

Savannah JEWISH ✦ LIFE

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Letters to the Editor
Savannah Jewish Life is a community publication. Letters should be civil and considerate in tone and not contain personal attacks, random attacks on businesses, or defamation. All statements of facts must and may be edited for length, clarity, or factual content. The opinions expressed are always the writer's. All letters must include the author's full name, address, and phone number (only your name, and if appropriate, job title and organization or business name, will be published). No more than two letters from the same author will be published within 12 consecutive months. Submit letters to savannahjewishlife@savj.org. Savannah Jewish Life retains full and sole discretion about which letters to publish.

Savannah Jewish Federation Mission Statement
Charged with raising, collecting and distributing funds, the Savannah Jewish Federation seeks to advance the welfare of the total Jewish community. The Federation strongly supports Israel and world Jewry. Additionally, the organization strives to preserve the civil, political, economic and religious rights of all Jews to develop an articulate, intelligent, and constructive Jewish community and to promote mutual understanding with the community at-large.

The objectives of the Savannah Jewish Life Magazine are to foster a sense of community among the Jewish people of Savannah by sharing ideas, information, experiences and opinions, and to promote the agencies, projects and mission of the Savannah Jewish Federation.

Savannah Jewish Life is published quarterly four times a year, with a deadline as follows:

Spring Issue- March, April & May- Deadline February 1

Summer Issue- June, July & August- Deadline May 1

Fall Issue- September, October & November- Deadline August 1

Winter Issue- December, January & February- Deadline November 1

Please send all Savannah Jewish Life materials to: savannahjewishlife@savj.org
Please send eNews newsletter submissions to: news@savj.org

Shalom Savannah

Sam Friedman, Chief Executive Officer

From the time I first interviewed for my role at the JEA and Savannah Jewish Federation, I was told to truly understand Savannah you have to read *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. Eight months later-- having read the book and watched the movie--I can confidently say it is not nearly enough to understand Savannah, but it was certainly a good starting point. In his book, Berendt says:

"For me, Savannah's resistance to change was its saving grace. The city looked inward, sealed off from the noises and distractions of the world at large. It grew inward, too, and in such a way that its people flourished like hothouse plants tended by an indulgent gardener. The ordinary became extraordinary. Eccentrics thrived. Every nuance and quirk of personality achieved greater brilliance in that lush enclosure than would have been possible anywhere else in the world."

Savannah, and our extraordinary and brilliant Jewish community, have stood for 300 years because of our commitment to each other. Though Berendt's quote would indicate no change had ever come to this land, you and I both know a good gardener adapts their care to the changing seasons. Spring has gone, and summer is now upon us. With my eye on being an indulgent gardener intent on seeing us flourish, I want to share with you two significant transitions to the JEA and Savannah Jewish Federation.

First, after 12 years of service, Jodi Sadler will retire at the end of May. As you know, Jodi served as a JEA President and opened the JEA Preschool. Under Jodi's leadership, our early childhood center opened with 30 children in three classes and has expanded to 120 children across eleven classrooms. Our school consistently receives the highest rating of 3-star accreditation from the State of Georgia and schools across Chatham County regularly tell us our graduates are better prepared for elementary school because of their time with us. Jodi has made our community and our agency better, and there aren't enough words to truly thank her.

In July, another long-time staple of the JEA and SJF, our CFO, Cheryl Lansing, will be transitioning to retirement Cheryl served two tours of duty here: first as a Controller, and then as our CFO. Under Cheryl's tenure the JEA went from near insolvency to stable financial footing. Cheryl's commitment to financial stability has inspired confidence in local donors,

foundations and partners. Personally, I cannot imagine having survived my own transition to this community without Cheryl's willingness to walk me through processes, talk out ideas and challenges, and provide tough guidance when needed. We also cannot thank her enough for her tireless work to see our JEA and Jewish Federations survive and thrive!



Coming to continue and grow the work Jodi began, our new ECE Director Amy Blechman began her tenure at the JEA on April 1 (no kidding!)! She comes to Savannah with nearly 20 years of experience in early childhood. Amy both founded a Jewish preschool in Florida and oversaw the allocation of millions of foundation dollars across early childhood centers throughout the state. Amy holds a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership, Bachelors Degree in Spanish, and I am confident Amy will successfully and skillfully manage the Konter ECE into a flourishing future!

Please also welcome Rick Bartlett as our new CFO! Rick is a CPA with over a decade of experience in public accounting, nonprofit accounting, and auditing. Rick worked as an Assistant Controller at the Atlanta Federation, and spent many years working with nonprofit organizations to manage their books ensuring accurate record keeping and accounting. Rick has a Masters of Professional Accounting, holds a CPA license, and a Bachelors of Business Administration. I look forward to working with Rick to update our software systems making investing in the local Jewish community easier for donors and foundations.

As we turn toward this new season, we will forever be grateful for the contributions of Cheryl and Jodi to this flourishing community. Please celebrate them heartily and often! Thank them not only for all they have done, but also for staying additional time to ensure smooth transitions of leadership. And with gratitude in our hearts, please join me in welcoming Amy and Rick! They will need your hospitality, your wisdom, and your support as we begin this new season. I know with your help, we will all continue to see our Jewish community in Savannah flourish.

Your fellow indulgent gardener,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sam Friedman'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

Mazel Tov GRADUATES!



Benjamin Homansky

Benjamin is the son of Eric and Kristy Homansky and the grandson of Anita Homansky. He will graduate with his International Baccalaureate Diploma from Campbell High School in Smyrna, GA where he was a member of the Varsity baseball team, cross-country team, National Honor Society and a recipient of the MLK Service Award. Benjamin will attend Piedmont University in Demorest, Georgia. He has been awarded an academic scholarship as well as an athletic scholarship as an outstanding pitcher.

Jessi Rush

Jessi is the daughter of Sonya Carpenter. She will graduate from Effingham County High School where she was a member of Spanish Honor Society, a recipient of the High School Governor's Scholar Medallion and participated in dual enrollment at Georgia Southern University. Jessi is the Head Lifeguard at the JEA as well as a Certified CPR Instructor and Certified Pool Operator. Jessi will graduate in 2028 from Georgia Southern with a Master's in Behavioral Psychology.



