

The JEWISH REVIEW

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The eastside is a happening place

BY DEBORAH MOON

Jewish options are multiplying on Portland's eastside in the Eastside Jewish Commons' beautiful, airy new home conveniently located on Sandy Boulevard.

"Our goal is to offer space to the community at low cost ... (to enable) lots of different flavors for Jewish life," says EJC Board Chair Mia Birk.

Congregation Shir Tikvah, the leaseholder for the 13,000-square-foot space, moved into a suite of four offices off the entry vestibule at 2420 NE Sandy Blvd. on May 1 and held its first full Shabbat service and activities June 26. In July, as COVID restrictions lifted and the new executive director came on board, EJC and its partners began presenting bigger activities.



Young campers enjoy B'nai B'rith Camp's first eastside day camp July 12-16. The new Eastside Jewish Commons will be home for many community programs, including two more weeks of BB Day Camp Eastside Aug. 2-6 and Aug. 9-13.

"The energy in the Commons this first week has been amazing," says Cara Abrams, who began her position as EJC Executive Director on

July 6. "From giving tours to interested community organizations and individuals, to connecting with Jewish See EJC, page 10

Hand in Hand models coexistence



The Hand in Hand alumni network has created a revolutionary web series called Mish Mish. In each episode, alumni hosts Noa and Juman explore pop culture, art, music and cultural identity across Israel. Learn something new and be challenged a bit in each new episode. Check out all the episodes at handinhandk12.org/mish-mish-episodes/.

BY DEBORAH MOON

A bilingual, multicultural school in Israel cofounded by a Portland native has become a model of coexistence in a time when that approach is in short supply.

Founded with one school in Jerusalem, Hand in Hand now has seven schools throughout Israel, with more than 2,000 students ages 3 to 18. Students learn both Hebrew and Arabic from Jewish and Arab co-teachers.

"Hand in Hand is a model of coexistence – a model people can see works," says cofounder Lee Gordon. "It's going to take more than Hand in Hand for reconciliation, (but) we are part of that process to bring people together."

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MJCC reopens as “living room of community”

BY DEBORAH MOON

The Mittleman Jewish Community Center is poised to reclaim its title as the “living room of the Jewish community” as the lobby reopens, in-person classes resume and sports options expand.

But as COVID restrictions have been relaxed, the MJCC moves forward into a new normal drawing on the lessons learned during 16 months of pandemic existence. The J has received several grants to upgrade the ballroom to facilitate hybrid events. Hybrid events allow those outside the metro area or those unable to come to the J to attend virtually the many community events held in the ballroom during normal years. Fitness classes, Hebrew conversation and knitting club continue to have online options.

“The pandemic has allowed us to leverage technology to serve a larger area – we are the only JCC in the state,” says MJCC Executive Director Steve Albert. “It is another tool in the toolbox to serve the community.”

The center posts updates on open hours, programs and guidelines on its website at oregonjcc.org/we-are-open. The webpage notes: “A great deal will be changing at the MJCC in the coming weeks as we gradually reopen facilities and resume programs and services. Our reopening will take place in stages, and we’ve included an overview of these phases.”

Steve notes that the dates for



The lobby at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center is starting to feel like the community's living room once again.



Basketball players have returned to the MJCC gym for drop-in games and practice 11 am-1 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

expanded hours and programs on the page reflect both the center's ability to hire necessary staff and assumes that the state or city will not need to reimpose COVID restrictions.

Drop-in basketball has returned to the J's gym to bring friends and strangers together three days a week for physical activity and camaraderie, just one of the ways recreation is returning to the J as we emerge from the global pandemic.

Members can now use the pool without reservations and can reserve racquetball courts and basketball courts during open hours. MJCC day camps and specialty camps presented by the Skyhawks are meeting in the J's Sportsplex and in the gym. Adult and youth soccer leagues, which met in the spring, will return in full force in the fall season.

Also set to return by fall is the Café at the J (oregonjcc.org/about-us/cafe-at-the-j), which

expects to resume serving food inside around the time Portland Jewish Academy students return to campus Aug. 31. Until then, the Café will continue to offer kosher meals to go for Shabbat and holidays. And owner Allen Levin continues to offer kosher, plant-based meals at Garbonzos food cart in the MJCC parking lot. (Those attending events such as concerts and films at the Zidell Yards on the South Waterfront also can enjoy Garbonzos' falafel, veggie kofta made from Beyond Burger, grilled vegetable plates, and a variety of salads and dips).

On July 12, guests were once again welcomed to the center, and guest passes to use the pools and fitness facilities became available. That week, an array of in-person programs began meeting in the lobby. Canasta and Mah Jongg classes began in person. More classes and cultural programs will be added in the coming weeks. The “Shabbat table” in the lobby once again features information from local synagogues to help people find a place to celebrate Shabbat. Other tables feature MJCC program information, local resources and publications, including printed copies of the Jewish Review. Bulletin boards hold community announcements.

All of which gives the space the renewed feeling of a comfortable and inviting living room.

Frieda Cohen to receive Nemer Award on 101st birthday

Congregation Shaarie Torah Men's Club will present the Harry R. Nemer Service Award to Frieda Cohen on her 101st birthday. The 10 am, July 25, event will be on Zoom.

This event was originally planned for 2020 on Frieda's 100th birthday but was postponed due to the pandemic.

The event will include a musical piece by Michael Allen Harrison, remarks from Rabbi Joshua Rose and Rabbi Arthur Zuckerman, a family history at Shaarie Torah with Rick 2 Jewish Review July 21, 2021

Cohen, award presentation by Steph Kotkins and awardee remarks by Frieda.

An article that ran in a 2014 Shaarie Torah Bulletin included several quotes from Frieda: “I’ve been associated with Shaarie Torah so long that everything about it is a part of me. It’s like being home. Shaarie Torah has been an intrinsic part of our lives. I want Shaarie Torah to continue for many more generations. My family has always felt that you need to take care of what’s important to you.

It’s been a tradition.”

Frieda's father and mother came to Portland from Russia in 1909 and joined Shaarie Torah. Frieda's recollections of growing up in the Jewish enclave in South Portland are included in *We Lived There, Too* and *The Jews of Oregon, 1850-1950*.

Frieda and her late husband, Ben, started an automotive supply business more than 70 years ago. Frieda continued to work there until she was 98 and her son, Richard, and three of her four grandsons also



Frieda Cohen and son, Richard.

joined the business.

To register for the Zoom link, email cst@shaarietorah.org.

The event will livestream on Shaarie Torah's website shaarietorah.org/stream/, [Facebook](#) and [YouTube channel](#).

30 years after Operation Solomon, a painting stirs memories of rescue

BY DEBORAH MOON

Thirty years ago, Steve “Rosy” Rosenberg was board president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland as Federations worldwide raised millions of dollars to help airlift nearly 15,000 Jews from Ethiopia to Israel.

This month, he and his wife, Ellen Lippman, hosted one of those evacuees for Shabbat dinner in Tel Aviv.

“Nirit, who came to Shabbat dinner by us this month, was 6 years old when she boarded one of those flights,” says Rosy. “Last year, she was named Israel’s best young artist and now appears in exhibitions around the world. It took us two years to convince her to sell one of her paintings to us. We were honored to have her share her story and art with us on this historic Shabbat.”

Jewish Federation of Greater Portland President and CEO Marc Blattner recently shared about the 30th anniversary of Operation Solomon in his weekly [Marc’s Remarks](#) email.

