



THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION

Rachel Dratch Named Next Head of School at Bi-Cultural

BY JUDIE JACOBSON

Rachel Levitt Klein Dratch has been named the next Head of School of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA), it was announced recently by the school's President David Pitkoff and Chairman of the Board of Incorporators Bob Zitter.

Dratch will take over as head of the Stamford Jewish day school, which is open to students in pre-K through grade 12, in August 2021. She succeeds Jacqueline Herman, who is stepping down as Head of School after ten years of service.



Rachel Dratch, incoming BCHA Head of School.

“When Jackie Herman told us of her plan to retire as Bi-Cultural’s Head of School, we knew how difficult it would be to find the right person to fill her shoes,” wrote Pitkoff and Zitter in a letter to the Bi-Cultural community announcing Dratch’s appointment. “Under Jackie’s stewardship for the past 10 years, BCHA has developed and thrived as a school known for its warmth and academic excellence. It is with great pleasure that

we announce that after a 15-month national

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UJF’s Community Read: A Bend in the Stars

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford, New Canaan and Darien is pleased to announce the historical novel *A Bend in the Stars* as its next Community Read. Author Rachel Barenbaum will speak about her book via Zoom on Monday, February 22nd at 7:30 in the evening. Following the author’s program, small breakout groups will be set up for interested participants to discuss the book further. The program is free to all.

Barenbaum took inspiration for her debut novel, set during World War I, from the



Author Rachel Barenbaum

story of Albert Einstein’s race to prove his theory of relativity. *A Bend in the Stars* was a New York Times Summer Reading Selection, a Boston Globe Bestseller and the 2019 Forbes Best Historical Novel for Summer.

The New York Times declared it ...“an epic march across Russia during the summer of 1914. The history of the region has been studied, but Barenbaum carves a fresh story from some of its most

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Bruce Feiler Headlines New Lecture Series at Temple Sinai

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) Temple Sinai will present New York Times best selling author Bruce Feiler at the inaugural program of the Joan Bruder Danoff Lecture Series on Sunday, March 21 at 4:30 pm. The virtual program is offered free of charge to the community.

Feiler and moderator Daniel Block will have a conversation about “The Jewish Voice in American Culture Tomorrow.” Feiler will discuss how Millennials and the Gen Z generation are engaging with Judaism today

and how our ideas of Jewish culture are changing.

Feiler is the best selling author of 15 books and a writer and presenter of two PBS miniseries, *Walking The Bible* and *Sacred Journeys*. He is one of America’s most popular and dynamic speakers on contemporary life whose two TED talks have been viewed over two million times. His current best seller “Life in the Transitions: Mastering Change At Any Age” describes his journey across America talking with people about

how they navigate life’s transitions with meaning, purpose and skill.

Since 2001 Feiler has been a leading thinker on the role of spirituality in contemporary life. His book *Walking the Bible* describes his 10,000 mile journey retracing the Five Books of Moses through the desert and spent a year on the New York Times bestseller list. He is also the author of *Where God Was Born; America’s Prophet;*



Author Bruce Feiler

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JCC Collects Supplies for Those in Need

Children display food and household items donated to November’s Collection Drive sponsored by KidsPlace, in front of the Stamford JCC. See article on page 11, on how the Stamford JCC JCares initiative is helping to alleviate hunger in our community. (CREDIT: KATHRYN CURRY)



From UJF's Chief Executive Officer Rising Above the Challenge

BY DIANE SLOYER

2020 has been devastating for the world and for the Jewish community of Greater Stamford, New Canaan and Darien. COVID-19 closed summer camps, synagogues and businesses. It also left many Jewish families struggling to meet even their most basic needs.

Our Federation team wanted to be a help for the entire Jewish community during this most difficult year, and rose to the occasion. Our goal was to secure our community and protect its most vulnerable while also innovating new activities to keep people engaged and connected. We launched new online programs and continued to welcome new residents, as Fairfield County became a refuge for those escaping cities, with socially distanced visits and welcome bags.

Our emergency COVID relief campaign as well as grants obtained (see centerfold)

provided and will continue to provide much needed financial support to all our agencies and synagogues to meet their emergency needs.

We all play a role in our diverse Jewish community and I am grateful and in awe for the lay leaders and professionals, many on reduced salaries, who worked around the clock to ensure we met the growing and demanding needs of the pandemic. The resilience and strength used to tackle the unknown has been awe-inspiring and gives me hope for the future.

Federation thrives on bringing people together for various events yearly. When in-person gatherings couldn't happen,



Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO

Federation focused on Zoom and Facebook Live. From rabbi classes to cooking presentations, UJF's annual meeting, the live drive-in movie event for the campaign kickoff, and comedy shows, Federation put on a range of virtual and semi-virtual events for every age group in the community.

The Federation's PJ Library program realized that for many families, this would be the first time everyone was under one roof 24/7. Our team equipped families with free books, at-home activities, virtual events and parent sessions.

Our ability to provide engaging programming and educational events as well

as to support our greater community is due to the generosity of you, our valued donors. Even in these difficult and uncertain times, you stepped up and answered the call, so thank you! And because of your generosity, we "met the match" and received an additional \$72,000 from Jewish Federations of North America for Human Service Needs in our community.

As the year came to a close, I reflected with pride on Federation's efforts during 2020 to build an infrastructure that allowed us to meet the needs of so many during this time of crisis. We need to be able to deal with big challenges and new challenges. We're not going to solve every problem every day. But at the end of the day, the Jewish Federation's relationship with the community of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien and globally is getting stronger, and we will continue the work we do into 2021.

UJF President's Message

BY DAVID GORDON

UJF President David Gordon gave this address at the (virtual) Annual Meeting of United Jewish Federation on December 17, 2020.

One year ago I stood before you as your incoming Federation president and I laid out my vision for my expected two years of leadership. Well, there is an old Yiddish expression which translates to: "man plans and G-d laughs"; and while I am not sure G-d is laughing, G-d certainly had something else in mind. It was hard for me to achieve my agenda due to Covid-19 which has been no laughing matter. In preparing my remarks [for tonight] with 20-20 hindsight both literally and figuratively, I am able to take pause and be proud of all we have accomplished and how we have impacted the community in this difficult year.

2020 started off with a bang in response to the unfortunate outbreak of antisemitism over Chanukah last December. Our UJF quickly organized a NO HATE NO FEAR rally held at Temple Beth El. At the rally, Governor Lamont, Senator Blumenthal, Representative Himes, and numerous other political dignitaries attended and spoke, as did clergy representing our Jewish

community, and our Christian and Muslim neighbors. It was not only a feel-good moment. It galvanized our community to renew long dormant outreach and communication through our Jewish Community Relations Council (the JCRC) as well as on the synagogue-to-church level. These efforts are ongoing and are contributing to mutual understanding and security of the community.

Before we had an opportunity to catch our breath, COVID hit. United Jewish Federation immediately launched an emergency COVID relief campaign, raising approximately \$170,000. Most of the funds were quickly disbursed to the JCC, Schoke Jewish Family Service, and BiCultural Hebrew Academy. Smaller amounts were sent to our synagogues, the Stamford and New Canaan Chabad Centers, and to the Senior Home. Through training provided by the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), all of our local Jewish agencies and congregations were able to secure forgivable payroll



UJF President David Gordon

protection program PPP loans from the federal government. These loans kept them all afloat during the March-to-May shutdown period. Our UJF also offered all of the local agencies interest-free loans of up to \$100,000, if they needed it to tide them over until receipt of their PPP loans. We convened our community leaders in several meetings over multiple months

to discuss and share how each of our organizations was doing and how we could help each other. And our CEO Diane Sloyer and I have continued to check in with all of the local agencies and synagogues on a regular basis. It was during this time of extreme hardship when it became clear to everyone that having a Federation and a Federated System with resources was critical and valuable for addressing crises facing the community.

All the while, we continued with our day-to-day work. Our education committee ran a successful community-read and Zoom program featuring the book and author

of "Unorthodox". It also brought the community together, virtually, for learning sessions led by our Rabbis and teachers for Tisha B'av and the High Holidays. Our Newspaper committee continued to work with our local agencies to provide eight editions of the New Jewish Voice, including a beautifully conceived and executed COVID edition highlighting Jewish heroes in our community. Our JCRC provided multiple Zoom programs to further communication and understanding between our Jewish community and our greater interfaith community. The JCRC also participated in a political push which helped pass security funding for houses of worship. Our staff continued to reach out to our community through Shalom Stamford packages to a surge of newcomers and Shalom Baby packages to a surge of newborns. Our staff also continued PJ Library programming which reached hundreds of young families, while sending out 450 Jewish-content books each month to PJ Library families. Our staff and volunteers continued when it was possible to impact our greater community, showing that we care for our neighbors through our 3-Square and Reading Partners programs, as well as a new program originally started at the Hartford UJF called Dignity Grows.

And, we should not forget our Life & Legacy program which was one of the three highlighted goals listed in my address to you last year. The Life & Legacy program is in full swing. Because UJF was able to bring Life & Legacy to our community, we have helped our ten local agency and synagogue partners and ourselves to secure promises of over 150 gifts with an expected legacy value of over \$4M so far. This program is ongoing and critical to the long-term flourishing of our community, and I hope and expect that many more in our community



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CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES	
January 22.....	4:41 pm
January 29.....	4:50 pm
February 5.....	4:58 pm
February 12.....	5:07 pm
February 19.....	5:16 pm
February 26.....	5:24 pm
March 5.....	5:32 pm
March 12.....	5:40 pm
March 19.....	6:47 pm
March 26.....	6:55 pm

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RECHARGE With Saul Cohen-Schoke

JFS Lecture Series

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) The next lecture in the 9th Annual Saul Cohen Schoke Jewish Family Service Lecture Series will be Wednesday, February 10 at 7:30 pm with Tiffany Shlain, author of *24/7: The Power of Unplugging One Day A Week*. She will discuss how to regain your inner calm and connection to people instead of digital screens.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Tal Ben-Shahar, will present his talk entitled *Happiness: Leading an inspired Life*, on Tuesday, April 27 at 7:30 pm. He will speak about how to achieve

happiness and rejoice in life when the circumstances are challenging.

The series this year is co-sponsored by Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield County and United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford, New Canaan and Darien and in partnership with the Jewish Book Council.

For more information about the lecture, please call Schoke JFS at 203-921-4161 or register at www.ctjfs.org/saul-cohen-jfs-lecture to receive the online address of the lecture.



Tiffany Shlain, Author (CREDIT: ALISON WACHSTEIN PHOTOGRAPHY)

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES

The deadlines for the next issues of

The New Jewish Voice are:

April/Passover: March 1

May: April 5

Send New Jewish Voice article submissions to Sandy Golove at

sandy@ujf.org marked

“Stamford Voice” in the subject line.

Expect an acknowledgement;

please re-send if you do not receive one.

UJF President's Message

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

will participate. If we, as a community work hard at this and do it correctly, we should be able to raise endowments of ten times that amount.

I should note that we have done all of this and a lot more with an extremely lean staff of just two full time people – our tireless CEO Diane Sloyer, and our wonderful Director Sharon Franklin – to whom we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude. I should also mention our part-time staffers Taly Farber, Lenore Fogel and Sandy Golove to whom we also owe our great appreciation.

Of course, I have just highlighted UJF's work in the Stamford, New Canaan and Darien community. However, our work as part of the Southern New England Consortium of Federations as well as part of Jewish Federations of North America continues to impact overseas as well. In the last few weeks, 3000 Ethiopian Jews have begun to make their way to Israel. The Beit Alfa Absorption center in Afula, UJF's partnership city, is full with many of these new immigrants. UJF just purchased laptops to help the Ethiopian school children learn remotely. And, during Covid, funds provided by us have been used to buy a needed air filtration system in the regional Emek medical center located in Afula and to provide Passover

meals for those in need. Our impact both locally and around the world has shown that one gift really does a world of good.

That brings us to the coming year. A lynchpin of my agenda was and continues to be to get us out of our silos and to unite this community. This is hard to do when we cannot physically be together but I do feel we have begun to make small steps though UJF's leadership during this crisis. While Zoom permits us to get together as a community in one way, it doesn't foster getting to know our fellow Jews.

So, if you are like me in your thinking, the Covid vaccine cannot come quickly enough. And although we know very little for certain, it is my hope we will all be vaccinated by this summer. It is with this hope, that I am excited to announce a United Jewish Federation community trip to Israel for November 2021. Although it is hard to get our heads around a community trip to a country which is presently closed for tourism, November 2021 is almost a year away. It is our plan to leave at some point after Thanksgiving and be in Israel for part of Chanukah. With enough people going we will have different tracks such as a history track, a foodie track, a nature track, etc. Also in the works is a possible extension to the UAE or to Jewish Spain or Portugal. Please watch for exciting details in the next couple of months.

I close with these thoughts. First, crises reveal a lot. There is no question but

that the twin crises of 2020 – antisemitism and Covid – have shown in a spectacular fashion that our Federation is not only the glue of our Jewish community, but also its backbone. I shudder to think where our community would be if not for UJF and our parent organization Jewish Federations of North America. Second, storm clouds most often have silver linings, and while Covid has certainly been a storm, there have been multiple silver linings. Covid has forced us to find new and creative ways to reach out to our community – ways we will continue to use after Covid is a distant bad memory. In fact, for those

who are unable to physically attend programs during the year, Covid has taught us that we can reach even more people by bringing ourselves to them. I hope that all of you have been touched, one way or another by our programming which did not require you to leave your homes and by occasional phone calls or small gifts from us which may have been delivered to your doors. And finally, the Jewish community of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien is and will be a vibrant Jewish community as long as we care for it and support it.

