

# THE JEWISH REVIEW

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## Sweet Lorraine's closes

*The Jewish Review staff*

Sweet Lorraine's Latkes & More has closed.

An email sent out by owners Rachel and Aaron Brashear on Monday, May 27 confirmed that the couple's efforts to find a new kitchen space following the sudden closure of Labyrinth Forge Brewing had not come to fruition and that continuing their operations was no longer economically viable.

"We don't want Sweet Lorraine's to end. Period. But we are just two people. We can't change the economy," the release said. "We can't change the harsh realities of running a business in Portland."

Sweet Lorraine's began in 2021 as a food cart, relocating twice before moving into a sublease arrangement at Labyrinth Forge in 2023.

"This seemed like an arrangement that fit in with our

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Jewish Federation of Greater Portland President and CEO Marc Blattner applauds honorees at the Federation's 100th Anniversary Gala Saturday, Oct. 8, 2023 at the Portland Art Museum. Last Saturday, June 1, marked 30 years of Blattner's work in Jewish Federations across the United States. (Andie Petkus Photography/Jewish Review file)

## 'I want to work for the Jewish people.'

### Blattner's life's mission spans 30 years - and counting

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

*The Jewish Review*

Marc Blattner remembers the day his path became clear.

It was 1987. Blattner was the Grand Alpha Godol of the Grand Order of the Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA), the male arm of B'nai

B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO). After a trip to New York City, where his sister was attending Columbia University and he was planning to study business at New York University, he took the train to Washing-

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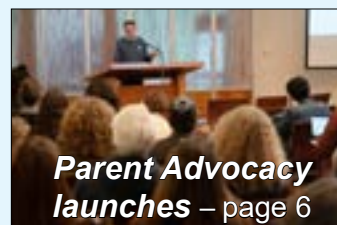
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On this episode of the podcast:

Marc Blattner, Federation CEO

## Segal wins 2024 Rogoway



Congregation Neveh Shalom Foundation School teacher Etti Segal, center, received the 2024 Laurie Rogoway Outstanding Jewish Professional award in a surprise presentation from Federation Chief Allocations and Engagement Officer Caron Blau Rothstein, left, and Rogoway Committee Chair Jodi Fried. Segal be honored at tomorrow's Federation Annual Meeting and a profile of her will appear in the June 19 edition of *The Jewish Review*. (Courtesy Photo)

## CLOSED (continued from page 1)

personal ethics and could benefit us all," the Brashears said. "We had a great time there, our business was growing and growing, we were paying all our bills and even hired some part-time employees. Our sales increased significantly, and we were in a good place."

Sweet Lorraine's also became the operator of Lefty's Café at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education – an arrangement which worked well because while OJMCHÉ's space lacks a full kitchen, transporting packaged items from their kitchen space to the museum was not onerous. With the loss of their main kitchen and dining room, the limited revenue from Lefty's made continued operations, which would have come with a significant hike in kitchen costs, an impossibility.

"It has been very emotional for us to make the decision to stop serving," Sweet Lorraine's closing announcement said. "But when we do the math, maintaining this model will never work in the local restaurant industry. The cost of doing business has ballooned so fast in the past three years, we can now never make enough to cover the minimum rent at a restaurant location in Portland selling latkes and knishes, let alone all the other ever-increasing costs."

Sweet Lorraine's is the latest in a string of shocks to Portland's Jewish food scene following the 2023 closures of Kornblatt's, Kenny and Zuke's and Jacob and Sons. The closure leaves Lefty's Café without an operator once again – Sweet Lorraine's was brought in following the departure of Henry Higgins Boiled Bagels, which succeeded Jacob and Sons following their closure.

## Women's Giving Circle announces 11 grants totaling \$32k

*The Jewish Review staff*

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Women's Giving Circle recently completed its eighth grant-making cycle, awarding \$32,000 to 11 organizations in Oregon to start or continue projects relating to Jewish women and girls, justice and Jewish continuity.

"Every grant had to have at least one of those elements in there," Women's Giving Circle member Elaine Coughlin said. "A common thread through it all, I think, is the idea that with our help, these programs can be sustained and in some cases continued."

This year's grant recipients include:

- Chabad of Tigard, supporting their upcoming women's book club program.
- Dignity Grows, the Federation's program to combat period poverty by providing menstrual and other hygiene supplies to those in need.
- Beit Am – Mid-Willamette Valley Jewish Community, to support their art- and meditation-focused Rosh Chodesh programs.
- Jewish Family & Child Service, to create a dedicated offshoot of their "Walking Beside You" grief support group for widows and widowers.
- Chabad of Oregon, supporting their Shabbat Hug program of Shabbat food deliveries to foster community through the "universal language of food."
- Greater Portland Hillel to build women- and queer-centered Rosh Chodesh programming.
- TischPDX for their Alumni Support Program, which was founded with a Women's Giving Circle grant in 2022.
- Congregation Shir Tikvah, to recruit new volunteers to continue their Torah study and Shabbat observance programs at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility.
- Chabad of Hillsboro in support of their ongoing Jewish Women's Group programs including Weekly Wednesday Torah Study and the Rosh Chodesh Society.
- Jewish Free Loan of Oregon, which is building a new program to provide gift cards to area grocery stores for those who need assistance that can't be fulfilled with a loan.
- The Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education, supporting the fourth annual Art + Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-Thon, a community event being planned for March 2025 to build and edit entries in the world's largest free online encyclopedia for artists who identify as Jewish women.

