



THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION

Journalist Mark Oppenheimer to Discuss Jewish Resilience

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) Temple Sinai's Joan Bruder Danoff Lecture Series will present a talk entitled "Campus Lessons - for Jews of Any Age" by acclaimed journalist and podcaster Mark Oppenheimer. Join the conversation, reflecting on how Jewish learning and cultural awareness serve us throughout our lives, whether in the college classroom, raising children, or in taking our rightful place in American society. The event, on Sunday, April 27 at 4:00 pm, is free and welcomes the entire community.

Mark Oppenheimer has covered



Mark Oppenheimer

American religion for 25 years. He holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from Yale, and has taught at Stanford, Wesleyan, Wellesley, NYU, Boston College, and Yale, where he was the founding director of the Yale Journalism Initiative. From 2010 to 2016, he wrote the "Beliefs" column, about religion, for *The New York Times*, and he

has also written for publications including *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, *GQ*, *Slate*, and others. He created *Unorthodox*, the world's most popular podcast about Jewish life and

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Fairfield County Celebrates Israel

BY NANCY SCHULMAN

Bringing an opportunity for connection and joy within the Jewish community, the 2025 Fairfield County Celebrates Israel Festival welcomes everyone to join together for an afternoon of fun and solidarity. Hosted by United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF) along with the Stamford Jewish Community Center and the Jewish Federation of Fairfield County, this event will bolster the Jewish community which, has been experiencing profound concerns and sadness as a result of current events. The festival will take place on Sunday, April 27, from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm at the Stamford JCC.



Gilad Segev

Attendees will enjoy a live performance by award-winning Israeli singer-songwriter Gilad Segev. Segev is known worldwide for his Project Heroes non-profit initiative, which he will present at the festival. He is also known for his hit songs "Achshav Tov" ("It's Good Now"), "Isha M'hashamayim" ("Woman From The Sky"), and "Chana'leh Hitbalbelah" ("Hannah Was Confused"), and is the founder of Passerby, a travel music lifestyle brand with millions of followers.

The Project Heroes initiative was created by Segev in the aftermath of the attacks on October 7, 2023, to honor the bravery and

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A Night of Music and Celebration

(Courtesy of Temple Beth El) Temple Beth El will shine bright on April 6, 2025, at 7:00 pm with "All That Glitters," an evening celebrating music, community, and dedication. This event will bring together renowned musicians for a concert while

also honoring Lisa and Jeff Manheim, whose tireless contributions have enriched both Temple Beth El and the greater Jewish community.

Cantor Katie Kaplan, a gifted vocalist and spiritual leader, will create a sacred space

through song, weaving together traditional melodies, chant, and meditation. Cantor Daniel Mendelson, whose repertoire spans cantorial music, opera, Broadway, and rock 'n' roll, will bring his powerful and versatile voice to the stage. Talya Smilowitz,

a Cantorial Soloist with nearly 15 years of experience and a background in prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall and Broadway, will add her dynamic presence. Scott Stein,

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Honoring Those Who Serve the Community

As it marks 50 years of service to the Fairfield County community, Schoke Jewish Family Service will honor its dedicated staff with its Annual Mitzvah Award at "An Evening with Schoke JFS" on May 18. (See article on page 3.)



(Back row, l-r) Frantz Byer, Lysa Cannon, Vanessa Butler, Erika Gadson, Isrella Knopf, Matt Greenberg, Toby Lazarus PhD, Jen Bernstein, Marina Sapir, Carolyn Spencer, Bonnie Russo, Craig Adler, Amanda Geffner, Erika Llanos, Adolfo Rodriguez. (Front row, l-r) Lielle Sugar, Hannah Pollack, Elizabeth Hinds, Licia Kendall, Rebekah Kanefsky.

From UJF's Chief Executive Officer Doing Jewish

BY DIANE SLOYER

I live every day as a proud Jew. For me, being Jewish is the greatest gift, and even if some days it is hard, or I take it for granted, "doing Jewish" is one of the most important things we can commit to. We are all links in a beautiful chain that spans thousands of years. By doing Jewish - we are setting an example for the next generation and ensuring our collective Jewish future.

I was born into a Conservative Jewish family. My father's parents were very active in their synagogue - the Brooklyn Jewish Center, where my grandfather helped make the daily minyan and taught a weekly Torah class. As the community eventually evolved, my grandfather used his legal skills to help sell the Brooklyn Jewish Center building to Chabad Lubavitch. My grandfather was a social activist and close friends with Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. My grandparents' involvement in Jewish life instilled in me a deep sense of history, pride and an understanding of both the joys and struggles of being Jewish.

From an early age, I knew my life and career would be connected to Jewish life. As a 61-year-old, I grew up deeply connected to Holocaust survivors and have watched those connections dissipate as fewer survivors are alive. For many people in our community October 7, 2023, was our new holocaust and a call to action to be involved Jewishly, and to "do Jewish". Collectively, this is the history that will shape the next generation. I believe that each of our actions will play a crucial role in being on the right side of



Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO

history...the truth!

I have been connected to Jewish communal work, as a volunteer and professional since my teens. Federation speaks to me because I see the organization and the opportunities it presents about "doing Jewish". Whether it's pushing back against the horrific scenes we have seen

on college campuses in the last few years, or fighting antisemitic acts we see in our community - there is so much work to be done. There is no right or wrong and every action, whether it be wearing a Jewish Star, filling your social media with truthful information, traveling to Israel, listening to a podcast or attending a speaker, learning or re-learning our history, taking on a new Jewish custom...strengthens us as a Jewish people: one filled with beautiful customs and a rich history and culture.

UJF works toward bringing the community together, which is not always easy. We work to find common ground to unify and promote our many priorities - whether it's celebrating our beautiful traditions, our need for security, advocating for our brothers and sisters in Israel and so much more. UJF is not a religious institution, we strive to be an inclusive big tent - respecting our differences while emphasizing our shared priorities. None of this is easy, but it needs to get done. What the last 16 months have taught me, is that there is an opportunity for me, and for all of us, to "do Jewish". Whatever that means for you, please figure it out - asap. The next generation is watching, and our future depends on it.

Journalist Mark Oppenheimer to Discuss Jewish Resilience

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culture, with over 7 million downloads.

More recently, Oppenheimer hosted an eight-part podcast called *Gatecrashers*, about the history of Jews and antisemitism at Ivy League schools. He has authored five books, including *The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia* and, most recently, *Squirrel Hill: The Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting and the Soul of a Neighborhood*. His next book is a biography of Judy Blume. He is currently the editor of *Arc*, the magazine of the Danforth Center

on Religion and Politics, at Washington University in St. Louis. He and his family live in Connecticut.

The annual Danoff lecture series honors longtime Temple Sinai members Joan and the late Dr. Stuart Danoff. It was endowed by their children, Nancy Danoff, Suzy Poneman, and Will Danoff. Register online at templesinaistamford.org to attend in person or to view as a webinar, or register by calling Temple Sinai at 203-322-1649. Temple Sinai is located at 458 Lakeside Drive in Stamford. Refreshments will be served.

UPCOMING DEADLINE

MAY 2025

Revised Deadline: Monday, March 31, 2025

Email submissions to sandy@ujf.org

You should receive notification that your submission was received!

UJF President's Message The Impact of Our Dollars in Israel

BY BEVERLY STEIN

The Southern New England Consortium (SNEC) is made up of ten Jewish Federations in Connecticut and Massachusetts, including ours. Through the Jewish Agency for Israel's Partnership2Gether initiative, SNEC has developed a long-standing partnership with the Afula-Gilboa region in northern Israel. This partnership strengthens the bond between our communities through people-to-people exchanges, while also offering essential funding for social services and urgent needs in the Afula-Gilboa region. Our support has become even more crucial since October 7.

Our relationship with Afula began over 40 years ago. Afula is an urban hub that provides essential services for the Jezre'el Valley. It is one of the most diverse cities in Israel. Today, Afula remains one of Israel's most strategically important and demographically complex regions.

The Gilboa region is located at the foot of Mount Gilboa in Northern Israel. It is made up of 33 settlements: 8 kibbutzim, 14 moshavim, 6 community settlements and 5 Arab villages.

In January, I had the honor of joining other Federation leaders on a five-day mission to Afula-Gilboa organized by the Jewish Agency for Israel. During this trip, we met with our partnership grantees, expressed our steadfast support, and saw firsthand the difference we are making together.

Wherever we went, everyone we met expressed deep gratitude for our presence. They shared how meaningful it was that we took the time to visit and truly understand the significant challenges they are facing.

- At Dorot BaGilboa, a senior center, we observed a range of senior programs in operation, along with Alzheimer's participants in the Day Care Center. SNEC contributed to funding the construction of a new bomb shelter.
- We spoke with counselors at the Afula Branch of the Haifa Rape Crisis Center, who provide emotional and professional support to victims of sexual assault. SNEC helped to establish the Afula



Beverly Stein, UJF President

Branch and continues to provide it with significant support.

We met two mothers who lost their children in the war. They shared how the support they received from student volunteers from B'Meitav - The Ruth Vrobel Foundation, has helped them heal and find purpose. These postgraduate students, pursuing careers in social work and psychology,

provide support to families of fallen soldiers through personal connections, grief counseling, and assistance in finding meaningful ways to honor their lost loved ones.

- The Sandwich Club is a program for teens in Afula who need a place to gather, eat, and volunteer. They prepare over 1,200 sandwiches weekly for students who can't afford lunch. The teens shared their gratitude for the chance to be involved in The Sandwich Club.
- We toured the expanded rehabilitation center, at the Emek Medical Center, and heard from a patient, a tank commander whose tank was hit by an RPG. The center serves as a model of coexistence, with an equal representation of Jewish Israeli and Arab Israeli staff (across all levels) and patients.

- A Mitzvah Day project at Temple Sinai, in collaboration with Eden, UJF's Community Shlichah, involved creating puppets for the children at the Beit Alfa Absorption Center. The children were delighted to receive the puppets. The Absorption Center was established in 2007 to receive immigrants from Ethiopia. The absorption center serves as a bridge for newcomers, assisting them in learning Hebrew and integrating them into modern Israeli society. It provides for all their needs until these families and individuals are prepared to take flight on their own.

I am deeply thankful for the opportunity to witness firsthand how our support is making a difference for the people of the Afula-Gilboa region.

(See photos from the mission on page 17)

CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

April 4	7:05 pm
April 11	7:12 pm
April 18	7:20 pm
April 25	7:27 pm

Schoke JFS Celebrates 50 Years of Service

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) On Sunday, May 18, 2025, Schoke Jewish Family Service (Schoke JFS) will mark an incredible milestone: 50 years of dedicated service to the Fairfield County community. The milestone will be celebrated at "An Evening with Schoke JFS," a gala event held at Temple Beth El in Stamford, beginning at 5:30 pm.

In honor of its golden anniversary, Schoke JFS will present the 45th Annual Mitzvah Award to its dedicated staff for their unwavering commitment to enhancing the lives of individuals and families in the community. The event will be chaired by Connie Freeman and Esther Rein, with Jeri Appel serving as auction chair.