In his column, Marc wrote: “What is less widely known is that at the last-minute American Jews (including through our Jewish Federation) raised \$35 million to cover the (ransom) payment demanded by the Ethiopian government to allow the Jews to leave the country.”

The speaker at that Federation dinner 30 years ago was to have been Senator Rudolph Ely Boschwitz, who had just finished negotiating that deal with the Ethiopian president for the bribe.

“Unfortunately, he canceled because he was busy working on the deal,” says Rosy.

Hearing Nirit’s story now was inspirational and an honor, he adds.

“Nirit served in the IDF at a border crossing,” he says. “When she told the story, she broke down in tears remembering the death of her friend, who was killed in a terror incident at the crossing. After the IDF, she got a menial job at a factory putting buttons on clothes. One day when she passed Shenkar (School of Engineering and Design near Tel Aviv) – Israel’s premier college for the arts along with Bezalel (Academy of Arts and Design) – she decided she wanted to go there. Within weeks, she put together a portfolio to present to administrators for admission. She had very little formal art training. She talked her way into a full scholarship and some money to live on ... And the rest is history.”

Nirit’s story from Ethiopia to international acclaim is told in depth in an April



Nirit Takele, left, was only 6 years old when she was one of 14,300 Ethiopian Jews who were airlifted on 35 aircrafts from Addis Ababa (Ethiopia’s capital) to Israel in less than 36 hours. Steve “Rosy” Rosenberg, who was board president of Portland’s Jewish Federation at the time, recently purchased one of Nirit’s paintings. Below, Rosy and his wife, Ellen Lippman, hosted the now famous young artist for a Shabbat dinner in Tel Aviv. The couple and the artist were joined for dinner by Portlanders Bianca and Tony Urdes and their daughter. The Urdes’ shared their own escape to freedom stories – from Romania. The Urdes family recently became Israeli citizens.



2019 article in Haaretz ([haaretz.com](https://www.haaretz.com)).

The [article](#) relates: “In 2016, when she was 30, she completed her studies and her star began to rise. About 10 months later, her painting ‘Mikveh’ was acquired for the Israel Museum. The work explores an experience described by an Ethiopian immigrant in a documentary in which she was forced to immerse in a ritual bath under the withering eye of Orthodox rabbis who doubted her Jewishness.”

The Haaretz article calls Nirit one of the biggest successes in the younger generation of Israeli artists with Ethiopian roots.

“This personal story showcases the incredible work of the Jewish Federation system,” said Marc after seeing Rosy’s post about Nirit on Facebook. “We truly are responsible one for each other. And, even more so, one never knows the incredible future talents and achievements of those we may save.”

Song of Miriam 2020-21 honorees, part 4



For 27 years, the Jewish Women's Round Table has recognized women volunteers in the community at its Song of Miriam Awards Brunch.

In the face of the pandemic, the brunch was cancelled last year. This year, JWRT leaders still believed it would not be safe to hold an indoor event that often draws more than 300 people.

Since the first brunch in June 1993, between 15 and 23 women have received the annual award. Honorees have been selected by more than 25 congregations and organizations. Nearly 500 women have been honored since the award was created.

JWRT and the Jewish Review have united to ensure Song of Miriam Award nominees from 2020 and 2021 get the recognition they deserve. Throughout the next few issues, the Review will feature pictures of honorees along with a description of their work and why they are valuable to their organizations.

Following is the fourth group of three women whose organizations selected them to receive the Song of Miriam.

The final three honorees will be profiled in the Aug. 4 issue of the Jewish Review.

LIZA MILLINER

Honored by Congregation Neveh Shalom

Liza Milliner started her volunteer work at Neveh Shalom as youth director for USY/Kadima and then served on the membership, adult education and long-term planning committees.

She joined the board of directors 10 years ago and now serves on the executive board.

Liza was involved in the founding of Keshet, the LGBTQ group at the synagogue. She was instrumental in organizing and creating Jewish Pride Greater PDX, where Jewish organizations came together as a community to march in Portland's Pride Parade. Liza recently cochaired, with her wife, Beth, a very successful virtual fundraiser/auction.

Liza was one of 20 volunteers in the Portland community accepted to participate in the Wexner Heritage Leadership Program. This two-year commitment includes intensive Jewish learning and leadership training.

Liza is cheerful, a good listener and a dedicated volunteer who happily takes on responsibilities. She is an example of the new leadership in the Jewish community.

Neveh Shalom looks forward to seeing Liza continue as a leader at the synagogue and in the community and says "Kol Hakavod" (All Honors), Liza!



DIANA LINDEMANN

Honored by Hadassah of Portland

Diana Lindemann is a first-generation American and second-generation descendant of Holocaust survivors who came to the United States to start a new life.

Because of that history, in 2010 Diana organized a group for children of survivors and refugees called the "Next Generations Group," which now has more than 200 regular followers. The support and technical skills of family members as well as the atmo-



sphere of togetherness created by Diana at group gatherings has helped build the group.

Hadassah has been part of Diana's life since childhood, and she recently stepped down as Portland president. Her accomplishments include organizing health seminars, teas and author visits. She brought enthusiasm to the task of delegating tasks to the right people, and her positive attitude infected others and was felt in the tasks she took on herself.

Diana has served on several boards in the Jewish community and helped with fundraising events for local and national organizations.

Being part of the community and helping where needed has always been a part of her family's values. Diana is inspired by her parents, who taught her to give back to the community that helped her family start new lives in Portland.

SHERYL CHOMAK

Honored by P'nai Or

P'nai Or refers to their honoree, Sheryl Chomak, as its "Holy Poet, Occupy-Portland Prophet, Deep-Heart Giving Member, Eternal Friend of the No Longer Living, Lover of Justice, and phenomenal Passover and Event Cook."



During the past pandemic year, Sheryl has been a vital, regular participant in P'nai Or's Zoom communities, including chant group, shiva minyans and Torah writing group. She also advocated for those who needed it, either for individuals or as part of peaceful human rights groups.

Following years of professional work as a psychologist with a focus on helping clients deal with trauma, she retired several years ago to devote time to her beloved garden, family, congregation and volunteer work.

Her service has included volunteering at a homeless shelter, helping to care for community members with serious health issues, and cooking for both individual congregants in need and the congregation's Passover seders.

Sheryl's sense of humor and infectious laughter help lift everyone up, particularly when she comes to events dressed as a banana. She is an incredible cook, talented writer, wise leader, beautiful singer and has a passion for Torah study.

P'nai Or calls Sheryl a "shining light" in the congregation.

You can read the first nine profiles of Marni Glick, Eliana Temkin, Sam Perrin, Hannah Berkowitz, Joni Plotkin, Kathleen Doctor, Robin Ellison, Carol Ray Richmond and Shari Raider at jewishportland.org/jewishreview/jr-stories/song-of-miriam-awards-part-1

Glen Coblens named Maccabiah head coach

Portlander Glen Coblens has been named head coach of the Team USA Men's Over 45 Basketball Team for the 21st Maccabiah Games in Israel in July 2022. The Maccabiah Games, also known as the Jewish Olympics, are the third-largest international multi-sport event in the world.

"My first Maccabi experience was as an accommodations manager in the 1999

Pan American Maccabi Games in Mexico City," says Glen. "Since then, I have served as a team manager, delegation head, chair, coach and athlete. (The year) 2022 will be my fifth World Maccabiah Games and overall my 11th Maccabi Games (Pan American, Australia and European Games)."

