



# THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION

## Mega Challah Bake Returns

*(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford)*  
Hundreds of women coming together to prepare challah dough and bake loaves for family and friends conjures up images of connection, community and camaraderie. Chabad of Stamford is thrilled to announce the return of its beloved tradition for women and girls in the community with a "Mega Challah Bake" on Wednesday, May 22 at 6:30 pm at the Italian Center, 1620 Newfield Avenue in Stamford.

renowned worldwide, was born right here in Stamford in 2009, with the very first Mega Challah Bake bringing together over 200 women, and has since captured the hearts of the Jewish community," said Morah Leah Shemtov, Co-director of Chabad of Stamford.

The Mega Challah Bake was conceived with the vision of bringing together 118 women to bake together and partake in this special mitzvah. The inaugural event

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"This event, which has become

## Dignity Grows Interfaith Community Pack

*(Courtesy of UJF)* United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien's Dignity Grows chapter, the Interfaith Council of Southwestern Connecticut, and local houses of worship will host a community pack event on Thursday, April 18 at 7:00 pm at Serendipity Labs, 700 Canal Street, in Stamford.

Dignity Grows is a national organization, started at the Hartford Federation, dedicated

to alleviating period-poverty by providing monthly totes filled with hygiene products for women in need. UJF's Dignity Grows chapter began several years ago under the leadership of Nancy Fahey, Terry Bernard, Tara Shapiro and Lisa Popper.

At the outset, grants allowed the group to pack 100 totes per month to be distributed alternatively to Inspirica, New Covenant

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## Why Is This Night Different From All Other Nights?

**BY SHARON LEWIS, DIRECTOR,  
UJF JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL**

For the first time since the COVID shut down, United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien (UJF), the Interfaith Council of Southwestern Connecticut and the Stamford Mayor's Multicultural Council will host an Interfaith Seder on Thursday, April 11 at UConn Stamford at 6:30 pm.

The Interfaith Seder will use a specially designed *Haggadah* designed around the theme of "Uniting Our Community." The *Haggadah* will follow the traditional pattern of the Passover Seder but will incorporate themes that will resonate with

people of different faiths and backgrounds. The events of the world since October 7 will provide a prism through which to view the reading.

Reverend Mark Lingle, Chair of the Interfaith Council noted, "Given the divisions among people throughout the world and in our own community, the Interfaith Seder offers an alternative to division. It models that we can come together--even in our differences--and develop relationships, understanding, and compassion. The overarching theme of liberation at the heart of the Seder functions to remind us that each individual possesses dignity and is worthy of liberation.

Our communities possess a similar reality. When we honor this in ourselves and the other, we promote the liberation inherent in the Seder."

The Interfaith Seder has a long history in this community. Rabbi Joshua Hammerman of Temple Beth El has worked on all the Interfaith Seders in the past. Rabbi Hammerman is retiring later this year, and the Interfaith Seder will be his last community event before his retirement. Although he is excited about the Seder, it will be a bittersweet evening for him and the Jewish community he has served for several decades.

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## Creative Outlets Bring Hope

As part of United Jewish Federation's recent solidarity mission to Israel, the delegation visited Ofakim, in Israel's Gaza Envelope. This development town had 53 residents tragically murdered on October 7. Participants learned about the Jewish Agency for Israel's Youth Futures Program, a long-time recipient of UJF allocations, which has sites throughout Israel and focuses on youth at risk. The visit served as a sobering education on the extended trauma related to the October 7 massacre and the war that continues to rage in the North and South. *(See pages 11-14 for more photos and reflections from the UJF mission.)*



## From UJF's Chief Executive Officer Showing Up Matters

BY DIANE SLOYER

Finding inspiration in these troubled times can be a challenge. The war is raging on in Israel as antisemitism and anti-Israel rhetoric, including violent protests, are at an all-time high here in North America and throughout the world.

I am a Jew who “does Jewish” every day. But since October 7, I have had an overwhelming sense of pride. Yes, we are the chosen people!

And while it is always easier to sit back and let someone else take action, October 7th has taught us that that is simply not a choice.

We rally and protest.

We make calls and write letters.

We read and listen to podcasts

We attend conferences, lectures and online seminars

We give financial support for Israel.

And many of us travel to Israel to show our solidarity in support of Israel’s right to defend herself, to volunteer in many capacities including working on farms in place of the farmers who are supporting their country, to support the economy and, as my friend and UJF board member Rhonda Schaffer Maron says, “to give our Israeli brethren a big hug.”

The impact of the COVID pandemic resulted in many Israeli travel companies closing and now the war with Hamas has further impacted this industry along with the economy of Israel. Today, the majority of Israel’s current sparse tourism is primarily



Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO

driven by solidarity missions. They are very important. Over my years directing Federations, I have taken many people to Israel on missions, not just in times of war. A mission has a long-

lasting effect on participants and has been shown to be life changing. In fact, many of our recent UJF mission participants told me how impactful this experience has been. And they indicated that although a war was going on, they still felt very safe and secure being in Israel.

Israel is our Jewish homeland. Many individuals travel to Israel through our synagogues and Federations, in times of crises or for happier times, for example, to celebrate a Bar/Bat mitzvah.

After traveling to Israel twice since October 7, like you, I pray for peace. And we all know Israel needs us now more than ever. Donating money is needed, but so is showing up!

Vacation time in the states is right around the corner. Let’s do our part in supporting the rebuilding of the Israeli economy by planning a trip to Israel. There is something for everyone—history, museums, beaches with breathtaking sunsets, fabulous food, abundant kid friendly activities, and more! Don’t wait for a special reason to travel to our homeland. Put Israel on your destination map for your next family trip.

I promise you will not regret it.

## UJF President’s Message Drawing On Our Strengths

BY MICHAEL SCHLESSINGER

On February 28, Federation hosted Hen Mazzig, a prominent young Israeli voice on social media. Nearly 200 people gathered at Congregation Agudath Sholom, perhaps half of whom were “young,” which in Federation terms means 45 or under. I was looking forward to the event because, since October 7, I have become focused on how poorly the American Jewish community has fared in the propaganda surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

I have repetitively observed that, while the pro-Palestinian side sticks to often untrue talking points that tie into larger “social justice” themes, the pro-Israeli side burrows deeper and deeper into the factual record in search of objective truth on questions like how many Palestinians were expelled in 1948 vs. leaving voluntarily, and what were the terms on which various partition plans or two-state proposals failed. (See Benny Morris or Hillel Cohen.) While each conversation has its place, they are ships crossing in the night, and the Jewish passion for nuance often undermines effectiveness in countering the social media narrative vilifying Israel.

Many of my generation attending Hen’s talk (some dragged there by their adult children) were uncomfortable that Hen seemed to express a series of independent thoughts rather than a complete narrative with a beginning, middle and an end. Forgive my confirmation bias when I say therein lies the point! In that spirit, my own short and random (but thus social media-worthy) thoughts:

- Hen’s talk was well attended, with a long and passionate Q&A.



Michael Schlessinger, UJF President

• We need more such fora, particularly where young and old interact.

• Our young people are experiencing the social media discourse on Israel very personally and hurtfully. Our institutions are letting them down.

• We must stop underestimating Hamas – they are well-funded, innovative to the point of ingenious, and playing a very long game.

• Their side includes Russia and China – they know how to manipulate and, in some cases, control the algorithms that determine social media winners and losers.

• By maintaining a vanishingly thin distinction between anti-Zionism and antisemitism, our enemies seek to divide Jews between bad Israel-supporters and good Israel-critics.

• There are only 15 million of us, so our continued survival depends upon resisting such efforts to divide us.

• Any ideology that labels arguably the world’s most oppressed race/ethnicity/religion as “white oppressors” must be rejected, or at least modified.

• While our success as individuals, and Israel’s economic and technological achievements as a nation, are held against us on social media, nothing succeeds like success. We can and must draw on our not insubstantial strengths to win the propaganda war and continue to thrive, both in Israel and the diaspora.

## UJF Brings Cinema Sabaya to Stamford

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation welcomes guest speakers, Gadeer Kamal-Mreeh and Dr. Avner Shavit, to Stamford on Sunday, March 31 at Temple Beth El (TBE) at 6:00 pm for a screening and discussion of the Israeli film, *Cinema Sabaya*.

Released in 2021, *Cinema Sabaya* captures the personal stories that transpire from a video workshop for Arab and Jewish women in a small town in northern Israel. Each member is given a hand-held device and assignments from their lives beyond the classroom, ultimately revealing their struggles, concerns, and hopes as women in the world today.

The first Druze emissary and the first Druze woman to become a Member of the Knesset,



Dr. Avner Shavit



Gadeer Kamal-Mreeh

Gadeer Kamal-Mreeh’s own story is truly inspiring as the Senior Envoy with The Jewish Agency of Israel spoke at UJF’s Annual Meeting in December. She will share the stage

with Dr. Avner Shavit, who is one of the most prominent film critics in Israel and has been covering the local and international scene for the last two decades.

The event will include the film, a Q&A with Gadeer and Avner, and a light taste from the Middle East made by community members. Get your tickets today at [www.ujf.org/cinema](http://www.ujf.org/cinema) or contact Yoav Yaron ([yoav@ujf.org](mailto:yoav@ujf.org)) for more information.

### CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

April 5 .....	7:22 pm
April 12.....	7:25 pm
April 19.....	7:28 pm
April 26.....	7:32 pm

### UPCOMING DEADLINES

May 2024 – Yom HaShoah & Yom Ha’Atzmaut Edition

Deadline: Monday, April 1, 2024

June 2024 Edition

Deadline: Monday, May 6, 2024

Email submissions to

[sandy@ujf.org](mailto:sandy@ujf.org)

You should receive notification that your submission was received!

## JCC to Honor Leaders at Annual Gala

(Courtesy of JCC) The Stamford JCC will celebrate its Annual Gala on Thursday, May 9, outdoors at The Stamford JCC. This year's event will be a celebration of the community and its members, recognizing exceptional individuals who have made significant contributions to the JCC and the community at large.

The Annual Gala will honor Dana and Stuart Roth for their extraordinary dedication and leadership to the JCC. The Roths have been long-standing pillars of the JCC community, actively involved in various capacities for over two decades. Dana began her volunteer efforts when her children attended the JCC's Sara Walker Nursery School. She has served in numerous leadership roles within the JCC, including co-president of the JCC Center Women and co-chair of the Tzahal Shalom program. She launched the JCC's first-ever Mother-Son Dance, served on the JCC's Board of Directors and was a recipient of the JCC Volunteer of the Year Award on numerous occasions.

Stuart is currently the Chief Business Officer and co-founder of Centivo and has a long history of involvement with the JCC. He served as co-commissioner of basketball for the JCC Maccabi Games in 2016 and has been a key figure in the JCC's strategic planning and development initiatives. He currently serves on the JCC Board of Directors and is a regular participant in JCC events and programs, including sports leagues and family activities.

The JCC will also present the JCC Emerging Leader Award to Alana Sliwinski and the Arlene & Irwin Ettinger Legacy Award to Mikhail Iogman. Alana, a prominent attorney specializing in real estate development, has



(L-R) Gala honorees Dana and Stuart Roth, JCC Emerging Leader Award recipient Alana Sliwinski, and the Arlene & Irwin Ettinger Legacy Award recipient Mikhail Iogman.

been a valuable asset to the JCC community since joining the Board of Directors in 2022. Her expertise and dedication have been instrumental in various JCC development projects, ensuring the continued growth and quality of the JCC's offerings.

Mikhail Iogman has been a pillar of the JCC's Aquatics Department for over three decades, touching the lives of countless individuals through his dedication to swim instruction and mentorship. He has nurtured the talents of over 6,500 individuals and has mentored over 300 lifeguards and swim instructors, leaving a lasting legacy on the JCC aquatics program. Most recently, he has provided free weekly swim instruction to over 40 Ukrainian refugee children.

The Annual Gala promises to be a special evening of shared connection and an opportunity to celebrate the JCC's achievements and the exceptional individuals who contribute to its vibrant community. The event co-chairs are Ariel Poser Bedik, Alix Field Eben, and Holly Lapine, with Pamela Feldstein and Arielle Moskowitz as sponsorship co-chairs. For ticket and sponsorship information, please visit the Stamford JCC website at [www.stamfordjcc.org](http://www.stamfordjcc.org). For more information, contact Rebecca Isenstein at 203-487-0943 or [risenstein@stamfordjcc.org](mailto:risenstein@stamfordjcc.org).

## Celebrating 70 Years of Community

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) The Temple Sinai Gala, "Celebrating 70 Years of Community," will be held on Saturday, May 4 at 6:00 pm. This year Temple Sinai will honor Marian Freed and Robin Himmelstein, members of the congregation who demonstrate with their actions the meaning of *Tikkun Olam*.

Marian retired from her position as Chief Administrative Officer of a large international law firm and has since immersed herself in volunteer opportunities, including serving as co-chair of Social Action for Temple Sinai Sisterhood, working weekly at New Covenant Center's (NCC) soup kitchen and food pantry, and acting as the coordinator of Temple Sinai's monthly dinner preparation and serving at NCC and NCC's annual Christmas Dinner. Beyond her involvement in social action, Marian serves on the Temple Sinai Board as a Trustee, helps make Shabbat bags for patients at Stamford Hospital, leads a Temple



Marian Freed



Robin Himmelstein

Sinai Circle for members and is one of the coordinators for Temple Sinai's Lunch Bunch. Her newest initiative, in coordination with fellow Temple Sinai congregant, Nan Gordon, is Book Pals. Book Pals pairs economically disadvantaged school children in Stamford with volunteers who send the children personalized letters and a book related to their

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## Young Israel of Stamford Gala Honors Community and IDF Families

(Courtesy of Young Israel of Stamford) The Young Israel of Stamford's Board of Directors and Rabbinical leader, Rabbi Eli Kohl, are proud to announce their upcoming Brunch Gala, to take place on Sunday, April 14, at Rockrimmon Country Club. This year's theme is a celebration of Young Israel's beautiful and welcoming community, highlighting the synagogue's deep and unyielding love for Israel, while also paying tribute to the children of Young Israel families serving in the Israel Defense Forces. They are a shining example of the commitment and passion the community brings to the Jewish people and Israel.

This is an unprecedented time that calls for celebration and togetherness, and the Gala aims to bring the community together in a spirit of unity and solidarity. The event will be an opportunity to share laughter, shed tears, and uplift one another.

The centerpiece of the Gala will be a delicious brunch featuring Israeli cuisine and drinks, Israeli desserts, and music

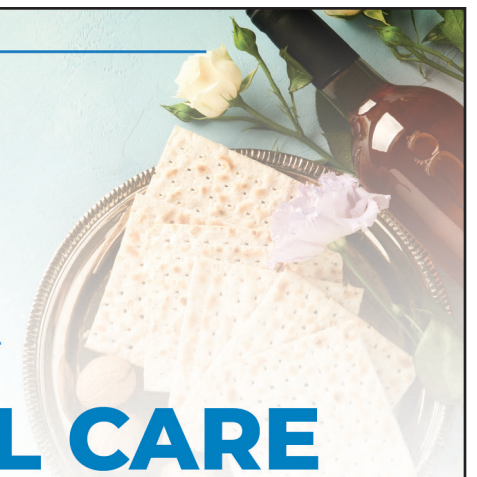
from Israel. It's a culinary, community, and cultural journey that promises to delight the senses and deepen the connection to the land.

The Gala will also shine a spotlight on two remarkable individuals: Izzy Kanefsky and Rochel Shmotkin, Young Israel's Youth Honorees. Their unwavering dedication and leadership in the shul's Youth Programming have been instrumental in shaping the future of the community. Join the Young Israel community as it comes together to honor and celebrate these special individuals.

Young Israel looks forward to a memorable, meaningful, and uplifting gala that brings the community together *k'ish echad b'lev echad* (as one person with one heart).

For reservations, go to [youngisraelstamford.org/gala](http://youngisraelstamford.org/gala). Contact Gala Chair Gadi Gavronski at [gpgavronsky@gmail.com](mailto:gpgavronsky@gmail.com) to ask questions or to make a contribution.

