

Looking for donations,
volunteers, and schmoozers!

Contact Sue Wilson and see how
you can be a part of the fun!

Sunday, Oct 25, 2026
Grill Fire Company
Shillington, PA

**Kozloff-Rotenberg
Night of Music**

Sunday, November 15 at 4:00
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom



British Pianist
Simon Mulligan

Simon Mulligan has been described by *The Times of London* as “the most abundantly gifted of pianists.” By Yehudi Menuhin as “one of the finest pianists I have ever had the pleasure of performing with” and by *Steinway & Sons* as “the world’s most versatile pianist.”

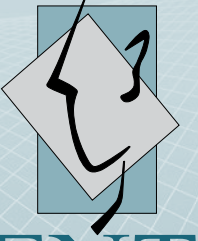
*Please join us as we honor the memories of
Jeraldine (Jeri) Kozloff and Alison Rotenberg,
members of RCOS.*

*Dessert reception to follow the performance
in the Social Hall.*

To support the Night of Music, a starting donation of \$40
is required per person. All donations \$100 and above
will be listed in the program.

Please visit the link at
<https://ohebsholom.org/kozloff-night-of-music>

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JFS Food Pantries recognized

Helping Harvest, the organization that helps to feed hungry families in Berks and Schuylkill counties, recently spotlighted the work of Jewish Family Service in its newsletter. See below.

Service Insights Agency Spotlight
Jewish Family Service

Jewish Family Service started their food pantry over 30 years ago. It initially only served a few members of the Jewish community, but expanded quickly to serve anyone in need of food. In 2020, they added a second food pantry at the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Hampden Heights.

“We launched Service Insights several months ago at one of our monthly food pantries. We decided to implement Service Insights to save time and to improve the accuracy of our records. Although using Service Insights initially takes longer than our previous paper registration process, it has become easier each time we use it. Service Insights has eliminated the need for spending endless hours on completing paperwork and compiling Excel spreadsheets after our pantries. In addition to saving time, we are probably saving a few trees! Once we are more comfortable navigating Service Insights, I'm sure it will become a valuable tool for us when we examine data and evaluate our community services.”

Carole Robinson - Jewish Family Service Director



We deeply appreciate your 30 years of service to your community and your willingness to explore new tools like Service Insights at both locations. Your passion and adaptability make a lasting difference in your community!



Movie Monday at the JCC
October 26, 2026, 1pm



Golda
Political Drama
100 min



A tense political drama set during the 19-day Yom Kippur War, focusing on Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir's leadership as she navigates military crises, political pressures, and a delicate relationship with Henry Kissinger.



Grab a seat for a Jewish themed movie each month at the JCC (1100 Berkshire Blvd., Ste. 125, Wyomissing). It is usually held on the 4th Monday of the month, and the popcorn and the movie are both free!

Movie poster for 'WE WILL DANCE FOR THEM'. The poster features a man in a military uniform holding a large, ornate Jewish prayer shawl (kittel) with Hebrew text. The background is a bright blue, starry sky. The title 'WE WILL DANCE FOR THEM' is written in large, white, serif font. Below the title, it says 'SHEMINI ATZERET & SIMCHAT TORAH' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom, it says 'SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3' and '6:30 PM' in a large, white, sans-serif font. The very bottom line says 'CHABAD 2320 HAMPDEN BLVD' and 'GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY DR. JERRY MARCUS' in a small, white, sans-serif font.

Federations back legislation for worship safety

Jewish Federations of North America applauds the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for advancing the bipartisan Pray Safe Act at a time when threats to Jewish institutions, houses of worship, and faith communities are at an all-time high.

As Jewish institutions and faith communities across the country face persistent security threats, the bill would

establish a Department of Homeland Security clearinghouse to help faith-based organizations and nonprofits access federal security resources, best practices, and recommendations. This centralized resource would support Jewish communal organizations, faith leaders, religious institutions, and other nonprofits as they work to strengthen security and protect the people they serve.

