



THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION

A Walk Through History Celebrating America at 250

(Courtesy of Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County) As Connecticut and the nation prepare to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County (JHSFC) is inviting the community to celebrate in a uniquely local way—by walking through history together.

On Sunday, August 9, participants will gather at Mill River Park in Stamford for a 1.776-mile Jewish Heritage Walk through downtown Stamford. The distance was chosen intentionally to reflect the year 1776,

when the Declaration of Independence was adopted, linking America's founding story with the rich history of Jewish life in Fairfield County.

Along the route, walkers will visit a number of historic sites that tell the story of Stamford's growth and the contributions of its Jewish community. Stops will include Stamford Government Center, Old Town Hall, Veterans Memorial Park, the site of Stamford's earliest Congregation Agudath Sholom, the former Jewish Center, and other locations that help illustrate more than a

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Lighting the Way Forward

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF) has proudly partnered with local synagogues and Jewish agencies for more than 53 years, working together to sustain and strengthen the community. Today, the Jewish community is seeing something extraordinary—a renewed connection and search for belonging across all ages and stages of Jewish life. From living rooms to campuses, from young families to older adults, more people are seeking meaningful ways to engage.

In response, this year's Annual Campaign is grounded in a powerful vision: "As One, We Build: Lighting the Way Forward for Jewish Life." Through this effort, UJF is investing in programs that expand outreach, deepen

relationships, and strengthen Jewish identity throughout the community. Together, the community has an opportunity not only to meet this moment, but to shape the future.

To help accelerate this impact, UJF is excited to offer a special matching gift opportunity. Thanks to the generosity of community leaders Melody and Claude Bernstein, Diane and Elliot Sloyer, Ellen and Richard Weber, and several anonymous donors, every gift or pledge made to UJF's Annual Campaign by September 30 will be matched dollar for dollar—doubling your impact and helping unlock up to \$180,000 in additional funding! Every contribution

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BCHA Welcomes New Head of School

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) has announced the appointment of Rabbi Jordan Soffer as its fifth Head of School, effective July 1, 2026. The transition comes as current Head of School Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein prepares to retire at the end of July 2026 after



Rabbi Jordan Soffer

years of dedicated leadership and support to the BCHA community.

Rabbi Soffer currently serves as Head of School at Striar Hebrew Academy in Sharon, Massachusetts, where he is completing his seventh year in the role. Under his leadership, the school has experienced significant

enrollment growth and strong institutional success, earning him recognition as a respected leader in Jewish education.

A graduate of The Leffell School in Westchester, NY, Rabbi Soffer earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin and a master's degree in Jewish Education from Yeshiva University, where he is currently pursuing a doctorate. He

received rabbinic ordination from Yeshivat Chovevei Torah and has been recognized for his contributions to Jewish education as a recipient of the Covenant Foundation's Pomegranate Prize. Rabbi Soffer is also a Wexner Field Fellow, and a Rabbinic Mentor for the Prizmah Day School Leadership Training Institute.

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Israel Day on Fifth

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy students, staff, and community members took to New York City to march proudly down 5th Avenue in the annual Israel Day Parade on Sunday, May 29.



From UJF's Chief Executive Officer Is Advocacy Enough?

BY DIANE SLOYER

At a time when antisemitism and anti-Zionism are rising, many of us find ourselves asking a difficult, self-reflective question: Is our advocacy enough?

Are our actions meaningful in the bigger picture that fills our newsfeeds daily? It can be paralyzing and even depressing to feel that only large, sweeping actions matter. The strength of our Jewish community has never depended solely on grand gestures. It has always been built on the accumulation of small, consistent acts of courage, care, and connection. The Soviet Jewry Movement comes to mind where activism led to a significant result.

Every conversation matters. Every time we speak up—whether correcting misinformation, sharing our story, or standing alongside another community—we are pushing back against hate. These moments may feel small, but they create ripples that extend far beyond what we can see.

Advocacy is not only what happens in legislative chambers or on national stages. It happens in our schools, our workplaces, and around our kitchen tables. It is in the decision to educate ourselves more deeply about our history and identity. It is in showing up to community events, supporting Jewish organizations with strong Jewish values, and ensuring that the next generation grows up with a strong sense of pride and belonging.



Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO

At United Jewish Federation, we see every day how these small actions add up. A donor's gift enables critical security measures. A volunteer's time strengthens community bonds. A parent's choice to prioritize Jewish education helps shape the next generation of leaders.

None of these actions alone will eradicate antisemitism—but together, they form a powerful, collective response.

Fighting antisemitism is not only about defense; it is about building. It is about creating vibrant, resilient Jewish life that cannot be diminished by hate. When we invest in our community—its institutions, its relationships, and its future—we are making a statement: that Jewish life is not only enduring, but thriving.

Responsibility belongs to all of us. When each of us speaks up, shows up, and gives back, we move the needle. And collectively, just like the impact of a Federation Annual Campaign, we make a meaningful difference.

The challenges we face are real, and they are serious, but so is our individual and communal capacity to respond. Our history teaches us that resilience is not built in a single moment—it is forged over time, through countless acts of determination and unity.

For me, it is a daily battle to remember that every action counts and every voice matters. You matter, and I am grateful for you and our beautiful, caring community.

A Walk Through History Celebrating America at 250

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century of local Jewish history.

The event is designed to be both educational and accessible. Families, students, seniors, and history enthusiasts are all encouraged to participate. The route is wheelchair accessible, and the pace will be comfortable for walkers of all ages and abilities.

In keeping with the spirit of service that has long been part of American civic life, participants are encouraged to drop off non-perishable food items to the designated person at the beginning of the walk. Donations collected will be distributed to organizations serving local individuals

and families experiencing food insecurity.

More than a history walk, the program is intended as a celebration of community. At a time when many Americans feel increasingly divided, JHSFC hopes the event will bring people together across backgrounds, faiths, and generations to learn, connect, and reflect on the shared values that continue to unite us.

Registration is free but required. Send email to info@jhsfc-ct.org with your name, email, phone number and number of participants. Following the walk, participants are invited to gather at 613 Restaurant for lunch and conversation. Lunch is optional and will be at each participant's own expense.

UPCOMING DEADLINE

September 2026 Edition

Deadline: Monday, August 3, 2026

Email submissions to sandy@ujf.org

You should receive notification that your submission was received!

UJF President's Message Advocating for Security

BY BEVERLY STEIN

AS ONE ...we stood 400 strong in Washington, DC.

In May, I had the privilege of joining nearly 400 Jewish Federation leaders and advocates from 41 states, in Washington, DC, for a national advocacy mission focused on protecting vulnerable institutions and strengthening community security. Our Connecticut delegation included 15 dedicated advocates, and together we met with both of our U.S. senators and representatives from all five Connecticut congressional offices.

We arrived with a clear and urgent message: Congress must act now to protect our communities.

The primary focus of our advocacy was expanding the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). We urged Congress to allocate \$1 billion in funding to help synagogues, churches, mosques, Jewish Community Centers, schools, and other at-risk institutions enhance physical security and employ trained security personnel. These grants are proven lifesaving investments. They help ensure that Americans of all faiths can gather, worship, learn, and celebrate safely and without fear.

Our advocacy, however, extended beyond that single program.

We called on lawmakers to support the SACRED Act, legislation that would establish safety buffer zones around houses of worship. The bill responds to troubling incidents across the country, including demonstrations that have blocked access to synagogues and intimidated worshippers. No American should ever be prevented from entering their house of worship. The SACRED Act is a critical safeguard for both religious liberty and public safety.

We also advocated for the passage of the Jewish American Security Act, comprehensive legislation designed to strengthen security protections for Jewish communities nationwide. According to FBI data, nearly two-thirds of all religiously motivated hate crimes in the United States target Jews, despite Jews representing



Beverly Stein,
UJF President

only about 2 percent of the population. This alarming disparity requires a strong and sustained federal response.

The advocacy mission was organized by Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in response to the sharp rise in

antisemitism across the country. Recent deadly antisemitic attacks in Washington, DC, and Boulder, Colorado, underscore the urgency of this moment. Over the past year, Jews in America have faced escalating threats and acts of violence intended to intimidate and silence Jewish religious life.

The need for enhanced security extends beyond the Jewish community. Faith-based institutions of every denomination continue to face growing threats, underscoring the importance of protecting every American's constitutional right to worship freely and safely.

What stood out most for me during our meetings was the unity and resolve of our delegation. Leaders from local federations, Jewish communities, and national organizations spoke with one voice. We were not advocating for partisan interests. We were advocating for safety, dignity, and the fundamental right of every person to live openly and proudly according to their faith and identity.

This moment demands moral clarity and decisive action. Jewish Federations, the backbone of organized Jewish life in North America, have long worked to ensure that Jewish voices are heard in Washington. Their leadership was instrumental in securing the original Nonprofit Security Grant Program, and expanding that program today is essential to protecting lives and strengthening communities.

The work did not end when our meetings on Capitol Hill concluded. We will continue to advocate, continue to engage, and continue to make our voices heard. The safety of our community is not optional, it is essential.

CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

July 3.....	8:12 pm
July 10.....	8:10 pm
July 17.....	8:06 pm
July 24.....	8:00 pm
July 31.....	7:53 pm
August 7.....	7:45 pm
August 14.....	7:36 pm
August 21.....	7:26 pm
August 28.....	7:15 pm

Rabbi Knopf Appointed to Prestigious Rabbinical Assembly Committee

(Courtesy of Temple Beth El) Temple Beth El proudly announces that Rabbi Michael Knopf has been appointed to the prestigious Committee on Jewish Law and Standards (CJLS) of the Rabbinical Assembly, the leading body responsible for interpreting and applying Jewish law within the Conservative Movement. His five-year term begins this spring.



Rabbi Michael Knopf

contemporary Jewish practice and policy for Conservative Jews worldwide. Composed of 25 of the movement's most distinguished rabbis and scholars, the committee examines and issues rulings on a wide range of religious, ethical, and legal questions affecting Jewish life, including matters of Jewish identity, worship, technology, ritual observance, and dietary law.

Rabbi Knopf's appointment represents a significant honor, recognizing his scholarship, leadership, and contributions to Conservative Judaism. Through his service on the committee, Temple Beth El will have a direct voice in discussions that influence the future of Jewish practice and communal life across the movement.

"This appointment is both a tremendous personal achievement for Rabbi Knopf and a point of pride for our entire congregation," said Jeff Cohen, Temple Beth El President. "When the CJLS considers the questions that

shape Jewish life today and for generations to come, Rabbi Knopf will be among those helping guide those conversations."

The Rabbinical Assembly is the international association of Conservative rabbis, and the CJLS serves as its principal authority on matters of Jewish law and standards.

Temple Beth El congratulates Rabbi Knopf on this well-deserved recognition and looks forward to supporting his important work on behalf of the Conservative Movement and the broader Jewish community.

Back to the Beach

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) Spend a summer evening by the water while supporting a great cause at Schoke Jewish Family Service's Sunset Summer Beach Concert: Back to the Beach on Thursday, August 6, beginning at 6:30 pm at Fairfield's scenic Penfield Pavilion.

This year's event promises an exciting lineup of live entertainment featuring opening act The Breakers and headliner Pimpinella, along with an open bar and food (dietary laws observed). Against the

backdrop of Long Island Sound, guests will enjoy an evening filled with music, dancing, and community spirit.

Pimpinella brings the party with timeless hits spanning 70s classic rock, funk, disco, R&B, and soul. The four-piece band is made up of seasoned professional musicians with more than 40 years of touring, recording, and live performance experience. Notably, August 1, 2026, marks the band's 18th birthday, and the Schoke JFS concert will be their 1,249th

performance.

