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Texas rabbi: Training saved lives

Texas Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker credits security training with helping him and three congregants escape from the gunman who took the four hostage during livestreamed Shabbat services Jan. 15. The hostage taker died in a gunfight with the FBI after the hostages escaped.



Rabbi Cytron-Walker

"Over the years, my congregation and I have participated in multiple security courses from the Colleyville Police Department, the FBI, the Anti-Defamation League and Secure Community Network," Rabbi Cytron-Walker told the Star Telegram in an emailed statement. "We are alive today because of that education. I encourage all Jewish congregations, religious groups, schools, and others to participate in active-shooter and security courses."

Locally that training is provided through SCN Regional Security Director Gene Moss. Organizations and individuals can sign up for train-

Afraid or Angry? Process it: Noon, Jan. 19

In response to the frightening incident outside Dallas-Fort Worth, Jewish Family & Child Service will offer a free online opportunity to process your feelings – fear, anger, grief or confusion. With JFCS Clinical Director Douglass Ruth, LCSW, and Jewish Community Chaplain Rabbi Barry Cohen.

To join at noon, Jan. 19, click tinyurl.com/JFCS-Portland-connect

ing classes and report suspicious incidents at jewishportland.org/security. Classes include Situational Awareness, Counter-Active Threat, Stop The Bleed and Usher/Greeter Training.

Since he began his SCN role in Portland in May 2019, Moss also has conducted numerous risk and vulnerability assessments, which can be leveraged to apply for nonprofit security grant funding in support of increasing the security posture of a local organization.

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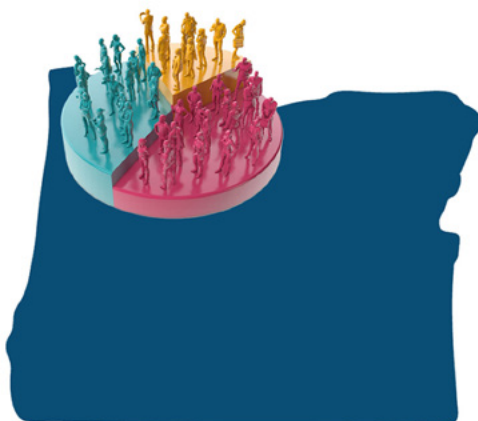
Study to allow data-driven decisions in future

BY DEBORAH MOON

An upcoming study of the greater Portland Jewish community will enable Jewish organizations to enhance and create programs, services and infrastructure that will serve our community more deeply and broadly.

"These studies are incredibly difficult, but what makes them fun is how much impact they can have," says principal investigator Matthew Boxer, an assistant research professor at Brandeis University. "It can make a community stronger ... (it helps) improve its strengths and confront its weaknesses."

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland has commissioned Brandeis University's Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies/Steinhardt Social Research Institute to "collect, analyze and report accurate, actionable data to support and promote vibrant Jewish life in Greater Portland."



"This study is a guide for our community to focus our communal investments for the next 10 years," says JFGP President and CEO Marc Blattner. "This will be the most comprehensive, scientifically valid study in Jewish Portland's history." He notes

JEWISH COMMUNITY STUDY TIMELINE

May-June 2022:

Kickoff meetings with community leaders/organizations

July-October 2022:

Draft and finalize survey

October 2022-January 2023:

Conduct survey

April-May 2023:

Final report

that for its last study in 2008, funding limitations did not allow Federation to hire a nationally recognized leading provider.

See COMMUNITY STUDY, page 6

Youth nourish charities with hands-on *tzedakah*

BY DEBORAH MOON

Several Portland Jewish Academy alumni and students brought some nourishment to neighbors and nonprofits during December.

Two groups of PJA elementary students set up hot chocolate stands to warm both those in their neighborhoods, who enjoyed their cocoa, and those at the charities, who benefited from the fund-raisers. Second-grader Leah Khavul, 8, and kindergartner Miriam Khavul, 5, raised money for the Ronald McDonald House, which helps kids and their families when a child is sick and far away from home. Second-graders Kayla Hilbert, 8, and Shiri Gilman, 8, were joined by PJA kindergartner Matan Gilman, 5, in raising funds for Blanchet House, which offers food, shelter and aid to those in need of a safe place. Blanchet House also reaped the rewards of two Ida B. Wells High School sophomores and PJA alumni, twins Liana and Sylvie Kressel, who made and sold granola.

Blanchet House Executive Director Scott Kerman says PJA has long embraced the community Blanchet House serves. Prior to the pandemic, middle-schoolers would volunteer monthly to help with dining service. For the last two years, PJA has held drives to collect sack lunches, clothing and care kits.

“Young people bring such passion and creativity to their support for our community,” says Scott. “Look how creative Liana, Sylvie, Kayla, Shiri and Matan were – they found a way to connect something meaningful or special in their lives to raising money and providing support for our houseless neighbors in Old Town.”

“Their extraordinary effort communicates to the people we serve that they are not invisible; rather, they *do matter* to people – people who are willing to take the time, effort and expense to support total strangers in need,” says Scott.



Liana, left, and Sylvie Kressel made and sold granola over winter break to raise money for the Blanchet House.



GRANOLA BAKERS HELP THOSE IN NEED

The twin daughters of Lisa Katon and Noah Kressel applied for and received a grant from PJA’s Noam Stampfer *Gemilut Chasadim* Fund to cover the cost of packaging and ingredients for granola. That way, 100% of proceeds could be donated to Blanchet House. Liana and Sylvie started baking the first weekend of winter break and continued till the last weekend before school resumed. They sold about 50 bags at \$10 each and asked for additional donations to Blanchet House for a total donation of \$713.

“Since their early days at PJA, they were instilled with a desire to give back,” says mom Lisa Katon. Whether it was for animal welfare, the environment, creating dialogue between different communities, or helping to feed or clothe vulnerable populations, our girls have always looked for ways to help. Using their baking skills to help those in

need was a natural extension of these values and a win-win for the buyers, who have raved about their delicious granola.”