Laney Rose Berman

Laney is the daughter of Kasey and Daniel Berman. She will graduate from Savannah Arts Academy where she majored in Dance. Laney also served as a Savannah Arts School Ambassador, was a member of English Honor Society, Journalism Honor Society, FBLA, Bound To Books Club and participated in Tutus For Tatas. Outside of school, Laney was a hostess at Crystal Beer Parlor and active in BBYO/BBG, where she was the Wexler Clark Chapter N'siah and Eastern Region Meshakeret. Laney will attend Elon University as an Honors Fellow majoring in professional writing.

Marissa Kate Loncar

Marissa will graduate from Wheeler High School in Cobb County, GA. She is the daughter of Jessica and Michael Loncar and the granddaughter of Kerry and Phil Rosen and Mary and Charles Loncar. Marissa was Team Captain for Flag Football and Diving; 2025 Georgia Scholar (top 145 seniors in the state), Positive Athlete Southeast Region Nominee, Intern at Kennesaw State Brain Lab, President of Science National Honor Society, Vice President of Jewish Club and a member of National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society. She was on the Varsity team for flag football, diving and gymnastics. Outside of school, Marissa earned her EMS certification, was a swim instructor for Atlanta Swim Academy and Head T-ball Coach at East Marietta Little League. She will attend Tulane University.



Matthew Sidney Javetz

Matt is the son of Shannon and Scott Javetz. Matt attended Benedictine Military School, where he was on Student Council serving as Secretary his senior year, and active in ROTC. He volunteered with The Ronald McDonald House of the Coastal Empire, the Savannah Ambucs and was a lead with Cure Crew, Cure Childhood Cancer of Savannah. Matt will be attending Georgia College and State University majoring in marketing.

Mazel Tov GRADUATES!



Meryl Fleishman

Meryl is the daughter of Jennifer and Jonathan. She will graduate from St. Vincent's Academy. She will attend Indiana University as a premed biology major.



Reese Javetz

Reese is the daughter of Shannon and Scott Javetz. Reese attended University of Georgia, graduating with a BA in Public Relations. At UGA she was an active member of Sigma Delta Tau and the Public Relations Student Society of America. She also served as a recruitment counselor for Panhellenic. Reese interned for UGA Fan Engagement and Cecilia Russo Marketing. She plans to pursue a career in marketing and communications.



Riley Jade Friedman

Riley is the daughter of Paul and Dana Friedman and granddaughter of Linda and the late Morris Friedman. She will be graduating from Eastside High School in Greenville, SC. She will be attending College of Charleston majoring in commercial real estate.



Sarah Lily Javetz

Sarah is the daughter of Lynn and Jay Javetz. She is the granddaughter of Arlene & Norman (obm) Jaffie and Rochelle and Harold Javetz (obm). Sarah will graduate summa cum laude from University of Georgia with a Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science and a Minor in Entrepreneurship. During her time at UGA, Sarah was active with Chabad, Hillel, Special Olympics, UGA Miracle and Sigma Delta Tau Sorority. Sarah was a Zell Miller Scholarship recipient and member of Order of Omega Greek Honors Society and Phi Upsilon Omicron Honor Society, where she served as Secretary. Sarah will attend the Medical University of South Carolina where she will obtain a Doctor of Occupational Therapy.



Tara Tirey

Tara Tirey will graduate from Capella University with her MS in School Counseling. Tara is a member of American School Counselor Association, Georgia School Counselor Association, Chi Sigma Iota, and National Society of Leadership and Success. Tara is a mother for Maddox and Morgan, wife to Jason, member of Women of Mickve Israel and teacher for Shalom School's Tot Shalom classes. Her future plans include a career in school counseling, being in leadership positions on the job and through organizations, and continuing to be an active member of the Jewish community.



Security Quarterly

Richard Ray



I feel that most people would agree that it's difficult to find a lot of free time in our busy day to day schedules. Participating in a security and safety training class may be the last thing we would think about doing in our free time, unless we truly think about the benefit of the training.

If I told you your chances of surviving an active shooter incident would significantly increase after attending a Counter Active Threat Training course, would it change your mind? Would you be eager to attend a Stop the Bleed Training course if you knew that this training could potentially save your life or a loved one's life during an emergency?

Recently, the Jewish community has suffered through acts of violence from around the world on levels not seen since the Holocaust. Because of this fact, the Secure Community Network (SCN) is a strong proponent of safety and security training for members in our community. SCN's main objective regarding training, is to provide coordinated, collaborative, and consistent approach to training, rooted in best practice, that empowers the Jewish community in North America to prepare for current and emergent threats.

Training offered by SCN can provide valuable lifesaving information, such as,

·**Preparedness for Emergencies:** Training helps individuals understand how to respond effectively during emergencies, such as dangerous weather events, active shooter situations, or other security incidents.

·**Personal Safety:** Security training can empower individuals to protect themselves and their loved ones from harm, providing them with the skills to make informed decisions in potentially dangerous situations.

·**Improved Situational Awareness:** Security awareness training equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to identify potential threats, vulnerabilities, and suspicious activities, ultimately contributing to a safer environment for everyone.

I sincerely hope to see our entire Savannah community join us for upcoming training opportunities in the near future. SCN offers a variety of safety and security training courses suited to prepare individuals for many various emergency situations. Training courses such as,

- De-escalation Training**
- Counter Active Threat Training**
- BeAware/Situational Awareness Training**
- Guardian Training**
- Stop the Bleed Training**

Please check the JEA and Federation websites to see dates and times for the upcoming courses, hope to see you there!