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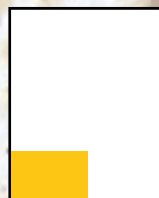
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**For more information,
contact Diane Sloyer at dianesloyer@ujf.org**

An Evening With Schoke JFS Unmasks Its Heroes

BY LYNN SALTZ

The Elayne and James Schoke Jewish Family Service will hold its annual fundraising gala virtually this year. **A Virtual Evening with Schoke JFS will be held on Sunday, March 14th, 2021 at 5:30 pm.** The annual gala, a major fundraising effort for Schoke JFS, will honor the service of community leaders with a celebration of the important work the agency provides across Fairfield County. The gala is co-chaired by Liz Kitay, Meryl Japha and Ronnie Sichel. Sandy Speter will chair the silent auction.

This year, Schoke JFS will honor **Michael Alexander** with the **41st Annual Mitzvah Award**. Michael has successfully led a thirty-five-year career in financial services and currently owns Holbrook Wealth Advisors, a wealth management and financial planning practice in Stamford. Michael's connection to Schoke JFS began in 2009 when he joined the Board of Directors as Treasurer. He went on to serve as Board President from 2012 – 2015 and then as Immediate Past-President from 2015 – 2017. He sponsors the Schoke JFS' annual shredding event, where community members are invited to bring sensitive materials for shredding while contributing food to the Freedberg Family Kosher Food Pantry.

The **14th Annual Young Leadership Award** will be presented to **David Brand**. David has lived in Stamford since 2012, and practiced commercial litigation in New York City for ten years before joining his family's real estate business. David began his volunteer efforts with Schoke JFS in 2013 and joined its board in 2020. He has also volunteered at Congregation Agudath Sholom's annual High Holiday Food Drive benefiting the Freedberg Family Kosher Food Pantry. He is also a member of the Schoke JFS Joan and Ben Zinbarg Camp Scholarship Committee, which annually distributes over \$40,000 in funds assisting more than 40 children in Fairfield County helping to ensure that they are able to attend a Jewish day or sleepaway camp.



Michael Alexander

(CREDIT: ALISON WACHSTEIN PHOTOGRAPHY)



David Brand



Risa Goldblum

The **2nd Annual Volunteer of the Year Award** will be presented to **Risa Goldblum**. Risa grew up in Stamford, where she attended Bi-Cultural Day School and Stamford High School. Risa's volunteer work with Schoke JFS began in 2013, when she answered an email asking for drivers to deliver Pesach meal bags. She has since served as co-chair of the Passover Food Drive and Distribution Program and former co-chair of the Schoke JFS Coat Drive. Risa also organizes the Rosh Hashana Food Drive and Delivery Program, leads the agency's annual Thanksgiving Meal Delivery Program, and assists with the Schoke JFS *Anachnu* Program for Holocaust survivors. She is also a regular volunteer in the Freedberg Family Kosher Food Pantry, and often brings her family along to help in all of her activities.

The March 14th virtual gala will begin with kosher hors d'oeuvres and wine, which will be distributed to guests' homes along with a commemorative journal and other surprises. The evening will include a presentation of the awards to the honorees, a short description of Schoke JFS' services, client testimonials, silent auction highlights, and ongoing donation opportunities to support the efforts of the agency.

General tickets include light hors d'oeuvres, wine and other surprises along with a link to the event for \$180 per person. Please visit <https://www.ctjfs.org/an-evening-with-schoke-jfs/> to reserve your tickets.

Please contact Lisa Rich at 203-921-4161 or lrch@ctjfs.org with any questions.

Lynn Saltz is the Marketing and Communications Coordinator for Schoke JFS.

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The New Jewish Voice welcomes letters on subjects of interest to the Jewish community. All letters must be signed and include a phone number. The editor may withhold the name upon request.

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'The Magic of Community' at Temple Beth El

BY STEVEN LANDER

For the first time since its inception in 2007, Temple Rock, an annual fundraiser for Temple Beth El, will be held via Zoom, on Saturday, February 6. This year's theme "Come Together – The Magic of Community" will feature a festive dinner party in a magical box of tapas, desserts and cocktails, and an annual auction.

The Annual Auction will be online this year and will offer everything from exotic vacations to Shabbat dinners and gift cards for area restaurants, to name just a few of the items.

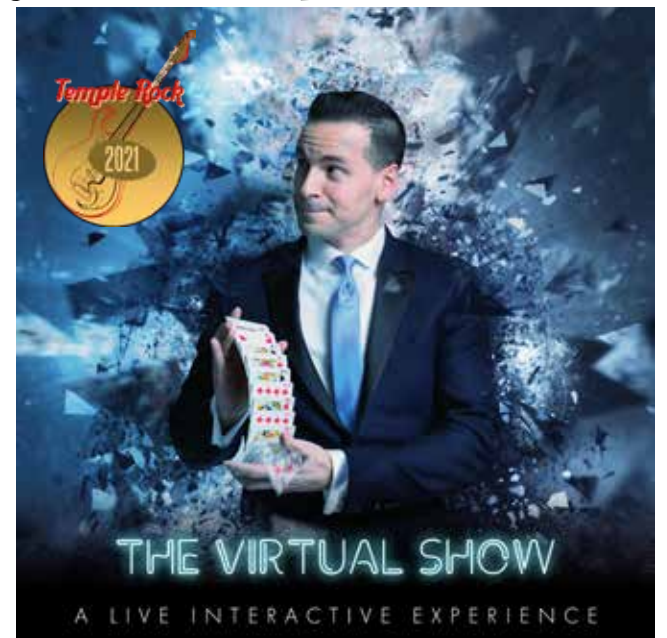
In addition to musical entertainment, the featured entertainer will be world-famous illusionist and magician Tom Pesce. Pesce involves multiple spectators throughout his interactive show. "He performs

mind-splitting magic that looks like it is done using camera tricks, but it isn't, and will leave everyone speechless at the end of the show," said Steven Sosnick, co-chair of Temple Rock.

Pesce has toured the country as a headliner for Princess Cruises and regularly performs for some of the most prestigious resorts, theaters and Fortune 500 companies in the world.

This event, open to the community, is being chaired by Barbara Rothstein and Steven Sosnick. Dana Weinberg is auction chair. Tickets are \$125 per person. Reservations are available online at www.tinyurl.com/templerock21.

For further information contact Steven Lander, TBE Executive Director at execdir@tbe.org or 203-322-6901, ext. 304.



Magician and illusionist Tom Pesce, featured entertainer.

Bruce Feiler Headlines New Lecture Series at Temple Sinai

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and Abraham. His book *The Secrets of Happy Families* has been widely credited with reshaping our discussions on modern parenting. Feiler's work "The Council of Dads" was the source for the popular NBC series of the same name.

This new lecture series was endowed at Temple Sinai by Joan and Stuart Danoff's three children, Suzy Poneman, Nancy Danoff and Will Danoff, in honor of their mother. It will offer a yearly talk by a leading figure in Jewish literature, art and culture. Joan Danoff is a retired elementary school teacher in the Stamford Public Schools. She

and her husband Dr. Stuart Danoff, a retired Stamford pediatrician, brought their children up in Stamford. They are long time Temple Sinai members.

To register for this free program email Benjamin.magidson@yahoo.com

Call Temple Sinai for more information at 203.322.1649.

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Honors Community Leaders



Jackie Herman



Doris Zelinsky



Josh & Stephanie Bilenker



Nicole & Jonathan Margovsky

BY JUDIE JACOBSON

Several leaders of the Connecticut Jewish community will be honored for their commitment to Jewish education and their dedication to community service at the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) 2021 Celebration Dinner, it was announced recently by dinner co-chairs Vered and Mark Links and Shira and Marc Nerenberg.

The annual dinner, which for the first time will take place virtually, will be held Sunday, February 28, 6:30 p.m.

The evening will pay tribute to Guests of Honor Stephanie and Josh Bilenker. Other honorees include Nicole and Jonathan Makovsky, who will receive the BCHA Young Leadership Award, and Doris Zelinsky, recipient of the Morton G. Scheraga President's Award.

The 2021 Alumni Award will be presented to eight BCHA graduates who are all currently serving in the Israel Defense Forces. Along with the many other courageous BCHA alumni who have previously completed tours of duty in the IDF, these soldiers are being recognized for their selfless contribution and commitment to the safety and well-being of the Jewish state. The eight are Meital Wiederhorn of Westport, Judy Fogel of Stamford, Nathan Haron of Stamford, Nathan Links of Stamford, Mia Brenner of Stamford, Maya Wiener of Ridgefield, Ella Feuerstein of Weston and Stamford and Michal Yaari, who resides in Zichron Yaakov, Israel.

Jacqueline Herman, who is retiring as Bi-Cultural's Head of School at the end of this academic year, will receive the Stamford school's inaugural Walter Shuchatowitz Award for Excellence in Education, named

for the school's founder and first principal who died in November 2019.

"As with many Jewish institutions, this year is a particularly challenging one for BCHA," says Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, Dean of the school. "We are, therefore, extremely excited to have this group of honorees. In this regard, our theme this year of *"Hishtadlut"* (active engagement) is perfectly suited for these honorees. *Hishtadlut* conveys our obligation to use all of our resources in difficult times to accomplish the goals and

expectations that Hashem has for each of us. Each and every one of our honorees has not allowed the pandemic to interfere with their service to the Jewish community and as such exemplify the dinner theme."

In addition to the dinner co-chairs, the dinner journal co-chairs are Jodi Hadge, Liat Sharabi Karsch and Maria Reicin.

For more information on the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Celebration Dinner, contact Rachel Cohen at rcohen@bcha-ct.org or (203) 329-2186.

CAS Movie Night - 'The Rabbi Goes West'

Join Congregation Agudath Saturday night, February 6th at 7:30PM for a free virtual screening of the documentary "The Rabbi Goes West" followed by a Q&A with the filmmakers. This movie tells the story of Chabad Rabbi Chaim Bruk, who moved from Brooklyn to Bozeman, Montana with his wife Chavie Bruk to bring traditional Judaism to the

American west. The screening will be followed by a question and answer session with the co-directors of the film, moderated by Judith Bernstein of Home Box Office's program marketing team. "It's a chance to expose the community to great films they otherwise might not have seen," she said.

For more info, visit www.cas-stamford.org.

Lessons Learned in the Fight Against COVID-19

Congregation Agudath Sholom and Bar Ilan University invite you to a special presentation with world renowned epidemiologist Dr. Michael Edelstein, entitled **Lessons Learned in the Fight Against COVID-19: A Conversation with Epidemiologist Michael Edelstein on Sunday February 7th at 10:00 AM.**

Topics to be discussed include:

1) What cultural differences explain

the varying degrees of vaccine acceptance around the world?

2) What will the real new normal look like in the foreseeable future?

3) What would be the most effective means of distributing a vaccine?

4) In today's world of increased travel - and also increased exposure to previously remote environments - is there a greater risk of future pandemics?

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Friendship Circle Chanukah Party Goes on Zoom

(Courtesy of Friendship Circle) On the seventh night of Chanukah, close to twenty Friendship Circle families gathered virtually for the annual Chanukah party. This year the light of Chanukah was spread through Zoom. Rabbi Deren began the evening by lighting the menorah and saying the blessings with the families.

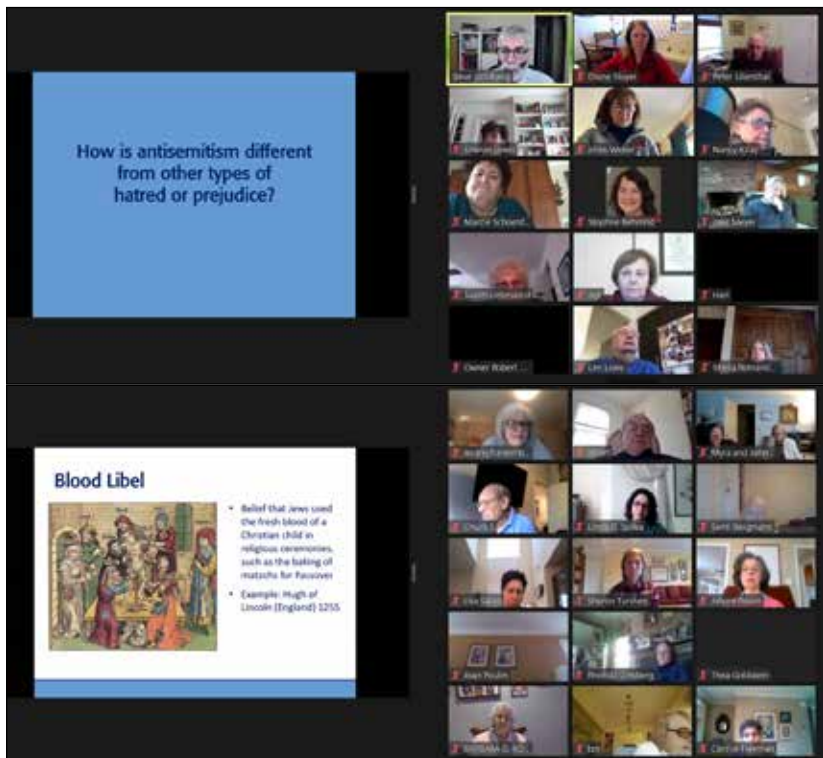
Dassie Prus, author of the book "If the Candles Could Speak" led an interactive story time with the participants. The children and adults heard the story of Chanukah as told by the candles on the menorah. Everyone was able to join in as the story was told.

Families decorated donuts together and sang Chanukah songs. Volunteers delivered bags to everyone's homes with all the supplies needed to create donut designs while munching on Chanukah gelt. After the official party was over, families were able to continue celebrating on their own with the dreidels and Chanukah puzzles they received in the packages.

Chaya Hanoka, program coordinator, said "It was so special to share the joy of Chanukah with the Friendship Circle families. Despite not being able to gather in person, we all had the opportunity to experience the story of Chanukah along with all the light, music and delicious tastes of the holiday."



Screenshots of the Friendship Circle virtual Chanukah party.



A captivated audience attended Steve Goldberg's presentation on Zoom.

The History of Antisemitism

(Courtesy of UJF) In mid-January, the Jewish Community Relations Council of United Jewish Federation, in partnership with the Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County, hosted Steve Goldberg, Co-Director of Education at The Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center in Westchester, NY. Over 70 people Zoomed in for Steve's very

thorough and sobering presentation on the history of antisemitism.