We thank the bipartisan leaders and committee members who advanced the legislation and urge the full Congress to pass the Pray Safe Act without delay. At a time when communities are facing unprecedented threats, Congress must act now to ensure that every person can safely gather, worship, celebrate Jewish life, and participate in the religious and communal life of their faith community.

Right to Worship Act

In September Jewish Federations of North America joined lawmakers and faith leaders on Capitol Hill to urge Congress to advance the bipartisan Right to Worship Act, legislation that would strengthen protections for Americans seeking to worship safely and without intimidation.

The legislation, led in the House by Representatives Tom Suozzi (D-NY) and Brad Knott (R-NC), with a Senate companion introduced by Senators Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Elissa Slotkin (D-MI), would establish a 100-foot buffer zone around houses of worship during religious services. The bill would prohibit conduct

that knowingly hinders, deters, threatens or intimidates worshippers attempting to enter services, while preserving peaceful expression protected by the First Amendment.

Jewish Federations President and CEO Eric Fingerhut joined representatives from Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh organizations at a September 16 press conference on Capitol Hill to highlight the broad support for protecting the right of all Americans to practice their faith safely.

“Every community deserves to gather safely in their house of worship. Too often, we’ve seen Jewish Americans and other faith communities targeted or intimidated simply for practicing their faith. The Right to Worship Act gives law enforcement and communities the tools they need to prevent these disruptions before they escalate, while still respecting every American’s First Amendment rights. Safety and religious freedom aren’t in tension; this bill shows how we can protect both,” said Fingerhut.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Jewish Family Service is grateful to our committed volunteers!

Here are some ways that you can help:

Help Fight Hunger

Join us at a JFS Food Pantry to distribute food to our hungry neighbors.

Share your Professional Expertise

Present a program on travel, photography, or your unique interests or hobbies to our seniors.

Share your time

A small investment of your personal time can make a profound difference in someone's life. Visit a shut-in, shop for a homebound senior, or take someone to a doctor's appointment.

Donate your vehicle to JFS or donate clothing to CommunityAid

Enjoy tax benefits of donating a car or help our clients through our partnership with CommunityAid.



Contact Us

Carole Robinson at 610-921-0624



Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

JFS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

This program provides transportation to members of the Jewish community, age 60 and over or those with disabilities, who have no other way of getting around. It allows participants to retain their independence and keeps them from becoming homebound and isolated. It can be used for medical appointments, synagogue attendance, shopping and other errands.

It is easy. Purchase a book of 25 taxi tickets from the Federation at a cost of \$25. Each coupon is worth \$3. The phone number for Reading Metro Taxi is on the ticket book. Call the company and arrange your ride. At the end of the ride, sign your coupon(s) before giving them to the driver. Tipping is left to the passenger's discretion. Coupon does not include cost of tipping.

Program subsidized by

The Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks



Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Evening Mahjong at the JCC

Beginners level

On the first Thursday of each month, we will meet for a night of Mahjong between 7:00 and 9:00 pm, at the JCC.

It is recommended to bring your own set.

Registration is required.





Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Annual Campaign 2026

Make your pledge or donate today!

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- 2) Email your Development Director, Richard Bradbury, at richardb@jfreading.org with “pledge” in the subject line.

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Noontime Knowledge presents 'Fire Witch'

By Nancy Russo

Literatour Berks Season 8 continues this fall with a fascinating Noontime Knowledge program featuring author Melanie Gall, who will discuss her book, "Fire Witch: Kate Claxton and the 1876 Brooklyn Theatre Inferno." The program will take place on Wednesday, Nov. 11 at noon at the Jewish Federation and is

free and open to the community.

Combining history, theater, tragedy, and the remarkable story of a woman caught at the center of it all, "Fire Witch" transports readers to the world of 19th-century American theater. Kate Claxton was a celebrated actress whose life became forever connected to the devastating Brooklyn Theatre fire of 1876. Her story

offers a compelling glimpse into a dramatic period of American history while exploring themes of survival, celebrity, resilience, and the way public tragedy can shape a person's life and legacy.