The 15-year-old twins told Blanchet House Community Engagement Manager Gabby Thuillier, “Portland Jewish Academy introduced us to the Blanchet House, where we and our classmates would volunteer many times after school, preparing and serving meals. Every time we volunteered at the Blanchet house, we admired your commitment to your mission and the welcoming community you’ve helped to build.”

HOT CHOCOLATE STANDS WARM BODIES AND SOULS

Leah and Miriam’s parents, Gina Westhoff and Mike Khavul, are very proud of their children’s initiative and hard work to help other children. In early December, the siblings sold hot chocolate on a cold weekend.

Continued on next page



Leah Khavul, left, shows off the hot chocolate stand she and her sister, Miriam, used to raise funds for the Ronald McDonald House. At right, the sisters put their donation in the dropbox for the local house.



TZEDAKAH (from previous page)



Shiri Gilman, left, Kayla Hilbert and Matan Gilman, right, enjoy a little cocoa of their own as they warm up with "Pupper" Stanley after their hot chocolate stand raised funds for Blanchet House.

"It was a moment of quiet pride when Leah came home from school eagerly explaining how she was going to hold a hot chocolate stand to help raise money for others," says Gina. "The weekend of the stand was bitterly cold and dreary, and their project brought warmth and joy to our entire neighborhood."

She says they wanted to donate to the Ronald McDonald House because the family likes all of the special things they do for the kids, like a cozy corner, the art room and paintings. "We are glad that our money could help continue all the activities they do to help kids feel happy and not so scared," says Gina.

The following week, another trio created "Cheer Chocolate." Rabbi Eve Posen and Duncan Gilman, the parents of Shiri and Matan, hosted the hot chocolate stand in their driveway. Kayla is the daughter of Jessica Zutz Hilbert and Matt Hilbert.

"It was 100% a kid-driven idea; parents were simply along for the ride (and to source the necessary components)," says Jess. When Kayla wanted to do a hot chocolate stand during break, Jess suggested that they give a hot chocolate to someone in need for every one sold.

Kayla says "I just remembered that there are so many people out there who don't



have a home and they need food. I thought giving them some hot chocolate would be a nice surprise, since it's been so cold out." She adds that Blanchet House is "pretty close," and "we know they serve food to folks in need."

Chocolate Cheer raised \$436, which the kids delivered to Blanchet House Dec. 30 along with 100 packets of hot cocoa mix.

"I'm really proud of the kids; both of the idea but also the execution of it all," says Jess. "They HUSTLED at the stand and knew the whole time they were hustling for others. We stood out in a 36-degree rainstorm for several hours, and they never complained. They just danced and peddled hot cocoa to anyone who got remotely close."

Volunteers pack Dignity Totes

At a Jan. 9 pack party at the Eastside Jewish Commons, Dignity Grows Portland packed 283 totes to provide hygiene products to women, girls and individuals assigned female at birth who cannot afford them.

Dignity Grows Portland is a chapter of a national nonprofit and a Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Women's Philanthropy project. At each pack in Portland, volunteers have a chance to learn about period poverty and the Jewish reasons for engaging in this social justice effort, and then they pack Dignity Totes. Each tote includes a month's supply of sanitary pads and tampons, toothpaste and a toothbrush, a bar of soap, deodorant and shampoo.

"The totes are free to our partners but cost \$10 each," says Arlene Cogen, chair of the Dignity Grows distribution team. "Donations are required so we have totes to assemble and distribute."

Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center & Foundation received 88 of the totes packed at EJC. The rest will be provided to other distribution partners. Three new distribution partners – A Safe Place, Self Enhancement Inc. and Divine Threads – join ongoing partners Outside In, Transition Projects and the Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center & Foundation.

"We are also creating b'nai mitzvah programs, where a youth can do the mitzvah project with Dignity Grows," says Cogen.

The chapter also will partner with PDX Hillel for a pack at Lewis and Clark campus on Jan. 19. Students at Portland-area campuses should email PDX Hillel Executive Director Hannah Sherman at hannah@pdxhillel.org for more information on that pack.

To learn more about Dignity Grows, visit jewishportland.org/dignitygrows or email Dignity Grows Portland Chair Nicole Sacks at nicole@sacks.me.



Volunteers listen to Dignity Grows committee members, who share why they are passionate about the mission of eliminating "period poverty" at an event at the Eastside Jewish Commons.

Grant applications due Feb. 18

The Women's Giving Circle of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland is now accepting applications for its fifth year of grant giving. Funding requests are due Feb. 18.

During its first four years, the Women's Giving Circle awarded 28 grants totaling \$86,465.

The Women's Giving Circle is an open and responsive program that offers flexible and creative funding opportunities. This year, the giving circle has \$25,300 available to fund grants that will range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 per grant.

Women's Giving Circle is chaired by Jessica Zutz Hilbert and Sharon Pollin and is staffed by Wendy Kahn, JFGP Campaign Director and Director of Women's Philanthropy, who also participates in the giving circle.

To apply for a grant, visit jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/womens-philanthropy/womens-giving-circle. For questions or clarification, please contact Wendy at wendy@jewishportland.org.

Free workshops to help educators cope

BY DEBORAH MOON

Stress of life under Covid has hit educators, along with health-care workers, harder than many other professions. Portland Area Jewish Educators will present two virtual workshops designed to help teachers cope (see box).

Last June, a [national study](#) found more than three in four public school teachers had frequent job-related stress compared to 40% of other working adults. The study also found 27% of teachers reported symptoms of depression compared to 10% of other adults.

"We know what a challenging year this has been for educators across the community, in some ways more so than last year," says Rachel Nelson, who staffs PAJE as part of her role as Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

"PAJE hopes to provide resources and opportunities for folks to come together to learn and process as a community," says Nelson. "We hope to continue to provide additional resources for educators virtually at this time, and one day soon, hopefully, safely in person."

The first workshop draws on the expertise of the Blue Dove Foundation, founded in Atlanta in 2018 to address mental health and substance abuse through a Jewish lens. It began offering national programming in 2019, just in time to help the Jewish community cope with Covid.

Blue Dove Executive Director Gabby Spatt is grateful the non-profit came into existence when it did.