The staff of Schoke JFS is the heart and soul of the agency, with a dedicated team of social workers, counselors, and administrative professionals who bring compassion, expertise, and a deep commitment to their work. Whether providing counseling, supporting the elderly, offering emergency assistance, or addressing food insecurity, their tireless dedication ensures that Schoke JFS continues to have a positive and lasting impact on the lives of individuals throughout Fairfield County.

Founded in 1975 to serve the Greater Stamford area, Schoke JFS expanded in 1990 with an office in Westport, which allowed the agency to reach the towns of Westport, Weston, Wilton, and Norwalk. Since then,

Schoke JFS has continued to grow, now providing services in 15 towns, including Bridgeport, Fairfield, Trumbull, Ridgefield, Redding, Easton, Monroe, and Stratford.

What began in the late 1970s with just one secretary, a part-time director, and a part-time social worker primarily focused on helping Russian immigrants resettle, has grown into a robust and diverse service provider. Schoke JFS now offers a wide range of programs, including counseling, geriatric care services, emergency assistance, and initiatives to combat food insecurity. The agency is also home to the Freedberg Family Kosher Food Pantry and the Kosher Mobile Food Pantry, Connecticut's only kosher food truck.

An Evening with Schoke JFS will feature a cocktail reception, dinner, awards presentation, and dessert. The event will also include a paddle raise benefiting the Japha Family Emergency Assistance Program and an online auction. General tickets, which include dinner and dessert, are available for \$250. For more information, to purchase tickets, or to read bios of the event honorees, visit www.ctjfs.org.

For journal ads or further inquiries, contact Erika Llanos at 203-921-4161 or ellanos@ctjfs.org. Join Schoke JFS in celebrating 50 years of service and supporting the agency's continued impact on the Fairfield County community.

Temple Sinai Annual Gala: One Rhythm, One Community

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) The annual Temple Sinai Gala, "One Rhythm, One Community," will be held on Saturday, May 3 at 6:00 pm at Temple Sinai. The evening will feature a silent auction, cocktails, dinner and dessert catered by Marcia Selden Catering, followed by a DJ and dancing.

This year, Temple Sinai is proud to honor congregant Sharon Goldstein, for her many contributions to Temple Sinai. The Temple is also excited to celebrate congregant Elisabeth Giles, for her enthusiastic participation throughout the community.

Sharon has been deeply involved with Temple Sinai since joining in 2015, along with her husband, Bruce. From adult education classes to traveling to Israel with a congregational trip in 2018, Sharon has been creating lifelong memories and friendships every step of the way. Sharon was part of the 2018 "Amidah Leadership Initiative" (ALI) program, in which the group created and implemented the "Staying Connected" program designed for the synagogue's senior congregants to allow for connection and reconnection. She was also

part of the planning and implementation of the Temple Sinai Circles program. Sharon joined the Leadership Team in 2019 and has served as the VP of Administration for over five and a half years.

Elisabeth joined Temple Sinai in early 2021 after relocating back to the area from the Midwest. She was searching for her new "spiritual home" and had stumbled upon Temple Sinai. After attending a virtual service (thanks, Covid!), meeting with Rabbi Jay, and feeling the warmth and connection from day one, she knew she was home. She began volunteering with the "Unity Project" and assumed leadership of a Circle focused on community service. She has volunteered at Mitzvah Day, delivered *Mishloach Manot*, and along with the many other opportunities that Sinai offers, she finds a sense of joy jumping in to help or participate. Elisabeth also serves on the Temple Sinai Board as a Trustee, co-chairs the Caring Committee and is on the Membership Committee.

Temple Sinai President Susan Kostin

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Yom HaShoah Commemoration

United Jewish Federation invites the community to join in commemorating Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) on Wednesday, April 23 from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at Temple Sinai in Stamford.

The featured speaker will be award-winning journalist Keren Blankfeld. Her stories have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Reuters*, *The Toronto Star*, and others. She teaches reporting and writing at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. She lives in New York with her husband and two sons.

Blankfeld will discuss her new book *Lovers in Auschwitz: A True Story*, which tells a story of instant love and poignant loss. Her book is full of musical motifs, an homage to the singing talent that helped save the life of a young Polish Jew while he was imprisoned at Auschwitz.

Auschwitz survivor and Stamford resident Ernest Nemeth will also address the community. Ernie was born in March of 1926 in Choma, Czechoslovakia (now part of Ukraine) and grew up in a close-knit Jewish family. During World War II, he and his family were forced into the Warsaw Ghetto before being deported to Auschwitz.



Author Keren Blankfeld

He survived forced labor and a death march before being liberated in May 1945. After the war, he moved to the United States, where he built a new life, found Sylvia, the love of his life, and became a bakery owner. He continues to share his story to educate future generations and is dedicated to Holocaust remembrance, ensuring that history would never be forgotten.

"As the years pass, the number of survivors of the *Shoah* is rapidly diminishing. It is our obligation to come together as a community to keep the memory of the victims and survivors alive. It is particularly important now, when hatred for Israel and the Jewish people throughout the world seems to be growing exponentially. We hope you will join us," said Gary Jones, Director of UJF's Jewish Community Relations Council.

Copies of Keren's book will be available at the event. There is no cost to attend, but advance registration is required at www.ujf.org/YomHaShoah25.

For questions or to get involved in planning the program, contact Eric Ross at eric@ujf.org.

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A Night of Music and Celebration

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a Brooklyn-based pianist, composer, and music director, will guide the evening with his innovative and masterful arrangements.

From cantorial masterpieces to Broadway favorites, operatic arias to original compositions, the night promises a journey through timeless melodies and fresh interpretations. The program will feature both solo and collaborative performances, culminating in a grand finale that will leave the audience uplifted and inspired.

While the music will undoubtedly be a highlight, the heart of the evening lies in celebrating Lisa and Jeff Manheim, two individuals whose dedication to Temple Beth El and the broader community has left an indelible mark. Members of the synagogue since 2009, Lisa and Jeff have been instrumental in strengthening the congregation's foundation

and fostering a spirit of togetherness. Lisa's leadership has been felt at every level—she joined the Board of Trustees in 2012 and went on to serve in multiple executive roles, including Secretary, First Vice-President, and President. She played a pivotal role in the Cantor and Rabbi Search Committees, ensuring strong spiritual leadership for the community. She also helped conceive and lead TeeBeEs, Temple Beth El's beloved program for its youngest members.

Jeff has been equally dedicated, actively participating in the Men's Club and serving on the Board of Trustees Nominating Committee for six years. Together, Lisa and Jeff spearheaded the creation of Emmet's Playground at Temple Beth El, a deeply meaningful tribute to their beloved son, Emmet Samuel Manheim, z"l. Their commitment to ensuring that children have a joyful, safe place to play reflects their belief in community, resilience, and love.

Their generosity extends far beyond Temple Beth El. Lisa has served on

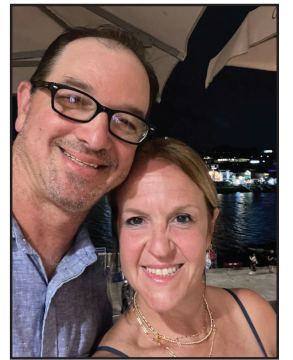
the board of United Jewish Federation, where she was honored with the Harvey A. Peltz Young Leadership Award. She has also played leadership roles at Carmel Academy, the Stamford JCC's Maccabi Games, and the JCC's Center Women. Together, Lisa and Jeff founded Emmet's Book Drive, which has donated over 25,000 brand-new books to Stamford's public schools.

They also established the Emmet Manheim Scholarship Fund at Camp Tevya, ensuring that families in need can experience the joy of Jewish summer camp.

For Lisa and Jeff, activism and volunteerism are not just values—they are a way of life. Their son, Oz, often seen joyfully exploring the sanctuary aisles during Shabbat services, is growing up in a home rooted in the power of giving back. Their dedication to Temple Beth El, the Jewish community, and beyond is an



Cantor Katie Kaplan



Lisa and Jeff Manheim

inspiration to all who know them.

As the lights dim on April 6 and the first notes fill the air, "All That Glitters" will not just be a concert—it will be a tribute to the power of music, the strength of community, and the extraordinary individuals who make Temple Beth El shine.

General admission is \$36 in advance, \$45 at the door, with no charge for students ages 10 to 18.

To purchase tickets, visit www.tinyurl.com/tbecc25 or call (203) 322-6901.

THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

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Shulchan Ivrit: Learn Hebrew and Build Connections

(Courtesy of UJF) What's the best way to learn Hebrew, if not by sitting and talking with others? The Stamford Jewish Community Center's Rabbi Joshua Strom and United Jewish Federation's Community Shlichah (Israeli Emissary) Eden Refaelovich have come up with an innovative way to teach Hebrew, while building new friendships in the community. "Shulchan Ivrit" is a new initiative, in which participants will gather around a table and engage in Hebrew conversation over brown-bag lunches.

The name "Shulchan Ivrit" combines two words, "table" and "Hebrew" –

Rabbi Josh Strom,
Stamford JCC Director
of Jewish ExperiencesEden Refaelovich, UJF
Community Shlichah

because sitting around a table is where the magic will happen! At each meeting, a new topic will be chosen and spoken about

in Hebrew, according to the group's level. All experience and levels are welcome. This will allow participants to actively learn from one another, make new friends, strengthen bonds in the community, and practice Hebrew in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

Sessions are scheduled approximately every other week. Please visit www.stamfordjcc.org to see the upcoming schedule and to register for an upcoming class.

For more information, please contact Eden Refaelovich at eden@ujf.org or Rabbi Joshua Strom at rjstrom@stamfordjcc.org.

Fairfield County Celebrates Israel

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resilience of Jewish heroes throughout history. His *Heroes Concert Tour* brought this initiative to audiences across North America and Israel, blending music in Hebrew and English with multimedia presentations that feature the stories of these heroes. Event organizers are grateful to the JCCA for the grant that has enabled Gilad's participation in this event.

Eden Refaelovich, UJF's Schlichah shared, "I am excited to be part of a Jewish community that values Israel, the homeland we hold dear. The theme, 'Fairfield County Celebrates Israel,' is especially meaningful. For so many of us, the last 18 months have drawn our hearts and bodies even closer to Israel. It is crucial that we show our unwavering support for the people of Israel. This festival is a

celebration of unity – coming together as one community to honor Eretz Yisrael, the land and people that make Israel the beloved country it is. We hope everyone comes to celebrate and leaves inspired, energized, and ready to share their love for Israel with the world!"

In addition to the concert by Gilad Segev, there will be adult programming with two visiting Israel Defense Forces soldiers and activities for kids and families. There will also be a marketplace with artisanal Israeli goods and products as well as kosher Israeli food for purchase. The marketplace (or "shuk") will be run by ESEK, a company founded by the Greater Fairfield Jewish Federation's recent Community Shaliach which aims to support small Israeli businesses that have been impacted since October 7.

The Stamford JCC is located at 1035

Newfield Avenue. Registration and updated festival information can be found at www.jewishfestivaloffairfieldcounty.com.

Early bird pricing (available through April 6) is \$18 per person, \$54 for family (includes admission for up to six immediate family members.) Effective April 7, tickets are \$25 per person, \$72 for family (includes admission for up to six immediate family members.)

