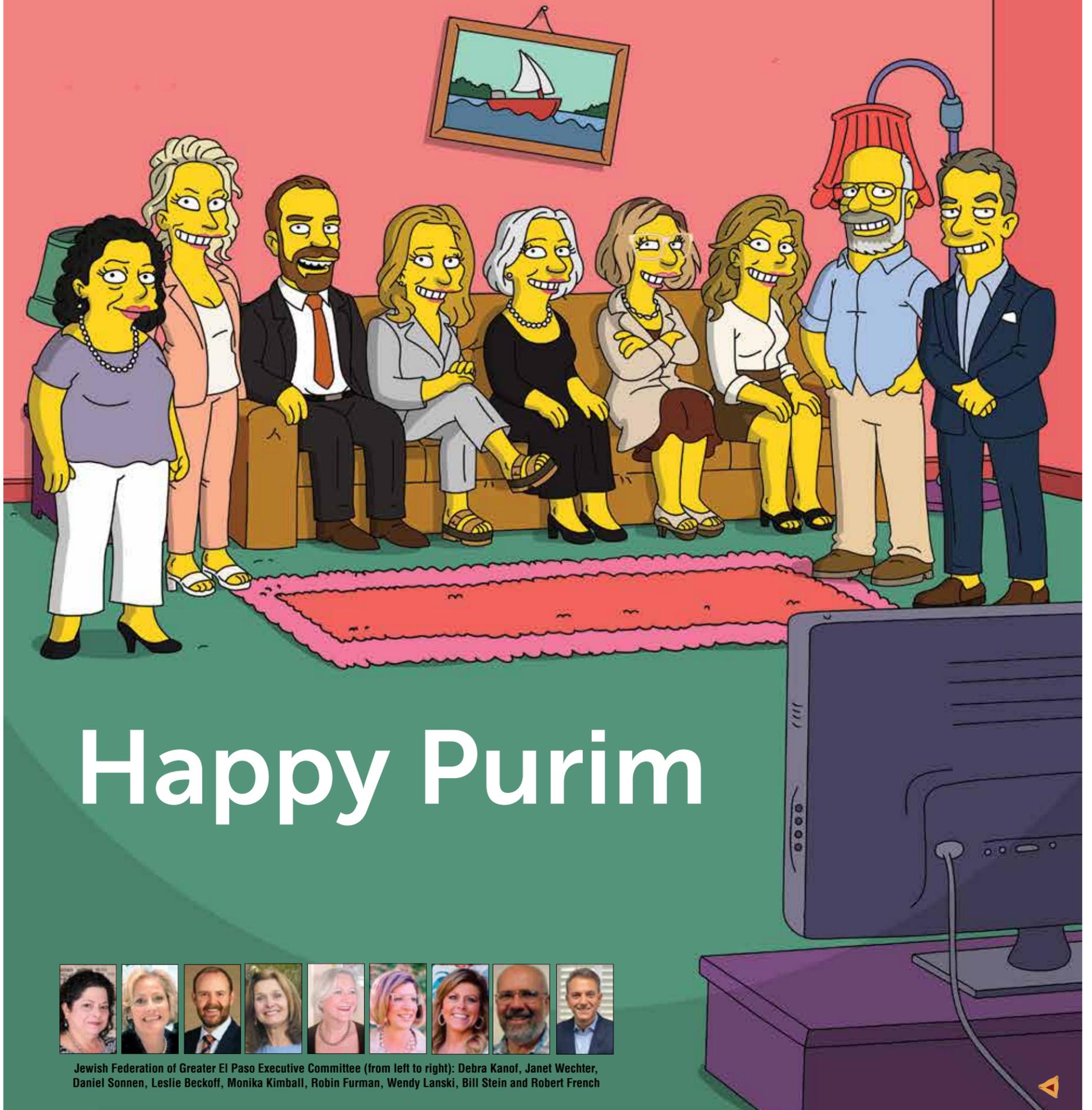


# The Jewish VOICE

Informing and Connecting Jews in El Paso-Las Cruces

Shevat-Adar, 5781  
February 2021



## Happy Purim



Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso Executive Committee (from left to right): Debra Kanof, Janet Wechter, Daniel Sonnen, Leslie Beckoff, Monika Kimball, Robin Furman, Wendy Lanski, Bill Stein and Robert French

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**Jewish Federation**  
OF **GREATER EL PASO**

## Up Close:

# Wendy & Steve Lanski

Wendy and Steve Lanski made El Paso their home nine-and-a-half years ago, moving from Atlanta, Georgia when they were newly married and just had two dogs. They immediately made it their mission to become involved in the Jewish community and they credit the welcoming community that exists here with that. One of the first things they did upon their arrival here was to go to the local Kosher grocery store where the owner greeted them and told them that he had heard they, (the “Lanski’s”) were coming.