"Covid allowed us to grow further faster with the ability to do more virtually and with the increased need," she says. "I truly believe we have been able to support the Jewish community, both organizations and individuals."

Gratitude will be the focus of the Blue Dove workshop, which will

PAJE Presents: Taking Care of You

Portland Area Jewish Educators presents a two-part series to help educators deal with the ongoing stress of the pandemic.

Hakarat Hatov: Judaism, Gratitude and You

Jan. 27, 7 pm, on Zoom; Free

Presented by Blue Dove Foundation

In this workshop, we will meet at the intersection of gratitude and Jewish spirituality.

Stressed Out, Exhausted and Overwhelmed?

March 3, 7 pm, on Zoom; Free

Presenters: Rabbi Barry Cohen and Dinah Gilburd, LCSW

In partnership with Jewish Family & Child Service.

A workshop designed to support educators with how to counteract the harmful effects of stress in our daily lives.

Register for free programs: jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/portland-area-jewish-educators/paje-presents-taking-care-of-you

explore the strength of *hakarat hatov*, thankfulness or appreciation.

"We usually think about gratitude at happy occasions – weddings, bar mitzvahs," says Spatt. "But with so many challenges the last two years, how can individuals create an appreciation for what went well?"

"Noticing the good reminds us to not let negatives overshadow the positive," she says.

The second workshop, in March, brings two local resources to offer help on coping with the stress of an ever-changing landscape. Jewish Community Chaplain Rabbi Barry Cohen will share how Jewish insight and wisdom can help us navigate these challenging times. JFCS Clinician Dinah Gilburd, LCSW, will explore how to deepen resilience for our mental health and well-being in a changing world.

Modern Hebrew to return to UO Judaic studies

BY DEBORAH MOON

The interdisciplinary Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies at the University of Oregon offers a major leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree. What it hasn't offered in more than a decade is modern Hebrew. That will change next fall when UO adds an instructor of modern Hebrew (see [job post on page 9](#)).

The return of modern Hebrew to UO is due in large part to the symbiotic relationship of Oregon Hillel and the Judaic Studies department.

"Organizations can get territorial," says Oregon Hillel Executive Director Andy Gitelson. "But when we assess and work collectively, we all win."

Gantt Gurley, the director of Judaic Studies, agrees: "JDST has developed a rather unique partnership with Eugene Hillel. We are the only public institution that has a joint appointment with our local Hillel chapter. ... The intellectual traffic between the program and Hillel is an opportunity for students to merge a dynamic education with community outreach, public programming and social justice."

Gitelson adds, "I can't stress enough the true friendship and collaborative approach that Gantt and I have built together. We have a shared vision that, through partnering, both Judaic Studies and Hillel would grow."

The partnership has been a success. Together, Judaic Studies and Hillel received a Jim Joseph Foundation grant that enabled the two entities to hire Rabbi Meir Goldstein for fall of 2019. Rabbi Goldstein serves as Senior Jewish Educator at Oregon Hillel and teaches one class each term for Judaic Studies. His first class in the winter term drew 32 students. Last year, with all classes virtual, he taught 81 unique individuals in three courses.

"He works with students in Hillel, encouraging that organization's growth and the Hillel students' interest in Judaic Studies curriculum

and events on campus," says Gurley. "Over the last two years, we have seen positive gains in enrollment and participation."

"Rabbi Meir has increased Judaic Studies enrollment," says Gitelson. He adds that this growth combined with "Gantt's vision and hard work to make this new faculty position were critical to making this happen."

Gitelson says students have asked about bringing modern Hebrew to campus since he arrived at Oregon Hillel 10 years ago. He says day school graduates coming to UO would like to earn their foreign language credits in modern Hebrew. Those wanting to study abroad in Israel have also requested it.

"We will develop a modern Hebrew language sequence that can prepare students for upper-division content courses in modern Hebrew literature and conversation, as well as empower them with critical linguistic skills for travel and study in Israel," says Gurley. "With a modern Hebrew instructor teaching both first- and second-year language courses, as well as advanced courses, participating faculty would be allowed to offer upper-division courses in the target language in art, literature, culture, history, sociology, political sciences and other fields that are essential to an interdisciplinary Judaic Studies curriculum. This, in turn, will generate more interest in the existing study-abroad programs, creating new relationships with Israeli universities and institutions."

JDST is also hiring a Professor of Holocaust Studies for fall.

"This new position will lend a strong sense of Jewish history and memory to the program and campus," says Gurley. "This new professor will also offer courses on contemporary ethno-fascist and white separatist movements in Oregon, the nation and across our living world. We are very excited that in these charged times, JDST will be welcoming two new faculty members."



Cedar Sinai Park, Neveh Shalom enjoy intergenerational planting

Fourth-graders from the Aliyah Program at Congregation Neveh Shalom celebrated *Tu B'Shevat* at Cedar Sinai Park Jan. 16. The students talked about the significance of the holiday, sang, shared prayers with Cedar Sinai residents and planted two dogwood bushes, one in front of the Harold Schnitzer Center for Living, the other behind Rose Schnitzer Manor Assisted Living. In addition, CSP celebrated the holiday with two *Tu B'Shevat seders* (ceremonial meals) to celebrate nature. The Rose Schnitzer Manor seder was held Jan. 17 and the seder at Harold Schnitzer Center for Living will be Jan. 20.

PJA's native garden celebrated on *Tu B'Shevat*

BY BLAIR BORAX

Tu B'Shevat (the 15th day of the Hebrew month of *Shevat*) is known as the Jewish New Year for Trees. Over the last several decades, it has been celebrated as Jewish "Earth Day" in many Jewish communities. In honor of this holiday, Portland Jewish Academy is recognizing the fifth-graders' work to revitalize PJA's Native Garden.

In 2018, when this year's eighth-graders were still in fifth grade, they took on a big project. Under the guidance of general studies teacher Jim Juntunen, they designed and built PJA's first Native Garden. A few (complicated) years later, the Native Garden project has become, yet again, an interdisciplinary cornerstone of the fifth-grade year.