"With International Holocaust Remembrance Day coming up on January 27th, and the sharp rise in antisemitism, this presentation was certainly timely," shared UJF CEO Diane Sloyer. "Thanks to JCRC chair and Historical Society Board member Peter Lilienthal for organizing this program," Sloyer continued.

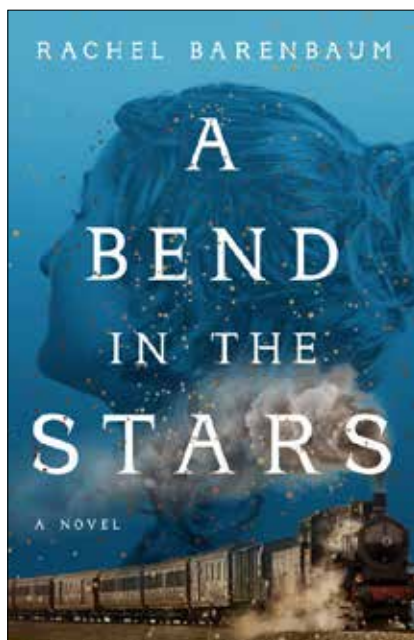
UJF's Community Read: A Bend in the Stars

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

evocative and disturbing details." Lilit magazine stated that "Buried within the pleasures of Barenbaum's impeccable plotting and thoroughly convincing love triangle are deep truths about being Jewish."

"A community read is a wonderful way to bring the community together" shared UJF Education Committee Chair Nan Gordon. "The Education Committee, consisting of Meryl Gordon, Michael Feldstein, Barbara Friedman, Elissa Kaplan and Lynn Lowin, had many wonderful novels to choose from and felt this historical novel would be an interesting read and provide for lively discussion. What better way to bring the community together than with an award-winning novel," Gordon continued.

Barenbaum is a prolific writer and reviewer for the LA Review of Books and DeadDarlings. She is a graduate of Grub-Street's Novel incubator. In her former life she was a hedge fund manager and a spin instructor. She has degrees from Harvard in business, literature and philosophy. Rachel will be speaking to us remotely from her home in Hanover, New Hampshire where



Book Cover, A Bend in the Stars.

she lives with her husband, three children, and dog named Zishe - after the folk hero who inspires many tales around their dinner table.

To register for the event visit www.ujf.org/communityread or email Diane Sloyer at dianesloyer@ujf.org

Rachel Dratch Named Next Head of School at Bi-Cultural

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

search, we have found just that person - Rachel Levitt Klein Dratch."

Dratch currently serves as director of educational innovation at Prizmah-The Center for Jewish Day Schools, a national network for Jewish day schools and yeshivas headquartered in New York. At Prizmah, Dratch was charged with training and mentoring heads of school and senior administrators in day schools throughout the country.

Prior to that, she served as director of student life and Israel guidance at Beth Tfiloh Dahan Community Day School in Baltimore, Maryland; as high school Dean of Students and lower school Assistant Principal at the Berman Hebrew Academy in Rockville, Maryland. She also served in various administrative capacities at several other day schools throughout the country, among them the Maimonides School and the Rabbi Soloveitchik Institute, both in Brookline, Massachusetts, Ramaz Upper School in Manhattan, and Frisch High School in New Jersey.

A graduate of Stern College with a BA in Judaic Studies, Dratch holds an MA in Jewish Education from the Azrieli Graduate School for Jewish Education and Administration of Yeshiva University.

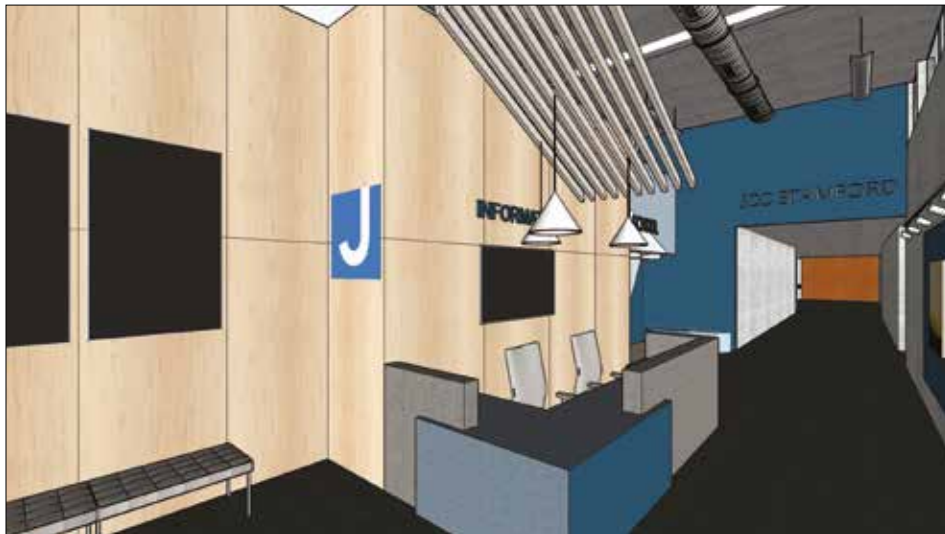
Although she will officially come on board at BCHA this summer, according to Pitkoff and Zitter, Dratch will soon relocate to Stamford with her husband, Rabbi Mark Dratch, and will spend time in the spring working with Jackie Herman becoming acquainted with students, parents, faculty and prospective families, in order to insure a smooth and seamless transition.

"We look forward to Mrs. Dratch joining the Bi-Cultural family and our community. Over the coming months we will be arranging opportunities for her to meet members of our school and community," wrote Pitkoff and Zitter.

"As for our beloved Jackie Herman," they added, "we look forward to honoring her at our annual Gala on February 28, 2021 with the first ever Walter Shuchatowitz Award for Excellence in Education, as we celebrate all she has done and meant to Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy."

While Rachel Dratch may be new to Stamford, her ties to the community are already strong. Her husband, Rabbi Mark Dratch, who currently serves as executive vice president of the Rabbinical Council of America in New York City, is the former spiritual leader of Congregation Agudath Sholom (1997-2005); and their daughter Yolly Faratci and her husband Yaakov, live in Stamford where they serve as Agudath Sholom's youth directors. Yaakov Faratci is also a member of the BCHA Judaic Studies faculty.

Creating a New Space for Community to Thrive



Rendering of front desk.



Rendering of multipurpose classroom wing.

(Courtesy of The JCC) The Stamford JCC is in the midst of executing its multi-year strategic plan to reimagine and transform the Center for the community: modernizing the facilities, updating and repairing the building's 40-year old infrastructure and maximizing space to better serve you.

The next phase includes converting existing office and meeting space into a new

multipurpose classroom wing in the front of the building, and a redesigned front entrance that will answer security and access control challenges and provide functional program spaces for the community.

The Stamford JCC is excited to share that the multipurpose classroom wing will allow for The JCC Sara Walker Nursery School to move to its Newfield Avenue Campus for the 2021-2022 school year,

with registration now open. The wing will also house a new KinderPlace infant child care room beginning in the 2021-2022 school year, and will serve KidsPlace, Inclusion, Day Camps@The J and membership communities year-round.

Once complete, the classroom wing will create a safe, engaging and modern environment that will enable the JCC to deliver on its mission to build community.

The scope of the project also includes security improvements with the installation of entrance turnstiles, secure and electronic wing access, and increased surveillance capabilities.

The Center will continuously update the community as the projects are underway and move towards completion. Progress on these capital improvements can be viewed on their website, stamfordjcc.org.

*Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy
Celebration Dinner 2021*

Virtual event on
Sunday, February 28, 2021 at 6:30 pm

*Engaging with
Fortitude*
השתדלות

**Bi-Cultural
Hebrew Academy
of Connecticut**
TORAH • MIDOT • TZIONUT

David Pitkoff, *President*
Jacqueline Herman, *Head of School*

2186 High Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06903 • bcha-ct.org

Proudly honoring

Guests of Honor
Stephanie and Josh Bilenker

Young Leadership Award
Nicole and Jonathan Makovsky

Morton G. Scheraga President's Award
Doris Zelinsky

Alumni Award
*Recognizing Our BCHA Alumni
currently serving in the IDF*

AND...
Honoring
Jacqueline Herman
upon her retirement, as the first recipient of the
Walter Shuchatowitz Award for Excellence in Education

<p><i>Dinner Co-Chairs</i></p> <p>Vered and Mark Links Shira and Marc Nerenberg</p>	<p><i>Journal Co-Chairs</i></p> <p>Jodi Hadge Liat Sharabi Karsch Maria Reicin</p>
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**For information on placing an ad in the
Celebration Dinner Journal,
please contact Rachel Cohen at
rcohen@bcha-ct.org or 203-329-2186**

NEW AROUND TOWN

Kara O'Connor, Marketing Coordinator At Schoke Jewish Family Service

Kara O'Connor, a Norwalk native, attended Brien McMahon High School and graduated from the University of Rhode Island in 2007 with a BA in journalism and political science. She was the public relations chairperson for her sorority, Sigma Delta Tau.



Kara O'Connor

O'Connor worked for both the Wilton Villager and The Stamford Times as a general assignment reporter from 2007 to 2012. In 2013 she joined Family Centers, Inc. as their Grants Manager, and in

2016 joined Laurel House, Inc. as their Grants and Marketing Manager.

"I am excited to join an agency with such dedicated staff, board and volunteers who do exceptional work in the Fairfield County community," says O'Connor. "I am thrilled for the opportunity to create awareness about the important work

that Schoke JFS is doing and to get more individuals and families involved in the services and programs we provide."

Sharon Lewis, JCRC Director At United Jewish Federation

(Courtesy of UJF) Sharon Lewis has joined the UJF team as the Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC). Sharon has been an active member of the Stamford Jewish community for 30 years having served on the Boards of Congregation Agudath Sholom, Bi-Cultural Day School and Women's American ORT. Before starting this role, Sharon most recently was the Jewish National Fund Director of Westchester and Southern Connecticut. Prior to JNF, Sharon was the Director of Alumni Affairs at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law (Yeshiva University)—her alma mater. Sharon practiced law at Webster & Sheffield in Manhattan until the



Sharon Lewis

early 90s. Sharon and her husband Jeffrey (a Stamford native whom she met at law school) live in Stamford. They are the proud parents of Caren Szanton (Jules) and Peter Lewis and grandparents to Micah Szanton.

The JCRC is the public affairs arm of the Federation. As such, the JCRC is concerned with a wide-range of topics including communal security, combating antisemitism, Israel advocacy

and education, government affairs, interfaith and intrafaith issues and current events. In the coming weeks, Sharon will reach out to JCRC partners and members of the JCRC committee to introduce herself and establish goals for the Council.

Friendship Circle Celebrates Chanukah With Mom's Latke Fry

(Courtesy of Friendship Circle) Before Chanukah, a group of 20 moms of children with special needs gathered together on Zoom for an evening of inspiration and latke making. The evening began with the moms having some time to catch up and socialize before the official program began. Zoom programming has been an alternate and safe way for the moms to see each other during the pandemic.

Goldie Plotkin, also a mom of a child with special needs, spoke to everyone to begin the program. She is a popular and inspirational speaker among the moms' group and often returns to talk about various topics. Goldie spoke about the power that mothers of children with special needs possess, and related the mom's strength to the Chanukah story.

After Goldie spoke, Chef Chaya Deitch led the moms in a latke-making session. All the participants had a bag delivered to their homes contact-free by volunteers the day of the event. The bag contained ingredients for two different types of latkes, as well as a Friendship Circle measuring spoon. Guided by Chaya, the moms all made latkes together.

Chanie Kamman, Family Coordinator at the Friendship Circle, said "It added so much fun to the holiday season to be able to get together for traditional Chanukah activities, in a safe and fun manner. The moms were so happy to see each other and to bring the smells and sounds of Chanukah into their home kitchens! It was the next best thing to being able to be together in person!"

Mayor Martin Joins Chabad Menorah Lighting



(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Rabbi Moshe Shemtov, co-director of Chabad of Stamford, and Stamford Mayor David Martin light up the giant Menorah at Chabad of Stamford's Chanukah Menorah Lighting ceremony in Latham Park.

United Jewish Federation Continues Wishing Newcomers Shalom



Shira Greenberg, pictured with her son Isaac, moved to Stamford this past fall with her husband Jonny Cohen.



Shira and David Gilboa moved to Stamford from New York City in the late fall.

(Courtesy of UJF) Despite the pandemic, United Jewish Federation's Managing Director of Campaign and Community Engagement, Sharon Franklin, continues to welcome newcomers to the community in a socially distanced way. The Shalom/Welcome program includes a personal visit with a gift bag, and helpful information is given to singles and

families who are new in town, as well as to parents of new babies. Gift bags and conversation happen from a distance at the door or porch, creating a safe visit and welcome.

Do you know someone who has recently moved to the area or a family that has a new baby? Contact Sharon Franklin at sharon@ujf.org.

Chanukah and Chesed at UJF

(Courtesy of UJF) The rise in COVID cases and the cold weather did not deter United Jewish Federation's Women's Philanthropy from doing good this past Chanukah. As in years past, toys were collected for David's Treasure closet at Stamford Hospital. Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy, Gan Yeladim in Stamford and UJF collected toys. Although students could not deliver the toys and pack the closet, hundreds of toys were safely dropped off.

Women's Philanthropy also held its first packing event for its new initiative, "Dignity Grows™." Dignity Grows™ was founded by the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford's Women's Philanthropy, and provides girls and young women with the human dignity that comes from having their most basic feminine hygiene needs met, one month at a time. Each Dignity Tote is "Hope in a Bag" for our neighbors in need, and provides essential products so they can attend school and work and participate in community life without interruption. The project began in West Hartford and has been so successful that it has been launched nationally. Dignity Grows™ will not only have a profound impact on helping individuals in need, but will also provide a wonderful opportunity for volunteers to participate in a meaningful and important program.