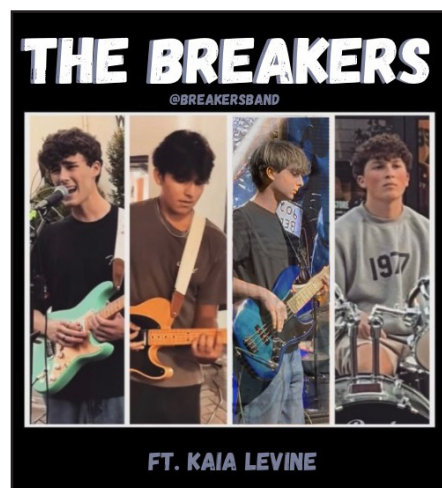
Opening the evening, The Breakers are an indie rock band composed of Weston High School students from Weston, Connecticut. Known for their high-energy performances and strong musicianship, they play a wide range of music, from classic rock favorites to today's hits, delivering a fresh, engaging take on familiar songs that keep audiences energized from start to finish.

Tickets begin at \$95. Proceeds support Schoke Jewish Family Service and its mission to provide critical programs and services to more than 8,000 families throughout Fairfield County each year.

Gather your friends, kick off your shoes, and celebrate summer while making a meaningful impact in the community. Purchase tickets at: SJFSCConcert26.givesmart.com.



Pimpinella



The Breakers

Torah's Surprising Role in America's Founding

(Courtesy of Chabad of New Canaan) Chabad of New Canaan will host a four-session course, *Sinai and Civics: How Jewish Values Helped Shape America's Founding Ideals*, beginning Wednesday morning, July 1, at Chabad of New Canaan. The program is offered through the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) and explores how Jewish values helped shape America's founding ideals, just in time for the nation's 250th anniversary.

On July 4, the United States turns 250. Most Americans will celebrate. Fewer will know that when Benjamin Franklin, Thomas

Jefferson, and John Adams were appointed to design the first national seal in 1776, they proposed an image of Moses parting the Red Sea, with the motto: "Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to G-d." They wanted the face of the new nation to be a scene from Exodus.

Sinai and Civics follows that thread. The four-session course traces the influence of the Hebrew Bible on America's founding (from the Mayflower Compact to the Declaration of Independence to the structure of the

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Jewish Choral Festival Celebrates American Jewish Music

(Courtesy of NAJCF) The annual North American Jewish Choral Festival (NAJCF) brings hundreds of singers together to enjoy five magical days of a life-changing musical experience of Jewish identity and community. A melodic tapestry of voices is led by world-class conductors in a lively and welcoming setting. Set for August 2-6 in Stamford, Connecticut, this experience is for all singers from beginners to professionals.

"The Festival is for anyone who wants to celebrate the joy of Jewish music," said Maestro Matthew Lazar, Festival Founder and Director. "This summer we are highlighting American Jewish music, which beautifully intertwines

U.S. history, Jewish history and a range of genres. It is important to note that America is the first place where Jews had the freedom to be composers as Jews, opening up unlimited musical opportunities."

NAJCF provides an environment of creativity and camaraderie as well as a feeling of hope, unity and Jewish identity, as singers share a bonding experience and forge new friendships.

NAJCF participants include amateur singers, professionals, cantors, conductors, and lovers of Jewish music of all ages. Attendees have the unique opportunity to interact with and learn from top experts in Jewish choral

music in a supportive setting. There are a variety of uplifting musical activities, including daily community sings; workshops and seminars on a wide range of topics; and evening concerts featuring guest choirs and outstanding performers.

"Whether you're a novice or a pro, you'll leave with new skills, new music and new friends to cherish from this transformative Choral Festival," concluded Maestro Lazar.

The North American Jewish Choral Festival



Maestro Matthew Lazar leads the choir in song.

is a program of Zamir Choral Foundation.

For more information and to register for NAJCF 2026 visit <https://zamirchoralfoundation.org/north-american-jewish-choral-festival/>

THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

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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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Temple Sinai Connects Spirituality and Nature

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) This summer, like many summers before it, Temple Sinai will host three Shabbat services outside on their back lawn. On June 19, July 17, and August 21, congregants are invited to come early, spread out on a blanket, and bring a picnic dinner to nosh on among family and friends. These outdoor services are popular with the congregation, and typically exceed 100 people.

The atmosphere is akin to a music festival or outdoor movie screening. Lawn chairs and blankets of all colors dot the sloping hill among the sounds of friendly chatter and light breezes. Sinai's Sisterhood provides wine and cheese for the adults, while the children chase each other on the grass, not a screen in sight.

The final outdoor service, on August 21, is reserved for Sinai's "Prayers for Pets" service. Dogs—and the occasional cat—

will descend upon the temple's back lawn, adding an extra dose of joy to the scene depicted above. It is a beautiful and vibrant expression of Temple Sinai's tight-knit and loving community.

The success of these services is no mistake. In a congregational survey, a majority of respondents noted that they find their spirituality in nature, whether they describe that connection as God, a manifestation of God, or simply a sense of awe and transcendence. In fact, congregants have reported that the music feels a little more soulful, and the rabbi's words a little more meaningful on these evenings.

Larry Stoogenke, Director of Congregational Engagement, notes, "The message was clear: if nature is where so many of our congregants experience the sacred, we needed to find meaningful ways to bring

nature into the Temple Sinai ecosystem."

In another attempt to fulfill this need, Stoogenke leads an ongoing series of outdoor weekend hikes, aptly named "Walks with Larry." Congregants meet at different picturesque locations, like the Helen Altschul Preserve or Tod's Point, to move their bodies, connect with nature, and connect with each other. The welcoming, low-pressure settings for these walks has quickly made them a fan-favorite among the Sinai family. They've even become a reliable entry point for new congregants who are looking to meet friends.

Nature and spirituality have always gone hand-in-hand, but Temple Sinai is making a particular effort to tie them together, honoring their congregants' feedback. So we can expect to see Vitamin D heavily featured in their programming this summer. All services are open to the community.

Lighting the Way Forward

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brings UJF closer to reaching the goal of strengthening the programs that connect and inspire the community.

By making your gift or pledge by the end of September, you enable UJF to plan ahead, as responsible stewards of your investment in our community. All commitments can be fulfilled through December 31, 2026, allowing you to plan your giving, while still making a difference right away.

"By having more pledges, as well as gifts, solidified earlier in the calendar year, UJF can more accurately budget for 2027, gaining a better sense of how UJF will be able to impact the community at large," shared UJF Deputy Director, Eric Ross.

As the campaign progresses, UJF will continue to share updates on the collective progress—tracking both the number of donors and dollars committed toward this matching challenge. Each gift represents more than a number; it reflects a shared

commitment to building a vibrant, inclusive, and enduring Jewish future.

Additionally, all donors who have pledged or have made a gift of \$180 or more prior to September 10 will receive two free tickets to UJF's Campaign Launch event on September 15, featuring guest speaker Alyssa Rosenheck and honoring Ellen Weber with the first annual Or (Light) Impact Award.

Alyssa Rosenheck is the bestselling author of the book *White. Blonde. Jew.*, which contains a bold call to end extremism, reclaim center, and speak up with courage. Alyssa is also an architectural photographer, known for capturing beauty in stillness and truth in chaos. Through her lens, words, and teachings, Alyssa empowers others to create bravely, use their voice, and lead with purpose.

Chairing the evening will be Jill and Mitchell Kaplan and Shira and Yoni Schwartz. Tickets for

UJF's Campaign Launch event will be \$54 per person until September 1st, and \$65 thereafter. Sponsorships are available. Register today at www.ujf.org/kickoff26 or email Eric Ross at eric@ujf.org.

UJF invites you to explore this year's full giving menu, which allows you to direct your giving to programs that are important to you, at www.ujf.org/AC26 and to join fellow community members in this important moment.

Together, as one, we can light the way forward.

GIVE TODAY



PLEDGE TODAY



Chabad Brings Comedy Club to Stamford

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Summer is a time to relax, reconnect, and enjoy the company of friends and neighbors. Chabad is bringing everyone together for one unforgettable event. Men and women, couples and singles, are invited to the inaugural Chabad Comedy Club, an evening designed for food, fun and plenty of laughter.

Headlining the evening will be Robert Cait, an acclaimed stand-up comedian and voice artist known for his clean, engaging comedy. Lou Rosenberg, Executive Director of Jewish National Fund in Greater Los Angeles, called him “hilarious and totally tasteful,” noting that his blend of comedy, impressions, and love of Israel makes him truly one of a kind.

In addition to the comedy show, guests will enjoy sushi, live cigar rolling, cocktails, and a relaxed summer atmosphere. Hosted at Chabad of Stamford on 770 High Ridge Road, the evening promises a unique opportunity to unwind, schmooze, laugh, and celebrate summer with friends old and new.

The event will take place on Monday, July 27 at 7:00 pm. Whether you’re looking for a

fun date night, an opportunity to meet new people, or simply a chance to enjoy a great evening with the community, Chabad of Stamford’s Comedy Club is shaping up to be one of Stamford’s highlights of the summer.

Bring your summer spirit. We’ll take care of the food, the fun, and the laughs. To register, visit www.stamfordchabad.org or call 203 3CHABAD.

Summer Salon to Focus on Relaxation and Reflection

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation Women’s Philanthropy will continue its Salon series this summer with a gathering on Thursday, July 16 at 7:30 pm, designed to foster reflection, relaxation, and community among local women. The evening will take place in a private home in Shippan.

The evening will include a guided sound bath led by Tali Abergel, a practitioner specializing in inner healing and family identity work. A sound bath is an immersive, meditative experience where you “bathe” in soothing sound waves and vibrations. Participants will take part in a sound bath experience designed to encourage relaxation, emotional grounding, and heightened awareness through sound and guided presence. Included in the evening will be a wine tasting and light bites.

“Tali brings a warm and balanced energy to her sessions, and I am thrilled we can host her here in Stamford. What a great way to

relax and socialize over the summer,” shared event co-chair Shira Schwartz.

The Salon events are designed as small, intimate gatherings, structured to encourage meaningful conversation and personal connection. The series emphasizes shared experience and community building outside of traditional program settings, offering participants an opportunity to step away from routine and engage in a more relaxed, reflective environment. The Women’s Philanthropy initiative reflects a broader effort to reimagine community engagement by prioritizing smaller-scale gatherings that emphasize meaning, creativity, and interpersonal connection.

Attendance is limited, and advance registration is required. Tickets are \$40 through July 9 and \$54 thereafter. Additional information and registration are available at UJF.org/reset. For more information, please email jillian@ujf.org.

Summer Backyard Jam

(Courtesy of UJF) On the evening of July 28, as the Jewish calendar marks Tu B’Av—a day traditionally associated with love, joy, and connection—United Jewish Federation’s NextGen leadership invites the community to gather for a vibrant celebration under the summer sky.

“Summer Backyard Jam” promises to be more than just a concert. From 7:30 to 10:00 pm, guests will enjoy an intimate outdoor evening featuring a lineup of talented local Jewish musicians performing a diverse mix of music designed to move both the soul and the feet. With blankets spread across the lawn and friends gathered together, the atmosphere will be relaxed, festive, and full of energy.

Attendees can look forward to beer, wine, and light snacks, with the option to bring their own blankets and favorite beverages to create a personalized picnic-style experience. Tickets are \$54 per person, with sponsorship opportunities available at \$180 for two tickets, offering additional support for a meaningful cause.

All proceeds from the evening will directly benefit United Jewish Federation’s critical security initiative, a cornerstone of ensuring the safety and resilience of the local Jewish community. Through its partnership with Community Security Initiative (CSI) and under the leadership of Regional Security Director James Comstock, UJF works proactively to safeguard synagogues, schools, and communal spaces. This includes security assessments, training programs, real-time intelligence sharing, and coordination with local law enforcement—efforts that have become increasingly essential in today’s environment.

As Tu B’Av reminds us of the power of bringing people together, this event offers a perfect opportunity to celebrate community, support a vital mission, and savor a summer evening filled with music, meaning, and joy. Registration can be found at www.ujf.org/jam or reach out to Jillian Moore at jillian@ujf.org. Location in Stamford will be announced closer to the event.