With the support of their teacher, Janet Collier, students began the project in early

fall. They researched native plants of Oregon, observed the current state and natural conditions of the garden, brainstormed potential garden improvement and chose plants that would be well-suited to the environment. Next, they went on a field trip to Portland Nursery, where they purchased plants, and to Mt. Tabor, where they observed and sketched plants in their natural urban environment. Back at the school, each student planted their native plant in the PJA garden.

Students continued researching their specific plants, identifying their scientific names, history, native uses and other fun facts to share on signage. With maker educator Nicole Surbaugh, students designed and 3-D printed signs for each plant using materials well-suited for Portland weather. Meanwhile, in their Jewish Studies class

with Jana Hopfinger, students wrote *tefillot* (prayers) through the voice of their plant, as if the plants were offering their unique blessing to us.

The students made block prints (similar to ink stamps) that they used to decorate the printouts of the prayers.

The PJA Native Garden won a \$500 grant from Portland Parks and Recreation to purchase and plant more native plants. Later this year, the class plans to host a family gathering to celebrate their work and plant more plants. Students will continue this robust interdisciplinary project by installing their signage, creating community guidelines for garden visitors, building pathways and, finally, opening the garden to the school community.

Blair Borax is PJA's garden and cooking educator.

Feb. 10 Solomon Memorial Lecture: American Jews: Who counts?

"American Jews in 2022: Who Counts? And Why That's Important" is the topic of the 17th Annual Gus and Libby Solomon Memorial Lecture.

In recent years, American Jews have become much more aware of the diversity of their community. American Jews are not only Ashkenazi Jews, whose ancestors immigrated to the United States from Eastern Europe, but also Sephardic Jews, Mizrahi Jews, Jews of color and Jews of many other backgrounds. In this talk, sociologist and thought leader Mijal Bitton explains why understanding this diversity and its implications is so crucial for the future of American Jewry.

"My colleagues and I are delighted that Dr. Mijal Bitton will join us this year as the speaker for the Gus and Libby Solomon Memorial Lecture," says Professor Natan Meir, academic director of PSU's Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies, which sponsors the annual



Dr. Mijal Bitton

event. "Dr. Bitton is a world-renowned expert on American Jewish identity and on minoritized and marginalized groups with-

in the American Jewish community, including Jews of color and ethnic subgroups such as Syrian Jews. We look forward to her giving us a deeper understanding of the makeup of American Jewry and perhaps a glimpse into what the future may hold for American Jews."

Dr. Bitton is scholar in residence at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America. She is co-founder and Rosh Kehilla (communal leader) of the Downtown Minyan in New York City. She earned her doctorate from New York University and is a Wexner Graduate Fellowship alumna.

Richard B. Solomon and Alyce Flitcraft underwrite this annual event. This year's lecture is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland and the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation.

The lecture begins at 5:30 pm, Feb. 10, on Zoom. The lecture is free, but you need to preregister at pdx.edu/judaic-studies/2022-solomon-memorial-lecture.

COMMUNITY STUDY (from page 1)

“There are two leading community study research practices in the country, and this time we interviewed both and chose Brandeis,” says Blattner.

Over the past decade, Boxer and CMJS/SSRI have completed or are working on 29 community studies and are in conversation with five other communities. Studies have included Chicago, Los Angeles and Seattle, as well as smaller Jewish communities such as Orlando, Nashville and Delaware.

Both Blattner and JFGP Director of Allocations Caron Blau Rothstein, who will be the project manager for the study, look forward to making data-driven rather than anecdotally driven allocations’ decisions. But the impact will be communal – extending beyond Federation to give synagogues and other Jewish institutions the concrete data they need to make decisions.

For instance, if the study reveals there is a large concentration of Jews in an area with few or no Jewish resources, a synagogue or school might want to open a satellite location or offer programming in the area, says Rothstein.

That is exactly what happened after CMJS/SSRI completed its study in Seattle. Boxer says the study revealed a much larger than expected Jewish population in Northwest Seattle. After the study, that Federation started offering mobile programs in the area, and Chabad opened a center there.

“We need a communal study to really understand who is here,” says Rothstein. “Are we really supporting the breadth of Jewish identity and depth of Jewish expression? We just don’t know.”

The communal study will gather socio-demographic data using representative samples from both Jews known to local Jewish organizations and those who are not known. Membership and contact lists from congregations and agencies will be cross-referenced to ensure a household is only included once, and then a computer will pick a randomized sample. Boxer says finding a representative sample of unknown Jews is more difficult.

“Our American Jewish Population Project gets us the total population estimate,” he says. “The difference between the total estimate and the number of Jews on organizations’ lists is the number of Jews who have to be represented by the people we find

who are Jewish but not on lists. The technique works because our holistic body of research shows that all we need to do is find enough of the people not on the lists and get them to do the survey, and we can make

them stand in mathematically for all the Jews not on lists without biasing estimates.”

Another key in planning the study is creating

the questions. Federation will schedule meetings with community leaders and organizations to help select important, not merely interesting, questions. Boxer typically comes to a community for that process, but it may need to be virtual this year. He says there are three categories of questions: top tier questions are those that provide information you cannot function without; second tier, the bulk of the survey, provide useful information that helps serve the community more efficiently; third are “factoids” that are interesting facts, but not useful. Only a few “interesting” questions should be included.

Questions that are included in most communities address ritual behavior and Jewish engagement, connection to Israel and social service needs. For instance, are households struggling financially, or do they struggle with disabilities?

“We ask what kind of help they need to help the community serve them better,” says Boxer.

When the study is completed, the entire data set is available (with any personal information that could identify respondents removed). Boxer will lead one or two public presentations and meet with Jewish organization to help them figure out how to use the data.

“We want to make it as useful as possible to all Jewish organizations in a community and help them figure out how best to use it,” says Boxer.

The survey is expected to run from October 2022 through January 2023. (See box on page 1 for timeline.)

“This is a call to the community to help us decide what we need,” says Rothstein. “This study will help us understand how to help people connect to our community in more and more meaningful ways.”

Blattner agrees: “When you are called or get an opportunity to participate, we hope you will respond and make your voice heard.”