This **PASSOVER** we pray for **PEACE** and **HEALTH** to all.



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## Get Ready for Summer with One Happy Camper

BY TALY FARBER

It's one of the best parts about the summer months at United Jewish Federation – being able to help send local kids away to camp to make life-long memories through the One Happy Camper program.

A program of the Foundation for Jewish Camp and in partnership with local Jewish communities and Jewish overnight camps across North America, One Happy Camper provides need-blind grants of up to \$1,000 to families with children attending nonprofit, mission-driven, Jewish overnight camp for the first time.

Thanks to a gift from UJF and together with

One Happy Camper, over the past three years UJF has sent approximately 25 campers to Jewish overnight camps.

One Happy Camper is available to children who are first-time campers and do not attend Jewish day schools, with the perspective that Jewish camp will allow children to explore who they are and who they want to become. During the camp experience, Jewish and Israeli culture is celebrated through song, food, art, and dance, while camp staff use experiential learning to reveal what makes Jewish religion and culture so unique in today's world.

To learn more about One Happy Camper, eligibility, and the 155 camps that participate in the program, visit [www.jewishcamp.org/one-happy-camper](http://www.jewishcamp.org/one-happy-camper) or email Taly Farber at [taly@ujf.org](mailto:taly@ujf.org).

## Weekend Fun for Children at The JCC

(Courtesy of JCC) Looking for fun weekend plans for children? Look no further than The Stamford JCC, located at 1035 Newfield Avenue in Stamford. The Selkowitz Center for Youth and Family at The JCC offers weekend programming and event options to help children make the most of their days off.

Excited for this summer at Day Camps@The J? Kids in grades K through 5 can join in on Saturday, April 6 from 5:30 to 8:30 pm for “Kids Night Out: Everything but the Camp Out.” Attendees will enjoy a night of games and activities outside, complete with a campfire and smores.

Calling all Swifties! Get ready to sing the night away while watching the Eras

Tour movie and enjoying Taylor Swift themed activities at “JClub: Eras Tour Night” on Saturday, April 13 from 5:30 to 9:00 pm. This event is for children in grades 2 through 8. Eras Tour themed clothing is highly encouraged!

Snacks and refreshments will be provided at each event; however dinner should be eaten prior to arrival. Member pricing is \$25 for the first child, \$15 for each additional child. Admission for community members is \$40 for the first child, \$20 for each additional child.

For questions and more information, contact Reyanne Neal at [rneal@stamfordjcc.org](mailto:rneal@stamfordjcc.org). To register, visit [www.stamfordjcc.org](http://www.stamfordjcc.org).

### THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

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## Zinbarg Camp Scholarship Program Applications

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) Embark on a journey of enriching Jewish experiences by applying for the Joan and Ben Zinbarg – Schoke Jewish Family Service Camp Scholarship Program. Applications are now open for the upcoming summer to Jewish families residing throughout the Schoke JFS service area, including Stamford, Westport, Bridgeport, and Upper Fairfield County.

Designed to make meaningful Jewish summer experiences accessible, this scholarship is specifically for families

facing financial constraints in sending their children to camp. The fund is made possible through the commitment of the Zinbarg Family and the financial support of United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien, as well as the Jewish Federation of Greater Fairfield County.

Fueled by the generosity of its partners, Schoke JFS granted 51 camp scholarships in 2023, fostering memorable and impactful experiences for the recipients.

The deadline for applications for

the 2024 summer is Friday, April 12. Apply by accessing the following link: [www.ctjfs.org/zinbargcampscholarship](http://www.ctjfs.org/zinbargcampscholarship).

Join Schoke JFS in creating lasting memories and empowering the next generation through the gift of Jewish summer camp! To support the Joan and Ben Zinbarg Camp Scholarship Program, visit: [www.ctjfs.org/camp-scholarship-donations](http://www.ctjfs.org/camp-scholarship-donations).

Questions? Contact Erika Gadson at 203-921-4161, [erikag@ctjfs.org](mailto:erikag@ctjfs.org).

### Celebrating 70 Years of Community

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interest each month.

Social action is a big part of Robin Himelstein's value system. She recalls delivering food for clients of Meals on Wheels with her mom and grandmother. It is no surprise that Robin is now Vice President of Social Action at Temple Sinai. In her VP role, Robin hopes to deliver programs and initiatives that give to the Temple Sinai community “that feeling that comes from giving back, that nothing else can duplicate.” In addition to her Board position, Robin has served on Temple

Sinai's Religious School Committee, Amidah Leadership Initiative, the Temple's Principal Search Committee and has been an educator in Temple Sinai's Hebrew school. Currently, she serves as a D'var Torah mentor for B'nei Mitzvah children, is a member of the Gala Committee and acts as a Temple Sinai Circle leader.

The Gala will include an in-person event with cocktails and dinner catered by Marcia Selden Catering, as well as a virtual option. Musical artist Noah Aronson will provide the evening's entertainment.

The fun-filled evening will also include a silent auction that will be held virtually

in the week leading up to the Gala and conclude that weekend, as well as a paddle raise to be held at the event. All donations support the spiritual, educational and social programming at Temple Sinai and the community at large.

To reserve a ticket for the Temple Sinai Gala or to place a tribute ad in honor of Marian Freed and Robin Himelstein, please RSVP online at [TempleSinaiStamford.org](http://TempleSinaiStamford.org). For more information about the Gala, contact Shelly Welfeld at Temple Sinai at 203-322-1649 or [Shelly@templesinaistamford.org](mailto:Shelly@templesinaistamford.org).

### Why Is This Night Different From All Other Nights?

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In addition to Rabbi Hammerman and Reverend Lingle, other clergy members will participate in the evening by reading passages from the *Haggadah*.

The evening is formal in nature so please reserve your spot by registering at [ujf.org/](http://ujf.org/)

seeder. The cost is \$18 by April 1 and \$25 after. For NextGen, the cost of \$10 by April 1 and \$15 after. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of University of Connecticut Professor Fred Roden, UConn students can attend at no cost to them. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Sharon Lewis, Director of UJF's Jewish

Community Relations Council, remarked, “We hope that many people of all faiths will be able to attend this special event and allow our community to be a beacon of peace and understanding.”

For additional information or to get involved, please contact Sharon Lewis, [slewis@ujf.org](mailto:slewis@ujf.org).

## Temple Sinai's Danoff Lecture Series

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) Temple Sinai's Joan Bruder Danoff Lecture Series will present a conversation with Judy Batalion, *The New York Times* bestselling author of *The Light of Days: The Untold Story of Women Resistance*



Author Judy Batalion

*Fighters in Hitler's Ghettos*, on Sunday, May 19 at 4:00 pm. The event is free and open to the entire community.

In 2007, while doing research in the British Library in London on Hungarian poet Hannah Szenes, Batalion, accidentally and serendipitously, came across an obscure Yiddish anthology called *Freuen in di Ghettos* (Women in the Ghettos). It was filled with accounts of young Jewish women who fought back against the Nazis, doing everything from distributing fake IDs to tossing molotov cocktails at Nazi officers.

Thirteen years later, her

research journey culminated in a history, created from memoirs, often written in code, first-person oral and written testimonies, letters, and diaries, one of which was written on toilet paper. Her book

brings to life the rebellion and bravery of Jewish women who acted as couriers, spies, smugglers and saboteurs in the ghettos of Poland, all in spite of mortal danger.

*The Light of Days* has also been published in a young reader's version and will be turned into a screenplay, co-written by Batalion and optioned by Steven Spielberg. Batalion's essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Vogue*, and many other publications. She has also written *White Walls: A Memoir about Motherhood, Daughterhood, and the Mess In Between*. Batalion

was born and raised in Montreal and earned a bachelor's degree in the History of Science at Harvard and a PhD in the History of Art from the University of London. She has worked as a museum curator and a university lecturer as well as a stand-up comedian.

Batalion's expertise, in a history largely unknown until she discovered it, will create space for conversation on the Jewish past, present, and future with vivid detail sure to leave a lasting impression on attendees of all demographics. The annual Danoff lecture series honors longtime Sinai members Joan and Dr. Stuart Danoff. It was endowed by their three children, Nancy Danoff, Suzy Poneman, and Will Danoff. To register to attend in person or to view as a webinar, contact Temple Sinai at 203-322-1649 or [www.templestamford.org/form/joan-bruder-danoff-lecture2024.html](http://www.templestamford.org/form/joan-bruder-danoff-lecture2024.html).

## Save the Dates for UJF Affinity Group Events!

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF) is ramping up its affinity group activities this spring. Please save these dates!

The evening of Thursday, May 2, UJF will be hosting a "Rothschild Society Networking Happy Hour" The Rothschild Society is UJF's affinity group for business professionals in Fairfield County, providing education, leadership, and networking opportunities aimed at helping the local and global Jewish communities. More details and registration can be found at [www.ujf.org/networking](http://www.ujf.org/networking).

On Monday, June 10 at 11:00 AM, UJF's Chapter Two affinity group will be holding a "Hands-On Israeli Cooking Class" with Community Shaliach (Israeli Emissary) Yoav Yaron. Chapter Two is UJF's affinity group for women in Fairfield County who are "empty nesters" looking to create a network through shared interests and an appreciation for community. Additional details and registration can be found at [www.ujf.org/chapter2](http://www.ujf.org/chapter2).

Please be sure to check UJF's social media and upcoming emails for updates on these events and other affinity group programs in the future. To be involved in these or future programs, please contact UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross at [Eric@UJF.org](mailto:Eric@UJF.org).

## Schoke JFS Hirsch Kosher Meal Subscription Service

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) The Pamela and Michael Hirsch Kosher Meal Subscription, a program of Schoke Jewish Family Service, now offers a hassle-free solution for individuals seeking convenient and nutritious meal options delivered to their doorstep.

Each subscription kit includes five fully-prepared kosher meals, curated by Mauzone Caterers for exceptional taste and quality. These meals are easily heated in the microwave or oven, providing effortless dining without sacrificing flavor or nutrition.

In addition to the main meals, subscribers receive five portions each of soups, desserts, fruit, and bread, all conveniently delivered frozen for easy storage.

Priced at just \$40 per kit, this subscription service ensures accessibility and affordability for individuals seeking wholesome and kosher meal solutions. Visit [www.ctjfs.org/koshermeals](http://www.ctjfs.org/koshermeals) to learn more or contact Jen Bernstein, Director of Food Programs, [jbernstein@ctjfs.org](mailto:jbernstein@ctjfs.org), 203-921-4161.

# PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS

Advertise with us & reach the Jewish community of Greater Stamford!

Call Diane Sloyer at (203) 321-1373, ext. 105 or email [dianesloyer@ujf.org](mailto:dianesloyer@ujf.org)

THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

## A NEW VISION IN SENIOR LIVING. YOURS.





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**Now's the time to secure lucrative benefits through Charter Membership!**

For more information, please schedule a personal appointment with one of our Sales Counselors at the new Welcome Center located adjacent to the project property at 260 Long Ridge Road. Contact us at **203-396-1140** or [info@mozaiccl.org](mailto:info@mozaiccl.org).

[mozaicconciergeliving.org](http://mozaicconciergeliving.org)

# MOZAIC

Concierge Living

Life with Community

Mozaic Concierge Living is a Life Plan Community by Mozaic Senior Life, a trusted senior care provider for over 50 years.

## Reinventing Jewish Food

(Courtesy of JCC)  
Whether you're Jewish, Jew-ish, or not Jewish at all, you are welcome to join the Stamford Jewish Community Center for a fantastic evening with best-selling cookbook author Jake Cohen on Thursday, April 4, at 7:30 pm. Robin Selden, Executive Chef and Managing Partner of Connecticut and New York City-based Marcia Selden Catering and Naked Fig Catering, will be the moderator for this event.

Jake Cohen will delight attendees with personal stories and a cooking demonstration featuring recipes from his beloved *New York Times* bestseller, *Jew-ish: Reinvented Recipes from a Modern Mensch*, as well as his latest cookbook, *I Could Nosh: Classic Jew-ish Recipes Revamped for Every Day*. With creativity and a healthy dash of *chutzpah*, Jake's cookbooks are a must-have for food lovers everywhere.

Discover how Jake reinvents the food of his Ashkenazi heritage while drawing inspiration from his husband's Persian-Iraqi traditions. Classics such as sweet and savory schmears, chicken soup sans soup, exotic variations of challah, kugel fries, Persian rice treats, tzimmes cake, and much more will have a whole new look and taste.

Jake Cohen, a social media star with millions of TikTok and Instagram followers, keeps audiences engaged with his challah-braiding and garlic matzo antics. A graduate of the Culinary Institute of America, Jake is not only a food writer but has also worked in some of New York's finest restaurants and test kitchens. His recipes have been featured on shows like *Rachael Ray* and *The Drew*



Celebrity chef Jake Cohen.



Robin Selden of Marcia Selden Catering.

*Barrymore Show*, as well as in publications such as the *New York Times*, *Food & Wine*, *Bon Appetit*, and *Forbes*, where he was listed in the 30 Under 30 list in 2022 for *Food & Drink*.

Robin Selden and her team orchestrate 1,100 events a year to include premier parties and weddings throughout the tri-state area and beyond.

She was named one of the 100 Most Inspiring People in the Wedding Industry by *The Knot*. Robin is a Past President and Chef-of-the-Year of the International Caterers Association, a Board Ambassador for the Make-a-Wish Foundation, and a founding member of

The American Cancer Society's Women Leading the Way to Wellness. Robin and brother Jeffrey taught a Catering and Special Events Class at Cornell University and a Master's Class in Events at Boston University. She is a featured speaker and emcee at the largest catering and events conference in the world, Catersource. Robin resides in Stamford with her husband Michael, twins Max and Maggie, and their Goldendoodles.

Tickets are \$20 for JCC members and \$35 for the community before March 21. Visit [stamfordjcc.org](http://stamfordjcc.org) for tickets and the option to purchase Jake's cookbooks. For more information contact Sandi Waldstreicher at 203.322.7900 or [swaldstreicher@stamfordjcc.org](mailto:swaldstreicher@stamfordjcc.org).

The JCC's Early Childhood Scholar-In-Residence program is underwritten by the Charles M. Karp Memorial Fund, through the generosity of Douglas and Sharon Karp and Arnold and Lisa Karp.

## Rose Schneiderman: Early Labor Organizer and Feminist

BY MARCIE SCHOENFELD

The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County invites you to learn more about Rose Schneiderman on Sunday, May 5, at 11:00 am for a Zoom multi-media talk. The program entitled "A Tiny Red-Haired Bundle of Social Dynamite: The Life of Rose Schneiderman" is presented by her great-niece Annie Schneiderman Valliere, who spent more than a decade researching and writing her biography.

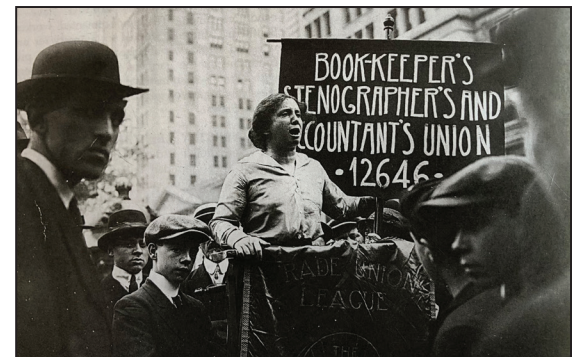
Rose Schneiderman emigrated from Polish Russia to the Lower East Side of NY in 1890. As a young girl, she worked in the garment industry in the Lower East Side and in the early 1900s began to organize women in her factory, who joined the United Cloth Hat and Cap Makers Union. Schneiderman played an active role in the 1909 strike of 20,000 shirtwaist workers in New York City. She is probably best known for her speech after the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire of 1911 where 146 garment workers were burned alive or died jumping from the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of their building. For years the union movement had been fighting unsafe conditions and lack of fire escapes in the factories and sweatshops in and around New York City. During this period, and for about 25 years, Schneiderman was the vice-president and then president of the New York Women's Trade Union League where she helped lead the fight for minimum wage, collective bargaining, and even universal health care.