Glen is president of Congregation Neveh Shalom, a board member at Maccabi USA, a cochair of the Portland JCC Maccabi Games steering committee and a member of B'nai B'rith Men's Camp. In 2019, he was inducted into the Oregon Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

"I am honored and excited to coach the Master's 45+ team next summer," says Glen, adding that he hopes this article will prompt interest in the Maccabiah. "Try-outs for most sports are taking place this summer and fall. I am always happy to talk with interested athletes, parents, coaches, team managers, etc. I am one of the lucky ones who has served in every capacity for Maccabi USA."

Though he doesn't know any local players likely to join his team, he does know three basketball players he is pushing to try out



for the Masters 35 and over team and there is a 17-year-old in Seaside trying out for the under 18 Men's Basketball team.

"In addition, my uncle Alan Montrose will compete in tennis," says Glen. "I know there are a bunch of talented soccer players in the area, so I hope they will give it a shot. I would be happy to talk with anyone about my experience and encourage them to jump at the opportunity."

Glen invites prospective Maccabians to contact him with any questions at 503-705-6295 or glenoblens@yahoo.com.

For Glen, the Maccabiah is important because it combines his deep passion for sports and Israel with his Jewish heritage. "Having a Maccabi family who are like-minded Jews around the country and the world strengthens my Jewish identity and brings joy to me and my family," he says.

Next summer, Glen plans to be in Israel for the games with his wife, Mia Birk, and their youngest child, Levy, now 9. Since Mia has family in Israel, they will probably go early or stay later to spend time with them. Their older children likely will be unable to join them as Skyler (22) has a full-time job in New York, and Sasha (19) will be a sophomore at Cal Poly and enjoys working at BB Camp as a counselor in the summer.

As a Maccabi athlete, Glen has won one gold, one silver and one bronze medal in basketball, and a silver medal in the half-marathon and open water swimming. He also finished fourth in the 2017 Maccabi Man competition, which included four endurance events held over seven days.

As an age-group competitor in triathlons, Glen completed his first Ironman, Ironman Arizona, in 2019. He will compete in the Oregon Half Ironman July 25 attempting to qualify for Worlds in the Half Ironman (70.3 miles).

This summer, he will captain of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Hood to

Coast team, 2 Life. This will be his 25th Hood to Coast. On Aug. 27-28, 2021, relay teams of 8 to 12 members each run 199 miles from Timberline Lodge to Seaside.

"I would not miss the opportunity to run and be with our great team," says Glen. "We are so fortunate to have such fun community members. While it can be challenging to run three times in a day, laughing with your teammates makes it a little easier."

Glen is a consultant for AMPLify Sports Psychology, where he counsels athletes, teams, coaches, parents, officials and program directors.

Glen was a member of the 1985 Wilson High School state championship basketball team, where he also competed in track and field. In college, he played basketball and ran track for Western Oregon University. In 2013, Glen won a masters basketball national championship for the Multnomah Athletic Club.

Glen has more than 30 years of coaching experience at youth, high school, college, professional and international levels, winning three gold medals in international competition, a national championship and coach of the year honors. He currently leads a youth basketball program and mentors youth coaches and has been instrumental in forming youth programs for Portland-area high schools. He founded PDX Hoops, which concentrates on youth skill development.

Along with a group of parents, Glen created Benchwarmers Basketball, now Pacific Rim Basketball, a nonprofit organization for competitive traveling teams, to help youth develop as people through basketball.

Maccabi USA is the official sponsor of the United States team to the World Maccabiah Games and the Pan American and European Maccabi Games, as well as a sponsor of the JCC Maccabi Games for teens in North America. Learn more at maccabiusa.com.

Shaarie Torah reflects back, looks forward

Congregation Shaarie Torah held its annual meeting via Zoom on Sunday, June 27. The congregation had the chance to toast to Rabbi Joshua Rose as his time on the CST pulpit came to an end. Video greetings from many in the community, including Jordan Schnitzer, were shared in a lovely tribute. Rabbi Gary Oren, who has now arrived at Shaarie Torah, also sent a recorded message wishing success to Rabbi Rose in his next venture. The last section of the meeting was a series of reflections by Rabbi Rose on his time with the congregation.

The meeting also included the election

of new and continuing board members and the honoring of retiring trustees. New trustees are Eva Celnik and Allison Fowler. The three retiring trustees are Tamir Heyman, Linda Nemer Singer and Robert Sturtz.

Moving forward, the synagogue community is welcoming Rabbi Gary Oren as he settles in Portland. Plans are under way for the High Holy Days and the rabbi's installation.

The congregation continues its gradual reopening with regular weekly office hours and limited in-person services throughout the summer.



CST presented Rabbi Rose with this framed print by Safed-based artist David Friedman, which he opened onscreen with his family.

Michael Jeser receives Sherut L'am Award

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) awarded Michael Jeser, a graduate of the Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management (then School of Jewish Communal Service), with the Sherut L'Am Award on July 6, 2021. The Sherut L'Am Award recognizes exceptional service to the College-Institute or to the Jewish People.

Jeser spent three years as director of financial resource development at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, leaving in 2018 to become CEO of the Jewish Federation of San Diego County. In Portland, he oversaw all aspects of the Federation's annual and supplemental fundraising campaigns. He also created PDX Pathways, JFGP's flagship leadership development and mentoring program for young Jewish leaders.

"This is a well-deserved honor for Michael," says JFGP President and CEO Marc Blattner of his former colleague. He was "an exceptional Jewish professional and a tremendous asset to the Portland Jewish community before moving San Diego. The hardest part is that his health is preventing him from doing the work he loves."

As a fundraiser at heart, Jeser helped to establish the Michael Jeser and Paul Jeser Scholarship Fund at the ZSchool (then SJCS) in 2005. He recently created a very personal fundraiser and introduced it with these words: "Nearly four years after being initially diagnosed with esophageal cancer, I am sadly losing the insidious war being waged against my body and my family. As we prepare for the inevitable, we are all focusing on my quality of life and spending invaluable and unforgettable time together as a family. We are cuddling, hugging and holding each other a little bit tighter. Hugs and kisses from Laura and Eleanore are undoubtedly the brightest part of my day." Learn more and make a gift at gofundme.com/f/f8p4z-embracing-the-jeser-family.

Jeser was honored for his years of dedicated service to the Jewish people as CEO of JFSDC, which cares for Jews in need, connects San Diego to Israel and strengthens Jewish identity. Past recipients of the distinguished award include Debbie Friedman, Ilene and Stanley Gold, Gideon Kaufman, Deborah Lipstadt and Lenny Thal.

Jeser's Sherut L'Am Award was presented by Marla Abraham '85, Director, Western Region, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, in a private ceremony in the presence of Jeser's parents Faye and Paul, his wife Laura and his 4-year-old daughter Eleanore, who helped to explode a confetti cannon and shout mazal tov after Abraham presented the award.

Erik Ludwig, Director of the Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management, said "The Sherut L'Am Award is well-deserved recognition of Michael's exemplary service to the Jewish people. The professional achievements, the friendships and the quiet repair of a broken world are testament to the sacred intention of Michael's leadership and his gift to future generations."

His career has included significant roles in and out of the national Federation system, serving in senior management, fundraising and program positions with Jewish community centers, Jewish summer camps and as the executive director of Hillel at the University of Southern California for four years.



Michael Jeser with wife, Laura, and daughter, Eleanore.