Family sponsorship is available for \$180 (includes admission for up to six immediate family members, public recognition during the festival, and a special gift bag.)

*If you were provided a discount code for this event, please select "Family Admission Ticket" and enter the code on the second page at checkout. For more information, please contact Eden@ujf.org.

Holocaust Remembrance Open House at the Archives



Jeff Bendremer, Elissa Kaplan, David Kaplan and Debra Emery, JHSFC Archivist, in the Archives.

(Courtesy of Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County) The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County (JHSFC) held an Open House in January at its Vivian and Irwin Miller Archives. This special event invited the community to commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day on the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi concentration camp.

Mark your calendar for April 24 and 25 from 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm when JHSFC

will commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day by hosting another Open House.

The JHSFC Vivian and Irwin Miller Archives houses a significant collection of Holocaust and World War II historical objects – alongside books, newspapers and documents, which were thoughtfully displayed to illustrate the realities of the time and the individual sacrifices made during WWII.

Among the artifacts exhibited were:
A postcard from Germany with Hitler's

picture that was postmarked April 10, 1938, featuring Hitler's image, along with a Nazi helmet. These were paired with books from the Joseph Miller Holocaust Collection and examples of currency used in concentration camps such as Theresienstadt, Buchenwald and Oranienburg.

Another impactful display showed *The Yellow Star* by Gerhard Shoenberger, which details the persecution of Jews from 1933-1945, alongside a large chart depicting the various "Jude" stars used throughout Nazi-occupied Europe.

Additionally, *French Children of the Holocaust* by Klaus Feld, a thick volume documenting the tragic fate of countless Jewish children, served as a sobering reminder of the era's devastation.

The January Open House also highlighted WWII artifacts related to Fairfield County's military veterans and their role in defeating the Nazis. Among the most poignant exhibits was Captain Kalman D. Perlman's Purple Heart and Medal of Honor, displayed alongside his photograph. Though he lost his life many years ago, his bravery and sacrifice remain a powerful legacy.

Another moving display featured a photograph of 2nd Lt. Max L. Levinson in full uniform, accompanied by the very uniforms he once wore – both dress and fatigues. His



Artifacts on display

wife, Eva K. Levinson, also served during WWII as a nurse, and her uniforms were displayed nearby as a testament to the crucial contributions of women in the war effort.

These are just a few of the many significant artifacts housed in the archives. The community is invited to visit the JHSFC Archives at 990 (rear) Hope Street on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm and Tuesday 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Reservations are required.

For further information, call (203) 359-2196 or info@jhsfc-ct.org.

Temple Sinai Annual Gala: One Rhythm, One Community

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remarked, "Every year, Temple Sinai congregants and friends gather to honor and celebrate those who put their heart and soul into volunteering their time, talent and treasure to our sacred community. This year is no different as we gather to recognize two of our most treasured contributors to the fabric of Temple Sinai. We are thrilled to honor Sharon Goldstein for her passion and talent to make Temple Sinai a safe and welcoming

physical space. And we are equally thrilled to celebrate the warmth and caring that Elisabeth Giles brings to everyone in our sacred space. Congratulations and warm wishes to both in receiving this honor!"

To reserve a ticket for the Temple Sinai Gala or to place a tribute ad in honor of Sharon Goldstein or Elisabeth Giles, please RSVP online at TempleSinaiStamford.org. For more information about the Gala, contact Shelly Welfeld at Temple Sinai at 203-322-1649 or Shelly@templesinaistamford.org.

Save the Date: Rabbi Knopf to Be Installed at TBE

(Courtesy of TBE) Rabbi Michael Knopf, who has been Senior Rabbi at Temple Beth El (TBE) in Stamford, CT since September 2024, will be officially installed in a ceremony on May 3, 2025. He succeeds Rabbi Joshua Hammerman, who was Senior Rabbi at TBE for 37 years and is now Rabbi Emeritus.

"Rabbi Knopf's visionary leadership, engagement with contemporary social issues, and his commitment to sharing a Judaism that is rich and meaningful are evident by his achievements throughout his rabbinic career," stated TBE President Jeff Cohen. "He has

been serving TBE well in a Jewish world that is growing more complex and challenging, as he works to strengthen the ties that bind us together as a congregation and to the outside community. In the short time that he's been here, Rabbi Knopf, along with his wife Adira, and their three children, has made a positive impact on Temple Beth El and the Stamford Jewish community," he added.

For more details about these events, check out the TBE website www.tbe.org. All are welcome, but please register in advance.

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JCRC Update

**BY GARY JONES,
UJF JEWISH COMMUNITY
RELATIONS COUNCIL
DIRECTOR**

United Jewish Federation is one of seven Jewish Federations in Connecticut. In pursuit of the legislative priorities of the Jewish community throughout the state, the Federations act collaboratively through Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut (JFACT), a nonprofit corporation formed by the Federations more than 30 years ago. JFACT serves as the lobbying and public advocacy arm of the Jewish Federations.

This year, the Jewish Federations and JFACT have requested that our state legislature enact into law three specific bills in this year's legislative session. I will briefly describe each of these bills and their importance to the Jewish community in our State. I think that you will see that all three bills are designed either to fight the growing scourge of antisemitism or to enhance the safety and security of the Jewish community.

1) **H.B. 7021, An Act Establishing a Working Group to Address Antisemitism in Schools.** As I discussed in the December



Gary Jones,
JCRC Director

edition of my JCRC Update, the explosion of unabashed antisemitism evidenced in so many of our college campuses is beginning to be evident in some of our K-12 schools as well. This fact is plainly demonstrated by ADL statistics. Jewish community members, school administrators and teachers are crying out for educational tools and

other support to combat this trend before the problem becomes worse. H.B. 7021, if enacted into law, would result in the appointment of a working group comprised of Jewish community members, education leaders and government officials to study the problem of school-based antisemitism and issue a report of its findings and recommendations to remedy the situation by February 1, 2026.

I am pleased to report that at UJF's request Dr. Alan Addley, Superintendent of Public Schools in Darien, delivered testimony in support of the bill. He is the only superintendent to have done so. We can't thank Dr. Addley enough, both for his recognition of the magnitude of the problem and for his support in seeking to address the problem.

2) **S.B. 1247, An Act Authorizing**

and Adjusting Bonds of the State (including Non-Profit Security Grant Funding). The State has been ahead of the curve in recognizing the need for state support of the Non-Profit Security Grant Program. So far \$20 million has been authorized in Connecticut to support critical security enhancements for faith-based and community institutions. However, of that amount, only \$5 million remains. That sum is clearly insufficient to meet rising demands and threat levels. S.B. 1247, if enacted into law, would authorize an additional \$20 million in State bond funds to support the Non-Profit Security Grant Program.

3) **S.B. 980, An Act Improving Safety on the Campuses of Institutions of Higher Education.** Since the October 7 attacks, we have seen too many incidents of

Jewish students being subject to harassment, discrimination, ridicule and exclusion. It has become clear that many institutions of higher learning do not currently have sufficient policies and procedures to protect students. S.B. 980, if enacted into law, would require institutions of higher education to provide training and adopt procedures to respond to and prevent incidents of hate, harassment and racial, religious or ethnic bias.

UJF will be in touch with the community with talking points and directions for reaching out to our State Senators and Representatives in support of these bills when the time is right.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions at gary@ujf.org.

Impact of Lessons Learned

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien's Regional Security Director Jim Comstock and the entire Community Security Initiative (CSI) team attended a briefing by Rabbi Charlie Cyton-Walker on the Colleyville, Texas Congregation Beth Israel Synagogue hostage crisis event that took place on January 15, 2022. Director Dani Menkin from Hey Jude Production was also present to discuss the film *Colleyville*. Rabbi Charlie talked about lessons learned and how prior "Active Threat Training" prepared him for this horrific

ordeal. As Jim and the CSI team look to broaden their impact, it is crucial to hear how the impact of their training saves lives.



(L-r) Film Director Dani Menkin, Regional Security Director Jim Comstock, and Rabbi Charlie Cyton-Walker

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Schoke JFS Zinbarg Camp Scholarship Applications Open

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) Applications for the Joan and Ben Zinbarg Camp Scholarship Program are open for summer 2025 to Jewish families residing throughout the Schoke Jewish Family Service (Schoke JFS) catchment 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 financial support of the Zinbarg Family, United Jewish Federation

of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien, and Jewish Federation of Greater Fairfield County.

Fueled by the generosity of its partners, Schoke JFS granted 48 camp scholarships in 2024, fostering memorable and impactful experiences for the recipients.

The deadline for applications is Friday, April 11. Apply here: www.ctjfs.org/zinbargcampscholarship

Questions? Contact Erika Gadson at 203-921-4161, erikag@ctjfs.org.

Schoke JFS is empowering the next generation through the gift of Jewish summer camp!

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More than Just Bitter Herbs

BY RONNIE FEIN

Every year, right before Passover, I see dozens of recipes for charoset and read about how to make the best matzo balls or how to prepare the perfect hard-cooked eggs for the Seder meal. But somehow the food world hasn't paid much attention to maror (bitter herbs).

Yet, isn't maror one of the essential ingredients on the Seder plate? Isn't it crucial to the retelling of the story of the Exodus?

Yes! We are commanded to eat maror to remind us of the suffering of our Jewish ancestors when they were slaves in Egypt.

So, what exactly is maror and isn't there a delicious way to eat some?

In my family, maror always meant horseradish. My grandmother, my mother and I, each in our turn, grated fresh horseradish every year for our Seder plate and dinner. So did every other Ashkenazi family I knew.

All these years later, I still use freshly grated horseradish for our Seder plate. It's tradition!

But I also include other bitter herbs -- Romaine lettuce, arugula, endive, watercress and/or radicchio, among others -- during the meal. It's another reminder of our history. But it serves a culinary purpose too, because most often I use one or more of these bitter herbs in a salad. Salads, especially one that includes robust greens and a perky vinaigrette, help lighten the otherwise heavy and filling Passover meal. They are also pretty and loaded with colorful ingredients, so they're a festive addition to the holiday table.

Here are two of our family favorites:

BITTER GREENS SALAD WITH ORANGE

- 3 navel oranges
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard or Passover mustard
- 3 Belgian endives
- 1 bunch watercress
- 1 small head radicchio
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 3-4 tablespoons toasted pignoli or pistachio nuts, optional

Grate enough of the peel of one orange to equal one teaspoonful. Place the grated peel in a bowl and add the olive oil, white wine vinegar and mustard. Halve the orange that has been grated and squeeze the juice from one of the halves into the bowl. Mix to blend the ingredients completely and set aside. (Reserve the other half of the orange for other purposes or nibble as a snack while you prepare the salad). Peel the remaining two oranges and remove all the white pith that surrounds the segments. Cut the orange flesh into thick slices, then cut the slices into chunks and set aside. Wash and dry the endive leaves and cut them in half. Place the endive in a bowl. Wash and dry the watercress, discard any thick stems and add to the bowl with the endive. Wash and dry the radicchio leaves, cut them if they are large, and add them to the bowl. Add the orange chunks. Pour the dressing over the ingredients and toss. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Scatter the nuts over the salad if desired.

