



Executive Director’s Letter

Dear Friends,

Ed Koch, the former mayor of New York City who recently passed away, was known to ask, “How am I doing?” as he walked the streets talking with his constituents. I write today to ask you a similar question about the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids.

As you may recall from prior columns in *The Shofar*, our Federation board has recently completed a strategic planning process and is currently implementing our plans. The mission we adopted during this process is to “unite[s] our local community [in order] to sustain and strengthen Jews locally, in Israel, and around the world.” This mission statement is also included below and in every month’s *The Shofar*.

To implement our plan, our board has created a number of committees that are reviewing JFGR’s programming, social services, fundraising and allocation efforts. These activities range from our solicitation efforts in the community to funding local and international organizations; from providing emergency grants and loans and the coordination of social service resources to offering a menu of cultural and social events. These committees are also looking into a number of proposals to better serve and engage our community, and I expect we’ll be making announcements about some of these initiatives over the next few months.

It is also important to state the obvious: resources are limited in small Jewish communities such as in Grand Rapids. Therefore, an important part of our work is to review and evaluate our programs and services to see how to maximize the use of our resources. And, while we reach out to the leaders of our congregations and other community organizations to discuss these decisions, we also want your help – our community – in determining the best way forward.

This is where Mayor Koch’s question is relevant. *How do you think Federation is doing?* What JFGR programs and services work well? What should we be doing to get better? What should we stop doing?

As our current campaign concludes early this spring, the Federation board and staff believe this is an opportune time to have a conversation with you when we are not soliciting donations. As a first step in opening up a dialogue between our community and

Continued on page 2



Our Mission

Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids unites the local Jewish community to sustain and strengthen Jews locally, in Israel, and around the world.

This mission is accomplished by providing services to the community and through fundraising and allocation efforts.

**Like Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids
on Facebook!**

Inside this issue:

Federation News	1-2
Senior News	4-5
Community News	3,8-9
Film Festival	6-7
United Jewish School	9
Congregational	10
Endowment	11

Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids
2727 Michigan NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
616.942.5553
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www.jfgr.org

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Campaign Update



390 Pledges
\$394,412

Your donation to JFGR is
100% tax deductible.
Payments can be made by
cash, check, credit card or
stock.

Pay in full or set up
installments. You can also
pay online at
www.jewishgrandrapids.org

**Note: any new gift or increase is
matched dollar for dollar by a
challenge grant**

Continued from page 1

Federation, I'd like to invite each of you to let me know your opinion, thoughts and suggestions on how we're doing and what we can do to improve. Please feel free to contact me by phone or email, or stop by our office at your convenience.

Grand Rapids offers options for Jewish life and support for Jews in need far beyond what our size would suggest. In addition to our wonderful congregations, we have a strong United Jewish School, great cultural events such as the Jewish Film Festival, and vital social service programs. Gifts to our Jewish Federation provide funding to these projects--as well as many others here in Grand Rapids, in Israel, and everywhere in the world--to sustain and strengthen our Jewish family. Our small community is able to do these things only because of the broad and generous support we receive from our members right here in Grand Rapids. Thank you for your contribution to Jewish life in Grand Rapids and the well-being of our Jewish family everywhere.

With warmest regards,

Mike
mike@jfgr.org
(616) 942-5553



Please cut out this pledge card, fill it in and send it to the Federation office.

I HEREBY PLEDGE TO THE FEDERATION
ANNUAL CAMPAIGN THE SUM OF: \$ _____

DONOR'S SIGNATURE

Method of Payment: Check Stock

Please Charge my: Mastercard Visa
 Discover American Express

Card Number
Exp. Date: _____

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN



Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids
2727 Michigan NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
(616) 942-5553
www.jfgr.org

Live Generously.

Name _____

Address _____

Please consider a 10% increase

The Jewish Cultural Council presents

ROYCE DEANS & TALI FARCHI

A unique Music & Painting experience



Sunday, April 14 – 12:30 PM

Temple Emanuel

Enjoy a wonderful and exciting afternoon experience full of music and artistic inspiration and be ready to buy the final product. (Two of the paintings will be available for purchase during the event).

Artistic duo Royce Deans of Traverse City, Michigan and Tali Farchi, an Israeli artist residing in The Netherlands, will delight us with their abstract paintings inspired by Jewish and Israeli music performed by live musicians. Tali and Royce have performed their painting to music shows and workshops all over the world including Europe, South Africa, Israel, USA, and Canada.

They appeared in ArtPrize 2011 with their entry *ArtPrize Jukebox*, and were part of ArtPrize 2012 with their entry *The Looking Box*. This is a unique opportunity to see the artistic creation process in action, and also to purchase a truly unique work of art!