Staff news

Building services director returns to CSP

Tammy Heard has returned to Cedar Sinai Park to serve as the building services director. CSP provides residential and community-based care to elders and adults with special needs in an environment based on Jewish values.

On April 12, Tammy resumed the position she left 2½ years ago. As building services director, she assures the grounds are clean and welcoming, the staff is taken care of and the major departments are running smoothly.

"Tammy is the consummate person-centered professional," says CSP CEO Kimberly Fuson. "She serves with her whole heart. Residents, families and staff trust her implicitly. Tammy is a common-sense, solution-oriented leader who understands that relationship is the foundation of service."

Tammy has lived in Portland since she was 12. She previously worked at CSP for about 16 years.

"For many years, I called Cedar Sinai Park my home," says Tammy. "An opportunity arose at Terwilliger Plaza that offered me the prospect for personal growth as well as some much-needed additional presence with my family. I came to know and love many people and enjoyed my time there, but when I heard of the position becoming available at CSP, I knew it was my chance to come back home. The part of my career that I love the most has to be the connection with my residents and coworkers ... we work amazingly (well) as a team."

Additionally, CSP interim executive assistant Angela Deverell is staying on permanently at the senior living campus. As of June 30, 2021, Angela is the executive assistant to CSP Chief Executive Officer Kimberly Fuson. Her most recent work as executive assistant was with the global not-for-profit educational services organization, Northwest Evaluation Association.



JFGP hires marketing associate Joey Endler

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland has hired Joey Endler as the marketing associate. He will work closely with Federation staff on social media efforts.

Joey began his new role on July 12. During the pandemic, he worked a variety of freelance and part-time jobs that used his skills in copywriting, blogging, marketing and social media management.

"I'm thrilled to have Joey start as our marketing associate," says JFGP Director of Marketing and Communications Jodi Garber-Simon. "It's so helpful to have a team when you are engaged in a creative process, and I am really looking forward to having a colleague to brainstorm with and share the workload. Joey has experience with social media marketing, and we look forward to putting those skills to work for Federation."

Joey was born in Chicago and moved to Portland when he was 5. Judaism has always been an important part of his identity. He attended Jewish preschool and then Hebrew school until becoming a bar mitzvah at Congregation Beth Israel. Joey spent many summers at B'nai B'rith Camp. He received his degree in public relations and advertising from the University of Oregon and was a leader of the AEPi Jewish fraternity on campus.

In his free time, he enjoys watching sports, playing with his cat and trying new craft beers.



Departing MJDS principal reflects on successes

BY DEBORAH MOON

Maimonides Jewish Day School Principal Rabbi Shneur Wilhelm leaves Portland this summer to serve as vice principal of the Desert Torah Academy in Las Vegas, Nev., a school with more than 250 students.

Karen DeNardo will take the reins of Maimonides as principal this summer. (See related story below.) Devora Wilhelm will retain her title as school director and serve on the transition team.

A Portland native, Rabbi Shneur attended the predecessor of MJDS as a child after his mother Devora established it 36 years ago. He returned to Portland seven years ago to teach at MJDS. A year later, he became the day school's principal. Rabbi Shneur was approached by Desert Torah Principal Rabbi Moshe Rodman about joining the school. Rabbi Shneur says Rabbi Rodman has been his mentor for several years, helping Maimonides navigate the path to accreditation. Rabbi Shneur will succeed him as principal after a year as vice principal.



Maimonides now serves students in kindergarten through 8th grade. During Rabbi Shneur's tenure, MJDS became the first school in the Pacific Northwest to be accredited for both its Judaic and general studies programs; the school also introduced a Montessori-inspired curriculum. In addition, Maimonides joined the Legacy Heritage Better Together Program to establish multi-generational programs at Cedar Sinai Park.

Jemi Kostiner Mansfield, now executive director of Congregation Shaarie Torah, was the CSP spiritual life director in 2015 when Rabbi Shneur ap-

Farewell Event July 28

Rabbi Shneur, his wife, Chaya, and their children will move to Las Vegas the first week of August. The community will have the opportunity to say goodbye to the family at a gathering at 5 pm, July 28, at the school, 6612 SW Capitol Hwy.

RSVP to office@portland-jewishschool.com.

proached her about building intergenerational social opportunities between Maimonides students and residents of CSP's Rose Schnitzer Manor.

"What started as a loosely structured pre-Shabbat sing-along in late 2015 became Torah & Us, a focused weekly parsha study created by the older boys, complete with audio and visual aids," says Jemi. "The program continued to gain traction in 2016 and expanded to include Tea & Torah, where some of the female students brought homemade baked goods to share with the residents over a cup of tea and teaching. Eventually, challah-making emerged on the

MJDS-CSP scene, cementing a strong and special relationship between the two organizations."

"These programs would not have flourished were it not for Rabbi Shneur's vision and encouragement to let the students lead," says Jemi.

The past year offered fresh challenges. When COVID closed schools in March 2020, Maimonides pivoted quickly. Within four days, the school was providing online classes. MJDS obtained an emergency child care license and was able to have children on the campus while parents worked. The school also offered a wide range of extracurricular activities including a weekly virtual art class. You can see more highlights from the past year at mailchi.mp/portlandjewishschool/thank-you-for-a-great-year-2021-highlights.

The rabbi is proud of the culture that evolved during his seven years at the school.

"Our biggest achievement during that time is to create a culture that successfully executes

See MJDS PRINCIPAL, page 13

Maimonides hires Principal Karen DeNardo

BY DEBORAH MOON

Karen DeNardo has been hired as principal of Maimonides Jewish Day School beginning with the 2021-22 school year. She succeeds Rabbi Shneur Wilhelm (see related story above).

Karen served as a principal in Wisconsin for nine years before moving to Portland in 2016 to join her two daughters, who moved here when one attended Portland State University.



For the past five years, Karen has worked at PSU as a university supervisor mentoring student teachers and serving as the link between the university and school districts. She had connected MJDS with two teachers in past years and was talking to Rabbi Shneur about a teacher for the coming year when he told her he was also looking for someone to replace him as principal.

Although Karen had not planned to seek another position as principal, she says she

had missed "the interactions with a variety of people – not just students but the community and staff. It is such a rich career." So she soon found herself talking to Rabbi Shneur and his mother, Devora Wilhelm, who is the school's founder and director.

"I was drawn to be able to serve a community so rich in support for each other," says Karen. "The closeness and support I see between various elements of the school ... I love being able to add my energy to that mix."

"She fits our mission of personal, meaningful and empowering – she puts students first," says Devora.

When Devora called the Wisconsin district where Karen had worked, she was impressed by the lengths Karen had gone to ensure the students in her low-income school were ready and able to learn – including getting a washer and dryer for the school. "She really cares for children, and she understands education."

Karen says she did many things to help students at the school where 98% qualified for free lunch, but jokes, "everybody always talks about the washer and dryer."

She says she was able to buy the appliances because for five years her school won an award (that included additional funding) as a school that beat the odds and racked up high standardized test scores.

"You have to meet the students' needs so they can come and be ready to learn," says Karen.

With the award funding, Karen also brought in trainers from the *Comprehension Toolkit* series developed by Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis.

She says the school was able to exceed expectations on standardized tests because of the creativity her teachers would teach reading standards using social studies and science. "We double dipped on time," she says.

She expects to follow that same double-dipping approach at Maimonides. With both Judaic and general curricula to cover, she says the school is ideally suited to use those creative tools to teach multiple skills in one lesson.

For more information, email Karen at Karen@portlandjewishschool.com or visit portlandjewishschool.com.