Portland to benefit from grant to theatre dybbuk

As an official City Partner, Portland will benefit from the recent Covenant Foundation Grant to theatre dybbuk when the theater company brings its new Dybbukast Live program to Portland.

Last week, The Covenant Foundation announced \$1.7 million in new grants to 19 organizations for projects supporting some of the newest and most forward-thinking ideas in Jewish education. Thirteen programs received Signature grants with funding of up to \$150,000 over three years, and another six received Ignition grants of up to \$20,000 for one year to support new and untested approaches.

“This grant program will support theatre dybbuk, and sometime between late 2022 and 2024, it is coming to our city for a residency that includes both performance experiences and educational workshops,” says Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Campaign Director Wendy Kahn, who participated on a panel for the theater’s grant application.

Over the last two years, Portland has hosted five virtual presentations by theatre dybbuk during the pandemic.

Signature grant recipient theatre dybbuk is a Los Angeles-based theater company that creates provocative performances and innovative educational encounters that explore Jewish thought to illuminate universal human experience. The Dybbukast Live program will bring residencies – including live performances and training workshops for educators and community leaders – to six cities and provide additional opportunities for others to engage with the content.

“We are excited that The Covenant Foundation’s support of The Dybbukast Live allows us to collaborate with a broad array of partners in cities throughout North America, enabling us to offer theatrical and artistic approaches to exploring the ways in which Jewish history can illuminate the complexities present in our world,” Aaron Henne, theatre dybbuk’s artistic director, told eJewishPhilanthropy for a Jan. 12 article.

In addition to theatre dybbuk, Signature grants went to Adas Israel Congregation in Washington, D.C.; American Jewish University in Los Angeles; The Center for Small Town Jewish Life at Colby College in Waterville, Maine; Hannah Senesh Community Day School in Brooklyn, N.Y.; Jewish Communities of Vermont in Burlington, Vt.; Jewish Learning Venture in Jenkintown, Pa.; jGirls Magazine; M2: The Institute for Experiential Jewish Education in Brooklyn, N.Y.; OneTable in New York; Sacred Spaces in Pittsburgh; South Philadelphia Shtiebel in Philadelphia; and Theater J at the Edlavitch DCJCC in Washington, D.C.

“Are we really supporting the breadth of Jewish identity and depth of Jewish expression?

We just don’t know.”

~Project manager Caron Blau Rothstein



Jewish Federation
OF GREATER PORTLAND



Genetic Matchmaking

The double edge sword of the BRCA1 and BRCA 2 genes
for Jews in relation to cancer

In Oregon, roughly 5% of unselected pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma (the most frequent form of pancreatic cancer) harbor mutations in genes labeled BRCA1 and BRCA2, and this number varies across ethnic populations (*e.g. can be double the amount in the Ashkenazi Jewish population*). These select patients who harbor BRCA1 and BRCA 2 mutations can be susceptible to cancers that arise in the breast, ovaries, and pancreas. The discussion will focus on where science and medicine is at with understanding, detecting and treating these people.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26th

7:00 p.m. Via Zoom

Speakers:



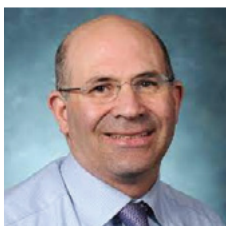
Dr. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward

Dr. Elizabeth Steiner Hayward is an Adjunct Associate Professor of Family Medicine at OHSU. She has served as the State Senator for Northwest Portland and Beaverton since 2012. She is a Senate Co-Chair of the Full Ways & Means Committee, which oversees Oregon's state budget.



Dr. Brett Sheppard

Dr. Brett Sheppard is a Professor of Surgery, Division of Gastrointestinal and General Surgery; the William E. Colson Chair of Pancreatic Disease Research; and the Vice Chair for Quality and Clinical Operations at OHSU.



Dr. Jonathan Brody

Dr. Jonathan Brody is the Vice Chair of Research for the Department of Surgery and is the Associate Director of Translational Research of the Brenden-Colson Pancreatic Center for Patient Care.

Register at jewishportland.org/genetic-matchmaking

People on the move

Cedar Sinai Park welcomes two to communications leadership team

Cedar Sinai Park welcomed two new members to the senior living campus' leadership team the first week of January: Director of Development and Communications Martha Norrie and Events and Communications Manager Sydney Clevenger.

"They are a wealth of heart, creativity, knowledge and expertise, and we're sooooo happy they've joined the CSP family," says CSP CEO Kimberly Fuson.

A native Oregonian, Norrie can trace her roots to Portland's early Jewish community. Her great-great-grandfather, Raphael Prag, immigrated to the United States. Upon arriving in Portland, he helped found Ahavai Sholom in 1869, which later merged with Neveh Zedek to become today's Congregation Neveh Shalom. His son, Jacob, married a Catholic, so Norrie's Jewish line ended.

Norrie is thrilled to have the opportunity to better understand and honor her genealogy by joining Cedar Sinai Park. She is excited to meet Jewish community



Norrie

members as she strategically raises funds and awareness for the 100-year-old senior living nonprofit. Norrie began volunteering as a teenager and developed a passion for charitable work. She holds a bachelor's in interdisciplinary studies from the University of Portland. Norrie is a certified digital marketing professional and a professional certified marketer. Her experience in marketing and development includes serving as interim executive director for the Oregon Society of Artists and at Norrie Creative for 13 years.

Clevenger is eager to connect with the residents of Cedar Sinai Park's facilities as she helps coordinate fund-raising events and



Clevenger

shares stories of the nonprofit organization's happenings. As a young girl, Clevenger vividly remembers the tranquility of playing checkers with her great-grandmother while watching Lawrence Welk. She has a passion for those who are aging and has experience working in senior living in the Portland area. A Portland native, Clevenger graduated cum laude in broadcasting with an English minor from Washington State University. She anchored radio and television news in Salem and the Tri-Cities before transitioning to public relations, where

she has worked for more than 30 years locally and in Washington, D.C. Clevenger's expertise is in health care and education nonprofits having worked at the Children's Defense Fund, OHSU, Providence Health & Services, and most recently, Oregon Episcopal School.