The decision to focus on these issues and programs, Coughlin said, is part of what makes the work of Women's Giving Circle so important.

"It gives women an opportunity to get some of the philanthropic aid that they might not be able to get otherwise through our group," she said.

The circle will begin working towards its next grant-making cycle in the coming months. For more information on how to be a part, email Federation Chief Development Officer Wendy Kahn at [wendy@jewishportland.org](mailto:wendy@jewishportland.org).



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## Orthodox slugger stops by day school



Students from Maimonides Jewish Day School/Tamim Academy of Portland visited with Portland Pickles catcher Elie Kligman, third from right, Friday, May 31 at the school in Northeast Portland. Kligman, who recently completed his junior season at Sacramento State University with a .292 batting average in 36 games, is one of the first Orthodox Jewish players in NCAA Division I baseball. Selected out of high school by the Washington Nationals in the 2021 MLB Amateur Draft, Kligman elected to play in college and joins the Pickles this summer to continue to hone his skills. The Pickles are members of the West Coast League, an elite summer circuit for college players that is heavily scouted by professional organizations, and play their home games at Walker Stadium in the Lents neighborhood of East Portland. Their season runs through August. (Courtesy Chabad of Northeast Portland)

## First NextGen Giving Circle awards grant

By **ROCKNE ROLL**  
*The Jewish Review*

Giving circles are what the “cool kids” are up to these days, especially in Jewish Portland.

The inaugural NextGen Giving Circle, organized by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland and the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, recently completed its grantmaking cycle, awarding \$2,600 to Greater Portland Hillel to support the campus group’s ongoing operations.

The group of eight participants contributed their own money to “fund social service programs that support the mental and physical wellbeing of young adults in the face of antisemitism for future generations,” explained Federation Associate Campaign and Engagement

Officer Laura Jeser.

Instead of requesting proposals, the group first settled on their mission statement and then privately evaluated which local agencies that worked toward those goals, concluding with meetings with a handful of finalist agencies to hone in on where the group felt their funds could do the most good. The grant was supported by contributions from OJCF and the Jewish Federations of North America.

While the giving circle is certainly a positive for PDX Hillel, OJCF Collaborative Giving Director Susan Berniker said it was also a powerful experience for the participants.

“They felt a connection,” Berniker explained. “This helped them feel like that the Jewish community was

accessible to them.”

The deliberation process also gave participants access to knowledge of not just Portland’s major Jewish institutions, but the smaller players on the stage of Portland’s communal Jewish life that do brilliant work.

“This experience broadened their horizons,” Jeser said. “They were learning through these experiences that we have so many Jewish organizations that are doing great work.”

Portland is no stranger to giving circle-style philanthropy – JFGP’s Women’s Giving Circle is one of the pillars of the Portland Jewish community’s charitable work and recently announced their latest round of grants (see story, page 2) and OJCF just celebrated 21 years of its Oregon Jewish

Community Youth Foundation. But it’s a growing trend, and programs like NextGen Giving Circle are an opportunity to grow the foundations of Jewish giving with younger donors who are energized about being hands on with their giving and invested in the work their dollars can do.

“It’s trying to democratize fundraising,” Berniker said. “It’s exciting that we have it here in our community.”

It’s also exciting as a first collaborative effort between OJCF and the Federation. Both Berniker and Jeser hope it’s the first of many – both in terms of co-op projects between the organizations and giving circles for young adults, though the details of future NextGen projects are yet to be determined.

# Kasser Institute presents in Portland June 18

*The Jewish Review staff*

In Israel, even in the midst of war and terrorism, groundbreaking research to improve lives in the Jewish state and beyond continues.

The Kasser Joint Institute for Global Food, Water and Energy Security is just one example of that work – work which will be on display Tuesday, June 18 at 7 pm in a presentation by Kasser Institute’s Tania Pons Allon, sponsored by Jewish National Fund, Israel360 and the Climate Action Committee of the Jewish Community Relations Council.

The Kasser Institute is a joint project between JNF, the Arava regional council and the University of Arizona that is pioneering agrivoltaics, the combination of solar panel installation in conjunction with crops, and aquaponics, raising fish along with crops, to create more advanced methods to use water to grow food and generate electricity as well. Along with research sites in Arizona and in the Arava region, the Kasser Institute works in these fields in rural Kenya to support communities in the area making the most of limited resources.