"Our first pack was small due to the need for social distancing, but 100 bags were packed and



Dignity Grows™ co-chairs Terry Bernard and Nancy Fahey deliver bags to Inspirica.

delivered to Schoke Jewish Family Service and to Inspirica. For \$18 a month, you can sponsor a bag. We have already had a Facebook Birthday Fund-raiser to help support this project, along with recurring monthly donors," according to Women's Philanthropy President Tara Shapiro. "We are looking for businesses, sisterhoods, book clubs, doctors' offices, etc., to take on monthly sponsorships. With increased funding, we can increase beyond the 100 bags a month" she added.

For more information, contact Diane Sloyer at dianesloyer@ujf.org or call (203)321-1373, ext. 105.



Tara Shapiro, Women's Philanthropy president, her daughter Ashley, and Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO, deliver Dignity Grows™ bags to Matt Greenberg, CEO at Schoke Jewish Family Service.

PROMOTIONAL PRICING OFFERED for a limited time for seniors and families who have an immediate need!



The CANNONDALE CAMPUS

PRIVATELY OWNED SINCE 1988

The Greens at Cannondale — *Wilton Meadows*

Assisted Living — Nursing & Rehabilitation



welcome to the Cannondale Campus

The same recipe that has earned the trust of our community for 30 years, remains our commitment and, as businesses nationwide begin their gradual re-opening, our Cannondale Campus has emerged with its singularly successful recipe intact. With a 5-star culture and commitment to integrity, compassion and quality, we are now setting the standard for care and welcoming new clients during this challenging time.

The Cannondale approach to health, well-being and creating a joyful environment remain second to none. Be it our "Peace of Mind" move in process or our wellness initiatives to manage chronic conditions, we encourage you to contact us if you or someone you know is in need of senior living.

Call now for availability 203.761.1191

Our "Peace of Mind" Process includes three simple steps:

- 1 New residents must receive a Covid-19 test prior to move in. Move-in date must be within 72 hours of negative test results.
- 2 New Residents will receive a 14 day "Peace of Mind" Stay and receive added care and concierge services at no extra charge.
- 3 All residents receive daily temperature and Oxygen level checks. Wellness visits from health specialists to ensure optimal balance, strength, nutrition and well-being are provided to give "Peace of Mind" to all our residents.

"My Mother is so fortunate to be in your care. Thank you to every single person who leaves home each day and goes to work at The Greens in this unprecedented pandemic. I know your family and friends are concerned for you, and those of us in the wider Greens community are too. I am enormously grateful for your dedication and commitment."

— GRATEFULLY, SALLY L (GREENS FAMILY MEMBER)

TBE Proudly Serves the Community

BY STEVEN LANDER

Despite the pandemic and all the restrictions imposed on providing Christmas Dinner for the area shelters, Temple Beth El once again provided over 250 meals and 275 gifts for the residents at Pacific House, Inspirica on Franklin Street and New Covenant Center. This project began over 25 years ago with Fred Weisman, z'l and his wife Joan, still an active member of TBE.

The shelter dinners are provided as part of TBE's Beth El Cares program under the leadership of Amy Temple. Karen Resnick and Joy Katz were the site leaders at New Covenant House and Pacific House and Amy Temple handled Inspirica. Sixty families participated in donating food, gifts, paper goods, and money needed to make this event happen this year. As with everything else in 2020, providing holiday meals at the shelters was DIFFERENT than in past years!! Volunteers were not allowed to serve the food, Santa Claus and the TBE Choir could not perform and Rabbi Hammerman could not share his greetings with the residents.

Over 275 hats, scarfs, gloves and socks were donated and individually wrapped for all of the residents at the three shelters. Special thanks to the TBE volunteers at Edgehill for knitting hats.

In addition, members of TBE donated hundreds of dollars to purchase gift cards for BIC (Building One Community), whose mission is to advance the successful integration of immigrants and their families. Last year TBE sponsored a Christmas Day lunch for over 50



Wendy Miles packs meals at New Covenant Center.

clients but, due to current restrictions, provided supermarket gift cards instead.

Throughout the pandemic, TBE has been raising funds and collecting food and funds for the Schoke JFS Freedberg Food Pantry, Person to Person and the Fairfield County Food Bank. Volunteers from TBE also worked together



(l-r) The Katz family including Larry, son Aaron, Joy and daughters Hannah and Rachel (not pictured) deliver food to local shelters.

with the Union Baptist Church to distribute 1,000 boxes of food on December 27.

TBE also provided 200 rolls of toilet paper and masks for Schoke JFS to distribute as part of their Thanksgiving Comfort and Care Drive.

Lisa Manheim, President of TBE stated, "I am proud of the commitment Temple Beth El has shown to do Tikkun Olam in our community. Particularly at a time when the needs are so critical."

Stamford JCC Continues to Create Community



Ryan Agovino, 10 years old, completes homework and virtual lessons in KidsPlace at The JCC. (CREDIT: KATHRYN CURRY)



Oliver Dones and Cole Walden in the 4's class at the JCC Sara Walker Nursery School enjoying some of their favorite books. (CREDIT: KATHRYN CURRY)



JCC members participate in a social-distanced morning spin class. (CREDIT: KATHRYN CURRY)

(Courtesy of JCC) The JCC offers the opportunity to form personal connections, cultivate knowledge, and physically better yourself through its Centers of Excellence programming.

JCares Brings Food To Those in Need

(Courtesy of JCC) The current pandemic has brought to the forefront the significant food insecurity that exists for many in our community. The Stamford Jewish Community Center's "JCares" initiative made its mission to meet these needs. JCares has sponsored "CAN" Drives to collect food and household items for the Freedberg Family Kosher Food Pantry of Fairfield County and other food banks as well. In fact, the JCC has collected over 1,500 pounds of food and supplies.

"The JCC has been absolutely incredible to us throughout this pandemic, continuously taking such great care of our clients ... we could not be more grateful and thankful for your kindness and efforts, commented Rebekah Kanefsky, Director of Case Management at Schoke Jewish Family Service. Food drives will be ongoing.

The JCC has a long history of collecting turkey and the fixings to be donated to the Food Bank of Fairfield County. Spearheaded by the JCC's KinderPlace program, over 50 turkeys, 790 pounds of accompaniments and nearly \$500 were donated during this past holiday season.

Unprecedented numbers of families were unable to provide holiday gifts for their children. JCares collected over 200 gifts for children in Stamford Public Schools and Schoke JFS's Matanot Lev program. "Many donors expressed sadness that the wish lists contained mostly practical essentials," according to Nancy Schiffman, JCC Associate Executive Director, Development & Signature Programs. "Many included toys and games to make the holiday special".

The JCC held a Day of Service in commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr. to benefit the New Covenant Center's Soup Kitchen, Stamford Public School children, Person-to-Person, Schoke JFS and Domus.

The JCC is committed to serving the ever-changing needs of the community. Please stay tuned for more drives and new initiatives coming in the next few months. For further information please contact Connie Cirillo Freeman, cfreeman@stamfordjcc.org.

Reading Partners Volunteers Stay Connected

(Courtesy of UJF) The Herbert and Sarah M. Gibor Reading Partners, a program of United Jewish Federation, has kept its loyal volunteers connected and engaged through various on-line opportunities during the last year due to the pandemic. These included a virtual Back to School Kickoff with author Rich Michelson, as well as a Zoom workshop presented by Stamford Cradle to Career and the Stamford Public Schools.

The next event in the series of opportunities to continue to engage the volunteers will be a virtual author visit


from David Adler, best known for his popular "Cam Jansen" Series. Adler will visit with Reading Partner volunteers via Zoom on March 1st.

Reading Partners will also offer a Reading Workshop to refresh skills and address common issues that arise when working with students. These opportunities will keep the volunteers up to date and ready when the doors to schools are open to volunteers once again.

For more information on how to become involved in the program, please contact Lenore Fogel at lenore@ujf.org



Author David Adler



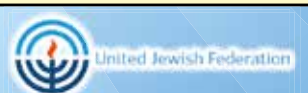
UJF Has A Lot To Celebrate

20 Things We Can Be Proud of in 2020

<p>1. United Jewish Federation launched the Grinspoon Life and Legacy program. 7 months into year one, over 150 letters of intent have been signed and an estimated 4 million dollars committed to our Jewish Community.</p>	<p>11. The power and inspiration of leadership in our community was strengthened through the convening of a Presidents' Council.</p>
<p>2. YOU helped us meet the match offered by Jewish Federations of North America for new and increased gifts!</p>	<p>12. Due to Covid, UJF helped purchase an air filtration system for the Emek Medical Center in Afula. We also purchased computers for the recent Ethiopian immigrants living in the Beit Alfa absorption center in Afula.</p>
<p>3. Every local Jewish organization received a forgivable Payroll Protection Program Loan with the support and guidance of Jewishtogether.org, a platform of Jewish Federations of North America.</p>	<p>13. In its 12th year, PJ Library books reached over 300 homes, sending over 500 FREE books monthly, creating the next generation of Jewish literacy. Hundreds have attended creative Covid compliant PJ programs.</p>
<p>4. UJF provided close to \$200,000 of emergency Covid relief to local agencies, and additionally offered interest free loans.</p>	<p>14. Hundreds gathered virtually at communal affinity networking events, building connections and creating community.</p>
<p>5. With the growth of the Stamford, New Canaan and Darien Jewish community, UJF's Shalom/Welcome Program welcomed 51 new families and 21 new babies to our community.</p>	<p>15. Reading Partners were not able to enter schools this year but the 100 plus volunteers stayed connected through educational opportunities and virtual reading when possible.</p>
<p>6. The New Jewish Voice, funded by UJF, is read by over 10,000, provides timely information about our community and allows for free advertising to our synagogues and agencies.</p>	<p>16. Partnering with JFACT (Jewish Federation Association of CT), we held legislative briefings and secured Federal and State money for security enhancements. Recently \$5 million dollars was secured for Houses of Worship in CT.</p>
<p>7. Our 3Square program provided over 3000 weekend meals to local school children this year, especially crucial during the pandemic.</p>	<p>17. Recognizing leadership and celebrating community, over 150 gathered virtually at UJF's Year End Celebration and Annual Meeting.</p>
<p>8. Our allocation to our partner region Afula/Gilboa in Israel enabled the Rape Crisis Center to service more victims and the Sandwich Program to feed more hungry children.</p>	<p>18. Parlor Meetings, Yom HaShoah, speakers and more, UJF kept our community educated and engaged about current events.</p>
<p>9. UJF launched the Annual 2020 Campaign with a Drive-in-Movie, celebrating community and donors of 18 years or more.</p>	<p>19. A record-breaking group of teens gathered monthly to learn about philanthropy and social action through the Kuriansky Teen Tzedakah Corps.</p>
<p>10. A new program, Dignity Grows, was launched by Women's Philanthropy, helping to combat Period Poverty in our community.</p>	<p>20. We continued to partner with UJA-JCC Greenwich on community-wide and campaign related events, bringing our communities closer together.</p>

Stay tuned for more amazing things in 2021!

A new decade... new challenges...but we'll be here for our local and global Jewish Family! Thank you for your continued support.



Successful 2020 Fundraising!

United Jewish Federation's 2020 Fundraising efforts, including the Annual Campaign for Communal Needs, had a strong successful year, despite the Covid-19 Pandemic. There was an increase in donors and funds raised. It was clear that those not impacted by the pandemic stepped up to answer the call for those in need.

UJF is grateful to be able to provide and fund a wide array of community building and sustaining efforts.



The following projects are projected to be **funded in full** thanks to our generous donors:

- Affinity Groups
- B'Yachad/Together
- Communal Security
- Community Chesed
- Connect to Community
- Infrastructure of UJF
- Israel
- Jewish Community Relations Council
- Jewish Free Loan Society
- New Jewish Voice Newspaper
- Overseas
- Passover Seder
- PJ Library Programming
- Senior Services at Home
- Shalom/Welcome Program
- Virtual Class Room and Studio
- Yom HaShoah Commemoration

Because of You:



900 Donors

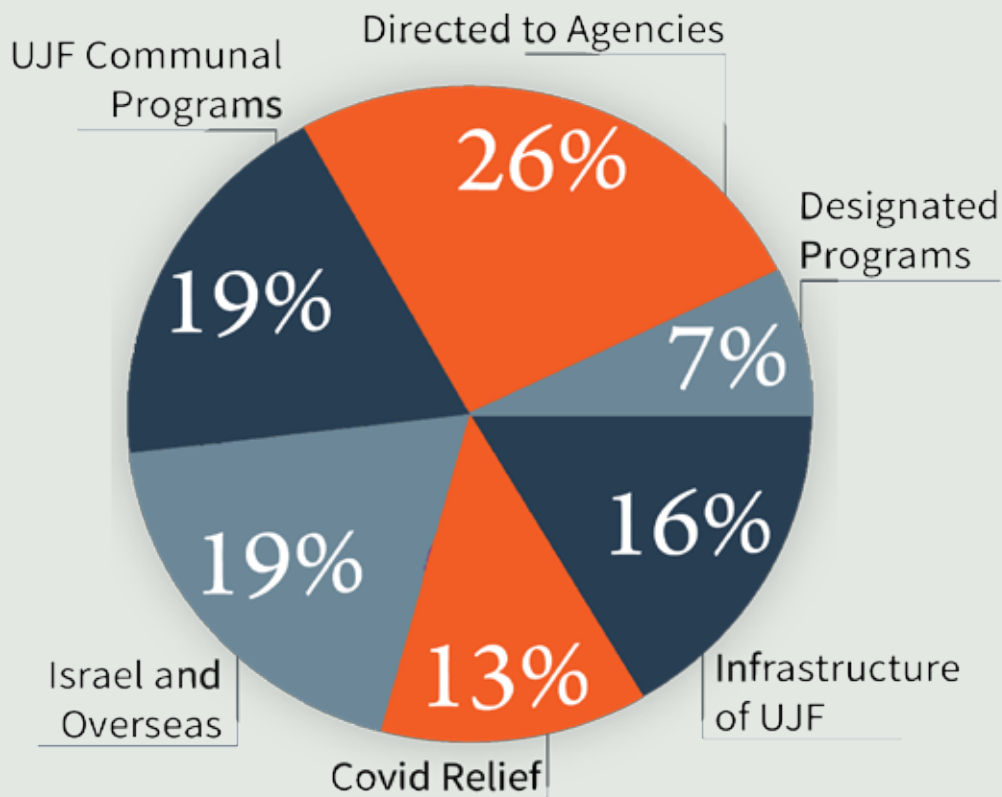


\$1,662,000 Total dollars to support our community



UJF's 2020 Annual Campaign for Communal Needs raised **\$1,275,000**. This was an **increase of 5%** over 2019.