Report An Incident



WELCOME TO THE



Thomas Oxnard
Akeen Jones & Kassandra Brunson
Susan Daggett
Walter & Melanie Biner
Lauri Taylor
Timothy & Lauren Mescon
Howard Spector
Kyle Kimmel & Madison Jesse
Ashley Pope
Mark Krchnak & Tracy Sun
Neil Anderson & Louise Tremblay
Anthony Caston
Alessandro & Emily Cannata
Joseph & Megan Simpson
Lori Smith
Ricardo Elizondo & Elizabeth McElroy
Samuel Yocco & Sasa Henkel
Jess & Sam Mikell
David Johnson & Mary Veith
Jay Reznick

Joseph Wheeler & Bromley Dyson
Jennifer Greene
Neal Eike & Sarah Castleberry
Janet Arvelo & Gustavo Carbone
Ilona Warner
Daniel John
Annilia King
Christopher & Victoria Hill
Irving Rosenbaum & Anne Rambo
Kathleen Young
Samuel Somers
Christine Reed
Julie Gaffney
Aaron & Cynthia Cradduck
Steven Hall & Dwana Mozee
Owen & Natalie Dickey
Analia Patterson
Andres Montez
Elias Clements
Parker LaSure

Christopher Putnam & Amerly Colina
Karen White
Robert Greenberg & Cherie David
Chris & Anna Ticher
Michael & Caitlin Montanez
Alyssa Johnson
Lori Yadin
Jason Saunders
Van Vogt
Ronald & Maria Pickard
Charles & Dawn Marshall
Adam Rusgrove
Phillip McClure
Austin & Amy Thompson
Gray & Hilary Slother
Ricardo & Brandi Brown
Stephen & Chantel Morton
Sherman Ellison
Sandra Carroll
Anatoliy Mykhsylovskyy



**CHECK OUT
OUR TRAINERS!**



SEASONAL PASS

3 MONTH PASS* TO THE JEA

Seasonal Single	\$250
Seasonal Couple	\$285
Seasonal Family	\$333

- \$25 Registration Fee
- Use of Health & Wellness center including fitness facilities, pools, lockers rooms & classes
- Payment due at sign up
- Not eligible for member pricing or financial assistance

SAVANNAHJEA.ORG

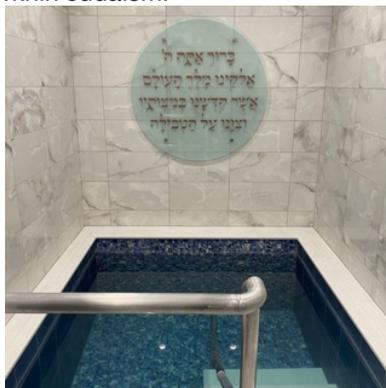
The Savannah Jewish Community Celebrates the Grand Opening of New Mikvah

Sabrana Rabhan

The Jewish Mikvah: Ritual Purity and Spiritual Renewal

In Jewish tradition, the mikvah (or mikveh) is a ritual bath of profound religious significance, symbolizing purification, renewal, and connection to divine commandments. Far more than a hygienic practice, immersion in a mikvah marks key transitions in life, sanctifies moments of transformation, and is deeply embedded in Jewish law (halacha). From its ancient roots to its modern applications, the mikvah remains a powerful symbol of continuity, identity, and spiritual consciousness within Judaism.

The concept of ritual immersion originates in the Torah, most notably in the book of Leviticus, where laws concerning purity and impurity are laid out in detail. The mikvah is derived from the Hebrew root k-v-h, meaning “to gather,”



referring to collected natural water. According to Jewish law, a mikvah must be filled with “living water”—rainwater or water from a natural spring—not drawn by human hands. This requirement symbolizes the mikvah’s role as a divine gift and a connection to natural, untainted sources.

Talmudic literature further elaborates on the specifications and purposes of a mikvah, including its minimum volume (40 se’ah, roughly 200 gallons), construction methods, and its role in restoring purity. The mikvah has endured through its essential functions in personal and communal Jewish life.

So vital is the mikvah to Jewish life that Jewish law considers it more essential to communal infrastructure than even a synagogue or a school. In fact, when establishing a new Jewish community, tradition holds that a mikvah must be built before constructing a synagogue. This underscores the mikvah’s role not only in religious observance but in ensuring the continuity of Jewish family life and identity.

A recent example of the mikvah’s enduring relevance can be seen in Savannah, Georgia, where the grand opening of a new mikvah was celebrated with great enthusiasm. The event was a resounding success, drawing many donors and supporters from out of town who were thrilled to share in this significant milestone for the community.

This mikvah serves as a spiritual and cultural touchstone for the Jewish residents of Savannah, reflecting the importance of maintaining Jewish traditions even in communities where the Jewish population is smaller. The outpouring of support for this new mikvah speaks to its importance not only for the local community but also for Jews nationwide, who view the establishment of such a vital institution as a powerful affirmation of Jewish continuity.

The mikvah is used for various religious purposes. Please call or email Sabrana Rabhan for an in-depth look into our Mikvah and the customs surrounding it.

Beyond its practical uses, the mikvah is imbued with deep symbolism. It represents rebirth, mirroring the womb’s water and symbolizing new beginnings. Emerging from the mikvah is seen as emerging from a liminal space—between impurity and purity, the mundane and the sacred.

Historically, mikvaot were a central feature of Jewish communities, even in antiquity. Archaeological discoveries of ancient mikvaot in Israel, including those near the Second Temple in Jerusalem, underscore their importance in Jewish daily life and worship.

The mikvah, with its blend of ancient ritual and enduring symbolism, is a cornerstone of Jewish spiritual life. It connects the physical and metaphysical, the individual and the community, and the past with the present. Whether marking a rite of passage, affirming a



commitment to God, or seeking spiritual renewal, immersion in the mikvah continues to offer Jews a powerful encounter with the sacred. Its central place in Jewish communal priorities—built even before synagogues and schools—testifies to its profound role in sustaining the spiritual and familial foundations of Jewish life.

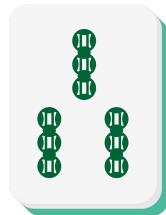
The recent grand opening of the mikvah in Savannah, Georgia, with the participation of donors from around the country, illustrates how this ancient tradition continues to thrive and be cherished, bringing Jewish communities together in shared celebration and renewal.

To join a class or schedule a private session, please email Sabrina@RabhanRehab.com or call **912-604-2847**.

Visit the Mikvah online at www.bbjmikvah.org



With great thanks to Mikvah USA and all who made this happen, we are grateful.



Mah Jongg And More

Robin Rackoff



I've always thought of myself as a good Mah Jongg player. Sure, my 73-year-old brain doesn't work quite as well as it used to. These days, it takes more effort to remember all the hands and the discarded tiles. With over fifty years of playing under my belt, though, the game still feels like second nature.

At least it used to.

For two weeks in a row, I didn't get a single Mah Jongg. Not one. I wasn't even close. In some games, while my opponents were happily declaring "Mah Jongg!", I was still figuring out which hand to play. Worse yet, I kept throwing the winning tile.