Schneiderman was also a founding member of The American Civil Liberties Union in the 1920s. She became friends with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt as well as other major leaders. At the start of FDR's New Deal, at the suggestion

of her friend Frances Perkins (the first woman to be appointed to the Presidential Cabinet as Secretary of Labor), she was appointed by FDR as the only woman to the National Recovery Administration's Labor Advisory Board and was a member of Roosevelt's "brain trust." From 1937 to 1944 she was Secretary of Labor for New York State, where she advocated for equal pay for female workers as well as including domestic workers for social security.

Once conditions for Jews in Europe deteriorated in the 1930s, she worked to bring Jewish refugees to the United States and then lobbied for the United States to enter the war against Hitler. Albert Einstein even wrote her a letter commending her for her efforts, considering the difficulties of the Depression and restrictive immigration quotas. According to Valliere, her great-aunt seemed unstoppable! She worked tirelessly for over 50 years, and she was a heroine to many Jews, labor activists, and feminists.

For more information and RSVP, please contact JHSFC via email at [info@jhsfc-ct.org](mailto:info@jhsfc-ct.org); or 203-359-2196. Check out our website: <https://jhsfc-ct.org>.



Rose Schneiderman addressing a labor rally in NYC, circa 1913.

## Singer/Songwriter to Perform at TBE Coffeehouse

(Courtesy of Temple Beth El)  
Temple Beth El (TBE) invites the community to attend a Coffeehouse event featuring Sue Horowitz in concert, beginning with *Havdalah* on Saturday, April 6 at 8:00 pm. Sue Horowitz writes songs about everyday struggles and joys and makes them meaningful and resonant.

Her stories in song are poignant, heartfelt, hilarious, rousing, timely and timeless. With one foot planted firmly in the spiritual Jewish music world, and the other in the



Singer and songwriter Sue Horowitz

singer-songwriter world, Horowitz has 15 years of national touring experience, from large festivals to congregations to intimate house concerts.

This Ithaca, New York and York Beach, Maine artist has five albums of original music, and her latest album, *Strings, Wings and Curious Things*, topped the Folk Radio Charts. Sue's sound is a blend of American and Folk, while also drawing influences from blues and classic rock, making each song unique. Check out Sue's music: [www.suehorowitz.com](http://www.suehorowitz.com).

TBE's Cantor Katie Kaplan, who will join Sue in concert that evening, stated, "It is with enthusiasm that I will be bringing Sue Horowitz, the leader and creative talent at

the helm, to TBE to share her music at a special dessert and *Havdalah* evening on Saturday, April 6. Please mark your calendars, as Sue's music and artistry are not to be missed. Together, we will share music and celebration while Sue takes us on a musical journey. She will share her superpower of building community and telling a story through song. I can't wait and hope you will join us!"

The cost is \$18 per person for the *Havdalah*, concert, and coffee and dessert reception.

RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/tbecoffeehouse>.

For further information, contact the TBE office at 203-322-6901, ext 300 or [office@tbe.org](mailto:office@tbe.org)

# Local Leaders Advocate for Jewish Issues in DC

BY MONICA SMYTH SCHLESSINGER

On January 31, Bob Abrams, Claudia Kraut, UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross, and I traveled to Washington D.C. on behalf of United Jewish Federation to advocate for legislative priorities including Israel, fighting antisemitism, and securing Jewish communities. Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) organized a “DC Fly-In Lobbying Day,” which brought together over 400 advocates from across the country. We worked together to convey to our legislators the importance of standing up for our most significant ally in the Middle East.

Our first lobbying meeting was with a legislative aide for Representative Jahana Hayes (CT-05, covering Northwest and Central Connecticut). While Hayes supports Israel, she has concerns about the Antisemitism Awareness Act. This act would require the Department of Education to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, the gold standard that has already been adopted by 1,200 entities including 45 countries and hundreds of municipal governments and universities. Led by Mayor Caroline Simmons, Stamford adopted this definition in June 2023. The ability for schools to apply the IHRA definition, helps them to clarify the critical line between legitimate criticism of Israeli policies, and applying double standards to Israel that pertain to no other country. Mindy Hersh of Southport spoke movingly of her father’s experience in Auschwitz in underscoring why a clear standard is necessary, for example to counter the rampant antisemitism we now see on college campuses.

Mid-morning, we met with Representative Jim Himes (CT-04). Himes indicated his theoretical support for the \$14.3 billion emergency assistance package to Israel. The package passed the House back in October but languished for three months while a bipartisan committee considered amendments. When we met with a key



Bob Abrams asks Representative Jim Himes to co-sponsor the Antisemitism Awareness Act.

proponent of this package, our own Senator Chris Murphy, later in the day, he said he hoped it would pass but, if it did not, they would try again given how critical the emergency funding and humanitarian aid are to those in need.

Joining the meeting with Senator Murphy was Gilli Roman, an Israeli spokesperson for the hostages. Gilli had met with Diane Sloyer and Michael Schlessinger on Federation’s first fly-in to Israel shortly after the horrific events of October 7. Gilli’s heroic sister Yarden, allowed herself to be captured so that her husband could save their daughter and thankfully was among the first hostages released. However, Gilli continues his fervent advocacy for those still in the Gaza tunnels. Gilli expressed his gratitude to Federation for “the deepest possible support that one can imagine.”

Beyond legislative meetings, the fly-in was enriched by musicians from the Gaza envelope and by heartfelt messages of support from Democrats and Republicans alike, including John Fetterman (D Sen., PA), Richie Torres (D NY-15), and Elise Stefanik (R NY-21). The concert was particularly emotional in evoking the memory of those slaughtered at the Nova music festival. To cope with seemingly unbearable grief, one performer remarked, “It helps to carry on with our work, whether it be soldiering or performing music.” Or, I might add, advocating for policies key to those activities.



Connecticut leaders meet with Senator Chris Murphy (L-R): Michael Bloom, Executive Director of JFACT (Jewish Federation Association of CT), Stamford participant Monica Smyth Schlessinger, Fly-In participant from eastern CT, UJF Education Committee Chair Robert Abrams, Senator Chris Murphy, Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven Board Member Jody Ellant, Gilli Roman (brother of Israeli hostage Yarden Roman-Gat), and Jewish Federation of Greater Fairfield County Board Member Mindy Hersh.

# A New Twist on a Dignity Grows Packing Party

(Courtesy of UJF) In February, Stamford resident Robin Fischel wanted to honor her birthday while doing something special to give back to the community. In lieu of gifts or dinner out, friends were asked to support the Dignity Grows program of United Jewish Federation by making a contribution of at least \$50 for bags to be filled with personal feminine hygiene products to be delivered to organizations such as New Covenant Center, Inspirica, Person-to-Person, and Domestic Violence Crisis Center. The group not only filled 100 bags that evening but also had a chance to schmooze and enjoy dessert and drinks!



Friends recognize Robin Fischel's birthday by filling Dignity Grows bags for women in need.

Dignity Grows™ embodies the Jewish

values of *tzedakah* (righteousness) and *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) by providing monthly kits with menstrual and personal care products to women in need.

If you are interested in supporting the Dignity Grows program, please contact Sharon Lewis at [SLewis@ujf.org](mailto:SLewis@ujf.org)

# Jim Himes Meets With UJF’s JCRC



(L-R) Marjorie Abrams, UJF President Michael Schlessinger, Lori Bean, Marni Amsellem, Congressman Jim Himes, Seth Lubin, Jonathan Lerner, UJF CEO Diane Sloyer, and UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross.

Thank you to Representative Jim Himes for meeting with members of United Jewish Federation’s Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) to discuss vital issues like supplemental emergency aid to Israel, H.R. 6090 - the Antisemitism Awareness Act, and for full funding of FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). The Jewish community in Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien truly appreciates your support.

## dignitygrows COMMUNITY PACK

**DATE**  
THURSDAY, APRIL 18

**TIME**  
7:00 PM

**LOCATION**  
SERENDIPITY LABS  
700 CANAL STREET - STAMFORD, CT.

**REGISTRATION**  
[WWW.UJF.ORG/PACK](http://WWW.UJF.ORG/PACK)

**TICKETS**  
\$18

*Pack feminine hygiene tote bags for women in need!*

Join United Jewish Federation’s Dignity Grows chapter for a community pack and to socialize over wine, cheese, and light refreshments.

Hosted by UJF, the Interfaith Council of Southwestern Connecticut, and local houses of worship.





## Aunt Fanny's Butter Cookies

BY RONNIE FEIN

For as long as I can remember, all the women in our family have baked a basic butter cookie we call Fannies. The name came about because it was my great-aunt Fanny who developed the recipe (more than 100 years ago) and somehow calling them Fanny's butter cookies just didn't seem right to anyone but the English majors in our lives.

My mom made these cookies when I was a little girl – though she used vegetable shortening, a habit leftover from World War II when butter was rationed. During those years she (and all the other relatives) just kept making them, butter or not, because the cookies were so good.

I have made Fannies so often I can mix the dough and shape them without even looking at what I'm doing. My kids make them. And now my grandkids even make them. They are the ultimate butter cookie. You need look no further to find a better one.

But not on Passover, of course!

A few years ago I thought -- this recipe is so good, why not try a Passover version? So I did. Many times! Until I got it right! And now, several years later, I have made several different versions. Two of them are below (Aunt Fanny's original recipe is on my website).

As far as I know, no one named a child after my father's mother's sister. But, in keeping with our Ashkenazi tradition, she will forever have something that bears her name: the family recipe for butter cookies. Passover version too.

Thanks Aunt Fanny.



Passover "Fannies"

### AUNT FANNY'S PASSOVER BUTTER COOKIES – PASSOVER (FANNIES)

1 cup matzo cake meal  
1/2 cup ground toasted almonds  
3/4 cup sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
15 tablespoons unsalted butter, slightly softened, cut into chunks  
2 large egg yolks  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
chocolate chips (about 50) (or use jam or lekvar)

Place the matzo cake meal, ground almonds, sugar and salt in the bowl of an electric mixer and mix on low speed for about a minute until the ingredients are evenly combined. Add the butter and mix on low-medium speed for about 3 minutes. The mixture will be crumbly. Add the egg yolks and vanilla extract and mix for another minute or so until a soft, uniform dough forms. Place the dough in the refrigerator for 30-40 minutes or until somewhat chilled and slightly firmer.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Take small chunks of dough and shape into balls about one-inch in diameter. Flatten the balls in the palm of your hands into disks that are about 1/4-inch thick. Place the flattened balls on ungreased cookie sheets, leaving some space between each cookie (they will spread slightly). Place a chocolate chip in the center of each dough disk (they hold better if you place the chips upside down). Bake for about 15 minutes or until golden brown. Makes about 50.

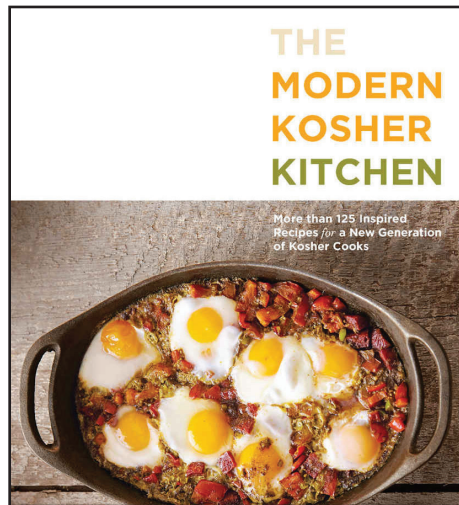
Note: if you use jam or lekvar, make a thumbprint in the center of each cookie and fill the hollow.

### ALMOND AND COCONUT BUTTER COOKIES (FANNIES)

2 cups almond flour  
1/2 cup coconut flour  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 pound unsalted butter  
3/4 cup sugar  
2 large egg yolks  
1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
jam, lekvar, chocolate chips, etc.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Mix the almond flour, coconut flour and salt in a bowl and set aside. Place the butter and sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer and mix on medium speed for 1-2 minutes or until the ingredients are evenly combined or until the mixture is light and fluffy. Add the almond flour mixture and mix another 1-2 minutes, or until the ingredients are almost blended. Add the egg yolks and vanilla extract. Mix the ingredients 1-2 minutes, or until a uniform dough forms. Refrigerate the dough for at least 45 minutes. Scoop pieces of dough and shape them into balls about 1" in diameter. Flatten the balls between your palms. Press each circle with your thumb to make an indentation in the center. Place the cookies on a cookie sheet, leaving an inch of space between them. Fill the thumb print spaces with a small amount of lekvar, jam, etc. Bake for 18-23 minutes or until the cookies are golden brown. Makes about 50

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



## Chabad of Stamford Covers Passover Needs

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Prepare for the holiday and explore Passover needs with Chabad of Stamford, whether seeking meaningful and beautiful in-person seders, *shmurah* matzah, *chametz*-selling services, participation in the mitzvah of *Maos Chitim* ("wheat money" for the needy), or "Seders-to-Go" Kits.

To kick off *Pesach* (Passover) preparations, join Chabad's annual family matzah bake on Sunday, April 7 at 10:00 am at Chabad of Stamford, 770 High Ridge Road. Later that day, Chabad also invites all teens in the community (8th through 12th grade) to join them for a fun teen matzah bake at 7:00 pm.

Chabad can also provide *shmurah* matzah for seder needs and assist with selling *chametz* before Passover. *Maos Chitim*, a significant Passover charity

observance, is strongly encouraged by Chabad who invites everyone to participate in sharing the festival of freedom with those in need across the community.

Join Chabad for in-person community seders on both nights of *Pesach* at 7:15 pm on April 22 and 23. Experience their elegant, thought-provoking, warm, and interactive seders, where enjoyable company and delicious food are promised.

For the fifth consecutive year, Chabad of Stamford offers "Seder-to-Go" kits, enabling people to conduct a seder at home with all the necessary items. These kits include *shmurah* matzah, wine or grape juice, an interactive and insightful Haggadah, and all the items needed for the seder plate. For further details, please visit [www.stamfordchabad.org](http://www.stamfordchabad.org) or contact us at 203-324-2223 ext. 103 or email [programs@stamfordchabad.org](mailto:programs@stamfordchabad.org).

## Friendship Circle to Hold "Sensory Seder"

(Courtesy of Friendship Circle) On Monday night April 22, Friendship Circle participants and their families will gather to celebrate the first night of Passover with a "Sensory Seder." The evening will be hosted at the home of Malya and Rabbi Zalman Shmotkin and will include all the traditional aspects of the holiday celebration. Guests will experience an interactive retelling of the story of the Jews' freedom from Egypt, the four cups, *maror*, *charoset* and all the traditional foods in a warm and inclusive environment.

There will be a special "ten plagues" kit to be used while reading the Haggadah. The kit will be full of sensory items and fidget toys so that participants can experience the

ten plagues in the way that they learn best. Back by popular demand, the Passover story will be told through a show. This has been a highlight of the Friendship Circle Seder for many years.

Friendship Circle Director Malya Shmotkin said, "This is one of my favorite parts of the holiday. It is an incredible way to tell the story of Passover. The warmth, excitement and joy that fill the room is tangible. I look forward to sharing the first Seder with our wonderful friends and families once again this year!"

To become involved with the Friendship Circle, please reach out to Director Malya Shmotkin at [Malya@friendshipct.com](mailto:Malya@friendshipct.com).





## Feed the Community for Passover with Schoke JFS

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) The festival of *Pesach* (Passover) commemorates the Exodus from Egypt and celebrates *zman heirutinu* – the season of Jewish freedom. Jews elevate the many freedoms they enjoy in their daily lives: freedom to practice their faith traditions, freedom to celebrate together in community, freedom to welcome the stranger into their home, freedom from want, and freedom from hunger.



Schoke JFS Passover bags

Schoke Jewish Family Service recognizes that many clients come in search of small freedoms like being able to celebrate Passover in their sacred tradition and to have additional food support during a time of need.

