



Federation for Jewish Philanthropy
OF UPPER FAIRFIELD COUNTY

FJP is...
Fostering Jewish Peoplehood
in

Bridgeport Easton Fairfield Georgetown
Monroe Norwalk Redding Ridgefield
Stratford Trumbull Weston Westport Wilton

news&events

10/2016

**FROM OUR
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR**



Dear Friends,

Over the next few days, many families throughout our Jewish community will be building sukkahs in their backyards for the upcoming Sukkot holiday next week.

I've been in sukkahs of many shapes and sizes, from rudimentary pop-ups that are a tight squeeze for four, to sukkahs with chandeliers and creative emergency roof systems, to a sukkah for nearly 300 celebrants.

And while different, those diverse sukkahs held much in common – from the temporary walls to the *skhakh* on the roof. But the most striking and important commonality was their sense of welcoming. Indeed, it is *amitzvah* to welcome guests on Sukkot, from welcoming family and friends and those in need – to the tradition of *ushpizin*, welcoming invisible guests from the past.

As I wrote in our September newsletter, the FJP board will be working with our constituency to ensure that our whole community works year round to be as open and welcoming as a sukkah.

In that message, I announced the creation of our new Outreach & Engagement Taskforce, formed to open new portals for engagement for our Jewish community. And I was delighted the day after that newsletter was distributed to receive a call from a new community-member asking to join the Taskforce; and, all of a sudden, a taskforce designed to promote engagement was itself becoming a

**GREETINGS
FROM OUR
BOARD
CHAIR**



Feeling Grateful

Among the many things I inherited from my wonderful father was his love of expressions. He, like me, believed in the power of words – their ability to inspire, to make a difference, and certainly to elicit emotion (laughter being a particular favorite for both of us). In fact, one of his frequently used quotes was about language, from Abraham Lincoln: “Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt.” For better or worse, I learned early on that words matter.

The holidays this year provided a much-needed respite from the awful words and headlines swirling around us. I found myself particularly comforted by the beautiful melodies, language and sentiments of our prayers that have been passed from generation to generation. Prayers for forgiveness. Embracing Jewish values. Communal *kaddish* for our loved ones.

Words really do have the power to move you. My words today are those of gratefulness. Grateful for my loving family, near and far. Grateful for my dear friends who are “the family we choose.” Grateful for my “village,” whose support is never-ending. Grateful for my synagogue, which is well more than just a place of worship. And grateful for our Jewish community, who believes in the importance of acting on our Jewish values by making the world a better and safer place.

portal for engagement.

Assuch, I am inspired to let you know of other opportunities for engagement, withthe hope that my phone will ring (2 03-659-3603) and my inbox will be full(dweisberg@jewishphilanthropyct.org).

Thoseopportunities include joining **the planning committee for our first everJewish Food Festival**, which we are beginning to plan for the Spring of 2017, or being part of **the organizing committee for our 2017 annual gala**, forwhich I am working to line up exciting talent. Those opportunities alsoinclude serving as a **captain for our expanded Super Sunday** this December4, a limited responsibility that could have a major impact. After theholidays, we plan on re-booting our **Community Relations Council**, with aninitial focus on public education; and, like the call I received last month, wewould still love to expand participation on our **Outreach & EngagementTaskforce**, such that we ensure that our community home is welcoming andopen to all.

Thebeauty of this process is that the more we engage some, the more likely we areto engage others, as our circles – and indeed the walls of our sukkah –continue to expand in meaningful and welcoming ways. And together, wecan look up through the branches that cover us, see the stars, and delight inwhat we have built, and are building, together.

Thankyou, and Chag Sukkot Sameach,

David Weisberg, Executive Director

Wishing you and your loved ones a happy and healthy new year.

Bonnie Slyn, Board Chair

featured community event



"THE MIDDLE EAST IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION" with Ambassador Dennis Ross

William Davidson Distinguished Fellow
and Counselor, The Washington Institute

TUESDAY, OCT. 25, 7:30 PM

The Conservative Synagogue
30 Hillspoint Road, Westport

Free & open to the community | [INFO & RSVP](#)



TOP: Rabbi Marcelo Kormis of Congregation Beth El in Fairfield hangs the mezuzah on the main entrance to the new FJP offices. Photo: Alison Wachstein Photography

OUR INAUGURAL EVENT!

On Sept. 27, the new FJP office space was filled with energy and excitement as rabbis, cantors, and supporters gathered for a mezuzah dedication and reception. More than 300 community-members and Merkaz Community High School for Judaic Studies students heard from author and activist Harriet Levin Millan about her inspiring work to help child refugees. FJP Executive Director, David Weisberg, told the crowd, "Tonight is a moving reminder of the importance of Hillel's question, 'If I am only for myself, who am I?' and, by extension, 'If we, as the Jewish community, are only for ourselves, who are we?'" [VIEW PHOTOS](#)

ENJOY JEWISH FILMS IN OUR COMMUNITY



The Federation for Jewish Philanthropy is a proud sponsor of the **Jewish Arts & Film Festival of Fairfield County**, now in its 15th season. Join us from **SATURDAY, OCT. 29-SUNDAY, NOV. 6** for the very best current Jewish films, speakers, fine art, and literature that the international Jewish community has to offer. [Click for a full program of events.](#)

[Rabin in His Own Words](#)

Sunday, Oct. 30, 7 PM

The Garden Cinema | 26 Isaac St., Norwalk

Followed by Q&A with former *New York Times* foreign correspondent and columnist, Clyde Haberman

Single ticket: \$15 | [INFO & TICKETS](#)

Co-sponsored by FJP, Congregation Beth El-Norwalk, JCC Tzahal Shalom, and Jewish War Veterans of Stamford

[In Search of Israeli Cuisine](#)

Monday, Nov. 7, 2 PM

Jewish Senior Services Campus
4200 Park Ave., Bridgeport

Senior age 62+: No Charge

Single ticket: \$15

[INFO & TICKETS](#)

In partnership with FJP

AN ADDITIONAL FILM OFFERING

[Screenagers: Growing up in the Digital Age](#)

Thursday, Oct. 27, 7 PM

Congregation B'nai Israel | 2710 Park Ave., Bridgeport

Join Merkaz Community High School for Judaic Studies for a special presentation of this powerful film exploring the impact of screen-time on the social, emotional, and physical development in children. Stay for a post-film discussion facilitated by clinical psychologist Roni Cohen-Sandler, PhD.

Free & open to the community - Parents & students welcome

Limited seating! Reservations recommended: (203) 450-5305

**JEWISH
LEARNING
CENTRAL**

*A twice-a-month overview from FJP
of unique adult-ed offerings
throughout Upper Fairfield County*

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