Staff changes reflect Neveh Shalom's mission

Congregation Neveh Shalom has announced staffing changes to support its new mission statement. In January, team members are transitioning into these new roles.

Neveh Shalom's Long-Range Planning team created a new mission statement: To foster and preserve an inclusive, authentic, and engaging experience of Conservative Judaism in the Pacific Northwest. Through meaningful life-cycle events, spiritual, educational, and social experiences, we become our best selves, strengthen connections to each other, and forge positive change in the world.

Michelle Caplan is now the director of congregational advance-



Caplan



Richmond



Bezodis

ment. Previously the director of congregant connections, Caplan is a connector in the CNS *kehillah*, community. She is known for her creative approaches to building community and her desire to ensure that CNS is here *l'dor v'dor*, for every generation. Her expanded role at CNS will include building community and the added role of development.

"I am looking forward to my expanded role of building community and the added role of development," says Caplan. "It's a natural combination that allows me to create even stronger relationships with our congregants."

Lisa Richmond is the new program director in charge of congregational programming, volunteer support and committee support. She was formerly the CNS clergy assistant and building coordinator. She is a creative thinker who strives for *klal*, inclusivity, in all CNS does.

JoAnn Bezodis has been named clergy assistant and building administrator. She has spent years working in the education department with Mel Berwin making sure that all who want to learn at CNS are able to do so. She will take her expertise in attention to detail and training to the clergy team, making sure that congregants are all able to connect to CNS *klei kodesh*, team of holy leaders, and one another.

Associate Rabbi Eve Posen will expand her role to include a focus on CNS' commitment to the engagement of all generations of our *kehillah*. She is thrilled for this opportunity to innovate and explore Judaism in this expanded role.

Leora Troper is the new librarian of the Feldstein Library. Leora is an experienced librarian



Posen



Troper

who has worked in school, academic and public libraries. She has lived with her family in Portland since 2002 and earned her master's in library science from Emporia State University in 2007. She feels strongly that a library should be a welcoming space for all. When not reading, Leora can be found writing, hiking, singing, working in visual arts, dancing and davening at various shuls in town.

Meieran announces candidacy for county chair

Dr. Sharon Meieran has announced her candidacy for Multnomah County Chair and has launched a campaign website at votesharon.com. She began her second term as a Multnomah County Commissioner in January of 2021 as the representative of Multnomah County's First District. She practices emergency medicine in the Portland area. She is a member of Congregation Beth Israel.

Project EM: Free resources for jobseekers

A new nationwide network provides job seekers with the assistance, resources and tools to find work – all for free and available virtually.

The Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies in partnership with Jewish Federations of North America has launched “Project EM: Empowering and Employing our Community.” The goal of Project EM is to ensure that no matter where someone is on their career path or where they are located geographically, they can get the support they require to get a job – or a better job. All Project EM programs and services are free of charge.

“At a time when people are dealing with the pandemic, inflation and extra childcare needs, every bit of support can be a lifeline,” says JFGP President and CEO Marc Blattner. “Project EM will provide that support, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland is proud to partner in this effort.”

With the ups and downs of



the pandemic, many workers remain on the sideline, find themselves severely underemployed, work multiple jobs or lack access to benefits. Others who have “upskilled” during the pandemic need help breaking into new fields.

“The Omicron variant is just the latest obstacle in a two-year trauma that has been enormously disruptive for the nation’s labor force,” says Sarah C. Welch, Vice President of Workforce Development Services at NJHSA and the coordinator of Project EM. “We created Project EM to help

people get the coaching, training, skill-building and support to find good jobs, jobs that pay a living wage and allow them to provide for themselves and their families.”

Through Project EM, job seekers can access interactive workshops, technical skills training, financial literacy sessions, resume writing assistance and personalized career coaching, as well as job listings. While administered by Jewish organizations, it is open to everyone.

“Creating access to employment services under Jewish communal auspices – and doing

so on a national level – helps to ensure that all communities regardless of size or location have the resources needed to support job seekers,” says NJHSA CEO Reuben Rotman.

Project EM is administered with services provided by 19 NJHSA member agencies with the support of Jewish Federations and relies on the funding support of The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, Crown Family Philanthropies and additional funding partners.

For details and to access the virtual resources, visit jewishtgether.org/project-em.

Jobs board

The Jewish Review publishes job openings from Jewish agencies and congregations, as well as other openings of possible interest to community members. Listings are shortened to fit available space. Submit to: editor@jewishportland.org.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, EUGENE

Career Instructor of Modern Hebrew

The interdisciplinary Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies will offer Modern Hebrew beginning in fall 2022. Review of applications begins Feb. 1.

This position will teach courses in modern Hebrew at all levels, including content courses taught in English that support the Judaic Studies curriculum. The instructor will teach diverse undergraduate students in an interdisciplinary, liberal arts context and contribute to Middle East and North African Studies.

Minimum requirements are a Ph.D. in modern Hebrew or related field and native or near-native fluency in modern Hebrew as well as fluency in English.

For the full job description and application, visit careers.uoregon.edu/en-us/job/528612/career-instructor-of-modern-hebrew

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL, EUGENE

Office Manager

Salary: \$40,000-43,500, Full time, non-exempt

The Office Manager plays an essential role in the functioning of Temple Beth Israel, overseeing many of the synagogue’s administrative and operational functions. This position requires a proac-

tive individual who takes initiative and ownership, offers thoughtful suggestions, uses good judgment and follows through on all aspects of a project. It requires the ability to multi-task effectively while staying focused in a busy environment. Excellent computer skills are necessary. A working knowledge of Jewish practice and the rhythms of the Jewish calendar are strongly preferred.

We provide a generous vacation package, paid Jewish and national holidays, family membership to Temple Beth Israel, and the opportunity to work with a vibrant and flourishing community.

For full job listing, visit tbieugene.org. Send a current resume and a cover letter outlining your interest and related work experience to info@tbieugene.org.

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Chaplain's Corner

Power of Blue Skies

Where else do you find hope and optimism during these dark and dreary days?