Melanie Gall will bring this extraordinary story to life during her presentation, giving audiences an opportunity to discover the history behind the book and learn more about the woman at its center. Following the program, Gall will be available to sell

and sign copies of "Fire Witch," giving attendees the opportunity to meet the author and take home a personally signed copy.

This special Literatour program is presented in partnership with the Exeter Community Library, Jewish Federation, and Jewish Book Council and is made possible through a generous grant from the Yiddish Book Center.

Registration is available at ReadingJewishCommunity.org.



Kristallnacht Commemoration Service

Monday, November 9, 2026

6:30 P.M. Circle of Light candle lighting **on the church steps**

7 P.M. Interfaith Service indoors

Reception to follow

Hosted this year at

Christ Episcopal Church

435 Court St. Reading, PA 19601

Parking lot located at Madison Ave and Washington St

Join us for our annual commemoration of Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass, which marked the beginning of the Holocaust.

The public is invited to this free event.

For information, please contact info@jfreading.org or 610-921-0624



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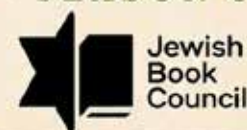
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**WEDNESDAY
NOVEMBER 11,
2026
12:00PM**



**JEWISH
FEDERATION**

FREE



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ReadingJewishCommunity.org



Yiddish
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THIS PROGRAM MADE POSSIBLE BY
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Organizations release Jewish Students’ Bill of Rights

American Jewish Committee

Following almost three years of growing antisemitism in K-12 schools, which have included bullying and, in many cases, ostracization, Jewish students across North America are returning to potentially tense classroom

environments.

To help students, parents, and communities better advocate for themselves, American Jewish Committee (AJC), Jewish Federations of North America, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Conference of Presidents of Major

American Jewish Organizations (COP), and StandWithUs (SWU) have released a Jewish Students’ Bill of Rights, calling on schools and districts to take six concrete steps to ensure that every Jewish student can attend school without fear of harassment, bias, or shame.

The document arrives as new data identifies K-12 schools as one of the few settings where antisemitic incidents have not declined, and as the High Holidays fall within the first weeks of the school year in most districts.

“Our schools should be places where students are able to learn not only academics, but also how to be good citizens and good neighbors -- key among that is creating an environment where no student has to fear harassment and exclusion because of who they are,” said AJC CEO Ted Deutch. “This Bill of Rights outlines common-sense principles that will help ensure that Jewish students, like all students, are able to safely, fully, and proudly participate in school life.”

“No child should have to choose between their education and their identity,” said Eric Fingerhut, Jewish

Federations of North America President and CEO. “We are not asking schools for special treatment. We are asking them to give Jewish students the same seriousness and the same protection that every other student in that building already receives. The Jewish Students’ Bill of Rights is a crucial roadmap of how to do that.”

The most recent Audit of Antisemitic Incidents from the Anti-Defamation League found that antisemitic incidents nationwide declined by roughly a third last year, but that incidents at non-Jewish K-12 schools remained essentially unchanged (825 in 2025, compared with 860 in 2024). The persistence of that pattern is what the Bill of Rights is designed to address.

“When a school does not know how to identify or respond to antisemitism, the lesson for every Jewish student in that building is that they do not belong,” said Jonathan Greenblatt, ADL CEO and National Director. “Not one child should be taught that lesson in the classroom. These six standards will set the textbook

Continued on Page 17



ANTISEMITISM THROUGH THE AGES

WITH

MICHELLE WAKSMAN,

STANDWITHUS MID-ATLANTIC HIGH SCHOOL REGIONAL MANAGER



One of the most significant obstacles in combating antisemitism is the widespread ignorance of its extensive history. This presentation aims to illuminate the evolution of antisemitism throughout human history, tracing its development as a form of religious, ethnic, and racial bigotry. By identifying and understanding the persistent tropes that have endured for centuries, we can educate our communities to recognize antisemitism in all its forms and work collectively to prevent its further spread.