2020 Impact



Each year, in addition to annual campaign gifts, donors may pass through gifts to connected organizations. In 2020, **\$96,000** pass through gifts were made to:



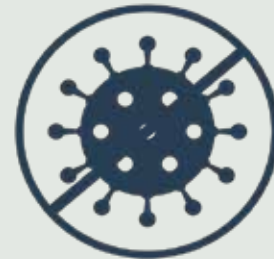
Jewish Agency for Israel:
Directed gift to partnership in Afula Gilboa • Ethiopian Aliyah
European Security • Schlichut Institute

Annually, UJF is grateful to receive program designated funds, **beyond the Annual Campaign**, to support projects that are spearheaded by UJF:

3Square • Behrend Leadership Institute
Dignity Grows • Kuriansky Teen Tzedakah
PJ Library Books (free to over 400 children) • Reading Partners

Thanks to a grant from Jewish Federations of North America and donors like you, UJF has “met the match”, raising new and increased funds **exceeding \$144,000** resulting in a **\$72,000 grant**. These human service funds are expected to be disbursed to the following:

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy
Chabad New Canaan • Chabad Stamford
Congregation Agudath Sholom • Friendship Circle
Jewish Broadcasting Service
Schoke Jewish Family Service • Stamford JCC
UJF for Dignity Grows and 3Square



From March 2020 though February 2021, **over \$200,000** is expected to be disbursed throughout our local community for **Covid-relief**. The following organizations have received relief funding:

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy
Chabad New Canaan • Chabad Stamford
Congregation Agudath Sholom • JCC Stamford
Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County
Jewish Home of Fairfield
Schoke Jewish Family Service
Temple Beth El • Temple Sinai
Young Israel Stamford



In 2021, **Scholarship Relief** is expected to be disbursed to:

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy
Chabad New Canaan • Chabad Stamford
Schoke Jewish Family Service
Stamford JCC • Temple Beth El



Sandy Golove

Bits and Pieces

BY SANDY GOLOVE

To submit information, please call (203) 912-9945 or email sandy@ujf.org

MAZEL TOV TO GROWING FAMILIES:

Chaim and Miriam Attar on the birth of a son; and to grandparents **Rochel and Hecky Attar** and great-grandmother **Yospa Lieberman**.

Aviva and Zev Gassner on the birth of a daughter; and to grandparents **Rochel and Hecky Attar** and great-grandmother **Yospa Lieberman**.

Arline Gewanter on the birth of a great grandson.

Eliza & Andy Granowitz on the birth of a son, **Raphael Scheffler Granowitz**; and to grandparents **Loralee & Phil Granowitz**.

Sandy & Michael Kamen on the birth of a grandson, **Dashiel Alexander Kamen**.

Danielle & Matthew Kondub on the birth of a son.

Heather & Adam Judd on the birth of a daughter, **Marlowe Willoughby Judd**; and to grandparents **Renee & Sam Judd**.

Wendy Kwartin & Jesse Sayers on the birth of a son, **Jude Elliot Sayers**; and to great grandmother, **Ruth Kwartin**.

Miriam and Josh Sperber on the birth of a daughter, **Aria Eden Sperber**.

Audrey and Joe Speter on the birth of a daughter; and to grandparents **Mona & Jacob El-Gamil** and **Sandy & Moshe Speter**.

Toby Schaffer & Hyman Schaffer on the birth of a grandson.

MAZEL TOV ON ENGAGEMENTS & MARRIAGES:

Meryl & Ron Japha on the engagement of their son **Alex Japha to Elizabeth Shulman**, daughter of **Amy Libenson & Brett Shulman**

Flora & Carl Kaufman on the marriage of their granddaughter, **Hanna Kaufman to Brian Akselrad**.

Leslie Freedman & Lee Miller on the marriage of their son, **Laurence Freedman to Constance Baker**.

Sharon & Simeon Wohlberg on the engagement of their son, **Zachary Wohlberg to Phyllis Shams**, daughter of **Michelle & Joey Shams**.

MAZAL TOV TO

Robin Fischel, recipient of The Harvey A. Peltz Young Leadership Award at UJF's Annual Meeting.

MAZEL TOV TO B'NAI MITZVAH:

Joey Breiner; son **Adam Breiner**; and to grandparents, **Mona & Mark Breiner**.

Alex Cohen, son of **Sherry & Ken Cohen**; and to grandmother, **Marge Shameer**.

Aaron Friedman, son of **Rachel & Keith Friedman**.

Ilana Gilbert, daughter of **Lori & Raph Gilbert**.

Gabriel Haron, son of **Rachel & Dan Haron**; and to grandparents: **Kamal Haron** and **Linda & Larry Rezak**.

Charlie Mangot, grandson of **Roz Mangot**.

Yishai Orbach, son of **Shani & Gil Orbach**.

Julia Samelson, daughter of **Diane & Matthew Samelson**.

Nathaniel Samelson, son of **Diane & Matthew Samelson**.

Elissa Tobin, daughter of **Laura & Seth Tobin**.

WE MOURN THE LOSS OF:

Arnold Applebaum: father of **Lisa Rome**.

Alvin Bernstein: father of **Jason Bernstein & Matt Berstein**.

Richard Breslow: son of **Elaine Breslow**; and father of **Frederick Breslow, Isaac Breslow, Emily Capodilupo** and **Rebecca Clark**.

Ethel Cohen: sister of **Nancy Cohen & Ida Mae Fleischer**.

Marlene Dobrin: wife of **Bernard Dobrin**.

Leon Fliegelman: father of **Steven Fliegelman, Renee Kurz, David Mann & Cindy Schwartz**.

Carl P. Friedman: husband of **Martha Friedman**; father of **James & Robin**; and brother of **Marilyn Goldblum**.

Georgiana (Georgie) Leslie Geller: daughter of **Polly & Harry Geller**; mother of **Chloe Kelly**; and sister of **Adam, Daniel, and Corey Geller**.

Eve Berenblum Goldberg: wife of **Brett Goldberg**; mother of **Isa Goldberg**, and

daughter of **Marvin Berenblum** and **Susan Berenblum**.

Melvin Goldstein: father of **David Goldstein & Howard Goldstein**.

Betty Gordon: mother of **Matt Gordon**

Janice Greenwald: sister of **Naomi Michelson**.

Jed Isaacs: husband of **Susan Isaacs**; and father of **Bill, Jane and John Isaacs**; and brother of **Madeline Isaacs**.

Phyllis Kahn: sister of **Bruce Kahn**.

Leonard Klein: father of **Stacye Nekritz**.

Gloria Latainer: grandmother of **Scott Koblick**.

Norman Mattisinko: brother of **Ruth Aminoff**.

Herminia Medel: mother of **Ivy Schildkraut**.

Barbara Miller: mother of **Scott, Jeffrey & Russell Miller**.

Andy Polak: father of **Hilary Polak & Ilana Polak**.

Irene Rosenthal: mother of **Allison Ostroff**.

Herbert Sackin: father of **Hope Carr** and **Jack Sackin** and sister of **Pauline Goldberg**.

Yaakov (Julian) Scheiner: father of **Ruti Kurland** and **Dani, Joseph and Zev Scheiner**.

Elliot Schwartz: father of **Lynn Eagle, Shari Schein** and **Mark Schwartz**.

Yecheil Schwartz: father of **Tzvi Schwartz**.

Bertha Scott: grandmother of **Navah Zizmor**.

Jane Shedlin: mother of **Stan Lee**.

Joanie Singer: sister of **Sherry Kfare**.

Irma Skversky: mother of **Beth Cohen**.

Marilyn Spirt: mother of **Ben Lanson, Terry Lanson** and **Rosina Lanson**; and sister of **Beverly Spirt Marmor**.

Howard Tichauer: father of **Michelle Fanwick** and **Lisa Rich**.

UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER STAMFORD, NEW CANAAN AND DARIEN PRESENTS



A VIRTUAL

CABARET

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST, 6:30 PM, \$36

A virtual evening of Song & Storytelling to benefit the Jewish Community in Greater Stamford and around the world.

\$100 sponsors are invited to a live talkback following the performance with Tova and Ari

STARRING:



TOVA FELDSHUH

Of Broadway's **Yentl** and **Golda's Balcony**, Films **Kissing Jessica Stein** and TV's **Crazy-Ex Girlfriend, Law & Order** and **The Walking Dead**.



ARI AXELROD

Sold-out solo cabaret performer including **Taking The Wheel** and **A Celebration of Jewish Broadway**

Register at www.ujf.org/cabaret

Questions, contact Diane Sloyer at (203) 321-1373, ext. 105, dianesloyer@ujf.org

Interactive Virtual Magic Show for the Entire Family

The Israel Cancer Research Fund, CT Chapter presents renowned illusionist, Tom Pesce on Sunday, February 21, 4:15 pm - 5:00 pm. Be part of this virtual interactive magic show on Zoom. Festive Purim costumes are welcome. Family virtual

link is \$18. A sponsorship of \$180 includes a 20-minute after-show to learn some magic tricks. There will also be a raffle. Register at www.icrfonline.org on the landing page or contact David Kveskin, ICRF's Connecticut Director, at David.Kveskin@ICRFonline.org

Beth Din of America Seminar With Rabbi Shlomo Weissman

MONDAY NIGHT, FEB. 1ST AT 8:00 PM - HALACHIC ESTATE PLANNING

MONDAY NIGHT, FEB. 8TH AT 8:00 PM - LITIGATION IN BETH DIN

Congregation Agudath Sholom is pleased to present an opportunity to learn about the role of the Beth Din (Court of Jewish Law) of America <https://bethdin.org/> and understand the interface between Jewish and American law in the areas of estate planning and litigation. Rabbi Shlomo Weissman serves as the Menahel [Director] of the Beth Din of America and received rabbinical ordination from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) in 2001 and advanced rabbinical ordination [Yadin Yadin] in 2014. He is a graduate of Columbia Law School, where he was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar. Prior to his association with the Beth Din of America, Rabbi Weissman worked as an attorney at several prominent law firms, including Debevoise and Plimpton LLP.

Children's Mental Health And the Effects of the Pandemic

(Courtesy of Temple Beth El)
Temple Beth El will sponsor a free program for parents and grandparents of school-age children, led by Dr. Alvin Rosenfeld, entitled "Children's Mental Health and the Effects of the Pandemic," on Thursday, February 4, 7:30 pm on Zoom. Dr. Rosenfeld is a clinical professor of psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College.

To help shape the discussion, we are asking attendees to register and submit questions/comments about this topic beforehand.

This program is sponsored by the TBE Men's Club. For further information, contact the TBE office at 203-322-6901, ext. 300 or office@tbe.org. Register here: <http://tinyurl.com/tbe0204>. You will receive Zoom information with your confirmation.



Dr. Alvin Rosenfeld



PURIM



JHSFC Celebrates Purim During Its Book Talks Series

BY ELISSA KAPLAN

Join the Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County, in celebration of Purim, with its Book Talks series - "Booked for Lunch" at noon on Wednesday, February 17.

Rhonda Ginsberg, also known as "Morah Rhonda," will discuss *The Book of V.* by Anna Solomon, published in May 2020. *The Book of V.* is a Belletrist Book Club Pick,

a list created by Emma Roberts and Karah Preiss. They describe *The Book of V.* as a "a bold, kaleidoscopic novel intertwining the lives of three women across three centuries as their stories of sex, power, and desire finally converge in the present day." The three main characters include Lily, in Brooklyn in 2016, Vivian, in Washington, D.C. during the Watergate Era, and Esther, in Ancient Persia. Check the JHSFC website for the Zoom link.

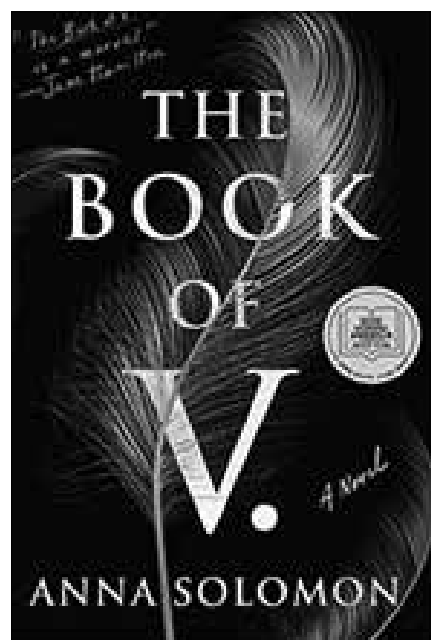
Rhonda Ginsberg is an award-winning former science and E2K teacher at Carmel Academy. Her education includes a B.A. in mathematics and computer science from SUNY Binghamton, an M.S. in computer science from New York University, and an M.S. in Education from the University of Bridgeport. She is originally from South Valley Stream, New York. Rhonda is active on



Rhonda Ginsberg

the boards of the Jewish Historical Society and Hadassah, at the local and state levels.

If you have any questions, please contact The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County, (Mission: *Collecting Memories and Telling Stories*). Telephone: 203-359-2196, Email: info@jhsfc-ct.org, Website: <http://jhsfc-ct.org>.



Book Cover for *The Book of V.*

'MEGILLAH DASH': Traveling Megillah Readings For People Confined to Home

Chabad Stamford @ Harbor Point will offer traveling Megillah readings this Purim, Thursday, February 25 and Friday, February 26.

Live, in-person Megillah readings are being offered to people confined to home this Purim who want to hear "the whole Megillah," fulfilling one of the four mitzvot (commandments) of Purim.