But lo and behold, the very next week, I couldn't not win. I almost started to feel guilty calling Mah Jongg again and again. Almost. I was on such a roll that the other players wanted to move to a different table to escape my winning.

I'm sharing this story because slumps happen - to everyone. It can shake your confidence and make you question whether you ever really knew how to play the game. But most of the time, it's just a stretch of bad luck. Maybe you're distracted, maybe the jokers are avoiding you, or maybe it's just not your week.

The important thing is to keep playing. Because next week, it could all turn around.

Until then—let's Maj on!

Fresh and Friendly Face in Finance

All good things must come to an end, or so they say. On that note, Savannah Jewish Federation and the Jewish Educational Alliance bid farewell to Cheryl Lansing, CFO Extraordinaire, who will be embarking on July 18th for a very important destination...RETIREMENT! Cheryl has tirelessly served the JEA and SJF since 2010, dotting every i crossing every t and accounting for every penny to provide oversight and ensure the financial integrity of both organizations. After an extensive and exhaustive search for someone to take the reins of all things CFO, we are pleased to welcome Rick Bartlett. Rick can be reached by email at Rick@savj.org.

Tell me a little about you.

I was born and raised in Vermont and moved to Charleston, SC in 2003 where I met my now wife, Mary Railey, in 2005. We moved to Atlanta in 2008 where I finished my bachelor's in accounting at Georgia State University and went on to earn a master's degree in accounting, as well. During grad school I took all four parts of the CPA Exam, passing each on the first try. After grad school, I went to work for one of the largest public accounting firms in the world, BDO. In 2018 when Mary Railey got pregnant with our only child, Champ, I left BDO and took the assistant controller job at the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta where I worked until we moved to Savannah in December 2020.

What attracted you to Savannah?

We wanted to raise Champ in smaller city than Atlanta. We were attracted to the proximity to the ocean, the natural beauty of the city, and the laidback nature of Savannah and its residents.

What attracted you to your position at the JEA?

The profound positive impact the JEA had on Champ while attending pre-K here, along with my experience with the organization and its employees as a member and parent. I also wanted to use my extensive accounting background to work for an organization that gives back so much to the city that has been so good to our family for the last four and a half years.



What do you like to do in your free time?

Spend time with my family and friends, travel, watch my favorite sports teams (the New York Mets, Buffalo Bills, and GSU basketball and football), and see live music.

What's your favorite color?

Blue



What's your favorite snack?

Any of the holiday Reese's.

Tell me an interesting fact about you.

I have seen the band Widespread Panic live in concert 160 times.

If you could have any other career, what would it be?

I would definitely be a veterinarian. I love animals. We have two cats, Jerry and Greta and a dog named Nessie.

Mountains or beach?

Definitely beach.

What are you most looking forward to in your role?

Making a positive impact on our members, donors, and the city as a whole.

MEET COACH SAM: YOUTH SPORTS



Born and raised in Savannah, Sam Chappell joins the Jewish Educational Alliance's team as Youth Sports Coordinator. A 2016 graduate of Benedictine, Sam holds a degree in International Affairs from Georgia Tech and also attended Sciences Po in Paris.

Although his favorite sports are football and tennis, children at the JEA will benefit from Sam's passion for all things recreation and skill development. When asked what he was most looking forward to in his position he said, "I am fired up for the opportunity to help kids find confidence, joy, and camaraderie through sports. I am also excited to build new programs that will reflect the spirit of our amazing community here at the JEA."

Check out SavannahJEA.org/youth-sports to keep up to date with all the great things Sam has planned!

FUN FACTS ABOUT COACH SAM

What drew you back to Savannah?

Simply put, I love Savannah. It is my favorite city in the world. Savannah people look after each other, and I am so proud to be from a place where people genuinely care about their neighbors and fellow citizens.

What do you like to do in your free time?

Most people do not know this, but I spend a lot of time in my garden! I find such reward in bringing a plant to life and creating a tiny ecosystem in my backyard.

What's your favorite food?

I could eat french fries all day, everyday.



MEET KIRBY: AQUATICS

What attracted you to Savannah?

Savannah's charm and small-town feel won me over from the beginning. Being close to the water was always a factor when considering where I wanted to make home, and when my parents relocated to Savannah while I was in college, following them felt like the right decision and an easy choice. Now, 11 years later, I love this special city and all of its whimsy and never plan to leave.

What attracted you to your position at the JEA?

Coming back to the JEA as the Aquatics Director was an opportunity that came into my life at the perfect time. This position presents a unique opportunity to engage with the Jewish community and the greater Savannah community in the best way possible- playing in the water! I'm grateful to get back where my career began- teaching water safety and creating exciting and fulfilling programs for everyone to enjoy.

What are you most looking forward to in your role?

I am most looking forward to being able to engage with the JEA community and work together to continue providing high-quality programs that everyone can participate in.



JEA Preschool Welcomes New Director with Vision and Heart

Amy Blechman, Director



As the warmth of summer settles in and we prepare for a season of reflection, renewal, and connection, I am thrilled to introduce myself as the new director of JEA Savannah's preschool. I have been in the field of early childhood education for 20 years and have worked in diverse roles in the field. My favorite role, by far, was as the founding director of the early childhood learning center at Temple Beit HaYam in Stuart, Florida in 2007. I was beyond excited when Sam Friedman offered me the opportunity to return to a preschool, and the acceptance of the job marked a meaningful new chapter in my life. My hope is that it will be a meaningful new chapter in this community's journey as well!

In Jewish tradition, the summer months lead us gently but purposefully toward the Days of Awe. This is a season imbued with the spirit of Teshuva — often translated as “repentance,” but more deeply understood as “return.” Return to our highest selves. Return to our values. Return to one another. This value resonates me with as I return to work that I love and that fills me with joy.



My vision for early childhood education is rooted not only in excellence, but in deep Jewish values, warmth, and compassion. I started my career as a teacher in a two year old classroom that cultivated my love for the field of early childhood and introduced me to the importance of a quality environment and the value of having support from leadership in creating that quality environment. Through the mentorship of my father in law, I learned the about the First 1000 days (<https://thousanddays.org>) and how much the brain develops during those first few years.