**Please email me at
chaplain@jewishportland.org.**



BY RABBI BARRY COHEN

When I moved to Portland in the summer of July 2018, Federation President and CEO Marc Blattner gave me a heads-up about Portland winters. He said it will feel as if the sun has disappeared. The rain will keep coming. Outside will be dreary and cold.

But then he added: During those rare times when blue skies appear, I really do not want to see you behind your desk.

When he shared those words, I did not fully grasp what he was talking about. In the winter of 2022, I finally get it. I did not anticipate how challenging this season would be. Though I still love the greenery and rolling hills of the Pacific Northwest, the overcast skies and consistent cold rainfall have been fatiguing. I feel the chill to my bones. (Granted, it's not as cold as the Chicago winters I had to endure, but it has been cold enough.) Is Mt. Hood still out there? I rarely see it anymore.

I am looking for creative ways to feel energized and hopeful. Sometimes the simplest of actions can make a tremendous difference with our spiritual and physical health.

An example: On Sunday, Jan. 9, I saw something novel – blue skies. Though it was still cold, I felt compelled to get outside. I took an hour-long walk around the neighborhood. For the rest of the afternoon and into the evening, my spirits were lifted. I felt less stressed. I viewed my challenges with a healthier perspective. I looked forward to the coming week.

Right now, we all need techniques to feel hope and optimism. One such strategy is right outside. If we can hike, let's take a hike. If we can walk around the block, let's walk around the block. If we can just capture some sunshine while sitting on our balcony or in our backyard, let's do that.

Many of you have shared with me the importance of getting enough sunshine. We need it physically to produce vitamin D, which is essential to staying healthy. It's incredible how we can combine sunlight, our skin and our body's cholesterol to manufacture this vitamin. Granted, we can also get vitamin D from salmon, tuna, mackerel, beef liver and egg yolks; in addition,

some milk, cereal and orange juice are fortified with vitamin D. But if we do not receive enough from our food, simply getting outside during blue skies can work wonders.

The sun's rays can recharge our psychological, spiritual and physical batteries. Experiencing blue skies can help us get out of our heads and reconnect with our hearts. We can be less consumed by worry or fear. We can foster better connections with one another and feel calmer and more balanced. Simply getting outside can improve our interactions with family, coworkers and friends.

In effect, blue skies foster equanimity: feeling mental calmness, composure and evenness of temper, especially in difficult situations.

In the coming days and weeks, when the rains cease and blue skies appear, the last place we need to be is inside. Let's look forward to those opportunities to put our stress, pressure, anxiety and fear into a healthier context. We have been here before. We made it through. We can do it again.

I am curious. Where else do you find hope and optimism during these dark and dreary days? Please share your experience with me by e-mailing chaplain@jewishportland.org.

Together, we can weather this dark, dreary and wet season. Spring is right around the corner ... with its longer days, warmer temperatures and blue skies. In the meantime, let's welcome and experience those fleeting moments of sunshine.

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

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Rabbi's Corner

Is Religion a “Dirty” Word?

BY RABBI GARY EZRA OREN

I grew up in a house where polite folk didn't bring up religion or politics at the dinner table. If the data from some of the polls put out in the last few years are correct, then it looks like a lot of people grew up in homes similar to mine.

In the last few years, the Pew Research Center has released studies about religion in America in general and a few studies on the opinions of Jews in America and in Israel. According to these studies, more than 60% of Americans say that religion is either a “bad thing” or “makes no real difference in everyday life.” For American Jews, less than 50% report that religion is “important” and less than 20% say “very important.” In Israel, less than 2% of secular Jews say that religion is “very important.”

When folks are asked to play a word association game with the word religion, six of the top 10 responses are negative: war, degradation, corruption, humiliation, blind faith and unwelcoming. If these are the words folks associate with religion, then it is little wonder why the word is sometimes called “dirty.”

And yet, Jews overwhelmingly claim they are proud to be Jewish and that being Jewish matters to them.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel asked American Jews to reclaim the word religion, and he thought it of vital importance. Feeling proud is great. Knowing it matters is wonderful. Rabbi Heschel taught that religion is the spark that drives Jewish life.

Toward the end of his life, Rabbi Heschel would travel the country and speak at local synagogues and Jewish community centers. He would start his lecture by calmly saying, “Ladies and gentlemen, a great miracle has just occurred.” And then, he would wait. He wouldn't say another word and instead just gaze at his audience until most everyone was uncomfortable. Next, he would say, “you just took a breath” or “the sun just set.”

In his talk, Rabbi Heschel would go on to claim that observant people follow rules, and “religious” people see the miracles

Imagine the feeling of truly understanding that a great miracle just occurred. You just took a breath. Clean water is readily available from the tap. You have a chance to make someone smile today.

around them all the time. He shared that he knew lots of people who were observant and not very religious and of course the opposite. He taught that it is this sense of amazement, wonder and gratitude that drives the best parts of Jewish life. He encouraged his audience to reclaim the word religion. To understand and know that life isn't rooted only in rules, and that mindfully experiencing daily miracles is essential to living a deeply meaningful Jewish life.

Imagine the feeling of truly understanding that a great miracle just occurred. You just took a breath. Your child or grandchild just called you for help. Clean water is readily available from the tap. You have a chance to make someone smile today. You speak and I can understand you – crazy! And of course, we could make this list go on and on ...

I wonder what the polls would look like if we thought of religion like this. I bet it would cease to be a “dirty” word.

Rabbi Gary Ezra Oren is the senior rabbi of Congregation Shaarie Torah, a Conservative synagogue in Northwest Portland. He and his wife, Sharone, have three children.



Jordan Schnitzer and father, Harold, z”l.

Harsch renamed Schnitzer Properties

Harsch Investment Properties rebranded as Schnitzer Properties Jan. 3, 2022.

Under the leadership of company founder Harold Schnitzer, z”l, and his son, Jordan Schnitzer, the company has been a trusted name in commercial real estate for more than 70 years.

“We’ve always been honored that our company name is based on my father’s first and last name,” says Jordan, the company’s president. Yet he adds that while many in the Portland community knew Harsch was the Harold Schnitzer family, the company now operates in six states and has 4,000 tenants, “and for them, the word Harsch was not a very friendly name.”