Wendy and Steve met in “space” according to Steve - they actually met on J-Date. They admit it is hard to meet anyone now, either in space or in person, because no one is getting together. Since then, they have given El Paso two new natives, Libi and Liam. Libi attends first grade at The Cherry Hill School, and Liam currently attends the J-Center, and will attend Cherry Hill beginning next year.

Wendy and Steve credit their children with a lot of influence on their involvement in the El Paso Jewish community, and in the greater El Paso community. They say, “It’s important for kids to see that we are community minded and give of ourselves.”

And do they ever: Wendy was on the Jewish Federation’s board from 2012-2015 and is again as of 2019, where she serves as its Campaign Co-chair. Steve also served on the Jewish Federation board for 1.5 years and is President of the board of The Cherry Hill School. Wendy served on the El Paso Jewish Academy (EPJA) board for four years.

When it comes to The Cherry Hill School, Wendy says that “necessity was the mother of invention and that they were parents on a mission”. A severe decline in the EPJA enrollment led them to rethink the school in order to get back in touch with the community to reformulate the Jewish day school. This led to the new Cherry Hill School.

Wendy and Steve Lanski give back in other ways as well. Steve is the Director of the Pediatric Unit at Providence Hospital. Wendy is president elect of the Junior League, an organization she has been in for 23 years helping train women to be civic leaders. She is also on the board of the El Paso Zoological Society, the fundraising arm of the zoo.

Wendy and Steve believe that it is important to integrate and be involved in the El Paso community and that this is a great place to live.



### ***What do you value most in your friends?***

Wendy: 3am friends... who can you call at 3am and they would “pick-up” and be there for you. That’s who I want to be around and who I want to be for others as well.

Steve: loyalty and kindness

### ***Who’s your favorite Jewish hero (living or not/fictional or not) and why?***

Wendy: My great, great grandmother, Louisa Menn the very last connection to Judaism my mother’s family had for decades. She left a trail for us to find her years later. Both of my kids are named after her.

### ***What value do we need most in our world today?***

Kindness/Chesed

### ***What’s your favorite Purim memory?***

Steve: Making hamantaschen with my mom.

### ***As current and former leaders on the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso’s (JFED) Board – and Wendy as its current Campaign Co-Chair – why would you encourage participation in our Jewish community and in philanthropy through the JFED?***

JFed bridges all Jewish organizations in our community, it is at the heart of all we are and do as Jews. It’s amazing to see how we can make a difference when we all come together.

***You have played major roles in the establishment of The Cherry Hill School – what do you hope the school will do to enhance Jewish educational opportunities in Greater El Paso?***

That it is truly a Jewish Community School, a school for our entire community. We hope it will give the children attending a stronger Jewish identity, a superior secular education as well as build bridges amongst all faiths in El Paso.

***Leaders step up and save the day in the Purim story. You are both strong leaders who have impacted Jewish life in our city. What message would you like to share to encourage others to take on leadership positions in our community?***

Everyone can make a difference in our community; it just takes the willingness and a little extra effort to step up. The rewards at the end of the day (a community to be celebrated and proud of) are worth the risk.