Sunday, October 18, November 8 and January 10 from 5:00 - 6:30 PM



The Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks
Open to 8th to 12th Grade students





For full details and to RSVP, please visit JFR website

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Saturday Oct. 3
7pm

Sunday Oct. 4
9:30AM



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NOV 8TH & DEC 13TH
11:30AM - 12:30PM

FIELD TRIPS

OPEN TO ANY BERKS COUNTY STUDENT IN GRADES 7 – 12

SPECIAL GUESTS

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM & KESHER ZION SYNAGOGUE
555 WARWICK DRIVE, WYOMISSING, PA 19610

For more information contact
Rabbi Prosnitz ravhazprosnitz@gmail.com or Rabbi Michelson rabbi@ohebsholom.org





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356 West Main Avenue
Myerstown, PA 17067
717-866-1400

JEWISH STUDENTS’ BILL OF RIGHTS

Continued from Page 16

for what to do, and ADL is ready to help any school that wants to learn how to get this right.”

The Bill of Rights lays out six standards that students and families can hold their schools to:

- Ensuring that administrators and staff are equipped to identify antisemitism and the ways it manifests in modern educational environments.
- Maintaining a clear, transparent process for reporting and responding to antisemitic incidents following all applicable laws and with the same gravity afforded to all other hate and bias incidents, with assurance of accountability and follow-through.
- Ensuring that all teaching about Jewish culture, diversity, history, the Holocaust, antisemitism, and Israel is accurate and representative.
- Treating religious observances as excused absences and avoiding scheduling school events on widely celebrated holidays.
- Protecting Jewish students’ right to express their identity, and fully participate in all aspects of school life without

religious coercion, bullying, or pressure to distance themselves from any aspects of that identity, including their connection to Israel.

• Assuring that educators and curricula present contested issues in a balanced way rather than using the classroom to advance specific political or ideological viewpoints.

“For most students and parents, the start of a new school year is a time of excitement and possibility. But for too many Jewish students, recent years have brought something very different: harassment, bullying, and anxiety in the classroom. This Bill of Rights makes clear that Jewish students deserve what every student deserves: to learn openly, proudly, and safely, and it gives schools the tools to make that promise a reality,” said William C. Daroff, CEO of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

“Far too many Jewish students carry the weight of educating others and defending their community against bias and bigotry in K-12 schools,” said Roz Rothstein, Co-Founder and CEO of

StandWithUs. “This Bill of Rights sends a vital message: that responsibility should not fall on students alone. It is time for the adults in the room, educators and administrators, to meet this moment with courage and moral clarity.”

AJC, Jewish Federations, ADL, COP, and SWU work to provide guidance and strategic support to school leaders, policymakers, families, and the public on

addressing antisemitism and promoting the full inclusion of Jews and Jewish life in K-12 schools.

To learn more, check out the resources available from AJC’s Center for Education Advocacy (<https://www.ajc.org/backtoschoolresources>), including action plans for school administrators to confront antisemitism and toolkits to support parents and students.

October ☆ Tishrei-Chesvan	
	
Shabbat Candle Lightings	Torah Portions
October 2 6:26 p.m.	October 3/22 Tishrei Shemini Atzeret (Deuteronomy 14 :22-16 :17)
October 9 6:15 p.m.	October 10/29 Tishrei Bereishit (Genesis 1 :1-6 :8)
October 16 6:04 p.m.	October 17/6 Chesvan Noach (Genesis 32:1-32:52)
October 23 5:54 p.m.	October 24/13 Chesvan Lech-Lecha (Genesis 12:1-17:27)
October 30 5:45 p.m.	October 31/20 Chesvan Vayeitra (Genesis 18:1-22 :24)

KESHER ZION'S 2ND ANNUAL BINGO

Sunday, October 25, 2026
Doors open at 11:30
Games begin at 1:00PM

Tricky Tray Prizes as well!

Grill Fire Company Social Quarters
739 Mountain View Road
Reading, PA 19607

Tickets: \$30.00 in advance - \$35.00 at the door
Includes (20) regular games
Specials sold separately

For tickets, contact Sue Wexler at 610.301.2083 or go to <https://www.keshertzion.org/events>





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...in us, it continues.