"The Megillah will be read outdoors, at your home, or circumstances permitting, in certain COVID - safe indoor setups," announced Rabbi Yisrael Deren, Regional Director of Chabad of Connecticut.

"Many of us remember Purim 2020 as the last "normal" celebration before the restrictions due to COVID-19 became part of our day to day life. But on Purim 2020 there were already people in quarantine, confined to home. I will never forget the images of young Yeshiva students, standing on the sidewalk, one reading while another held a flashlight, doing what they could

to bring Purim to those who couldn't join the community."

Purim 2021 presents a radically different picture, with quarantine being a very common situation. "Senior citizens, those with medically vulnerable situations, and others who choose to self-quarantine for safety concerns are already missing so much of normal life. Missing Purim should not be another item on that list," said Rabbi Deren. "Of course, the 'Megillah-Dashers' will come supplied with copies of the Megillah, and delectable Hamantaschen and other Purim goodies".

Purim readings will be available by pre-registration; there is no charge for this service. Readers will start the first reading at 5:45 and continue for as long as needed. Morning readings will start at 8:30 a.m. through 2:00 p.m.

*For more information about Purim, its history and the four Mitzvot of the Day, visit jewishharborpoint.org

To register email rabi@chabadstamford.org



Preserved Lemons for Purim

BY RONNIE FEIN

This has been a stressful, trying year for everyone. But, for those of us stuck inside for what seems like forever, there have been some benefits. Many of us have been cooking and baking more. We've been kneading bread and making cookies, preparing soup, inventing new riffs on rugelach and babka. It has satisfied a need to be productive, to busy ourselves and also have some delicious stuff to eat.



Preserved Lemons

I have made dozens of banana breads, blueberry muffins, challahs, soups, preserves, cookies and other goodies. I've given most of them away via "curbside pickup" on my front porch. It was satisfying to give food to people: friends, delivery people, the guy who mows the lawn. It's reminiscent of the mitzvah of *Mishloach Manot*, when we reach out to people we care about by giving them gifts of food for Purim.

One of the most interesting, delicious and useful foods I fiddled with this year is preserved lemons. I made them and then used them to flavor all sorts of other dishes from braised chicken to roasted potatoes to baked fish to whole grain salads, and more. The recipe is easy, although the lemons do take some time to "ripen."

Purim begins at sundown on February 25th. If you're considering giving edible gifts this year, why not make preserved lemons instead of the same old, same old? The recipe is below, and also a recipe for Roasted Potatoes with Preserved Lemons.

Preserved Lemons

- One quart jar and cover
- 6 large lemons, approximately
- 1/4 cup table salt (you can also use sea salt)

Wash the jar and its cover in hot water (or use the dishwasher). Spoon about a

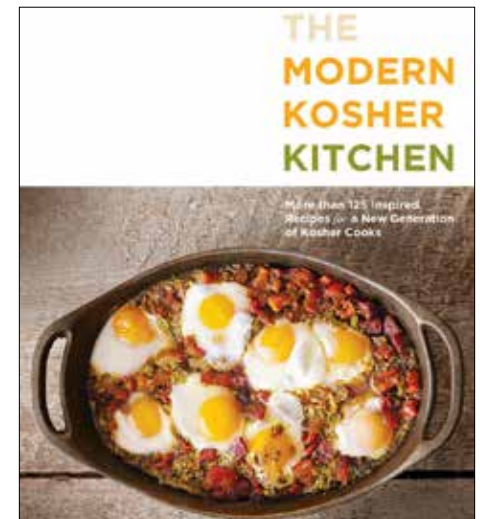
teaspoon of the salt into the bottom of the jar. Rinse the outside of the lemons. Cut the tip from the pointy end of each lemon. Cut the lemons into quarters. Add a few quarters to the jar, then sprinkle with salt and press down on the lemons to extract the juice (I use a wooden spoon). Keep repeating this step, layering the lemon quarters and salt and pressing out the juice) until all has been used. Close the jar. Keep the jar at room temperature for one week. Turn the jar upside down occasionally. Transfer to the refrigerator for another 3 weeks (turn the jar occasionally). The peels will become translucent when they are ready for use. Use a tongs or fork to remove pieces of lemon as needed.

Makes one quart

Roasted Potatoes with Preserved Lemons

- 4 medium all-purpose potatoes, peeled and cut into small cubes
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Paprika
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped preserved lemon

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the



The cover of Ronnie Fein's newest cookbook, "The Modern Kosher Kitchen."

potato cubes on the parchment paper. Pour the olive oil over the potatoes and toss to coat each cube. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, paprika and rosemary. Roast for 15 minutes. Toss the potatoes and continue to roast for another 12-15 minutes. Sprinkle with the lemon. Return to the oven for 1-2 minutes to heat the lemon. Serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings

Ronnie Fein is a cookbook author, food writer and cooking teacher in Stamford. She is the author of *The Modern Kosher Kitchen* and *Hip Kosher*. Visit her food blog, *Kitchen Vignettes*, at www.ronniefein.com, friend on Facebook at [RonnieVailFein](https://www.facebook.com/RonnieVailFein), Twitter at [@RonnieVFein](https://twitter.com/RonnieVFein), Instagram at [RonnieVFein](https://www.instagram.com/RonnieVFein).

Purim Scholar-in-Residence Program at CAS

Congregation Agudath Sholom is pleased to present "Power and Mutuality in Megillat Esther" with educator Simi Peters, on Sunday, Feb. 21st at 10:30 AM.

Simi Peters is an internationally acclaimed Jewish educator based at Nishmat in Jerusalem. She is the

author of *Learning to Read Midrash*, a critically acclaimed and popular book on *Midrash* (ancient biblical interpretation). She has also worked in teacher education and as Text Consultant for the JCCA of North America's award-winning Ethical Start® curriculum. She

specializes in providing access to a wide variety of classic Jewish texts for audiences at all levels of Jewish literacy and experience.

The program will take place over Zoom. Please see the CAS website for details: <http://cas-stamford.org/>

Celebrate Purim With Chabad of Stamford

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) From Megillah readings, to *Shalach Manos* packages, to its Purim bashes and *seudahs* (meals), Chabad of Stamford has your Purim needs covered every year. This year will look different but promises to include all the joy and spirit of the celebration.

On Thursday, February 25th at 7:00pm Chabad of Stamford will host its annual Purim bash with a twist. Chabad invites the entire community to a virtual "Purim party of a lifetime" online. Celebrations in person may be curtailed, but Chabad hopes to bring the community together for a special *Chagigah* (celebration).

Megillah readings this year will be run in small pods to allow people to participate in a safe way. The readings will be held throughout the evening and during the day on Friday, February 26th. If you would like to RSVP for a Megillah reading, or if you are homebound and would like to

arrange a reading, please contact Chabad of Stamford.

One of the four *mitzvot* (commandments) celebrated on Purim is to send gifts of food to friends in celebration of the spirit of Jewish unity and joy. *Mishloach manot*, or *shalach manos*, are gifts that contain two different ready-to-eat foods and are sent to a friend or community member on the day of Purim. Every year, Chabad of Stamford sends over 900 *shalach manos* packages to Jewish families all over Stamford and Fairfield County. This year Purim falls on a Friday and in honor of this, Chabad will be sending out beautiful Shabbat kits. Greeting letters can be included in the gift packages to friends, family and community members for as little as \$18 a listing. For more information about Chabad of Stamford's *Shalach Manos* Project, the Purim party, or Megillah readings go to www.StamfordChabad.org or contact programs@stamfordchabad.org

Join Temple Beth El For Two Days of Purim Fun

Sunday, February 21: Amazing Purim Race

On Sunday Feb 21, Temple Beth El will host its first "Amazing Purim Race", a Purim-themed photo scavenger hunt around Stamford. Beginning in the TBE parking lot at 350 Roxbury Road, and on Zoom, participants will each receive a Megillah with clues and trivia questions, leading to a variety of locations in Stamford. Participants will take selfie photos at each location and look for answers to the questions on the Megillah. Participants must complete the hunt by Thursday, Feb 25. Prizes will be awarded to winners at the Purim Service and Megillah Reading on Thursday, Feb. 25 at 6:00 pm.

Thursday, February 25: Celebrate Purim with TBE!

5:15 pm: **Clown College!** In a Zoom workshop, learn to be a clown with Gail G.

Trell, Jodi Maxner and Donna Wolff who volunteer their time as hospital clowns and were formally trained by and are members of the Stamford Hospital Haha (Health and Humour Associates). Learn how clowns make up with a wig, hat, glasses; learn to make a dog balloon, decorate a Purim Kazoo, learn some new magic tricks and create stress balls.

6:00 pm: Purim Family Service and Megillah Reading: Join us on Zoom for an amazing Purim experience led by Rabbi Joshua Hammerman and Katie Kaplan, Cantorial Soloist. Wear your most creative mask, face paint, or hat to be spotlighted!

8:00 pm: Adult Megillah Reading Zoom Service: For further information and Zoom info contact the TBE office 203-322-6901, ext. 300.

LIFE & LEGACY Honor Roll

United Jewish Federation is proud to partner with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation to bring the Stamford, New Canaan and Darien community the Harold Grinspoon Life and Legacy Program. Through our communal efforts the following individuals have made a commitment to one or more Jewish communal institutions to secure our future.

For more information contact Lenore Fogel or Diane Sloyer at (203) 321-1373 or lenore@ujf.org, dianasloyer@ujf.org.

Anonymous (11)
 Adrienne and Michael Alexander
 Jeri Appel
 Mark Appel
 Erica Snow Arbron
 Suellyn Bache
 Monica Becker and Edieal Pinker
 Rachel Tyd and Robert Beldock
 Gayle and Mitchell Bell
 Daron and Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein
 Melody and Claude Bernstein
 Bruce Blasnik
 Judith B. Block
 Amy and Henry Bubel
 Alan Cohen
 Andrea and David M. Cohen
 Diane and Rabbi Daniel Cohen
 Malerie Yolen-Cohen and Jeff Cohen
 Judy and David S.* Cohen
 Mimi Cohen
 Rachel and Ephraim Cohen
 Roberta Cohen
 Saul Cohen*
 Arthur Cramer*
 Stephen Davidson
 Helen and Marty Donner
 Fran and Bob Dorf
 Shoshana Dweck
 Debra and Daniel Faizakoff
 Michelle Fanwick
 Jay and Esta Feinsod
 Peggy and Jerry Fensterstock
 Lenore and Dr. Ilan Fogel
 Morton and Miriam Lavinsky Folb*
 Sharon Franklin
 Connie and Alan Freeman
 Marc Friedman
 Donna and Edward Fuhrman
 Nancy and Mark Funt
 Lesley and Dennis Gehr
 Carole Gladstone
 Herbert Gladstone*
 Sylvia and Herb Gladstone*
 Robin Frederick and Michael Gold
 Cyndy and Eric Goldberg
 Caryl Goldstein*
 Meryl and David Gordon
 Nan and Paul Gordon
 Linda B. Gornitsky
 Hank Green
 Sharon and Larry Greenberg
 Pam Ehrenkranz and Matt Greenberg
 Grecia and Ron* Gross
 Scott Handelman
 Jacqueline Herman
 Dr. Shara and Rabbi David Israel
 Devra Jafee-Berkowitz
 Meryl and Ron Japha
 Judith and Grant Kallen
 Helene and Harvey Kaminski
 Chanie Kamman
 Jason Kaplowitz
 Joy Katz
 Judith and Sheldon Katz
 Larry Katz
 Liz and Marc Kitay
 Elissa and Philip Klapper
 Harris Kligman
 Susan Kostin
 Arthur Kramer*
 Jeannie and Brian Kriftcher
 Jackie and Marshall Kurland
 Lorraine and David Kveskin

Helen and Ed Kveskin
 Lieba and Steve Lander
 Shelley Leibowitz
 Lois D. Stark and Gary P. Lessen
 Vered and Mark Links
 Eleanor and Mark Lowenthal
 Stu Madison
 Norma and Milton Mann*
 Susan and Len Mark
 Chris Maroc
 Melanie Massell
 Michal and Rabbi Levi Mendelow
 Nancy Zinbarg Mimoun
 Marsha and Lois Panzer
 Doni and Leah Perl
 Enid Randall*
 Bonita and Stephen Rappoport
 Judith Raymond
 Lisa and Harry Rich
 Judy and Adam Rin
 Betty and Dan* Roberts
 Brian and Sonia Roitman
 Arlene and Carl Rosen
 Irma Ross
 Sally and Jim Rothkopf
 Bonnie Russo
 Edith Samers
 Sharyn and Richard Sarner
 Hilde Scheraga*
 Jayne and Bud Schiff
 Carol Ruth and Herman Shepherd*
 Nancy Schiffman
 Monica Smyth and Michael Schlessinger
 Elayne and James Schoke*
 Chaya and Levi Segal
 Myrna and George Sessa
 Jessica and Laurence Sheinman
 Leah and Rabbi Moshe Shemtov
 Stephanie and Bob Sherman
 Malya Shmotkin
 Ronnie Ness Sichel
 Dr. Steven Sichel
 Paula Simon
 Diane Sloyer
 Diane and Elliot Sloyer
 Greta Solomon
 Miriam and Steve Sosnick
 Ed Spilka
 Eileen and Fred Springer
 Beverly and David Stein
 Betsy and Michael Stone
 Gladys and Greg Teitel
 Dr. Julie and Rabbi Jay TelRav
 The Estate of Sheila Carmine*
 The Estate of Thomas Gilmartin*
 Ellen and Richard Weber
 Linda B. Gornitsky and Harvey Weber
 Dana and Carl Weinberg
 Leon Weisburgh
 Janet Welkovich
 Robyn and Mark Winarksy
 Neda Khaghan and Robert Yaghoubian
 Joan Zinbarg*
 Renee Zinn

**Of Blessed Memory
 This is the list provided to UJF at time of publishing. We apologize for any names that have been omitted. Please let us know and the missing names will be added to the next issue of the paper.*

UJF LIFE & LEGACY Testimonials

In each edition of the New Jewish Voice, we feature the testimonials of couples just like you, who have declared their intent to leave a legacy gift to an organization in the Stamford Jewish Community. Learn why they give and discover your reasons to join them. Together, we can all work to guarantee the future of the Stamford Jewish Community we love!

