



THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION

Walter Shuchatowitz, z"l: A Visionary and Guiding Soul

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy)
Walter Shuchatowitz, founder and founding principal of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy in Stamford, died Nov. 27. He was 92.

In 1956, Mr. Shuchatowitz — affectionately known as “Mr. S.” — founded Bi-Cultural Day School (now Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy), a dual curriculum Jewish school for grades pre-K through 8.

He served as the school’s principal for 50 years, retiring in 2005, but he remained a member of the school’s board of incorporators and was actively involved in the 2018 merger of Bi-Cultural Day School with the Jewish High School of Connecticut to form Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA), the first K-12th grade Jewish day school in Connecticut.

“It was his dream to give kids a Jewish education that would last; to light that spark within them that would give them a love of Judaism,” said BCHA President David Pitkoff, the parent of Bi-Cultural alumni. “He built the school as a community day school guided by the principles of Modern Orthodoxy because he felt you had to reach out to everybody and embrace the entire community. It’s been that way ever since.”

Born June 21, 1927, Walter Shuchatowitz was the son of Rabbi Aron and Rose Shuchatowitz. His father was a spiritual leader in the New Haven area. In 1948, he graduated from New York’s City College. He was about to begin law school when he met Dr. Gershon Churgin, dean of Teacher’s Institute at Yeshiva University, where he had concurrently



Mr. S.

earned a degree in Judaic Studies. Dr. Churgin lamented that not enough graduates were entering the field of Jewish education.

And so, Mr. Shuchatowitz postponed his career in law. Instead, he began his career in Jewish education in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Seven years later, he arrived in Stamford to start a Hebrew school at Congregation Agudath Sholom. U.S. Senator Joseph Lieberman was one of his students.

Soon after, he began efforts to open a community Jewish day school.

“He started Bi-Cultural with just a handful of kids and knocked on doors to bring people in,” said Rabbi Daniel Cohen, Agudath Sholom’s spiritual leader, where Mr. Shuchatowitz was a longtime member. “He was tireless in pushing hard to unlock the potential in Jewish children. [He] not only changed children’s lives, but changed the trajectory of their families for generations.”

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UJF Selected for Grinspoon ‘Life & Legacy’ Program

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation is excited to announce that it has been selected to partner with 10 other local community Jewish organizations as part of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation’s LIFE & LEGACY® program. Together with these other agencies, UJF will be working to establish a culture of legacy giving in the Stamford, New Canaan and Darien communities.

Philanthropist Harold Grinspoon established LIFE & LEGACY, a national effort, eight years ago. The program assists Jewish communities in promoting af-

ter-lifetime giving to benefit local Jewish organizations. The Grinspoon Foundation sought to answer the question: “Can Jewish communities be motivated to become proactive in encouraging widespread legacy giving?” Through LIFE & LEGACY, they have found a way and the program provides the tools necessary for organizations to encourage and secure these gifts.

The program, which officially launches on February 1, provides the structure, training, mentoring, workshops, and even

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Chevre Kadisha Dinner to Remember Tamar Gershberg and Flossy Fischel Rabbi Ethan Tucker to Speak

BY MICHAEL FELDSTEIN

Rabbi Ethan Tucker, the President and Rosh Yeshiva (head of school) at Hadar in New York City, will be this year’s featured speaker at the annual Stamford Chevre Kadisha annual dinner, to be held at Temple Beth El on Tuesday, March 3, at 5:30PM. His topic will be “Can Torah and Ethics Truly Be at Odds?”

This year’s dinner will honor the memory of Tamar Gershberg and Flossy Fischel, z”l, both of whom passed away this past year and were models of kindness in the Stamford Jewish community.



Tamar Gershberg, z”l



Flossy Fischel, z”l

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NO HATE, NO FEAR

Over 500 people of all faiths gathered at Temple Beth El in Stamford for a community interfaith vigil convened by United Jewish Federation and the Interfaith Council of Southwestern Connecticut. (see page 10-11)



UJF President's Message

New UJF President David Gordon gave this address at the Annual Meeting of United Jewish Federation on December 8, 2019.

Congratulations to tonight's honorees for their exceptional work on behalf of UJF, and a special thanks to Ricky Arbron for three years of her tireless, dedicated work, and for her help in bringing me up to speed in my new role. I also want to thank our talented and indefatigable CEO, Diane Sloyer, with whom I look forward to working closely over the next couple of years. Thank you to our stalwart long-time donors and to our new donors who are helping strengthen our Jewish community through UJF. And thank you to my Mom, my mother-in-law, my family and friends, and most of all, my wonderful wife, Meryl, for everything, including their support of me in this venture.

A quick story. Rabbi Goldstein stepped up to the bimah to deliver his Yom Kippur Kol Nidrei sermon. He had worked five weeks on it, meticulously polishing it until it was perfect. Exactly thirty minutes later, he finished the



UJF President David Gordon

know that I run a radio station, and I was wondering whether you could condense your sermon and convey to my listeners everything that was in the sermon in a five minute spot." Rabbi Goldstein was very pleased and he said: "five minutes? I'm sure I can." To which the vice president replied: "Then why didn't you?"

Well, I have a half hour of material, but here is the five minute version...

In the next two years, my goals for UJF are: to strengthen the fabric of our Jewish community, to strengthen the security of our Jewish community, and to strengthen the institutions of our Jewish community.

What do I mean by strengthening the fabric of our Jewish community? What I see in our community is what I see in the country at large. I see that we are increasingly withdrawing into different silos where we have less and less to do with each other, and where we in-

creasingly only talk to people who will agree with us. And, even in our silos, which may be our own synagogues, or our other Jewish organizations, we are increasingly sub-siloing and talking to only our friends who have the same political outlook for both the U.S. and Israel. We need to start weaving our communal fabric back together again. We need to be meeting each other more, sharing what we have in common more, and respecting each other more. For example, rather than having only separate synagogue missions to Israel, we need to have a community mission to Israel (which hasn't happened in a decade or more) led by Federation and our Rabbis. We need to reinstate opportunities for our community to talk to each other and learn from each other; and I dare say to learn to like each other – outside the comfort of our silos. Those opportunities may include a morning or evening of learning where all of our rabbis, and other community resources such as professors and teachers offer classes; where the members of our community can widen their horizons and be exposed to ideas and people from outside their silos.

What do I mean by strengthening the security of our Jewish community? There is no question that most of us feel that the Jewish community in this country is under assault from the far left and the far right. We are hiring guards, at great expense, to guard the safety of ourselves and our children in our institutions. However, our Federation has expert resources via the Secure Community Network of the JFNA (Jewish Federations of North America) which we can use. The Secure Community Network works with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to bring best practices and a strategic approach to security; to make assessments of buildings and organizations; to train staff and members; to share information and intelligence. I intend to appoint a member of the UJF Executive Board to be our security leader – to convene

and work with all of our institutions; to help our institutions bring best practices to their institutions; and hopefully to decrease the financial burden to each of the institutions that has resulted from our need to defend ourselves against hate.

Finally, what do I mean by strengthening our institutions? As some of you know, our community, under the auspices of our Federation, was accepted last month to the Grinspoon Life & Legacy Program. The Life & Legacy Program is a four-year commitment from our Federation and the Grinspoon Foundation to work with our agencies/institutions using a proven step-by-step program to obtain "legacy" or "endowment" gifts and promises that will strengthen our institutions for generations to come. Life & Legacy is a seven year-old Grinspoon Foundation partnership program with Federations that is now functional in 58 communities across our country. It has already generated close to \$100M in actual endowments and approximately \$1B in future gifts for participating agencies. Our goal will be to have our 10 local institutions – in alphabetic order – Agudath Sholom, Beth El, BiCultural, Chabad, the Friendship Circle, the JCC, Schoke Jewish Family Services, Temple Sinai, UJF and Young Israel* – obtain legacy gifts such that 20% of their 2030 budgets, a decade from now, will be funded through endowments so as to ensure a thriving Jewish Stamford community well into the future. We can do it together.

I am humbled by the trust you have put in me to lead our United Jewish Federation. The task ahead is large, and I know that I can't do it without your active support – in mind, word, (forgiveness when I mess up) and, most of all, actions. I hope that you will join me in the journey of strengthening our community fabric, security and institutions. Thank you.

*There are now eleven institutions, since Chabad of New Canaan joined after this speech was given.

CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

January 24	4:43 pm
January 31	4:51 pm
February 7	5:00 pm
February 14	5:09 pm
February 21	5:17 pm
February 28	5:25 pm

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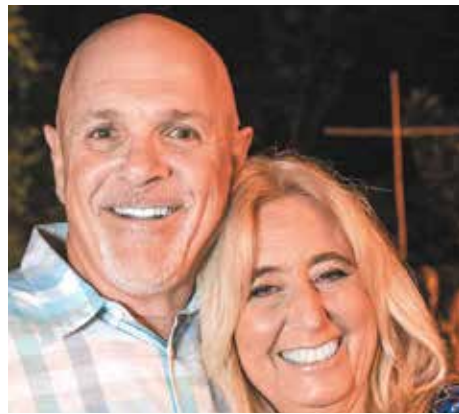
United Jewish Federation's partnership with JFACT, Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut, led to a very informative meeting with Senator Richard Blumenthal. UJF's delegation, along with 6 other CT Federation's took part in an important and urgent State-Wide conversation on Security. Our local Federation was proudly represented by our CEO, Diane Heller Sloyer, UJF's new President David Gordon and Rabbi Joshua Hammerman of Temple Beth-El in Stamford.

JCC Gala to Honor Community Leaders

(Courtesy of the Stamford JCC) At its spring gala on Saturday, March 7, the Stamford Jewish Community Center will honor Debbie Katz Shapiro & Leon Shapiro for their leadership and dedication to the JCC. Arlene and Irwin Ettinger will also be presenting the Arlene & Irwin Ettinger Legacy Award to Arthur Selkowitz.

Debbie Katz Shapiro has long been a leader of the JCC, having served on the Board of Directors from 2005 - 2009. She was a co-chair of JCC Tzahal Shalom for three years, and served on the Jewish Arts & Film Festival committee for many years. Debbie played an active role on numerous youth and strategic committees, including shaping programming for active retirees and senior adults. Debbie was a volunteer coordinator for the 2006 JCC Maccabi Games and a key player in command central for the 2016 JCC Maccabi Games & ArtsFest. Debbie has helped chart the course for so many of the services offered by the JCC.

The impact of Debbie's leadership can also be felt beyond the JCC. She serves the community, especially its youth, through her work at Kids In Crisis, the Lighthouse, AIDS Interfaith Stamford, Beth El Cares, Stamford CARES, Indivisible Stamford, and as the long-



Debbie Katz Shapiro and Leon Shapiro

time director of the HIV/AIDS Program for Stamford.

Leon Shapiro has served on the Stamford JCC Board of Directors since 2017. He has played an active leadership role on the Board and in his capacity as Interim CEO of the JCC in 2017. He was also a co-chair of special events for the 2016 JCC Maccabi Games & ArtsFest.

Leon's selflessness extends beyond the walls of the JCC as well. He serves on the Temple Rock Café Committee at Temple Beth



Arthur Selkowitz

El, advanced the use of technology at Temple Beth El and Newfield Elementary School, serves holiday dinners at Pacific House Shelter for Men, helped build a playground for a New York City school, and refurbished community centers in San Diego.

Arthur Selkowitz grew up at the JCC, and was a longtime member of the JCC Board of Directors. He joined the Board when the Center was on Prospect Street and was instrumental in its move to Newfield Ave. Arthur served as president of the Board from 1986

-1989, and is a past recipient of the Harold E. Hoffman Humanitarian Award. Arthur currently serves on the JCC Council of Advisors.

As a native of Stamford, community is of deep importance to Arthur. He is currently Chairman of the Mill River Park Collaborative. He is also a member of the Advisory Council of the Children's Learning Centers in Stamford, a Board member of both the Avon Theatre Film Center and the Stamford Museum and Nature Center. In 2012 Arthur was named "Citizen of the Year" in Stamford, he was recognized by Moffly Media as "Outstanding Philanthropist" in 2011, and was a recipient of the United Jewish Federation of New York's Global Leadership Award.