Dr. Blechman was an avid advocate for children and early childhood education in Florida and I am grateful for all the things he taught me. Through my leadership roles with the Children's Services Council of Palm Beach and Palm Beach Head Start Early Head Start, I refined my skills and knowledge about quality rating and improvement systems in early childhood education, allowing me to understand the systems that impact children and families. This diverse set of experiences have prepared me to be the best leader possible for the JEA of Savannah's preschool. I will bring both passion and purpose to the work of guiding our youngest learners — helping them grow intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

Just as Teshuva invites each of us to examine where we come from and where we are headed, I am joining the JEA of Savannah with a commitment to honor our school's history while embracing the promise of what lies ahead. I believe in cultivating a nurturing environment where curiosity is celebrated, Jewish identity is cherished, and families feel truly seen and supported.

I am excited to meet the community and to partner with you in this next chapter of our school's journey. May this summer bring opportunities for growth, joy, and meaningful return — to community, to purpose, and to the future we are building together.

JEWISH EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE

Jewish Educational Alliance Preschool Savannah

SECURE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

JEA PRESCHOOL SAVANNAH IS CURRENTLY ACCEPTING REGISTRATION FOR **ALL** OF OUR CLASSROOMS WITH IMMEDIATE OPENINGS.

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2-YEAR-OLD
3-YEAR-OLD AND PRE-K CLASSROOMS

COME TAKE A TOUR OF JEA PRESCHOOL SAVANNAH

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DO NOT MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ENROLL YOUR CHILD IN SAVANNAH'S QUALITY RATED, PREMIER EARLY LEARNING CENTER.

25-26
SCHOOL YEAR

JEA

Before & After School Program

Open to all children PreK-8th grade



Sports & Rec.

S.T.E.A.M.

Culinary

Arts & Crafts

Outdoor Play

Swimming

Different & Engaging Daily Activities!

**Transportation to and from
select schools available!**



www.savannahjea.org

Love Where You Live: Be A Tourist At Home This Summer

Sarah Docar

Savannah, with its wide tree-lined streets and historic squares is a breathtaking place to enjoy. Whether you are new to the city, have lived here your whole life, or are just visiting, Savannah is full of fun things to see and do. We recommend getting acquainted, or re-acquainted, with our lovely city, steeped in history... and Judaism? Savannah's Jewish population, including its founders (!), played a vital role in shaping the Savannahian way of life we know it today. Become a tourist in your own town this summer, remember why you love it here, and learn a thing or two along the way.

Visit Museums!

The Telfair Museums is the oldest public art museum in the South. Founded in 1883, the Museums consist of three buildings- The Telfair Academy and The Owens-Thomas House and Slave Quarters, both built in the early 19th century and National Historic Landmark sites, and the contemporary Jepson Center for the Arts and Telfair Children's Art Museum.



The Telfair Museums Jewish Connection: In 1790, Georgia Governor Edward Telfair granted a perpetual charter to Congregation Mickve Israel, establishing the congregation as “a body incorporate by the name and style of the “Parnas and Adjuntas’ of Mickve Israel at Savannah”. The Telfair has a long history of hosting exhibitions and programs related to Jewish art and culture. From June 13, 2025 – April 26, 2026, you can view Savannah based artist Lisa D. Watson's mixed media artwork, who has previously been a featured artist at the JEA's Montag Art Gallery.

Hang Out in Forsyth Park!

Forsyth Park is a “must-see” while in Savannah, boasting 30 acres of green space, majestic Oak tree lined sidewalks bordering the park, and the most photographed spot in the city- the iconic fountain. Erected in 1858, the fountain was designed to be the centerpiece of the park (even though its not placed in the center). Beautiful yes, but not unique- the fountain was chosen from a catalogue and similar fountains can be found in New York Peru and France.

Forsyth Parks Jewish Connection: Congregation Mickve Israel's famed Shalom Y'all Food Festival was held in Forsyth Park for decades, until 2017, when the festival was moved to Monterey Square.

Tour Congregation Mickve Israel!

Speaking of Monterey Square- Congregation Mickve Israel, one of the oldest Jewish congregations in the United States, and the only Gothic-style synagogue in North America, faces Monterey Square, and was founded in 1733 by Jewish settlers arriving in Savannah about the ship The William and Sarah. Visitors can explore the synagogues history through their library, museum exhibitions and tours.

Congregation Mickve Israel's Jewish Connection: is obvious, but be sure to see the two oldest Torah scrolls in North America while there. The scrolls date back to the 1400's!

Taste Honey!

The Savannah Bee Company, founded in 2002, began as a way to sell the best honey and beehive products while educating the public about honeybees. The Savannah Bee Company co-founded The Bee Cause Project, a non-profit focused on educating the youth about the importance of bees. You can visit any of their locations to participate in free honey-tastings.

The Savannah Bee Company's Jewish Connection: The Savannah Bee Company's honey is Kosher, has a KSA Kosher label on all of its honey jars, and their certification is renewed four times a year by Rabbi Yerucham Shochet of Kosher Savannah.

Continued on Page 25

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JUNE 26
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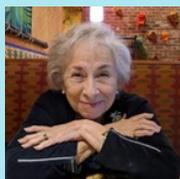
AUGUST 7
 Love Where You Live:
 National Georgia Day

AUGUST 14
 Prosecco:
 A History and Tasting

AUGUST 21
 Bases Loaded with Jackson
 Hollander; A Talk on Baseball

AUGUST 28
 My First Year in Savannah-
 Sam Friedman

SEPTEMBER 4
 Vital Bridge Wellness:
 Healthcare and Aging



Sherry Dolgoff Holocaust Art & Writing Contest

Lena Anne Smith, Savannah Arts Academy
 1st Place High School Writing
Elizabeth Carroll, Savannah Arts Academy
 2nd Place High School Writing

Aleksander Domazet, Savannah Arts Academy
 1st Place High School Music Composition
Hayden-Elijah Sills, Savannah Arts Academy
 2nd Place High School Music Composition

Nora Phillips, Hancock Day School
 1st Place Middle School Art
Reeves Romano, Hancock Day School
 1st Place Middle School Art
Jack Burt, Hancock Day School
 2nd Place Middle School Art
Emma Richter, Hancock Day School
 2nd Place Middle School Art
Pete Rosario, Hancock Day School
 3rd Place Middle School Art
Whiteney Mitchell, Hancock Day School
 3rd Place Middle School Art

Montag Gallery: Artists Spotlight

June 1-27: Karen Butch + Harris Lewis Reception Thursday, June 12, 5-7pm

Artist Karen McVay Butch received her BFA and MFA from the Savannah College of Art and Design. Her artwork includes paintings, installations, and costumed parades, while working in her family-owned restaurant Elizabeth on 37th.