Makes 8-10 servings.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS, KUMQUAT AND AVOCADO SALAD

- 1 pound brussels sprouts
- 18 kumquats
- 1/2 cup chopped red onion or 2 shallots, chopped
- 1 medium avocado, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1/2 cup crumbled goat or feta cheese, optional
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper, optional
- 1/2 cup chopped pistachio nuts, optional

Shred the brussels sprouts and place in a bowl. Cut the kumquats in half, remove seed and chop the fruit coarsely. Add to the brussels sprouts. Add the onion, avocado and cheese, if desired, and toss gently to distribute the ingredients evenly. Mix the olive oil, white wine vinegar and maple syrup and pour over the salad. Toss to coat all the ingredients. Add the crushed red pepper and nuts, if desired, toss. Let rest for 10-15 minutes before serving.

Makes 4-6 servings.

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

KOSHER COOKING for Beginners



Ronnie Fein

Simple and Delicious Recipes for the Modern Kitchen



Brussels Sprouts, Kumquat and Avocado Salad

Chabad @ Harbor Point Passover Seders

(Courtesy of Chabad @ Harbor Point) Chabad @ Harbor Point invites the community to fun and meaningful Passover Seders, to enjoy the tastes and songs of Pesach, journey inward on the path of freedom, and pray and hope for freedom for those still held captive in Gaza, may they be released long before then.

First Seder - Saturday, April 12 at 7:30 pm.

Second Seder - Sunday, April 13 at 7:30 pm.

The Seders are open to the entire community of all ages, backgrounds, and knowledge levels. They will be held in Harbor Point in Stamford CT. The exact location will be provided upon RSVP. Suggested donation \$36.

For more information or to RSVP, text or call 203-912-7708, or visit JewishHarborPoint.org



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



Through PJ Library and PJ Our Way, United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF) proudly sends nearly 7000 Jewish-themed books a year to Jewish children in Fairfield County, absolutely free.

Do you have Jewish children or grandchildren ages 6 months to 12 years, who would like to receive PJ Library books? To sign up to receive an age-appropriate PJ book every month, visit www.ujf.org/PJ-Library.

Are you a former PJ Family who has extra gently-loved PJ Library books laying around collecting dust? If you'd like to donate them back to the community so they can be put to great uses, please reach out! For more information or to get involved locally, please contact UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross at Eric@ujf.org.



Chabad of Stamford's Family Model Matzah Bakery

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Come experience Chabad of Stamford's Annual Model Matzah Bakery on Sunday, March 30, at 10:00 am at 770 High Ridge Road in Stamford. Enjoy making *shmurah* matzah at this hands-on, family-friendly event.

Feel the excitement mixing, rolling, and baking, while learning about the meticulous process of crafting authentic matzah.

"We aim to educate the community about the unique art of making *shmurah* matzah in a fun family-friendly way," says Rabbi Moshe Shemtov, director of Chabad of Stamford. "This event offers

an opportunity to witness and participate in the sacred process of preparing this special, handmade unleavened bread."

Shmurah (guarded) matzah is matzah that was baked from wheat that was guarded from contact with water from the time of harvesting.

This event is free and open to all, with sponsorship opportunities available.

To register, email programs@stamfordchabad.org, call 203-324-2223, or visit www.chabadstamford.org/pesach for more information.

Come bake, learn, and celebrate the joy of Pesach preparation with Chabad of Stamford.

Second Night Seder at Temple Sinai

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) No plans for the second night of Passover? Come join Temple Sinai on Sunday, April 13 at 5:30 pm.

The Second Night Seder hosted by Temple Sinai will revisit the story of the Jewish people's formation with songs, activities and traditions for kids of all ages. Rabbi Jay TelRav and Cantor Micah

Morgovsky will lead the Seder.

Please visit www.templestamford.org now to make reservations for a four-course Passover meal. RSVP on or before March 28 for the Early Bird price: \$65 per adult / \$25 per child. After March 29: \$75 per adult / \$25 per child. Please note: No reservation can be accepted after April 9.

Ideas and Inspiration for Your Pesach Seder

(Courtesy of Congregation Agudath Sholom) Join the Vaad HaKashrus of Fairfield County online on Thursday, March 27, from 8:00 pm to 9:00 pm and learn about the upcoming holiday of Pesach. The Vaad HaKashrus is an association of local rabbis who work together to provide certification for local kosher food establishments. Each rabbi will share a brief idea that will help you

prepare and be ready for the Seder night.

Speakers will include Rabbi Daniel Cohen of Congregation Agudath Sholom in Stamford, Rabbi Eli Kohl of Young Israel of Stamford, and Rabbi Fred Hyman of Westville Synagogue in New Haven.

To receive the Zoom link, please register at www.cas-stamford.org

Please email rabbikurtz@cas-stamford.org with any questions.

The Beverly and Stanley Ferber Memorial Senior Passover Seder

(Courtesy of JCC) On Friday, April 11 from 11:00 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 Senior 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 4. Please register online at www.stamfordjcc.org or contact Catherine Cimbalo at 203-487-0979 or ccimbalo@stamfordjcc.org.

Everything You Need for Passover!

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) As the Passover holiday approaches, Chabad of Stamford is offering a comprehensive lineup of programs and services to help the community prepare for and celebrate Pesach. From hands-on matzah baking experiences to traditional Seders, charity initiatives, and Passover essentials, Chabad is ensuring that every family can observe the holiday with ease and meaning.

The preparations begin on Sunday, March 30, with Chabad's "Annual Family Model Matzah Bake" at 10:00 am at (see article to the left). This interactive event offers children and families a chance to learn about the traditional process of making *shmurah* matzah, a staple of the Passover Seder.

On Sunday April 6, Chabad will host a Teen Party Bus at 11:00 am. Local teens (8th through 12th grade) will have an opportunity to connect to the holiday in a fun and engaging way by enjoying fun and games and doing *mitzvahs* of delivering *shmurah* matzah around town.

In addition to these events, Chabad is making *shmurah* matzah available for purchase. Chabad is also assisting

community members with the sale of *chametz*, a vital pre-Passover tradition, and encouraging participation in *Maos Chitim*, a charitable initiative that provides food and support to those in need during the holiday.

For those looking to celebrate Passover in a communal setting, Chabad will host Seders on both nights of Pesach, April 12 and 13, at 7:30 pm. These Seders promise a warm and welcoming atmosphere, featuring traditional Passover foods, meaningful discussion, and an engaging and interactive experience.

Chabad is also offering Seder-to-Go kits for those who prefer to conduct their Seder at home. Kits include handmade *shmurah* matzah, wine or grape juice, an insightful and interactive Haggadah, and all the necessary items for the Seder plate, making it easier for families to observe the holiday.

For more information, to register for events, or to order Passover essentials, visit www.chabadstamford.org/pesach, call 203-324-2223 ext. 103, or email programs@stamfordchabad.org.

This Passover, consider four more questions

Do you value United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien?

Do you support UJF on an annual basis?

Do you want UJF to exist for future generations?

How will you assure Jewish tomorrows?



United Jewish Federation
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Be remembered forever with a gift to UJF in your will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy.

To learn more about leaving a legacy, contact
Lenore Fogle, Director of Reading Partners Life and Legacy, lenore@ujf.org; 203.321.1373. Ext. 1001

Tu B'shvat Afternoon of Connection and Creativity



Young professionals gather on Tu B'shvat afternoon at the Stamford Museum & Nature Center

(Courtesy of Chabad @ Harbor Point) On February 9, a group of young Jewish professionals gathered at the Stamford Museum & Nature Center in honor of Tu B'shvat ("New Year for the trees") for an afternoon of meditation and painting. The event offered an opportunity for creative expression and reflection, accompanied by kosher wine and cheese.

Held in memory of Tova Feldstein in honor of her second *yahrzeit*, the afternoon was sponsored by deep admirers of Tova. Her parents, Michael and Sharon Feldstein, shared heartfelt words about her life.

For more info about future events and to join the warm community of young Jewish professionals in Stamford, visit youngandjewish.org.



Participants create paintings at the Stamford Museum & Nature Center

Hitting the Slopes

(Courtesy of Chabad @ Harbor Point) On Sunday, March 2, Young & Jewish hit the slopes for a day of skiing, snowboarding, and tubing at Mohawk Mountain in Connecticut. The group enjoyed runs down the trails and friendly races, making the most of the winter season.

Whether carving through the snow, taking in the mountain views, or hanging out in the lodge, the day was filled with adventure, great company, and the chance

to create memories together.

Young & Jewish, an initiative of Chabad @ Harbor Point, is a warm and vibrant community of young Jews, singles, and couples in Stamford and the Fairfield County area, with social, educational, and cultural get-togethers. Find them at youngandjewish.org and follow them on Instagram @youngandjewish. For more information contact Levi Deren at 203-912-7708 or Levideren@gmail.com



On the slopes of Mohawk Mountain

Comedy and Jewish Pride with Michael Rapaport

(Courtesy of Chabad @ Harbor Point) On Saturday night, March 1, the "Young & Jewish" community enjoyed a night of comedy at the NY Comedy Club in downtown Stamford with comedian Michael Rapaport. He had the crowd roaring, giving everyone a break to sit back, relax, and enjoy some great humor.

Rapaport shared words about his connection to Israel and the Jewish people following October 7 and emphasized the importance of standing strong with Jewish pride.



Comedy night with Michael Rapaport (center) at the NY Comedy Club in Stamford.

Young and Jewish in Stamford Joins Annual Shabbaton in Brooklyn



Participants from Stamford at the Young Professionals International Shabbaton (PHOTO CREDIT: ITZIK BELENITZKI)

(Courtesy of Chabad @ Harbor Point) A contingent from Stamford participated in Encounter - Chabad Young Professionals International Shabbaton in Brooklyn, NY, over MLK Weekend, joining 700 young professionals from the US and around the world. Over the weekend, participants connected through experiences including warm Shabbat dinners, a lively cocktail hour, a tour of the Chassidic neighborhood of Crown Heights, meeting Israeli American rapper Kosha Dillz and actor/comedian Michael Rapaport, visiting the Rebbe's resting

place, and participating in the largest Jewish speed dating event in NY.

The highlight of the weekend was a Saturday night concert and party that brought everyone together in celebration. The group returned energized and proud, having connected, socialized, and shared a weekend with a dynamic and diverse group of people from all over.

For more information about future events and to join the warm community of young Jewish professionals in Stamford, visit youngandjewish.org.

Teens Impact the Community

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien held the third session of its Kuriansky Teen Leadership Institute at Elayne & James Schoke Jewish Family Service (Schoke JFS) offices of Fairfield County. Participants learned about various nonprofit organizations, how to identify their effectiveness, and began brainstorming what their own fundraising project will be.

The class had the opportunity to hear from Matt Greenberg, President and CEO of Schoke JFS, who shared insights on what they do, how much they give back to the community, and the importance of their work. Participants toured the facility, including the Schoke JFS Mobile Food Pantry. The class also participated in a hands-on volunteer project, where they packed spices to be delivered with food to



Kuriansky Teen Leadership Initiative participants pack spices for Schoke JFS Freedberg Kosher Food Pantry

those in need!