This program is free of charge

For additional information contact the federation office 616-942-5553 or sari@jfgc.org

Want to have lunch and enjoy the show?

Have lunch during the show at the

UJS Israeli Mis'ada

Menu: Hummus Appetizer \$ 5, Falafel & Salad \$ 8, Kids meal \$ 5, Dessert \$ 2

Reservations are required. Contact Pam at 616-633-5692 or pam@templemanuel.org

Seniors

TAX TIPS FROM THE LEGAL HOTLINE!

The Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors answers questions relating to various taxes at no charge to Michigan residents age 60 and over. Their lawyers are not specialists in tax matters and so they are unable to answer complicated questions. But as we all know, taxes impact our lives in many ways and raise many issues and questions. Hotline lawyers try to answer these questions when possible. If you have questions about taxes, or any other legal issues, by all means call the Hotline at (800) 347-5297. Their services are free, however donations are gratefully accepted. And, they're tax deductible!

Filing Requirements

If your 2012 annual gross income is at or over the following amounts you must file a tax return.

Single: under age 65, \$ 9,750 /age 65 or older, \$ 11,200

Married filing jointly: both spouses under 65, \$19,500/ one spouse 65 or older, \$20,650/ both spouses 65 or older, \$ 21,800

For filing purposes, gross income does not include Social Security benefits unless you are married filing separately.

Tax Help

Free tax assistance is available for low income taxpayers and seniors. A good place to find out where and when this help is available is to contact your local Area Agency on Aging. AARP offers free tax assistance to low and middle income taxpayers with special attention to those 60 and over, through their nationwide Tax-Aide programs. You can find out dates, times and locations for this assistance by calling (888) 227-7669. Some sites offer bilingual help. In most situations it is necessary to visit a site, however when needed, arrangements can be made to assist shut-ins, the homebound and people with disabilities, to provide counseling at special sites, such as hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, etc. If your return is relatively complex you will be advised to seek professional tax assistance.

If an AARP or Accounting Aid Society site is not available in your area, you can contact the IRS directly at (800) 829-1040 for information about its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program, called VITA. Or, you can call VITA at (800) 906-9887 to find a site near you. To qualify, your annual income generally must be below \$49,000. Tax Counseling for the Elderly, or TCE, is an IRS program to provide

Lunch Bunch

Thursday

March 21

11:30 AM

Heritage Restaurant

151 Fountain St NE/ GRCC

RSVP by March 19

to Ann at 616-942-5553

Transportation is available by calling Ann



SAVE THESE DATES!

Lunch Bunch Dates

April 18, 2013 - Location TBD

May 9, 2013 - Location TBD

Free tax assistance to individuals 60 and over.

Finally, most Community Action Agencies have programs for free tax preparation. Telephone numbers for local agencies are listed in local phone books.

The IRS announced in late 2009 that it would require all tax preparers to be registered by the 2011 filing season. Eventually, training will be required and tax preparers will be held to higher standards of ethical conduct as the IRS steps up its oversight to help reduce fraud and errors. You should avoid any tax preparer who promises larger refunds or who charges fees based on the size of the refund.

The Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors can answer questions you may have concerning a variety of legal issues. You can call (800) 347-5297 Monday through Thursday, between 9-3, to set an appointment to have a lawyer call you, usually the next day. All services are free of charge to callers; tax deductible donations are gratefully accepted.

The information in this article is general and not intended to be a substitute for tax or legal advice. In any legal matter you should always consider consulting with an attorney for specific advice.

Special thanks to Legal Hotline volunteer attorney Jadranko Tomic-Bobas for researching all of the changes to the state and federal tax codes that are now in effect for tax year 2012.

TEN SCAMS SENIORS SHOULD BE AWARE OF!

Courtesy of Elder Law, Disability Rights section of the Michigan Bar Association

All too often seniors are the targets of financial abuse. Being aware of some of the common tactics can help senior citizens avoid such scams, which include:

1. **“Help me, Grandma”.** These are calls or emails from a young person who claims to be your grandchild and may have information to make you think that is true. Usually they are in some kind of predicament that involves wiring money immediately –**but** they want to keep their problem a secret from their parents. Ask a few questions only your real grandchild will know, such as the name of your pet or grandpa’s favorite chair.
2. **The “free” seminar lunch.** These lunches are a way of persuading you to buy investments that may not be in your best interest.
3. **The follow-up visit to your home by the seminar presenter.** At these visits, you may be pressured to provide personal financial information so that the salesperson can evaluate how much of their product they can persuade you to buy. Always meet with people selling financial products in their offices, with a trusted friend or family member.
4. **E-mails from the IRS or from someone claiming you have won money.** The IRS never communicates with taxpayers by e-mail, and legitimate sweepstakes don’t ask you to wire cash for taxes or fees.
5. **Affiliate fraud.** This is outreach from an organization whose name sounds like you are connected to it, whether by religious affiliation, ethnicity, or veteran status. Check with your own religious leader or a recognized veterans’ group to find out if these are bogus or real.
6. **“Free trips” and “travel club” cards.** These attractive sounding offers are almost always ways to get you to attend sales presentations with high pressure offers. Most of the “club” memberships are more expensive than they sound and some go out of business - conveniently- after they have collected fees.
7. **Unlicensed individuals, such as life insurance agencies, selling securities.** To confirm that salesperson is registered, call the Office of Financial and Insurance Regulation (OFIR) at 1-877-999-6442.
8. **Ponzi or pyramid schemes, where new investor’s money is used to pay previous investor.** One type of these is cash gifting schemes that claim to “guarantee” a big payoff. Any time something sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
9. **“Callable” CD’s.** These are higher yielding certificates of deposit that do not mature for 10 to 20 years unless the bank redeems them. Unfortunately, if you redeem them, there can be losses of as much as 25% of the money you invested. Sellers of callable CD’s often don’t adequately inform customers of these risks.
10. **Financial advice you haven’t asked for, especially from someone you don’t know.** They may sound “nice”, but never give in to pressure to make an immediate decision – even if you are told you will lose money if you don’t get in right away. You can check out whether a broker or financial planner is in good standing with the State of Michigan by calling OFIR – again 1-877-999-6442

Film Festival



PLEASE PLAN TO ARRIVE EARLY. That means even if you are holding a flex pass ticket, seats are not guaranteed later than thirty minutes prior to movie time. **Flex pass tickets are only available until May 5th.**

The Film Festival also offers members of the community an opportunity to become an individual sponsor of the Jewish Film Festival. Please read about the benefits of becoming a financial supporter below.

Individual Sponsors Get Great Benefits!

Director: (\$500.00) receive two flex passes (16 admissions), recognition in all publications, and four admissions to all private receptions, dinners and events.

Producers: (\$250) receive two flex passes (16 admissions), recognition in all publications and two admissions to all private receptions, dinners, and events.

Actor: (\$100.00) receive one season punch card (8 admissions) and recognition in the program booklet.

Film Fan: If you would like to financially support the Jewish Film Festival and do not see an amount that interests you, please feel free to send a contribution in any amount to the Federation office. You will be listed in the program booklet.

The 2013 Jewish Film Festival is once again bringing special movies to the Grand Rapids community. The committee has been previewing movies and planning special programs. As in previous years, the Film Festival will be held at Celebration! North Cinemas. Watch for more details about the festival events in our community mailings.

The Film Festival is offering special rates through a **flex pass** (eight admissions): the flex pass is **\$36.00**. Flex pass ticket holders will have seats reserved until **THIRTY MINUTES** prior to the movie beginning. At that time, tickets will be sold for all seats.

I would like to be a Film Festival Sponsor



NAME: _____ **PHONE:** _____

_____ **Film Festival Director (\$500.00)**

_____ **Film Festival Producer (\$250.00)**

_____ **Film Festival Actor (\$100)**

_____ **Film Festival Fan**

_____ **Flex Pass (\$36.00)**

Mail this form and your check to:
Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids
2727 Michigan NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Community

SHALOM GRAND RAPIDS !!

A new program of the Jewish Federation

*** Would you like to become an ambassador to welcome people who are new to the Jewish community, or not currently involved?**

*** If you know about somebody new to the Grand Rapids community, please let us know. "Shalom Grand Rapids" would like to welcome them.**

To sign up or receive additional information about the program, contact Sari at the Federation office

616-942-5553 or Sari@jfgr.org

WELCOME



Thanks to the coordinating efforts of Toby Dolinka, Mort Hoffman and Ed Miller, you can check out Forest Hills Foods for a selection of Passover foods

Remember Passover starts
March 25 / Nissan 14

Hadassah Book Club



March 13, 2013
Once We Were Brothers
by Robert Balson

Host: Flory Silverstein
2930 Bonnell SE
616-949-5766

Looking forward to a good winter read.

*Books available at
SCHULERS BOOKS, 28th ST*

As always,
your faithful bookends,
Sue Remes 616-949-3505
Flory Silverstein 616-949-5766

Jewish Women's Professional Network



March 6, 2013 at 12:00 PM
Olives

2162 Wealthy St. EGR

We meet monthly for networking, to share professional challenges and successes, exchange ideas, provide support, and give advice on how to better succeed in our work. All women are invited—whether working outside the home, thinking of returning to the workforce, in career transition, or a community volunteer. For more information, please email marnivyn@yahoo.com or phone 616-774-8644.