The gala will be held at Rockrimmon Country Club at 7 p.m. and will feature cocktails, dinner, auctions, and a journal. Dietary laws will be observed.

Leslie Napach and Carlie Socaransky will serve as event chairpersons. Randi & Craig L. Price and Risa & Steven Raich will serve as chairs of the journal.

Visit www.stamfordjcc.org for ticket and journal reservations. For more information, contact Shannon Jacobs at 203.487.0965 or sjacobs@stamfordjcc.org.

Celebrating a New Partnership



Jill Kirsch

As we begin the new decade, the New Jewish Voice (NJV) has joined forces with the Jewish Link Media Group (JLMG) in an effort to bring you, its readers, the best and most informative newspaper experience possible. Our plan is not to take over and completely change the newspaper you have come to love, but rather to enhance it, both aesthetically and in terms of its content.

Moshe Kinderlehrer, founder of the JLMG, and Adam Negnewitzky, founder of the Jewish Link Design Group, will be the driving forces behind the publication's new look, while I will be the face of the JLMG in these pages and your community. I have already met with the paper's Advisory Committee, and will continue to do so, in an effort to offer my experience and expertise to the venture. I plan to get to know you, our readers and advertisers, as well. Consider my "door" (or in this case, email) always open, whether just to say hello, to offer suggestions, make comments, ask questions or even offer criticism. I will also be in the Stamford area monthly or more, and would be happy to chat with you over coffee, lunch or whenever is mutually convenient.

By way of introduction, I have been with The Jewish Link of New Jersey and The Jewish Link of Bronx, Westchester

and Connecticut since 2014 and currently serve as the senior editor of those publications. However, I started as the community editor from my neck of the woods, Essex and Union counties in New Jersey, so I am very well aware of how important the community element is to a local paper. I promise to work hard to ensure that the news you are reading is the news you want to read, and that the community events you feel are important get included in each and every issue.

On a personal note, I am the proud mother of five amazing children, ages 13 to 22, most of whom are currently living at home. My husband is a rabbi, but his day job is guidance counselor/teacher/athletic director at the Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School in Livingston, New Jersey. I have a "secret" law degree and am licensed to practice in New Jersey, although I choose not to do so. I love to read, especially James Patterson; watch too much TV; and am kind of a fitness and health nut. Feel free to email me about any or all of the above.

I am excited to begin this new venture and I look forward to working with the committee as well as with you, the NJV's loyal readers and advertisers. I hope to have the opportunity to meet, or at least communicate with, as many of you as possible. I know we will accomplish great things together, and I can't wait to see what the new year has in store.

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2020!

Jill Kirsch

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Chevre Kadisha Dinner to Remember Tamar Gershberg and Flossy Fischel

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"The annual Chevre Kadisha dinner is one of the most eagerly awaited community events on the calendar," said Phyllis Shapiro, who is working on the dinner committee. "It's especially gratifying this year to honor the memory of Tamar and Flossy, each of whom exhibited their own strength in observing and performing the mitzvah of chesed. Tamar was the consummate teacher, who transmitted Torah in unique artistic forms, and Flossy was the action warrior, who used her culinary talents to prepare, coordinate, and provide meals for family and friends, as well as organize shiva meals at times of need."

"The Chevre Kadisha is very fortunate to be bringing Rabbi Ethan Tucker to the Stamford community. He is one of the most thoughtful and articulate leaders in the Jewish community today, and a sought out speaker by organizations across the country."

In addition to his duties as President and Rosh Yeshiva at Hadar, Rabbi Tucker is the chair in Jewish Law and also directs Hadar's Center for Jewish Law and Values. He was ordained by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and earned a doctorate in Talmud and Rabbinics from the Jewish Theological Seminary and a B.A. from Harvard College. A Wexner Graduate Fellow, he was a co-founder of Kehilat Hadar and a winner of the first Grinspoon Foundation Social Entrepreneur Fellowship. Rabbi Tucker serves on the board of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and



Rabbi Ethan Tucker

the Ramaz School. He is the author, along with Rabbi Michael Rosenberg, of Gender Equality and Prayer in Jewish Law.

The cost of attending the dinner is \$54 a person. Sponsorships are also available at \$180, which entitles an individual to two dinner reservations and can be made in honor of a family member or in memory of a loved one.

If you are interested in attending the dinner, please contact Janet Welkovich at jane-tann711@gmail.com. Reservations must be received by February 24 in order to guarantee a seat at the dinner. You can also

reserve online at stamfordchevrakadisha.org.

DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES

The deadline for the next issue of The New Jewish Voice is:

February 10th

Send New Jewish Voice article submissions to Sandy Golove at sandy@ujf.org marked "Stamford Voice" in the subject line.

Expect an acknowledgement; please re-send if you do not receive one.

Schoke JFS to Honor Community Members

On Sunday, April 26, the Elayne and James Schoke Jewish Family Service will hold its annual gala, An Evening with Schoke JFS, at 5:30 p.m. at The Italian Center in Stamford. The recipients of the 41st Annual Mitzvah Award will be the Jewish Sportsmen's League and Michael Alexander. Schoke JFS will award the 14th Young Leadership Award to David Brand and the 2nd Annual Volunteer of the Year Award to Risa Goldblum. The evening will begin with a silent auction, appetizers and cocktails, followed by dinner, presentation of awards and a live auction.

The evening will be hosted by the Master of Ceremonies, Stamford's own Alan Kalter. The evening is co-chaired by Liz Kitay and Ronnie Sichel.

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The views expressed in editorials and opinion pieces are those of each author and not necessarily the views of the United Jewish Federation.

Letters

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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For ticket information or to RSVP please call Lisa Rich at 203-921-4161 or visit www.ctjfs.org.

Congregation Agudath Sholom Plans Annual Dinner

On Sunday evening, March 15, Congregation Agudath Sholom will hold its 2020 Annual Dinner with Guests of Honor Rabbi Daniel and Diane Cohen, Community Service Award recipient Sandy Goldstein, Chai Award recipients Sandy and Lillian Shapiro, and Young Leadership Award recipients Peretz and Kate Cik. The event will begin at 5 p.m..

Honorary Dinner Chairs are Harvey and Helene Kaminski, and Irwin and Arlene Ettinger. Dinner Chairs are Stella Cohen, Tricia Hoff and Navah Zizmor, and Journal Chairs are Rhonda Schaffer-Maroon and Doreen Nusbaum.

For further information, contact Matt Feinberg at mfeinberg@cas-stamford.org or visit www.cas-STAMFORD.org

Chabad of Stamford to Host Community Celebration

A "farbrengen" is a Chassidic gathering where people spend time together connecting and sharing on a spiritual level. The entire community is invited to join Chabad of Stamford at a farbrengen on Wednesday, February 5, at 8 p.m. to mark a special day on the Chabad calendar. Yud Shevat (the 10th day of the Jewish month of Shevat) marks the day the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, passed away in 1950. Exactly one year later, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson accepted the leadership of the movement, and set about transforming the face of world Jewry. Drinks and light refreshments will be served. For more information and to RSVP contact programs@stamfordchabad.org.

Chabad of Stamford's JWC Plans International Cookoff

Chabad's Jewish Women Connected (JWC) annual cookoffs have become a favorite on Chabad's culinary calendar. This year, Chabad has added an international "flavor" to the event on Wednesday, Feb-

ruary 26, at 7:15 p.m.. The evening will be an opportunity for women to meet other women from around the world who live in the Stamford community. They will hear about their childhood experiences and taste special dishes from their countries of origin. Attendees will learn to cook (and try) dishes from places like France, South Africa, Iran and of course Israel. The event is chaired by Mouskha Heller. For more information and to register, contact programs@stamfordchabad.org.

JCC Plans Children's Programs for February 1

On Saturday evening, February 1, the JCC will have program offerings for children of all ages.

Come at 5:45 - 7:15 p.m. for Pajama Havdalah, for children from birth - 5 years with their families, to say goodbye to Shabbat and hello to a great new week. There will be traditional Havdalah candle lighting, song and dance. The cost is \$20 per family of four, \$5 per additional family member (\$15 per family of 4, \$5 per additional family member for JCC members). Snacks will be served.

Children in grades K - 6 are invited at 6:15 - 8:45 p.m. for Saturday Night MAX. Children will have the chance to take a break from their parents and enjoy an evening at the JCC with Movies, Adventure and Xcitement. The cost is \$15 per child (\$10 per child for JCC members). This Saturday Night MAX theme is games. Snacks will be served.

Sign up for either program by calling the JCC welcome desk at 203-322-7900 or visiting www.stamfordjcc.org. For more information on the Pajama Havdalah, contact David Citrin at 203-487-0961 or dcitrin@stamfordjcc.org. For more information on the Saturday Night MAX, contact Jason Samuel at 203-487-0973 or jsamuel@stamfordjcc.org.

Israeli Film Series Continues at the JCC

"Not only do films entertain, provoke thought and move us, films are a great way to gain insight into a society and culture," said Nancy Schiffman, Associate Ex-

ecutive Director of Development and Signature Programs. Join David Citrin, Coordinator, Jewish Engagement & Innovation, as he screens award-winning films at the JCC, direct from Israel. Following each film, David will shine a light on the many facets of Israel and facilitate a discussion. There is a suggested donation of \$5 per person per film.

"The Oslo Diaries" will be shown on Thursday, February 20, at 7:00 p.m. This film is about a group of Israelis and Palestinians that come together in Oslo for unsanctioned peace talks during the 1990s in order to bring peace to the Middle East.

For more information, contact David Citrin at 203-487-0961 or dcitrin@stamfordjcc.org.

Turn an Ordinary Friday Night Into Something Extraordinary

On Friday night, February 28, Temple Beth El will join hundreds of synagogues across the continent for an historic national Jewish event to celebrate what unifies all Jews — Shabbat! Everyone is invited...singles, couples and families of all ages.

Shabbat Across America offers participants the opportunity to experience Shabbat, and also to share that experience with tens of thousands of Jews across North America. Special musical services will be led by Rabbi Joshua Hammerman and Katie Kaplan, Cantorial Soloist, along with a special band beginning at 6 p.m. followed by a traditional Shabbat dinner at 7 p.m..

Services are free and open to the public. There is a fee for the dinner and reservations are required. To make reservations go to www.tinyurl.com/tbesaa2020. For more information call the office at TBE, 203-322-6901, ext. 300. Temple Beth El is located at 350 Roxbury Rd., Stamford.

Temple Rock Is Coming To Temple Beth El

Temple Rock, Temple Beth El's annual fundraiser, will be held on Saturday, February 1, at 7:00 p.m. at the synagogue.

The theme of this year's event will be "The Roaring 20s," and the fundraiser will serve as a kick-off to TBE's 100th anniversary year celebration. Featuring the Roaring Twenties dance band, the evening will include cocktails, dinner and the Temple Rock Auction.

Serving as the evening's chairs this year are Honni and Sylvan Pomerantz, Miriam and Steven Sosnick and Dana Horowitz and Peter Wolly. Auction chairs are Dana and Carl Weinberg, Emily Pomerantz and Sean Altman, and Lindsay and Corey Shulman. Event chairs are Susan and Marc Peyser, Entertainment chairs are Amy and Aron Davidson and Event planner is Avi-va Maller.

Reservations for the event can be made at: <https://templebethelstamfordct.school-auction.net/templerock2020/register>

For further information, call Steven Lander, Executive Director, at 203-322-6901. Temple Beth El is located at 350 Roxbury Rd., Stamford.

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Cardozo Society Holds Malpractice Educational Program



(l-r) The Cardozo Society educational program was presented by Jeffrey Cunningham, Rob Hoff (moderator) and Mike Trippico.