BCHA Welcomes New Head of School

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“I could not be more excited to welcome Rabbi Jordan Soffer as the next Head of School for the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy. The Board and I are confident that his leadership, extensive experience, and commitment to our mission will continue to build on our current successes leading us to an even brighter future,” said BCHA President Howard Rothman.

“Rabbi Soffer is going to have great success at BCHA,” Rabbi Bernstein added. “He’s a

stellar educator with great leadership skills and a truly winsome personality. I am confident our students, staff and parents are going to love him.”

“I have known Rabbi Soffer (and his family) for over 15 years and am thrilled he will be the next Head of School at BCHA. Grounded in Torah and *Ahavat Yisrael* (love of the people of Israel), Rabbi Soffer’s warm, approachable nature will make him an asset for our entire community,” shared United Jewish Federation CEO Diane Sloyer.



DON'T FORGET TO USE THE COMMUNITY CALENDAR.

THE CALENDAR CONTINUES TO BE IMPORTANT TO AVOID CONFLICTS.

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Stepping Up and Making a Difference

(Courtesy of UJF) As the Ben Gurion Society enters its second year at United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF), it is expanding opportunities for those who are ready to deepen their involvement in Jewish philanthropy and community leadership.

The Ben Gurion Society (BGS) is a national leadership development and recognition program for adults ages 25 to 45 who make a minimum annual gift of \$1,000 to UJF's Annual Campaign. Named for Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, the program inspires the next generation of Jewish leaders through philanthropy, education, networking, and meaningful community engagement.

UJF is introducing a new way to immediately be a part of the Ben Gurion Society with the Ben Gurion Society Step Up Program. Through a three-year pledge, participants can gradually increase their contribution, reaching the Ben Gurion Society giving level of \$1000 by year three.

Best of all, participants of the Step Up program are welcomed into the Ben Gurion Society immediately and enjoy access to exclusive programming, leadership and educational opportunities, and the ability to help decide where a portion of BGS funds are directed through an Israel and overseas allocation process.

As a preview of the exclusive programming offered through the Ben Gurion Society, members and prospects are invited on Tuesday, August 4 to an intimate evening with Jacki Alexander, CEO and President of HonestReporting.



Guest speaker
Jacki Alexander, CEO
of HonestReporting

In her role, Alexander has expanded the organization's focus from media accountability to combating anti-Israel disinformation across digital platforms. Previously, she spent 15 years at AIPAC strengthening pro-Israel advocacy throughout the Southeast. She holds a Master's degree from the London School of Economics and was named one of *The Algemeiner's* Top 100 People Positively Influencing Jewish Life in 2024.

"I'm really excited about the Ben Gurion Society Step Up Program and our fellow community members who are joining this initiative," said Micky Reich, NextGen Chair. "The vibrancy of Jewish life in Fairfield County doesn't happen by accident. It takes investment — in our institutions, our programs, and the people who will carry this community forward. When young donors make this kind of commitment, they're not just writing a check. They're saying: this community matters to me, and I'm going to help make sure it thrives now and in the future. And the difference we can make is so great, here, locally and beyond. In 2025, a portion of BGS funds were allocated to build a new playground in Stamford's 'sister city' of Afula, for Emunah, an organization in Israel that serves vulnerable children and families."

Whether you are looking to deepen your connection to Jewish philanthropy, grow as a leader, or engage more meaningfully with the community, the Ben Gurion Society offers a unique opportunity to get involved, stay inspired, and make an impact. Please email Jillian@UJF.org for more information.

Torah's Surprising Role in America's Founding

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Constitution) and asks what that history means for Jewish Americans today.

"Most people have no idea how directly the founders drew on the Jewish tradition," says Rabbi Levi Mendelow, Director of Chabad of New Canaan. "They were reading it, quoting it, and using it as a model for the kind of country they wanted to build. In this course, we'll look at the primary sources together, and it's a lot more specific than people expect."

"The great American historian Perry Miller once said that the Bible was 'the air people breathed' in early American culture," says Dr. Jonathan D. Sarna, professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University. "*Sinai and Civics* underscores the profound interrelationship between Judaism and America's founding ideals."

The course is open to participants of all

backgrounds. No prior knowledge of Jewish studies is required.

Sinai and Civics: How Jewish Values Helped Shape America's Founding Ideas will be held on four consecutive Wednesday mornings from 10:00 to 11:30 am, beginning on July 1, at Chabad of New Canaan, 137 Putnam Road, New Canaan. The fee of \$120 includes the text book. *Sinai and Civics* is CLE-accredited for attorneys in most U.S. states.

To register, contact Rabbi Levi Mendelow at 203-449-0472, rabbil@chabadnewcanaan.org, or www.newcanaanjewish.org

The Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) is the adult education arm of Chabad-Lubavitch. JLI's classes and programs are offered at over 1,600 locations in more than 900 communities worldwide.

Rabbi Mendelow has been directing the JLI program in Stamford and New Canaan since 2004.

CAS to Host Scholar-in-Residence Shabbat

(Courtesy of CAS) Congregation Agudath Sholom (CAS) will welcome Rabbi Shmuel Hain as Scholar-in-Residence for Shabbat July 10-11, for a meaningful series of talks exploring Jewish mourning, loss, and renewal.

The weekend program will focus on the personal and national dimensions of mourning in Jewish tradition. Through Biblical, Rabbinic, *halakhic* (legal), and interdisciplinary study, Rabbi Hain will examine how Jewish responses to destruction can serve as a blueprint for personal healing and communal rebirth after loss. The program is designed to offer a thoughtful and transformative experience during the "Nine Days" of semi-mourning preceding Tisha B'Av.

Rabbi Hain is widely recognized for his scholarship and teaching in *Aveilut*, the Jewish laws of mourning. His work integrates *halakhic* rigor, pastoral sensitivity, and insights from psychology and the humanities. He teaches *Aveilut* to rabbinical students at RIETS (Yeshiva University's rabbinic seminary), Yeshivat Chovevei



Rabbi Shmuel Hain

Torah, Hadar, and the Shalom Hartman Institute's Rabbanut North America program. His forthcoming book on the philosophy and practice of Jewish mourning will be published by the Jewish Publication Society in 2027.

The Scholar-in-Residence weekend will include the following talks:

- Shabbat Morning Sermon: "Déjà Vu in the Desert: The Hidden Legacy of the Wilderness Generation"
- Shabbat Morning Lunch & Learn: "Anticipatory *Aveilut*: Lessons on Grief from Mourning the Temple"
- Pre-Mincha *Shiur* (class): "Beyond Baseless Hatred: Rereading Kamtza and Bar Kamtza"
- *Seudah Shlishit* (afternoon shabbat meal): "Voices from the Ruins: Rabbinic Responses to *Churban* (Destruction of the Temples in Jerusalem)"

The community is invited to join Congregation Agudath Sholom for this special Shabbat of learning, reflection, and spiritual preparation.

Tiny Treasures Returns for a Summer of Shabbat Fun

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) The sounds of singing, laughter, and tiny footsteps are back as Tiny Treasures launches its popular summer session, "Tiny Treasures, Got Summer," welcoming babies, toddlers, and their caregivers for a season of connection and hands-on fun.

Designed for children from birth to age two, the program, led by Morah Leah Shemtov, brings the beauty and excitement of Shabbat to life through music, movement, sensory exploration, interactive storytelling, and age-appropriate activities. Each session includes making freshly baked challah, tiny baking adventures, Shabbat-themed crafts, water play, and special moments for parents and children to enjoy together. There are even occasional special visits from miniature goats to add to the fun.

Held on Fridays from 9:30 to 10:30 am, Tiny Treasures offers a warm and nurturing environment where young families can connect, learn, and celebrate Jewish traditions in a joyful way.

Chabad invites families to join them for the next 2 sessions on Friday, July 3 and 17, and families are also invited to join a special Pre-Shabbat Party on Friday, July 24 at 5:00 pm for an evening of Shabbat spirit, community,



Tiny chefs were busy "cooking" for Shabbat in the Meditation Garden at Chabad of Stamford.

and family fun. The event promises a festive atmosphere where children and parents can celebrate together as they welcome Shabbat.

Whether you're a returning family or joining for the first time, Tiny Treasures is the perfect way to make this summer memorable, meaningful, and filled with the magic of Shabbat. For more information and to register, please email programs@stamfordchabad.org or visit www.stamfordchabad.org

Convening Community Around Increased Security Needs

(Courtesy of UJF) On May 11, United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien, in partnership with UJA-JCC Greenwich and the Community Security Initiative (CSI), convened the inaugural meeting of the Jewish Security Council (JSC) at the Stamford Police Department Community Room.

Approximately 50 community members

representing both Federations and Jewish community organizations attended the gathering to learn about the council's mission and explore ways to strengthen security throughout the local Jewish community. The initiative seeks to establish a network of designated representatives who will serve as security liaisons within synagogues, schools, and other Jewish institutions.



Steve Weiss shares his story of survival in Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.



Mitch Silber, Executive Director of CSI, speaks to participants.

Among those in attendance were CSI Chief Executive Officer Mitch Silber, CSI Director of Training Brad Orsini, and Southwest Connecticut Regional Security Director Jim Comstock (United Jewish Federation's Regional Security Director).

Silber outlined the council's vision, emphasizing the importance of coordinated communication and preparedness. He explained that the Jewish Security Council will help ensure that every synagogue, school, and institution in the community has a direct line of communication regarding security matters, including training opportunities, incident reporting, and the sharing of timely information with members and congregants.

The meeting also featured strong support from local law enforcement agencies. Representatives from the Stamford, Greenwich, New Canaan, and Darien police departments attended the event, highlighting the collaborative approach to community safety.

Stamford Police Assistant Chief Richard Conklin addressed attendees regarding a Nakba Day protest scheduled for May 16 at the Stamford Superior Court. Conklin reassured participants that both the Stamford Police Department and Connecticut State

Police were closely monitoring the event and coordinating efforts with CSI Regional Security Director Jim Comstock.

The evening guest speaker, Steve Weiss, shared his powerful story of survival and advocacy. A longtime member of the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Weiss was present during the tragic attack on October 27, 2018. He credited lifesaving emergency training provided through his local federation and public schools with helping him survive the attack. Since then, Weiss has devoted himself to promoting preparedness and encouraging communities to invest in security education and training.

Organizers said the Jewish Security Council plans to meet three to four times each year and will maintain ongoing communication with its partner organizations and law enforcement agencies. The council's goal is to help create a safer, stronger, and better-prepared Jewish community throughout the region.

For more information about the Jewish Security Council or upcoming training opportunities, community members may contact Security Director Jim Comstock at Comstockj@csiny.org.

The Importance of Being Prepared

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Chabad of Stamford recently held a lockdown training and drill with United Jewish Federation's Regional Security

Director, James Comstock. "It is crucial that all Jewish institutions are educated and prepared. As we have seen, knowing how to react can save lives," shared Comstock.



Security Officer Ramon Taveras, Larry Greenberg, James Comstock, and Rabbi Moshe Shemtov

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JFACT Names Tara Cook-Littman as Executive Director

(Courtesy of JFACT) The Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut (JFACT) proudly announces the appointment of Tara Cook-Littman as its new Executive Director. A lifelong leader within Jewish institutions and a respected advocate for community-driven change, Cook-Littman brings decades of leadership, coalition-building and grassroots organizing experience to the role.



Tara Cook-Littman

JFACT unites Connecticut's Jewish Federations to amplify a collective voice through statewide advocacy, strategic partnerships, coalition-building, and

grassroots engagement. JFACT works to strengthen Jewish communities, combat antisemitism, advance shared public policy priorities, and deepen the enduring relationship between the United States and Israel.

In her new role, Cook-Littman will lead JFACT's strategic initiatives, advocacy efforts, and coalition-building work across Connecticut, strengthening the organization's mission to support Jewish communities and institutions statewide.

Cook-Littman began her professional career as an Assistant District Attorney in

the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, where she developed strong investigative and advocacy skills that would later shape her public policy work. Cook-Littman is widely recognized for her successful leadership in food safety and environmental advocacy. She spearheaded the effort to pass the first-in-the-nation GMO (Genetically Modified Organism) labeling law in Connecticut in 2013. In addition, she co-founded Connecticut Pesticide Reform, which successfully led to the passage of legislation banning toxic pesticides, including chlorpyrifos and neonicotinoids.

