

United Jewish Federation of Stamford, Darien, and New Canaan.
Annual Meeting
December 18, 2024
Temple Sinai, Stamford CT

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:33PM by Eric Ross who offered a warm welcome to distinguished visitors, members or the board, nominees, and guests. Eric thanked the staff of the UJF who worked hard all year long and he acknowledged that 439 days had passed since Oct 7, 2023 – wishing the hostages a speedy return to Israel and their families.

10 years of 3 Square

Jill Kaplan and Robin Maden founded and have coordinated 3 Square for the past ten years. They saw a need in the community and met that need with volunteers who work tirelessly to feed our children. This program is Stamford wide and helps support our entire community. Congratulations to 3 Square on their 10 year anniversary!

Remarks from Diane Sloyer - CEO

Diane Sloyer introduced Michael Schlessinger with kind and inspiring words. Michael's leadership has meant the world to all of us. He has taken UJF to the next step and has left us in a financially healthy position with programs that serve our community.

Diane also introduced Jim Comstock UJF's new regional security Director Gary Jones, our new Director of JCRC.

In addition to the new hires, Diane listed several accomplishments of Michael's years as president and the challenges we faced since 10/7. Accomplishments included our successful community unity activities and our emergency campaign that raised over 1 million dollars for Israel.

Michael was presented with gift and immense gratitude for his years as president.

Remarks from our outgoing UJF President -Michael Schlessinger

Michael thanked the community for embracing him. He thanked Diane for her unmatched dedication and commitment to UJF, and he thanked Monica for embracing federation and supporting Michael as he provided visionary leadership to UJF.

Michael shared some perspective – In the past year we had 3000 standing in solidarity with Israel. The aftermath of 10/7 has revealed the large scope of antisemitism we must respond to effectively. It's UJF's role to assist in responding to crises and to antisemitism. In doing so we increased our security, we are increasing our investment in JCRC, we are investing in other

Jewish agencies, and we use our money to respond to threats. Michael shared that he has confidence in our incoming leadership and will do everything he can to help make a smooth transition in 2025.

Introduction of Claudia Kraut and speaker Swell Ariel Or

Michael introduced Claudia Kraut, moderator, and Swell Ariel Or our guest speaker and star of The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem. He introduced each presenter and their backgrounds. Swell talked about her family in Israel and her career in both the IDF and in acting. Swell shared how her acting is a reflection of life in Judaism, Israel, and of Jews, traditions, and culture and how they are reflected in the movies. She enjoys being the story teller. She said that tragedies often strengthen Israelis rather than bringing them down. Israelis choose to fight with hope. They don't fight to just survive. Through her storytelling is how she helps Jews and Israel. Swell recommended that everyone see Kissufim on Netflix. It's about nearing the end of their military service in 1977, a group of young Israeli soldiers volunteer on a kibbutz, navigating love, violence and morality. Swell told the audience that she could feel the support and love of Israel in the Stamford community and congratulated us on the work we do.

Presentation of the Harvey Peltz Award

Wendy Siegel, UJF board member, presented the award to Mickey Reich. The award is presented to a young leader who brings heart, vision, and community and to those who inspire and give back. Mickey is a father of 4, opens his home to NexGen, and steps up when it matters. Mickey made a few remarks and said his thank yous in an acceptance of the award and then did a rap of inspiration for the meeting attendees that delighted everyone. Congratulations Mickey!

Why Federation?– Ellen Weber

Ellen gave her report on the campaign, the importance of UJF, and the impact UJF has on the community. There are so many reasons to give and support the work that UJF does to provide for our Jewish community. This year we bring attention to our community with a new campaign slogan AS ONE. 'As one' we make things happen and we bring support and programing to build a strong Jewish community.

Nominations to the UJF Board – David Gordon

The nominating committee consisted of David Gordon, chair, Nancy Mimoun, Linda Hurwitz, Carl Rosen, Jill Kaplan, Michael Feldstein.

Slate of proposed officers for the 2025 term.

President – Beverly Stein

Past President – Michael Schlessinger

Previous Past President – David Gordon

New Directors

Leslie Heyison- 2yr

Edith Samers -2 yr

Greg Waldstreicher – 2 yr

Lee Soffer – 2 yr

Margarite Felsenfeld – 1yr

This leaves one 2yr vacancy and one 1yr vacancy

Renewed Directors

Alan Barr -2nd term

Jessie Brand -2nd term

Josh Esses – 3rd term

Stacy Ferber – 2nd term

Rob Hoff – 2nd term

Linda Hurwitz – 3rd term

Sue Kostin – 3rd term

Chris Maroc – 2nd term

Chairs of Constitutional Affinities with voting power on the Board

Tara Shapiro – Woman's philanthropy

Robin Fischel - NexGen

Eileen Rosner moved to approve the proposed slate of officers. Claudia Kraut seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Closing – Beverly Stein

Beverly Stein thanked the outgoing president Michael Schlessinger and his work for the UJF. She said she has big shoes to fill. Beverly also thanked the past presidents and Diane Sloyer for all they have done to keep UJF healthy and thriving. Beverly said Wow! She was honored and humbled to become the president of UJF. It's about the collective US; of the many there is one. One Community. In Unity we make things happen. 'As one' we strengthen Jewish future, humanity, tzedakah, advocacy, etc.

Rabbi Michael Knopf gave the final blessing. Dessert was served following the meeting.

The meeting was closed at 8:45PM

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Hurwitz, Secretary