(Courtesy of UJF) Lawyers from around the community came together in December for United Jewish Federation's Cardozo Law

Society event "Staying on the Ethical Path: Ethics & Malpractice." The Cardozo Society is UJF's affinity group for legal professionals, and offers programming focusing on legal and Jewish concerns. The evening started with dinner and cocktails, which allowed for plenty of time to network with colleagues and make new professional connections. An educational program followed, which offered lawyers Ethics CLE credit, sponsored by Wiggin and Dana of Stamford.

The program gave guests the chance to learn in detail about issues they may face with liability and malpractice and hear many of the reasons they occur and how to be better protected. Rob Hoff, a partner at Wiggin and Dana, moderated the program. The presenters were Jeffrey Cunningham of Goldberg Segalla of White Plains,

NY, and Mike Trippico of Morrison Mahoney in Hartford.

Thank you to Rob Hoff and to Wiggin and Dana for hosting and sponsoring this program, and to Steve Steinmetz of Ivey, Barnum & O'Mara for being a sponsor. UJF holds networking and educational events several times a year for the Cardozo Society, as well as for the Rothschild (business) and Maimonides (medical) affinity groups. If you would like to get involved with UJF's affin-



Lawyers earned one CLE credit in ethics during the program on malpractice. (l-r): Jack Scherban, Mel Bloomenthal, Matt Knopf, Howland Gordon, Steve Steinmetz and Cathy Satz.

ity groups or want to learn more about upcoming programming, contact Sharon Franklin at sharon@ujf.org.

Discussion of Jewish Genealogy Planned in Darien

BY ELISSA KAPLAN

Have you always wanted to start working on your genealogy but didn't know how to get started? Have you always believed that there are no records of your family? Do you wonder where your family came from? Was your family name changed "at Ellis Island" and no one knows the original name? Come listen to Linda Carlson, genealogist, and learn how to find the answers to your questions.

The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County (JHSFC), in partnership with Middlesex Genealogical Society (MGS) of Darien, invites the community to a presentation by Linda Carlson on Sunday, March 22, at the Darien Library, 1441 Post Road, Darien. The program begins at 2 p.m., following refreshments at 1:30 p.m.. This program is being held as part of the JHSFC Annual Meeting. It is free and open to the community.

Linda Carlson was born and raised in New York City until age 5, when she moved to Long Island. She moved to Connecticut in the 1970s to attend the University of Hartford and never left. As a descendant of Jewish immigrant grandparents, Linda began her



Linda Carlson

genealogical research at age 15 for a school project. Her husband is descended from English, Irish, Danish and Swedish immigrants, which has allowed her to expand her research skills into these areas as well.

Linda currently assists the public with their genealogy questions at Genealogy Road Shows, sponsored by the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council.

After beginning her career as a Special Education teacher, Linda is now the Educational Director at a private high school. She earned a master's degree in Educational Technology from the University of Connecticut and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in School Administration from American International College.

Working as a Professional Genealogist for the past few years, Linda Carlson specializes in doing research for information that is not available online. Her presentation

will cover some of the common methods of doing genealogy from a Jewish perspective. She will provide information about ship records, Ellis Island, name changes, naturalization, reading gravestones, finding towns in Europe, Holocaust records, Jewish DNA and more.

She is a member of the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council and is on the

Board of both of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Connecticut and the Connecticut Society of Genealogists.

If you have questions about the program, contact The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County, Bridging Yesterday and Tomorrow, by phone: 203-321-1373 ext.150, by email: info@jhsfc-ct.org or on-line: <http://jhsfc-ct.org/>.

Bi-Cultural Teen Receives 'Mitzvah Hero' Award

(Courtesy of BCHA) Ben Marcus, a junior at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Upper School in Stamford, has received the "Mitzvah Hero" Award of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield. Ben was among 11 community volunteers to be honored with the award at a special ceremony held in December in Bridgeport.

In addition to serving as president of Bi-Cultural's junior class, Ben is also the founder of the school's Environmental Club. Last spring, he was among a group of Bi-Cultural students to organize a fishing expedition with special needs children, working with the C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation, an organization that enriches the lives of children with special needs. It was the first such C.A.S.T. for Kids event in Connecticut.

Ben and his family are members of Beit Chaverim Synagogue in Westport.



Bi-Cultural student Ben Marcus (holding award) is joined by his family at the "Mitzvah Hero" Award Ceremony.

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Bits and 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:

Erica and George Brunner on the birth of a son, Tobias Alexander Brunner
Andrea and David M. Cohen on the birth of a grandson, Oliver Lawrence Cohen.
Robin and Jason Fischel on the birth of a daughter, Hadassah Faye Fischel; and to grandparents, Sam Fischel and Ellen and Richard Weber; and to great grandmother Guta Fischel.
Gloria Green and Cheryl Green Hillman on the birth of a great grandson and grandson.
Ele and Mort Lowenthal on the birth of a great grandson, Ayden Marty Akabas
Rachel Kurth and Michael Mellin on the birth of a daughter, Leah Charlotte Mellin
Meira and Joe Scheiner on the birth of a daughter; and to grandparents, Kalia and Yaakov Scheiner and Goldy and Reuven Stepansky.
Ivy and Marvin Schildkraut on the birth of a grandson.

Allison Simpkin and Sean Kapras on the birth of a daughter, Sarah Paige Simpkin; and to grandmother Gilda Simpkin.

Sandy Weiner and Marc Weiner on the birth of a grandson.

Helene Zimmerman on the birth of a great granddaughter.

MAZAL TOV TO ENGAGEMENTS/MARRIAGES:

Stephne and Kerrin Behrend on the marriage of their son, Neal Behrend, to Natalie Kamenetsky.

Michelle and Peter Ebstein on the engagement of their daughter Rebecca Ebstein to Andrew Selig.

Joanne and Marshall Goldberg on the marriage of their son, Jonathan Goldberg, to Grace Gould.

Susan and Edward Greenberg on the marriage of their granddaughter, Margaret Greenberg to Erik Blumenkranz.

Nancy and Jerry Kapchan on the marriage of their daughter, Aly Kapchan, to Brett Ackerman.

Lieba and Steve Lander on the engagement of their daughter, Karen Lander, to Kevin Lafferty, son of Jody Handler Lafferty and Daniel Lafferty.

Debra and Stephen Pollack on the marriage of

their son, Adam Pollack, to Gabriela Costa.

Joan and Robert Rosenthal on the marriage of their daughter Rachel Rosenthal to Sam De Roest.

Sheryl and Mark Schwartz on the engagement of their daughter, Rebecca Schwartz to Max Altholz, son of Lauren and Jeffrey Altholz.

Lois Stark and Garry Lessen on the marriage of their daughter, Stacy Lessen, to Gregg Arenson.

Ronnie Lilien on the engagement of her daughter Julia Falkenburg to Josh Askinazie.

Rona and David Moskowitz on the marriage of their son, Ben Moskowitz to Megan Eilenberg.

Eva Weller on the engagement of her daughter, Elizabeth Weller to Todd Swedock.

Nurit and Mark Wexler on the engagement of their daughter, Shira Wexler to Josh Goldhirsch, and to grandparents Debbie and Ben Soifer.

MAZEL TOV TO B'NAI MITZVAH:

Matthew Connor Dreyer, son of Bryna and Jonathan Dreyer and to grandparents Marlene and Edward Chait and Lois and Neil Dreyer.

Selia Sitzer, daughter of Reba and Howard Sitzer.

Shayna Friedman, daughter of Stacy Friedman

WE MOURN THE LOSS OF:

Donald Berman: brother of Nancy Greene.

Vivian Berman: mother of Harvey Berman.

Annette Block: mother of Liba Steinmetz and of Stephen Block.

Jennifer Buhler: daughter of Gail Karlitz

Carol Burstein: mother of Ora Burstein.

Stanley Epstein: father of Melissa Broder.

Carrie Goettsch: sister of Debbie Ferri.

Claire Goichman: grandmother of Sam Sroka.

Rita Post Gordon: mother of Judith Post Roll.

Elliott Koenig: uncle of Gary Schpero.

Pearl Lubash: mother of Sharon Rubin.

Barbara Mercanti: mother of Pamela Aflalo.

Irwin Metviner: husband of Estelle Metviner

and father of Monica Metviner Blatt, Alexander, David, Jonathan and Neil Metviner.

Claudio Ortiz: brother of Elizabeth Ortiz-Schwartz

Ken Peters: husband of Beth Peters

Marcia Pomerantz: mother of Sylvan Pomerantz.

Dr. Howard Radwin: brother of Susan Isaacs

Walter Shuchatowitz (Mr. S): husband of Jackie Shuchatowitz; and father of Avron, Robert and Phyllis Lander.

Robert Tathan: father of Sarah Hochman.

Ruth Trappier: mother of Mervyn Trappier.

George Trief: father of Frank Trief.

Larry Zuckerberg: brother of Jodi Boxer.



Betsy Berns Korn, AIPAC president-elect (center), with members of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Upper School's Israel Club.

AIPAC's President-Elect Discusses Israel Advocacy at BCHA

(Courtesy of BCHA) In November, the Israel Advocacy Club of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Upper School (BCHA) hosted Betsy Berns Korn, president-elect of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), who spoke to students about her experience as an intern at AIPAC in 1989, when she first learned about

the need to continually cultivate among America's leaders a strong relationship with the state of Israel. Many BCHA Upper School students plan to visit Washington, D.C. this spring to take part in AIPAC's annual policy conference, where they will have the opportunity to advocate for Israel in the halls of Congress.

Walter Shuchatowitz, z"l: A Visionary and Guiding Soul

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In the 1990s, Mr. Shuchatowitz received the coveted Jerusalem Prize presented by the State of Israel. In addition, under his leadership, Bi-Cultural was named an outstanding elementary school by the U.S. Department of Education.

In a letter to the community, Bi-Cultural Day leadership said, "Mr. S. was far more than our school's founder and founding principal, he was our father, grandfather, mentor and guiding soul. He was the voice that told us we

can do better, he was the neshama who helped us dream of what our school and community could be."

Walter Shuchatowitz was predeceased by his wife, Deena Shuchatowitz, in 2017. He is survived by his wife, Jackie Shuchatowitz, three children and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy will host a memorial tribute to Walter Shuchatowitz z"l on Thursday, Jan. 23 at the school, 2186 High Ridge Rd. Services at 7 p.m., followed by the memorial.

UJF Selected for Grinspoon 'Life & Legacy' Program

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

financial incentives to ensure success in building legacy giving into the philanthropic culture of Jewish organizations. Emphasizing collaboration, it works to create a united and strong Jewish community for the future.

Diane Sloyer, Federation CEO, facilitated the connection between LIFE & LEGACY and UJF. It is one of the first calls she made when taking over as CEO, 2 ½ years ago. It is a lengthy process for acceptance which includes an application and several interviews.

Sloyer explains: "I believe that integrating legacy giving into the philanthropic culture of our community is key for the continued long-term viability and strength of our local Jewish Community. The legacy program offers those who have supported our community during their lifetime the opportunity to be remembered by maintaining their support long after they have passed on. A legacy gift also allows individuals and couples who have never donated before and/or are unsure of their future financial needs the opportunity to help provide for the community in a way that doesn't impact their current finances."

As of December 31, 2019, with 630 participating organizations participating in 58 communities throughout North America, LIFE & LEGACY has helped its partners secure more than 25,781 legacy commitments with an estimated value of nearly a billion dollars in future gifts to the Jewish community. UJF has been accepted into

Cohort 8 along with Ann Arbor, MI Columbus, OH Ottawa, ON Canada, and Toronto, ON Canada.

Beverly Stein, President of Schoke Jewish Family Service, is grateful to be participating in this program. "A legacy gift is a lasting investment in our Jewish community. It helps to ensure that the Agencies and Synagogues we care about will be viable for future generations," she shared.

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy, formerly Bi-Cultural Day School, was founded over 50 years ago and is excited to participate in the LIFE & LEGACY program to ensure Jewish education is part of Stamford's Jewish landscape for years to come.