Agrivoltaics places solar panels over crops, Allon said, to reduce the temperature and infrared radiation levels around the plants – this leads to less water usage. The type of solar panels used in these arrangements, she explained, are some of the lowest cost panels on the market, making this type of water



A Kasser Joint Institute Agrivoltaics research site in Kenya. (Courtesy JNF)

conservation-oriented farming much less expensive than other solutions like desalination technology.

“It’s a very exciting project, and it involves a community on the ground that is in deep poverty,” Allon said. “We are able to show them how we are doing things in the Arava, how we grow different crops; we’re able to show them that they can use the sun as a power source.”

It may seem odd to some that JNF is working on research that is destined for

Kenya and other places, as opposed to Israel itself. But it makes perfect sense to Allon on a number of levels.

“We are promoting research in the Negev. We are getting more people to work as researchers in the lab,” she said. Furthermore, “The Jewish community throughout the centuries has always been doing good for the world.”

The event is free, but preregistration is required at [events.jnf.org/e/buildtogetherportland](https://events.jnf.org/e/buildtogetherportland).

## Moishe House seeking residents for new locations in East Portland

*The Jewish Review staff*

One chapter in Moishe House’s Portland story is ending, but another is beginning.

Portland’s Moishe House – not to be confused with Moishe Pod West PDX across the river – is closing, with the owner of the property in Southeast Portland repurposing the building. Josh Traulsen, West Coast Director of Advancement for Moishe House, is already looking to fill the void in young adult Jewish programming on the Eastside.

“We’re looking for a whole new group of people to move into a house that could

end up being in that same area or nearby or not nearby, depending on where people are applying,” Traulsen said. “We’re really open to whatever comes our way.”

The “whatever” may not be a single house, even. The success of the West Portland pod, with both its current and previous residents, has sparked the possibility of opening two additional Pods in the Portland Metro area instead of a single house. In Moishe House parlance, a “Pod” features two residents that put on three programs per month, while a full-sized “House” hosts five

or six events per month and incorporates three to five residents.

“We’ve never had three pods and no houses in a city before,” Traulsen said.

More of the smaller pods provides the opportunity to engage a broader portion of the community, Traulsen explained, whether that be geographically or in terms of areas of interest. Those variables – location, focus, size and number of units-- will be determined by the people that end up participating.

If you’re between the ages of 22 and 32, looking to build Jewish community and

can commit to at least a year, “those people” could be you. It’s not for everyone, though.

“I was a resident for a couple years in the Phoenix Moishe House a while back, and I know it can be a lot of work,” Traulsen said. “It’s hard to be on all the time, and it’s hard to have people at your house multiple times a month, but it also was one of the best times of my life and I loved it so much.”

Those looking to participate can email Moishe House’s Senior Northwest Community Manager Jake House at [jake.house@moishehouse.org](mailto:jake.house@moishehouse.org).

# 'Eyes and ears' - Parent Advocacy Groups launch

By ROCKNE ROLL

*The Jewish Review*

"We can't be silent anymore," Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Director of Community Relations Bob Horenstein told a packed Stampfer Chapel at Congregation Neveh Shalom the evening of Monday, June 3. "That's what you are here for."

Ceasing to be silent is the entire point of the Federation's K-12 Parent Advocacy Groups, launched at Monday's meeting. With antisemitic incidents on the rise in schools and a local teachers' union pushing a curriculum that labels Israel as a "settler-colonial" enterprise and describes the entirety of "Palestine" as under a "violent Zionist military occupation since 1948," it is imperative to have parents engaged as partners in this advocacy with the schools.

"It is something I feel will fuel antisemitism," Horenstein said of the curriculum, called "Teach Palestine" and endorsed by the Portland Association of Teachers, the union of Portland Public School's educators, which has been engaged in anti-Israel advocacy for months following the Oct. 7 attacks. (See "[PAT promotes one-sided narrative on Gaza](#)," Mar. 13, 2024, pg. 1) "You may not live in the Portland school district, but you should still care about what's going on."

The advocacy groups, a follow-up to a webinar hosted May 22 with the Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, are meant to provide parents with tools to look out for their children's wellbeing. It's a model that's seen positive results in Texas, Indiana and North Carolina, among other locales.



Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Director of Community Relations Bob Horenstein addresses the launch meeting for the Federation's K-12 Parent Advocacy Groups Monday, June 3 at the Stampfer Chapel at Congregation Neveh Shalom. "You, as parents, are our eyes and ears," Horenstein told the crowd of more than 125 parents. (Rockne Roll/*The Jewish Review*)

"Especially since Oct. 7, we've seen that parents and community members wanting to do something who have felt so paralyzed and so unsure of what direction to take," Federation Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations Rachel Nelson told *The Jewish Review*. "This is a model and a method in which they can advocate for themselves for their kids and be part of the community response in a very targeted, guided fashion."

After opening remarks by Nelson and Horenstein, the more than 125 parents split into geographically focused groups to work with facilitators and discuss issues specific to their school districts. In those opening remarks, Horenstein explained that parents are an essential conduit between the Feder-

ation's work combatting antisemitism and the particular school where it's happening.