CLAUDE AND MELODY BERNSTEIN TESTIMONIAL

When my wife, Melody, and I decided to participate in the legacy program on behalf of Chabad of New Canaan, we agreed it was critical to talk to our adult children first.

It was essential for us to reinforce to them what it means to us to be Jews, and what Judaism meant to our parents and our parents' parents.

We emphasized to our adult children why it is important for us to have children and grandchildren who value the Jewish heritage — and why we find it especially important to support a strong Jewish presence in New Canaan.

We also described how a modest slice of our estate can help to ensure the durability and vitality of Jewish life in New Canaan. Not just in our lifetime, but long afterward.

We appreciate that Chabad of New Canaan, for more than a decade, has provided our community with the means to live a joyous and fulfilling Jewish life. We value their

lifelong learning programs, personal counseling, Hebrew school for children, and their wide range of holiday, ritual and life cycle offerings.

Interestingly, we found the actual process of establishing a legacy gift to be relatively easy, once we opted to move forward.

JASON KAPLOWITZ TESTIMONIAL

As members of the tribe, it is our birthright to assist others and provide Tikkun Olam. I have been working with the Friendship Circle for over 18 years, which has had the most profound impact and instilled in me a sense of giving and responsibility at a very young age. I am now a Friendship Circle Board member. Recently the opportunity presented itself to think about giving more than I ordinarily could, by participating in the Life & Legacy program. It just made so much sense to me as a way to help the Friendship Circle. We are securing the future of our most important and beloved organizations that are the heart-beat of this Jewish community, and arguably we are preserving the crowning essence of what it means to be Jewish. I give what I can now, and I always wish it could be more. This is a way to give more. Everyone dreams and thinks about their legacy - one day, how will they be remembered, and what will they leave behind - to friends, to family, and to our community?



Claude and Melody Bernstein



Jason Kaplowitz

THE FUTURE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IS IN YOUR HANDS.



HOW WILL YOU ASSURE JEWISH TOMORROWS?



ASSURING JEWISH TOMORROWS
A PROGRAM OF THE HAROLD GRINSPOON FOUNDATION



United Jewish Federation

To create your Jewish legacy contact: Diane Sloyer, CEO • DianeSloyer@ujf.org • (203) 321-1373

And the Winner Is....



Bi-Cultural's 4th Grade Class Enjoys a Pizza Lunch.

(Courtesy of UJF) Each fall, children around the community collect coins for United Jewish Federation's Super Sunday Tzedakah (charity) Coin Challenge. With Super Sunday going virtual due to the pandemic, children could not drop off their coins in person. This created a challenge, and extra effort was needed to turn in their tzedakah. The kids stepped up to the

challenge by collecting nearly \$2000 in just a month. Area day schools, nursery schools, and synagogue Sunday schools participated, but there could only be one winner. Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy's fourth grade class, taught by Riki Wiederhorn, came out on top for collecting the most tzedakah. The prize? A pizza party for the whole grade.... socially distanced of course.

Chabad of Stamford's Betsy's Buddies Program Expands Offerings

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Thanksgiving this year brought about the realization that many members of the Stamford community would not be experiencing the day in the same way as in previous years. With that in mind, Leah Shemtov, Co-director, Chabad of Stamford, launched a "Community Hug" initiative which saw 50 households receive a specially catered kosher Thanksgiving dinner delivered with love by volunteers in the Betsy's Buddies program. The program is named in loving memory of Betsy Polakoff (OBM), and is geared to facilitate one-on-one interactions between volunteers and seniors in the community. People with similar values and interests are paired in the hopes of building a mutually rewarding relationship for both the volunteers and their buddies.

For the Thanksgiving program, members of the community were encouraged to be involved in one of three ways; to nominate individuals to receive the meals, to deliver the meals or to help sponsor them. For Leah Shemtov, this was all about "sharing a virtual hug and love, through a delicious meal with so many in our community who are alone, homebound, unable to be with family and friends or just need a community 'hug.'" Each Thanksgiving package also contained a large bouquet of flowers kindly donated by a local retailer and a "Modeh Ani" prayer card. In Jewish tradition, every morning begins with the Modeh Ani prayer of thanksgiving.

Building on the success of the Thanksgiving program, Chabad organized its annual Betsy's Buddies Chanukah luncheon for seniors in the community in a similar way, but with the added bonus of a special Zoom program this year. In addition, on Thursday, January 28th, they will run a special Tu B'Shevat



(l-r) Elayne Dener and Cyndy Goldberg volunteer to deliver Thanksgiving meals and flowers as part of Chabad of Stamford's "Thanksgiving hug" project for homebound members in the community.

celebration. Organized in conjunction with the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy middle school, this will be an intergenerational event where participants can connect together on Zoom in an uplifting way.

To volunteer to become a "buddy", deliver meals, sponsor a meal, nominate someone in the community to be a recipient of this program, or RSVP to the January 28th event, please contact Vered at programs@stamfordchabad.org.

SUPER BOWL LV

Sunday, February 7, 2021

SIX THIRTEEN

<p>FIELD GOAL PACKAGE 199</p> <p>3 FOOT DELI SUB CONDIMENTS & WORKS 60 WINGS 15 CHOW DOG BITES CHIPS & SALSA</p>	<p>TOUCHDOWN PACKAGE 379</p> <p>3 FOOT DELI SUB CONDIMENTS & WORKS 120 WINGS 15 CHOW DOG BITES 15 BRISKET EGG ROLLS 15 BEEF SLIDERS CHIPS & SALSA</p>
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<p>BY THE PAN HALF/FULL</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>WINGS</td><td>60/110</td></tr> <tr><td>CHOW DOG BITES (15/30)</td><td>65/120</td></tr> <tr><td>BEEF OR VEGETARIAN CHILI</td><td>60/110</td></tr> <tr><td>FIRE POPPERS</td><td>90/170</td></tr> <tr><td>CHICKEN FINGERS</td><td>70/120</td></tr> <tr><td>HOT DOGS (15/30)</td><td>65/120</td></tr> <tr><td>BEEF SLIDERS (15/30)</td><td>75/140</td></tr> <tr><td>MEATBALLS</td><td>75/140</td></tr> <tr><td>BRISKET EGG ROLLS (15/30)</td><td>75/140</td></tr> </table>	WINGS	60/110	CHOW DOG BITES (15/30)	65/120	BEEF OR VEGETARIAN CHILI	60/110	FIRE POPPERS	90/170	CHICKEN FINGERS	70/120	HOT DOGS (15/30)	65/120	BEEF SLIDERS (15/30)	75/140	MEATBALLS	75/140	BRISKET EGG ROLLS (15/30)	75/140	<p>A LA CARTE</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>SHREDDED BBQ SMOKED BRISKET</td><td>31.99/LB</td></tr> <tr><td>RACK OF BEEF RIBS</td><td>33</td></tr> <tr><td>3 FOOT DELI SUB</td><td>99</td></tr> <tr><td>HOUSE MADE DELI</td><td>24.99/LB</td></tr> <tr><td>GRILLED VEGETABLE PLATTER</td><td>75</td></tr> <tr><td>FRIES (REGULAR, SPICY, SWEET POT)</td><td>60/110</td></tr> <tr><td>CHIPS & SALSA FOR 10</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>FRUIT PLATTER (SM/LG)</td><td>35/60</td></tr> <tr><td>CRUDITE PLATTER (SM/LG)</td><td>25/50</td></tr> </table>	SHREDDED BBQ SMOKED BRISKET	31.99/LB	RACK OF BEEF RIBS	33	3 FOOT DELI SUB	99	HOUSE MADE DELI	24.99/LB	GRILLED VEGETABLE PLATTER	75	FRIES (REGULAR, SPICY, SWEET POT)	60/110	CHIPS & SALSA FOR 10	20	FRUIT PLATTER (SM/LG)	35/60	CRUDITE PLATTER (SM/LG)	25/50
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BEEF OR VEGETARIAN CHILI	60/110																																				
FIRE POPPERS	90/170																																				
CHICKEN FINGERS	70/120																																				
HOT DOGS (15/30)	65/120																																				
BEEF SLIDERS (15/30)	75/140																																				
MEATBALLS	75/140																																				
BRISKET EGG ROLLS (15/30)	75/140																																				
SHREDDED BBQ SMOKED BRISKET	31.99/LB																																				
RACK OF BEEF RIBS	33																																				
3 FOOT DELI SUB	99																																				
HOUSE MADE DELI	24.99/LB																																				
GRILLED VEGETABLE PLATTER	75																																				
FRIES (REGULAR, SPICY, SWEET POT)	60/110																																				
CHIPS & SALSA FOR 10	20																																				
FRUIT PLATTER (SM/LG)	35/60																																				
CRUDITE PLATTER (SM/LG)	25/50																																				

Place your orders by email at catering@613restaurant.com
Orders due by 12pm on Wednesday, February 3

Snow Day at Gan Yeladim

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) In keeping with the children's love of nature and exploration, Gan Yeladim combined a snow day with outdoor learning and fun for all.



(l-r) Ilan Furmansky, Avi Lefkovich, Yael Sosnovich, Joe Kondub and Bara Katz.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Remembered

BY ELISSA KAPLAN

The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County invites the community to its virtual Annual Meeting and program on Sunday, March 14, at 1:00 pm. This program is free and open to the community; donations are appreciated. The Zoom link is available on the JHSFC website <http://jhsfc-ct.org>.

The guest speaker is Dr. Laura J. Ping, who will discuss why the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire is still an important topic on its 110th anniversary. In addition to the lecture, there will be a dramatic presentation and an “open mike” time for you to share stories of your family and friends who were victims of the fire. We are collecting memories and want you to tell the stories. If you have pictures to share, scan and email them to info@jhsfc-ct.org. Please include your name, your contact information, and a short description of the picture.

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire took place on March 25, 1911, perhaps caused by a carelessly tossed cigarette. Hundreds of low-paid garment workers were trapped, and 146 people died. Most of them were Jewish and Italian

immigrant women. This fire caused the state of New York to enact many of the first significant worker protection laws. Eventually new federal regulations emerged, including the 40-hour work week, a minimum wage rule, and a ban on child labor. In addition, it was the spark that led to the formation of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU).

Laura J. Ping received her Ph.D. in American History from The Graduate Center, City University of New York in 2018. She is particularly interested in the history of New York City and women's history. Ping's current book manuscript, *Beyond Bloomers: Fashioning Dress in Nineteenth-Century America* analyzes the cultural and political impact of the dress reform movement on the nineteenth-century women's movement in the United States. Ping has been awarded a 2020-2021 David Jaffe Fellowship in Visual and Material Culture from the American Antiquarian Society. Laura Ping has been teaching history for 16 years at Pace University, The Gilder Lehrman Institute, the George Washington Teacher Institute, the National



Dr. Laura J. Ping

Endowment for the Humanities Institute for School Teachers, and the Macaulay Honors College, Queens College.

The JHSFC Annual Meeting will include reports on the State of the Society and Special Appreciation Awards. If you have questions about the lecture and presentation, contact The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County, Mission: *Collecting Memories and Telling Stories*. Telephone: 203-359-2196, Email: info@jhsfc-ct.org, Website: <http://jhsfc-ct.org>.



Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Jerusalem Jews and Arabs Hack Ideas for a Better City

Food waste, learning Arabic and appreciating Jerusalem's history are all on the minds of young locals in a first hackathon of its kind.



Young Jewish and Arab entrepreneurs gather in Jerusalem for a hackathon to create projects for the benefit of the city. (CREDIT: MAY HATIB)

BY NAAMA BARAK/ISRAEL21C

While the grassy lawns at the Margalit Startup City complex in Jerusalem are used to hosting entrepreneurial minds, they recently played home to a unique experience: a hackathon for 20 young Jewish and Arab Jerusalemites to pitch projects that will improve their city.

Among the presenters was Yusuf Awada, who drew on his experience as a waiter shocked by the level of food waste and spoke

of the need for an app that locates and distributes surplus food to those in need.

Participants Gilad Sevvit and Michal Rosen presented an idea for an app to help those who want to learn Arabic, while Ohad Stosel proposed an app for comparing old pictures of Jerusalem to modern-day views as you visit them.

“We have a vision to build an innovative, integrated platform of Jerusalemites from all sectors. This is the beginning of a vision and



Hackathon organizers Adnan Jaber (left) and Yonatan Arnon flank JVP founder Erel Margalit at the Jerusalem event. (CREDIT: MAY HATIB)

building bridges. In the days when virtual reality covers everything –we create reality,” said Yonatan Arnon, one of the event's organizers.

“This meeting is a dream come true. I have been in a lot of peace programs, but never in Jerusalem. Let's learn together and succeed together. Diversity will win out,” added co-organizer Adnan Jaber.

The hackathon's organizers are now working to build on this first meeting and to embark on a series of further meetings and

collaborations.

“People think of Jerusalem as a city which is just fought over, but we are proving that it is a city of creativity,” said Erel Margalit, JVP's founder and the chairman of Margalit Startup City.

“The young entrepreneurs are bringing energy to the city, and they are the people making the connections. This meeting proves the power we have in building big things together.”

PJ Library Corner

BY SHARON FRANKLIN

New and exciting community activities are happening at United Jewish Federation's PJ Library & PJ Our Way! We're providing more ways for your family to share Jewish stories and experiences!



Sharon Franklin

UJF's PJ Library and Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy invite you to "Havdalah In Pajamas" on Saturday, February 6th at 6:30pm on Zoom, with music, blessings and a make your own candle craft. Free Havdalah kits will be provided for pick-up (limited quantity). Sign up at www.ujf.org/pjcandle for this free program.

- Remember, families are eligible to receive "One Book Per Child" monthly for children ages six months to eight years old. It's easy to sign up! Just go to www.pjlibrary.org and fill out the online form to begin receiving the free books.