"I am thankful that Bi-Cultural will be able to participate in this truly communal program. The training the Grinspoon Foundation will provide our community will make a measurable and lasting impact," shared board president David Pitkoff.

Organizations in Stamford, New Canaan and Darien communities now part of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation LIFE & LEGACY program include United Jewish Federation, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy, Chabad of New Canaan, Chabad of Stamford, Congregation Agudath Sholom, Friendship Circle, JCC Stamford, Schoke Jewish Family Service, Temple Beth El, Temple Sinai, and Young Israel of Stamford.

Lenore Fogel will serve as coordinator of the program and can be reached at Lenore@ujf.org for more information. Additional information can be found on the Federation website at www.ujf.org/legacy.

UJF Holds Annual Meeting and Year End Celebration

(Courtesy of UJF) Ricky Arbron was honored for her three years of service as President of United Jewish Federation at UJF's Year-End Celebration and Annual Meeting in December at the Ferguson Library. The evening was chaired by Dinah Miller-Marlowe and Seth Marlowe.

Arbron's term was marked by a strategic vision to evaluate and redefine Federation's role, mission and purpose in the community and beyond. The board was restructured to better represent our diverse community. Each year of her tenure brought new volunteers, more donors and an increased campaign.

"Ricky is an out of the box thinker with a tremendous amount of love for being Jewish and our Jewish community," said Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO. "Her energy and enthusiasm spread to others and the Federation is blessed to have had her as our leader for the past three years."

Ricky addressed the group at the meeting and conveyed her love of Federation, the driving forces during her tenure and the new changes proposed for Federation and the community.

"Three years ago, when I stood here before you...I asked you to join me in envisioning a stronger and more vibrant Jewish community."

"...We spoke to all segments of our community, we continued to learn together within our community, took best practices from other Federations and worked through a strategic process to make our community a better place. We honestly faced



Honoree Ricky Arbron joined by Family and Friends (l-r) Ed Hatton, Laura Jaques, Jake Arbron, Ricky Arbron, Linda Gross, Barrett Gross, and Tom Arbron. (Credit: Aviva Maller Photography)

what was working, and what was not. We seriously cut our spending and have focused on staying true to our mission statement. We continue to be the communal convener, and we raise funds for our local agencies. However, we heard you."

"Many of you expressed concern that they were getting asks both from our agencies and from us, for our agencies. You wanted to know 'why this duplication?!' As our research pointed out, all of our agencies are raising more money directly from our community. All of our

institutions have professional fundraisers. We also learned that as great as our Jewish community is, there were ways we could make it even stronger. You also said you wanted transparency in all that we do. Our new model answers these questions, concerns and values, you communicated to us... Your dollars are speaking louder and clearer than ever before. We are the overall agency to bring our community together – initiating programs for the community that only Federation can do..."



Volunteer of the Year Award recipients Peter Lilienthal, Toby Lazarus, Shari Raymond and Cathy Satz with UJF CEO Diane Sloyer (center). (Credit: Aviva Maller Photography)



Jonathan and Dr. Allison Ostroff receive the Harvey Peltz Young Leadership Award. (Credit: Aviva Maller Photography)

"My partnership with all of you has been wonderful. I love our Jewish community more than ever. I welcomed understanding our challenges, speaking with you and hearing your comments and dreams about our community."

The evening also honored David Fogel with the Distinguished Leadership Award and the Harvey A. Peltz Award was presented to Dr. Allison and Jonathan Ostroff. Volunteers of the Year Awards were given to Toby Lazarus, Peter Lilienthal, Shari Raymond and Cathy Satz.



Eileen and Fred Springer with Judy Raymond. (Credit: Aviva Maller Photography)



Allan Lichtenberg, Toby Lazarus, Drs. Kayla and Leon Hanna, and event chairs Dinah Miller Marlowe and Seth Marlowe. (Credit: Aviva Maller Photography)



Over 150 attendees listen to UJF President-elect David Gordon. (Credit: Aviva Maller Photography)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Outgoing UJF President Ricky Arbron and UJF CEO Diane Sloyer. (Credit: Aviva Maller Photography)

UJF Holds Annual Meeting and Year End Celebration

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

David P. Gordon was installed as the new UJF President (see his remarks on page 2).

The following officers were installed on the UJF 2020 board of directors:

Ricky Arbron, Robin Fischel, Nan Gordon, Linda Gornitsky, Caryn Halbrecht, Leon Hanna, Jill Kaplan, Rachel Klein, Lorraine Kwestkin, Peter Lilienthal, Dinah Miller-Marlowe, Nancy Mimoun, Jonathan Ostroff, Shari Raymond, Arlene Rosen, Edith Samers, Michael Schlessinger, Rhonda Schaffer-Maroon, Tara Shapiro, Sherry Steiner, Greg Waldstreicher and Ellen Weber.



David Gordon, President-elect, shares his vision for UJF.



Daniel Gordon, UJF President-elect David Gordon, Meryl Gordon, Jonathan Rohner, and Jonathan Gordon.



Bi-Cultural 8th Graders fill the toy closet.

UJF Women Collect Toys for "David's Treasure Chest"

(Courtesy of UJF) Women's Philanthropy of United Jewish Federation once again spearheaded a toy drive for David's Treasure Chest in Stamford Hospital's children's ward. Toys were collected by Federation, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy, Carmel Academy and Gan Yeladim, Stamford. Eighth graders from BCHA delivered the toys and visited with sick children in addition to learning about David Bennett Kanarek, the young boy in whose memory the toy closet is named.



David's Treasure Chest is filled!

Friendship Circle Offers a Night Out For the Whole Family

(Courtesy of The Friendship Circle) What's better than a Saturday night out on the town? A night on the town with friends, food and fun, which is just how a group of children from the Friendship Circle and their siblings recently spent their Saturday evening.

Called "Kids Night Out," the program gave children with special needs, their siblings and teen volunteers a chance to spend some time together.

The night began with a musical recitation of Havdalah to mark the end of Shabbat, followed by a pizza dinner at Soosh. Then it was time for the main attraction: a trip to the indoor inflatable center, Pump It Up in Norwalk, where the fun and laughter was contagious.

One could hear the squeals of delight echoing through the building as the youngsters got a chance to climb the rock wall, bounce on inflatables and dive into a ball pit.

While the event was clearly geared towards children, the real beneficiaries seem to have been the parents.

The experience of having a child with special needs varies in every family but for many, it brings along a set of physical and emotional challenges. Caring for a child with special needs often precludes parents from being able to relax and spend some time away from their children to focus on themselves, their relationship and their lives.

That's when the Friendship Circle steps in. For Kids Night Out, the parents were encouraged to drop off their kids and enjoy a night on the town.

Dorit Shashouah, Friendship Circle mom, describes it in her own words. "After dropping off our son for Kids Night Out, it was the first time in ages that we actually enjoyed adult company. We



Chana Goldstein and teen volunteer, Rebecca Friedlander, enjoy the Pump It Up inflatables.

felt very calm about going out after we dropped Tamir, our 19 year old son, off for the program."

"The parents got a goody bag that had delicious treats in there. Three of us couples headed to a restaurant in Stamford. It was the first time in many years that we could sit comfortably with other adults and laugh, make jokes, share stories and more. We all knew that our children were in the very good and trusty hands of the FC staff."

"One thing was for sure; all six of us were genuinely happy. There are simply no words to describe the deep gratitude, connection and appreciation to the FC staff for making it happen."

For more information or to get involved, go to www.FriendshipCT.com or email Malya@FriendshipCT.com.

Hundreds Attend Eighth Annual Saul Cohen-Schoke JFS Lecture

(Courtesy of JFS) Close to 300 guests attended the Eighth Annual Saul Cohen-Schoke JFS Lecture, held at the Ferguson Library, to hear the guest speaker, Brandeis University Professor Barry Shrage. Professor Shrage, who served for 30 years as president of Combined Jewish Philanthropies of

Greater Boston, encouraged the audience to support their Jewish identity through community organizations such as Schoke JFS.

For more information and photos of the event, visit <https://www.ctjfs.org/saul-cohen-jfs-lecture/>



Pictured is the Steering Committee of the 8th Annual Saul Cohen-Schoke JFS Lecture with guest speaker, Barry Shrage. (l-r) Jonathan Fass, COO of Schoke JFS; Beverly Stein, President of the Board; Joanna and Mark Frank; Michael and Betsy Stone; Mimi Cohen; Barry Shrage, featured speaker; Matt Greenberg, CEO of Schoke JFS; Connie and Alan Freeman; Stephen and Gail G. Trell and Sheila L. Romanowitz.

(Credit: Aviva Maller Photography)

Chabad of Stamford Runs Spiritual Journey To Israel for Women

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Chabad of Stamford led a week-long “women’s spiritual journey” to Israel in November with a group of local women from Fairfield County. The tour was led by Leah Shemtov, Co-Director of Chabad of Stamford, and began with a stop at the “Ohel” in New York, the resting place of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson. While there, the group celebrated the Bat Mitzvah of Leah’s daughter, Shaina Shemtov, before departing to Israel.

Using the Torah as their primary guide the group traveled the length and breadth of Israel. Highlights included going to Bethle-

hem to visit the Tomb of Rachel before stopping at a soldier’s ‘rest stop’ manned by volunteers where the women spent quality time with off-duty soldiers, including women drone pilots. Another moving experience was going to the ancient city of Hebron where they had an opportunity to pray at the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

On Friday the group welcomed in the Sabbath by lighting candles in an apartment overlooking the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem with magnificent views of the Temple Mount. As they experienced celebrating Shabbat at the Western wall with thousands of Jews from all over the world, they also had a chance meet-

ing with another Stamford resident and former Gan Yeladim Alum, Shoshana Munk, who was thrilled to be having a Shabbat meal with three of her former teachers! At the Golan Heights, they had another chance to connect to Stamford when they discovered their guide for the afternoon had been a former visiting soldier to Stamford on the JCC’s “Tzahal Shalom” program.



The travelers visit Maarat Hamachpela (the Cave of the Patriarchs) in the ancient city of Hebron.



Participants in Chabad of Stamford’s women’s trip to Israel pose during a day spent volunteering at Pantry Packers food bank in Jerusalem. (l-r) Lieba Lander, Dallice Lazarus, Maddy Shapiro, Cyndy Goldberg, Leah Shemtov, Stephanie Finder, Aliza Avshalom (tour guide) and Linda Spilka

The trip included those who were visiting Israel for the first time and those who had been countless times before. For all, however, it was a chance to see Israel in a new and unique light.

Throughout the seven days, the group was fortunate to travel with a knowledgeable tour guide and met many individuals including rabbis, journalists and soldiers. For Leiba Lander, seeing Israel through the eyes of their tour guide was one of the highlights of the trip, adding that “her sharing of her love of the land and yiddishkeit along with her incredible knowledge made our travels shine with understanding and beauty on a trip that will remain in our hearts forever.”

The women were privileged to spend

time volunteering at “Pantry Packers,” the food distribution arm of Colel Chabad, the oldest continuously operating network of social services in Israel, established in 1788. They also worked on an archeological dig unearthing artifacts and debris from Jerusalem. From sightseeing to praying to volunteering and learning, the trip had something for everyone.

According to participant, Dallice Lazarus, “Our women’s spiritual journey should be renamed trip of a lifetime as it was the most inspiring time filled with tears and joy and life changing feelings.”

For Leiba Lander, the journey was “beyond words, allowing spiritually to flow at every moment.”

Stamford Organizations Court New Jewish Families



Stamford residents (l-r) Elaine Finkelstein, a Jewish community volunteer; Miriam Sperber, director of admissions at Stamford’s Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy; and Jonathan Makovsky, a local realtor.

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) Representatives of Bi-Cultural Hebrew

Academy, as well as other synagogues and organizations within Stamford’s Orthodox

Jewish community, traveled to New York City in November to participate in the Orthodox Union’s (OU) Seventh International Jewish Community Home & Job Relocation Fair. The fair is aimed at recruiting new families and individuals to move to different Jewish communities throughout the country.