"Our goal is to be a resource for the school," Horenstein said. "I can't recall an instance where we weren't welcomed into a school once the parents introduced us."

He explained that addressing specific incidents among students or tackling longer-term issues like school culture through programs like the Anti-Defamation League's "No Place for Hate" both start with parent involvement and engagement.

"You, as parents, are our eyes and ears," he said.

And while much of the current motivation and need to advocate for students stems from antisemitism and political advocacy in the classroom, Jewish parents working together to engage with their children's schools already has

a successful history in the area with the implementation of holiday equity policies advocated for by Jewish parents. It's an example of the work parents can do together to engage with schools to support their children and families collaboratively.

"[While Parent Advocacy Groups are] reactive in terms of the situation that's happening, they can also be proactively working with districts, creating and fostering relationships, so that districts have connection points of concerned parents, parents who want to be involved parents," Nelson said.

For more information or to get involved with a Parent Advocacy Group in your school district, email Nelson at [rachel@jewishportland.org](mailto:rachel@jewishportland.org) or Horenstein at [bob@jewishportland.org](mailto:bob@jewishportland.org).



## *EJC celebrates three years with grand gala*

The Eastside Jewish Commons staged a fundraising gala in celebration of its third birthday Sunday, June 2, at the Commons. Celebratory toasts of bubbly preceded an Israeli dinner and a performance by singer Rizo, accompanied by Pink Martini pianist Thomas Lauderdale. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)



# Today's youth, tomorrow's leaders

By GLORIA HAMMER

For *The Jewish Review*

What does young Jewish Leadership look like today? Who will be the voice of the future?

On a quest to answer these questions, I met two remarkable young people: Avery Dorfman, who is a member of the Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation, among other organizations, and Daniel Mezistrano, the recently-elected Grand Aleph Godol (international president) of The Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA), the boys' section of the B'nai B'rith Youth Organization (BBYO). After communicating with these two I feel confident our future is in good hands. Both have a lot to say and their own unique way of expressing their passion for being involved in Jewish leadership.

Avery is a 17-year-old Ida B. Wells High School student in Portland. She has been a member Congregation Beth Israel all her life and spent eight summers at the Reform Camp Kalsman, forming long-lasting friendships and memories she can't say enough about and will be forever grateful for. She became *bat mitzvah* in 2019 and the following year she started teaching Havdalah prayers to 6th and 7th graders at CBI. Another love of hers has been teaching Israeli dancing to pre-kindergarten up to fifth graders.

She's also involved in gun violence prevention, especially an event called Soul Box Project which draws attention to the battle against gun violence.

"A tragedy in 2018 of Damia, a three-year-old who accidentally took her father's gun and shot herself, compelled me to take meaningful action," she said. "The heart wrenching story stirred something deep within me."

Avery founded Students Demand Action, a student group supporting measures to reduce gun violence, and has met with elected officials at the local state and federal level. She orchestrated a school walkout in favor of Measure 114 prior to the 2022 midterm election and gathered signatures to get the measure on the ballot, where it passed.

"More than 100 teens gathered outside on the tennis courts during class," she recalled of the walkout. "Though many of us could not cast a vote, our united voices resonated beyond the ballot box."

She has taken on a leadership role with Students Active for Ending Rape, a club dedicated to eradicating rape culture, highlighting consent, and promoting safe sex while striving to prevent sexual violence. Avery says a highlight of their efforts was last year when they hosted Rep. Susanne Bonamici.

The experience "deepened my commitment for meaningful change as well as contributing to a safe environment for campus and beyond," she said.

Her advocacy is not just focused at home. Avery partici-

pates in both the Jewish Student Union and No Place for Hate, a program to fight bigotry and bullying supported by the Anti-Defamation League; the war in Gaza has upped the challenge level those engagements present.

"The war against Hamas has seeped into every aspect of my life," she said.

She's navigated the situation with flying colors, supporting Jewish peers through JSU programs while collaborating with her school's Muslim Student Association to craft presentations to underclass students about the complexities of the ongoing conflict in a way that brought communities together.

"We came together to address antisemitism and Islamophobia," she said. "We stood as allies against prejudice while embodying our commitment of culturally diverse viewpoints."

Amongst all this, she also participated in the Rose Festival court.

Daniel was elected to his post at BBYO's Centennial International Convention was held in Orlando, Florida in February.

"During these unprecedented times for the Jewish people, it is especially meaningful to hold this role," he said. "I am eager to instill a sense of pride and safety in our teens."

Daniel attended the Jewish Day School of Metropolitan Seattle and became *bar mitzvah* at Herzl Ner Tamid Synagogue. He comes from a large Sephardic family. His favorite part about growing up Jewish was going to summer camp at B'nai B'rith Camp in Lincoln City where he says he has met some of his very best friends. Daniel calls BB Camp (now BB360), "the most formative experience of my childhood."