The Kuriansky Teen Leadership Institute is a leadership program designed to equip teenagers with the knowledge and skills they need to become community leaders and philanthropists, and is generously funded by the Kuriansky Family Foundation.



Kuriansky Teen Leadership Institute participants (l-r) Jakob Zelazny, Gabriel Lesser, Hannah Bahar, Eden Cohen, Yoav Hochman, and Perri Hines (far right) with Schoke JFS President and CEO Matt Greenberg, and UJF Community Shlichah Eden Refaellovich.

Shining Scholars

(Courtesy of BCHA) The hallways at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) of Connecticut are ringing with pride, as the school celebrates the achievements of BCHA Upper School student Adam Daniel (BCHA '26) who scored perfect PSAT and ACT scores this year. His achievements earned him a feature in the education section of the Connecticut Post and the pride and respect of all students, teachers and the BCHA community.

Along with Adam, classmate and 12th grade student Max Ferits, (BCHA '25) has been named a U.S. Presidential Scholar Candidate. Max was also featured in an article in the Stamford Advocate as one of seven local students nominated for this prestigious honor.

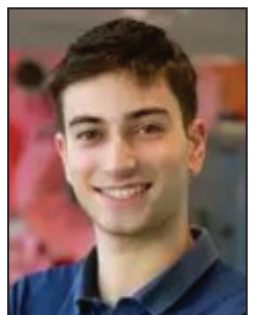
The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program honors the nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors based on their outstanding academic achievements, including SAT and ACT scores. This prestigious recognition is a testament to Max's hard work, dedication and excellence in the classroom.

"Max is a remarkable young man," said David Giver, BCHA Upper School principal. "His pursuit of knowledge, and his deep thinking on all that he does, shows that Max has always had an eye and a heart for becoming a high achiever. This candidacy is proof that all of his efforts are seen far beyond our school and community."

Max spoke glowingly of his achievements in a recent interview. "My BCHA education



Max Ferits



Adam Daniel

played a role in my nomination. I can say that the strong foundation I received here has been invaluable. BCHA's supportive environment, excellent teachers and rigorous curriculum have truly shaped my academic journey."

Adam took the ACT in September and a month later, he took the PSAT, achieving perfect scores on both tests. He told the Connecticut Post that he was in disbelief when he first saw he got a perfect score of 36 on the ACT.

"When I looked at the website and I saw that it came back with the 36 when it showed up on the screen, I didn't think it was my actual score," the 16-year-old said. "I was like, 'Is this the example that they give for what your score would look like?' I was very confused."

Upper School Principal David Giver said, "Adam's achievement is not surprising; it is well deserved. Adam has been a naturally curious and diligent student since I first met him in middle school. His relentless pursuit of deeper understanding in his studies has always stood out."

An Evening with Douglas Murray

In early February, a sellout crowd filled Temple Sholom in Greenwich for an evening with Douglas Murray in conversation with Liel Leibovitz. The evening was sponsored by United Jewish Federation and UJA-JCC of Greenwich.



Edith Samers, Michael Schlessinger, Monica Smyth, Douglas Murray, Beverly Stein, Diane Sloyer, Eric Ross



Over 600 people filled Temple Sholom in Greenwich



Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO Douglas Murray, and Pam Ehrenkranz, UJA-JCC CEO



A sell out crowd is captivated by Douglas Murray



Remembering the Past and Inspiring the Future

(Courtesy of UJF) In March, United Jewish Federation hosted a historic event, bringing together 250 people for a deeply moving occasion. The evening was headlined by Jonny Daniels, a renowned global Israel advocate, known for his behind-the-scenes insights on the Israel-Gaza conflict. His advocacy and leadership have made a significant impact on Israel's global narrative.

Jonny was joined by Holocaust survivors Ernest Nemeth (99 years old) and Luba Weinroth to inscribe a Torah scroll that had been hidden and partially destroyed during

WWII. Now being revived by survivors worldwide, the Torah will ultimately be placed in the office of the President of Israel, where it will be used once again in sacred ceremonies. As Ernie shared a poignant glimpse into his Holocaust memory, alongside a deeply meaningful message to the Jewish people, and as the Torah inscription took place, there wasn't a dry eye in the room.

"It was a powerful moment of living history," said event organizer and UJF NextGen Director Mel Vorm.



PHOTO CREDITS: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY

Bits & Pieces



BY SANDY GOLOVE

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

MAZEL TOV TO

GROWING FAMILIES:

Marlyn & Rich Agatstein on the birth of a grandson, Levi William Agatstein, son of **Madison & Alex Agatstein**.

Adrienne & Michael Alexander on the birth of a grandson, son of **Liz & Eli Reichner**.

Aliza & Bradley Baskir on the birth of a daughter.

Steve Block on the birth of a granddaughter, daughter of **Emile & Harry Block**.

Diane & Rabbi Daniel Cohen on the birth of a granddaughter Ayelet Shmidman, daughter of **Elisheva & Yaakov Shmidman**.

Judy and Howard Goldstein on the birth of a granddaughter, a daughter of **Rebecca and Eitan Edelman**.

Amy & Gilad Harel on the birth of a son.

Betsy & Kevan Herold on the birth of a granddaughter, Noa Vera Priem, daughter of **Rachel & Richard Priem**.

Helene & Harvey Kaminski on the birth of a granddaughter.

Nancy & Jerry Kapchan on the birth of a grandson, Elijah Paul Kapchan, son of **Kayla & Zachary Kapchan**.

Hazel & David Katz on the birth of a granddaughter, Sylvie Renée Guild, daughter of **Melanie & Will Guild**.

Allison & Aaron Kaufman on the birth of a son.

Marcy & Marc Kurzman on the birth of a grandson, Jacob Seth Ferrara.

Dani & Michael Levine on the birth of a daughter.

Ilene & Jim Locker on the birth of a granddaughter, Ilana Indira Locker, daughter of **Neha & Howard Locker**.

Sandy Rosenberg on the birth of a granddaughter, Liat Adira Rubin.

Kaili & Daniel Scherban on the birth of a daughter, Madeline Scherban, granddaughter of **Judy & Nathan**

Janette and Mazi Scherban.

Debbie & Leon Shapiro on the birth of a granddaughter, Emory Harper Lazarus, daughter of **Danielle and Mikey Lazarus**.

Debbie & Leon Shapiro on the birth of a granddaughter, Sienna Lee Shapiro, daughter of **Kara & Adam Shapiro**.

Monica Smyth Schlessinger & Michael Schlessinger on the birth of a granddaughter, Lilah Charlotte Mills.

Lois Stark & Gary Lessen on the birth of a granddaughter, Isabel Rose Sparno, a daughter of **Emily Lessen & Robbie Sparno**.

Eve & Philip Steinmetz on the birth of a son, Yekutiel Tzvi Steinmetz, grandson of **Elise Lerner, Michael Wiener and Liba & Steve Steinmetz**.

Allie Ungar & Aryeh Friedman on the birth of a daughter.

Kimmie & David Warmflash on the birth of a son, Itay Benzion Warmflash, grandson of **Sherry Kfare and Doris & Ron Warmflash** and great-grandson of **Camille Warmflash**.

MAZEL TOV ON MARRIAGES/ ENGAGEMENTS:

Debbie & Lou Ferri on the marriage of their son, Kevin Ferri to Emily Stern.

Elaine Finkelstein on her engagement to **Pinnie Balbin**.

Sharon & Bruce Goldstein on the engagement of their daughter, **Lauren Goldstein** to **Joey Most**.

Sondra & Jared Mehl on the engagement of their son, **Ayden Mehl** to **Eyden Price**, daughter of **David Price & Daphne Lazar-Price**.

Marguerite & Kenny Neuhaus on the marriage of their son, **Remy Neuhaus**, to **Noa Friedman**.

Guy Sasson & Jane Berzner Edelman on their engagement.

Rachel Seligson on the engagement of her son, **Daniel Seligson** to **Bracha Weinberger**, daughter of **Tal & Josh Weinberger**.

Malya & Rabbi Zalman Shmotkin on the engagement of their son, **Berel**

Shmotkin to **Devorah Leah Wilansky**, daughter of **Chana & Rabbi Moshe Wilansky**.

Sharon & Simeon Wohlberg on the engagement of their son, **Joshua Wohlberg**, to **Shira Borochoy**, daughter of **Debora & Ronen Borochoy**.

Neda & Robert Yaghoubian on the engagement of their son, **Gabriel Yaghoubian** to **Gabrielle Styles**, daughter of **Liz Fiedler & Stu Styles**.

MAZEL TOV B'NAI MITZVAH:

Lila Fishman: daughter of **Jennifer & Daniel Fishman**.

Aiden Miller: son of **Rina & Yoni Miller**.

Zosia Rafelson: daughter of **Karolina & Paul Rafelson**.

Nili Steinberg: daughter of **Ayelet & Keith Steinberg**.

WE MOURN THE LOSS OF:

Joseph Barocas: husband of **Sandra Barocas**; father of **Sabrina Benjamin, Stacy Beyda, Hayley Barocas and Morris Barocas**.

James Elliot Benjamin: husband of **Amy Fishkow**; father of **Rachel Elaine Benjamin and Sarah Hope Benjamin**; brother of **Daniel Benjamin, Sanford Benjamin, Alfred Benjamin and William Benjamin**.

Paul Berger: husband of **Dina Berger**; and father of **Gideon Berger, Alisa Berger and Benjamin Berger**.

Lee Chavkin: husband of **Carolyn Chavkin** and brother of **Barry Chavkin and Linda Matisoff**.

Judith Cohen: mother of **Susan Rich, Amy Cohen and Lori Josephson**

Benard Dreyer: brother of **Neil Dreyer**
Dr. Robert Erichson: husband of **Elaine Erichson**; father of **Laurie Leibowitz and Howie Erichson**; and brother of **Carol Kane**.

Gloria Faizakoff: mother of **Daniel Faizakoff and Judy Faizakoff**.

Marcus Sender Feldman: father of **Elise Feldman**.

Herbert Felsenfeld: father of **Marguerite Felsenfeld**; brother of **Irving Felsenfeld**;

and sister-in-law of **Ursula Mark**.

Miriam Fischer: sister of **Phoebe Greenberg**.

Marilyn Gochberg: mother of **Marjorie Kellner, Rav Asher Gochberg and Barbara Gochberg**.

Ralph Green: father of **Dovid Green**.

Marsha Greenberg: mother of **Robert Wolfe, Liz Wolfe Kitay, Michael Greenberg and Jeffrey Greenberg**.

William "Billy" Heller: husband of **Audrey Heller**; and father of **Carol, Chaia and Laura**.

Ruth Kantrowitz: sister of **Arline Gewanter**.

Jay Lipis: uncle of **David Zizmor**.

Margaret Osnos: mother of **Steven Osnos, Mary David, Jane Pottmeyer**; and sister **Bettina Paley**.

Anatoliy Podelko: father of **Alex Podelko**.

Parvin Salem Rastegar: mother of **Saiid Rastegar, Nahid Neman, Soraya Baharestani and Kamran Rastegar**.

Edwin Sidney Robbins: father of **Russell Robbins**.

Nina Rosenberg: mother of **Michael Rosenberg**.

Eric Sandler: son of **Audrey Frankenberg**; brother of **Mark Sandler**; and partner of **Aynet Santiago**.