**Educate.  
Engage.  
Empower.**

**February  
2021**

**JDAM** Jewish Disability Advocacy Month

**This February, we come together for a month-long virtual experience to fight the stigma around people with disabilities, culminating in a week of action and advocacy. Will you be there? Learn more at [JewishTogether.org/JDAM](http://JewishTogether.org/JDAM) #JDAM #JewishTogether**

**What can be done to promote the best inclusion and supportive care practices for people in our communities with disabilities? Learn about this and more during the month-long virtual Jewish Disability Advocacy Month this February. LEARN MORE: [JewishTogether.org/JDAM](http://JewishTogether.org/JDAM) #JDAM #JewishTogether**





# El Paso Connect

**For those of us in our  
20s and 30s**  
Virtual Purim Megillah Reading  
& Happy Hour  
with Shalom Austin

*Save the Date*

**Thursday, February 25, 2021**

**Watch for details:**

[www.jewishelpaso.org/elpasoconnect](http://www.jewishelpaso.org/elpasoconnect)

## Can you find the hamantaschen?



4 hamantaschen have  
been hidden around  
this issue of  
The Jewish Voice.

**Can you find  
all 4?**

Email  
[letsconnect@jfedelpaso.org](mailto:letsconnect@jfedelpaso.org)  
with their locations  
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to win a prize.



## Borderland's Café Europa

Call-in and Lunch for Seniors 65+

**Beyond Gin and Tonics and Moscow  
Mules with Michael Mandel**

Wednesday, February 10 | 11:30am

**Shabbat Dinner**

Friday, February 26 | 5:00 pm

**For Assistance Call: 915-842-9554**

RSVP by noon on Monday before the  
event to have a light meal delivered to you

*Borderland's Café Europa is funded by a grant from  
The Jewish Community Foundation of El Paso*



[www.jewishelpaso.org](http://www.jewishelpaso.org)

## These We Honor With Tributes Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso

In Memory of Roslyn Sugarman  
FROM: Gerie and Stan Muchnikoff

## Todah Rabah Thank you to our volunteers

**Borderland's Café Europa Guest Speakers-**  
Jamie Flores

**Borderland's Café Europa Support-**  
Noel Hollowell-Small

**For Those We Love Caregivers Support Group -**  
Lee Chayes

**Harvesting Our Wisdom: Letter Writing Workshop -**  
Joanne Turnbull

**Jewish Film Festival - Co-Chairs:** Jennifer Ehrlich and  
Dana Frank. Committee Members Joyce Anenberg,  
Wendy Axelrod, Mike Batkin, Oscar Beltran, Brenda Ehrlich,  
Romaree Herbert, Rebecca Krasne, Lowry Martin

**Virtual Summer Camp Fair Coordinator -**  
Audrey Lavi

## The Jewish VOICE

A publication of the Jewish  
Federation of Greater El Paso

The Jewish Voice of El Paso, published ten times a year, is dedicated to informing, educating, and uniting the Jewish community by providing news items of local, national, Israeli and international concern.

The Jewish Voice will consider for publication any materials submitted that support the mission of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso and have relevance and appeal to the El Paso Jewish community. Articles are subject to editing at the editor's discretion and are subject to space limitations. Letters cannot be longer than 150 words and articles must be kept to a maximum of 300 words. Please email to [thevoice@jfedelpaso.org](mailto:thevoice@jfedelpaso.org)

Opinions are those of individual writers and not necessarily those of the Jewish Federation of Greater El Paso. The Jewish Voice is not responsible for the kashrut of any product or eating establishment advertised herein.

Executive Director: Robert French  
Director of Philanthropy : Sue Bendalin  
Administration Coordinator: Araceli Rico  
President: Monika Kimball  
Office: 915-842-9554  
7110 North Mesa, El Paso, TX 79912

Editor: Elizabeth Sloane  
Layout and Design: Beatriz Garcia  
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**The Jewish  
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Rabbi Yisrael Greenberg

# It's all about the dress-up

Purim is traditionally a holiday to masquerade in masks and costumes and I find it ironic that since Purim of last year we've been masked in public settings. As we reach the first-year anniversary since COVID-19 has impacted our lives in so many ways, and as we hopefully round the bend with the new vaccines, I'd like to reflect on an important lesson we can learn from Purim about how to best respond to crisis and tragedy.

One of the fundamental mitzvot of Purim is to hear the reading of the Megillah twice: once on Purim night and once during Purim day. The Mishna declares that one who read the Megillah "backwards" has not fulfilled

the Mitzvah. Practically speaking, if one hears the story from Chapter Three until the end and afterwards hears the first two chapters – it doesn't count. You need to hear the story from the beginning to end - in order.