Cook-Littman's work has consistently demonstrated her understanding of the importance of grassroots engagement and

coalition building. Following the horrific attacks on October 7th and the subsequent surge in antisemitism across the United States, she made the decision to focus her skills, energy and passion on supporting and protecting the Jewish community. She has been a key advisor and the Government Relations Director for the grassroots organization Fairfield Jewish Advocacy Coalition. Most recently, she played an instrumental role in galvanizing support for the passage of legislation creating a K-12 antisemitism working group, which will provide much-needed guidance to schools

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Meeting Community Needs in Trying Times

(Courtesy of UJF) The impact of increasing antisemitism is being felt virtually everywhere, but especially in the educational environment. As a result, United Jewish Federation (UJF) has been working diligently to assist public and private schools in designing responses to antisemitism and other forms of bigotry and also helping to plan educational opportunities for students, administrators and parents.

Serving the role of initial point of contact and convener has become a larger part of the Jewish Community Relations Council's (JCRC's) work. Unfortunately, Scofield Magnet Middle School in Stamford was hit with a number of swastika incidents in a very short period. The school contacted UJF and Gary Jones, UJF's JCRC Director, met with Principal Shawn Marinello and Carlos Ribiero, Scofield's Resource Officer. Because of UJF's understanding of the various education service providers that work in the fight against school-based bigotry, UJF helped schedule anti-bias programming for students that began in the current academic year, and plans are underway for next year as well.

UJF was also contacted by John Carrigan, Director of Counseling and Student Service of Cardinal Kung Academy in Stamford, to seek help regarding bias-related graffiti painted by a few graduating seniors in connection with a pre-graduation ritual. Because of the time constraints related to the end of the school year, immediacy in the response was required. On two days' notice, Gary Jones spent a morning at the Academy, first meeting with Principal Dr. Alexander Miller, Carrigan, and Assistant Principal Kyle



UJF JCRC Director Gary Jones (center) with John Carrigan, Director of Counseling and Student Support and Dr. Alexander Miller, Principal, at Cardinal Kung Academy.

MacDonald. Administrators noted that the Catholic school took seriously the need to instill values in its students. Immediately after the meeting with the administrators, Jones and Carrigan met with the students. Jones led an interactive discussion with the students to discuss the challenges faced by their generation, the impact of hatred on both the target and the perpetrator, the need to think of consequences before one acts and the benefit of being the person who will stand up for anyone who is subject to hate or bullying. Jones provided information on the Catholic/Jewish relationship and on examples of circumstances when people have come together to support victims of hatred. The students were engaged and seemed genuinely committed to being the kind of people that would make the Cardinal Kung Academy community proud.

(See letter of thanks from Cardinal Kung Academy on this page.)

A Letter of Thanks

(Reprinted with permission)

Good morning, Gary,

Less than 24 hours ago, we met to converse, collaborate, and present some very important insights and share perspective with our senior boys who seemed to "have lost their way."

What a true difference a day makes!

You spoke to our students with clarity, in-depth, well established expertise, caring empathy, strong encouragement and true understanding in ways where I know will make that vital ripple effect now, and in their futures.

For that, my friend, I could not be more grateful, both personally, and professionally.

To share the honor of our collaboration, both in our administrative team meeting, and with our student conversation, you graciously offered us the supportive brotherhood of our Jewish friends, and did so with integrity and compassion, very precious gifts and blessings.

Afterwards, I further explained to the boys the importance of performing a mitzvah, learning what it takes to be a mensch, and yearning for a life of true righteousness, rather than becoming part of the many universal problems and impactful conflicts that exist in our world today.

As you and I spent a considerable amount of time assessing the myriad struggles, obstacles and unfortunate and powerful distractions that lure our young people toward the evils that prey upon them, our conversations yesterday and those yet to come, fill me with great confidence and

strong faith that together we are making a difference.

Please feel free to share my insights and the uplifting promise you helped provide to our school community, as well as our brother-to-brother connections with your UJF colleagues, and with the many friends and supporters of Israel, as well as anyone else looking to further strengthen this very important work to which we are both strongly committed.

I already know that we will be keeping in touch for further collaboration, and I will get back to you soon about the next consideration: I did share with Alex, your recommendation "to go on record with adding our report," with the state-wide level of the ADL.

Have a wonderful summer, my Friend, and please know that you have my most sincere gratitude and full support, respect and appreciation, in this incredibly important and courageously crucial cause.

Both personally and professionally, Gary, the highest compliment I could pay you in addition to honoring the value and worth of your endeavors, is to say that your parents and family must be incredibly proud and grateful for the good, kind and caring man that you are, in so many inspiring and impactful ways.

Shalom,

John Carrigan

Director of Guidance and Student Support
Cardinal Kung Academy

Making Our Voices Heard

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien (UJF) leadership joined over 400 participants from Federations throughout the country for a two-day Jewish Security Fly-In to Washington, DC

on May 18-19. UJF's delegation was part of a delegation of 25 participants from Connecticut. During the lobbying visits, the Connecticut group together met with staff members of all five Congressional Representatives and met

personally with both Connecticut Senators communicating with them important actions that the group recommended should be supported. These included an immediate increase in funding in support of nonprofit

security grants, and the need to gather cosponsors for the Jewish American Security Act and for the SACRED Act, which would prohibit harassment of worshippers within 100 feet of a religious institution.



UJF leadership joins members of the CT delegation in a meeting with Senator Richard Blumenthal (center).

State Commission Supports Local Security Programs

(Courtesy of UJF) On Friday, May 29, the State Bond Commission approved the expenditure of \$5,000,000 to support the Connecticut Nonprofit Security Grant program. Protecting Jewish institutions and the community is a top priority of Jewish Federations in Connecticut and across the country. United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien (UJF) is engaged in advocacy to address this issue both on the Federal and State levels.

The Connecticut legislature has authorized over \$30,000,000 to support the

Connecticut Nonprofit Security Program, \$15,000,000 of which has already been committed. However, the action of the Bond Commission is also needed to make the remaining funds from the \$30,000,000 authorization available to support the program. Thanks to Governor Ned Lamont, State Senator Pat Billie Miller and other members of the Bond Commission for ensuring that the authorized funding will be made available to enhance the security of the various nonprofit institutions throughout the State.

JFACT Names Tara Cook-Littman as Executive Director

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

and help protect Jewish students from hate and discrimination.

Cook-Littman has demonstrated a deep commitment to Jewish communal life throughout her lifetime. She is a graduate of Brandeis University and Cardozo School of Law and has served in numerous leadership roles from a young age to serving as president of her synagogue. Her dedication to strengthening Jewish identity and community engagement has been a hallmark of her personal and professional journey.

"I am honored to serve as Executive Director of JFACT at such a critical time," said Cook-Littman. "Our community faces unprecedented challenges, but also extraordinary opportunities to unite, advocate, and build stronger, safer Jewish

institutions both in the United States and in Israel. I look forward to working collaboratively with partners across the state to strengthen Jewish life, confront antisemitism and ensure our voices are heard."

Gary Jones, UJF's Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council shared, "Tara is a talented and high-energy leader who brings a clear vision and a strong commitment to the future of JFACT, and I have had the privilege to work with her over the years in her grassroots advocacy work. At a time when antisemitism is surging, JFACT's mission is more important than ever. Her leadership will be instrumental in meeting the growing challenges facing the Jewish community."

For more information and to get involved in local and statewide advocacy work, contact Gary Jones, at gary@ujf.org.



UJF Jewish Community Relations Council Director Gary Jones, UJF President Beverly Stein, and UJF Regional Security Director James Comstock wait to meet with Congressman Jim Himes.

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Celebrating Israel Through the Flavors of the Shuk

(Courtesy of UJF) Community members came together to celebrate Yom Ha'Atzmaut with a vibrant event that brought the spirit, flavors, and energy of an Israeli *shuk* (open-air marketplace) right here to Stamford.

Participants enjoyed a festive evening filled with Israeli food, a hummus bar, music, refreshing drinks, halva tastings, spices, trivia games and many other tastes and traditions that make Israel so special.

The evening was filled with laughter, conversation, community spirit, and Israeli pride, creating meaningful memories for

everyone who attended.

A special thank you to Stella Cohen, whose vision and leadership as Event Chair made this celebration possible. United Jewish Federation is grateful to the planning committee and volunteers whose dedication and hard work helped to bring the event to life.

Most importantly, thank you to community members who came together to celebrate Israel, share in the joy of the day, and make the event such a meaningful success.

Am Yisrael Chai!



Harry Soffer, Ellen Weber, and Marilyn Soffer at the Israeli Shuk celebration.



David and Meryl Gordon with UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross (center) share in the spirit of the Israeli shuk experience.



Anna Rozinov and UJF President Beverly Stein sample traditional Israeli spices at the shuk.



Shira Ashkenas, Robin Fischel, Shushannah Walshe, Asaf and Ari Yasgur celebrate Yom Ha'Atzmaut at the Shuk.

(ALL PHOTO CREDIT: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY)

NextGen Marks Yom Ha'atzmaut

(Courtesy of UJF) In Celebration of Israel turning 78, United Jewish Federation's NextGen community celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel Independence Day) with a house party that brought together close to 100 attendees. The evening was filled with great energy, meaningful connections, and a shared celebration of Israel. Guests enjoyed a

festive atmosphere and Israeli food while meeting new people and strengthening existing friendships. The strong turnout reflected the enthusiasm and engagement of the growing NextGen community, which encompasses adults 25 to 45 years old. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make this meaningful celebration of Israel such a memorable success.



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Brian Tepper, David Wollner, Jared Kafer, and Avi Teplitsky



Robin Fischel and Jennie Fishman



Elana Tepper, Kaili Scherban, and Tamar Levine



Brett Olsen, Eve & Phil Steinmetz, and Elie Herman

Danoff Lecturer Sarah Hurwitz Reflects on Jewish Identity

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) The Joan Bruder Danoff Lecture each year brings an important figure in the Jewish world to Temple Sinai in Stamford. The popular author and Obama White House speechwriter, Sarah Hurwitz, joined over 200 people on May 3 at Temple Sinai and virtually. Hurwitz discussed her path, Jewish identity, and spiritual resilience in the face of growing antisemitism. Highlights of the engaging discussion include:

- Reflecting on her time in the White House, Hurwitz shared: “The Obamas were a pleasure to work with. These were people who knew who they were and what they were trying to say. So you’re not trying to script them. Instead, you’re trying to channel them.”
- Following her career in politics, Hurwitz took an introduction to Judaism class which launched her journey to explore how the “transformative, thrilling wisdom of Judaism helps one understand what it means to be human, to be a good person, and to lead a worthy life.” Her first book, *Here All Along: Finding Meaning, Spirituality, and a Deeper Connection to Life -- in Judaism (After Finally Choosing to Look There)*, captured her newfound appreciation for Jewish wisdom and traditions.
- Describing her further research, Hurwitz said that growing up in a country where Christianity was the dominant religion led her to feel as if she needed to apologize for her Jewish identity. Her second book, *As A Jew: Reclaiming Our Story From Those Who Shame, Blame, and Try To Erase Us*, was her effort to “help Jews talk about the layers of internalized antisemitism and to strip them away so we could turn back to Jewish tradition with an open heart and with awe, reverence,

and gratitude.” She encouraged Jews to view themselves as “not just a religion, but rather as a peoplehood, a family, and a nation.

- Speaking regularly on college campuses enabled Hurwitz to observe that students feel pressured to convert to anti-Zionism and reject Israel in order to be viewed as “good, acceptable Jews.” Sarah shared that she defines herself as a Zionist because “Zionism is the national independence movement of the Jewish people. It’s the belief that Jews have a right to safety and security in a country of their own The reason she believes this is that for 2,000 years, Jews did not have a state and the result was millions of murdered Jews. ... Since Israel was founded, the result has been hundreds of thousands of Jews who were not murdered.” She explained that she can both be a Zionist and be critical of the current Israeli government.