Your donations can help fulfill this need. As so many of you have done throughout the years, Schoke JFS looks to you again to help the Freedberg Family Kosher Food Pantry and Kosher Mobile Food Pantry meet the needs within the community. Your contribution will help provide food to 250 additional households – nearly 1,000 individuals – in the weeks leading up to Passover and during the holiday. This is above and beyond the hundreds of households Schoke JFS serves each week.

Schoke JFS is gladly accepting Passover donations between March 22 and April 12 at the listed locations and times.

### SHOPPING LIST FOR PASSOVER 2024

- Kosher chicken – whole chicken or chicken parts
- Matzah ball soup mix – regular and low sodium
- Eggs, eggs, eggs!
- Gefilte fish
- Horseradish
- Parsley
- Matzah – and any great recipes you have for how you prepare matzah dishes!

### DROPOFF LOCATIONS

**Freedberg Family Kosher Food Pantry (196 Greyrock Place, Stamford)**

Mondays through Fridays 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**Local Kosher Mobile Food Pantry distribution sites**

- Thursday, March 28, 7:00 to 9:00 pm (Stamford JCC)  
1035 Newfield Ave, Stamford
  - Thursday, April 4, 2:30 to 4:30 pm (Odyssey - FEC)  
11 Ingalls Ave, Norwalk
  - Tuesday, April 9, 11:00 am to 1:00 pm (Caroline House)  
574 Stillman Street, Bridgeport
  - Thursday, April 11, 10:30 am to 12:30 pm (Stern Village)  
200 Hedgehog Circle, Trumbull
  - Sunday, April 14, 9:30 to 11:30 am (Congregation Beth El in Norwalk)  
109 East Ave, Norwalk
  - Sunday, April 14, 12:30 to 2:30 pm (Congregation B'nai Israel in Bridgeport)  
2710 Park Ave, Bridgeport
- Kosher Mobile Food Pantry: Onsite at An Evening with Schoke JFS event**  
Sunday, April 7, Temple Beth El, 350 Roxbury Road, Stamford  
Questions? Contact Jen Bernstein, SJFS Director of Food Programs, jbernstein@ctjfs.org, 203-921-4161.

## Ferber Senior Passover Seder

(Courtesy of JCC) On Friday, April 19 from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm, the JCC will host the annual “Beverly and Stanley Ferber Memorial Senior Passover Seder.” Carrying on the tradition of the Ferber family, this year’s Passover Seder luncheon is presented for the senior adult community, free of charge, through the generosity of Stacy Ferber, Caryl Ferber

Poser and Peter Poser, in memory of Beverly and Stanley Ferber, Stacy and Caryl’s parents. The luncheon is in partnership with Catholic Charities.

RSVP is required no later than Friday, April 12. Please register online at [www.stamfordjcc.org](http://www.stamfordjcc.org) or contact Shari Ziegelman at 203-487-0979 or [sziegelman@stamfordjcc.org](mailto:sziegelman@stamfordjcc.org).

## JBaby Passover Concert with Tkiya

(Courtesy of JCC) Join the Stamford JCC on Sunday, April 7 from 9:30 to 10:30 am for a morning of joyous melodies at the “JBaby Passover Concert” featuring Tkiya. With an interactive musical retelling of the Passover story and an array of delightful Passover songs, children ages birth to 6 and their families are in for a treat. Tkiya’s team of friendly and knowledgeable Jewish

educator-musicians promises a morning filled with original and curated songs, captivating stories, engaging puppets, lively movement, and more.

Pricing is free to JCC members and \$25 per family for the community. For questions and more information, contact Danielle Mittleman at 203.487.0976 or [dmittleman@stamfordjcc.org](mailto:dmittleman@stamfordjcc.org).

## Temple Sinai Holds Second Night Seder

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) If you don’t already have plans, then join Temple Sinai for a second night Passover Seder on Tuesday, April 23 at 5:30 pm led by Rabbi Jay TelRav and Cantor Micah Morgovsky. The story of our ancestors becoming a people will be retold with songs, activities and traditions for kids of all ages.

Reservations are required. A four-course Passover meal will be catered by A&S of Stamford.

Please call the Temple Office at 203-322-1649 to register. RSVP on or before April 1: \$54 per adult / \$18 per child. After April 1: \$70 per adult / \$18 per child. No orders can be taken after April 19.

## Chabad of Stamford’s Model Matzah Bakery

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Join Chabad of Stamford for its annual “Model Matzah Bakery” on Sunday, April 7, at 10:00 am. Dive into the Passover spirit with this hands-on experience open to families and kids of all ages. Get ready to make your own *shmurah* (guarded) matzah and discover the meticulous process behind crafting kosher matzah.

Rabbi Moshe Shemtov, director of Chabad of Stamford, notes, “We aim to educate our community about the unique art of making *shmurah* matzah

for the Passover seder. This event offers a firsthand opportunity to witness the precise steps involved in producing this special handmade unleavened bread.”

This event is free and open to all members of the community with sponsorship opportunities available. To register, please contact [programs@stamfordchabad.org](mailto:programs@stamfordchabad.org) or call 203-324-2223. Visit [www.stamfordchabad.org](http://www.stamfordchabad.org) for more information. Join Chabad of Stamford and experience the joy of *Pesach* preparation!



**DON'T FORGET TO USE THE COMMUNITY CALENDAR.**

**THE CALENDAR CONTINUES TO BE IMPORTANT TO AVOID CONFLICTS.**

**WWW.UJF.ORG**  
QUESTIONS? EMAIL [TALY@UJF.ORG](mailto:TALY@UJF.ORG)

## Shabbat Across Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien

**Has been postponed until September.**

**Please watch for updates from UJF!**




# Celebrating Tu B'Shevat and Israeli Agriculture

*(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford)*  
 United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien and Chabad of Stamford brought the community together to celebrate Tu B'Shevat.

The event was a special gathering in honor of the holiday and a celebration of Israeli agriculture. Attendees were treated to a variety of Israeli products, including wine, beer, fruits and breads, primarily sourced directly from Israel. Additionally, there was a fun activity where guests could make their own chocolate bars with toppings representing the "seven species" of the land of Israel. Moroccan-style meat and dried fruit bourekas and Israeli music added to the festive atmosphere.

The evening began with Leah Shemtov providing an explanation of the symbolism of the "seven species" in Judaism, followed by Yoav Yaron sharing his experiences celebrating Tu B'Shevat in Israel. He spoke about why barley is his favorite of the seven species as it allowed him to indulge in his passion of craft beer making.

A particularly moving moment came



Dinah Miller Marlowe enjoys the "fruits of Israel" at the United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien and Chabad of Stamford Community Tu B'Shevat celebration.

from Claudia Kraut, who shared her testimony of volunteering on farms in Israel through Israel Food Rescue, a group she helped found. She recounted how, in the face of brutal attacks by



Celebrating Tu B'Shevat (L-R) Renee Manger, Dinah Miller Marlowe, Diane Sloyer, Leah Shemtov, Claudia Kraut, Gayle Bell and Inna Novikova.

Hamas, the resilience of the Jewish people and their allies was evident. Within a few days after the October 7 atrocities, Israel Food Rescue was swiftly established to aid struggling farmers affected by the conflict. Claudia described how the organization mobilized hundreds of volunteers from 17 countries to assist farmers who had lost their workers during the war.

Despite a lack of prior farming experience, Claudia and a group of 18 other individuals, ranging in age

from 18 to 76, convened in New York and flew together to Israel this winter. They received professional training and support from the organization which enabled them to make a meaningful impact on each farm where they were assigned. Their work, which included packing around 5,000 pieces of fruit per day, was both physically demanding and deeply rewarding. For the farmers they assisted, these volunteers were not just helping with their farms – they were saving them.

## Dignity Grows Interfaith Community Pack

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Center and Person to Person. But the need was so great that now, thanks to additional grant money, UJF's Dignity Grows chapter provides 400 bags per month.

Join community members in packing bags as well as socializing over wine, cheese and light refreshments.

The packing event on April 18 provides a way for interfaith communities to help

support this effort. Participants will help to assemble the bags, learn more about Dignity Grows, shmooze, sip wine and have snacks. To register, please go to [ujf.org/pack](http://ujf.org/pack). The cost of \$18 helps to defray the cost of the products.

Hosting a pack at home is a great way to commemorate a birthday or special occasion while helping members of the community in need. It's easy to do. Contact Taly Farber at [taly@ujf.org](mailto:taly@ujf.org) if interested.

## Mega Challah Bake Returns

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

surpassed expectations, drawing 215 women. Since then, it has united hundreds of women and collaborated with other Chabads and women's organizations across Fairfield County, with attendance reaching up to 500 women.

This year, Chabad aims to match that number as it hosts this highly anticipated communal event. Women and girls from all Jewish communities in Stamford are invited to join, contributing to the goal of unity and connection. The event coincides with a lesser-known Jewish holiday called *Pesach Sheini* (second Passover), offering a unique opportunity for inspiration, spiritual growth, and enjoyment for women of all ages and backgrounds.

The time of preparing challah is a unique time for prayer, giving and connection, and this event will have a focus on prayer and unity with Israel, including special guests from Israel, prayers for our brothers and sisters in Israel and

an opportunity for Jewish pride and strength.

To participate as a captain (gathering nine women to sign up to your table), an attendee, or to gather more information, please contact Vered Links at 203-3CHABAD ext 103, email [programs@chabadstamford.org](mailto:programs@chabadstamford.org), or visit [www.StamfordChabad.org](http://www.StamfordChabad.org). Join us for a memorable and meaningful evening of community, tradition, and connection.

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# CINEMA SABAYA

**UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION PRESENTS  
 A FILM SCREENING, DISCUSSION, &  
 A TASTE OF THE MIDDLE EAST**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 31**  
 TEMPLE BETH EL  
 6:00 - 9:00 PM

**FEATURING GUEST SPEAKERS**



Gadeer  
Kamal-Mreeh



Dr. Avner  
Shavit






WWW.UJF.ORG/CINEMA

# Mission Participants Share Personal Reflections

In early February a group of 15 individuals traveled to Israel with United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien. Coming to Israel today is a special act of solidarity and of Jewish peoplehood. Israel has never faced more challenging times. A solidarity mission is about encountering and understanding where the people of Israel stand – their hurt, their healing, their hope. The solidarity mission is about bringing comfort and being comforted. It is an act of empathy and confirmation of shared memory and destiny. Above all, the solidarity mission is about what each participant chooses to do to make a difference on the day they return to their communities from Israel.



## Every Story Heard, Every Voice Amplified



**BY WENDY SIEGEL**

Our visit to The Hostages and Missing Families Forum in Tel Aviv was an immersion in a world of profound sorrow juxtaposed with a tangible sense of hope and invincibility.

We sat, hearts heavy, listening to Yaakov Bohbot's distressing account of his brother Elkana's kidnapping. His words evoked a deep sense of heartbreak and urgency within us. Sitting next to Yaakov, we found a beacon of resilience and strength in Meirav Safdie, Director of Fundraising. Meirav exemplified the spirit of the Forum, a place where heartache fuels action.

The Forum operates from a donated building, filled with thousands of volunteers. Their efforts fuel the impactful

"BRING THEM HOME NOW" campaign with a call to action, a demand for justice, and a plea for humanity. The recognizable black, red, and white of the campaign, contrasting the tranquil blue and white of the Israeli flag, underscores the urgency of their mission - working around the clock to raise awareness, advocate for policy change, provide legal support, handle media, public relations, and advise on security and diplomatic strategies to help bring the hostages home.

Leaving the Forum, we carried a crushing sense of sadness coupled with a renewed determination. Every story heard, every voice amplified, brings us a step closer to BRING(ing) THEM HOME NOW!

## Rebuilding Lives

BY CAROLINE MARCIANO

During our life-changing UJF Solidarity Mission to Israel, we had the opportunity to meet a few residents from the southern town of Kibbutz Nir Oz, like Clarice, Oshrat and U.S. veteran Larry. Initially, they were moved to Eilat, the day after October 7, with JUST the clothes on their back! This displaced community was subsequently moved to temporary housing in Carmei Gat. Like most, they are struggling to readjust.

A partnership was formed with their director, Tali, and UJF Community Shaliach, Yoav Yaron. During their conversations, it became clear that there was a need for an oven to be used for communal events, such

as child-friendly activities as well as challah bakes with the elderly.

Our very own BCJA students raised a whopping \$1,000 for the Kibbutz Nir Oz families in collaboration with UJF, which graciously covered the rest of the cost!

Unfortunately, the community has lost 25% of its people. Yet Kibbutz Nir Oz is not just a kibbutz – it is a family! The residents of Nir Oz used to gather to eat meals daily. Moving forward, this community hopes to not just return to their shared dining room, but rebuild their lives together.



## The Land of Milk and Honey ... and Laundry



BY JESSIE BRAND

The hotel room door across from ours was open. A young mother heaped plastic bags into the hallway.

“I’m so sorry,” she said, embarrassed. She explained that she and her three children were living in the hotel room since being displaced from their home in Southern Israel on October 7. In her room, a huge suitcase overflowed with neatly folded clothing.

There was almost no space to walk or stand. We were speechless imagining ourselves in her shoes.

The plastic bags in the hallway, she explained, contained her family’s clothing that Israeli families were

taking to launder. Laundry. Such a basic, tender act of love. Of community.

Witnessing how the Jewish people are there for each other, no questions asked – regardless of level of observance, skin color, or politics – struck me to my core. This is probably the thing that makes me most proud to be Jewish. The thing that I most want to instill in my children. And this is the reason, I believe, that we will continue to survive and thrive despite the horrors we have faced and the evil that we face today.

Laundry and love and community. And of course, milk and honey too.

*Am Yisrael Chai.*



## Evacuees from the North

BY RHONDA SCHAFFER MARON

Imagine living 150 yards from the Lebanese Border and being able to see Hezbollah from your window. Or imagine being told there are terrorist tunnels directly under your house. Of course you would evacuate, but now imagine that your family has to move into a single hotel room— one room for living, sleeping, and storing the few belongings you were able to take with you.

All of these unimaginable experiences are a reality for the evacuees we met from the Northern Israeli town of Shlomi. These women were lucky in the sense that they evacuated before terrorists emerged from tunnels in their neighborhood, and before rockets hit their homes. They can live in relative safety in government-paid-for hotels. But many cannot return to their jobs, their children must adapt to

new schools and new friends, some are separated from family, and single-room living is very difficult.

Five months since evacuating, these Israelis from the North have no idea when they will be able to return home. Some have no houses left to go back to. Rockets continue to rain down and the prospect of a full war with Hezbollah continues to be a possibility. The evacuees from the North continue to live in difficult circumstances... indefinitely.





## The Things They Left Behind

BY ELINA FURMAN

Walking through Kfar Aza, I witnessed the ravages of the horrors firsthand. The burned homes. The overturned tables and mattresses. Fire pits that had long gone out, now filled with mud and cinder. Bullet holes that bore witness. Signs of struggle everywhere.

Visions of young and old living peacefully swirled through my mind — a jarring contrast against all this destruction.

Everything had been left behind. The little blue trike on the side of the road. The play kitchen once loved, now forgotten. A swing that once cradled a laughing child still swaying

in the soft breeze.

Toys. Shoes. Pots. Water jugs. All were still here. Nothing touched except the photos of the departed on houses left behind. Some already dead. Some still unknown.

What struck me most was a bright green painted path surrounded by beautiful orange trees. Signs of paradise before the gates of hell opened and swallowed it whole.

They will return, I thought. There will be laughter. Families and kids playing here once more, prancing down the bright green path with overripe oranges still waiting to be picked.

## Reflections from Kfar Aza

BY ZOE CHIEL

As we walked through Kibbutz Kfar Aza, I was struck by our guide Chen's vivid recounting of life on the kibbutz before October 7. Recalling my own visits to kibbutz communities during my teenage years, I could easily visualize her description of how teens eagerly awaited their opportunity to move into a special subsection of the community for young adults in their 20s, after moving out of their parents' homes. Rows of single-story apartment units lined the border of the kibbutz. Chen explained how the apartment units faced each other, creating a courtyard atmosphere for young adults to have a communal space to socialize with their peers.