HAND IN HAND (Continued from page 1)



A recent graduate from the integrated Hand in Hand school in Jerusalem is flanked by the principal and assistant principal with the school's head teacher and his parents. The Jerusalem Hand in Hand is one of the seven Hand in Hand schools.

Gordon cofounded Hand in Hand with Amin Khalaf, an Israeli Arab Muslim, in 1997. The first integrated school opened with one class in Jerusalem the following year. After living in Israel for 20 years, Gordon returned to Portland in 1999 to launch the American Friends of Hand in Hand and to be closer to his then 90-year-old father, William (Bill) Gordon, z"l.

Hand in Hand recently completed a survey of alumni ranging in age from 18 to 28 (see more results at https://handinhandk12.org/alumni_evaluation_2021/). Among other findings, the survey revealed:

- Bilingualism: 89% of HIH alumni report that their knowledge of the other's language has had a significant positive impact on their perception of the other.

- Multiculturalism: 90% feel it is easy for them to connect with people from different backgrounds than their own.

- Social responsibility: 73% feel that their HIH education provided them the tools to make a positive difference in Israeli society.

As one alumnus from the Wadi Ara school noted, "It's not just a theoretical discussion of shared society or a limited experience; it's living shared society every day." (See more alumni quotes in box.)

"A sizable number of our alumni are really engaged," says Gordon.

Hand in Hand alumni are highly educated, attending prestigious universities both in Israel and abroad, and are employed in a range of fields, most predominantly education, nonprofit and government. One group of alumni has created a "cultural magazine" online (see photo on page 1). He says past segments have featured a punk band, Palestinian filmmaker and other hip cultural topics.

Just as important as the alumni's views

and actions are the new families who join the schools each year, according to Gordon. "Every year, we add a new cohort of young children, so our foundation has stability."

During the recent Hamas-Israel conflict, riots erupted in mixed cities in Israel with "mostly young men" on both sides engaged in violent attacks.

"Our older Hand in Hand students were really active in anti-violence vigils," says Gordon. "Our executive director was invited to speak at the Knesset."

Gordon says Hand in Hand has far exceeded the founders' modest expectations.

"We were afraid to dream too big," he says. "It was such a revolutionary concept. People said no one would send their kids to an integrated school."

Now the schools are a visible part of Israeli society. The schools are accredited and receive funding from the Israel Ministry of Education in addition to parent fees and international philanthropy.

Hand in Hand students score higher on standardized tests than those at other schools and enjoy a trilingual (students also learn English) education with small classes. "(That) has attracted many parents who would not have met people from the other community," says Gordon.

Gordon oversees the American Friends office in Multnomah Village with the help of two part-time employees to raise funds and awareness of the multicultural schools. He says many of Portland's rabbis have visited the schools and taken congregants to see them. Gordon grew up at Congregation Neveh Shalom and joined Havurah Shalom when he returned from Israel. He is also a past board member of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

For more information on the schools, visit handinhandk12.org.

What alumni are saying

"That's what Hand in Hand told us, you don't have to have pre-sumptuous thoughts about other people, you have to come open minded ... it always taught us to listen to other people, to other sides. ... So once going to university, this kind of allowed me to be more open."

~ Palestinian alumnus

"I see my friends who don't speak Arabic, how they hear Arabic on the street, and they immediately think that it's something like a terrorist or it comes out in their head that it's something bad or something that can harm them. And I just know that they speak about what they had for breakfast or how they're going to get home today. So, everything is much more peaceful around me."

~ Israeli Jew

"My goal is to create a movement of people who believe in partnership and practice it. Change starts when we ask hard questions of each other, and when we dare to listen, understand and hear the answers. And we, the Hand in Hand graduates, know how to create the space to make it happen."

~ Munia Masalha, class of 2012

"We are not naïve. We know that peace is still far away. However, the first step that every one of us can take is to promote the reality we learned as children. We can live as good neighbors in equality and dignity, without racism or incitement against any group. We succeed and continue to do this every morning in six (now seven) schools across the country. We learn together, live together and work together... We call this shared society and shared living. We are here today to assure all of you that this is possible."

~ from a speech by Hand in Hand graduates Fatimah Yahia and Bar Itamari

Kesser Israel unveils expansion plans

BY DEBORAH MOON

Congregation Kesser Israel has unveiled plans to expand its 2,500-square-foot, “one room shul” into a 4,200-square-foot, multi-use space to meet communal needs in an efficient manner.

“This is a big transformation for the shul,” said Rabbi Kenneth Brodtkin in a Zoom presentation to congregants. “Now we’ve got a one-room shul building, and we are looking forward to a more dynamic building that can comfortably host a lot of different aspects of community life at one time.”

The new space features a larger, more efficiently arranged sanctuary that can be used as a social hall for larger events. Seating in the new sanctuary will increase from 165 to 230 plus. All spaces will be adaptable for multiple uses, which include a meeting room for up to 20 people, a communal space for kiddush and for young families and children to hang out during services, new hallways with shelves for siddurim, larger kitchen and bathroom facil-



This architectural rendering shows the new entry for Congregation Kesser Israel as seen from Capitol Highway.

ities, and a covered breezeway for strollers. A new entry and lobby with a raised ceiling will welcome people into the new space. The new construction will be on the south and west sides of the existing building, which will also undergo extensive remodeling.

The expanded building was designed by Stewart Gordon Strauss, who was also the architect for the master plan and several new buildings for B’nai B’rith Camp near Lincoln City

as well as numerous other institutional projects. Kesser’s plans have been submitted to the city of Portland for permitting and to the contractor for a final cost estimate.

“It’s a beautiful plan that will meet a lot of needs,” said Rabbi Brodtkin in a phone interview. “Stewart is a creative architect who knows how to use every inch of space.”

The site plan also leaves room on the property for future development. The current expan-

sion was limited by the shul’s \$1 million construction budget.

Rabbi Brodtkin said it is too early to share a timeline for construction, but he hopes to be able to announce a groundbreaking date after permits and final costs are obtained later this summer.

The June 23 community update on Zoom also included an update on the congregation’s 2021 Sefer Torah Campaign. Thanks to a family coming forward with a lead gift, a scribe in Israel has already begun to write the new Torah scroll. A campaign later this year will offer each member the chance to participate in the mitzvah of writing a Torah. Dedication of the new scroll is planned for Dec. 5, 2021, during Hanukkah, 20 years after Kesser’s current Torah was dedicated.

The meeting also announced the 4-6 pm, Aug. 14, summer barbecue at Sellwood Park. Cost is \$15 adults, \$10 children and free for members of Kesser. For more information and to RSVP, visit kesserisrael.org/summerbbq.



Elissa Rose Treger and her mom, Candice Adelson, hold a sign announcing the first shift of the Dignity Grows packing party packed 135 Dignity Totes.

Dignity Grows off to strong start

In its first public packing party, Portland’s Dignity Grows Chapter celebrated a bat mitzvah and packed 220 Dignity Totes.

Elissa Rose Treger, who will become a bat mitzvah at Congregation Beth Israel on July 24, has chosen to support Dignity Grows by packing totes filled with personal and menstrual hygiene products for people who cannot afford them. Elissa and her mother, Candice Adelson, helped pack the totes July 11 and then delivered them to Outside In, an organization supporting youth ages 18-24 experiencing homelessness and other marginalized people.

Earlier this year, Women’s Philanthropy of GAT each pack in Portland, volunteers will have a chance to learn about period poverty and the Jewish reasons for engaging in this social justice effort, and of course, pack Dignity Totes.