Jewish Community Business Forum

A networking opportunity to discuss business principles and to stay aware of resources available within our community



March 21, 2013
12 PM - 1 PM

El Barrio
545 Michigan Street NE
Everyone Welcome!



At Habonim Dror Camp Tavor, children ages 9-16 experience a one-of-a-kind Jewish Youth community. Camp Tavor programming allows campers to build strong relationships while learning about leadership, social justice and stewarding the environment.



Taste of Tavor
Grand Rapids Community Session
August 1-5, 2013
Grades 2-5
\$595

This is an opportunity for first-time campers to have a wonderful short-term Jewish camp experience. Campers will swim and boat in our beautiful beach, help out in our organic farm, create beautiful arts and crafts projects participate in meaningful Jewish cultural activities, meet Jewish kids from all over the Midwest and more!

Please call for more information about any of our camp sessions



Brittany Abramowicz
Outreach Manager
(224)-619-5969
registrar@campfavor.org
www.campfavor.org

Campers who attend the August Taste of Tavor Session will get to experience Camp Tavor's meaningful Shabbat celebration. One-Way transportation available home from camp to Grand Rapids is included.

United Jewish School



Beit Sefer B'yahad/United Jewish School
1715 East Fulton, Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Pam Rush, School Director 616-459-5976
pam@templemanuelgr.org
www.unitedjewishschool.org

Calendar

- 3-10-13 Matzah Factory
- 3-20-13 UJS Model Passover seder Ahavas Israel 4:30pm
- 3-20-13 UJS Board Meeting 7pm Ahavas Israel
- 3-27-13 No school 2nd day Passover
- 4-3-13 No school Spring Break

School closings: Please tune in to WZZM 13 and WOOD TV 8 for UJS closings. It will be listed as United Jewish School. You may also check their websites.

UJS would like to welcome Jason, Meredith and Logan Rothouse to the community. They moved here from Georgia. Logan is in Gan Katan.

School News

10th grade continues to visit different religious services in town to enhance their world religions curriculum.

9th grade is gearing up for the annual New York trip which will be April 25 to April 28.

8th grade welcomes a new teacher, Doug de Lange. Doug is a member of Ahavas and will be teaching with Andrew Harter for the second semester of class.

7th grade continues to practice different Jewish music in preparation for their end of year presentation to the school.

Coming Soon!!!!

**ISRAELI
MIS'ADA
(RESTAURANT)**

UJS Fundraiser

Sunday

April 14 12:30 PM



Plant Your Roots in Israel with Trees for Tu B'shevat! On Tu B'shevat we celebrated the New Year for trees. We ate wonderful fruits and we prayed for a fruitful year. You can still join students all over the world by planting a tree in Israel through Jewish National Fund. Tzedakah monies at UJS will be sent to Israel to plant trees. www.jnf.org

Congregational

Congregation Ahavas Israel

Doing Passover - The Preparation and The Experience

Wednesday, March 6, 7:00 PM "Doing Passover: The Experience"

Please join us for a learning session on the Seder - leading a Seder, what to include, what may be left out, how to enhance the Seder and engage your guests.

Sanctuary Shabbat Speakers in March

March 2 - Barb Christiaans and Pat Hall, Interfaith Quilting project.

March 23 - **Special Opportunity.** Representative from LiNK (Liberty in North Korea), a non-profit organization that works to rescue and resettle North Korean refugees who have escaped into China. "Redefining North Korea by focusing on the people while rescuing and providing resettlement support to North Korean refugees and pursuing an end to the North Korean crisis."

Temple Emanuel

Busy Month!!!

March 1 New Member Shabbat Service at 6:15 followed by a Welcome Seder dinner No charge, but Reservations are required.

March 3 Book Reading by Patti Moed, author of *The Incident at Montebello*, followed by an Italian Luncheon at 11 AM

March 7 6:00 PM Pizza and Board Games at TE in the Social Hall

March 8 Third Grade Students participate in Shabbat Service at 6:15 PM

March 10 and 24 Adult Education Cooking Class at TE Kitchen 10 AM

March 10 CPR Education Class 12:30 at TE Social Hall

March 20 Food Bank Distribution Day contact TE at 616-459-5976 for more information

March 24 Arthur Meyers Lecture at TE Sanctuary

March 26 Second Night Seder at TE

Chabad House

The Jewish Women's Circle presents

Loaves of Love

Join us for some challah baking fun! Learn the tricks of the trade of challah braiding.