Eugene Shapiro: husband of **Frieda Cohen Shapiro**; and father of **Paula Some and Bruce Shapiro**.

Phyllis Barbara Shapiro: mother of **Shari Glucksman, Ricki Kovacs, Marc Shapiro and Mitch Shapiro**.

Stuart Sobel: husband of **Millie Sobol**.

Harvey Sober: father of **Saryah Sober and Shai Sober**.

Howard Tedoff: brother-in-law of **David Levine**.

Sheila Teig: wife of **Bernie Teig**; mother of **Ellen Klein and Karen Didia**; and sister of **Bill Carey and Bert Carey**.

Small Gifts Make a Big Impact

**BY ROBIN FISCHER,
UJF BOARD MEMBER**

On a weekly basis, my family and I have the occasion to give gifts for birthdays, births, honors, and passings. Over the past year, my husband Jason and I have changed our approach to gift giving. Rather than running around to find gifts that seem meaningful to the recipient, it dawned on

me to give an incredibly more meaningful gift that will keep on giving and make an impact not only for the recipient but for our community.

For every occasion, including birthday parties of our kids' friends (ages eight and five), we now give the gift of a UJF tribute. A tribute to UJF is any level of giving which is accompanied by a personalized note from the donor (which our kids love to help

create!) and sent via both email and snail mail. This act of giving a tribute is teaching our own children about philanthropy and *tzedakah* and that a true gift does not always come in the form of a tangible object. I will never forget the note I got back from a parent that said their son was so excited a donation was made in his name and the child thanked my son for "his forever gift." "Wow!" I thought to myself. Finally, a gift

that won't get lost at the bottom of the toy pile.

When I celebrated a milestone birthday this year, I asked for tribute gifts to be made in my honor...and they were! Instead of making another lasagna for a meal train, I make a tribute gift. It is easy and more importantly meaningful, for both my family and the recipients.

Visit www.ujf.org/tribute

The Hebrew Corner

A Monthly Primer by Rabbi Robert Abrams,
UJF Education Committee Chair

RESPONSIBILITY

We are all aware that responsibility is a key component of Judaism. The Hebrew word for responsibility is pronounced AhCH-Rah-YooT, with the three letter root for this word being Aleph, Chet, and Raysh. Now that we know what the root letters are, let's extend the idea of responsibility.

Ah-CHaR means "after" or "later." If I do something later, I may be pushing off my responsibility or, alternatively, I may recognize I have a responsibility but I have other commitments I need to address beforehand.

The Hebrew word Ah-CHayR - by replacing the vowel under the Chet with an "ay" sound in place of the "ah" sound - means "another" or "other." As in, "oh my gosh, yet another responsibility." Or, it could mean that a particular task is "someone else's responsibility."

Now that we've toyed around with a few possibilities, let's do some building. We know that the Hebrew word for "brother" is AhCH, and the word for "sister" is Ah-CHot. Here's where we ask the age-old question, are we



Rabbi Robert Abrams

truly our brother's keeper? Let's see what we can find.

If I add the letter Raysh to AhCH/brother, I get the word Ah-CHayR, as we just mentioned. Now if I add the letter Yud to the end of Ah-CHayR, I get either the word Ah-CHah-RaY, meaning "after," as above. But, if we change the last vowel under the Raysh so

the word is instead read Ah-CHahR-eYe (eye as in what we use for vision), this word now literally means "after me." It is also used in Hebrew as the expression "follow me." Now this word means something very different. When I say this word - Ah-CHahR-eYe - I am now responsible for setting an example and now must rise to the challenges of leadership. In other words, I now have to "walk the walk," and not just "talk the talk."

Finally, we can return to the word we first examined at the beginning of this column: AhCH-Rah-Yoot/Responsibility. By understanding the foundation of this Hebrew word we can truly feel the responsibility that is ours to assist one another, as well as ours to help our brothers and sisters. The answer is "Yes!" We are our brother's keeper.

A Message from UJF's Community Shlichah When You Leave Home to Visit Home

BY EDEN REFAELOVICH

When I arrived in August, no one really prepared me for that first feeling of leaving home to visit home. And only after it happens, do you realize how meaningful that phrase really is.

Six months have passed, and it feels like yesterday. In those months, I've done, learned, met new people, matured, and felt part of the most amazing community I've ever been a part of.

Then the day arrived, my flight to Israel, which I booked six months in advance. And suddenly it hits me, I'm not going on "vacation," I'm visiting home, but it feels strange because right now, this is home.

In February, I flew to Israel for my younger brother's Bar Mitzvah. I didn't know what to expect. For those of you familiar with Ben Gurion Airport, you know the two large hallways, one for those leaving Israel, and one for those arriving. I always heard Israelis heading abroad say to themselves, "The good side of the hallway." But as I passed through, I realized for the first time, I was on the right side, coming home.

The excitement was real when I saw my family again after six months, and I couldn't



Eden Refaelovich

wait to see my dog, Kai, who I'd missed so much.

Before my flight, of course, I made a list of all the places I love, foods I have to eat while I'm there, and everything I wanted to accomplish during my trip. And I'm proud to say, I managed to check off everything on the list!

There were also big events - my brother's Bar Mitzvah, the Torah reading, Shabbat at the synagogue, which was so special and meaningful.

But beyond the events, Israel always feels like home, even though after six months of speaking English, I found myself forgetting a word in Hebrew here and there.

The jet lag is a real thing, but I didn't let it ruin the experience for me. I was grateful for the visit. It gave me a chance to reset, return to normal, and focus on the work I love while thinking of new ways to connect with everyone and think about more ways to bring more of my Israel to the community.

Now that I'm back, I can already feel spring approaching. With it comes more holidays, events, and opportunities. I'm looking forward to it all and can't wait for my next visit!

Supporting Growing Families

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford)
Welcoming a new baby is a joyous milestone, but it also comes with sleepless nights and countless adjustments. To support growing families, while strengthening their connection to Israel, Chabad of Stamford has introduced two meaningful initiatives, one providing nourishment and encouragement to new moms and the other offering a financial investment in their babies' future.

The first initiative, "New Mom Breakfasts," was launched by Leah Shemtov, co-director of Chabad of Stamford, to give new moms a well-deserved treat. Each month, local mothers who have recently given birth receive a beautifully prepared breakfast package. The package includes a fresh smoothie, a yogurt parfait with fruit and granola, and a warm waffle, offering both nourishment and a moment of indulgence. This initiative is a small but powerful reminder to new moms that they are appreciated and supported by their community.

The second initiative takes this support a step further by investing in the next generation. Thanks to the generosity of Gan Yeladim grandparents Harry and Marilyn Soffer, each newborn in the community is gifted an Israel Bond in their name. For Harry and Marilyn, the motivation to do this for new



Chabad of Stamford volunteers Melissa Klein and Margarita Kunin deliver deluxe breakfasts for new moms.

babies in the community was "with a prayer that the blessing and beauty of Eretz Israel is bestowed on them eternally."

This initiative not only provides a meaningful financial start for the child but also serves as a gesture of solidarity with the Land of Israel, especially during these challenging times. By purchasing Israel Bonds, the community is strengthening its connection to the Jewish homeland while ensuring a lasting gift for its newest members.

Through these thoughtful programs,

Chabad of Stamford is investing in the future, nurturing new mothers and their babies while reinforcing the community's deep bond with Israel. As Stamford's Jewish population

continues to grow, initiatives like these ensure that the next generation is welcomed with care, generosity, and a strong sense of Jewish identity.

Budding Bakers

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Over 100 budding bakers gathered at Chabad of Stamford to mix, shape, and bake delicious hamantaschen in preparation for Purim.



Havdalah with PJ Library

(Courtesy of UJF) On Saturday evening, January 25, United Jewish Federation Deputy Director Eric Ross visited Temple Beth El for its “TeeBees Havdalah” program. Rabbi Michael Knopf taught the children how to close out Shabbat and then led a beautiful and participatory Havdalah service. Before dinner, the kids all gathered around for a PJ Library read-aloud with Eric.

UJF and PJ Library proudly send nearly 600 Jewish-themed books a month to Jewish children in Fairfield County, absolutely free. The Federation-funded program is designed to strengthen the bonds between parents and children through stories about Jewish traditions and values and to build their connection to the Jewish community.

Do you have Jewish children or grandchildren ages 6 months to 12 years, who would like to receive PJ Library books?

To sign up to receive an age-appropriate PJ Library book every month, please visit www.ujf.org/PJ-Library. For more information or to get involved locally, please contact UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross at Eric@ujf.org.



TBE's Rabbi Michael Knopf leads the Havdalah service.



Children enjoy a PJ Library read-aloud after Havdalah.

Coming Together To Mourn

(Courtesy of UJF) When news broke that the bodies of Shiri, Ariel, and Kfir Bibas and Oded Lifshitz would be returned to Israel, United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien jumped into action to help the community come together to share in the mourning process.

In just a matter of hours, 750 pairs of orange candles were created with the help of volunteers from UJF's Israel Committee and students from Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy. The candles were sent home with children from the Stamford JCC's Sara Walker Preschool, Chabad of Stamford's Gan Yeladim, and Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy. Dozens of community members stopped by UJF to pick up candles as well.

The candles were accompanied by a note that read:

UJF and the entire community mourns the tragic loss of Ariel and Kfir Bibas and Oded Lifshitz.

As the color orange has become a symbol



BCHA students pack pairs of orange candles to be distributed in the community.

for the Bibas family, please light these candles in memory of them and all those murdered.

May their memories forever be a blessing. Baruch Dayan Ha'Emet.

Justice Around the Globe

(Courtesy of BCHA) Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Upper School students Roberto Toraty, Adam Daniel and Yoav Hochman (BCHA '26) participated in Yeshiva University's Model United Nations Conference for high school students. This conference brought together teams from 45 Jewish schools from across the country to participate in a high-level competition, where students are tasked with working together to solve global issues. The conference took place from February 23 through 25, and the theme for this year's gathering was “Justice Around the Globe: Empowering the Next Generation to Make a Better World.”



BCHA students participate in model United Nations conference.

On-The-Job Leadership Training

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation Deputy Director Eric Ross is one of 24 Jewish Federation professionals from around the country who are currently participating in the second cohort of the Jewish Federations of North America's Executive Accelerator program. This is a highly selective year-long program designed to equip high-potential professional leaders in the Jewish Federation system with the resources, network, and coaching to competently and confidently grow toward their first or next executive role.

In early February, Eric traveled to Camp Perlstein in the suburbs of Baltimore for a three-day professional retreat, focused on building leadership presence and capacities. On the second evening, the participants enjoyed an informal dinner with Eric Fingerhut, the CEO and President of JFNA.



Eric Fingerhut, President & CEO of Jewish Federations of North America, with UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross.

Fingerhut spoke about how Jews carry an awesome responsibility to one another. He encouraged all of the participants to proudly say that they “work in service of the Jewish community, and today that happens to be through Federation.”

“We Are Singing Again”

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Chabad of Stamford's Annual Gala Dinner featured music and dancing and a celebration of the Jewish future.