At the July pack, Education Team member Debbie Plawner thanked Elissa for sharing her bat mitzvah project with the group. Then Debbie led an exercise to teach volunteers about Maimonides’ ladder of tzedakah (charity). After learning about the eight levels of tzedakah, participants discussed what rung they thought the volunteer project best matched.

Including a trial run pack for chapter leaders in



Volunteers at the July 11 Dignity Grows packing party learned about Maimonides’ eight levels of giving and then assigned a modern-day example of giving to each level of the ladder.

May, the Portland Dignity Grows Chapter has packed 360 Dignity Totes.

The next pack will be at the Eastside Jewish Commons on Sept. 19. For more information, visit jewishportland.org/dignitygrows.

EJC (continued from page 1)

communal professionals like Eleya Fugman of TischPDX and Rabbi Josh Rose of Co/Lab, to hearing kids having fun at BB camp, to meeting Rich Meyer, the Challahman, when he dropped off challot, to singing Siman Tov u'Mazal Tov at the first bris at the Commons ... it's been amazing to connect and collaborate with the Portland Jewish community. It's only the beginning of this incredible cross-communal venture, and I can't wait for what the future holds #AtTheCommons."

The dream for this eastside hub is coming to fruition now thanks to community support from 25 community partners and endorsing organizations, especially the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland and Congregation Shir Tikvah. (See below).

"Federation has made a three-year, \$150,000 commitment to enhance the operation and utilization of the Eastside Jewish Commons," says JFGP President and CEO Marc Blattner. Federation plans to use the space for some board meetings and events.

Announcing the grant at the JFGP Annual Meeting, Board Chair Lauren Goldstein said, "We are excited about this new Jewish community space on the east side of town and look forward to many programs and services being provided there."

Shir Tikvah is covering the majority of the rent for the first year in recognition "that they (EJC) are a new organization with no existing infrastructure and (we) are happy to make it possible for them to build and grow," says Shir Tikvah Administrative Director Katie Schneider. EJC will pay an increasing percentage of rent in subsequent years of the five-year lease.

After 18 years renting space in multiple locations on the eastside, Congregation Shir Tikvah wanted more capacity to offer services and programming. The congregation invited EJC to partner in the space. The majority of the building is multi-use communal space open

for programming by Jewish organizations, congregations and individuals.

"It is a mitzvah for us (Shir Tikvah) to support what we can," says Katie.

To that end, Shir Tikvah invites other groups to use its supplies in the common areas including linens and table service for 100 in the kitchen, its library in the conference room (which can accommodate services or classes), the ark in the prayer room and a second portable ark. (Other congregations need to bring their own Torah, however, since Shir Tikvah stores its scroll in a safe.)

WHO IS USING EJC?

The Eastside Jewish Commons formed as a nonprofit in 2017 to address the lack of eastside public Jewish spaces.

"Our vision is to expand the opportunity for programs and connection to Jewish life," says Mia. "This is community space ... it adds to the portfolio of Jewish infrastructure."

EJC can now provide space for communal organizations to hold programs or provide services (see story on next page about EJC's many rooms and spaces). In addition, individuals can rent the spacious atrium for one-off events such as parties or b'nai mitzvahs. Jewish professionals can rent office cubicles.

One professional who is renting a cubicle is Abbie Barash, Cascadia field manager and national fellowship coordinator for OneTable, which promotes Shabbat and holiday dinners for and by young adults. She is also eager to invite hosts and guests who want to learn about OneTable to visit the space. A centralized location will help build relationships. Noting a lot of young adults live on the eastside, she says she can envision hosts using the space for pre-Shabbat or weekday happy hours, or holding challah baking classes in the kitchen.

As a professional for a national organization with no local coworkers, Abbie also is ex-

EASTSIDE JEWISH COMMONS COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Community partners have contributed financially and been involved in the development of EJC; they will get preferential space usage fees and times.

Congregation Shir Tikvah (co-located in space)

The Alberta Shul

B'nai B'rith Camp

Cedar Sinai Park

Congregation Beth Israel

Congregation Neveh Shalom

Congregation Shaarie Torah

Jewish Family & Child Service

Jewish Federation of Greater Portland

Havurah Shalom

Mittleman Jewish Community Center

OneTable

ORA: NW Jewish Artists

Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust

Education

Oregon NCSY

P'nai Or of Portland

Portland Jewish Academy

Portland Kollel

Tivnu

TischPDX

Tree of Life Montessori

ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS

Oregon Board of Rabbis

Oregon Jewish Community Foundation

Congregation Kesser Israel

Moishe House Portland

cited to be working in a space with other Jewish communal professionals.

"I'm signed up for one of the cubicles," says Eleya Fugman, cofounder of TischPDX, a leadership incubator for Jews who have been historically marginalized in Jewish communal life. "We're definitely excited for that. It's perfect for me just in terms of being able to connect with other community members and other communal professionals on the eastside."

In addition to the networking opportunities of working at the EJC, Eleya also expects the six members of Tisch's third leadership cohort, all of whom live on the eastside, to use the space to host some of the programs they plan.

"It seems like a good spot — people have felt really excited about the accessibility of it. It's easy for public transporta-

tion, it's close to where a lot of people live," says Eleya. "It's very welcoming — the design, the airiness and the big openness kind of has this feeling of connectivity."

"Our fellows are excited about hosting events there," says Eleya. "I can picture us having late-evening events and salons and conversations and maybe musical events. I think younger adults are always looking for spots to congregate, and it's exciting to have a place that feels so accessible ... (with a) multi-generational level. ... We're all excited intergenerationally; it doesn't feel like space that is owned by one age demographic."

Congregations and agencies with their own buildings on the west side also plan to hold programs and offer services at the EJC.

Continued on next page



Left: EJC Chair Mia Birk, left, and Executive Director Cara Abrams inside the Eastside Jewish Commons. **Right:** Shir Tikvah's Katie Schneider, Rabbi Ariel Stone, Amelia Schroth and Rachel Walkinshaw in the EJC prayer space. Another room with portable ark allows for concurrent services.



EJC: Continued from previous page

"I believe we'll be partnering with EJC in many ways," says [Congregation Neveh Shalom](#) Education Director Mel Berwin. "One concrete plan: ALIYAH has a new Hebrew tutoring program for our K-6th grades, and we are offering tutoring at CNS, at the EJC and online as options for these families. We know that the eastside community has long wanted space and access to community without crossing a bridge, and we're excited to partner with EJC to bring CNS programming to the eastside, as well as to partner with the greater Jewish community on programs and events."

[Jewish Family & Child Service](#) is exploring many options for the new space.

"We are looking at a satellite office," says JFCS Executive Director Ruth Scott, saying the agency is considering a test in the fall with several options for services. Possible services include a counseling office, events and meetings, and possibly disability services. "As we come out of COVID, if some people are left behind, we may have an emergency office needs, too."

"We like the space, and it is an important location for reaching out to the community," says Ruth.

[Mittleman Jewish Community Center](#) is also exploring options for eastside programming.

"It's great to have Jewish space on the eastside where we can offer programs, and we look forward to doing it," says MJCC Executive Director Steve Albert.

JFGP's new [Dignity Grows](#) program to provide monthly hygiene supplies to those in need plans to hold its next Packing Party at the EJC Sept. 19.

[ORA: Northwest Jewish Artists](#) is considering hosting a Chanukah Art Show at the EJC. On the performing arts side, several musicians have expressed interest in hosting musical evenings or teaching classes.