As we approached this subsection of the kibbutz — with the fence bordering Gaza just a few meters away — the devastation was pervasive. Just as Chen had described, we could see signs of what a vibrant, joyful, youthful community outside each unit had been — string lights and tiki torches, lawn chairs and hammocks, beer bottles, shoes — except now these items were scorched, crumbled, bullet-ridden. Chen pointed to each home, telling us about the young people who had lived full lives in what had been a bucolic community before being brutally murdered or taken hostage into Gaza on October 7. "Please take pictures," Chen urged. "Share them. Make sure people don't forget."



## Coloring in Ofakim

BY NAVA ULMER

Ofakim is a large town in Southern Israel that had 53 residents murdered on October 7. Kids from the Ofakim school came to color a large banner with us that would be hung up in their playground. It read: "am yisrael chai."

I sat with girls who looked the same age as my oldest son. My Hebrew isn't great, but I wanted to try to talk with them, so while we were coloring I asked questions like how old they were, how many siblings they had, etc.

One girl, however, remained mostly silent until she suddenly asked me where I was from. I told her, "United States." She then asked, casually, if I have war in my city.

Her innocent question knocked the air out of me.

Wondering how to continue this important conversation in my minimal Hebrew, I slowly replied, "No." She continued by commenting that she has war in hers. Still coloring. "I know," I said. "That's why I'm here."

Then it was her turn to be surprised. Looking shocked, she asked, "But why did you come?"

My mind raced. I didn't have the Hebrew vocabulary to appropriately answer her. To tell her how for the past four months, I've been physically aching to be with my people in our homeland, how I cry most nights while being far away in their time of terror, how I want to tell them in person how sorry I am that this is happening to them, how I want to hear their stories, hug them, and share their pain.

So I said, "Because I wanted to say hi and say I love you." For the first time since our conversation had started, she stopped coloring. She turned to me, looked me in the eye, and broke out into a big smile.

And in that moment, my heart stopped aching for the first time since Oct 7, for a beat. And I prayed that hers did too.

And we continued coloring.



## The Necessities of War

BY ROBIN FISCHEL

On Federation's recent mission to Israel, we had the opportunity to tour the beautiful new Hadassah Hospital Mt. Scopus inpatient rehab facility which will also host outpatient services for physical therapy, hydrotherapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. This addition will turn a 40-bed unit to a technologically advanced 140 bed inpatient- rehabilitation unit. It will serve both wounded soldiers and citizens in addition to neurological conditions such as stroke, traumatic brain injuries, and spinal cord injuries. Amazingly forward focused, Hadassah built an emergency unit on the garage level which doubles as an extensive

bomb shelter. Hospital beds and nursing stations adorned the "unit." Upon the end of the war, everything car level and below will be taken down so this area can be converted back to a garage.

We also had the privilege to hear the personal story of a police officer and an October 7 hero. He is recovering from a severe arm injury after being shot in the arm by Hamas terrorists as he attempted to save innocent souls, including a fellow officer. With the help of this new facility, dedicated physicians and nurses, and skilled therapists, our hero will make a full recovery.



## Eggplant Farming

BY JACOB FELTON

On February 7, our mission was to pick and box eggplants on a moshav outside Beit Shemesh. We witnessed firsthand the effects of the October 7 terror attacks – and the ensuing exodus of foreign farm workers – on Israeli agriculture just the day prior, while visiting Kfar Aza, Ofakim, and other massacred areas of the South, where citrus groves lay strewn with rotten oranges.

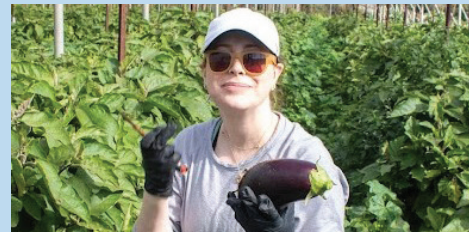
On the way to the moshav, we stopped at a park in the Judean Foothills and talked about

our experiences in the South, challenged by our guide, Lior, to summarize in a single word our thoughts and feelings. The contrast between the devastation we saw in Kfar Aza and the bluebird skies, bright green grasses, and blooming red poppies that surrounded us could not have been starker or stranger – and everyone's word seemed to center on this disparity, e.g., "conflicted," "torn."

Upon arriving at the moshav, we met a Thai farmhand, who escorted us to the eggplant greenhouses via a 20-minute

tractor ride through shin-deep mud. Our bus driver, David, a Jerusalem native who has led countless tour groups throughout Israel, also joined us for this "activity" – every Jew, every Israeli wants to help however they can! David said this was his first time ever taking a tour group to do farmwork.

We spent the next several hours picking eggplants, talking amongst ourselves, and admiring Israel's incredible natural beauty. By the end of the day, we packed at least 50 boxes of eggplants!



## Hosting BBQ for 200 Soldiers

BY ANDREW BANOFF

An important interactive experience of our mission was a BBQ we hosted for 200 soldiers at an army base. Apparently, most of the meals are cold and served outside. Some of our group had arranged to bring hand-knitted hats and letters from the children in the Hebrew school, and bracelets and little dolls that were warmly received. We were able to mingle and chat with some of the soldiers and everyone was grateful for our visit.

This base serves to care for the jail that is there for Palestinians who were captured who illegally crossed the borders, the military police who serve at the checkpoints, the general military assignments, and then finally for special operations.

I spoke in depth with a young woman who had made aliyah two years ago from Canada. She is working as a military police officer at the border crossings. All of the people on this base are active military, meaning they are in their initial service although the officers stay longer. This differs from the reserve units that are serving in many parts of the war. I wish the world would see the picture of the diversity of the soldiers who truly have origins from all over the world. Pictures cannot capture the beauty of these people, the heart and soul that they have for Israel and the incredible pride that they have for their country.



## Bits &amp; Pieces



BY SANDY GOLOVE

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

**MAZEL TOV TO GROWING FAMILIES:**

Sandy Golove

**Aliza & Seth Bettan** on the birth of a daughter.  
**Leora Borzak & Coby Sloyer** on the birth of a daughter, Nava Tehila Sloyer; and to grandparents **Diane & Elliot Sloyer and Deena & Steve Borzak**; and to great grandmothers **Eleanor Heller and Esther Sloyer**.  
**Andrée Ciccarelli & David Aronica** on the birth of a daughter, Josephine Ciccarelli Aronica; and to grandmother **Barbara Aronica**.  
**Ana & Ben Cohen** on the birth of a son, Noah Skye Cohen; and to grandparents **Malerie Yolen-Cohen & Jeff Cohen**.  
**Stacie & Brandon Espinosa** on the birth of a daughter, Bailey Reese Espinosa; and to grandparents **Amy & Bill Miller**.  
**Elana Tombka Friedman & Yossi Friedman** on the birth of a son.  
**Chaya & Rabbi Levi Feller** on the birth of a daughter; and to grandparents **Dina & Rabbi Mendel Feller and Malya & Zalman Shmotkin**.  
**Zach & Christina Kampler** on the birth of a daughter, Ella Maria Kampler.  
**Sara & Yoel Kelman** on the birth of a son.  
**Amalia & Leon Kotlyar** on the birth of a daughter.

**Leron & Benjamin Lerner** on the birth of a son; and to grandparents **Judy & Seth Lerner**.

**Meryl & Larry Meiteles** on the birth of a grandson.

**Tamar & Feivel Segelov** on the birth of a daughter, Yakira and to grandparents **Diane & Rabbi Daniel Cohen**.

**Alana & Jed Selkowitz** on the adoption of a son, Anton Craig Bentley Selkowitz; and to grandparents **Betsey & Arthur Selkowitz and Natasha & Norm Turoff**.

**Myrna & George Sessa** on the birth of a granddaughter, Maxine Cora Schickler.

**Brina & Teddy Stalbow** on the birth of a daughter.

**Caren & Jules Szanton** on the birth of a daughter, Aliza Adar; and to grandparents **Sharon & Jeff Lewis** and great-grandmother **Muriel Ashley**.

**Ro & Yitzy Wexler** on the birth of a son.

**MAZEL TOV ON MARRIAGES/ ENGAGEMENTS:**

**Linda & Len Russ** on the engagement of their son, **Douglas Russ** to **Yael Malul**, daughter of **Esther Malul**.

**Risa & Jeff Goldblum** on the engagement of their son, **Jordan Goldblum** to **Jackie Kolbert**, daughter of **Denise & William Kolbert**; and to grandparents **Ann & Allie Goldblum**.

**Rhonda Greif** on the engagement of her son, **Jensen Greif** to **Tal Hamami**, daughter of **Iris & Alon Hamami**.

**Monica & Eric Jankelovitz** on the marriage of their daughter, **Lauren Jankelovitz** to **Kevin George**.

**Rachel & Jay Jubas** on the marriage of

their daughter, **Talia Jubas** to **Moshe Steinberg**.

**Steven Labkoff & Liron Sissman** and **Tracey Ryan** on the engagement of their daughter **Nicole Leigh Labkoff** to **Nathan Bick**, son of **David Bick**.

**Marguerite & Ken Neuhaus** on the engagement of their son, **Remy Neuhaus** to **Noa Friedman**, daughter of **Gail & Avi Friedman**.

**Beth & Sandy Weinberg** on the engagement of their son, **Alex Weinberg** to **Eliana Melmed**, daughter of **Hetty & Gil Melmed**.

**Sharon & Simeon Wohlberg** on the engagement of their son, **Jason Wohlberg** to **Shelby Weller**, daughter of **Marsha & Ely Weller**.

**MAZEL TOV B'NAI MITZVAH:**

**Joshua Friedman** son of **Rachel & Keith Friedman**.

**Akiva Lowenstein**: grandson of **Hadassah & Senator Joseph Lieberman**.

**Peyton Gendason**: son of **Helaine & Ari Gendason**.

**Jadyn Lurie**: daughter of **Nina & Steve Lurie**.

**WE MOURN THE LOSS OF:**

**Charles F. Axelrod**: husband of **Chryl Axelrod**; and father of **Scott Axelrod**.

**Lillian Bolensky Backer**: wife of **David Backer**, mother of **Harry Backer**, **Hannah Book**, and **Sam Backer**, and sister of **Shira Manheimer**.

**Joan Behrend**: mother of **Kerrin Behrend**, **Linda Robinson**, **Deborah Shtein** and **David Behrend**.

**Richard Salman Cohen**: father of **David Cohen**, **Dan Cohen** and **Sharon Cohen Bertler**.

**Jacob Deutch**: father of **Charisse Lichtman**.

**Joan Druckman**: mother of **Greg Druckman**, **Mike Druckman**, and **Steve Druckman**; and sister of **Richard Moskovits**.

**Joyce Gerber**: mother of **Pamela Tinkham**.  
**Sultana Tina Habib**: mother of **Judy Contente**, **Ralph Habib**, **Kay Habib**, **Tino Habib**, **Tikvah Habib**, **Aviva Habib** and **Dayana Rapoport**.

**Gerald "Jerry" Jacobs**: father of **Bonnie Jacobs**, **Philip Jacobs** and **Steven Jacobs**; and brother of **Robert Jacobs**.

**Gail Laddin**: sister of **Jayne Schiff**.

**Myrna Lazarus**: mother of **Jeff Lazarus**, **Michael Lazarus** & **David Lazarus**.

**Yossi Lefkovich**: father of **Michael Lefkovich**.

**Lily Lunenfeld**: mother of **Tami Raymer** and **Charles Lunenfeld**; and sister of **Sandra Goldstein**.

**Steven Mainzer**: father of **Hugh Mainzer**.  
**Sandra Ross**: mother of **Tamar Ross**.

**Jim Samuels**: husband of **Patty Samuels** and father of **Jonathan**, **Francine** and **Susan Samuels**.

**Carole Tindel**: mother of **Lori Kahn**.

**Menahem Toraty**: husband of **Shula Toraty**; father of **Natalie Toraty**; and brother of **Hezi Toraty**, **Talia Hanuka** and **Bat El Skornik**.

**Kurt Zimble**: husband of **June Zimble**; father of **Ronnie Zimble Newton** and **Debbie Zimble**, **Larry Alintoff**, **Scott Alintoff** and **Bryan Alintoff**

## A Message from UJF's Community Shaliach Being There For Each Other

BY YOAV YARON

When I traveled to Israel in early February, as part of UJF's Solidarity Mission trip, I was reminded of the notion that nature and humanity are intricately intertwined, forming an inseparable bond.

One morning on our way to help a farmer by volunteering to pick eggplants in the small settlement of Tirosh, located between Beit Shemesh and Kiryat Malakhi, I happily noticed the almond trees blossoming. Our tour guide, Lior, took us to a gorgeous park full of greenery, chirping birds, buzzing bees, sunshine, and the delicate smell of spring. I was looking at the trees and anemones, and then it hit me; we are not so different. A few days before, the trees looked bare and nearly dead, but on this particular morning the land was filled with colors, scents, and the promise of the future.

When I was home in Israel, I felt different; different from when I was home last August



Yoav Yaron

and well before the events of October 7. The land has changed, and the people seem dissimilar but in almost every person we have met, there was a shining spark in their eyes. There is something unique about the way Israelis deal with sorrow; Israelis might fall as every other person but they

will stand up. And they will do so by helping others, even if they also need help and lost a lot. The truth is that in Israel, we fall often but we also get back on our feet, by being there for each other.

Being in Israel and being in nature gave me the boost of energy I desperately needed.

All around, flowers blossomed with fruit and prosperity, and so did our brothers and sisters in Israel. Each hug, tear, smile, laugh, and cry all helped us to support one another. Only together will we prevail. Just as spring brings with it a new season full of hope and promise, it is our duty to make those promises into reality.

## The Great Jewish Baby Boom of 2024



**Ariel Blum, Ben Zweig, and their daughter** are welcomed by **Eric Ross**, UJF Deputy Director.



**Rachel Lieberman** and her daughter thank UJF for the **Shalom Baby** bag.



**Eric Ross** braves the snow to meet **Rabbi Oran Zweiger** and present a **Shalom Baby** bag.

(Courtesy of UJF) It's been a very busy month for "Shalom Baby" visits, with so many new additions to the Jewish community. Since the start of the year, United Jewish Federation Deputy Director **Eric Ross** has visited with **Rachel Lieberman** and **Jaryn Horner**, **Ariel Blum** and **Ben Zweig**, **Chani** and **Rabbi Oran Zweiger**, **Sherry Steiner** and **Dr. Marc Silver**, and **Leron** and **Benjamin Lerner**, to share a warm "Mazel Tov" and a "Shalom

"Baby" bag from UJF in honor of their beautiful new sons and daughters.

UJF delivers "Shalom Baby" bags to all new Jewish babies in town, and "Shalom Stamford" bags to all new Jewish arrivals to Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien. If you know of someone who recently moved to the area or welcomed a child into their family, please contact **Eric Ross** at [Eric@UJF.org](mailto:Eric@UJF.org).

## Temple Beth El Rocks!



(Standing at left) Scott Krowitz and Suzanne Fruithandler. (l-r front) Eileen Rosner, Peggy Kalter, Erica Krappohl, TBE Executive Director Steven Lander (standing), Jon Eisenstein, Dana Horowitz, and Barbara Rothstein. (Standing at right) Dana Weinberg, Sylvan Pomerantz, Emily Pomerantz. (Seated at right) Susan Greenwald and Marilyn Sofer. (ALL PHOTO CREDIT: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY)

(Courtesy of Temple Beth El) Temple Beth El (TBE) held its 18th Annual “Temple Rock” event on February 24. The event was co-chaired by Dana Horowitz and Barbara Rothstein, with Dana Weinberg chairing the auction. The theme this year was “Club Temple Rock” and the TBE social hall was transformed by Aviva Maller, the event planner, into a nightclub setting. Music was provided by Willful Misconduct.

The silent auction was held online and the auctioneer for the live auction and the emcee for the evening was Dan Romanowitz.