NEXT GENESIS

First event on November 10
RSVP to office@chabadofberks.org/rsvp

KZ Social Action making a big difference

By Debbie Goldberg
Keshar Zion Synagogue

The Keshar Zion Social Action Committee has completed one mitzvah

project and is actively involved in another. We spent two months collecting hygiene products in support of the LGBT Center of Greater Reading and

the Refresh Berks Hygiene Project. Both organizations provide free shower assistance to individuals in our community who are experiencing homelessness. We want to thank all those in the community who dropped off donations and helped us provide dignity, comfort, and care to those in need across Berks County.

In an ongoing project, we again partnered with the the Living Faith Church to help those in need at the New Journey Community Outreach/ Food Pantry. New Journey is a

nonprofit organization supporting those in need in our community. Our KZSA volunteers made 30 pounds of BBQ to add to the batches made by the volunteers from the Living Faith Church for distribution to those served by New Journey. Volunteers from both groups fill lunch bags and deliver them to New Journey. The KZSA is thrilled to be a part of this project and look forward to continuing our work together with the Living Faith Church in support of New Journey.



Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks is extremely grateful for the donations that made this issue of Shalom possible. Thank you for keeping our community's voice in print!

Donald and Ellen Abramson
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Louise Zeidman
Allen and Amicie Zimmerman

Federation Honorarium-Memorial Card Information

Please mail your payment with complete information to the Jewish Federation, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125, Wyomissing 19610, or bring to the Jewish Cultural Center at the same address. You may set up a “savings account” for the purpose of sending cards. Please contact the Federation at 610-921-0624 for further information.

Contributions as of Sept. 24

Jewish Federation
In memory of:
Norman Wilikofsky - Beth and Bob Caster
Debbie Cieplinski - Debbie Goodman
In honor of:
Jeff and Jan Gernsheimer’s new grandchild - Beth and Bob Caster
Scott Goldberg’s marriage to Gretchen Johnson - Beth and Bob Caster

Jewish Family Service Food Pantry
In honor of:
Excellent years of service of Sari Incledon - Susan Schlanger
Anzie Golden’s new grandson - Michael Schein
In honor of Karen Kabakoff’s Bat Mitzvah - Betsy & Dave Marateck
In memory of:
Deborah Cieplinski - Kate Mohn, Susan Schlanger

PJ Library
In honor of:
Adi Shalev Smitheman’s new baby - Beth and Bob Caster
Jonathan and Jan Simon’s new grandchild - Susan Schlanger

Yvonne Frey Oppenheimer Fund for Community Engagement
In memory of:
Murphy Tomlinson - Grace and Reggie Waxler (Laurie and Andy Waxler)

Honorariums and Memorials
Contributions may be made to the following Funds:
Federation Jewish Community Campaign
Jewish Family Service
Leo Camp Lecture Fund
JFS Food Bank
JFS Taxi Transportation Program
Holocaust Library & Resource Center
Doris Levin Fund
Sue B. Viener Memorial Fund for PJ Library
Harry & Rose Sack Fund for Adult Programming
Evelyn Thompson Fund
Yvonne Frey Oppenheimer Fund for Community Engagement

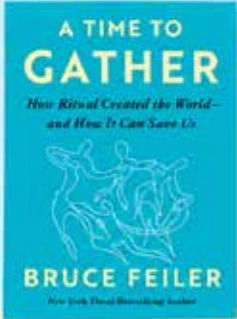
Jewish Family Service
In honor of:
Sari Incledon’s retirement - Louise Zeidman and family, Debbie Goodman
Aidan Incledon going to college - Beth and Bob Caster
JFS’s lovely Rosh Hashanah program - David Kay, Gloria Isman, Claire Bram
Anzie Golden’s new grandson Ellis Noah Golden - Sharon Syret
In memory of:
Deborah Cieplinski - Vicki Haller Graff, Corinne and Andy Wernick, Beth and Bob Caster, Carrie and Stephen Latman, Marsha, Joel, Rachel and Josh Adelman, Barbara and Seth Rosenzweig, Ellen and Donald Abramson, Louise Zeidman, Sharon Syret
Get well wishes:
Meir Mazuz - Sharon Syret
Carol Gerber - Sharon Syret