Many other partner organizations are also exploring how they will use this new space.

Learn more or sign up to get more information about EJC: ejcpdx.org

Spaces at the Commons

Chair Mia Birk describes the new Eastside Jewish Commons as "a blank slate" of space for the community.

The 13,000 square feet of space was originally an indoor car dealership, and the former display room is now an open atrium flooded with natural light. Last used as co-working space, the building also features a variety of office spaces, large meeting rooms, hidden nooks and an open kitchen.

The entry to 2420 NE Sandy Blvd. is a secure vestibule. To one side are the dedicated offices of leaseholder Congregation Shir Tikvah. The other side opens into the central atrium.

"The big atrium – everyone who goes in there gets excited about how we could have a big community event here," says Eleya Fugman of TischPDX.

All of the rooms on the main floor will be multipurpose rooms, but they will have themes that reflect the rooms' resources.

The Art Room will feature spaces and materials for creative work by adult artists and art classes or activities for children.

The Lounge/Rec Room featuring comfortable furniture and game tables could be used as a teen lounge or youth group meeting room.

A Child Care Room could be used for drop-in child care during events, host activities for small children or provide counselors from Jewish Family & Child Service a friendly space to meet with young clients.

An adjoining office could be soundproofed for counseling sessions or other confidential meetings.

Another room on the main floor could be used as a tutoring space or meeting room. And a small space is available for private phone or Zoom calls.

The kitchen, which sits at the back of

the atrium, is being upgraded with new appliances and stainless steel counters for easy kashering. Though not kosher, it will be a dairy kitchen. It will not be a full commercial kitchen, but it will have plenty of space and a refrigerator and stove for catered events or cooking classes.

A large conference/meeting room faces east and could be used as a prayer room. It also houses Shir Tikvah's library of Talmud and other Judaica "for community use, to be used with respect," says Shir Tikvah Administrative Director Katie Schneider. Technology to permit hybrid meetings is also being planned.

The final two rooms on the main floor will eventually be combined into one larger room with a movable divider. One is a dedicated prayer space with Shir Tikvah's ark. The other could be used for study sessions.

A mezzanine overlooks the atrium with several rooms opening off a balcony that has a beautiful art display case. One room is the EJC executive director's office. A second office is also available. A large multipurpose room could be used for yoga, dance or music classes. The largest room features eight cubicles for co-working space. Jewish professionals can rent a cubicle full time, half time or quarter time. Two small rooms are available for the use by those in the co-working cubicles for private meetings or calls.

Lockers are available for organizations to store items.

Mia urges organizations interested in hosting events this fall to contact EJC now. Some cubicles are still available, so contact the EJC for more information on the co-working space.

Use the contact form on the EJC website, ejcpdx.org/contact, or email info@ejcpdx.org.

Chaplain's Corner

Necessity of post-COVID community

BY RABBI BARRY COHEN

*In a place where there are no
mensches, try to be a mensch.*

(Pirkei Avot 2:5)

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Submit news, photos
and obituaries by the
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12 Jewish Review July 21, 2021

This year, one of the rabbis who officiated at my bar mitzvah retired. He wrote a personal note on the prayer book that I used almost 40 years ago: "The world is yours if you want it, but always remember having the world is second to having a good life with true friends and loving family. Treat them as you wish to be treated and you will have it all and always remember Hillel said, 'In a place where there are no mensches, try to be a mensch.' " (Pirkei Avot 2:5)

One is a mensch when one is humane, when one treats others with a sense of dignity, compassion and humanity.

Based on incident after incident, now that COVID restrictions have been lifted, we seem to have lost a sense of our humanity. Too many of us are acting out and expressing anger and frustration at the expense of servers at restaurants, clerks in retail stores and flight attendants at 30,000 feet. We even see adults – primarily whites – lashing out at children, targeting Black, Asian or Hispanic youth.

Apparently, the COVID pandemic has made mensches an all-too-precious commodity.

I gained further insight with the article, "Judaism in the COVID era: What will be lost, gained and changed." (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 7-9-2021) It featured Dr. Micah Goodman, research fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, and Sarah Hurwitz, President Barack Obama's former speechwriter.

Goodman noted that over the past decade, what has stripped away our sense of humanity is our loneliness and our sense of tribalism. Having separated into tribes, we see outsiders not merely as "wrong" but as "dangerous and threatening." Our kneejerk reaction is to

view them with anger and hate. Goodman notes that the antidote to both tribalism and loneliness is developing communities. Judaism at its best creates communities. In addition, what binds communities is common ritual.

But herein lies a problem. Too many of us either never learned Jewish rituals or currently find rituals to be no longer relevant. In addition, nearly a year and a half of COVID restrictions made the practice of community-binding ritual difficult if not impossible. We can respond to this challenge by rethinking the meaning and purpose of ritual, by reinventing them or even developing brand new rituals.

In response, Hurwitz offered some humbling constructive criticism: "To be totally honest here, the vast majority of American Jews know very little about Judaism."

This makes the rethinking of ritual a challenge and the development of new ritual a daunting task. Hurwitz adds that the inroads we have made to be accepted in American society have made it harder to remain a distinct and unique people.

She writes, "We all have friends who are not Jewish. We have lots and lots of choices as to where we can find community. So, if people ... don't know why (Judaism is) transformative and meaningful, if they're not in love with it, I think they will go elsewhere for community."

The time is now to make our Jewish communities attractive, engaging, relevant and meaningful. Based on my face-to-face experiences now that COVID restrictions are disappearing, I find that people are

thirsty for communal interactions. The greater Portland area, cities and towns throughout Oregon, and southwest Washington have a rich array of Jewish community organizations.

Let's encourage our family and friends to connect with synagogues; [volunteer at Jewish Family and Child Services](#) and through [the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland](#); take advantage of [the Mittleman Jewish Community Center](#); discover what is happening with the [Eastside Jewish Commons](#); and explore other organizations – all of which can be found in the community directory on the Federation website jewishportland.org/community-directory.

Together, we can socialize, study and make new friendships. We can rediscover what rituals bind us and take part in the creation of new rituals that are appropriate for changing times. We can enjoy the amazing experience of creating or recreating community.

The result? We will rediscover and recultivate our inner mensch.



Rabbi Barry Cohen is the Jewish community chaplain of the Greater Portland area.

Violence shows it is time for compromise

BY MARC N. BLATTNER

This past Saturday night, at the start of Tisha b'Av, several hundred hard-line, religious-Zionist activists descended on the egalitarian section of the Kotel (Western Wall) disturbing the services of a Masorti (Conservative) group.

Worshippers were reading from the Book of Lamentations when the activists, mostly teenagers, entered the site, cursing and screaming at the worshippers before installing a mechitzah, a partition to segregate the area by gender, in opposition to the custom of the egalitarian section.

The targeting of non-Orthodox Jews demonstrates how critical it is to implement, with no further delay, the [Western Wall compromise](#), which was approved in January 2016, yet frozen in 2017 by then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu due to

What is Tisha B'Av?

Tisha B'Av, or the 9th of Av, this year began Saturday evening July 17. Tisha B'Av is a day commemorating many tragic events in the history of the Jewish people, especially the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. and 70 C.E.

These events are considered an opportunity to reflect and transform ourselves and to think about how to elevate ourselves and our world.

pressure from his ultra-Orthodox coalition partners, who refused any move that could be seen as legitimizing pluralistic Judaism. The compromise provides the non-Orthodox movements with a new and

revamped egalitarian prayer plaza at the holy site. The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland has long supported the development of the space.