Savannah native, Harris Lewis, started painting while a student in grade school most notably at the Telfair Academy. Later, while working as an attorney, he took workshops on watercolor and oil painting. Since retiring as a Chatham County Judge in 2017, Harris has enjoyed painting in studio and *plein air* painting at the Jepson Center. He has exhibited in shows at Downstairs Gallery, the Ships of the Sea Museum, The Learning Center of Senior Citizens, Inc., and the Savannah Art Association Gallery at the Savannah Airport.

For years, friends Karen and Harris have shared art studios and enjoy the camaraderie, helpful suggestions, and friendly critiques in a safe, shared space, yet their painting approaches are very different. Harris is an a-la-prima painter, the results are fresh and energetic. Karen's work is produced in layers, calculated to grow the composition.

Their art reflects their daily lives. Harris lives on the Vernon River and his landscapes display his deep love of the salt marshes. Karen's still life paintings often show her love of the table and food obsession. Both wish to thank their encouraging and forgiving husbands, John McEllen and Greg Butch.



June 29-July 1: Angela Hopper-Lee

**Red Carpet Opening Reception
Sunday, June 29, 3-5pm**



Angela Hopper-Lee is a professional photographer from Savannah, Georgia, who pursued her passion for photography at the Savannah College of Art and Design, where she earned a Bachelor's of Art Degree in Photography and Drawing. Her specialties include pet photography, capturing the essence of furry friends, children and families, and food photography, showcasing the culinary delights of the region.

She has always dreamed of having an art exhibit showcasing her work, and her first solo show, titled "Simple Me," will be a testament to celebrate her 25th year in the industry. To honor the community that has supported her business throughout her journey, she is hosting a special celebration to benefit The Savannah Children's Theatre Emergency Fund at the JEA Sunday, June 29th. All are welcome to come!

July 8-31: Allison Hall

Reception Thursday, July 10, 5-7pm



Allison Hall is an artist based in Savannah, Georgia who primarily uses gouache to paint florals, landscapes, and still lifes. Originally from Dallas, Texas, she constantly draws inspiration from the vast landscapes of her home state. Allison has a BFA in Illustration from SCAD, and still is enamored by the lush plant life of the low country. She's currently having lots of fun running Dreamhouse Studios, a collective artist work space she founded with her friends in Savannah's Starland District. dreamhousesavannah.com

August 1-31: Nicholas Seward

Reception Sunday, August 3, 3-5pm

Longtime JEA Member, **Nicholas Seward**, has been immersed in photography since he was seven years old. Having founded *True Creations Photography* in October 2006, he has dedicated the past 20 years to featuring over 2500 men and women across 24 states in his photographs. His work often combines themes of female body positivity and empowerment and explores women in positions of strength, especially early milestones in motherhood. Selected pieces in this show demonstrate photography beyond his usual focus, highlighting landscapes and moments between his journeys.



Love for
La La Land

A Benefit for California Creatives

Thank
you!

The Love for LaLaLand art benefit successfully raised over \$5000 to support the Grief x Hope fundraiser, helping California creatives affected by the recent wildfires. This initiative, launched by a group of LA artists and art workers, aims to provide financial aid to those who recently lost their homes, studios, and livelihoods. Thank you to all the artisans who participated in this special Tikkun Olam inspired show to repair the world.

- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Ann Lutz | Bellamy Murphy | Fran Burton | Kate Keiser | Mariana Langley | Seth Grenald |
| Anna Bliss | Betsy Cain | Hampton Watts | Katherine Sandoz | Mary Hartman | Shea Slemmer |
| Anna Ottum | Carmen Maria Aguirre | Heather L. Young | Lawrence Lerner | Molly Campbell | Steven Bliss |
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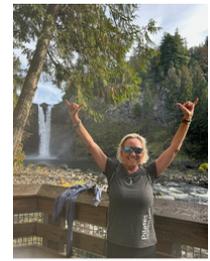
12 Benefits of Walking This Summer

Kat Ackerman

Master Trainer with Balanced Body and Personal Trainer at the JEA

I have been a runner all my life. As I'm getting older, I've started to enjoy walking more than running, and my husband and I have found evening walks very enjoyable and relaxing. Walking is one of the most accessible forms of exercise that almost everyone can do. Here are some benefits of going for a daily stroll.

- 1. Reduces chronic disease:** Walking can help reduce stroke, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and even some cancers.
- 2. Improves cardiovascular health:** Brisk walking can help reduce the risk of a heart attack and stroke by forcing oxygen-rich blood through the heart and brain to help strengthen both organs.
- 3. Improves weight management:** 5000 steps or fewer each day is considered sedentary. Walking can reduce the effects of sitting by increasing Lipoprotein Lipase (LPL), which helps metabolize fat into energy. The body burns approximately 100 calories for every mile walked. The more you walk, the more you burn.
- 4. Boosts energy levels:** Walking can make the body more efficient at converting oxygen into energy. It increases the blood flow, which also increases the oxygen in our bodies turning it into Energy!
- 5. Strengthens bones and muscles:** Walking is a weight-bearing exercise that can improve bone density and build muscle strength. Especially in our legs. It can help decrease and avoid the risk of osteoporosis and osteoarthritis.
- 6. Enhances sleep quality:** Walking can help regulate the body's natural sleep aid and help reduce insomnia. Evening walks, followed by stretching and a shower, can also help relax you for a solid night of sleep.
- 7. Increases brain function:** Walking can enhance problem-solving skills by improving cognitive function, memory, focus, and creativity.
- 8. Strengthens the immune system:** Walking is just good medicine. Increasing the oxygen-rich blood through the body can help kill bad cells, helping improve your immune system. Additionally, getting outside in the fresh air and nature will always help boost our energy and immune system.



9. Boosts Mood and Reduces Stress:

Walking releases endorphins, those natural mood boosters. Even a short walk can significantly reduce feelings of stress, anxiety, and even symptoms of depression. It's like a natural therapy session!

10. Improves Digestion: Gentle movement like walking can aid in the digestive process. It can help regulate bowel movements and prevent constipation.