This annual lecture series, honoring longtime Sinai members Joan and the late Dr. Stuart Danoff, was endowed by their children, Nancy Danoff, Suzy Poneman, and Will Danoff. Thank you to the work of the Danoff Committee members: David Cohen, Joan Danoff, Nan Gordon, Tamra Lichtman, Marty Newman, Ruth Rothseid, Mered Sliwinski, and Shelley Taylor.



Moderator Ruth Rothseid and Danoff Lecturer Sarah Hurwitz.



(l-r) Will Danoff, Nancy Danoff, Joan Danoff, Sarah Hurwitz, Ruth Rothseid and David Cohen.

A Busy Spring for Friendship Circle

(Courtesy of Friendship Circle) Friendship Day 2026 was a huge success with 1,258 donors and participants! Families, volunteers and community members enjoyed a free lunch and snacks, as well as many different family friendly activities including bumper cars, a petting zoo, face painting and more. The fundraising goal of the walk was also met and exceeded by thousands of dollars.

Three final programs rounded out the

2026 year. Bowling League concluded on May 31 at Nutmeg Bowl with one final session. There was a special program for Friendship Circle Dads, including time to bowl together. Families also participated in a trip to the Beardsley Zoo on June 7, and moms were treated to a special end of year dinner. To learn more about the Friendship Circle please contact Director Malya Shmotkin at malya@friendshipct.com



Kicking off the Friendship Circle Walk.

Kuriansky Teen Leadership Initiative Graduation Celebration

(Courtesy of UJF) Thanks to the generosity of the Louis J. Kuriansky Family Foundation, the Kuriansky Teen Leadership Institute (KTLI), formerly called Kuriansky Teen Tzedakah Corps, completed another successful year in training the next generation of philanthropists. KTLI is a premier leadership program of United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF), designed to instill local teens with the knowledge and skills necessary to become

future Jewish leaders and philanthropists.

To celebrate their achievements, graduates and their parents gathered for a special dinner followed by a certificate presentation. The evening was a meaningful opportunity to recognize the students' commitment, growth, and accomplishments throughout the program.

Congratulations to all the graduates as they continue to lead, give back and make a difference in the years to come.



Participants in UJF's Kuriansky Teen Leadership Initiative (KTLI) receive their certificates from UJF community Shlichah Eden Refaelovich at Ricotta Stamford, upon successfully completing the KTIL program. (Pictured l-r) David K, Elissa T, Gavin C, Sarah G, Alex B, Noam G, Eli H, Ilan R, Shoshana B, Perri H, May Simone A, and UJF Community Shlichah Eden. (Not pictured: Max B.) (PHOTO CREDIT: ERIC ROSS)

From Israel to Stamford: Encounters with IDF Soldiers

(Courtesy of UJF) Thanks to The Jewish Agency for Israel's *Shlichim B'Madim* (Emissaries in Uniform) program, three Israeli soldiers spent a week in Stamford, participating in a series of meaningful community engagements. Together with the community, they honored the memory of those who fell defending the State of Israel and celebrated Israel's Independence Day, made possible

through their courage and sacrifice.

During their visit, the soldiers met with people of all ages and visited Jewish schools, synagogues, community organizations, as well as the local police and fire departments and more. These encounters provided community members with a unique opportunity to hear firsthand about life in Israel and the experiences of those currently serving in the IDF.

The visit fostered meaningful dialogue, strengthened connections between Stamford and Israel, and offered both the soldiers and community members the chance to learn from one another through open conversations and shared experiences.

A special highlight of the week was Shabbat, when local families welcomed the soldiers into their homes, allowing

them to experience the warmth of the community while creating lasting friendships and memories.

For their safety and due to the sensitive nature of their service, the soldiers' faces have been blurred in the photos. Their stories, connections, and the meaningful dialogue they shared with the community, however, will not be forgotten.



The soldiers attended BCHA's Yom HaZikaron ceremony and met with high school students for discussion and personal storytelling.



The soldiers met with local teens at BBYO for an evening of learning and questions.



The soldiers celebrate Israel Independence Day with community members at a UJF family celebration.



The soldiers visited the office of Darien first selectman Jon Zagrodzky with Gary Jones, UJF's JCRC Director.



The soldiers met students from King School's Jewish Club for discussion and learning.



Soldier Assaf with Rabbi Jay TelRav and his son Amitai.



Soldier Mausam with Max, Jessie and Sophie Brand.



The soldiers visited Temple Sinai Sunday School and spent time with second grade students.



The soldiers visited the BCHA kindergarten, gathering around a map of Israel and sharing where they are from while teaching the students about the country.



Soldier Assaf with Robin Fischel and Wendy Siegel at the 613 Cocktail Hour.



Soldier Mausam with Tara Shapiro and Stella Cohen at the 613 Cocktail Hour.



IDF soldier Assaf interacted with two children during Israel Independence Day celebrations at Congregation Agudath Sholom.



Soldier Assaf with community members Susan Kostin, Beverly Stein, Michael Schlessinger and Monica Smyth.



The soldiers visited Fire Station No. 2, engaging in meaningful dialogue and sharing personal stories that provide insight into the realities of life in Israel.



The soldiers met community members at the JCC for their first community gathering, sharing their personal stories and experiences.



The soldiers visited Stamford Police Headquarters, where they shared personal stories and insights about life in Israel.



The soldiers visited Temple Sinai Sunday School and answered questions from sixth grade students.

Bits & Pieces



Sandy Golove

BY SANDY GOLOVE

To submit information to Bits and Pieces, call (203) 912-9945 or email sandy@ujf.org.

MAZEL TOV TO GROWING FAMILIES:

Ali & David Ash on the birth of a daughter, Melody Rachel Ash; and to the grandparents, **Susan & Art Greenwald**.
Leora (LeeLee) Borzak and Coby Sloyer on the birth of a daughter, Daria Sue Sloyer; and to the grandparents, **Diane & Elliot Sloyer and Deena, z"l and Steve Borzak**.
Michelle Bloom & Ron Kutas on the birth of a son.
Rachel & Moshe Cohen on the birth of a son, Itai Yosef Cohen.
Kate & Justin Diamond on the birth of a daughter, Betty Claire Diamond; and to the grandparents, **Stephanie & Robert Sherman**.
Rachel Feit & Elie Weiner on the birth of a son, Aiden Jacob Weiner.
Melissa & Gabe Felder on the birth of a daughter; and to the grandmother, **Helen Felder**.
Lauren & Kevin George on the birth of a daughter; Sophie, and to the grandparents, **Monica & Eric Jankelovits**.
Francesca & Daniel Goldstein on the birth of a son; and to the grandparents, **Danielle & Steven Thau**.
Rebecca Gourevitch & Michael Wexler on the birth of a daughter, Leah Gloria Wexler; and to the grandparents, **Nurit & Mark Wexler** and to the great-grandparents, **Debbie & Ben-Zion Soifer**.
Lori & Sam Gressel on the birth of a son, Liam Levi Gressel.
Rachael & Alex Haendler on the birth of a daughter, Lilah Dove Haendler; and to the grandparents, **Caryn Halbrecht & Tommy Haendler**.
Peri & Nat Keller on the birth of a daughter, Lila Gene Keller; and to the grandparents, **Sue & Carl Shapiro and Karl Keller and Barbara Shwom**.
Karen Lander-Lafferty & Kevin Lafferty on the

birth of a son, **Logan Hunter Lafferty**; and to the grandparents, **Lieba & Steve Lander**.
Sarah & Maxwell Lent on the birth of a daughter.
Tali & Emil Nusbaum on the birth of a son; and to the grandparents, **Doreen & Howard Nusbaum**.
Eliza & Uri Pearl on the birth of a daughter, Nessa Emmanuelle Pearl.
Abigail Pick & Daniel Katz on the birth of a daughter, Shiri Grace Katz.
Diana Portna & Radislav Sendersky on the birth of a daughter, Sarah Amira Brooke Sendersky.
Rebecca (Becky) Rastegar & Andrew Jacob on the birth of a daughter; and to the grandparents, **Rosa & Saiid Rastegar**.
Shoshana Rosenzweig & Yoni Israel on the birth of a daughter, Ayala Meital; and to the grandparents, **Shara & Rabbi David Israel**.
Sarah & Marty Rubin on the birth of a daughter, Dena Shayna Rubin; and to the grandparents, **Sharon & Burt Rubin**.
Tehilla & Adar Shakked on the birth of a daughter, Adi Miryam and to the grandparents, **Gila & Goel Jasper** and great-grandfather, **David Bessaleli**.
Olivia & Andy Shapell on the birth of a daughter.
Sarah Naomi & Oz Shapira on the birth of a daughter; and to the great-great-grandmother, **Audrey Waldstreicher**.
Aderet & Gabriel Shechter on the birth of a son.
Talia & Moshe Steinberg on the birth of a son; and to the grandparents, **Rachel & Jay Jubas**; and great-grandmother, **Shirley Jubas**.
Shelby & Jason Wohlberg on the birth of a daughter; and to the grandparents, **Sharon and Simeon Wohlberg**.
Annie Zagha & Brad Waldstreicher on the birth of a son; and to the grandparents, **Sandi & Stuart Waldstreicher and Alissa & Sammy Zagha**; and to great-grandmother, **Audrey Waldstreicher**.
Ariel Blum & Ben Zweig on the birth of a daughter.

MAZEL TOV ON MARRIAGES/ENGAGEMENTS:

Diane & Rabbi Daniel Cohen on the engagement of their daughter, **Shalhevet Cohen to Duniel Shapiro**, son of **Rebecca & Avi Shapiro**.
Mariya Feldman and Alex Abramov on the marriage of their son, **Gregory Abramov to Jackie Lasker**.
Tricia & Robert Hoff on the marriage of their son, **Benji Hoff to Reina Amar**.
Rivky Kolodny & Aryeh Klein on their marriage.
Jeannie & Brian Kriftcher on the engagement of their daughter, **Charlotte Kriftcher to Sam Herbst**, son of **Beth & Steve Herbst**.
Dayna Langfan & Lawrence Heller on the engagement of their son, **Bennett Heller to Jessica Jakoby**, daughter of **Janet & Arthur Jakoby**.
Kori and Bill Meyers on the marriage of their son, **Ben Meyers to Ayelet Bessler**.
Terry Newman & David Rubin on the marriage of their daughter, **Leah Rubin to Samuel Kent**.
Jen & Ed Rosenfeld on the engagement of their daughter, **Tamar Rosenfeld to Ari Spivack**, son of **Shari Rose and Boruch & Randi Spivack**.
Leah & Rabbi Moshe Shemtov on the engagement of their daughter **Mussie Shemtov to Mendel Zaklikovsky**, son of **Chana & Rabbi Eliezer Zaklikovsky**.
Shana & Rob Yakubovich on the engagement of their son, **Andrew Yakubovich to Liana Shtern**, daughter of **Natalie Trubetsky & Sam Shtern**.
Neda & Robert Yaghoubian on the marriage of their son, **Gabriel Yaghoubian to Gabrielle Styles**.
MAZEL TOV TO B'NEI MITZVAH:
Rebecca and Eliza Ostroff: daughters of **Allison & Jonathan Ostroff** and to the grandparents, **Barbara & Norman Ostroff**.
Jacob Hecht: son of **Maya Golden and Levi Hecht**.
Oliver Reich: son of **Amy & Joey Reich**; and to the grandmother, **Veronica Reich**.