We strongly condemn the outrageous disruption of prayer services at the Kotel by these extremists on Tisha b'Av – the day our tradition holds the Temple was destroyed because of baseless hatred between Jews.

We also urge the new governing coalition to live up to its promise to restore the carefully negotiated Western Wall agreement, abandoned four years ago, that ensures fair access to the Kotel for Jews of every denomination. It is a place where every Jew must feel at home.

Marc N. Blattner is president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.



This illustration shows Natan Sharansky's proposal, which will expand the Western Wall and create a permanent egalitarian space in the Robinson's Arch area. Photo credit: Creative Commons/Graphics by Uri Fintzy/JTA.

MJDS PRINCIPAL (continued from page 7)

the school's mission of being a personal, meaningful and empowering Jewish day school," says Rabbi Shneur.

"We adopted a social-emotional curriculum (based on Thinking, Feeling, Behaving by Dr. Ann Vernon)," he adds. "We had volunteers in the school every day for a lot of one-on-one instruction."

One of those volunteers, Basha Necha Rothstein, says Rabbi Shneur makes volunteering

at the school a pleasure.

"Rabbi Shneur's sincere and genuine appreciation for the time volunteers contribute to Maimonides School is palpable," says Basha. "From the moment the volunteer comes through the doors and is greeted with his cheerful 'Hello' and warm smile, to the moment in the day when we are asked if there's anything he can do for us, we are constantly assured of the utmost value and honor he

places on our work."

Rabbi Shneur also has led a weekly "Kabbalah of the Soul" class since 2015. *For the first four years, the class studied The Tanya, shifting from in-person to Zoom after COVID hit. After the in-depth study of the Tanya concluded Nov. 16, 2020, the class began a study of Gate of Trust. The class is posted online on Soundcloud (soundcloud.com/kabbalah-of-the-soul).*

When the class finished its

study of Tanya, participant Mark Berkowitz commented, "Learning Tanya with Rabbi Shneur was such an incredible foundational growth experience... The rabbi broke it down into bite-sized pieces so we would not be overwhelmed and taught in layman's terms so we could grasp the depth and breadth of Tanya's concepts and ideas."

Rabbi Shneur says he hopes to continue the class after he settles into his Las Vegas post.

Jobs board

TIVNU: BUILDING JUSTICE

Operations and Outreach Coordinator

Full time, including some evenings and weekends.

Compensation: \$38,000-\$54,000, individual medical and dental insurance paid by Tivnu, five weeks' vacation/personal days, and most Jewish and U.S. holidays.

Tivnu: Building Justice is looking for a detail-oriented, dynamic go-getter who will ensure the smooth operations of all programs and promote and recruit for our core program, the Tivnu Gap Year. As the operations coordinator, you will ensure that Tivnu's day-to-day logistics run smoothly: managing our digital and physical resources, including CRM, social media, the Tivnu houses, etc. You will oversee and implement the Tivnu Gap Year recruitment plan, as well. You will build relationships through strategic outreach efforts to potential participants, alumni, connectors and relevant networks throughout the United States.

See full description at tivnu.org/careers/

Email resume and cover letter to both Steve Eisenbach-Budner at Steve@Tivnu.org and Adinah Miller at Adinah@Tivnu.org with subject line "Operations and Outreach Coordinator."

PJ LIBRARY

Two parent ambassadors (one east side, one west side)

Part time: \$20/hour (12 hours per month)

POSITION ENDS 6/30/2022 (extension dependent on funding)

Help create experiences and connect with young families across the Greater Portland area.

"This very part-time position is perfect for stay-at-home moms," says Rachel Nelson, Director of Educational Initiatives & Inter-group Outreach at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, who will oversee the ambassadors. "As we are coming out of COVID, people are desperate for connections, and we want to engage Jewish families with each other in authentic relationships."

Each ambassador will build authentic relationships, create new, barrier-free Jewish experiences, expand communities, and impart relevant Jewish content to Jewish families with children ages 1 to 3 years old. The Parent Ambassadors will develop and implement small-scale outreach and engagement programming, connecting families to one another and the Jewish community of Greater Portland. This programming will begin at the very earliest stages of a child's life in public, secular spaces and will maximize social connections over time among these families.

For more information, check out the [job posting](#) online or contact Rachel at 503-892-7415 or rachel@jewishportland.org.

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Competitive pay, comprehensive health insurance benefits, and paid time off with separate vacation, sick and holiday pay.

Available positions include accounts payable coordinator, certified nursing assistant, cook, housekeeper, licensed practical nurse, medication tech/resident assistant, payroll specialist, registered nurse, resident care manager, server and Sinai In-Home caregiver.

These are great opportunities for energetic, outgoing and compelling people with a passion for elder care and the mission of Cedar Sinai Park. CSP is a nonprofit, community-based, residential senior living, skilled nursing and long-term care organization with a dedicated workforce.

Free parking and free meal on each shift worked. Benefits include low-cost health insurance with low/high deductible options; free dental, long-term disability and life insurance; flexible spending accounts; and 403(b) retirement with matching contribution.

Check out available positions and apply at cedarsinainpark.org/careers-in-healthcare/

Life-cycle events

BIRTH

CHARLIE SHEM TOV ROHR

Charlie Shem Tov Rohr was born July 1, 2021, to Brian and Sarah Rohr of Portland. He was welcomed home by older brother Gabriel.

Everyone is healthy, happy, and full of love. In addition to being members of Congregation Neveh Shalom, Brian is Neveh Shalom's communications coordinator, and both Brian and Sarah teach in Neveh Shalom's ALIYAH program.

Charlie was welcomed formally into the community at Neveh Shalom on July 8.



Obituaries

CHARLOTTE BLUMSTEIN

Charlotte Blumstein, z"l, passed away July 11, 2021, at age 102. Charlotte is survived by sons, Steven Blumstein (Arlene Postal) and David Blumstein. She was preceded in death by husbands, Milton Blumstein and Bernie Cohen, and son, Leonard Blumstein. Charlotte was a grandmother of nine including Portlanders Liza (Beth) Milliner, Melissa (Oren) Abu and Scott Bloom; and a great-grandmother of 10.

The funeral and shiva took place in Florida.

Congregation Neveh Shalom extends our deepest condolences to the extended Milliner, Abu and Blumstein families.

HAZZAN SAMUEL NECHEMIA

Hazzan Samuel Nechemia, z"l, passed on July 6, 2021, the 26th of Tammuz. Sam is survived by his niece, Nurit Gamal of Los Angeles, and very many devoted friends in Sephardic Portland.



Sam served as the loyal hazzan (prayer leader, cantor) for more than 30 years to Portland's original Sephardic synagogue, Congregation Ahavath Achim.

He was born in December of 1943 in Jerusalem, Israel, the son of Kurdish immigrants. He also helped found and served as hazzan for the Sephardic community of Vancouver, British Columbia. His hauntingly beautiful Sephardic cantorial combined with his culinary expertise in the preparation and presentation of Middle Eastern foods made him a local catering favorite at weddings, bar mitzvahs and many other life-cycle events. Memories of his beautiful voice and cherished friendships with so many in Portland's greater Jewish community will be remembered always. As Sam so often said, "We do not bid farewell but l'hitraot (see you later)."

Ahavath Achim gathered a minyan for funeral services at the Kesser Cemetery on July 7.