**Jewish Book Council
Presents
Community One Read
With**

**Bruce Feiler in Conversation with
Rabbi Angela Buchdahl**
from Central Synagogue

**October 15
1:00 PM
Live Zoom at the
Jewish Federation**



 Jewish Book Council

In partnership with JBC Network Sites
1100 Berkshire Blvd. Suite 125
Wyomissing

 **RSVP to**
info@jfreading.org

JULIET
Just Us Ladies Into Eating Together

Friday October 2
12:00pm at Wyomissing Family Restaurant

RSVP to info@jfreading.org



NOONTIME KNOWLEDGE
At the JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Ste. 125, Wyomissing



**Showing of the short film
THIRTEEN**

A devoted mother is determined to honor her child, who is profoundly disabled, with a Bat Mitzvah, a rite of passage she believes her daughter deserves. However, her aspirations clash with tradition as the synagogue’s rabbi opposes the ceremony, citing longstanding practices. As tensions rise, secrets from the rabbi's past emerge, challenging the congregation and forcing the rabbi into a crossroads: to preserve tradition or embrace change for a more inclusive future.



Thursday, October 22, at noon



PJ LIBRARY OF READING AND RCOS INVITES FAMILIES TO

Pajama Havdalah

ALL Reading/Berks families are invited to a special Havdalah at RCOS with Rabbi Michelson and Cantor Stuart Binder.
We will meet for a special craft, pizza dinner, story time, and the Havdalah service.
Make sure to wear your pajamas!

This is a great opportunity for all families to come together!

October 17, 2026 | 6:30 PM
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing
Registration is required

 REFORM CONGREGATION
OHEB SHOLOM



Officer shot outside Ontario synagogue on Yom Kippur

JEWISH EDUCATION Scholarship

GIVEN BY
THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF READING/BERKS

The Federation is proud to offer Jewish children/students who are residents of our Berks County Jewish community monetary awards up to \$1000 to support their participation in programs that nurture Jewish identity, leadership, and connections to their culture, history, and Israel.

Our goal is to ensure that every Jewish child in the Reading community has access to meaningful Jewish experiences. While Jewish summer camps are a primary driver of identity, we recognize that families have diverse needs. Therefore, this scholarship is designed to be flexible: it supports summer camps, youth groups, and any structured Jewish educational content.

To receive the scholarship, parents need to submit an online form and include supporting documentation to ensure the participation of their child in the program.



Jewish Federations of North America

Jewish Federations of North America are horrified by the shooting outside the Sons of Jacob Synagogue in Belleville, Ontario, as members of the Jewish community gathered to observe Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar.

Jews must be able to gather in prayer and community without fear, and we urge authorities to fully investigate this attack and hold those responsible accountable.

We pray for the full and speedy recovery of those injured, and thank the heroic law enforcement officer who engaged the shooter and sustained injuries.

We stand in solidarity with the Belleville Jewish community at this deeply painful moment, and will never back down on our fulfilling community's

security needs.

Police Constable Jeff Smith was wounded on Erev Yom Kippur outside the synagogue as congregants were gathering for the Kol Nidre service. The shooter fired at Smith before being fatally wounded in an exchange of fire with police.

The synagogue's president, Norman Weddum, told the CBC that the officer had been stationed outside the building in an unmarked car.

"It was boom, boom, boom," he was quoted as saying. "So that's when we ran back into the auditorium of the synagogue, closed the doors behind us so as to not leave a visible target and we hit the floor."

"We owe an immense debt of gratitude to this brave officer and to all the first responders who acted so quickly to keep the community safe," he added.

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- Friendly and supportive visits
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- Information about our taxi transportation services program

If you or a loved one are being treated at a local hospital or nursing home and would like a visit, please call Carole at 610-921-0624.



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