“Stamford has all the amenities that Orthodox families could want, including two Orthodox synagogues, eruv (Shabbat boundaries), mikvah (ritual bath), a day school and three kosher restaurants. We’ve had a lot of young families move here within the last four to five years. We hope that some families come for a Shabbat, which is the best way to experience our community, and hopefully some of those people will eventually move here,” said Michael Feldstein, who represented Stamford at the fair.

“For various reasons, including the high costs of tuition and housing in the New York City area, there is a growing cadre of Orthodox families exploring other locations throughout the country and Israel to establish their homes. We are pleased to have been able to assemble so many Torah communities and to enable them to show-

case to these families the attractiveness and advantages of their respective communities,” said Orthodox Union President Moishe Bane.

“The enthusiasm shown by the representatives from Connecticut as they demonstrated the vibrancy of their community’s Orthodox Jewish life was truly extraordinary,” said Orthodox Union Executive Vice President Allen Fagin. “As dozens of community fair participants crowded around their table, they had an opportunity to be introduced to a welcoming community which is rich in the infrastructure necessary for a full and meaningful Orthodox life.”

Founded in 1898, the Orthodox Union serves as the voice of American Orthodox Jewry, with over 400 congregations in its synagogue network. As the umbrella organization for American Orthodox Jewry, the OU is at the forefront of advocacy work on both state and federal levels, as well as outreach to Jewish teens and young professionals through NCSY, Israel Free Spirit Birthright, Yachad and OU Press, among many other divisions and programs. For more information, visit <https://www.ou.org/>.

No Hate, No Fear

UJF convenes community interfaith vigil

(Courtesy of UJF) On Sunday evening, January 5, over 500 people gathered at Temple Beth El in Stamford for a vigil convened by United Jewish Federation's Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), and the Interfaith Council of Southwestern Connecticut. The Board of Rabbinis and AJC co-sponsored the event.

The gathering was a result of the recent myriad of anti-Semitic assaults. In addition to the participation of those in the local community, the event was attended by local and state politicians including Governor Ned Lamont, Senator Richard Blumenthal, Congressman Jim Himes, Connecticut Attorney General William Tong, Stamford Mayor David Martin and many more. (see full list in the box below). Also joining the event were law enforcement from both Stamford and New Canaan as well as area clergy of all faiths. Over 30 dignitaries sat on the bima (stage) and participated in a candle lighting ceremony.

The evening began with opening remarks by UJF CEO Diane Sloyer, followed by David Gordon, UJF President, who introduced the dignitaries and led the audience, which included an additional 500 people live stream-

ing, in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The New World Chorus, led by Beth Styles, Founder, Composer, Director; and Jason Terry, Choir Director, sang meaningful songs that touched all in the audience, bringing them to their feet in the closing song, Oseh Shalom, a prayer for peace.

Speeches were heartfelt and uniting. The New Canaan Chief of Police, Leon Krolkowski, called on all "to pay it forward and do something good for someone else...This simple act can make a difference."

Governor Ned Lamont shared, "Looking at this room and the love and the shared humanity, this is what it takes to conquer some of the poison that is out there right now."

Senator Richard Blumenthal added, "We need to teach to love, to despise hatred and stamp it out, and to continue to light candles. No hate, no fear; we are Americans; we will not tolerate it."

A common theme of the remarks included the need for dialogue, education and an appreciation for diversity.

To learn more about the work of UJF's Jewish Community Relations Council, email Diane Sloyer at dianesloyer@ujf.org.



New Canaan Chief of Police Leon Krolkowski: "Three requests: Do something kind tomorrow for someone....Keep in your thoughts and prayers the thousands of police officers that are serving our nation and our communities.....Pass along this message to 10-20 people who weren't here tonight."



Steven Ginsburg, ADL CT Director: "We are getting many more reports of anti-semitism and hate called to our office...We also get a whole different kind of call - the call from clergy, the call from our elected officials, the call from the police, the call from community leaders - saying 'what can we do to help'. Tonight is part of that."



Cantor Jill Abramson participates in the candle lighting ceremony.



The New World Chorus sings "Heal Us," "Eli, Eli," and "Oseh Shalom."

All photos are courtesy of Aviva Maller Photography.

Dignitaries in Attendance at the Vigil: Clergy:

Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont
U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal
U.S. Congressman Jim Himes
CT Attorney General William Tong
CT State Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff
CT State Senator Carlo Leone
CT State Senator Will Haskell
CT State Representative Dan Fox
CT State Representative Matt Blumenthal
CT State Representative Caroline Simmons
Stamford Mayor David Martin
Stamford Board Representative Dan Lyon
Police Chief Leon Krolkowski, New Canaan
Captain Sue Bretthausen, Stamford Police

Cantor Jill Abramson, Congregation Shir Ami, Greenwich
Dr. Kareem Adeeb, Imam, Muslim Study and Prayer Group
Rev. Dr. Michael Christie, Union Baptist Church, Stamford
Father Justin Crisp, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, New Canaan
Reverend Shelley Donaldson, First Presbyterian Church, Stamford
Rabbi Joshua Hammerman, Temple Beth El Stamford
Pastor Robert Hewitt, 1st United Methodist Church Stamford
Minister Michael Hyman, Union Baptist Church, Stamford
Rabbi Eli Kohl, Young Israel of Stamford
Reverend Mark Lingle, St. Francis Episcopal Church, Stamford,
President Interfaith Council
Reverend Susan M. Pfeil, United Congregational Church, Norwalk
Rabbi Liz Rolle, Chaplain, Stamford Hospital
Rabbi Phil Schechter, Jewish War Veterans

Rabbi Moshe Shemtov, Chabad of Stamford
Reverend Frances Sink, The Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Stamford
Reverend David Van Dyke, 1st Presbyterian Church, Stamford
Rabbi Oran Zweiter, Congregation Agudath Sholom, Stamford
Mr. Talay Hafiz, President, Stamford Islamic Center
Mr. Maher Hussein, President, Islamic Cultural Center, Norwalk
Dr. Ibrahim Mohamed, Islamic Cultural Center of NY - Stamford

Local Agency Heads:

Ms. Diane Sloyer, CEO, United Jewish Federation
Mr. Steven Ginsburg, Director of ADL Connecticut
Mr. Marshall Kurland, CEO JCC Stamford
Ms. Jackie Herman, Head of School, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy

Excerpts from UJF CEO Diane Sloyer's Vigil Remarks

Thank you all for being here with us this evening-we stand strong together ..No Hate, No Fear!

Community leaders, clergy of many faiths, elected officials...tonight we are one, coming together as a community to say enough!

Each day of the 8 day festival of Chanukah there were attacks on Jews in NY/NJ.

Every single day.

Every single day during the Festival of Lights, we saw darkness and evil.

These attacks don't fit any one narrative. The perpetrators over the last year have been from different backgrounds and have expressed different politics.

But what all these individuals have in common is their hatred of Jews.

No one should feel intimidated into hiding their Jewishness or any religion they choose to outwardly display.

No one should accept this as "normal."

As Jewish Historian Deborah E. Lipstadt

recently said, "No healthy democracy can afford to tolerate anti-Semitism in its midst. It is a sign of long-term rot in that democracy,"

Hating Jews is just the beginning of a rot that sets in to corroding societies.

It has to stop. It's not a Jewish problem. It's an American problem.

We need our community partners, allies and friends, like you, to stand with us.

We need protection, we need our political leaders, and we need you to stand united

against hate and violence in all its forms.

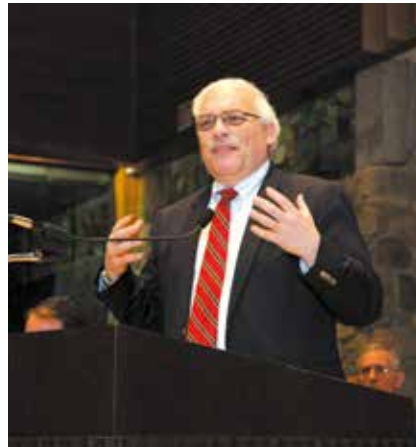
We truly appreciate all of you being here tonight.

Let today be an evening of love and tolerance - for our community and for our broader communities in which we live.

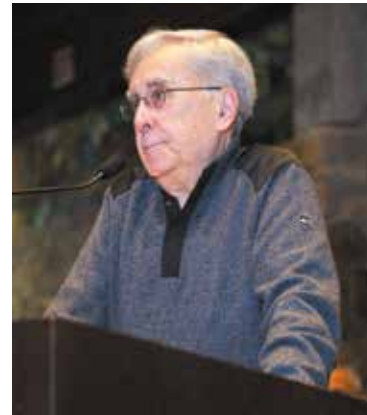
No hate, no fear - this speaks to ALL OF US. Let's show the world what we are made of. Love, compassion, devotion to principles - proud Jews and our good neighbors working, praying, advocating... side by side.



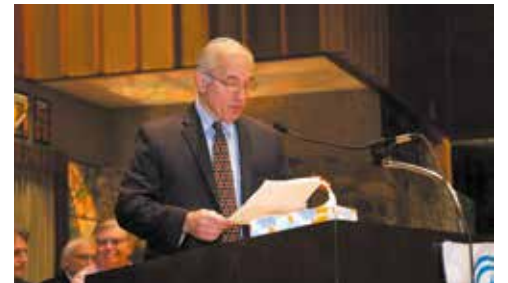
State Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff, State Representative Matt Blumenthal and Rabbi Oran Zweiter light candles.



Rabbi Joshua Hammerman: "We are here tonight to proclaim that hate will never win."



Dr. Kareem Adeeb, Imam: "stand up and say No to Anti-Semitism, No to Islamophobia, No to hate, No to racism, Yes to the unity of God, Yes to the unity of the universe, Yes to the unity of mankind."



UJF President David Gordon introduces the dignitaries.



Audience members hold signs reading "Hatred and fear have no place here."



Stamford Police Captain Sue Bretthauer: "Be vigilant. Pay attention to what is going on...The police are here, for each and every one of you."



(l-r) Attorney General William Tong, Rabbi Joshua Hammerman, Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont, UJF CEO Diane Sloyer and U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal.



Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont: "Looking at this room and the love and the shared humanity - this is what it takes to conquer some of the poison that is out there right now."



U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal: "Hate is a virus that has plagued our faith and so too other faiths that are represented on this bimah."



U.S. Congressman Jim Himes: "...I am comforted to stand with members of my community, with the governor, with senators, with state senators, with state representatives, with attorney generals and police captains and imams and rabbis and priests....all come together to say no to hate."



Mayor David Martin: "Rather than racism - respect. Rather than hatred - love. Rather than fear - courage....Respect and love and courage is the way for us, as a species, to survive."



Attorney General William Tong: "My grandmother came as an immigrant...a refugee running from war and violence...My grandmother would say 'I didn't come all this way to watch us tear ourselves apart.'"



Reverend Mark Lingle: "What we are calling for us all to work on, and for the community and the larger society to be engaged in, is the work of becoming a better human being...Let us go forth in love."

All photos are courtesy of Aviva Maller Photography.



Minister Michael Hyman: "Words do matter...We must make sure that we speak up."



Teens from UJF's Kuriansky Teen Tzedakah Program.



Cars line up for Chabad of Stamford's Menorah Car Parade.

Chabad of Stamford Shines on Chanukah

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Every year, Chabad of Stamford celebrates Chanukah with various community events. This year was no exception as Chabad kicked off the holiday with its 31st giant menorah lighting ceremony at Latham Park. More than 350 people enjoyed Stamford's first-ever giant gelt drop, live music from "Three Rabbis and a Cik," and an olive oil-making demonstration, as well as latkes, doughnuts and hot apple cider.

Leah Shemtov, co-director of Chabad of Stamford, said of the event, "The giant menorah lighting is an opportunity for the entire Jewish community of Stamford to come together and celebrate as we 'light up' the night together."