11. Enhances Creativity: As you mentioned with brain function, the act of walking can actually spark creativity. The rhythmic movement and change of scenery can free up your mind and allow new ideas to surface. Many writers and thinkers have long extolled the virtues of a good walk for inspiration.

12. It's Socially Engaging: Walking with friends, family, or even joining a walking group can foster social connections and combat feelings of loneliness. Sharing a walk can be a great way to bond and support each other's well-being.

Walking should always be followed by stretching to improve the quality of your exercise. Now get out there with your family and friends and enjoy some good quality time together while improving your health and well-being!

In the hot and humid Savannah summer, prioritizing hydration is crucial to prevent heat exhaustion. Drinking 8-10 glasses of water daily is recommended, and electrolytes can be supplemented with low-sugar sports drinks or coconut water. Eating water-rich foods like watermelon and cucumber can also contribute to hydration.



Rambam Day School

Ester Rabhan, Principal



As our 2025 eighth graders prepare to graduate, we look back not only at this current year but reflectively on all their years at Rambam. They have accomplished so much: learning to read and write in both English and Hebrew, mastering math, delving into Talmud, exploring History, Prophets, Science, and Chumash (The Torah in text), and gaining a deep understanding of prayers, Jewish Laws, and Customs. What a breadth of knowledge they have gained to take with them to their respective high schools.

But their growth extends beyond academics. Over these formative years, our students have developed a strong sense of identity, character, and community.

Through school events, projects, and everyday interactions, they have internalized the values that define our heritage, compassion, integrity, perseverance, and a genuine commitment to our heritage.

It is with tremendous pride that we send off these young adults, confident that they will continue to shine in their next chapters. We see in them the leaders of tomorrow, deeply rooted in their Jewish identity yet prepared to engage thoughtfully and successfully with the wider world.

We are grateful to the dedicated faculty and staff who nurtured their minds and souls, and to their parents whose partnership has been essential every step of the way. May they be shining examples of fine young people whose lives were deeply influenced By Rambam Day School.

Mazal Tov to the Class of 2025 and their families! May you go from strength to strength.



It's Easier Than Ever to Find Your Family's Stories

Unlock your family's history with ease! The Breman, home to the Ida Pearle and Joseph Cuba Archives for Southern Jewish History and The Savannah Jewish Archives, offers an online search feature powered by ArchivesSpace, renowned for its state-of-the-art search capabilities. Dive into your family's stories with our user-friendly online research tool. Start exploring today at TheBreman.org for free!



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The Annual AA GALA will take place on
Sunday, August 10, 2025

BBYO

Jordan Jaffie, BBG Advisor

From April 4-6, 2025, Savannah BBYO participated in Eastern Region's Spring Cultural Convention at Camp Thunderbird in Lake Wylie, SC. Wexler Clark BBG and David Finn AZA proudly sent a delegation of 12 teens- 8 Alephs and 4 BBGs- who represented our community with energy, spirit, and leadership.

The weekend was filled with meaningful and impactful programming:

On Friday, teens gathered for a welcoming Shabbat dinner and services, followed by Separates programming where BBGs and Alephs participated in reflective discussions and activities. Chapters then showcased the music videos they had prepared prior to the convention, highlighting their creativity and teamwork.

Saturday included Shabbat morning services, followed by the chapter competition showcase, where teens presented songs, dances, and banners they created. In the spirit of community service, all participants took part in J-Serve projects, giving back to local causes. The Regional S'ganim (Vice Presidents) delivered the State of the Region address, celebrating Eastern Region BBYO's achievements over the past year. The day ended with the Chapter Relay Competition, Havdallah under the stars, and an emotional Life Ceremony honoring graduating seniors as they reflected on their BBYO journeys and looked ahead to their futures.

On Sunday, the teens elected their new Southeast Council leaders. Savannah BBYO is thrilled to share that two of our teens were elected to lead: Elana Ruben as Southeast Council's 62nd BBG N'siah (President) and Will Berman as Southeast Council's 62nd AZA Godol (President).

The weekend was a celebration of Jewish life, leadership, service, and community, and our Savannah teens made a lasting impact.



Elana Ruben



Over President's Day weekend, I, along with six other Jewish teens from Savannah, traveled to Denver for BBYO's annual International Convention. The adventure started on Thursday, where we reunited with camp, BBYO summer, and regional friends. We walked around the hotel for hours, cheering as more and more friends' buses arrived. The evening was filled with stories from the last six months and excitement for the weekend to come. We ended the night with regional spirit, an Andy Grammar concert, and meaningful messages from leaders around the order.

Friday was LEADs day, and I was lucky enough to explore the Denver Zoo and learn about all of the animals there. Back at the convention center, elections for the 101st and 81st International Boards took place. When we returned, it was time for Shabbat!

I attended a meaningful service with my friends, and ever made several new ones. After services and dinner, my BBYO Summer Program had a reunion with lots of singing, hugs, and pictures.

Saturday we finally got to see snow! I first went to a Shabbat service led by my closest camp friends and then spent most of the day walking around and meeting other teens from all around the world. I got to hear from actor and singer, Asher Angel, and went to a beautiful Havdalah service where we expressed our hope for the futures of Israel and Jewish teens.

On Sunday, all teens went sightseeing to various spots around Denver. I explored Meow Wolf, an immersive art playground, featuring magical worlds, mysteries to solve, and amazing details everywhere you look. That night, we heard performances from Swae Lee and Galantis during the BBYO Block Party, where there were activities set up all around the convention center!

I left the convention with a phone buzzing from messages from all my new friends, a bag filled with new BBYO merch, and a greater pride for my Jewish identity, inspired by all the other Jewish teens I met. IC 2025 was a truly unforgettable experience, and I am already counting down the days until IC 2026 in Philadelphia.

Finding Jewish Moments in Summer Journeys

Eva Locker, Principal



As summer approaches and families prepare for travel, there's a hidden opportunity tucked between flight delays, highway rest stops, and sandy car seats: the chance to explore Judaism in ways that are joyful, meaningful, and surprisingly fun.

Travel has a way of opening our eyes to the rich, diverse story of Jewish life around the world. Beyond the familiar stories of struggle and survival, we find Jewish bakeries in unexpected corners, historic synagogues, quirky museums, and communities that show how Judaism has flourished in countless ways. When we mix Jewish stops with the usual sightseeing—national parks, beach days, or even roller coasters—we teach our kids that Judaism isn't limited to Hebrew

school or holidays. It's a living, traveling companion.