The Baal Shem Tov taught a profound lesson from this rule. Using a slightly altered translation, this Mishnaic statement can be understood as follows: "One who reads the Megillah as a story of the past" is missing the whole point of the Purim celebration. The Megillah is not just history; it is the story of today.

When Haman succeeded in issuing his genocidal decree against the Jewish people the Megillah informs us that Mordechai donned sackcloth and ashes calling upon the Jews to pray and return to G-d. When he approached the palace gates Esther sent him a change of clothing, which

he rejected. The Talmud explains that there was strict palace protocol regarding clothing, and Mordechai was barred from entering the palace as long as he was garbed in his sackcloth.

This seems to be a minor detail, but in truth, this whole fuss about Mordechai's wardrobe reveals the essence of the Purim story.

As the highest-ranking Jewish officer in the Persian Empire, it would seem obvious that when his people faced an existential threat from the government he worked for, Mordechai would don his most impressive suit, straighten his tie and march into the halls of power to defend his people from annihilation. Instead, in a seemingly egregious dereliction of his duty, he donned sackcloth and ashes, which barred him from entering the palace where he would be most effective on behalf of his people!

But Mordechai knew the truth, that neither Haman nor Achashveirosh had true power over the Jewish nation and our fate had nothing to do with his political savvy. Everything is in the hands of G-d and therefore the first order of business was to inspire his fellow Jews to repentance and prayer. Of course, natural steps would be taken to avert the decree, but Esther only approached the king after all the Jews in Shushan had fasted and prayed for three days and nights, to entreat G-d for her success.

When faced with crisis we must first focus our attention and energy on strengthening our connection to G-d, to evoke divine mercy and blessing. Only then can we be confident that the natural steps we take to fix the problem will succeed. As we continue to mask up in public and vaccinate ourselves to combat this once in a lifetime virus, it's crucial for us to learn from Mordechai and Esther and increase our Torah study, Mitzvah observance and charitable giving, to be sure that our natural efforts will succeed.

Please be sure to celebrate Purim this year by fulfilling the four Mitzvot of Purim. 1. Hear the story of Purim as it is read in the original text from a genuine scroll. 2. Give generously to (at least) two charitable causes throughout the day. 3. Share gifts of food with your friends and acquaintances. 4. And of course – partake in a delicious festive meal till you can party no more.

Best wishes for a joyous and healthy Purim!

Rabbi Yisrael Greenberg  
Chabad Lubavitch

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- Feb 15 - 22: Sublet**  
Discussion with Director Eytan Fox, Sunday, February 21 at 2pm
- Feb 22 - Mar 1: Aulcie**

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[gecu.com](http://gecu.com)

# Spring is coming at The Cherry Hill School!

The Cherry Hill School (TCHS) is ready to enter into the spring semester featuring our new theme, “Living Organisms” with an emphasis on “Plants” and “Animals” of which ties in to the upcoming holidays.

Our students love plants and creepy crawly insects! Getting involved and actually growing them can be exciting. Thinking about Tu B’Shvat (birthday of trees) coming up at the end of January gives the opportunity to expand on learning across the curriculum. The Giving Tree gives us a beautiful story that follows the lives of an apple tree and a boy who develop a relationship with one another.

The Cherry Hill School has officially adopted a Mexican Gray Wolf from the El Paso Zoo. We are so happy to be a part of supporting and protecting the Mexican Gray Wolf and our partnership with the Zoo! We have so much to learn about this animal and our focus will be on animals during the latter half of our unit on Living Organisms. All six values covered thus far at TCHS are embedded within this unit (Kindness, Responsibility, Respect, Community, Learning by Doing, and Giving to Those in Need). What better way to culminate?

Our staff loves learning about Finland and what makes them a

leader in educational practice. We are creating a world class education at The Cherry Hill School. These conversations lead us to developing content based on the whole child with real life learning experiences. So much love and learning to take place these next two months at The Cherry Hill School.

### Purim at The Cherry Hill School

To better understand the story of Esther, the students will make puppets out of recycled material (also tied to Tu B’Shvat) to portray the various characters in the story. The kids love practicing “drowning out the evil” by booing Haman during the Purim practices. In addition to puppets, the students will be dressing up as one of the characters in the story.