He's also no stranger to Israel, having spent a semester at Jewish National Fund's Alexander Muss High School, which he calls the best four months of his life.

"This was my first real experience in the Holy Land, and I instantly fell in love," he said. "I forged lifelong friendships, learned about the history of our people and most importantly built a connection to Zionism."

He says much of his childhood he was exposed to the religious side of Judaism, but BBYO showed him how incredible the community and culture of our people were.

Daniel joined BBYO in Eighth grade, following his cousins who were both very involved. He knew he wanted to be involved in leadership.

"Coming out of Covid, our chapter's membership had declined and morale was low," he said. "I was excited to step into the role of President to lead our chapter back to its former state. By the end of the term our membership tripled, and we won 15 of 17 possible awards for excellence in our region."

***"Though many of us could not cast a vote, our united voices resonated beyond the ballot box."***

-Avery Dorfman, on campaigning for Ballot Measure 114

***"People look to leaders for guidance in times of change, and the ability to calmly navigate the change and make the best of a given situation."***

-Daniel Mezistrano, on leadership

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## Awardees highlight family fun at "Day for the J"



'Day for the J' at MJCC has evolved over the years to incorporate a variety of athletic activities, arts and culture activities and acknowledgment of important community members. This year, Day for the J took place May 19th and combined the typical open-house style event with a Community Awards Ceremony, (an event formerly called the Community Celebration) which saw Priscilla Kostiner receive the Pillar of Excellence Award, below left, and Enzo Nusbaum and Lia Komitor named this year's Glickman Scholarship recipients, below center. (Courtesy Middleman Jewish Community Center)



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Daniel knew he wanted to run for Grand Aleph Godol as a freshman.

"While my intentions for running may have been originally selfish, when I stepped on to the podium in front of 300 people to deliver my speech, I knew I was most excited at the possibility of being able to impact those teens' lives," he said.

Leadership of a large group in times like these is an especially big responsibility, but it's one he's reflected extensively on.

"The best way for people to grow as leaders is to watch their leaders in action," he said. "People look to leaders for guidance in times of change, and the ability to calmly navigate the change and make the best of a given situation."

Daniel used social media to speak out against hate that he and his peers have faced because of their Jewish roots. "I took every opportunity I could to educate myself, others, and speak out against hate to defend our community and the state of Israel."

Daniel says he lives in a strong Jewish community that does

not face a lot of antisemitism, but he was sitting in school in an off period scrolling Instagram and saw a Stand with Us post about a synagogue being vandalized - his synagogue.

"I left school early and went down to look at the site," he recalled. "In the courtyard where I celebrated my bar mitzvah, I sat and stared at the hateful messages desecrating the walls of the temple. The moment sparked a passion inside to combat this hate and empower our community to do the same."

It's a passion that's at the forefront of his work with BBYO.

"Regardless of your opinion on the Israeli Government and their actions towards the Palestinian people, you cannot deny the Jewish People and their historical connection to Zion and their right to return to their ancestral homeland," Daniel said. "There is nothing wrong with being Zionist."

With leaders like Avery and Daniel, who are passionate about a wide range of causes and motivated to take action on them, the future of the Jewish community is bright indeed.

*Gloria Hammer, a Portland educator and Pilates instructor, has written for The Jewish Review for over 20 years and produced OPB's Emmy-nominated documentary "The Three Rabbis."*

<https://www.jewishreview.com/podcasts/jewishreviewpdx>

# Community Endowment Fund grants announced

## *Oregon Jewish Community Foundation*

The Oregon Jewish Community Foundation (OJCF) supports vital and impactful community organizations and initiatives in Oregon and SW Washington through its Community Endowment Fund (CEF). For Fiscal Year 2024, OJCF awarded grants from the CEF to seed innovative and collaborative organizations and programs in Oregon and SW Washington that remove or lower the barriers to Jewish participation identified in the community study commissioned by

the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. OJCF's vision is that the proposals funded with CEF dollars will serve immediate needs and help build the community fabric of Oregon and SW Washington.

CEF grants were awarded to 27 of the 47 applications received. Distributions from the CEF for fiscal year 2024 totaled approximately \$257,000.00 with an average grant size of approximately \$9,500.00. The CEF grants will support communities in Clackamas County, Clark County, Deschutes County, Lane County, Lincoln Coun-

ty, Linn County, Multnomah County, and Washington County.

OJCF is pleased to support our community's organizations in developing programming for Jewish teen philanthropy, education (Holocaust, Hebrew, Jewish, Financial), arts and culture, services for marginalized communities, regional security, and Jewish engagement that will sustain the Jewish community for today and tomorrow.

This year's CEF grant recipients were: BB360, Co/Lab, Congregation Neveh Shalom, Congregation Shaarie Torah, Congregation Shir

Tikvah, Eastside Jewish Commons, Facing History & Ourselves, Hebrew at the Center, Jewish Family & Child Service, Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, Jewish Federation of Lane County, NCSY – Oregon, Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education, Sacred Heart Sacred You, Temple Beth Tikvah, TischPDX.