As part of “Temple Rock” this year, food was collected for one week prior to and one week after “Temple Rock” including people bringing food to the “Food Warehouse” on the night of the event. The collected food was donated to Schoke Jewish Family Service Freedberg Family Food Pantry and to Person to Person, a Stamford non-profit dedicated to helping those in need. On March 2, the TBE Mitzvah Makers, sponsored by UJF, had an event at Schoke JFS to stock the Mobile Food Truck with the collected food.



Gail and Stephen Trelle in front of the “Food Warehouse.”



Dan Romanowitz, Temple Rock Auctioneer

## Chabad Gala Fosters Unity



(L-R) Rabbi Moshe Shemtov, Joe and Audrey Speter, Dallice and Ian Lazarus, Mark and Vered Links, and Leah Shemtov

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) The Stamford community came together for the Chabad of Stamford Annual Gala at the Armon Hotel on January 21st, with over 420 attendees fostering joy, unity and strength. The event aimed to secure the future both physically and spiritually, honoring three couples for their community spirit and volunteerism: Dallice and Ian Lazarus, Mark and Vered Links, and Joe and Audrey Speter. Additionally, Chabad recognized their trusted security guard, Ramon Taveras, with a surprise award. The evening’s highlight was a speech by

a former hostage, sharing her courageous story of faith during captivity in Gaza. Gratitude was extended to the evening’s MC, Craig L. Price, and to Micky Reich who orchestrated a successful paddle raise fundraiser. Rabbi Moshe and Leah emphasized the importance of community support, particularly for those in Israel. The gala served as a celebration of Chabad and Gan Yeladim achievements and as a demonstration of solidarity within the Stamford community leaving attendees inspired and united.

## Bi-Cultural Hosts Dinner

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) Over 400 guests filled the Italian Center of Stamford on March 3rd for Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy’s 68th Annual Dinner.

The evening highlighted the school’s dedication to Israel, honoring alumni who made Aliyah or served in the IDF, graduates advocating for Israel on college campuses, and current students supporting Israel through various initiatives.

The event surpassed its \$1,000,000 fundraising goal, with a donor matching contributions that will be sent to Israel. Security officers Stu Joseph and Sean Swift were recognized for their service, and Bob Zitter received the Morton G. Sheraga President’s Award. The program included student and faculty participation, with songs related to the October 7th tragedy and subsequent events in Gaza sung by members of the



Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, Head of School at BCHA, honors its school security officers, Stu Joseph and Sean Swift, with a Community Service Award. (PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL SILVERFARB)

8th and 12th grades and faculty. “We knew that this year had to be a very different experience for our community and not a traditional celebration of community members who deserve to be honored for their service to our school,” said Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, Head of School. “We chose to celebrate the unwavering commitment to Israel that BCHA nurtures.”



Guests in attendance at the BCHA Annual Dinner wave Israeli flags and sing along to a stirring rendition of “Am Yisrael Chai” which was recorded by the school’s 4th grade. (PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL SILVERFARB)

## Girls Night Out with JWC

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Chabad of Stamford’s Jewish Women Connected (JWC) women met for a fun evening of food, drinks, schmoozing and words of inspiration from Leah Shemtov. This was followed by a workshop led by Rachel Zheden who created “vision boards” and focused on personal growth and tangible ways to achieve success.



(L-R) Fernanda Teitelbaum, Chaya Segal, and Roni Rotstein create vision boards at Chabad of Stamford’s JWC Girls Night out.

# Hen Mazzig Inspires Community

(Courtesy of UJF) In late February, United Jewish Federation (UJF) hosted social media influencer Hen Mazzig, bringing together a wide representation of the community with close to 200 in attendance.

The evening, chaired by Rachel and Greg Waldstreicher, began with a thank you dinner for major donors to UJF and the Israel Emergency Campaign and continued with a packed sanctuary at Congregation Agudath Sholom. UJF's NexGen emerging philanthropy group shared some time with Hen at the end of the evening.

"Antisemitism is why Israel MUST exist," shared Mazzig. "The beauty of Jewish resilience is that through trial and tribulation the world throws at us, we know we will regroup, rebuild, and



Hen Mazzig addresses the crowd.

thrive," he continued.

Mazzig founded the Tel Aviv Institute and has written for and appeared on the LA Times, Newsweek, Variety, CNN, NBC, BBC Sky News and more. He can be followed on Instagram @henmazzig where he has over 269K followers.



(L-R) Jocelyn and Margie Abrams, Hen Mazzig, Tara Shapiro, Leslie Moskowitz and Toby Lazarus.



Julie and Rabbi Jay TelRav.



Robin Fischel and Marisa Kurz.



(Standing L-R) Jeffrey Maron, Rhonda Schaffer-Maron, Edith Samers, Ed Smith, Hen Mazzig, Michael Schlessinger, David Stein, and Diane Sloyer. (Seated) Monica Smyth Schlessinger and Beverly Stein.



Sandi and Stu Waldstreicher (left) and Monica and Eric Jankelovits (right) with Hen Mazzig (center).



(L-R) Events Chairs Greg and Rachel Waldstreicher, guest speaker Hen Mazzig, UJF CEO Diane Sloyer and UJF President Michael Schlessinger.



Becky Kimelstein and Stacy Miller.

# Get Ready for an Epic NextGen 2024

BY MELANIE VORM,  
DIRECTOR OF UJF'S NEXTGEN

Over the past year, United Jewish Federation's NextGen has emerged as a powerhouse of community engagement, rallying more than 180 young Jewish leaders from Stamford, New Canaan, Darien, and surrounding areas.

From its laid-back "Weekday Wine Downs" to its electrifying "Chanukah Casino Night" and the poignant Israel Solidarity march joining thousands of others in Washington D.C., NextGen has become the epicenter for cultural connection and community engagement, providing a cherished home for the diverse group of young Jews in their 20s, 30s and 40s.

And while the backdrop following the tragic events of October 7 has certainly changed the playing field, the significance of global Jewry and the torchbearers of the future - the Next Generation - has never been more critical.

That's why the UJF NextGen Leadership Committee has been working hard behind the scenes to bring exceptional and jam-packed programs for the forthcoming year, ensuring a diverse range of experiences for the community.

Highlights include the introduction of the "Newish and Jewish" happy hour which will flip between different New Canaan and Darien locations, catering specifically to local residents of both

towns. Watch this space for where they'll be!

NextGen will also host separate *Krav Maga* (Israeli martial arts) sessions tailored for women and men, promoting empowerment and self-defense skills.

Engaging in community service, a "Dignity Grows" packing party will be on the itinerary, emphasizing the importance of philanthropy and social responsibility, and contributing to a cause that UJF works tirelessly to support.

Another notable event on the agenda will be a Schoke Jewish Family Service (SJFS) food pantry packing session, highlighting the incredible partnership between UJF and SJFS. And speaking of food, an end of summer cookoff will spotlight culinary talent.

And, of course, the NextGen program would never be a NextGen program without the epic Yom Ha'atzmaut and Chanukah parties that the community has all come to know and love. Stay tuned for more details on both of those.

As calendars rapidly fill up, UJF's NextGen can't wait for a year packed with connection, community service, and celebration. Keep your eyes peeled for these upcoming exciting events that promise to make 2024 an unforgettable year for the community!

# A Place to Find Comfort

BY RONNIE SICHEL

"Thank you Aaron's Place for taking care of us while we were taking care of our mom." - *The Warmflash family*

Since June 2023, Aaron's Place, a Kosher Comfort Room at Stamford Hospital has been providing a space for family and friends of patients to relax and refresh as they work to meet the needs of an ill loved one.

A joint project of United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien, the Sichel Family, and the Stamford Health System, Aaron's Place can be found on the ground floor of Whittingham Pavilion, in the corner of the patient discharge area. Here, guests enter the code (posted at the entryway in Hebrew letters) to gain access to a welcoming space with a comfortable place to relax, sit and eat. There are snacks, coffee, tea and juice. The freezer is stocked with soups and meals (supplied by Schoke Jewish Family Service) that can be heated in the microwave.

For Shabbat, fresh meals that do not require heating, graciously donated by

Six Thirteen Restaurant, can be found in the refrigerator, along with challah rolls and grape juice. There is also room in the refrigerator for families to store their own, labeled, food. A hot water urn is set up weekly before Shabbat for those in need. Electronic tea light candles are also available. (Open flames are not permitted in the hospital.) Family members often bring these tea lights to the patient's room to bring the light of Shabbat into what can be a dark and trying time.

The room is stocked as needed thanks to the ongoing donations to a designated fund at United Jewish Federation. A core of volunteers brings and organizes food and supplies for Aaron's Place, checking several times a week to make sure the room is properly stocked and continues to be a welcome respite for those who need to use it.

Donations to support Aaron's Place can be made at [www.ujf.org/aaronspcace](http://www.ujf.org/aaronspcace). Contact Ronnie Sichel at [Ronsichel@aol.com](mailto:Ronsichel@aol.com) to join the dedicated group of volunteers that keeps this much needed community initiative going!

## Gan Yeladim's Associate Director Volunteers in Israel

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) While all of our hearts are with Israel during these difficult times, not everyone is able to be there in person. Gan Yeladim was proud of Associate Director and School Psychologist Morah Hillary Isaacs for making the trip on a special volunteer mission. For a week in February, Morah Hillary traveled the country providing comfort and support to many Israeli communities affected by the attack on October 7 and the ensuing war.

In Jerusalem, Morah Hillary spent a day making sandwiches at the Chabad of Katamon for 3,000 evacuees. She participated in an after-school program run by the Israel Museum for displaced children, helping the children make art projects and providing a welcome distraction. In addition, Morah Hillary toured several pop-up preschools in Tel Aviv which have been created for evacuated toddlers and preschoolers from the northern and southern parts of the country. Right now, there are over 200 preschools with displaced children being run out of local hotels. As an educator, Morah Hillary felt drawn to help these children and support their parents in any way possible.

As part of her trip, Morah Hillary also visited Kfar Aza, a kibbutz in the south



Displaced Israeli children enjoy arts and crafts at a pop-up educational center.

where 80 residents were slaughtered and 19 were kidnapped on October 7. She also visited Hostage Square in Tel Aviv where she had the privilege of speaking with families of hostages still being held in Gaza. Visiting the sites of such horror and hearing from the families was so important to Morah Hillary, who believes a commitment to Israel is of the utmost importance for the Jewish community in the Diaspora.

"While many of us may physically be far away from Israel, it is always in our minds and our hearts," she said. "Being here is a reminder that we are all part of *Klal Yisrael* and the Stamford community stands with Israel now and forever."

Gan Yeladim thanks Morah Hillary for her volunteerism.

## BCHA Takes a Top Prize at CIJE Hackathon



The BCHA Upper School Engineering Team of Jacob Contente, Roberto Toraty, Jake Brenner, and Joseph Bildner finished first in the AI Vehicle Challenge during last week's CIJE Hackathon. (PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL SILVERFARB)

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) On February 28, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) of Connecticut Upper School Engineering Team traveled to Brooklyn for a competition in the Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE) Hackathon. The team of Jacob Contente, Roberto Toraty, Jake Brenner,



BCHA Upper School Engineering Team's Tamar Links works on her project during the CIJE Hackathon in Brooklyn. (PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL SILVERFARB)

and Joseph Bildner finished first in the AI Vehicle Challenge! The team of Tamar Links, Liam Raz, Matthew Spektor and Yoav Hochman, as well as the team of Asher Marcus, Gabriel Haron, Kalanit Shmuel and Miriam Mann received high marks in the IoT ("Internet of Things") Product Design event.

## Chabad of Stamford Joins Global CTeen Shabbaton

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) This February, a group of teens from Stamford joined over 3,000 other teens from 58 different countries for a weekend of unity in New York City. The Stamford group had an unforgettable experience interacting and connecting with teens from around the world and strengthening their Jewish pride. Activities included a trip to the Empire State Building for breathtaking views, a lively kosher scavenger hunt, a tour of Crown Heights, and a memorable Friday night filled with singing and engaging speakers like Rabbi Leo Dee. Late-night discussions and connections with rabbis, mentors, and fellow teens added depth to the experience.

On Saturday night, the teens figuratively "lit up Times Square" as a powerful expression of Jewish pride and solidarity unfolded at the annual CTeen "Times Square Takeover," a highlight of Chabad's annual CTeen International Shabbaton. With Israel at the forefront of their thoughts, this year took on new significance as 3,000 teens, including 200 from Israel, gathered to pray for the hostages and peace in the Holy Land. Times Square came alive with dancing, singing, and prayer. The teens especially drew inspiration from hearing from two brothers, survivors of the Nova Festival massacre, who fought off terrorists on October 7 for five hours and led a prayer for peace and the safe return of the hostages.

The highlight for many was the trip to the *Ohel*, the site of the grave of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, on Sunday where they were inspired to *daven* (pray) and ask



(L-R) Hannah Bahar, Mussie Shemtov, Kira Doft, Gabriel Haron, Jacob Contente, Sophie Sigman and Magan Schulsinger join 3,000 other teens at Chabad's annual CTeen International Shabbaton.

for blessings and pray for Israel. At the closing ceremony, they enjoyed a concert with Gad Elbaz and Jewish rapper Nissim Black and heard uplifting stories from teens around the world celebrating their Jewish pride.

The Shabbaton's theme, "Count on Me," encouraged teens to bring inspiration back to their communities as leaders and "ambassadors of light." The teens left energized and inspired despite the darkness around them these past few months. The feedback from the Stamford teens was that this Shabbaton was different from anything they'd ever been on in terms of how inclusive, inspiring and fun it was.

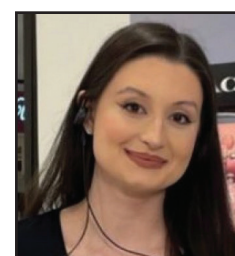
CTeen offers impactful programs for Jewish teens of all backgrounds, fostering purpose, self-discovery, and community engagement. To learn more about CTeen in Stamford and to join Chabad in empowering the next generation of Jewish leaders, please contact programs@stamfordchabad.org.

## New Around Town

### Lara Agatstein, UJF Administrative Assistant

United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien welcomes Lara Agatstein as its new administrative assistant. Lara works closely with CEO Diane Sloyer and office staff in coordinating events, department programs, board meetings, and conferences. When you call UJF, Lara will be there to greet you with a warm *Shalom*.

Prior to her position at Federation, Lara served as a customer service manager



Lara Agatstein

for a local department store in Stamford, where she evaluated and supervised seven customer service team members and found enjoyment in the daily face-to-face interactions.

Lara lives in Stamford with her nine-year-old son and likes swimming, basketball, soccer, and loves spending time with family. Lara is very excited to work for United Jewish Federation and to contribute to the Jewish community.

## History Relived

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation's long awaited Civil Rights Mission finally took place this past January along with its partners at UJF-JCC Greenwich.

The first day of the three day journey began in Atlanta with visits to the burial place and memorial of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., followed by a visit to Ebenezer Baptist Church to hear Pastor Warnock preach, exploring the Equal Justice Initiative's Memorial to Peace & Justice, then stopping at the Southern Poverty Law Center Memorial.

The following days were spent in Alabama. Participants learned about the

African American struggle to gain equality in the 1950s and 60s, and discovered how Jews were involved in the Civil Rights movement. The journey included Atlanta, Montgomery, Selma and Birmingham.

Guided by the educational staff of Etgar 36 and local speakers, participants also visited the Equal Justice Initiative Legacy Museum and Memorial to the victims of lynching; Freedom Park, the site where Leo Frank was lynched; the Rosa Parks Museum; the 16th Street Baptist Church; and walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.



Participants gathered in Selma to cross the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

## Remembering with Love at the Friendship Circle

(Courtesy of Friendship Circle) On February 25, adults with special needs and a group of seniors gathered to celebrate the life of Friendship Circle volunteer Gayle Judson and to bake challah in her memory. Gayle was a long-time Friendship Circle volunteer whose passion was the Adult Circle Vocational Training Program. She volunteered at the program when it took place at Soosh restaurant and then at its current location at Napoletana restaurant in the Armon Hotel.