If you are interested in enrolling your child for the 2021-2022 school year, visit [www.thecherryhillschool.org/enroll-now/](http://www.thecherryhillschool.org/enroll-now/)



## CBZ Book Zoom Presents:

### Meredith Jacobs *Just Between Us: Mother and Son*

Meredith Jacobs is CEO of JWI, a nonprofit with the mission of empowering women leaders and ending violence against women and girls. Jacobs is an award-winning journalist and former editor-in-chief of *Washington Jewish Week*.

Want to know how to raise a mensch? Meredith Jacobs is back, with a new edition to the bestselling journal series *Just Between Us*—for moms and their sons. This thoughtful keepsake journal is the perfect place for a mother and son to share stories and dreams, hopes and fears. Advice, guidelines, and prompts by author Meredith Jacobs and her son pave the way to discussing everything exciting and scary about growing up—from friendships and school to positive masculinity. With plenty of free space to write about whatever’s on their minds and fun pages for drawing pictures and making lists, this journal will open the lines of communication and help strengthen mother-son relationships.



DATE: Sunday, March 7, 2021  
TIME: 7:00 PM

ZOOM ID: 85980908355  
PASSWORD: 805





## Bea Weisz Memorial Scholarship Fund

Applications are now being accepted for the Bea Weisz Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Applications must be received on or before May 17, 2021 for distribution by August 6, 2021

In July 2001 the Beatrice L. Weisz Memorial Scholarship Fund was established so that proceeds from the fund would be given to a needy and worthy Jewish college student(s) in El Paso to enable him or her to pursue his or her studies.

Applications are available at [www.jewishelpaso.org/bea-weisz-scholarship-2021/scholarships-2021](http://www.jewishelpaso.org/bea-weisz-scholarship-2021/scholarships-2021)

## Purim at the J is Different This Year

Purim is almost upon us. Although the students and families at The J usually celebrate by having a carnival with our Temple Mount Sinai family, this year we will be celebrating in other ways. Leading up to the holiday the children will learn about the story of Purim and how brave Queen Esther helped to save the Jewish people. They will participate in all sorts of arts and crafts like baking hamantaschen, and making crowns, masks and graggers. On the actual day of Purim each class will celebrate with their classmates: The students and teachers will come in costume, they'll get to play games, read stories, hear the Megillah (while using those graggers, of course), have their faces painted and just have fun, fun, fun! Although this will be a different kind of carnival than we usually have we're still going to make sure this holiday is memorable and joyful.



Interested in Registering your child?  
Call 534-1234 to learn more.  
[www.thejelpaso.org](http://www.thejelpaso.org)

# PaceSetters

Cooking Up a Great Evening with Master Chef

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February 10, 2021  
6:00 PM

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Community Campaign \$1,800 per person

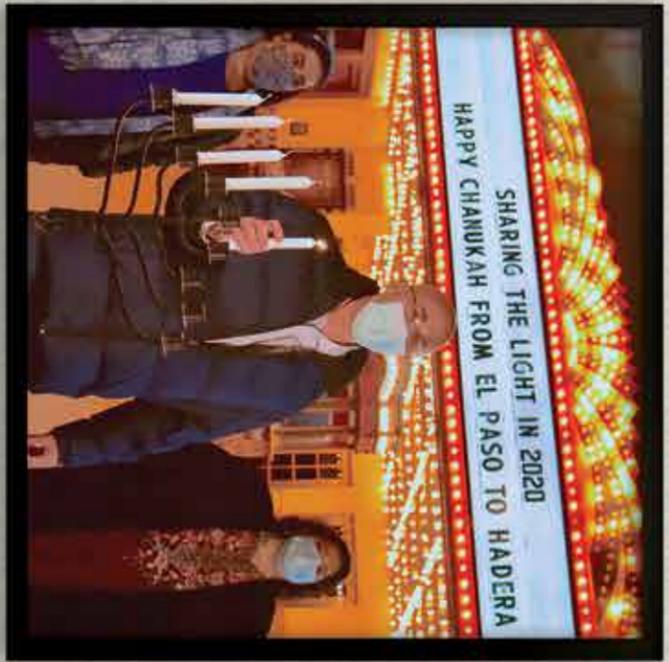
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