For more information about Oregon Jewish Community Foundation's Community Endowment Fund, contact OJCF's Director of Community Relations, Noah Rosenberg at [noahr@ojcf.org](mailto:noahr@ojcf.org).

## BLATTNER (continued from page 1)

ton, D.C. to attend Freedom Sunday for Soviet Jews, the demonstration on the National Mall for Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union in advance of Soviet Premier Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting with then-President Ronald Reagan.

"Walking down the street with thousands of people I did not know to go to this rally," Blattner told The Jewish Review Podcast, "I said to myself, 'I want to work for the Jewish people.'"

Following a bachelor's degree at Emory University in Atlanta and a double masters at what was then known as the Baltimore Institute for Jewish Communal Service, he embarked on that career in Jewish Federations – a career which has spanned 30 years as of last week.

For those who have known him along the way, Blattner's journey into, and success in, Jewish communal work has not been a surprise.

Robin Minkoff knew Blattner from his AZA days, where she was an adminis-

trator at AZA's summer programs.

"He was a trendsetter and a really warm, outgoing person," she recalled.

"He was somebody who was very passionate about what he believed in," explained Michelle Caplan, assistant executive director of Congregation Neveh Shalom and the former International President of B'nai B'rith Girls (BBG), who served alongside Blattner. "All the kids always looked up to him, to his leadership."

Caplan was with Blattner in 1987 when they marched on the Mall, the day Blattner decided on his direction.

"That was one of those things that is sort of seared in your brain that you don't forget," she said. "That really was powerful, and very meaningful."

When Blattner set out on that course and eventually made his way to graduate school in Baltimore, Minkoff was there again – she was working at the school when Blattner began his studies.

"When he came to Balti-

more, I brought him to meet my grandparents and my parents and my siblings, and he came to Shabbat dinners and spent holidays with us," she recalled. "He was a very studious person and serious about his endeavors, and you could see was career minded."

That career took off in Baltimore. Initially, he told The Jewish Review Podcast, Blattner had a goal of becoming the Executive Director of BBYO. During his second year in graduate school, however, he interned at Baltimore's Jewish Federation (known as The Associated) under Darrell Friedman. Friedman, who served as The Associated's CEO for 20 years, had been heavily involved in BBYO, providing an instant point of connection between the two.

"I knew this guy was a star," Friedman. "I could tell by his emotional intelligence, which is very high. His ability to develop relationships and his ability to be a leader to basically bring about consensus among

people. He was very bright when it came to the visions of the future. He had a way about him that was very convincing."

Friedman hired Blattner after he completed his studies, starting a 10-year stint in Baltimore where Blattner ultimately became the Campaign Director.

During that time, he worked closely with Jeff Finklestein, who has since become CEO of the Federation in Pittsburgh.

"He made me a better professional because I really watched him and how he kept himself organized," Finkelstein said. "He does not let balls drop."

One of those habits was the volume of notes Blattner would take, always writing things down to ensure memory. It's a technique Blattner continues to this day, but it's far from the only impression he left on Finkelstein.

"Even when there's tough situations, he stays really positive, he doesn't get negative, he rarely gets critical

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Marc Blattner, right, stands at The Kotel in Jerusalem with Michelle Caplan during a visit to Israel while the pair were international presidents of B'nai B'rith Youth Organization. (Courtesy Michelle Caplan)

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of people,” Finkelstein recalled of Blattner. “He always sees the good in individuals and their actions. I think it’s an incredible trait for a leader.”

The pair became good friends, even though Finkelstein is said to have killed Blattner’s cat – a running joke that stemmed from Finkelstein visiting Blattner’s home to feed the cat and administer medication while Blattner and his wife, Sarah, were away on their honeymoon in Israel. The couple returned to find their cat quite ill; it later passed away.

“He continues to tell everybody that I killed his cat,” Finkelstein said. “All I can say is if I did, it wasn’t on purpose.”

Blattner’s time in Baltimore was followed by a return to Atlanta, his undergraduate stomping grounds, where he was the Chief Operating Officer of the Greater Atlanta Federation. From there, he moved to Philadelphia where he worked as the second-in-command of the Federation there.

Minkoff was then residing in Philadelphia; she helped Blattner connect with the Jewish community in town and rekindled their friendship.

“We had many Shabbat dinners and other holidays together,” she recalled. “We were interwoven in in the ways that families with young kids can find each other and it was extremely meaningful to have someone in my life in Marc from all of those years earlier and to be able to watch him grow.”

Beyond friendship, Minkoff was impressed to watch Blattner’s vision for moving Philadelphia’s Federation forward come to life.

“Marc came as an architect of change in a positive way,” she said. “He really wanted to embrace the younger generation and make sure that their voices would be incorporated into the decision-making process that federation would have.”

-

Eventually, Portland came calling. Blattner told The Jewish Review Podcast that Portland was one of the cities he visited during his time as Grand Aleph Gadol that left the strongest impression on him. When the opportunity to become

a Federation CEO came up in just that city, it was a perfect opportunity.