“Schnitzer Properties honors the past as we continue to grow. Looking forward, it also helps tie in the fact we’re a company that gives back into our communities,” says Jordan of the name change that honors the legacy of giving connected to the Schnitzer family name.

The Schnitzer name has long been synonymous with philanthropy in the arts, health, Jewish and educational communities. In 2021, the family’s foundations, the company and bequests from Arlene Schnitzer, z”l, contributed a total of \$17,880,000 to some 200 nonprofits. That included \$1,077,653 from the Schnitzer Family Fund at the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation.

In addition to the financial donations, company employees also engage in hands-on *tzedakah*. On Jan. 13, Jordan and about a dozen employees engaged in what he calls “one of the most meaningful things we’ve done.” The Schnitzer group packed 700 25-pound food boxes at the Gresham Station shopping center they own and then handed out the food to needy families.

“When you hand those boxes out and you see the people’s eyes ... (you realize) they’re human beings just like us,” says Jordan. “It’s often easy to forget how lucky we are.”

The announcement of the rebranding notes, “It’s a new name for our company, but a familiar one for the community. One with deep roots, a legacy of giving and a powerful promise for the future.”

[schnitzerproperties.com](https://www.schnitzerproperties.com)

Rabbi's Corner

The Jewish Review offers space for the community's rabbis to share their thoughts on the week's parsha or current events. Rabbis are invited to schedule a date to submit a 500- to 600-word piece. To schedule a column, email editor@jewishportland.org.



The Evans family observes Rabbi Shimon Kraft from Los Angeles fill in their "letter" in the Torah. Rabbi Kraft came to speak and fill in the final 70 letters of the new Sefer Torah.

New Sefer Torah dedicated Jan. 9

Congregation Kesser Israel dedicated its new Sefer Torah Jan. 9. About 200 people turned out for the dedication, with another 50 joining on Zoom.

The Torah was scribed by Rabbi Moshe Kornblatt from Jerusalem, with the final letters scribed by Rabbi Shimon Kraft at the celebration at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center.

Long-time member Adam Rosenberg shared some of the [history of the shul](#).



After the celebration at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, Avraham Warshaw, Gabbai of Kesser Israel, carried the Torah on the procession to the synagogue, above. At right, before the procession Rabbi Kenneth Brodtkin takes the Torah from Rick Haselton, whose family sponsored the Torah in memory of Meyer and Flo Rubenstein, z"l, parents of Rick's wife, Sura Rubenstein.



SECURE COMMUNITY (from page 1)

Founded in 2004, SCN is a nonprofit that serves as the central organization dedicated to the safety and security of the American Jewish community. It works with 146 federations, 50 partner organizations and more than 300 independent communities.

Locally the SCN director is funded by a four-way partnership – Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, multiple local Jewish organizations and SCN. Moss recently accepted the SCN role to serve as Regional Security Director for the entire Pacific Northwest, including Portland. SCN and JFGP also will hire a new local security director soon.

"With the incredible financial support of our partners to hire a local security director our community is better positioned and prepared to respond to horrific instances like this," says JFGP President

and CEO Marc Blattner.

Following the Texas incident, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations released the following statement: "We are relieved by the resolution of the hostage situation at Congregation Beth Israel and are immensely grateful for the courage of local and state law enforcement, and the FBI, who acted quickly and effectively to rescue the rabbi and all of the worshippers inside the synagogue. We are also indebted to our partners at the Secure Community Network, whose mission is to guarantee every congregation the right to worship freely and safely by providing security resources and training. Congregation Beth Israel received this training from SCN only several months prior, which likely helped to make them better prepared for this tragic incident."

Obituaries

NANCY SHERMAN

Nancy Sherman, z"l, passed away on Jan. 15, 2022, at the age of 93. Nancy is loved and remembered by her five children, Nathan (Linda), Gregory, Stanley, Pauline and Susanne Sherman; and grandchildren, David, Joel, Jacob and Tamara.

She was a member of Congregation Neveh Shalom. A private funeral was held Jan. 18 and shared on Zoom.

MOLLY BODNER

Molly Bodner, z"l, passed away Jan. 11, 2022, at the age of 103. Molly is loved and remembered by her son, Floyd (Lora) Bodner; grandsons, Robert (Tara) Bodner and Jeremy (Sharron) Bodner; and granddaughter, Elana Bodner; along with three great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her husband, Herbert Bodner, and son, Jay Bodner.

Molly was Congregation Neveh Shalom's oldest congregant. The funeral was held Jan. 16 at Ahavai Shalom Cemetery.

LEO ARFER

Leo Arfer, z"l, also known as "Leo the Lion," passed away Dec. 31, 2021. He is survived by beloved friends and family including his wife, Patti; daughters, Hannah Fisher and Rory Lindo; son, Ethan Arfer; daughter-in-law, Christinia Lively; his three wonderful grandchildren, Sophia, Wilson and Soleil; sisters, Enid and Laura; stepdaughter, Netanis Waters; and son-in-law, Paljeet Singh.

Leo was born in the Bronx, N.Y., May 9, 1949, to Anne and Leonard Arfer. He grew up on Long Island, graduating Kings Park High School in 1968 and soon after enlisting in the U.S. Air Force, where he served in the Vietnam War. Vietnam became the inspiration for his career in photography. Upon completion of his service, Leo moved from New York to Portland, where he met his wife, Kathy Fisher. Together for 40 years, Leo and Kathy raised two kids, Hannah and Ethan.

As a photographer, Leo was the President of the Oregon Chapter of the American Society of Media Photographers and taught business photography at Mt. Hood Community College. His commercial career spanned four decades specializing in film photography for food, furniture and architecture.

Leo retired in 2012 so he could devote himself to the care of Kathy through an illness that ultimately led to her passing in 2013. Later he met Patti Waters, and they married in 2017.

He was preceded in death by his mother and father; sister, Gail; and wife, Kathy.

Memorial services were held Jan. 7, 2022, at Congregation Beth Israel.