UJF Dollars at Work

Beverly Stein began her term as United Jewish Federation President in January, 2025 and jumped right in by joining a Southern New England Consortium (SNEC) partnership mission to UJF's partnership region, Afula/Gilboa. (See *UJF President's column* on page 2.)



Seniors participate in the recorder class at Dorot BaGilboa, a local agency supported by the partnership, bringing meaningful socialization opportunities to older adults.



UJF President Beverly Stein spends time chatting with the teens at The Sandwich Club who make hundreds of sandwiches to feed those in need.



Children at the Beit Alfa Absorption Center play with puppets sent from Temple Sinai in Stamford as part of their Mitzvah Day.



Beverly Stein delivers Temple Sinai Mitzvah Puppets to the Beit Alfa Absorption Center.

Bridging Generations

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Bridging generations and celebrating Tu B'Shvat with a heartwarming intergenerational lunch at Chabad of Stamford featuring music and entertainment with the children of Gan Yeladim.



BCHA Caps Strong Basketball Season

(Courtesy of BCHA) What a way to say farewell to basketball season! In the final game of the winter season last week, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) Upper School boys brought home a solid 56-39 victory against (New England Jewish Academy) NEJA.

For the Upper School boys' team, this game was about more than just the score. It was about heart, hustle, and the love of the game. Both teams played with passion, showed excellent sportsmanship, and made it a night to remember. The perfect ending was a pizza party filled with celebration—wrapping up a season of growth, teamwork, and unforgettable moments on and off the court.

"The boys and girls basketball teams this winter were competitive, worked hard and improved throughout the season," said Coach Karen Cella, BCHA's Director of Athletics. "The BCHA basketball program was well represented; the coaches and the players always showed good sportsmanship, always gave a true team effort, and never gave up."

In the same week ending the season, the Lady Bobcats in grades 7 and 8 played

their final game. They played with fierce defense, unstoppable hustle, and great determination. "They gave it their all," said Coach Cella, "battling for every play and never backing down."

Finally, BCHA's 7th & 8th Grade boys' team also closed out the final home game of the season with a solid performance. These young men pushed themselves, showed determination, and displayed true sportsmanship.

The BCHA basketball program ended the season with an overall record of 20 wins; 20 losses; and 2 ties. Opponents included teams from the Fairchester Athletics Association (FAA) league: St. Luke's School, Greenwich Country Day, Ridgefield Academy, New Canaan Country School, Greens Farms Academy, The Harvey School, and the Masters School.

The BCHA community offers a heartfelt thank you to the coaches for their time and effort on and off the court; and to the parents for making a successful season happen this winter: their support at the games and volunteering added to the teams' success.

 **NEXTGen**

YOM HA'ATZMAUT

PRESENTING

**77 YEARS OF ISRAEL,
1 NIGHT OF CELEBRATION!**

**Join us for Israeli fare catered by L'chaim,
an open bar, and a live DJ spinning your
favorite Israeli tunes!**

Saturday, April 26 | 9pm | Serendipity Labs
700 Canal Street, Stamford

\$36 early bird / \$50 after April 16
Sponsorship: \$180 (includes 2 tickets)

Event chairs: **Jason Lewis, Micky Reich, Lee Soffer**
Committee: In formation

RSVP www.ujf.org/nextgenYH

For any questions, please contact Melanie Vorm at melanie@ujf.org



New Around Town

Erika Llanos, Schoke JFS Senior Development Manager

Erika Llanos joins Schoke Jewish Family Service as its Senior Development Manager, bringing over 18 years of experience in the non-profit sector. With 15 years at The Salvation Army, including leading The Missing Persons Bureau for the last four years, Erika has worked alongside individuals in need, to see them triumph over their circumstances with the right support and resources. Now focusing on her local community, Erika is committed to enhancing Schoke JFS's impact and creating a future where the community thrives.

"I am passionate about making a meaningful difference and building a stronger, more resilient community. My goal is to create lasting change that future generations can be proud of, inspiring them to reach even greater heights. Joining Schoke JFS allows me to be part of an organization that empowers individuals and drives community growth," Erika said.



Erika Llanos

Steve Schwartz, Schoke JFS Psychotherapist & Intake Coordinator

Steve Schwartz joins Schoke Jewish Family Service (JFS) as a Psychotherapist and Intake Coordinator. He initially came on board as an intern in November 2023, and from the beginning, he was inspired by the opportunity to work with Schoke JFS's diverse client base. After earning his degree, Steve was excited to transition into a full-time role, where he now works with couples, families, and individuals of all ages. A fan of outdoor activities, Steve often finds ways to incorporate these interests into his therapeutic practice.

"Being part of Schoke JFS is incredibly fulfilling," Steve shared. "I get to see firsthand how we're making a positive impact on people's lives, and I'm continually inspired by the dedication of my colleagues who make that possible every day."



Steve Schwartz

Aaron Gaberman, UJF Assistant Director of Marketing

Aaron Gaberman joined United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford, New Canaan and Darien as its new Assistant Director of Marketing at the end of February. Prior to joining UJF, Gaberman served as the Assistant Director of Strategic Communications for Penn State University Athletics for three years. During his time at Penn State, Gaberman handled all aspects of media relations and communication efforts for the Penn State men's lacrosse and women's ice hockey programs. Prior to Penn State, Gaberman was the Athletic Communication Coordinator at Sacred Heart University where he developed unique and creative social media content for various teams with a focus on improving engagement with fans, driving attendance, increasing revenue, and highlighting student-athletes while connecting them to the community.

He has been a marketing and communications professional for over eight years and has a background in working with non-profit organizations as well. He received his undergraduate degree from Marist College in 2017 and a master's degree in athletic communications and media from Sacred Heart University in 2020. Aaron is excited to join UJF's team and is thrilled to be able to give back to the Jewish community.



Aaron Gaberman

Lielle Sugar, Schoke JFS Psychotherapist & Clinical Administrator

Lielle Sugar, J.D., L.M.S.W., joins Schoke Jewish Family Service (JFS) as a Psychotherapist and Clinical Administrator. She is deeply committed to serving the Jewish community, where she finds great fulfillment in using her skills to support its members. After graduating from Brooklyn Law School, Lielle's own family-building journey revealed gaps in support for individuals and families facing similar challenges, prompting her to pursue a Master of Social Work (MSW) at Boston University. Throughout her studies, she explored various avenues for building a career centered on community well-being. She holds an LMSW in Connecticut.

"I'm proud to be a new member of the Schoke JFS team and a mom of two young kids in the Stamford community. Before moving here, I was drawn to Stamford's warm, welcoming spirit, and since arriving, I've seen firsthand how active and supportive its members are. Schoke JFS embodies that spirit, turning it into action to help not only the Jewish community but also our neighbors. I'm excited to be part of a team that does such meaningful work," shared Lielle.



Lielle Sugar

Jo Anne Lewis, Schoke JFS Case Manager for Home Companion Program



Jo Anne Lewis

Jo Anne Lewis joins Schoke Jewish Family Service as a Case Manager for the Home Companion Program. With over 20 years of experience in health and human services, she brings a wealth of knowledge, passion, and commitment to her role. Jo Anne holds a Bachelor of Science in Human Services/Management. She started her career in the nonprofit sector, where she managed caseloads in the Childcare Subsidy Program and later oversaw the appeals department. She also

gained significant experience working with children with developmental and behavioral disabilities, implementing treatment plans, and supporting families in achieving their goals. Over the past seven and a half years, Jo Anne has worked closely with NICU families, conducting needs assessments, connecting them with resources, and providing critical support during challenging times. Now, as a Case Manager in the Home Companion Program at Schoke JFS, she looks forward to

continuing her work with diverse populations while expanding her expertise in supporting seniors and individuals with disabilities.

"I'm passionate about helping people and making a difference in their lives. Inspired by Martin Luther King Jr.'s question, 'What are you doing for others?', I'm committed to creating positive outcomes and having a lasting impact on individuals and families," said Jo Anne.

Chabad of Stamford Teens Join Global CTeen Shabbaton

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) This February, a group of teens from Stamford joined over 4,000 peers from around the world for a transformative weekend filled with unity, inspiration, and an electrifying display of Jewish pride at Chabad's Annual CTeen International Shabbaton in New York.

At registration, in addition to picking up swag bags and the iconic CTeen hoodies, the teens filled out personal *mitzvah* commitments, pledging acts of kindness in the merit of safety and protection for their brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. The teens then went on a deeply moving visit to the Ohel, the resting place of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, z"l, where Stamford's teens joined thousands in praying and seeking blessings.

The Shabbaton offered an opportunity to connect with Jewish peers from around the world while exploring New York City. The action-packed weekend featured a dynamic lineup of activities, including a DJ-hosted dinner, a meeting with influencer Ellie Zeiter, music, swag, a bus tour of Manhattan, and a pre-Shabbat concert that set the tone for an uplifting experience. Shabbat itself was deeply meaningful, with an inspiring

Farbrengen (Chassidic gathering), engaging workshops, and powerful discussions with mentors and rabbis.

Throughout the weekend, the teens participated in game rooms, inspiring talks, and late-night conversations that fostered deep connections and camaraderie. Spontaneous singing and dancing in dozens of languages added to the vibrant atmosphere, making the experience even more memorable.

The highlight of Saturday night was the annual "Times Square Takeover," where the teens illuminated the heart of New York City with Jewish pride. With music from Noam Buskila, an IDF paratrooper who served in Lebanon for 250 days post-October 7, dancing, and prayer, the iconic square transformed into a powerful hub of unity and celebration. Chabad-sponsored billboards flashed messages of faith, resilience, and joy, further amplifying the moment's significance.

The closing ceremony featured inspirational stories from teens worldwide, reaffirming their commitment to their Jewish identity.

This year's theme, "Shine On," encouraged



Chabad of Stamford's CTeen members at the CTeen International Shabbaton in NYC.

teens to return home and shine their light within the Jewish world. Whether through lighting Shabbat candles, putting on *tefillin*, or performing acts of kindness, each teen left inspired to be a leader and an ambassador of light, ready to uplift their communities with newfound strength and Jewish pride. Stamford's teens described this Shabbaton as uniquely inclusive, inspiring, and

incredibly fun—an experience that will stay with them for a lifetime.

CTeen continues to provide impactful programs for Jewish teens of all backgrounds, fostering purpose, self-discovery, and community engagement. To learn more about CTeen in Stamford and how to be part of this movement, please contact programs@stamfordchabad.org.

AN INTERFAITH SEDER UNITING OUR COMMUNITY

Hosted by: United Jewish Federation, UCONN Hillel, the Interfaith Council of Southwestern CT, and the Mayor's Multicultural Council

Led by: Rabbi Michael Knopf and Reverend Mark Lingle



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 6:30 PM
RSVP BY: MARCH 29

UConn STAMFORD
1 University Pl, Stamford, CT 06901

General Admission: \$18
Students: \$10

PRIOR REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

Using a specially designed Haggadah (the traditional Passover narrative), the themes of the Seder will include unity and common ground among varied cultures, backgrounds, and faiths.



As One

Dear UJF Community,

Wishing you and your families a Passover filled with many blessings and joy as we reflect on the timeless lessons of the Passover story of freedom, hope, and unity.