WE MOURN THE LOSS OF:

Seri Ann Alexander: sister of **Wendi Hoak**.
Batyah Ben David: mother of **Adam Ben David and Sheera Ben David**.
Laurel Benet: wife of **Alan Benet**.
Maxine Lynn Brody: wife of **Rick Brody** and mother of **Seth Brody and Lauren Cohen**.
Alan Freeman: husband of **Connie Cirillo Freeman**; and father of **Meryl Freeman, Ian Freeman and Rachel Freeman Hudson**.
Aleksander Sendersky: father of **Radik Sendersky**.
Barbara Hotz: sister of **George Sarner** and aunt of **Richard Sarner**.
Sally Hurwitz: sister of **David Rubin**.
Alan Jaffe: father of **Devra Jaffe-Berkowitz**.
Andrew Scott Madison: son of **Stuart Madison**.
Gloria Maurer: mother of **Lisa Arons**.
Robert Miller: father of **Jonathan Miller**.
Lee (Shirley) Neufeld: mother of **Lisa Shapiro and Robert Neufeld**.
Charles Prentiss: uncle of **Valerie Rosenson**.
Constance Rafelson: mother of **Paul Rafelson**.
Eileen Marie Bell Saleh: partner of **Benjamin Friedman**, daughter of **Linda Bell**, mother of **Austin Karpel**, and sister of **Tracy Bell**.
Ruth Schechter: wife of **Jay Schechter**; and mother of **Jill Nadel and Amy Zahn-Stern**.
Helene Scheine: mother of **Greg Scheine**.
Nancy Schulman: wife of **Gary Schulman** and mother of **Sam Schulman and Josh Schulman** and daughter of **Arlene & Kenneth Block** and sister of **Marcy Glattstein**.
Richard Lloyd Slavitt: husband of **Jane Slavitt**; father of **Nicole Alexis Slavitt and Joshua Slavitt**, and brother of **Alan Brad Slavitt**.
Judith Kahn Steinberg: mother of **Jane Kahn and David Kahn Verza**; and brother of **Bill Kahn**.
Nadji Tehrani: husband of **Julliette Tehrani** and father of **Rich Tehrani and Michelle Tavdi**.
Anna Luiza Maltz Zilberman: wife of **Natanel Zilberman** and mother of **Fernanda Teitelbaum**.

Thinking of You...

Send your sympathies to someone who fell ill or to the family of someone who recently passed by scanning the QR code below, visit www.ujf.org/tribute, or call 203-321-1373



MAZEL TOV

Do you know someone that just had a baby, a birthday, a bar/bat mitzvah, a wedding or special celebration?

Send them a greeting by scanning the QR code below, visit www.ujf.org/tribute, or call 203-321-1373



Nearly 200 Gather for Inspiring Pride Shabbat

(Courtesy of UJF) The community came together in a powerful display of joy, inclusion, and Jewish pride at this year's Community Pride Shabbat, which welcomed nearly 200 attendees for an evening of connection, reflection, and celebration. Held on June 5 at the Bartlett Arboretum, Pride Shabbat offered a meaningful Shabbat experience that highlighted the values of belonging, dignity, and acceptance.

This year's program was sponsored by United Jewish Federation, Schoke Jewish Family Service, Temple Beth El and Temple Sinai. Participants went home with Shabbat-to-go bags which included rainbow challah.

Participants enjoyed a *d'var torah* by special guest Jaimie Krass, the CEO of Keshet (an advocacy organization for the equality and inclusion of LGBTQ+ Jews) as well as a presentation by Liat Feller about her experience growing up in Stamford as both a member of the Jewish community and the LGBTQIA+ community.

The strong turnout reflected the community's commitment to creating inclusive Jewish spaces, where everyone is celebrated for who they are. Pride Shabbat served as a reminder of the strength that comes from embracing diversity and fostering a community where all are welcome.



Keshet's CEO, Jaimie Krass, gave a beautiful *d'var torah*.



This year's Pride Shabbat had nearly double the number of attendees as last year.



(l-r) Eli Shaffer, Eric Ross, Keshet CEO Jaimie Krass, Rabbinic student Leo Linder, Cantor Katie Kaplan, Cantor Micah Morgovsky, Rabbi Michael Knopf, Liat Feller, Rabbi Jay TelRav, and Rabbinic Intern Abby Allen.



Young families enjoy celebrating Pride Shabbat
(PHOTO CREDIT: LEO ROSS)



Stories by the Fire

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation and Mem Global (memglobal.org) brought the spirit of an Israeli *kumzitz* (musical gathering) to the community. Attendees gathered around the bonfire for an evening of connection, storytelling, and meaningful conversation, sharing

personal experiences, memories, stories, and reflections while enjoying the warmth of the night under the stars.

With hot dogs, marshmallows roasting over the fire, and a cozy campfire atmosphere, participants shared a special sense of togetherness and community.



UJF Community Shlichah Eden Refaelovich (standing, rear) together with community members, gathered around the bonfire.

POPSICLES IN THE PARK

Enjoy a fun story and cool off with a sweet treat!

Wednesdays in July
from 4:30-5:30pm

7/8 - Stamford | 7/15 - Darien
7/22 - New Canaan | 7/29 - Stamford

Register at:
UJF.org/Popsicles

Registration is free but required to attend.
*Exact location given upon registration

An Inspiring Night at Women's Philanthropy Spring Dinner

(Courtesy of UJF) In early May, United Jewish Federation's Women's Philanthropy gathered for its annual Spring Dinner, welcoming more than 150 women for

an inspiring evening of community and connection.

Led by event chairs Valerie Cohen and Michelle Cait, and auction chairs Jennie

Fishman and Elina Furman, the evening featured special guest speaker Zibby Owens and honored Aviva Maller as the inaugural recipient of the Woman of Valor Award.

Guests enjoyed a lively auction, meaningful conversation, and the camaraderie of coming together in support of UJF and the Jewish community.



United Jewish Federation CEO Diane Sloyer presents Aviva Maller the Woman of Valor Award.



Marsha Shendell with Aviva Maller.



Shira Schwartz and Rachel Waldstreicher.



Toby Lazarus, Tara Shapiro, and Leslie Moskowitz.



Julie Rosenberg, Toby Lazarus, and Pam Feldstein.



Guest speaker Zibby Owens.



Betsy Kempner, Rachel Benjamin, Amy Fishow Benjamin, and Sarah Schiff.



Elina Furman, Jennie Fishman, Michelle Cait, and Valerie Cohen.



Gayle Rothman, Aviva Maller, and Marilyn Soffer.



Stacy Soffer, UJF Director of Programming and Engagement Jillian Moore, and Robin Fischel.

UJF WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY SALON

Mind, Body, & Soul Reset

A RESTORATIVE SOUND BATH EXPERIENCE
WITH FAMILY IDENTITY AND INNER HEALING
PRACTITIONER
TALI ABERGEL

Thursday, July 16th at 7:30pm

\$40 through July 9th
\$54 afterwards

Private Home in Stamford

Athleisure Attire | Please bring your own yoga mat or towel

UJF.org/Reset

Event Chairs: Elina Furman, Yael Geller, Rachel Levi, Caroline Marciano,
Shira Schwartz, Rachel Waldstreicher

United Jewish Federation
of Stamford, New Canaan, and Cheshire
Serving Greater Fairfield County



Emily Raderman, Cory Zablow, and Morgan Beckerman.



Attendees filled the room at the Stamford Museum and Nature Center.



Honoree Aviva Maller with Geri Guzinski, Arlene Hall, and Karen Sheftell.



Muriel Ashley, Avi Freedberg, Aviva Maller, and Rhoda Freedberg.



Regional Security Director Jim Comstock with his K-9 Pogo and Linda Rezak, Francie Leader, Cathy Bernstein, and Robin Madan.



Woman of Valor Honoree Aviva Maller with her husband Michael (middle) and sons Jacob (left) and Zachary (right).

(ALL PHOTO CREDIT: CHUCK MAY)

An Evening With JFS

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) On May 17, the community gathered for “An Evening with Schoke JFS: Seeds for Tomorrow,” an inspiring evening dedicated to celebrating community, compassion, and service. Wheel It Forward, an extraordinary organization that provides free durable medical equipment to individuals and families throughout Fairfield County, received the 46th Annual Mitzvah Award. Ben Frimmer, a TONY-nominated producer, theatre educator, and EMS leader whose commitment continues

to enrich the arts, strengthen public safety, and support our community, was presented with the Community Service Award. Schoke Jewish Family Service extends its deepest gratitude to all donors, sponsors, event committee, staff, volunteers, and board members for helping make the evening such a success. Because of the generosity of attendees, seniors and families across Fairfield County can continue to access vital support and resources when they need them most.



Elliot Sloyer, founder and CEO, accepted the 46th Annual Mitzvah Award on behalf of Wheel It Forward, alongside Schoke JFS Board Chair Ken Neuhaus and President & CEO Matt Greenberg.



Ben Frimmer accepted the Community Service Award, alongside Schoke JFS Secretary and Treasurer Sally Kleinman and President & CEO Matt Greenberg.

The Stamford JCC’s Gala

(Courtesy of JCC) The Stamford Jewish Community Center’s 2026 J Gala was a memorable evening celebrating the people whose leadership, generosity, and commitment help strengthen our community every day. The JCC was proud to honor Toby Lazarus and Allan Lichtenberg for their extraordinary dedication and leadership, to present the JCC Emerging Leader Award to Ariel Poser Bedik, and to award the Irwin and Arlene Ettinger Legacy Award to Brian Kriftcher.

Funds raised through The J Gala support critical scholarships and mission-driven programs, helping ensure access, inclusion, and meaningful community experiences for individuals and families throughout the year.



Honorees Toby Lazarus & Allan Lichtenberg.

Gala Chairs were Cheryl Bader-Goldblum, Tara Shapiro and Sara Simon and Sponsorship Chairs were Natalie Behrend, Lindsay Rosen and Stuart Roth.



The Irwin & Arlene Ettinger Legacy Award recipient Brian Kriftcher.



JCC Emerging Leader Award recipient Ariel Poser Bedik.



Lindsay Rosen, Cheryl Bader-Goldblum, Tara Shapiro, Stuart Roth, and Sara Simon, and Natalie Behrend.

(ALL PHOTO CREDIT: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY)



Guests at An Evening with Schoke JFS came together for a meaningful evening of community, connection, and support.

(ALL PHOTO CREDIT: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY)

Family Nature Hike & Scavenger Hunt

Explore nature, hunt for treasures, and then cool off with kosher ice cream for the whole family!

Sunday, August 16th 10:00-11:30am
\$5/person or \$12/family

At a park in New Canaan
*Location will be shared upon registration

Register at Ujf.org/Nature

Shaping Dough, Strength, and Jewish Pride

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) At Chabad of Stamford, the Challah Club has become a beloved spring tradition, an open, welcoming space where women gather on Morah Leah Shemtov's porch to connect, create, and prepare challah together.

Each session is built around a creative theme, from *schlischel* (key-shaped) challahs after Pesach to cheesecake challahs for Shavuot. Held on select Fridays, the gatherings bring together rolling pins, flour, laughter, and inspiration in a relaxed, uplifting atmosphere. Participants learn to knead, shape, and prepare challah dough to take home for Shabbat, while exploring new techniques and designs.

This June's Challah Club featured special guest and Gan Yeladim mom, Shira Burstein, who shared tips and shaping techniques to help participants elevate their challah-making and add meaning to each loaf.



Women at Chabad of Stamford's Challah Club gather on Leah Shemtov's porch, proudly showcasing their beautifully braided challahs after a hands-on session led by Shira Burstein (center).

For Shira, challah-making has taken on a deeper significance, a "twist" shaped by recent events. She had only made challah once or twice before college and her wedding. "After that, it wasn't part of my identity as a Jewish woman," she said.

That changed after October 7. Following a direct antisemitic verbal attack experienced

by her parents, she chose to respond not with anger or argument, but with action. That week, she baked challah.

"I decided that for every antisemitic or hateful comment moving forward, I would bake a challah as my protest," she said. "Not surprisingly, it didn't stop, but neither did I."

What began as a response became a

weekly practice of learning, creativity, and meaning. She studied techniques, developed her own braids and flavors, and used each challah to highlight a Jewish story or tradition.

"It was my way of showing Judaism without anger or defensiveness," she explained. "Just being Jewish, visibly and joyfully, without needing to justify it."