Bake one challah to take home and one for a senior in the Jewish community.

Come and discover the beauty of this tradition.

Thursday, March 7 at the home of Sara Weingarten

2615 Michigan

\$5 cover charge

For more info or to RSVP contact Nechamy at 616-828-2340 or Nechamy8@gmail.com

Gan Israel Day Camp!

Dates: June 17, 2012 - July 5, 2012

Ages 3 -13

To register or for more info please call Chana @616-570-1742 or email me at WeingartenChana@gmail.com

A Jewish summer experience of a lifetime!

Chabad Kids Club

Tuesday March 12 - *Passover Pottery*

Come learn about Passover and make your own seder plate.

4 pm - 6 pm | \$10 per session (includes a light dinner)

For more information or to register call Chana at 616-570-1742

Congregation B'nai Israel - Muskegon

Save the Date

April 28 & 29 (in Muskegon)

Martha Cohn is a 92 year-old Holocaust survivor authored a book with Wende Holden in 2002: *Behind Enemy Lines: the True Story of a French Jewish Spy in Nazi Germany*. "The book details how Cohn, a nurse fluent in German, travelled into German territory and collected intelligence information for the French Army".



If you would like to receive this monthly newsletter via email, in color, before the mailed paper version, please email us your request to info@jfgr.org. If you would like to receive a printed paper copy in the mail instead, or in addition, we are happy to do that. Please let us know at 616-942-5553 or info@jfgr.org.



Now Arriving

The 2013-2014 Jewish Community Roster

Available (for \$9 each) at

Ahavas Israel or Temple Emanuel
or call

Lanny Thodey: 956-6161

Eileen Enoch: 949-6444

Endowment

Life cycle times, both happy and sad, are traditional times to make donations to Jewish causes. You can make a donation of \$5 or more to the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids in honor or in memory of members of our community. We then will acknowledge that donation with a card to that individual or family. This is a wonderful way to send your good wishes and be able to fulfill the mitzvah of tzedakah.

Please be sure to indicate what the occasion is and who is to receive the card. Please specify which of the following funds you would like your donation to be credited to:

Woman of Valor Fund (\$10 minimum contribution). To honor the women in our lives who have made a difference personally, locally or nationally.

Federation General Endowment/L'Dor Vador Fund. To help ensure the continued work of the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids for now and the future.

Julian and Judith Joseph Fund. To provide for local programming and events through the Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids.

David and Susan Samrick Youth Scholarship Fund. To provide scholarships to Jewish sleep away camps and experiences.

Chuck and Maxine Shapiro Fund. To help ensure long-term aid to Israel and Jews around the world.

Louis and Louise Weiner Fund. To help ensure local programming for seniors in the Grand Rapids Jewish Community.

Jerry and Judy Subar Fund. To help ensure funding for overseas Jewish communities' needs.

Leven Family Fund. To establish and provide Jewish facilities, and support for cooperative programming among the congregations that support Jewish education for our youth.

Sam and Jane Kravitz Social Services Fund. To support Jewish social services in Grand Rapids.

Thank you for supporting the Grand Rapids Jewish Community

The Louis & Louise Weiner Fund

To Karen and Paul Belfer in memory Bernice Weiner

From Toby Weiner Dolinka

The Jerry & Judy Subar Endowment Fund

To Mrs. Nettie Beers in memory of Mike Rossman

From Mitzi and Monte Cohon

The Charles and Maxine Shapiro Endowment Fund

**To Karen Belfer in memory of Bernice Weiner
From Maxine Shapiro**

The Women of Valor Endowment Fund

**To The Family of Bernice Weiner in her memory
From Julian and Judith Joseph**



JFGR Endowment Fund Donation Form

Donation from: Name _____ Fund (pick from list) _____

Donor Address _____ In honor of _____

Donor City/St/Zip _____ In memory of _____

Send card to: Name _____ Notes: _____

Send card to address _____ **Send your donation and this form to:**

Send card to City/St/Zip _____ **2727 Michigan NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506**

The Shofar

Jewish Federation of Grand Rapids
2727 Michigan NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506-1240

Send article text to: Ann@jfgr.org
Phone: 616.942.5553
Fax: 616.942.5780
www.jewishgrandrapids.org
Email: info@jfgr.org

**Next Issue's Information Deadline:
March 15, 2013**



Jewish Federation[®]
OF GRAND RAPIDS

THE **STRENGTH** OF A PEOPLE.
THE **POWER** OF COMMUNITY.

Chag Sameach!



Happy Passover!