Among those who anticipated his arrival was current Federation Board Chair Mindy Zeitzer, who had moved to town just two years earlier.

“I was kind of excited that we were going to be getting somebody pretty awesome,” Zeitzer recalled. “He came with glowing reviews.”

Caplan was also waiting, having already moved to Portland and having maintained a friendship with Sarah Blattner, who was her vice-president at BBG.

The reviews Zeitzer spoke of were, of course, not flukes.

“He was like this as a teenager, he listens to whatever you have to say whether it’s positive or negative, and he takes something, he learns from it and he grows from it,” Caplan said of Marc Blattner.

“Marc is an incredible person to work with. He, in my mind, has such an incredible pulse on our community,” Zeitzer said. “I truly believe that he looks out for the best interests of the community as a whole, because he wants to see a growing and thriving community and feels that Federation is a key element to that.”

Those who Blattner has worked with, and who he maintains friendships with to this day, are not surprised at the caliber of leader he’s proven to be. It’s always been there.

“He has grown professionally beyond anybody’s expectations,” Friedman said. “He’s just a very unique individual, and Portland is lucky to have him.”

“Portland’s a really lucky community to have someone of Marc’s caliber leading its federation,” Finkelstein added. “Portland’s a growing community and to have someone with the deep experience and expertise and relationship building, a consensus builder, that’s the secret sauce to success.”

Hear more about Blattner’s 30 years in Jewish Federations on the latest episode of The Jewish Review Podcast, available wherever you get your podcasts.

## Security Corner

# We're all in this together

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## NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

JUNE 19 JUNE 11

By JESSICA ANDERSON

In previous columns, I've written about Oregon's DOJ Bias Response Hotline. Those articles were largely directed to individual community members to increase awareness about reporting incidents and what rises to the level of a reportable event. In this column, I'd like to direct a message to organizational leaders and social media managers.

The Oregon DOJ recently released its marketing materials for a new campaign called "You Belong." According to their literature, this is a "culturally and linguistically inclusive, statewide public outreach effort to increase awareness of Oregon's Bias Response Hotline as a crucial resource in the fight against the continued rise of hate crimes and bias incidents in Oregon." The group is providing a toolkit for sharing the message with your community members on your own platforms. These include social media copy, graphics, Public Service Announcements (PSA), and more. Over the



*Jessica Anderson is the Portland-area Director of Community Security. She was previously an FBI agent for 24 years. This position is funded by SCN (the official safety and security organization of the Jewish community in North America) and a local three-way partnership of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, Oregon Jewish Community Foundation Endowment Fund and multiple Jewish organizations in the region.*

next few months, you will also start seeing statewide billboards, bus ads, and online ads as the campaign gets underway. The toolkit can be found at [doj.state.or.us/oregon-department-of-justice/civil-rights/bias-and-hate/you-belong-toolkit](http://doj.state.or.us/oregon-department-of-justice/civil-rights/bias-and-hate/you-belong-toolkit). Below are a couple of examples of the social media posts available in the toolkit to use along with the hashtag #youbelong and others.

It's important to highlight the importance of reporting bias against others that you witness. Within the Jewish community, we're fortunate to have a few places to report antisemitic incidents, including through the JFGP

website at [jewishportland.org/security](http://jewishportland.org/security). Although in Portland, Jewish bias incidents outpace all other religious targeting, bias directed towards Black and LGBTQ+ communities is more than double that of Jewish bias incidents that get reported to the Portland Police. If you witness bias against someone in another marginalized group, the Oregon Bias Hotline is the best place to report it. Even if the victim doesn't come forward, the more bias is reported, the more resources will be directed to the issue. We're all in this together.

## Clergy Corner

*The Jewish Review* offers space for the community's professional clergy 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. For more information or to request a date, email [editor@jewishportland.org](mailto:editor@jewishportland.org).



Click the logo  
for the latest  
episode of  
The Jewish  
Review Podcast

## THELMA SOLOMON

It is with great sadness that Congregation Shaarie Torah announces the passing of Thelma Solomon, z"l. Thelma passed away on Sunday morning, May 27, 2024 at the age of 93. She is mourned by her daughters, Marti Solomon and Jill Solomon, brother Larry (Sandie) Huppin, sister-in-law Gayle Huppin, five nieces and nephews and numerous great-nieces and great-nephews. She was predeceased by parents Nathan and Mildred Huppin, z"l, and brother Irving Huppin, z"l.

The funeral was held May 29 ay Shaarie Torah Cemetery.

## MARVIN WOLF

Congregation Neveh Shalom is sorry to announce the passing of CNS member Marvin Wolf, z"l on May 28, 2024 at the age of 92. He is lovingly remembered by his wife Barbara Wolf, his children Eric Wolf, Sandra Wolf, and Howard (Laurene) Wolf, and grandchildren Jack, Sadie, Carly, and Reese Wolf. The funeral was held on Sunday, June 2, at Ahavai Shalom Cemetery.