The Board and Staff of United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien

Beverly Stein
President

Diane Sloyer
Chief Executive Officer

Make a difference this Passover, your gift will help ensure a brighter future for generations to come.
Visit www.ujf.org/give to make your gift today.



UJF Community Yom HaShoah Commemoration

Wednesday, April 23, 7:00 pm

Temple Sinai
458 Lakeside Drive, Stamford, CT

All are invited to join this year's community Yom HaShoah Commemoration which features Auschwitz survivor, Ernest Nemeth who will be speaking as well as award-winning author Karen Blankfield

Register
www.ujf.org/YomHaShoah25



JScouts Raise Funds for Israel



Chabad of Stamford's JScouts take part in a bootcamp-style exercise.

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford)
Stamford's young *mitzvah* troops are back in action! This month, Chabad of Stamford's JScouts Mitzvah Club embarked on a heartfelt mission: caring for Israel.

The evening kicked off with an Israeli-style dinner, followed by a dynamic bootcamp-style warm-up designed to strengthen teamwork and communication skills. Energized and ready for action, the troops then headed to an artisan popcorn factory, where they crafted delicious treats to sell as part of a fundraiser for Israel.

In a meaningful exercise in philanthropy, the JScouts explored various charitable

organizations in Israel and cast their votes for the cause they felt most passionate about. Now, all eyes are on the next meeting, where the young entrepreneurs will tally their earnings and see the impact of their hard work.

With their dedication and enthusiasm, these Stamford kids are proving that even the smallest hands can make a big difference. Chabad of Stamford couldn't be prouder of their efforts in turning popcorn into a powerful act of *tzedakah*! To find out more about JScouts Mitzvah Club open to all boys and girls in Grades 3 through 7, please contact programs@stamfordchabad.org.

Mazal Tov to BCHA's Bracha Bee Champions!

(Courtesy of BCHA) After learning a unit about saying blessings (*brachot*) over food, the first grade students at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy of Connecticut held a Bracha Bee. The students were asked about different kinds of foods and they had to name the *bracha* that is said over it. Charlotte S. and Talia G. were the winners of this year's Bracha Bee. The students discovered the diverse blessings and food categories within Jewish traditions.



LIFE & LEGACY

Life & Legacy Testimonial

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

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

MONICA SMYTH TESTIMONIAL

I was not raised in the Jewish community but married into it 40 years ago. Together with my husband, Michael Schlessinger, we raised four children in the Jewish faith. We had a lot of help. First, there was family. We met every Sunday afternoon with the greater Schlessinger brood on the south side of Chicago at Alice and Nathan's. We ate bagels and lox from Kaufman's Deli and played with cousins and celebrated birthdays and argued about politics.

In addition to family, the broader Jewish community has shaped our family in innumerable ways over the years. Beth Emet, Am Shalom, Beth Ahabah, JCC Richmond, Temple Sinai, JCC Stamford, and UJF. At all these places we found belonging and opportunities to learn, while absorbing Jewish values and performing mitzvot. As the world seems more in turmoil than ever, what better investment could we make in



Michael Schlessinger and Monica Smyth

our children and their children than to help endow the future of the institutions that supported us, through Life & Legacy.

Warm Winter Smiles

(Courtesy of UJF) This winter, UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross visited with Zoe Sheinberg, who recently moved to Stamford, and told her all about the amazing community over a cup of coffee. Eric also brought Shalom Baby bags to new parents Suri and Jason Fischman and their daughter Lielle, and to Dr. Shira Burstein and Zinovy Pravin and their new son Remi.

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.



Shira Burstein shows off her Shalom Baby bag and little Remi's hairdo.



Zoe Sheinberg with UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross.



Jason Fischman receives a Shalom Baby bag.



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Jewish community, wherever you are.

An Evening of Insight: Ask, Learn, and Connect with Israel

Join us for an intimate gathering at a private home, where you'll have the rare opportunity to engage with those who've experienced Israel's security and defense challenges firsthand. Enjoy open dialogue and ask questions on topics that matter, all in a relaxed setting.

Thursday, May 1st • 7.30pm • Private Home in Stamford
Free of charge, registration required.
www.ujf.org/connectisrael

For more info, contact Melanie Vorm at melanie@ujf.org



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, or Diane Sloyer at (203) 321-1373 or dianesloyer@ujf.org.

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29 Anonymous
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**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.*

Artificial Breastmilk Could Form Basis for Future Oral Meds and Vaccines

Israelis develop 'milkosomes,' artificial particles based on human milk that can deliver drugs across the intestinal barrier to the bloodstream.

BY JOHN JEFFAY/ISRAEL21C

Researchers in Israel are a step closer to replacing injections with swallowable medicines and vaccines.

They've done so by developing artificial particles that mimic the properties of human breastmilk.

The problem they're solving is that the body prevents anything it suspects of being potentially harmful — such as insulin for diabetes and a range of vaccines — from passing out of the intestine into the bloodstream.

But a team at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa realized that breastmilk does cross the baby's intestinal barrier — the large protective layer of mucus and epithelial cells that allows essential nutrients to enter the bloodstream while blocking suspected toxins.

"If compounds in breastmilk can cross this barrier, it means breastmilk contains 'keys' that enable them to do so," said Si Naftaly, a PhD candidate who jointly led the study.

The team's challenge was to identify and recreate those keys so that medicine and vaccines could also cross the barrier.

They discovered that certain proteins

in human breastmilk form a coating — or a corona — around nanoparticles, which "unlock" the intestinal barrier. Cows' milk and infant formula can cross the barrier to some extent, but human breastmilk does it best, they concluded.

They describe this effect as the Human Breast Milk Protein Corona.

Milkosomes

Researchers at the Technion's Wolfson Faculty of Chemical Engineering launched a local appeal for breastmilk because most donations, post October 7, were being allocated to newborns orphaned in the Hamas massacre.

From these donations, they developed "milkosomes" — artificial particles that are based on human milk and mimic exosomes, the nanoparticles responsible for infant development and immune system support.

These milkosomes are able to cross the intestinal barrier.

"Breastmilk is a remarkable biofluid," said Assistant Prof. Assaf Zinger, who co-lead the study.

"It contains a wide range of essential compounds. To impact the baby's health, these compounds must pass from the digestive system into the bloodstream by

crossing the intestinal barrier."

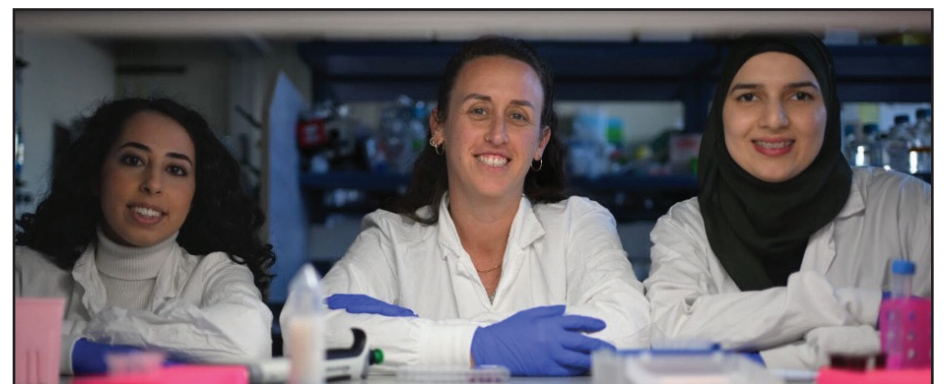
The hope is that in the future, milkosomes will be able to deliver medicines and vaccines through the gastrointestinal tract, instead of injections.

The advantage would be that oral medication is generally cheaper and more convenient than a jab . . . and less troubling for anyone squeamish about needles.

The study, "Harnessing the Potential of Human Breast Milk to Boost Intestinal Permeability for Nanoparticles and Macromolecules," has been published in the Journal of Controlled Release.



Dr. Assaf Zinger of the Technion. Photo by Sharon Gabay/Israel Cancer Research Fund



From left, Topaz Pery, Si Naftaly and Kiros Rawan Mhajne helped develop "milkosomes" that cross the intestinal barrier. Photo by Rami Shlush/Technion Spokesperson's Office

Israeli Cardiac Mission Saves Children's Lives in Zambia

Save a Child's Heart orchestrated open-heart surgeries and catheterizations on dozens of gravely ill children over the course of four days.

BY YULIA KARRA/ISRAEL21C

Save a Child's Heart (SACH), an Israeli humanitarian organization providing free cardiac healthcare to children in countries where such care is limited or nonexistent, recently treated 25 children suffering from congenital heart defects in Zambia.

The mission, conducted in the Zambian capital of Lusaka, brought together an international team of medical professionals from Israel's Wolfson Medical Center (WMC, where SACH is based), Tanzania's Jakaya Kikwete Cardiac Institute (JKCI) and Zambia's National Heart Hospital (NHH).

The team included cardiologists, surgeons, anesthesiologists, ICU specialists, technicians and nurses. Over the course of four days, the medical professionals performed dozens of open-heart surgeries at NHH.

Additionally, the team performed catheterizations, advanced procedures that allow for the repair of heart defects

in children without the need for open-heart surgery.

SACH will donate essential medical supplies and a portable echocardiography machine, utilized in both the operating room and catheterization lab, to help local teams build on the success of the mission.

Working closely with Zambia's Health Ministry since 2017, SACH has treated more than 100 Zambian children and trained local medical professionals in advanced cardiac care in Israel.

The latest mission was led by Tanzania's Dr. Godwin Godfrey Sharau, and Zambia's Dr. Mudaniso Kumani Ziwa, both of whom trained in Israel under the mentorship of WMC Director of Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Dr. Lior Sasson.

"The specialized training they received at Wolfson Medical Center has empowered them to perform complex heart surgeries and train others, creating a ripple effect that extends far beyond Israel," Sasson said.

"Witnessing the successful collaboration

of these skilled professionals, who were once our trainees, fills me with pride and hope for the future of children with heart disease around the world."

Ziwa added: "Thanks to the training and resources provided by Save a Child's Heart,

we are now equipped to deliver world-class care to children in Zambia. This mission signifies the start of a brighter future for countless families and the continued growth of our center of excellence toward achieving global standards."



Israel's Dr. Lior Sasson, left, with Zambia's Dr. Mudaniso Kumani Ziwa and Tanzania's Dr. Godwin Godfrey. (Photo courtesy of Save a Child's Heart)

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- Visit Beit Shalom and Etz Haim Synagogues.
- Discover Chalkida, one of Europe's oldest Jewish settlements.
- Marvel at Meteora's dramatic rock formations and historic monasteries.
- Tour Thessaloniki's key landmarks, including the White Tower and Rotunda.
- Reflect at the old railway station, a site of Holocaust deportations.
- Engage with a Ladino specialist on Sephardic language and culture.
- Celebrate Shabbat at Yad Lezikaron Synagogue with the local community.
- Gain insights on modern Greece from a local journalist.
- Visit Mount Olympus, legendary home of the Greek gods.
- Explore Ioannina's Jewish quarter and Romaniote heritage.
- Wander through the historic streets of Delphi, ancient center of prophecy.
- And much more...

Informational Meeting, April 3, 7:30 pm, via zoom.

Email Lara@ujf.org to receive zoom link.



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