Other Chanukah events held during the week included the Jewish Women Connected (JWC) Package Party, where gifts that were brought to the party were auctioned off for charity, a Chanukah brunch for the community with music from Bobby Doowah, a "Betsy's Buddies" lunch for seniors and their friends, and the annual Menorah Car Parade through Stamford. The Menorah Car Parade, which included 27 cars decked out with menorahs on their roofs, lit up the streets of Stamford as participants drove together to spread Chanukah light and spirit.

Coming so soon after the horror that occurred in Monsey and the rising violence against Jews globally, Rabbi Moshe Shemtov's Chanukah message was especially timely. Shemtov said, "As we lit up the streets of Stamford with 27 cars, each sporting a bright menorah, a police escort, joyous families, doughnuts, snacks, hot latkes and music, we showed that joy and love and Jewish pride will win through." He added that the goal of Chanukah was "to spread the message of light, goodness and positivity having power to overshadow bad, darkness and negativity, at the very time that evil and Anti-Semitism reared their ugly heads just a few miles from us over the Governor Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, to remind us that we must stand stronger, be proud Jews and not give in. The timing of Chanukah and its message is not by chance." Rabbi Moshe urged the community to "take the Chanukah energy and message: that though they rise up against us, we will persevere!"

Having given out 9,000 Chanukah candles, 220 dreidels, 720 doughnuts, 1500 Chanukah guides, 872 latkes, 200 menorah kits and 5342 chocolate coins; provided entertainment for 16 seniors by the children of Gan Yeladim at the Betsy's Buddies lunch; and held the giant menorah lighting and the Menorah Car Parade, Chabad of Stamford kept the Chanukah flames burning bright in Stamford.



Chanukah celebrants brave the cold to pose in front of Chabad's giant menorah in downtown Stamford.

(Credit: Steve Labkoff/www.luminantpix.com)

Chabad of New Canaan Celebrates Chanukah



The New Canaan Fire Department helped celebrate Chanukah, with the "Gelt Drop" from a fire truck.



Over 100 people gathered on God's Acre in New Canaan to celebrate Chanukah with Chabad of New Canaan.



(l-r) Izzy Kanefsky, Marina Sapir, Matvey Grinman, Galina Kats, Tamara Grinman, Jannette Vitenzon, Rimma Livshits, Rozanna Frolov, Nelly Averbakh, Raisa Gluskiy, Esther Shklover, Rebekah Kanefsky and Ilya Molodetskiy.

Anachnu Celebrates Chanukah

(Courtesy of JFS) Marina Sapir, Director of the Anachnu Program, and Rebekah Kanefsky, Case Management Director at Schoke Jewish Family Service, celebrated the first night of Chanukah at an event sponsored by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, and hosted by the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City. Ten Anachnu participants were present at the event, with the transportation provid-

ed by the Claims Conference.

Anachnu is a program managed by Schoke JFS with support from Jewish Federations of North America Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care, Kavod SHEF, the Claims Conference, and the Kuriansky Teen Tzedakah Fund of United Jewish Federation.

For more information, visit www.ctjfs.org/anachnu



NextGen's 'Lights, Latkes & Laughter' Celebrates Chanukah

(Courtesy of UJF) Couples and singles from around the Greater Stamford area came together on Saturday night, December 14, to celebrate Chanukah with United Jewish Federation's NextGen at the "Lights, Latkes & Laughter" event. The program was held in the party room of the Beacon in Harbor Point. Lively music and soft candlelight were the perfect backdrop for the more than 80 guests who came to mingle, catch up with friends and meet new people.

Besides sampling latkes and other holiday fare, guests had a chance to taste a variety of spirits and sip specialty holiday cocktails from Litchfield Distillery, a Connecticut craft liquor company. Spirits specialist Naomi Adler educated guests about the natural ingredients and flavorings used from local farmers to create their products one batch at a time.

Special thanks go to Josh Esses, and the event committee. For more information about United Jewish Federation's NextGen group, contact Sharon Franklin at sharon@ujf.org.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Carmel Combines Social Skills and STEAM After School

(Courtesy of Carmel Academy) "Often lifelong friendships are formed in conventional after school programs, such as sports. However, our students do not always have similar interests. The idea to combine social skills with STEAM evolved after noticing that students who were not interested in sports were left out of our after-school program schedule. We also observed that a large percentage of our students are more interested in STEAM than our robust athletic program. It is important to us that every child has an opportunity to participate in a non-school related after school program," said Lisa Corner, Director of Educational Resources and PALS program.

The new social skills and STEAM pro-

gram, beginning at Carmel Academy this spring, will allow children to develop meaningful friendships while learning the soft skills necessary to be successful in the careers of the future. These skills include creative critical thinking, inferencing, collaboration, working as a team, as well as the ability to have conversations and fun. Particularly, children who spend their day having to focus on subjects or activities they aren't particularly interested in are given the opportunity to build on their strengths. This will greatly help their self-esteem. This after school program will give them the opportunity to feel good about themselves and develop their interests while in a structured and supportive setting.

Carmel Academy currently offers social skills training for all of its students, TK through 8. The school uses the Dr. Michelle Dunn's S.O.S. social skills program, which focuses on the direct teaching of social skills, behavioral and emotional regulation and peer mentoring. This, combined with the Second Step program, which is rooted in social-emotional learning, includes emotion management, problem solving, empathy and skills for learning. Second Step, S.O.S and this new after school program include a parent component, with parent training and communication.

Contact Lisa Corner for more information at (203) 983-3556 or lisa.corner@carmelacademy.com.



Carmel students Elijah G., Jack H., and Derek P. work together as a team to engineer a structure in the middle school STEAM lab.

UConn-Stamford Offers Spring 2020 Judaic Studies Programming

(Courtesy of Center for Judaic Studies, UConn) The Center for Judaic Studies at UConn Stamford is pleased to announce its spring programming.

On Tuesday, January 28, distinguished NYU historian of German Jewish life Marion Kaplan will deliver the annual Jacobson Lecture. Her topic concerns refugees to Portugal during Nazism, the subject of her latest book. The lecture begins at 6 p.m., preceded by a 5 p.m. reception. Reservations are not required.

In February, the Center for Judaic Studies

and Contemporary Jewish Life at Stamford is co-sponsoring a "dress for success" clothing drive. Business attire for both men and women, including accessories, will be gratefully accepted by donation.

On Thursday, April 2, at 12:30 p.m. in the MPR, Dr. Mark Weisstuch will give a special interfaith lecture in preparation for Passover and Easter on "Re-visioning the Cross: Chagall's Crucifixion Paintings."

On Tuesday, April 28, the Center will host a panel discussion on the legacies of the

European Jewish experience at 5:30 p.m. in the MPR. Panelists will include Dr. Andrew Zalewski, vice president of Gesher Galicia (geshergalicia.org), an organization dedicated to the history of Jewish Galicia and author of two books on the subject; Leora Tec, founder of Bridge to Poland (bridgetopoland.org), that promotes dialogue between contemporary Poles and American Jews; and Ralph Berger, an editor of his parents' writings as members of the Bielski partisans who survived Nazism in the Belorussian forests,

the subject of Nechama Tec's book *Defiance* and the film adaptation. This program will be the Center's annual Yom Hashoah commemoration.

All events are free of charge and open to the public. Parking in the Target lot on Broad Street is recommended. For more information about any of these programs, or if you require an accommodation, contact Professor Roden, Stamford Coordinator for Judaic Studies, at frederick.roden@uconn.edu or 203-251-8559.



Stuart and Bran Berni

ICRF CT Chapter Honors Stuart Berni at Gala

(Courtesy of ICRF) Nearly 300 gathered at the Stamford Hilton to recognize Stuart Berni of Greenwich at November's fourth annual Heroes For Hope gala for his 10 years of support and leadership of the Israel Cancer Research Fund (ICRF) and for his ongoing support of community challenges. The evening amassed \$300,000 for cancer research scientists in Israel. Mr. Berni stirred the audience with his soaring rhetoric, "Enough is Enough!"

Stamford mayor David Martin, who lost his wife to cancer and was the honorary event chair, pleaded, "Let us make miracles!"

Temple Beth El Spreads Holiday Cheer



Bottom row: (l-r) Catalina Horak, Exec Dir of B1C; Gail G. Trell; Belle Horwitz; Ivonne Zucco, B1C Workforce Development Director; and Alejandra Gomez, B1C staff person
Top row: (l-r) Steven Trell, Linda Rothman, Betsy Herold, Eve Herold, Jonathan Weiner, Rabbi Hammerman.

Troubled Water

Join UJF and UJA-JCC Greenwich for an evening with Seth Siegel, author of *Troubled Water*.

Hear how America's drinking water became contaminated, the risks it poses for us, what's needed to make it safe - and discover Israel's role for the solution.

January 30, 2020
at The Bruce Museum
7pm Dinner and Drinks
Presentation to follow
\$80 Per Person

Register by January 13th
at www.ujf.org/water

Questions, Contact Diane Sloyer
203-321-1373 ext 105/dianesloyer@ujf.org

This event is intended for donors of \$5,000 or more to the 2020 annual campaign.



United Jewish Federation



(Courtesy of Temple Beth El) This year, as part of Temple Beth El's expanded Tikkun Olam program through Beth El Cares, TBE volunteers prepared and served food at Pacific House, Covenant House, Inspirica and, new this year, Building One Community (B1C).

Over 120 TBE volunteers provided food and gifts, entertained guests and volunteered at the four facilities, helping to make this a special holiday for all that attended.

Lunch was served at Covenant House on December 24 and each guest received a gift of hats, gloves or socks, in addition to their choice of coats.

Dinner was served at Pacific House and Inspirica. All of the children at Inspirica received specially wrapped toys and the women were given make-up, perfume and toiletries in large cosmetic bags. All of the men received gloves, scarves or hats.

TBE provided singers at each location and Santa Claus (aka Steven Lander) made a special appearance, along with Rabbi Hammerman who lit the Hanukkah candles.

New this year, TBE provided a special dinner and evening of games at B1C for over 60 people on Sunday, December 22, as part of TBE's new Immigration Task Force in coordination with Beth El Cares. A special treat was

the appearance of the Street Angels singing holiday songs.

The dinner was held for immigrant workers, primarily men, who are alone during the holiday season and whose families are in their home countries. B1C has opened its doors to become a welcoming point of entry for newcomers from all parts of the world, and works to advance the successful integration of immigrants and their families into this country.

Ivonne Zucco, Workforce Development Director for Building One Community, said, "The workers' holiday party was a huge success. Everyone who attended had a wonderful time and are grateful for the gifts and the delicious food that was served. We, the staff at B1C, are so thankful for TBE's dedication and generosity towards our participants. We were also so touched by the message of care and understanding of our common human experiences delivered by Rabbi Hammerman to our immigrant workers hope and the feeling that they matter to many."

The Beth El Cares dinners were coordinated by Amy Temple with the assistance of Joy Katz and Karen Resnick. The Immigrant Task Force dinner was coordinated by Belle Horwitz, head of the TBE Immigration Task Force.

Greek Woman Reunited With Siblings She Saved During Holocaust and Their 40 Descendants

BY ELIANA RUDEE / JNS.ORG

"There is no way to describe the acts of heroism and the danger they took upon themselves and all those around them to shelter an entire family," said Sarah Yanai upon reuniting with the Greek woman who, along with her two sisters, hid her and five other members of her family during the Holocaust.

"The feeling is very emotional and very exciting. I cannot describe it," said the 86-year-old. "What can I say? They saved our lives."

At the Hall of Names at Jerusalem's Yad Vashem, Greek rescuer Melpomeni Dina, 92, now living in Thessaloniki, Greece, was reunited with two survivors she saved during the Holocaust: Yanai, who now lives in Ramat Hasharon, and her brother Yossi Mor, 77, now living in Beersheva.

Melpomeni Dina (then Gianopoulou) was just 14 when she and her two orphaned sisters, Efthimia and Bithleem, decided to hide the Jewish family in their home.

For more than two years, they hid and provided for the Mordechai family, including Sarah and Yossi; their parents (Mentes and Mari); and siblings Asher, Shmuel, and Rachel. Due to the heroism and sacrifice of the Gianopoulou sisters, most of the family survived the war.