## Events

More upcoming community events online at [jewishportland.org/community-calendar](http://jewishportland.org/community-calendar)

### June 5: Building a Better Future in a Time of Crisis

Presentation from grassroots education organization Dror Israel at 6:30 pm at Eastside Jewish Commons. \$8. For more information or to register, visit [ejcpdx.org/events](http://ejcpdx.org/events)

### June 6: The Braid presents "What Do I Do with All This Heritage"

Zoom performance by The Braid, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Thursday, June 6 at 4 pm and Sunday, June 9 at 11 am. Use code "portlandjf3" for free tickets at [thebraid.my.salesforce-sites.com/ticket/PatronTicket\\_PublicTicketApp#/events/a0S5G00000VyIQUA3](http://thebraid.my.salesforce-sites.com/ticket/PatronTicket_PublicTicketApp#/events/a0S5G00000VyIQUA3)

### June 6: Art/Lab Opening and Performance

Opening event with performances and conversation for 2023-24 Art/Lab cohort at Eastside Jewish Commons at 6:30 pm. For more information, visit [colabpdx.org](http://colabpdx.org)

### June 6: Cafe Shalom Israeli Folk Dancing

Weekly open Israeli dance session Thursdays, 8-10 pm at CHCC, 8936 SW 17th Ave in Portland. All experience levels and ages welcome. \$7. For more information, contact Allison Victor at [allisuev@gmail.com](mailto:allisuev@gmail.com).

### June 7: First Friday Shabbat Dinner

Free community Shabbat dinner at Tigard Chabad Jewish Center at 7 pm.

For more information, visit [jewishtigard.com/firstfriday](http://jewishtigard.com/firstfriday).

### June 7: Kirtan Kabbalat Service

Immersive Kabbalat Shabbat service with Mashpi'ah Zahavi at P'nai Or of Portland at 7 pm. For more information, visit [pnaiorpdx.org](http://pnaiorpdx.org).

### June 8: Shavuot Up All Night

Late-night Torah study and education with TischPDX at 6:30 pm at Eastside Jewish Commons. For more information, visit [tischpdx.org](http://tischpdx.org).

### June 9: Tefillin for Israel

Men's prayer session for Israel Sundays at 10:30 am at Tigard Chabad. For more information, email [rabbi@jewishtigard.com](mailto:rabbi@jewishtigard.com).

### June 9: Oregon Renaissance Faire with Moishe Pod

Field trip with Moishe Pod West PDX from 1-6 pm at the Faire. Ticket pre-purchase required; no ticket sales onsite. For more information, email [moishepodportlandwest@gmail.com](mailto:moishepodportlandwest@gmail.com).

### June 9: Israeli Folk Dance at SWCC

Weekly class and open dancing at Southwest Community Center Sundays; lessons at 2:30 pm, open dancing at 3:30 pm. \$6. For more information, email [Rhonaf@comcast.net](mailto:Rhonaf@comcast.net).

### June 11: Family Erev Shavuot at Neveh Shalom

Holiday program for children age 0-7 and families at 5:15 pm. For more information, visit email [receptionist@nevehshalom.org](mailto:receptionist@nevehshalom.org).

[nevehshalom.org](http://nevehshalom.org).

### June 11: CNS Shavuot

Dinner, panel discussion and small-group learning sessions at Congregation Neveh Shalom at 6 pm. \$20, \$25 for non-members. For more information, visit [nevehshalom.org/Shavuot](http://nevehshalom.org/Shavuot).

### June 12: For The Love of Spock with Adam Nimoy

Film screening and Q-and-A with Leonard Nimoy's son, Adam, at The Hollywood Theater at 7:30 pm. \$15. Tickets available online at [hollywoodtheatre.org/tickets/25988](http://hollywoodtheatre.org/tickets/25988).

### June 15: Mini Mensches Tot Shabbat

Shabbat morning children's program for ages 0-5 and families at 9 am at Congregation Beth Israel. For more information, visit [bethisrael-pdx.org/community/mini-mensches](http://bethisrael-pdx.org/community/mini-mensches).

### June 15: Clothing Swap at Moishe Pod

Used clothing exchange at Moishe Pod West PDX at 11 am. For more information, email [moishepodportlandwest@gmail.com](mailto:moishepodportlandwest@gmail.com).

### June 18: Israel: A Light Unto Nations, Even in the Darkest of Times

See story, page 5.

### June 19: Marx Bros. Movie Night at EJC: Horsefeathers

Marx Brothers movie night at Eastside Jewish Commons at 7 pm. \$3-8 sliding scale tickets available online at [ejcpdx.org/events](http://ejcpdx.org/events).

Free online subscription: [jewishportland.org/subscribe](http://jewishportland.org/subscribe)



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## YOUNG FAMILIES

**9-11 AM**

**SUNDAY, JUNE 23**

Ideal for families with children  
ages 4-10

Snacks provided



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