At the challah bake in Gayle's memory, a dozen seniors and Gayle's friends came together for a luncheon and discussion about Gayle and her contributions to the Friendship Circle. Afterwards, everyone watched a video to learn about volunteer opportunities at the Friendship Circle to help perpetuate Gayle's legacy and created a collage to hang on the wall in the Friendship Circle offices. The collage featured Gayle in all of her different elements while volunteering. When the luncheon was over, the seniors joined the Adult Circle for a challah bake.

"Links of Love" is a program designed to connect adults with special needs with retirees and others in their golden years.

During the "Links of Love" section of the program, seniors and adults with special needs and their volunteers measured, mixed and prepared challah dough together. Over fifty people participated in the special program and enjoyed each other's company across the generations.

Shira Nerenberg, Special Projects Coordinator for the Friendship Circle said, "It was so inspiring to see our seniors working side by side with our



Laura Bale enjoys the Gayle Judson Memorial Challah Bake.

adults and volunteers. I look forward to continuing to connect the generations with other "Links of Love" programs in the future. It is so wonderful to see Gayle's legacy continue in a way that was so meaningful to her in her lifetime.

In Gayle's honor, the program will be renamed "Gayle's Gala Job Training" and is sponsored by Mitchell and Shira Zucker. Gayle volunteered several times a month to help adults with special needs develop and refine their job skills. Each week adults fold and decorate pizza boxes, fill sauces and roll silverware as well as whatever else is needed that day. Gayle could be seen there at each session with a smile on her face and encouraging words to the participants.

To learn more about the Friendship Circle please contact Director Malya Shmotkin at [malya@friendshipct.com](mailto:malya@friendshipct.com)



The group gathers at a reflective civil rights chronological memorial.



Beverly Stein with author Joanne Blackmon Bland.

Your Community  
Impact

## With Gratitude: A Letter from Israel

Dear UJF Community,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Rachel Valenta and I work closely with Iris Hen at the Haifa Rape Crisis Center (HRCC). I am writing to express our heartfelt appreciation for your donation this past year to the HRCC, specifically directed towards supporting our branch in Afula, Gilboa, and the Valleys. Your generosity ensures the continuation of essential services for survivors of sexual violence in the community.

Thanks to your donation, we are able to maintain crucial assistance services, including our 24/7 telephone and WhatsApp helplines, support meetings, and guidance through legal and medical processes. This year alone 15% of our 80 volunteers came to us through the Afula branch. Additionally, your support enables us to offer educational programs aimed at empowering youth at risk, which touched approximately 2,000 adolescents in 2023, and educating the broader community on healthy sexuality and the prevention of sexual violence, which touched approximately 300 people!

The impact of your support is profound. Your contribution allows us to facilitate the conversations we get so much positive feedback about. As noted in a

conversation about one of our educational programs in Afula, "The teachers got to know the children a little differently, some of the educators came out in shock from how much the kids knew. It was excellent to have moderators like [that] who came both last year and this year and created a good continuation. This, for example, made [one of our students] feel comfortable to approach the moderator and share after the workshop something that she had not shared with anyone until then." It is together that we are able to make conversations like this happen, and together we are working towards a future where every individual feels safe, supported, and empowered.

Once again, thank you for your kindness and generosity. Your support makes a tangible difference in the lives of survivors and contributes to the prevention of sexual violence in our community. Your partnership is invaluable to us, and we are truly grateful for your continued support. I hope we can continue working together to make a lasting impact in the lives of survivors and in our community.

With heartfelt gratitude,  
Rachel Valenta

## BCHA Receives Decennial Re-Accreditation

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) In February, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) received official notification that the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has renewed BCHA's accreditation for 10 years. The grant came after a period of many months of evaluation by ten seasoned and veteran educators. They spent long hours interviewing parents, students, teachers, administrators, and board members and observing school life.

The NEASC team evaluated the school community and concluded, "In reaching its decision, the Commission particularly commends the entire school community for its strength. The community's resilience and care embody the school's mission and values. The love for Israel, pride, and community support were palpable to the Visiting Team. In addition, the Commission commends BCHA for making its mission the cornerstone of all decisions and community interactions. The faculty of BCHA is to be commended for their dedication to the school, the care and love they provide their students, and for prioritizing the physical and emotional well-being of the entire community."

The team also evaluated the school campus and facility, reporting: "The sprawling school building is light-filled and welcoming. The Visiting Team found hallways decorated with student artwork, student writing, and bulletin boards in both English and Hebrew. The hallway connecting the early childhood classrooms with the main building is labeled The Greenhouse Gallery. This area is lined with plants and made more soothing by the addition of a small waterfall and bird sounds providing visitors and students with a welcoming entrance to the school. In keeping with the school's focus on learning, there is an attractive explanation of every plant. The Team sensed a creativity of spirit and a positive atmosphere throughout the school. BCHA is a student-centered school in all regards."

The report continued, "During our time at BCHA, the Program Visiting Team members were



**BCHA 5th grade teacher Adrienne Robinson and BCHA Head of School Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein hold the school's NEASC accreditation certificate. (PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL SILVERFARB)**

welcomed into the community. The Team was honored to be present for a school-wide assembly expressing support for Israel. Every adult took time from their busy days and myriad responsibilities to talk with us or guide us when we were lost in the hallways. Conversations with faculty, staff, and administrators felt authentic and open. Universally, the team members enjoyed their time at BCHA, recognizing a place where children are valued and cared for deeply. The mission of the school was evident in every aspect of the school."

The NEASC evaluation included a segment of self-evaluation and study by BCHA of eleven "Foundation Standards" established by NEASC. In a majority of cases, NEASC revised BCHA's self-study rating from "met the standard" up to "exceeded the standard," which is its highest rating. BCHA's Board of Trustees President, Howard Rothman, said, "The process showed our commitment to high quality. We know from our feedback that we are doing well. But we are always working to improve."

"We were deeply gratified by the conclusions NEASC reached after a thorough review of all aspects of BCHA's school and school community," said Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, Head of School. "We know that we have something very special and very effective here at BCHA, where our alumni have been prepared for their life experience with an excellent Torah and General studies education and the *Midot* (character traits) of respect, kindness and leadership. It was nice to receive independent confirmation of our strength from an agency as pre-eminent as NEASC."

## Today a Reader, Tomorrow a Leader

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) The children of Gan Yeladim are hooked on reading! The first week of February marked the Gan's "Literacy and Jewish Book Week" with a schedule that had the children and *morahs* (teachers) fully "booked" with both playtime and story time.

The week kicked off at the Ferguson Public Library's children's section. While the children snacked, *Morah* Hillary Isaacs read a series of Jewish and secular picture books. Afterwards, the children were invited to participate in an art project, browse books and play in the recreation area. Some grown-ups even took the opportunity to get their own library cards!

Coincidentally, the library was also hosting a children's event for the Lunar New Year, which led to a number of children joining who were not affiliated with Gan and turned the event into an opportunity for all the children to learn about different cultures and faiths.

As the Associate Director and School Psychologist at Gan Yeladim, *Morah* Hillary is well aware of the impact that reading to children can have on young minds. "From our Bereshit Room to our Pre-K class, we infuse literacy into every aspect of Gan, nurturing a love for reading and learning while fostering critical thinking, communication, and creativity," she said. "At Gan, we read aloud every day from a diverse selection of Jewish books and secular classics, carefully chosen for their high-level language and rich content. Through our literacy-rich environments, we empower children not only to read but also to learn about the world around them."

For the rest of the week, the Gan's *morahs* joined the children on Zoom in the evenings



**Gan Yeladim families enjoy books, snacks and play at the Ferguson Public Library.**

for story time, choosing different stories to read aloud each day. Some children joined while eating dinner while others showed off their pajamas.

The children also picked songs to sing such as *Twinkle Twinkle Kochavim* (stars) and each night they signed off by saying the *Shema* prayer together.

For *Morah* Chaya Pinson who also joined the Zoom nearly every night, "It was so much fun seeing the kids in their homes while we read stories. Getting to interact with our students outside of school was so special and saying *Shema* with them just before bedtime was a great way to strengthen the *davening* (prayers) we do every day in class."

The Zoom calls were fun for all ages from the youngest babies clapping along to the children in the preschool classes who are starting the journey of learning to read. The entire week was filled with literacy and learning, and will help all the *yeladim* (children) start a new chapter with an ever-growing love of reading.

## Raising A Glass with TBE's Men's Group



**TBE Men's Club members enjoy the handcrafted beer they created with UJF Shaliach Yoav Yaron.**

(Courtesy of UJF) Cheers to United Jewish Federation's Community Shaliach-turned-brewmaster, Yoav Yaron, and Temple Beth El's Men's Club who enjoyed the fruits – and hops – of their labor by holding a tasting of their handcrafted IPA aptly named, Barzel Beer.

Bottled on December 26, 2023, the initial process of creating the delicious pale ale began with a homemade beer-making workshop in November. Following the events in Israel on

October 7, TBE's men's group decided to name the beer "*Barzel*" which refers to the word iron in Hebrew. It was a way to recognize and honor those who have sacrificed their lives in Israel's Swords of Iron War.

The Barzel Beer label says it all: "We raise this beer and toast their heroism. We want to bring people together over good conversation. *L'Chaim! Am Yisrael Chai!*"

## LIFE & LEGACY Honor Roll

United Jewish Federation is proud to partner with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation to bring the Stamford, New Canaan and Darien community the Harold Grinspoon LIFE & LEGACY Program. Through communal efforts, the following individuals have made a commitment to one or more Jewish communal institutions to secure our Jewish future. The names in blue indicate that formal actions have been taken.

For more information, contact Lenore Fogel at [Lenore@ujf.org](mailto:Lenore@ujf.org), or Diane Sloyer at (203) 321-1373 or [dianesloyer@ujf.org](mailto:dianesloyer@ujf.org).

20 Anonymous  
 27 Anonymous  
 Adrienne & Michael Alexander  
 David Amsellem  
 Alice & David Andersen  
 Jeri Appel  
 Mark Appel  
 Ricky Snow Arbron  
 Suellyn Bache  
 Monica Becker & Edieal Pinker  
 Rachel Tyd & Robert Beldock  
 Gayle & Mitchell Bell  
 Debra & Michael Berg  
 Dina & Paul Berger  
 Karen & Ira Berk  
 Devra Jaffe- Berkowitz & Parry Berkowitz  
 Lynn & Harvey Berman  
 Berkun Family  
 Darona & Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein  
 Jen & Andy Bernstein  
 Melody & Claude Bernstein  
 Bruce & Nancy Blasnik  
 Judith Block  
 Ilana Springer Borkenstein & Daniel Borkenstein  
 Jodi & Richard Boxer  
 Amy Bubel  
 Henry Bubel  
 Blake & Daniel Bueckman  
 Judy & Jeff Cahn  
 Kate & Peretz Cik  
 Roberta & Alan Cohen  
 Andrea & David M. Cohen  
 Diane & Rabbi Daniel Cohen  
 Malerie Yolen-Cohen & Jeff Cohen  
 Judy & David S.\* Cohen  
 Mimi Cohen  
 Rachel & Ephraim Cohen  
 Saul Cohen\*  
 Marsha Colten  
 Tracy & Nahum Daniels  
 Janice Steinberg & Stephen Davidson  
 Andrea Dener  
 Elayne Dener  
 Rabbi Yisrael Deren  
 Helen & Marty Donner  
 Fran & Bob Dorf  
 Shoshana Dweck  
 Heather & Glenn Dynner  
 Debra & Dan Faizakoff  
 Michelle Fanwick  
 Esta & Jay Feinsod  
 Sharon & Michael Feldstein  
 Peggy & Jerry Fensterstock  
 Linda Hurwitz & Richard Fine  
 Robin & Jason Fischel  
 Gail Berman & David Fogel  
 Stephanie & Howard Fogel  
 Lenore Fogel  
 Ilan Fogel  
 Miriam Lavinsky & Morton Folb\*  
 Beverly Frank  
 Sharon Franklin  
 Robin Frederick  
 Julia & Eli Freedberg  
 Connie & Alan Freeman  
 Maxine & Jay Freilich  
 Susan Frieden  
 Rachel & Keith Friedman  
 Marc Friedman  
 Donna & Edward Fuhrman  
 Nancy & Mark Funt  
 Heidi & Harrison Ganz  
 Lesley & Dennis Gehr  
 Gary Gepner  
 Carole Gladstone  
 Herbert Gladstone\*  
 Sylvia & Herb Gladstone\*  
 Leslie Glenn  
 Michael Gold  
 Abby Goldberg  
 Cyndy & Eric Goldberg  
 Marilyn & Irving Goldblum  
 Alicia & Jason Goldstein  
 Caryl & Melvin Goldstein\*  
 Judy & Howard Goldstein

Sharon & Bruce Goldstein  
 Meryl & David Gordon  
 Nan & Paul Gordon  
 Linda Gornitsky  
 Lorelee & Philip Granowitz  
 Shira & Ethan Green  
 Allison & Frederic Greenbaum  
 Sharon & Larry Greenberg  
 Susan & Edward Greenberg  
 Pam Ehrenkranz & Matt Greenberg  
 Rhonda Greif  
 Grecia & Ron\* Gross  
 Caryn Halbrecht & Tommy Haendler  
 Jeremy Hager  
 Kayla & Leon Hanna  
 Scott Handelman  
 Wynd Harris  
 Jacqueline Herman  
 Elissa & James Hyman  
 Rebecca Isenstein  
 Shara & Rabbi David Israel  
 Sari & Alan Jaffe  
 Meryl & Ron Japha  
 Anne Liss Johnson  
 Sadae & Michael Kadish  
 Judith & Grant Kallen  
 Peggy Kalter  
 Helene & Harvey Kaminski  
 Chanie Kamman  
 Roni & Jan Kaplowitz  
 Jason Kaplowitz  
 Lisa & Arnold Karp  
 Jeannie Kasindorf  
 Jessica & Ilan Katz  
 Joy Katz  
 Larry Katz  
 Judith & Sheldon Katz  
 Mark S. Kaufman  
 Betsy & Peter Kempner  
 Madelyne Kirch  
 Liz & Marc Kitay  
 Elissa & Philip Klapper  
 Sally Kleinman  
 Harris Kligman  
 Naomi & Rabbi Eli Kohl  
 Susan Kostin  
 Arthur Kramer\*  
 Claudia Kraut  
 Norma Kraut  
 Jeannie & Brian Kriftcher  
 Carol & Allen Krim  
 Elizabeth & Scott Krowitz  
 Nina Kuch  
 Svetlana Kunin  
 Jackie & Marshall Kurland  
 Lorraine & David Kveskin  
 Helen & Ed Kveskin  
 Lieba & Steve Lander  
 Hannah & Ilan Lastoff  
 Dallice & Ian Lazarus  
 Shelley Leibowitz  
 Lois Stark & Gary Lessen  
 Marla & Jason Lewis  
 Sharon & Jeffrey Lewis  
 Elizabeth Libner  
 R. & J. Licht  
 Ronnie & Gary Lilien  
 Vered & Mark Links  
 Lisa & Seth Linzer  
 Pamela Feldstein & David Loewenberg  
 Eleanor & Mort Lowenthal  
 Stu Madison  
 Lisa & Jeff Manheim  
 Norma & Milton Mann\*  
 Susan & Len Mark  
 Dinah Miller Marlowe  
 Seth Marlowe  
 Chris Maroc  
 Rhonda Schaffer-Maroc & Jeffrey Maron  
 Melanie Massell  
 Sandra Mehl\*  
 Michal & Rabbi Levi Mendelow  
 Janice & Jake Meyer  
 Nancy Zinbarg Mimoun  
 Bennet Moskowitz