In this way, Challah shaping for her becomes more than baking. It is a space where identity, resilience, and community rise together, one braided challah at a time.

Chabad of Stamford thanks Shira for her creativity, positivity, and inspiration.

For more information about Chabad's Challah Club, please contact programs@stamfordchabad.org

Rooftop Cocktail Hour & Shabbat Dinner

(Courtesy of Chabad @ Harbor Point) Young Jewish professionals from Stamford gathered for a rooftop cocktail hour. Guests enjoyed an open bar, hors d'oeuvres, and plenty of opportunities for mingling before welcoming in Shabbat together.

The evening continued with the women lighting the Shabbat candles together, followed by Kiddush, challah, and Shabbat

dinner. As everyone shared highlights of their week and connected over shared traditions, the evening was filled with warmth, laughter, and conversation. It was a meaningful evening that brought people together and strengthened the bonds of the growing community.

For more information and for upcoming events visit: Youngandjewish.org or call 203-912-7708



Participants enjoy cocktails.



Women light Shabbat candles.

Shavuot with Chabad @ Harbor Point

(Courtesy of Chabad @ HP) Community members of all ages and backgrounds gathered together for an inspiring evening of learning, discussion, and connection in celebration of Shavuot. Throughout the evening, participants shared fascinating presentations on a wide range of topics. From Rahim Shamash sharing his experience growing up as a Jew among Muslims in Iran to reflections on a mission trip to Israel, the discussions were thought-provoking. Other participants explored the wisdom of Torah, the psychology on dealing with anxiety, the Book of Ruth, what

it means to be a Jew, and even our purpose here on earth.

The presentations were followed by an engaging question-and-answer discussion with Rabbi Levi Deren, as well as lively conversations that continued throughout the night. Over a dairy buffet, attendees explored stimulating ideas from the wisdom of the Torah and connected with one another. It was an evening filled with learning, inspiration, and meaningful community.

For more information and for upcoming events visit: Jewishharborpoint.org or 203-912-7708.



Community members enjoying the Shavuot all-night Torah learning and dairy buffet at Chabad Harbor Point.

Nursery School Supports Back to School Shop

(Courtesy of JCC) The JCC Sara Walker Nursery School children chose to donate their *tzedakah* (charity) they collected throughout the school year to the local non-profit, Back to School Shop (BTSS), Inc. BTSS creates a one-day pop-up store where elementary school children of low-income families in Stamford can shop for brand new back-to-school clothes, coats, sneakers, backpacks, supplies and books - all for free.

As Anne Liss Johnson, the Associate Executive Director of the JCC, explains, "We try to make *tzedakah* very concrete and real for the children. We explain to them that not all the children in our community are able to receive new sneakers and



The JCC Sara Walker Nursery School students donate *tzedakah*.

(PHOTO CREDIT: SAM PILCHIK)

clothes when school starts, but the money they put into the *tzedakah* box will help Back to School Shop get those items and many others to the children who need them."

Reading Partners Celebrates Volunteers at Annual Breakfast

(Courtesy of UJF) On May 19, volunteers, school specialists, and community partners gathered for the annual UJF Reading Partners Volunteer Breakfast to celebrate the impact of volunteerism in Stamford public schools. The event recognized the dedicated tutors who help young readers build confidence, strengthen literacy skills, and develop a lifelong love of learning.

This year's guest speaker was Devra Newberger Speregen, an accomplished children's author and former writer and editor for Scholastic and Disney. Having authored nearly 175 children's books, she shared her passion for literacy and her belief that every child deserves the opportunity to experience the joy of reading. She also expressed her appreciation for the volunteers whose time and dedication help make that possible.

The Herbert and Sarah M. Gibor Reading Partners program pairs volunteer reading tutors with children in grades K-3 at public schools and community centers throughout

Stamford. United Jewish Federation has run the Reading Partners program for over 25 years thanks to the generosity of the Herbert and Sarah M. Gibor Foundation. Volunteers spend one hour each week working one-on-one with students to strengthen reading skills and build confidence. Tutors receive training, ongoing support, and guidance from team leaders throughout the school year.

As the program prepares for the 2026-27 school year, new volunteers are needed. No teaching experience is required, just a love of children and a desire to help young readers thrive. One hour a week can make a lasting difference in a child's life.

For more information, please reach out to Jillian@ujf.org.



Reading Partners Volunteers enjoy an appreciation breakfast in recognition of their hard work and commitment.



(l-r) Joan Sternberg, Sue Pianin, Gayle Rothman, Jan Schorr, and Wanda Kowalski

Schoke JFS Survivors Celebrate Holocaust Survivor Day

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) Schoke Jewish Family Service was honored to celebrate Holocaust Survivor Day with nearly 90 Holocaust survivors and their aides from across Fairfield County at Congregation Agudath Sholom through its Anachnu Program.

The event was a joyful celebration of life, resilience, hope, family, music, and the power of community. Schoke JFS also recognized four June birthdays among Anachnu participants, including a very special milestone, Olga Rosenstein's 100th birthday!

Guests enjoyed a meal, music by Leon Skolnik, and plenty of dancing and fellowship. Schoke JFS was proud to join 32 KAVOD SHEF (The Kavod Survivors of the Holocaust Emergency Fund) communities across the country in bringing together survivors, families, caregivers, and community members in solidarity and celebration.

This program was co-sponsored by UJF and made possible in part through a grant United Jewish Federation (UJF) of Stamford, New



Olga Rosenstein celebrates her 100th birthday while being serenaded by Leon Skolnik.

Canaan and Darien received from the Seed the Dream Foundation. Schoke JFS extends its sincere gratitude to UJF for helping make this event possible and for its generous support of Anachnu and many other vital Schoke JFS



Anachnu participants enjoy meaningful conversation, music, and camaraderie during Holocaust Survivor Day.

programs and services.

The event was enriched by the presence of Anachnu program donors Freida Fogel, herself a Holocaust survivor, along with Howard Fogel and Stephanie Fogel, who joined participants in the celebration and helped make the day especially meaningful.

Schoke JFS is also grateful to the dedicated student volunteers from Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy, whose kindness, enthusiasm, and commitment contributed to the event's success. Their efforts fostered connection, warmth, and joy, creating a memorable experience for the survivors and all who attended.

NextGen Kicks Off Summer

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation's NextGen, which connects Jews in their mid-20s through mid-40s, welcomed the arrival of summer with a fun and casual happy hour and networking event in early June. The gathering provided a chance for young adults to unwind, enjoy the warm weather, and spend time with both familiar faces and new friends. Laughter, lively conversation, and a relaxed atmosphere made for a great start to the season.



NextGeners gather for a night out in Stamford.

BCHA Holds Annual First Grade Chag HaSiddur

(Courtesy of BCHA) Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) first-grade students took center stage in early June as they celebrated their Chag HaSiddur, a cherished milestone in their Jewish education when they each receive their own first *siddur* (prayer book).

The festive event brought together families, faculty, and friends to honor the students, marking an important step in their spiritual and academic journeys. The first graders captivated the audience of parents, grandparents, classmates, and staff with a

performance featuring spirited singing, lively dancing, and thoughtful student-led speeches that reflected the meaning and significance of prayer in their lives.

The annual Chag HaSiddur celebration serves as a highlight of the school year, recognizing the students' growth and achievements while strengthening their connection to Jewish tradition. Through their enthusiastic participation, the first graders demonstrated both confidence and pride as they reached this meaningful milestone.



BCHA's first graders perform for parents, friends, and classmates.

NEW AROUND TOWN

Alisa Weisser, Young Israel of Stamford

BY CECILE MINKOFF

Young Israel of Stamford has hired Alisa Weisser to be its new synagogue administrator. Since its founding, Young Israel's administration has been assumed by its members on a volunteer basis. Up to now this has worked out quite well. But, in anticipation of a new building whose plans are now well underway, the board recognizes the need to create a more formal administrative structure. To this end, Alisa is now the first point of contact for anyone who has any business with the shul, from cleaning services to event planning to community-wide communication.

Currently she is busy learning everything there is to know about how things are getting done and thinking about how they might be done more professionally. Board co-president Shani Cohen commented, "Our new shul administrator has already helped us become more organized, proactive, and coordinated in many areas of the shul's operations. Although Alisa has only been in the position for a few months,



we can already see the impact of having someone focused on helping things run more smoothly behind the scenes."

Alisa is looking forward to being the "address" of the shul, the traffic director, so to speak, of all its different demands and operations. "This is a labor of love," said Alisa. "My kids have grown up in the shul, and it means a lot to our family. I look forward to helping make the shul look good and function well."

BCHA Hosts Sefer Torah Ceremony

(Courtesy of BCHA) On Monday evening, May 18, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) held a *Hachnasat Sefer Torah* (inauguration of a new Torah scroll) ceremony, celebrating the arrival of two new Torah scrolls to the school community.

The evening also served as a meaningful tribute to the legacy of Rabbi Abraham Lieberman z"l and Morah Yospa Lieberman. The program honored their decades of impact in building Torah education at BCHA.

Rabbi Lieberman dedicated over thirty years to teaching Torah at BCHA. Through his scholarship, humility, and humanity, he helped shape generations of students and left a lasting imprint on the school's approach to Torah learning.

Morah Yospa Lieberman's impact during her 42 years teaching at BCHA was also central to the evening's tributes. Her deep care for students, families, and colleagues continues to be felt across the community, and she remains a cherished presence in the school.

Throughout the evening, students,



BCHA Head of School Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein with one of the new Torah scrolls.

alumni, colleagues, and family members offered Divrei Torah and tributes reflecting on the Lieberman's influence.

The ceremony concluded with spirited *hakafot* (processions), as participants danced with the new Sifrei Torah in celebration. The event combined joy and gratitude, honoring the Lieberman legacy while celebrating the enduring commitment to Torah learning at BCHA.

Celebrating New Beginnings

(Courtesy of UJF) As summer begins in full swing, United Jewish Federation (UJF) is delighted to celebrate and welcome new additions to the Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien community. UJF Director of Programming and Engagement Jillian Moore recently delivered a Shalom Baby bag to proud parents Esther Gibofsky and Adam Rattner in honor of the birth of their beautiful baby girl, Margot.

UJF's Shalom Baby program offers a warm welcome to every new Jewish baby born in the community, while its Shalom Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien bags help introduce families who are new to the area to the many resources and connections within this vibrant community.

If you know someone who has recently had a baby or moved to town, help UJF welcome them! Contact Jillian Moore at Jillian@UJF.org to share the news.



A warm welcome for a cozy baby Margot.



- Daily News Directly From Israel and the JBS News Desk
- *Defending Israel* with David Harris
- *Being Jewish* with Jonah Platt
- *Jewish Insights* with Justin Pines
- *In the Spotlight* with Abigail Pogrebin
- Conferences of major Jewish organizations
- Movies, Music, Authors, Travel, Comedy, Cuisine
- Interviews of Major Jewish Leaders
- Jewish Studies
- Shabbat Services from Central and Hampton Synagogues

JBS can be watched 24/7 on Optimum CH 138, DIRECTV CH 388, ROKU, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV (Amazon Prime) ZipWave TV CH 29 and www.jbstv.org

Building a World of Mitzvot

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Parents, grandparents, and friends filled Chabad of Stamford this June to celebrate the Gan Yeladim Pre-School graduation. The Pre-K children were beaming with Jewish pride as they sang about the *mitzvot* they have learned throughout the year and their commitment to add more *mitzvot*, brick by brick, step by step. Through their

songs and presentations, they shared their vision of a world filled with peace, kindness, goodness, and care. For Gan director Morah Leah Shemtov, "If only we could bottle the special Gan energy that inspired us all that morning, we would have a powerful reminder of the pure faith, joy, and goodness our children bring into the world every day."



Lag B'Omer Bonfire and Barbecue

(Courtesy of Chabad @ Harbor Point) Young professionals from Stamford and the surrounding areas gathered for a wonderful evening of connection and community. Friends old and new bonded over great food, drinks, s'mores, stories, and guitars around the bonfire. Meaningful conversations continued late into the night as everyone enjoyed the music and the warm

atmosphere.