Resources like Jewish Discoveries or even a quick call to a local JCC can help uncover hidden Jewish gems wherever your adventure takes you.

But let's be honest, traveling as a family doesn't always feel spiritual. Sometimes it's just about surviving the backseat fights and remembering where you packed the sunscreen. And that's okay. Jewish life is just as much about small, everyday moments: lighting Shabbat candles in an Airbnb kitchen, singing a Hebrew song during a hike, or blessing a snack on a road trip. No need to overthink it, just showing up with intention makes a difference.

And for those sending kids off to Jewish sleepaway camp: lucky you (and lucky them)! Camp is where Judaism gets messy, musical, and deeply memorable. Your child may not return quoting Maimonides, but they will come home humming Birkat Hamazon, wearing six friendship bracelets, and sharing stories about Shabbat under the stars. They'll learn to lead blessings, resolve cabin arguments with Jewish values (or at least try), and maybe master Israeli dancing between bug bites. It's Jewish learning by osmosis—and it sticks.

As a parent, I know that summer can feel like a sprint without a finish line. But even in the chaos, there are tiny windows for connection. Whether it's a crooked challah braid, an off-key Dayenu, or your child proudly explaining why we bless grape juice—it all counts. These little moments build a Jewish identity that's warm, lived, and personal.

For those feeling like you're just barely keeping up: you're not alone. And you're doing better than you think. Every moment you make space for connection, whether it's with your heritage, your family, or your community is another brick to the foundation.

This summer, let's mix in a bit of Jewish discovery with our travel adventures, and give our family the gift of seeing Judaism not just as a tradition, but as a meaningful companion on life's journey.

Wishing you a joyful, restful (well, restful-ish), and meaningful summer.

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Donating to a Savannah Jewish Community Foundation of Savannah fund is a wonderful way to honor a special simcha or life cycle event, honor the memory of a friend or loved one, or recognize someone in the community.

Stop by Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace Museum!

The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace Museum offers guided tours and information on Juliette Gordon Low's life and the beginnings of the Girls Scouts, founded in Savannah in 1912. The Museum is a National Historic Landmark and has a beautiful garden surrounding it that can be explored.

The Girl Scout's Jewish Connection: Three of the four original troop leaders in Savannah, Ga were Jewish- Leonora Amram, Mildred Guckenheimer and Henrietta Frank. The National Jewish Committee on Girl Scouting offers special badges related to Judaism and scouting, and the first commercially-produced Girl Scout cookies were made at the kosher Gottlieb's Bakery in Savannah in 1936.

Cheer on The Savannah Bananas at Grayson Stadium!

The Savannah Bananas is a baseball team known for its entertaining style of play group of players. They play a variation of baseball that they created, known as "Banana Ball", and now compete in exhibition games. The Savannah Bananas have been featured on MSNBC, CBS Sunday Morning, HBO, and ESPN to name a few.

The Savannah Bananas Jewish Connection: The Bananas' Premier Team Head Coach, Nate Fish, is referred to "The King of Jewish Baseball", and has played professional baseball in Germany, Puerto Rico, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, and Israel. Also, Jesse Cole, the owner of The Savannah Bananas is Jewish.



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- Wes Putman, Owner of Papa's BBQ & Seafood on Whitemarsh Island

On The Personal Side

Mazel Tov To

Sofia Chernyak, daughter of Nina and Mikhail, who became a bat mitzvah on March 1st at Congregation Mickve Israel.

Stellan Carroll, son of Robyn and Sam, who became a bar mitzvah on March 8th at Congregation Agudath Achim.

Jordan and Amish Shah on the birth of their daughter, Emme on April 3rd. Proud grandparents are **Betty and Bubba Rosenthal**.

Emilia Mackowiak, daughter of Lisa and Ben, who became a bat mitzvah on April 5th at Congregation Mickve Israel.

Sofia Tillinger, daughter of Jenny and Aaron, who became a bat mitzvah on May 10th at Congregation Agudath Achim.

Rachel Walcoff, daughter of Leslje and Andrew, who became a bat mitzvah on May 17th at Congregation Agudath Achim.

Lori Loncon and Scott Samuels on their engagement.

Arlene Schwartz on her installation as a Woman of Valor with Women of Mickve Israel.

Sheila Weinberg on her installation as a Woman of Valor with Women of Mickve Israel.

Darren Rodriguez on 25 years of service with Congregation Mickve Israel.

Jodi Sadler on her retirement and dedication as Director of JEA Preschool Savannah.

Cheryl Lansing on her retirement and dedication as CFO of Savannah Jewish Federation and Jewish Educational Alliance.

Laney Berman, on receiving the Rubinitz Family Scholarship, Henry W. Center College Scholarship and the Jacob and Ida W. Ulman College Scholarship.



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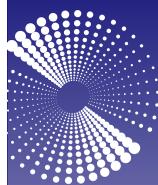
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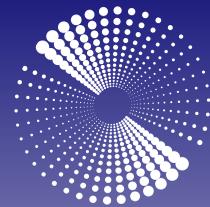
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August 17th at 9:30am

Welcome Back Party
August 17th at 12:30pm

Don't miss out on our vibrant programs open to the entire community! Get firsthand information about our Spring events listed above, temple announcements, volunteer opportunities, and so much more on our website. Sign up for our weekly newsletter by emailing info@mickveisrael.org

SHABBAT SERVICE TIMES



Friday nights
6:00 pm

Saturday mornings
11:00 am

www.youtube.com/mickveisraelsavannah

SHALOM SCHOOL



Sundays at CMI
9:30am - 12:30pm

Wednesdays at AA
4:45pm - 6:30pm

www.theshalomschool.com





Bedikat HaMayim

The 1st International Pre-Passover Jewish Waterfront Cleanup

On April 6, **The Savannah Jewish Federation, Jewish Educational Alliance, PJ Library and PJ Our Way** partnered with **Repair the Sea** in the 1st International Pre-Passover Jewish Waterfront Cleanup. We chose Tybee Beach, and together, we collected over 55 lbs. of trash!

We had so much fun, we're doing it again!

Mark your calendar

Sunday, September 28, 2025