Marguerite & Kenneth Neuhaus  
 Becky & Omer Neumeier  
 Rose\* & Bruce Newman  
 Marsha & Louis Panzer  
 Leah & Doni Perl  
 Robin Evans & Jeffrey Perry  
 Dr. Shay Pilnik  
 Michele & Scott Piskin  
 Caryl Ferber Poser & Peter Poser  
 Tanya Barton- Radin & David Radin  
 Enid Randall\*  
 Bonita & Stephen Rappoport  
 Judith & Robert Raymond  
 Lisa & Harry Rich  
 Judy & Adam Rin  
 Jamie & Toby Ring  
 Betty & Dan\* Roberts  
 Sonia & Brian Roitman  
 Linda & David Roitman  
 Romanowitz Family  
 Arlene & Carl Rosen  
 Julie & Remi Rosenberg  
 Natalie & Mark Rosovsky  
 Irma Ross  
 Sandra Ross  
 Sally & Jim Rothkopf  
 Ruth Rothseid  
 Terry Newman & David Rubin  
 Linda & Leonard Russ  
 Bonnie Russo  
 Edith Samers  
 Renee Samson\*  
 Sharyn & Richard Sarner  
 Sharon L. & Charles H. Saul  
 Leah Schechter  
 Hilde Scheraga\*  
 Jayne & Bud Schiff  
 Judy Schneiderman  
 Nancy Schiffman  
 Chaya Segal  
 Carol Ruth & Herman Shepherd\*  
 Monica Smyth & Michael Schlessinger  
 Elayne & James Schoke\*  
 Daniel Schwartz  
 Chaya & Levi Segal  
 Betsey & Arthur Selkowitz  
 Myrna & George Sessa  
 Diane & Steve Shaby  
 Debbie Katz Shapiro  
 Leon Shapiro  
 Tara & Richard Shapiro  
 Jessica & Laurence Sheinman  
 Leah & Rabbi Moshe Shemtov  
 Marsha Kaiser Shendell  
 Rosalyn Mae Sherman  
 Stephanie & Bob Sherman  
 Malya Shmotkin  
 Ronnie Ness Sichel & Steven Sichel  
 Lisa & Grant Silver  
 Miriam Landsberg-Silverman & Eliezer\* Silverman

Paula Simon  
 Gloria & Randy Skigen  
 Marty Skrelunas  
 Diane & Elliot Sloyer  
 Michal Fox Smart  
 Brenda & Bruce\* Smith  
 Ed Smith  
 Louise & Ami Soifer  
 Greta Solomon  
 Miriam & Steve Sosnick  
 Sandy & Moshe Speter  
 Ed Spilka  
 Cantor Micah Morgovsky & Rabbi Benjamin Spratt  
 Eileen & Fred Springer  
 Beverly & David Stein  
 Betsy & Michael Stone  
 Gladys & Greg Teitel  
 Julie & Rabbi Jay TelRav  
 The Estate of Judith Bragin\*  
 The Estate of Sheila Carmine\*  
 The Estate of Thomas Gilmartin\*  
 The Estate of Ronald Gross\*  
 Rebecca Tipermas  
 Hildi and David Todrin  
 Gail & Steven Trel  
 Pamela & Richard Vogel  
 Phyllis & Harvey Walzer  
 Annie & Jeremy Watman  
 Shternie & David Wayne  
 Ellen & Richard Weber  
 Linda Gornitsky & Harvey Weber  
 Dana & Carl Weinberg  
 Marian Weinberg  
 Leon Weisburgh  
 Janet Welkovich  
 Barbara & Ken White  
 Leigh Wilson  
 Robyn & Mark Winarksy  
 Dana Horowitz & Peter Wolly  
 Neda Khaghan & Robert Yaghoubian  
 Rita & Abe Yellen  
 Marcia Gordon & Seth Young  
 Sheryl & Dan Young  
 Lauren & Joe Zalis  
 Joan Zinbarg\*  
 Renee Zinn  
 Navah & David Zizmor  
 Shira & Mitchell Zucker

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

## LIFE & LEGACY Testimonials

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

Learn why they look to secure our Jewish future and discover your reasons to join them. Together, we can all work to guarantee the future of the Greater Stamford Jewish community we love. For more information, contact Lenore Fogel at (203) 321-1373 or at [lenore@ujf.org](mailto:lenore@ujf.org)

### LARRY AND JOY KATZ TESTIMONIAL

Over the past 30 years, the connections that we have made at our Stamford Jewish organizations have truly shaped our lives. When we enrolled Aaron, our oldest, in the JCC Sara Walker Nursery school over 25 years ago, we started forming our lifelong friendships. As our daughters, Rachel and Hannah, followed in the nursery school as well as at Hebrew school at Temple Beth El, these friendships expanded and grew deeper.

We have given legacy gifts because we want our children to know that *tikkun olam* and giving to others are core values which should continue even after we are no longer here to give ourselves. It is



Larry and Joy Katz and Family

important for us to do our part to ensure that our Jewish institutions thrive for years to come so that families like ours can find a welcoming place to make their lifelong friendships.

# Temple Sinai Group Builds School in Remote Nepal

**A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE BY MIKE KADISH**

Fifteen members of Temple Sinai, including Rabbi Jay TelRav and President Susan Kostin, brought to life the principles of the temple's mission statement ([www.templestain Stamford.org](http://www.templestain Stamford.org)) to inspire community involvement and learning by: providing funding for a primary school in Basantgadha, a remote village in southwestern Nepal; and participating in a "trek" to the village from February 19 through 23, to help with initial stages of construction of the school. The funding and trek were accomplished through a program sponsored by buildOn ([www.buildOn.org](http://www.buildOn.org)), a non-profit government organization that advances its mission to break the cycle of poverty, illiteracy, and low expectations by building schools in developing countries. Marc Friedman, buildOn's Chief Development Officer and a former Temple Sinai President, participated in the trek, as he did on the temple's two previous treks to Senegal and Malawi.

The villagers appreciated that we had donated the funds that made the school possible, but were more deeply moved by the fact that we traveled so far to work alongside them to begin construction. We were the first foreigners ever to visit the village! The residents welcomed us with a groundbreaking ceremony at which they performed elaborate dances and songs; decorated us with garlands of flowers and *tikki*, a bright red powder applied from the bridge of the nose up to the forehead; and coaxed us to dance with them.

We stayed each night in residents' homes, which were simple and constructed of concrete with no doors or windows. The kitchen consisted of an open fire over which a grate was placed to hold pots for cooking. There was no running water, a latrine instead of a toilet and a curtained stall with a bucket of water with which to bathe. There was electricity only occasionally. We were amazed by the size and flavor of dinners of rice, dal, and curry they



Temple Sinai trekkers Carl Rosen, Marty Newman, Jeff Pardo, David Rubin, Susan Kostin, Monica Smyth Schlessinger, Amitai TelRav, Marc Friedman, Alan Barr, Terry Newman, Wendy Lewis, Harrison Kadish, Mike Kadish, Larry Cryer, and Rabbi Jay TelRav pose with the buildOn team at Basantgadha.

prepared for us. They taught us much about true hospitality, freely sharing what little they had and exuding concern about our satisfaction. They could not speak English but used smiles and gestures to communicate more warmly than we did with our words.

Each morning started with a yoga session that prepared us spiritually and physically to help: dig the foundation using only shovels, hoes, pickaxes, sledgehammers and crowbars; tie rebar used to support the concrete walls; and mix and pour concrete for the foundations. With no machinery or power tools, we were the uneducated and less-than-fully-abled. Many of the adult male residents work out of the country so the local workers were mostly women, who routinely performed tasks too strenuous for most of us. The residents loved to take pictures with their cell phones, which they used to communicate with those family members working in remote countries and to stay connected with the outside world.

We were privileged to have had an opportunity one afternoon to engage in serious discussions of our respective cultures, assisted by translators provided by buildOn. The



Amitai TelRav (right) and Harrison Kadish (left) help Basantgadha women clear rocks from the foundation site.

(ALL PHOTO CREDIT: SANTOSH MAHATO, THE BUILDON TREK LEADER WHO LED THE TEMPLE SINAI PARTICIPANTS AT BASANTGADHA)

men asked about political issues such as the availability of public education and of guns and drugs in the U.S., while the women talked candidly about personal and family issues, including marital relations and gender equality. We were reminded that 10 Nepalis visiting Israel were among those killed or taken hostage in Hamas's October 7 raid.

It was often heart-wrenching to see the villagers' harsh living conditions; but they never lost their graciousness, sense of humor, and hope for a better future. All fifteen of us would agree that the trek was among the most satisfying and rewarding experiences of our lives. To paraphrase Temple Sinai's mission statement (uncap), "Growth Happened There."

# 50(ish) Voices: Tommy Haendler

**BY WENDELL MAXEY**

Last summer when United Jewish Federation Gala event chair, Carl Rosen, and I were researching vintage photos, old newspaper articles, and gathering information to include in the making of UJF's 50th Anniversary video commemorating milestone moments since UJF's start in 1973, Carl mentioned being able to get his hands on a VHS tape of a Federation event from 2002.



Tommy Haendler

The black Maxell video cassette was from "An Evening of Music and Tango to Benefit Argentinian Jewry" held that November in Stamford. It depicted joyful music, beautiful dancing, and a chance to turn back the clock on an important UJF community event that placed a focus on supporting those in need during Argentina's financial crisis.

That grainy footage felt like the missing piece to the 50th Anniversary video and it wouldn't have been possible without Tommy Haendler saving that VHS tape from twenty-one years ago. Looking back, that night remains one of Tommy's most favorite UJF memories and provides the perfect stage to feature this long-time member of the Jewish community (and proud Argentinian) in the latest 50(ish) Voices Q&A.

**What does it mean to know that Federation has been there for the last 50 years and is still here today for the community?**

Federation is the glue of the community. It is the backbone that holds us together in all instances of need. It is our rainbow that consolidates all the different colors, perspectives, and flavors that we have in our community. In a way, it is the home with many doors where everyone can walk in, as well as the bridge to the Jewish world internationally and especially to Israel.

**What brought you to UJF?**

Initially, Young Leadership.

**Is there a particular memory or experience you think about when looking back at UJF?**

Yes, running the annual campaign with David Rubin, organizing the fundraiser and rally for Soviet Jews, and organizing the fundraising event for Argentinian Jews after the financial crisis there in 2001.

**How do you feel UJF has affected our community?**

I am proud of our community's response in each of those cases and have met the most wonderful, devoted friends, and dedicated professionals like Sheila Romanowitz, Edith Samers, and of course UJF CEO, Diane Sloyer.

**Do you have family or multi-generational connections with UJF you would like to share with us?**

We expect that our children will continue our legacy, which we have already seen reflected in the choices they make.

**Why is a strong UJF important for the next 50 years?**

UJF needs to continue having strong lay leadership to ensure the strength of our institutions. We need to keep educating our children and teens through our schools and afterschool programs to prepare them for a tough world out there, where their Jewish values and identities will be challenged. We need to keep engaging with all of the national organizations and keep the religious dialogue going.

# Digital Campaign Against Antisemitism Continues To Grow

BY NATASHA KONSTORUM

It's hard to believe that back on December 4, 2023, our small group of local volunteers began a billboard campaign with the help of United Jewish Federation (UJF), aimed at raising awareness about antisemitism and demonstrating solidarity with Israel.

What was once unthinkable quickly became a reality as the first digital billboard went live in just six days and has been viewed by millions of by-passers on I-95 in Connecticut. The campaign became a beacon of hope by tapping into the bedrock of American pride and patriotism. The goal is to deliver straightforward and powerful messages that are easy to understand and impossible to ignore or to tear down.

These messages resonate loudly, showing America's support for Israel and zero tolerance for antisemitism. It's these kinds of informative and important messages that need to be seen community-wide as they can influence and shape public opinion.

Success is rarely a solo act. Our group of volunteers is working together with UJF, who is sponsoring the Digital Campaign Against Antisemitism and has played a pivotal role in swiftly advancing the campaign. Spotlight articles published in *The New Jewish Voice* and the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) community newsletter generated engagement and reached a wide variety of supporters who have contributed towards our initiative.

As the campaign gains momentum, other people are joining along. Our efforts expand beyond the confines of our state, reaching communities far and wide. We gained support from many people, including religious leaders, and we received the *Kol Hakavod*, which means applause and recognition.

We were told that our messages deeply resonate with Israelis and Jews worldwide.

Recently, thanks to UJF's support, the Digital Campaign Against Antisemitism advertising has expanded into movie theaters. From March 4 through May 31, AMC theaters in Stamford at Majestic 6 and Landmark 8 will feature a 30-second pre-movie ad from UJF that encourages viewers that "Antisemitism Can End With You" and to take a stand against antisemitism and hate crimes in any form. With a total of 14 movie screens over a 13-week period, audience members will come away knowing that putting a stop to antisemitism is something that starts with each of us.

This is a great accomplishment for our local Jewish community.

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to all of you who have contributed



(Top L-R) Irene Karas, Natasha Konstorum, Irina Tsvikvin. (Bottom L-R) Galina Landres, Polina Lifshin, Svetlana Gutkovich.

(and are currently contributing) to the Digital Campaign Against Antisemitism, as we continue to show support for Israel.

As we look to the future, we know that there is much more to be done. We hope we can count on the ongoing support of our local community as we move forward together. We draw strength from the knowledge that we are strong, united in purpose and unwavering in our commitment to stand against antisemitism and support Israel.

*Am Yisrael Chai.*

## Loving Israel at UConn

BY JESSICA NIRSCHEL

I have been so blessed with a love of Israel and pride in my Jewish heritage. I went to Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy through sixth grade and continued to be involved with the Jewish community through Gan Yeladim, BBYO, and Temple Beth El. As a student



Jessica Nirschel

at the University of Connecticut, I found Jewish life immediately by becoming involved with UConn Hillel, Chabad, and the UConn chapter of Students Supporting Israel (SSI), a pro-Israel international campus movement.

Now in my third year at UConn, I serve as the President of SSI as well as a BICEP (Building Israel Connections and Engagement Program) Intern through UConn Hillel and I am on the board of Chabad. I went to Israel for the first time during my second year at UConn on a Birthright trip organized through Hillel. I have since been back to Israel with Hasbara, Onward Israel, and a seminary program.

Being involved so deeply with pro-Israel work empowered me to mobilize so quickly after the attacks on Israel by Hamas on October 7. Working with UConn Hillel's Israel Fellow, I organized a successful Israel March on Campus on 10/25. This attracted Jewish and non-Jewish students in solidarity with Israel and in support of the safe return of the then over 200 hostages being kept in Gaza. Since 10/7, I have had a harder time connecting with my non-Jewish classmates and peers, specifically in my sorority. I am so grateful for the power of the Jewish community at UConn and Hillel and the opportunity to connect with

so many like-minded students who are just as passionate about supporting Israel.

Before and after 10/7, my work as a BICEP intern allows me to share my love of Israel with other students on campus. Most Jewish students at UConn have not visited Israel. Some do go with Birthright and the Maccabee Task Force trip, but the overwhelming majority do not end up traveling there. By meeting with me and other BICEP interns who have been to Israel, students can get a taste of the country without ever leaving Storrs. My work is even more critical in a post-10/7 world on a college campus.

To broaden our community's education, we have brought various speakers to campus including Israeli Ethiopian activist Ashagar Araro, Rabbi Charlotte Korchak and Nova survivor Shye Klein. Our goal with these speakers is to educate students as well as to empower other students to tell our stories and fight for our promised land.

My family has deep roots in the Jewish community from being involved with Congregation Agudath Shalom's early days. They and this community have taught me to be a proud Jew. Now, UConn Hillel is serving as an extension of that upbringing, providing me with all the values I need to affirm my Jewish identity.

*Jessica Nirschel, '25, is a Junior at UConn, studying communications. UConn Hillel, the Center for Jewish Life, fosters inclusive and meaningful experiential opportunities to enrich the lives of students and help them explore Judaism and Jewish values on their own terms. For more information about Jewish life at UConn, please visit UConnhillel.org*

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# INTERFAITH SEDER

## UNITING OUR COMMUNITY

Open to all, the Interfaith Seder brings the local community together using a specially designed Haggadah (the traditional narrative) that will include themes of unity, cultural diversity, and faith.

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