According to Yad Vashem, Gianopoulou's connection to the Mordechai family was through Melpomeni's sister, Efthimia (married name Xanthopoulou), who before the invasion of Greece had studied to become a seamstress at Mari Mordechai's studio in Veria. Since Efthimia was an orphan and very poor, Mari did not charge her for the lessons.

Efthimia became attached to the Mordechais and visited them regularly after they went into hiding. When a new place was needed, she arranged for them to move to her home in Veria, where she lived with two younger sisters, 15-year-old Bithleem (later Sumbasi) and 14-year-old Melpomeni. There, in one room, they accommodated sev-



At the Hall of Names in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Greek rescuer Melpomeni Dina, 92, reunites with (left) Sarah Yanai, 86, one of the survivors she saved during the Holocaust. (Credit: Eliana Rudee)

en members of the Mordechai family.

"They loved my mother very much because of her good heart," recalled Mor, "so they took upon themselves the dangerous mission to hide us in their home."

The three sisters shared their food rations with the Mordechai family and sheltered them, despite the risk. As supplies were scarce and expensive, Bithleem and Melpomeni cultivated a piece of land they owned in a swamp near Yiannitsa, about 25 miles from Veria, and when they would return from working the land, they would carry on their backs provisions for all 10 people.

After illness took the life of Yossi's older brother, Shmuel, the family's hiding was discovered and reported to the authorities. Melpomeni's family helped the Mordechai family flee to the Vermio Mountains, continuing to provide for the family until the end of the war.

On April 12, 1994, Yad Vashem recognized Melpomeni Dina as one of the Righteous Among the Nations.

At the meeting, which was made possible by a partnership between the US-based Jewish

Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) and Yad Vashem, Dina was introduced to nearly 40 descendants of Yanai and Mor.

After meeting all these relatives, Dina declared that she sees every member of their families as her own. "I am very happy to be here and to see you," she told Yanai and Mor, with tears in her eyes, again inviting them and their family to live with her in her home in Greece.

"We will stay together day and night for two days," Yanai told Dina. "We have a lot to talk about."

Yanai continued, saying "it's very hard to describe my feelings in words; it's something deep in my heart. It brings me back many years, [thinking] how they kept us and how they worried about us. We hid in her house; she saved all my family. Now she can see our large family — all this thanks to her because she saved us. She did such a great thing! You cannot imagine how dangerous it was for her and for her whole family to keep our whole family."

This was the first time that the JFR, which provides monthly financial assistance to more

than 265 aged and needy Righteous Among the Nations living in 18 countries, has reunited Holocaust survivors and their rescuers in Israel.

"The beauty of [making this reunion] in Israel is we got to have the whole family, *ldor v'dor*," Stanlee Stahl, executive vice president of JFR, told JNS. "You get to see the generations, including two grandchildren in uniform," she said.

Mor's grandson — Imri Dor, 22 — arrived in uniform to meet his grandfather's rescuer, currently serving in the paratrooper's unit in the IDF. "It's a huge event," he said. "We heard a lot about [Dina] and everything she did for our family; she has inspired me as a person and it means so much [to meet her]. It fulfills you and gives you perception."

Dor noted that his army service, in the context of the story of his grandfather, is "always on my mind; it's why I'm doing what I'm doing."

"We don't have another place to be other than Israel," he said. "This is our only country, and we must be strong because [the Holocaust] could happen again if we are not."

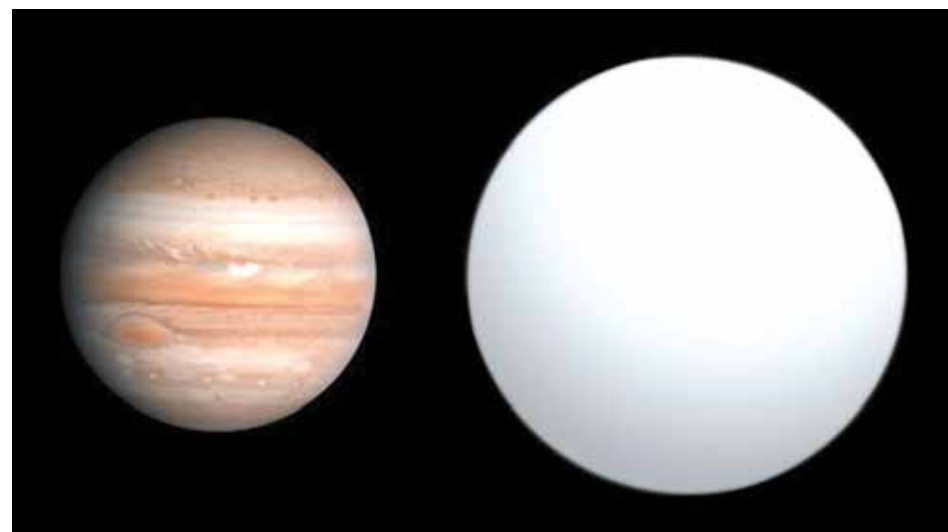
According to Stahl, this is likely JFR's last reunion "because of the age and frailty" of the survivors, and even more of those who helped save them, like Dina.

Joel Zisenwine, director of Yad Vashem's Righteous Among the Nations Department, spoke of the rareness of such a meeting.

"As time passes, we have fewer survivors and even fewer rescuers," he stated. "This coming together of the offspring and descendants in Yad Vashem, which is authorized to commemorate the Holocaust in the presence of monuments" like the Hall of Names, "makes it even more meaningful."

Since the work of Zisenwine's department often occurs past the death of the Righteous Among the Nations, he said, "to see a living testimony of someone who took part in a rescue mission is even more moving."

First 'Israeli' Planet Named After Hebrew Letter Alef



BY ITAMAR EICHNER/YNETNEWS.COM

Planet HAT-P-9b, aka Alef, right, in a size comparison with the planet Jupiter. (Credit: The Astrophysical Journal)

The Ministry of Science, Technology and Space announced on Monday that it will be naming a planet after the Hebrew letter Alef.

The unique name was chosen in an online poll set by the Israel Space Agency, in which over 20,000 users picked the winner out of 1,600 different user-submitted suggestions.

The competition was held on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the International Astronomical Association, which is the only institution authorized to assign names to celestial bodies.

As part of the project, the IAU offered dozens of countries the chance to name a planet and a star in solar systems outside of the Milky Way.

So far, over 400,000 people from 110 countries have voted which name they liked the most for their respective country's planet.

Israel is among the leading countries in the number of suggested planet names and the number of voters who actively participated in the poll.

The letter Alef, a word that stems from the proto-Semitic word for "bull" and its written form resembles an ox's head, has an abundance of different meanings.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Celebrating their winning opener are the BCHA Bobcats: (l-r) Josh Marcus, Daniel Janush, Ben Marcus, Justin Krebs, Doug Herman, Gavin Rakitt, Dovid Trencher, Avichai Jeiger, Nate Herman, David Waknine, and Coach Stefan Driehuizen.

Go Bobcats!

(Courtesy of BCHA) The first game of the basketball season proved to be an exciting and celebratory one for the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Upper School Boys Basketball

team. The BCHA Bobcats pulled off a victory against the team from Winston Prep. The teens are looking forward to more of the same as the season unfolds.



Gan Yeladim Hosts Family Fun Day

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Gan Yeladim Early Childhood Center hosted an open house and family fun day in December. Over 100 parents and children were treated to

an interactive drum circle program, "A Drum Tale Lion King," led by Musical IQ. Other activities included ceramics, challah making, arts and crafts and a CPR course.

Sinai Circles: Connecting at Temple Sinai

BY LARRY STOOGENKE
DIRECTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

As Temple Sinai's membership continues to grow, so grows the opportunity to find new ways to meet the congregation's needs. Starting in March, Temple Sinai will be launching Sinai Circles, a significant addition to its programming. Sinai Circles are congregant-led small groups of no more than 8-12 people, which will meet on a regular basis around shared interests and discuss Jewish wisdom and values. Sinai Circles will create safe, nurturing spaces for the congregants to grow with each other.

Esteemed Rabbi Eugene Borowitz, z"l, used the term "groupiness" when speaking of the power of small groups. He understood that "the group experience, intentional and repeat encounters, would foster much deeper relationships. The sheen of surface 'hellos' will be replaced with much more satisfying kinship."

There are seven circles ready to launch. They are diverse and designed to attract a

wide variety of the congregation. Just imagine being part of a Temple Sinai Dead Head circle for those who loved Jerry Garcia's music, or joining a men's book club, or gathering monthly with a shabbat dinner club, or being guided by a trained doctent in a "sensing art" circle. What better way to marry heritage with our community while developing authentic connections?

Sinai Circles will not only deepen relationships within the small group, it will allow those who participate to feel a greater sense of belonging and to find their *makom* (both a name for God and the Hebrew word for "place") in the greater congregation as a whole. Everyone knows how much more comfortable it is to walk into services or a program and see a familiar face. Sinai Circles is how the synagogue members will find their family-of-choice within their spiritual home, leading to a true *kehilah kedoshah*, sacred community. Temple Sinai is excited to implement this initiative and witness its growth; the possibilities are endless.



Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Lower School students presented the Broadway hit musical "The Lion King."

The Lion King Roars at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy

(Courtesy of BCHA) Another opening, another show! And what a show it was when the curtain was raised in December on the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy musical theater production of "The Lion King Jr."

"Our annual musical theater production is

yet one more example of the importance we place on the arts here at BCHA, and the dedication of our outstanding arts department which continually creates opportunities for our students to shine bright and showcase their unique talents," said BCHA Head of School Jackie Herman.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

It's the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet and is also used as a vowel.

In set theory, a branch of mathematics or of symbolic logic that deals with the nature and relations of sets, the letter Alef is used to indicate the strength of an infinite set - another

symbolism, as the universe is also believed to be infinite.

In Kabbalah, a school of thought in Jewish mysticism, Alef symbolizes the unity of the Lord.

Alef's mother star will be called Tevel, a flowery Hebrew term for "universe." The star's name also begins with the letter Tav - the last

letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Both names were chosen to symbolize completeness - from Alef to Tav, from A to Z, from Alpha to Omega.

Alef, aka HAT-P-9b by its scientific name, is located 1,500 light-years from planet Earth in the Auriga constellation, which is home to other planets named by various different

countries, such as Luxembourg and Belgium.

Minister of Science, Technology and Space Ofir Akunis welcomed the name choice.

"This is an interesting and respectable choice by the Israeli public, who participated en masse to determine the name for the new planet of the State of Israel," said Akunis in a statement.

UJF Teens Make Lasagna for Those in Need

(Courtesy of JFS) A group of teens from UJF's Kuriansky Teen Tzedekah Corps prepared lasagna in the kitchen at Schoke Jewish Family Service (JFS). The Kuriansky Teen Tzedekah Corps is a youth program of United Jewish Federation which is open to teens in the 10th-12th grades. The lasagnas were

frozen in Schoke JFS's Freedberg Family Kosher Food Pantry and are available for distribution to clients who need food assistance.

For more information on the Teen Tzedekah program, contact Diane Sloyer at (203)321-1373 ext 105 or Dianesloyer@ujf.org.



Carmel Academy Middle School Gives Back for Chanukah



Carmel's seventh graders, Mica F., Lyla D., Maddy W., Spencer G., Gabe L., Jesse S. and Rachel B., stocked the food pantry at Schoke Jewish Family Service in Stamford.

(Courtesy of Carmel Academy) Chanukah learning at Carmel Academy includes an extensive unit, in all grades, on gratitude and kindness. In honor of Chanukah, and to express their

gratitude, the middle school students at Carmel Academy went on field trips to give back to the community's many local establishments.

The sixth graders spent time at The New Jewish Home in Westchester County, where they played games and chatted with residents.