The evening was an expression of the growing community of young adults in their 20s and 30s that is taking root here in Stamford, a community built on friendship, belonging, and connection.

For more information and for upcoming events: Youngandjewish.org or 203-912-7708.



Rabbi Yisrael Deren (far left) shares words of inspiration with young professionals.

ISRAEL AT YOUR DOORSTEP

CONVERSATIONS • CULTURE • COMMUNITY

BRING UJF COMMUNITY SHLICHA EDEN TO YOUR HOME, YOUR TABLE, OR YOUR FAVORITE HOBBY FOR A MEANINGFUL AND ENGAGING EXPERIENCE THIS SUMMER AND BEYOND.

EXPLORE ISRAEL, CULTURE, CURRENT EVENTS, IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, AND MORE. ASK QUESTIONS. SHARE PERSPECTIVES. CONNECT.

MORE THAN A PLACE.
MORE THAN A STORY.
THE PEOPLE.

LET'S PLAN TO GET TOGETHER!
SEND US A PRIVATE MESSAGE ON INSTAGRAM OR FACEBOOK.



Swimming Through a Sea of Learning

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) This year, Gan Yeladim's room Yud (the oldest 4 year old class), dove deep into an exciting exploration of the ocean, fish, and the wonders of the underwater world. Guided by their Jewish, Reggio Emilia-inspired approach, the children's curiosity led the

learning journey, culminating in a special trip to the Maritime Aquarium. There, a year's worth of learning came to life as the children enjoyed a morning of discovery, wonder, and hands-on exploration, encountering the fascinating creatures and habitats they had been studying all year.



Gan Yeladim's Pre-K class visited the Maritime Aquarium to bring a year of ocean learning to life.

Summer Edition

United Jewish Federation
Serving Greater Fairfield County

From The Shlicha's Kitchen

"Rolada"

★★★★★

Ingredients:

- 5 eggs
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 container heavy whipping cream (250 ml / about 1 cup)
- 2 tablespoons vanilla pudding mix
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

How to make:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. Whip eggs until light and fluffy.
3. Gradually add sugar and continue whipping until thick and airy.
4. In a separate bowl, sift flour and cocoa powder together. On low speed, add vanilla extract, lemon juice, and the dry ingredients to the batter until just combined.
5. Pour batter into a parchment-lined baking sheet pan.
6. Bake for 18-20 minutes, until set and a toothpick comes out clean. Do not overbake.
7. While still warm, roll the cake with the parchment paper. Let cool completely.
8. Whip heavy cream to soft peaks. Add vanilla pudding mix, powdered sugar, and vanilla extract. Mix until smooth and stable.
9. Unroll cooled cake and remove parchment paper.
10. Spread most of the cream evenly over the cake (save a small amount for topping).
11. Roll the cake back up into a roulade.
12. Spread remaining cream on top for a smooth finish.

TIP You can decorate the cake roll with: Drizzle, grated dark chocolate, crushed nuts or praline crumbs, chocolate curls and more. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving.

BON APPÉTIT
בתיאבון

RECOMMENDED

Tracing Fairfield County's Jewish History They Also Served

(Courtesy of Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County) When America entered World War II, thousands of Jewish women answered the call to serve. Some enlisted in newly created women's military branches, while others stepped into factories, offices, and laboratories to support the war effort at home.

Jewish American women served in every branch open to women, including the Women's Army Corps (WAC), Navy Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES), Marine Corps Women's Reserve (USMCWR), and Coast Guard Women's Reserve (SPARS), named for the Coast Guard motto, *Semper Paratus*—"Always Ready."

Fairfield County's Jewish women were among those who served. One of the most notable was Dahlia "Pobie" Johnston née Paubionski, who enlisted in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in 1942. Born in Philadelphia to immigrant parents, she joined, as she later recalled, "with clear intent that I would win the war for the U.S." After beginning as a cook, she was reassigned to Army personnel administration, helping process military discharges at war's end.

After the war, Johnston settled in Stamford, becoming a civic leader and three-time mayoral candidate.

Another local veteran was Betty Gordon of Greenwich, who served in the Navy WAVES, performing duties that freed male sailors for service at sea and in combat zones.

Their experiences reflected a broader national movement. Long before becoming a television star, Bea Arthur served as a Staff Sergeant in the Marine Corps Women's Reserve, while Dorothy E. Kurtz carried out critical administrative duties as a member of the Coast Guard SPARS.

The military's need for nurses was equally vital. Jewish women served in hospitals, evacuation centers, and near combat zones throughout the world. Among the most inspiring was Lt. Frances Slinger, daughter of Jewish immigrants from Poland. Serving with the Army Nurse Corps in Europe, she cared for wounded soldiers during some of the war's fiercest campaigns. In October 1944, while tending the wounded in Belgium, she was killed by enemy artillery fire and was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart.

Not all services required a uniform. As

more than twenty percent of Stamford's population entered military service, local industries including Yale & Towne, Pitney-Bowes, American Cyanamid, and Machlett Laboratories faced labor shortages. Women stepped into factories, laboratories, and offices, becoming Fairfield County's own "Rosie the Riveters."

Many Jewish women helped produce materials essential to the Allied war effort, while others advocated for improved workplace conditions. Among them was labor organizer Matilda Rabinowitz, whose work in Stamford and Bridgeport helped improve wages, safety, and treatment for women workers.

Stamford's Marian Plotnick found another way to serve. Believing every departing serviceman and servicewoman deserved community support, she helped organize the distribution of "Buddy Bags" at Stamford train stations. No matter the hour, volunteers greeted departing inductees with care packages containing razors, toothpaste, playing cards, and other comfort items, reminding them that the community stood behind them.

Whether serving in uniform, caring



Dahlia "Pobie" Johnston

for wounded soldiers, supporting wartime production, or encouraging troops as they departed for military service, Jewish women made indispensable contributions to Allied victory. Their stories remind us that courage, patriotism, and service took many forms—and that the history of World War II cannot be fully told without them.

Today, their legacy remains an important chapter in both Fairfield County's history and the broader story of American Jewish life. The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County continues to uncover, preserve, and share these stories. JHSFC welcomes inquiries, visitors, and volunteers. Please contact JHSFC at info@jhsfc-ct.org to schedule an appointment.

As One ...we touch lives.

"The partnership between United Jewish Federation and Schoke Jewish Family Service reflects the true meaning of 'As One' - a community united in responsibility, compassion, and care for one another. Through its vision, leadership, and generous support, UJF helps make possible the essential work Schoke JFS carries out each day: providing counseling, food assistance, emergency support, services for older adults and Holocaust survivors, and critical care for individuals and families facing life's greatest challenges. UJF's commitment strengthens not only our agency, but the fabric of the entire community, ensuring that no one has to face hardship alone. Together, As One community with one shared purpose, we are able to bring hope, dignity, and meaningful support to thousands."



Matt Greenberg
President and CEO of
Schoke Jewish Family Service
of Fairfield County

UJF and Schoke JFS's actions and deeds breathe life into words of Rabbi Hillel, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I'm only for myself, what am I?" From bringing all corners of the Jewish community together in times of both joy and sadness, to reaching within the Jewish community to let everyone know they are welcome and valued, creating welcoming spaces is one of the most important things we can do to bring everyone together, As One.



As One ...we connect the generations.

"Whether attending the NextGen Yom HaAtzmaut party with my husband, PJ Library scavenger hunts with my kids, or the Women's Philanthropy Spring Dinner with my mom, I love that UJF touches every stage of our lives. L'dor v'dor has always been a vital piece of Jewish history and tradition, but even more so after October 7."



Robin Fischel
UJF Board of Directors and
Co-Chair of The Big Give

UJF is committed to sustaining Jewish life for today and future generations. Through community events like Yom HaAtzmaut and Yom HaShoah, UJF connects and engages every generation. Educational programs like the Kuriansky Teen Tzedakah Corps and the Behrend Institute for Leadership enables UJF to cultivate and train the next generation of Jewish leaders, benefitting every aspect of our Jewish Community.



Celebrating Six Years of Life & Legacy

(Courtesy of UJF) On Wednesday evening, May 27, nearly 100 local legacy donors gathered together to celebrate the completion of the sixth year in the Life & Legacy program, an extraordinary initiative of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, which has transformed how the community thinks about the future.

Event Co-Chairs Robin Fischel, Nan and Paul Gordon, Susan Kostin, and Nancy Mimoun each addressed the audience, sharing their own personal stories about what moved them to establish end-of-life commitments that will one day make a meaningful difference for future generations.

To date, the Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien community has received 646 letters of intent from individuals and families who have chosen to make a lasting statement about their values and hopes for the future. Of those, 427 commitments have been formalized. Moreover, these letters of intent represent nearly \$17

million in promised legacy gifts – with over \$1.17 million already realized to support the community today.

If you would like to learn more about joining the Life & Legacy program, please contact UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross at Eric@UJF.org.



Event Co-Chairs Robin Fischel and Nancy Mimoun



UJF President Beverly Stein, Event Co-Chairs Nan & Paul Gordon, and Myrna Sessa



Terry Newman, Katy Meyers, and Event Co-Chair Susan Kostin



Connie Freeman, UJF CEO Diane Sloyer, and Stamford JCC CEO Marshall Kurland



Ed Smith, Edith Samers, and Carl Rosen



Meryl & David Gordon, Michael Schlessinger, and Marilyn & Harry Soffer



Michael & Sadae Kadish, Paula Simon, Alan Barr, and Shelley Leibowitz



Peter Poser & Caryl Ferber-Poser, Event Co-Chair Nancy Mimoun, and Carl & Arlene Rosen



UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross and Leiba & Steven Lander



Shira Nerenberg, Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, Jeff Cohen, and Ron Zussman

(ALL PHOTO CREDIT: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY)

LIFE & LEGACY

Life & Legacy Testimonial

Each edition of the New Jewish Voice features the testimonials of community members just like you who have declared their intent to leave a legacy gift to a Jewish organization in the Stamford, New Canaan and Darien Jewish community. This program is funded by United Jewish Federation and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

Learn why they look to secure our Jewish future and discover your reasons to join them. Together, we can all work to guarantee the future of the Stamford Jewish community we love. For more information, contact Eric Ross at (203) 321-1373 or at eric@ujf.org.

ALLEN AND CAROL KRIM TESTIMONIAL

The Stamford Jewish Community offers a world of Jewish connections at its doorstep. Temple Beth El, Bi-Cultural, JCC, BBYO and United Jewish Federation have played a huge part in my family's life for 50 years. I (Carol) was brought up in a small community with only 35 Jewish families in Ontario, Canada. The ability to live a truly Jewish meaningful life in Stamford, as well as to provide a strong Jewish education for my daughters, has been a joy and a comfort. I love that I can say "Good Shabbos" in the supermarket on any given Friday. I can share Shabbat, simchas and Jewish milestones in my synagogue.

A beautiful Jewish community thrives in this city, and we cannot take this for granted. Our Jewish institutions depend on all of us to keep them strong, because after all, who

but us can do that. They give us the means to be Jewish at any level of observance. They nurture, support and strengthen our Jewish connections.

With sincere gratitude and with our gift to the Life & Legacy program, we want to ensure our community continues to offer a strong Jewish life, now and into the future.



Allen and Carol Krim

United Jewish Federation
The New Jewish Voice
2009 Summer St., Suite 302
Stamford, CT 06905

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United Jewish Federation Presents

Summer Backyard Jam

Featuring Local Jewish Musicians

Thursday, July 28th 7:30-10:00pm

\$54/person

Sponsorships available for \$180 (includes 2 tickets)

Includes wine, beer, and snacks!

All proceeds benefit United Jewish Federation's security partnership with CSI,
protecting our local Jewish community.

Lawn chairs and blankets encouraged!

UJF.org/Jam

Location provided upon registration



United Jewish
Federation

of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien
Serving Greater Fairfield County