- PJ Our Way offers children 8 ½ to 11 years old a free chapter book each month. Tweens can choose from a selection of four high-quality titles that have been reviewed by a panel of PJ educators, kids, and parents. To sign up, simply go to www.pjourway.org.

- Grandparents in Stamford, New Canaan and Darien can now receive a free subscription to PJ's PROOF Magazine and two free books each year. Sign up at: www.pjlibrary.org/grandparent-enrollment.

- UJF is starting a PJ Library Grandparents Group! Interested? Contact Sharon Franklin at sharon@ujf.org.

Indoor craft activity: Make Some Colorful Playdough!

Materials

- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup salt
- 1 tablespoon cream of tartar
- Food coloring
- Saucepan
- 1 cup flour

Directions

1. Combine water, oil, salt, cream of tartar, and food coloring (a couple of drops will do) in a saucepan and heat until warm.
2. Remove from heat and add flour.
3. Stir, then knead until smooth. The cream of tartar makes this dough last 6 months or longer, so resist the temptation to omit this ingredient if you don't have it on hand.
4. Store this dough in an airtight container or a Ziploc freezer bag.
5. Make a second batch to create a different color.



Grandparents Get in on the Action With PJ Library

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation's PJ Library program provides free monthly Jewish books and chapter books to over 400 children ages six months to twelve years of age in the Greater Stamford, New Canaan and Darien area through a partnership with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF), and support from local philanthropists and donors. The program is growing by leaps and bounds, with subscriptions up 20% in 2020. Recently, HGF introduced subscriptions for grandparents, which include two free PJ Library books each year and a subscription to their magazine PROOF.

With the growth of book subscriptions, it was the natural next step to start an initiative for local grandparents. The new group, "PJ Grandparents," is launching in early 2021, and is co-chaired by Meryl Japha, Lorraine Kweskin, Lynn Lowin, and Linda Spilka. Planning has already started for the premier Zoom program.

When asked why she feels a grandparent's role in a child's life is important, co-chair Lorraine Kweskin commented: "I recently checked out the PJ Library grandparents page on their website and really resonated with what I read: 'Grandparents play an important role in the lives of their grandchildren. They pass down tradition and heritage through the values they've taught their children and the family history they share with future generations.'"

If you would like to join the new UJF PJ Grandparents group, contact Sharon Franklin at sharon@ujf.org or call 203-321-1373 ext. 109. To sign up for a

PJ Library Grandparents subscription and to check out some great resources, go to <https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/grandparents>



Meryl Japha with her granddaughter, Lorraine Kweskin with her grandchildren, and Lynn Lowin with her grandson.

PJ Library Does Good



Area kids had a chance to do good deeds as part of UJF's PJ Library "Martin Luther King, Jr. Mitzvah Day".



Holocaust survivor Anita Kutus reads the PJ book "The Run Away Dreidel" by Zoom to area PJ kids.



The Svartz and Kutus Families get to schmooze socially distanced while sipping coffee and hot chocolate.

PJ Library Celebrates Chanukah

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation's PJ Library helped local families celebrate Chanukah with fun and engaging holiday programming in December. On Sunday,

December 6th UJF and Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy teamed up for a coffee truck pop up, held at the school. Nearly 70 people gathered during several shifts in a safe outdoor environment to sip coffee or hot chocolate and schmooze with friends they hadn't seen in a while. Chanukah gift bags were given out to the children, and families dropped off toys for UJF's Women's Philanthropy David's Treasure Tree Closet, benefitting kids in Stamford Hospital. Special thanks to Rabbi Eli Kohl for his help on this program.

Doowah, who entertained the kids during the Zoom program with some holiday favorites.

UJF's Parent Ambassadors got in on the holiday action, too. From hot chocolate packages, to dreidel contests, to parking lot menorah lightings, to Chanukah bags filled with fun treats and holiday sensory boxes, UJF's Parent Ambassadors found creative ways to connect with local families throughout the month of December (see separate article on UJF's PJ Library Parent Ambassadors on page 22).

Interested in learning more about UJF's PJ Library or Parent Ambassador groups? Contact Sharon Franklin at sharon@ujf.org or call 203-321-1373 ext. 109.



Leor Kutus spins his edible dreidel, and comes out on top as a raffle winner for Parent Ambassador Liatte Lasher's contest.

On Sunday, December 13th, UJF's PJ Library and Schoke JFS' Anachnu program partnered for a Zoom program which included a Chanukah story time with local survivor Aneta Kunis. It was a wonderful opportunity for kids to hear a fun PJ story and chat and connect with a senior who had experienced the Holocaust.

December 24th brought together over 40 kids to celebrate with a sing-along with Bobby



Ava Goldstein plays with items from a sensory kit provided by Parent Ambassador Erica Safer.



Participants mingle at the PJ/BCHA joint Coffee Truck Pop Up event.

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UJF's PJ Library Parent Ambassadors Help Keep Things Social

(Courtesy of UJF) Thanks to the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, United Jewish Federation's PJ Library organization announces its second year receiving a generous grant for local Parent Ambassadors. Ambassadors work with the local PJ professional, creating grassroots micro communities, providing engagement opportunities outside formal institutions.

United Jewish Federation's Parent Ambassadors include:

Shira Fischer: Baby Group

Shira Fischer and her husband Reuven moved to Stamford four years ago. Originally from New Haven, Shira began her work with PJ Library through a college internship, where she worked creating Jewish programming for local families. Shira is now the Parent Ambassador for our local "Baby Group" for families with babies up to 12 months old. "Because of my earlier experience with PJ Library, our family's love of Jewish books, and my desire to actively give back to my community, I happily accepted the role of Parent Ambassador in the spring of 2020," says Shira. She can often be found creating fun cocktails, hanging out with her family at the Nature Center, or shuttling around her three daughters, Ayeli (4), Maayan (2) and Adira (1).

Liatte Lasher: Central Stamford

Liatte Tsarfati Lasher, originally from Florida, moved to Stamford about four years ago. Liatte and her husband David have three girls: Emma (5), Abby (3), and Anaelle (4 months). "I'm passionate about Jewish education and love working with children," says Liatte. Her career in education started while in college, first as an early interventionist, then Hebrew school teacher for children with special needs, and then a classroom teacher. "I love having a close-knit, warm community, and was excited to join PJ Library as a Parent Ambassador in order to strengthen the Jewish community in Stamford and as a way to bring more Jewish books into everyone's homes," says Liatte. Besides homeschooling her children and being a



UJF PJ Library Parent Ambassador, Shira Fischer, engages parents with new babies. (l-r) Reuven, Adira, Shira, Maayan and Ayeli Fischer.

busy volunteer in the community, Liatte loves horseback riding, swimming, and learning new things.

Erica Safer: Harbor Point and Downtown Stamford

"My husband Elliot, our three-year-old daughter Nellie, and I live in Harbor Point in Stamford. We love the convenient location, the great view and the walkability of the neighborhood," says Harbor Point/Downtown Parent Ambassador, Erica Safer. There are a lot of singles and families who have moved to the area over the past five years. Erica is a busy working mom, but when a friend gave up her role as a Parent Ambassador, Erica was recommended for the job. "Since the summer of 2020, I have been happily engaging families, planning activities and packaging and dropping off gift bags in my part of town. PJ Library has become an important part of

my family's lives. My daughter loves getting her monthly PJ book, and I feel more engaged in our community in the role I play as Parent Ambassador for our UJF's PJ Library," stated Erica.

Mel Vorm: North Stamford

Mel Vorm is originally from London in the U.K. and recently moved to Stamford after a 10-year stint in NYC. She and her husband Laurie have two children: daughter Ariella (3 years and nine months) and son Eden (17 months). Mel described what a strange feeling it was to make such a big change to their lives during the height of a pandemic. And admittedly she was really nervous to make the leap from the busy city life that they knew and loved, to the suburbs of North Stamford that felt like the middle of nowhere. "But how wrong I was! From the moment we

moved here we were immediately immersed into the warmth of the Jewish community through both UJF's PJ Library and Ariella's school, Gan Yeladim. So, when asked if I would be a PJ Library Parent Ambassador for North Stamford, I jumped at the opportunity," says Mel. PJ Library had given her family so much through its monthly books and events, she felt now it was her turn to give something back. It has enabled her family to create a whole new social group in the under-served area of North Stamford and has given her the opportunity to meet so many people that she now calls friends.

A special thank you to past Parent Ambassadors Jessica Furmansky, Mihal Aryeh, Leah Zeide, and Liat and Ori Kochavi.

For more information contact Sharon Franklin at sharon@ujf.org/203-321-5364 ext. 109.



Mel Vorm happily manages the neighborhood of North Stamford for UJF's PJ Library. (l-r) Mel, Eden, Laurie and Ariella Vorm.



Erica Safer, pictured with her daughter Nellie, is the UJF PJ Parent Ambassador for Harbor Point and downtown Stamford.



Liatte Lasher with baby Anaelle, welcomes new families to Central Stamford.



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WHY I CARE...

Focus on Oren Shapiro

"He that gives should never remember. He that receives should never forget."
— Talmud

BY JANE LEVENE

Oren grew up in Northern Westchester, NY. He and his wife Jodi moved to Stamford in 1998, where they are raising their three children. Oren was originally a lawyer and commuted to New York City. Wanting a deeper work satisfaction, he changed careers and Mrs. Bloom's Direct started in 2003. Oren has been a dedicated and involved member of the Jewish community and the great Stamford area for many years.

Here's why he cares...

What is your current and past involvement with UJF?

My floral company, Mrs. Bloom's Direct, has donated flowers and floral arrangements to United Jewish Federation for over six years for a variety of programs and events. Also, the floral designer from my partner company, Damsel Fly, has created some unique arrangements that we were happy to have grace the tables of UJF

fundraisers. My company's mission has always been to say "yes" and to give back to non-profits, and sponsoring flowers for UJF is part of this mission.

Describe your involvement with other Jewish organizations in the community and elsewhere.

I, and Mrs. Bloom's Direct, have had similar involvement with other organizations in town, including Chabad, the Chevra Kadisha Society, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (where my children went to school), and Friendship Circle.

I have recently partnered with the National Alzheimer's Association as their official sponsor. I am providing flowers across the country for assisted living facilities. I was inspired to get involved with this particular charity because of my experience with a neighbor who suffers with this illness. I saw how devastating the illness was and the effect it has on my neighbor's family as well. I feel it's important to support this cause and to do whatever we can, because it is a massive issue and there is no cure.

Why is it important for you to give back in this way?



(l-r) Lev, Iko the dog, Jodi, Oren (in the back), Talia (front and center), and Avi Shapiro.

Giving back is an important part of the mission of my company. I feel that if more businesses, including small businesses, were charity centric, it would not only give the company a worthwhile feeling, it could also potentially

help improve business. It is important to give back, otherwise, it's like steering a rudderless boat.

To find out how your business can give back to the community, contact Sharon@ujf.org

TEEN VOICES

My High School During COVID

BY MAYA FOGEL

On March 2nd, 2020, my high school, S.A.R., became the first school in the country to shut down due to COVID-19. I had no idea that the whole country would follow. At the time, it was a temporary closure for a day, soon it became two weeks, and later the rest of the school year. Typically hoping for an extended vacation, I was surprised to find myself missing the daily routine of in-person school life.

My school's adjustment to online learning was quick and efficient. There were some benefits to Zoom school, such as less academic pressure, no commute (which is usually an hour!), shorter days, and no distraction from my teacher's cute babies popping into class. However, the long days on Zoom were tiring and I missed seeing and sitting with my friends all day long.

After the summer was over, I was happy to find out that we would go back to a COVID safe, in-person learning. I never thought that I would be excited to go back to school. I was not sure how long it would last but because of the efforts of the faculty and volunteers, we are still in the school building as of today. This experience has made me more grateful and appreciative of how unrestricted our lives were pre-pandemic. This time has also taught me the privilege of good health, in-person education and time spent with friends.

Maya Fogel lives in Stamford with her parents and four siblings (her oldest sister is currently doing basic training in the IDF in Israel), and is a sophomore at SAR High School in Riverdale, New York. She enjoys baking and hanging out with her friends (socially distanced of course).

Bonding at Friendship Circle

A Friendship Circle Volunteer Reflects on her Special Friendship

BY SARAH HANNA

The first time I volunteered, I felt a little intimidated and scared. Working with a friend with special needs was a completely new thing that I had never done. Then I was introduced to Jane. She was a little shy at first, as was I. It was at a Children's Circle program. Our first activity was gym. We started playing a game of catch together- just us- and her eyes just lit up as if she was thinking "OK, she's not so bad."

One of the best memories I have of Jane is at the Drum Circle. We were feeling awkward to play the drums alone- and then when we played side-by-side together it became so much fun. I also remember when the petting animals came out at Children's Circle; we both held each other's hands and squeezed. Together things weren't scary!

Jane is the sweetest person ever. I love her sassiness. You don't expect it because she's so sweet and nice, but then she'll come up with a one liner that totally throws you off and makes you laugh. Her smile is so big and bright.

I learned so much about myself, a whole new side of me- I see the patience that I have in me. Jane teaches me so much with her positive outlook on life. She is always excited about things. With her "don't worry" attitude, she taught me



Sarah Hanna with her special friend, Jane.

to relax and not take things so seriously. Her ability to just enjoy life has taught me to do the same.

Malya Shmotkin, Director of Friendship Circle, told me that every person in this world has a soul, but some are in a different body that is limiting sometimes. That really touched me and has enabled

me to see past the surface level with everybody. Now, when I interact with people, it is not the outside that matters; it's the person within. I have gained so much from my friend Jane.

Stamford resident Sarah Hanna is an 11th grade student at SAR High School in Riverdale, New York.

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The month of February will be filled with virtual programming designed to educate, empower and engage. Participants will also learn key advocacy strategies and the power of civic engagement to advance public policy — ultimately, participating in a week of virtual lobbying to elevate disability issues to the policymakers in Washington.

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Questions? Call Sharon Lewis, Director, JCRC | (203) 321-1373 | Slewis@ujf.org