The seventh grade visited the Schoke Jewish Family Service Freedberg Family Kosher Food Pantry in Stamford and brought in food donations from the middle school. They spent their time stocking the pantry and had a rich discussion on food insecurity and the role the pantry plays in the area. They asked thoughtful questions such as: What qualifies as food insecure? What is the process for being able to take food from the pantry? Why would the pantry spend extra money on buying kosher meat instead of buying cheaper dry food?

The eighth grade visited the United Hebrew Nursing Home in New Rochelle, NY. The students played high energy games and engaged in meaningful conversations with the residents about where they grew up and their favorite holiday memories.

In a culmination of this learning unit, the entire Carmel community participated in a toy drive with the JCCA for Pleasantville Cottage Campus, a residential treatment program serving children ages 7 to 15.



United Jewish Federation Invites You To A:

Jewish Food

Scavenger Hunt!



Explore Jewish foods on a grocery store scavenger hunt! Craft, Story Time & Snacks.

Sunday, February 9, 2020 3pm - 4:15pm

All ages welcome!

Meet at Whole Foods Darien
150 Ledge Rd, Darien

This is a free program, but we ask that you RSVP at www.ujf.org/pjhunt or contact Sharon Franklin at sharon@ujf.org/203-321-1373 ext.109



United Jewish Federation



Warm Up This Winter With
PJ Library and BCHA

Join us for a morning of fun including
an introduction to BCHA's Maker Space,
Tu B'Shvat crafts and story time
with Pre-k and K teachers and more!

Featuring a
Waffle and Hot Chocolate Bar!



Sunday, January 26th

10:00 - 11:30am

BCHA, 2186 High Ridge Road

This program is free but RSVP greatly appreciated @ www.ujf.org/pjwaffles
Questions? Contact Diane Sloyer, (203) 321-1373, ext. 105.



'PJ Our Way' Bakes for a Cause

(Courtesy of UJF) PJ Our Way held a mitzvah program in December entitled "Bake Taste & Donate." Area tweens had the opportunity to give back to their community and have fun in the process, baking several kinds of cookies from scratch. After sampling their creations, the kids wrapped cookies in cellophane tied with colorful ribbon, and included a personal message they had written for each bag before the packages were donated.

The kids and PJ Our Way Director Sharon Franklin talked about the idea of Tik-kun Olam, or repairing the world, and the importance of doing mitzvahs (good deeds) for those less fortunate. The cookie packages were later delivered to Inspira, a local shelter, just in time for the holiday season. Special thanks to Emily Balinsky and her mother, Tracey Aaron, for chairing this program, and to Congregation Agudath Sholom for the use of their kitchen.

PJ Our Way is a program of UJF and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, and allows children ages 8 ½ to 11 years of age to pick a free Jewish themed chapter book each month. To sign up, go to www.pjourway.org or contact Sharon Franklin at sharon@ujf.org.



PJ Our Way "bakers" show off some of their cookie gift packages.



PJ Our Way kids assembling cookie ingredients in the Agudath Sholom kitchen.



Final cookie dough mixture placed on cookie sheets.

PJ Corner



Celebrate Tu B'Shevat by creating handprint tree art.

- Interested in getting PJ Library books? Sign up at www.pjlibrary.org for books geared to kids six months to 8 ½ years of age. Go to www.pjourway.org for chapter books for kids 8 ½ to 11 years old. Stamford is now a one book per child community, so sign up all of the kids in your family ages six months to 11 years of age.
- Want \$100 to get together with friends? It's easy to apply for a PJ Library Get Together. Go to www.pjlibrary.org/Get-Together to sign up and start planning your gathering with two or more families raising Jewish children! Have a Tu B'Shevat seder, a shabbat meal together, go out to eat as a group or go to a community program (including PJ Library). Or come up with your own idea!
- Join UJF's PJ Library & PJ Our Way on Sunday, February 9, at 3:00 pm for a "Jewish Food Scavenger Hunt" at Fairway Market, 699 Canal Street in Stamford. This event includes a craft, story time, snack and hunt, and is for kids of all ages. This program is free, but pre-registration is required to ensure there are enough supplies: www.ujf.org/pjhunt.
- Tu B'Shevat is on February 10. This holiday celebrates the birthday of the trees. Try these holiday activities with your kids:
 - Hold a Tu B'Shevat seder using the seven species. Fresh and dried fruit should be on the menu. For great recipes and ideas go to <https://pjlibrary.org/beyond-books/pjblog/january-2019/a-tu-bshevat-seder-for-kids>
 - Celebrate Tu B'Shevat by creating handprint tree art. Paint your hand with brown paint to create the trunk and branches of a tree. Use dot paints or paint and a brush to create leaves and fruit. Have some wipes on hand for an easy clean up!
- In Spring of 2019, UJF was awarded a grant to create "Play Together," monthly family gatherings in Stamford, New Canaan and Darien for families raising Jewish children. Interested in meeting new families and joining a gathering? For more information, contact Sharon Franklin, Managing Director of Campaign and Community Engagement, at sharon@ujf.org (203) 321-1373/109.

Families Enjoy 'PJs & Pancakes' for Chanukah



Gene Farberov and his daughter craft a spiro-dreidel.



Mark and Joanna Frank and Heather and Ben Sussman enjoy a pancake and pajama breakfast with their children.

(Courtesy of UJF) On the morning of December 25, families gathered to celebrate Chanukah with United Jewish Federation's PJ Library, PJ Our Way and the Stamford JCC. The program included crafts, music and a mitzvah project. This was the second year of this successful collaboration.

Participants enjoyed a pancake and waffle breakfast with all the fixings. Children created their own spiro-dreidels and painted colorful handprint menorahs. David Citrin, Coordinator of Jewish Engagement & Innovation at the Stamford JCC, performed an interactive Chanukah musical program, including dancing the hora and having children role play the part of candles on the menorah. Parents assisted their kids with a mitzvah project, creating and wrapping hot chocolate to go cups that were later delivered to "hometown heroes": local firefighters. Handwritten personal notes were also included thanking them for their service.

Special thanks to Galit Roloff, Director of Kidspace at the JCC, and David Citrin.

For more information about PJ Library programming and how to receive free monthly Jewish books, contact Sharon Franklin at sharon@ujf.org.



Jennie Woltz Folkinshteyn and her daughter put together hot chocolate packages.



Children enjoy taking part in an interactive musical program.

TEEN VOICES

My Kuriansky Teen Tzedakah Corps Experience

BY MADDY SHAPIRO

I vividly remember going to the Stamford JCC often when I was younger for various activities, such as swimming lessons, birthday parties, dance classes, and picking my brother up from summer camp. Ever since I played soccer in the 2016 Maccabi games, the JCC has simply been a building I pass whenever I drive up Newfield Avenue. For the first time in quite a few years, I returned to the building this fall to attend the monthly meetings of United Jewish Federation's Kuriansky Teen Tzedakah Corps (KTTC). UJF's KTTC is a program that teaches local teens about philanthropy and the agencies and institutions they support.

It's funny how familiar the building felt when I walked back in, especially on UJF's Super Sunday. When I entered the auditorium that day to get breakfast, memories came back to me of the daddy-daughter dance I attended in the same room many years ago. In the room where the carnival games were set up for younger kids during Super Sunday, I looked out the window towards the field where my brother had a soccer-themed birthday party when he turned four, and I saw the playground

I used to play on during the summer. When I first joined the KTTC, I did so because I was interested in learning about Jewish philanthropy and what was behind the decisions of my family to fund programs such as the UJF's Teen Tzedakah Corps.

Although there have only been a few meetings so far this fall, I realize I have learned more than just about giving back to the community. For me, being a part of this program has also been about becoming more involved in the Jewish community of Stamford that played a large role in my life when I was younger.

The last meeting I attended for the KTTC was at the Schoke Jewish Family Service where we made lasagnas for the kosher food pantry. The lasagnas we made that night were likely distributed through the food pantry the next morning. I have driven past this building many times, but I had never heard of this organization before and what types of services they provide for families in Stamford. As a result of becoming active in Federation's teen tzedakah program, I am realizing there are more ways I can volunteer and try to make an impact. Just a ten-minute drive from my house was an organization I knew very little about in the past that provides a diverse amount of services to help people in Stamford. Through UJF's Kuriansky Teen Tzedakah Corps, I look forward to discovering additional new ways that I can give back and become more involved in a Jewish community in which my family has such deep roots.



Maddy Shapiro

Maddy is a 10th grader at Stamford High School. She enjoys reading, traveling, and playing soccer for both her school and the local travel team. She is the president of her school's writing club, the Knight Writers.

WHY I CARE...

Focus on Myrna Sessa

BY JANE LEVENE

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

— John Quincy Adams

Myrna Sessa and her husband, George, have lived in Stamford for 42 years and both are active members of the local Jewish as well as Stamford communities. Their children, Melanie and Jeremy, both now in their 20s, were also active in the Jewish community where they graduated from the former UJF-sponsored high school program, Kulanu. Myrna runs a Human Resources consulting firm, HR Innovations, LLC, which she founded in 1998 and which offers professional Human Resources consulting and expertise to small and mid-size businesses. As if that doesn't keep her busy enough, she recently became a member of the Stamford Board of Ethics, volunteers for the Back to School Shop, the CT Bar Association and Stamford Hospital. In the Jewish community, Myrna is active at Temple Sinai, as well as UJF, the JCC, Schoke JFS and Hadassah. Both Myrna and George feel giving back is important not just for them personally, but because they want to be role models for their children.

Here's why she cares...

Describe your current and past involvement with UJF and how long you have been involved.

I've been involved with UJF for many years, starting with event committees such as Yom HaShoah, as well as the Personnel Committee and strategic planning committees. Most recently, I was a member of the Allocations Committee for three years, the Federation Forward Committee, 2019's Nominating Committee and I currently serve as the HR Advisor for UJF. I've sponsored and participated in the Rothschild Society, the business professionals Affinity Group.

Have you been involved with other Jewish organizations in the community and elsewhere?

Yes, I've been very active at Temple Sinai, having spent almost 15 years on the Board, including as the temple's first VP-Administration. I participated in Rabbinical and Cantorial Search



Myrna I. Sessa

Committees, By-Law Revision Committees, served as Assistant Treasurer, Co-Chair of Mitzvah Day, Co-Chair of the 50th Anniversary Gala, as well as the Personnel Committee. I was actively involved on several other committees, such as House, Communications, Membership, Spring Fundraiser, B'nai Mitzvah, Youth, the editing/proofing team and currently, I serve as HR Advisor to the temple.

I've also been actively involved in Hadassah, the JCC, the JCC Maccabi Games, and Schoke JFS.

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

It is important to give back to the community in which I live, work, worship, and in which I raised my kids, and have made so many life-long friends and meaningful connections. Besides my desire to give back (as my parents did before me), it was a great way (and still is!) to meet people, as I did not grow up in Stamford. Further, I believe it is my obligation to offer my professional expertise (Human Resources) to local Jewish (and other) organizations that do not have financial access to appropriate consultants and attorneys.

In your opinion, why should others get involved in UJF? In the Jewish Community in general?

Besides giving back to the community which gives me so much, I appreciate the fact that all of us who are Jewish can come together in organizations, such as UJF and the JCC, where we can work jointly on projects, events and other volunteer endeavors as Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, Chasidic, Reconstructionist and all other types of Jews, as well as non-Jews. As a Reform Jew, volunteering for the UJF provides opportunities for me to meet and spend time with other Jews, whatever their affiliation. It is a wonderful chance to work closely together and learn about each other's viewpoints. I truly believe that by working together with other Jews we can learn to value each other and each other's perspectives.

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\$1,245,000
a 10 percent increase from last year!**

We tried something new and while nothing is perfect the first time, we THANK YOU, our committed donors, for embracing change.

Federation will continue to impact the community with this Newspaper, The New Jewish Voice, a Jewish Community Relations Council, Welcome and baby visits, Affinity group programming, PJ Library Books and Programs, Behrend Leadership Institute, 35 SQUARE, Kuriansky Teens, and more. And central to our new model, we will foster growth and innovation of our greater Stamford, New Canaan and Darien Community and beyond.

Together, we make a difference!



United Jewish Federation