

# THE JEWISH REVIEW

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## A year 'none of us expected'

Federation annual meeting looks back on tumultuous but successful year

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

*The Jewish Review*

Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Board Chair Mindy Zeitzer opened her year-in-review remarks with what could be described as an understatement.

The last year was “one that none of us expected,” she said.

Twelve months prior, the Federation and the community gathered to hear the results of the Community Study conducted by Brandeis University in collaboration with the Federation. A year of digging into its results, identifying how to use the information gained to better Jewish life in Portland, and developing a strategy to do so was on tap.

Then, as Zeitzer explained, “Oct. 7 changed our world.”

The response of Portland’s Jewish community to the attacks on Israel was immediate. Federation President and CEO Marc Blattner said that



Jewish Federation of Greater Portland board chair Mindy Zeitzer addresses the Federation's 104th Annual Meeting Thursday, June 6 at Congregation Neveh Shalom. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

within weeks, the Federation had raised over \$2 million in emergency funds for Israel.

One of the recipients of those funds is Dror Israel, a grassroots educational or-

ganization in Israel. Their work is centered from what they call “urban kibbutzim,” based in underserved communities, large and small, around the country.

“Instead of waking up each morning and milking cows, we wake up morning and we go to our high schools, we go

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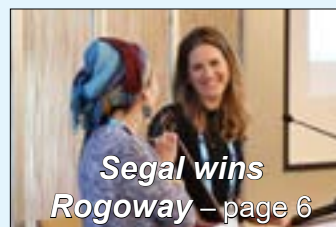
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On this episode of the podcast:

Rabbi Rachel Joseph, Cong. Beth Israel

# AEPi's Steinberg to lead Oregon Hillel

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

In 2010, Lenny Steinberg, then a senior at the University of South Florida and soon to start a position at Hillels of the Florida Suncoast, was featured on the cover of the Hillel Institute's annual report in a group photograph that was labeled "The future faces of Hillel."

"I'm really feeling like that's come to fruition," said Steinberg, who will take over as Executive Director of Oregon Hillel's this summer.

"Lenny was far and away the most outstanding candidate," explained Oregon Hillel board member Sharon Rudnick, who headed up the national search process that selected Steinberg from a field of 25 applicants. "He's very passionate about Jewish nonprofit work and he's very passionate about working with students."

For all his experiences in Oregon, Steinberg is actually a Floridian by birth and education. But after graduating from University of South Florida in 2010 and working in programming at Hillel and the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, he accepted a position at Portland's Mittleman Jewish Community Center and made his way to the Northwest. After a stint at the Alzheimer's Association's Oregon and Southwest Washington Chapter, he returned to Jewish communal work as Regional Director of Alpha Epsilon Pi, the Jewish college fraternity, serving chapters up and down the West Coast, including chapters at Oregon Hillel's campuses, Oregon State University and the University of Oregon.

"My experience working with Alpha Epsilon Pi on college campuses this past year reinvigorated my desire and enthu-

siasm to work with college students," Steinberg said. "It's so cliché, but college students are our future, and if I'm able to help create a holistic Jewish collegiate experience before, during and beyond those, typically, four years, I'm really jazzed about that."

His predecessor at Oregon Hillel's Executive Director, Andy Gitelson, first met Steinberg while he was at the MJCC and worked closely with him when he went to AEPi.

"I got to see him interact with our students and hear our students' interactions with him," Gitelson said. "I think it's a real advantage for him coming into this role."

Another characteristic that makes Steinberg well suited for the role, Gitelson explained, are the qualities Rudnick saw in his interview process.

"He's excited and passionate; he sees the opportunity that this is not just for him professionally, for the communities," Gitelson said. "Where I've seen Hillels really excel is when they have leaders that are excited, that are passionate. That energy is critical. We are working with 18-to-24-year-olds. They have a lot of energy, they have a lot of ideas, they have a lot of passion and you have to meet that passion with passion."

Gitelson will be around to watch in his new role as Campus Support Director for Hillel International, covering campuses along the west coast.

"I'm just grateful for all the folks over the last 12 years that have helped us get to this point where we now have totally transformed the organization and what student life can look like on our campuses," he said, "and I'm excited to stick around and help Lenny and the new team coming in."



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Sklar Brothers



Dignity Grows

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compassion,  
and generosity in  
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season so successful!



Purim/Holi  
Dual Holiday Event



Spotlight with Fran Drescher



Impact with Juju Chang

# Community mikvah welcomes artists for Shavuot

By ROCKNE ROLL

*The Jewish Review*

Rachel's Well Community Mikvah has been a place of spiritual meaning since its opening in 2017. ORA: Northwest Jewish Artists is looking to add to that experience with the first or a series of art-related programs at the mikvah.

Zac Banik, an arts educator, helped lead that program, an Erev Shavuot observance Tuesday, June 11, along with Rabbi Josh Rose of Co/Lab for a group of 15 artists.

"We wanted to bring the community, and not just our community, ORA, but the community at large, to be a part of, you know, coming together to make the art for the space that we share together," Banik said.

The mikvah's waiting area is currently quite unadorned for two reasons: the aesthetic challenge of creating work that is thematically appropriate to the enormous variety of people who use the mikvah and the humidity that comes from being adjacent to a heated pool, which can damage the materials in many artistic mediums.

The program began with a tour of the facility from its manager, Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Chief Allocations and Engagement Officer Caron Blau Rothstein, along with Hebrew singing led by Eddy Shuldman, the marketing and publicity director for ORA. The group then moved to a text study with Rabbi Rose and a creative exercise with Banik to, as he explained, "get their gears turning."

The turning of those gears is planned to lead to the pro-



Artists gather at Rachel's Well Community Mikvah as part of an Erev Shavuot arts program Tuesday, June 11. The event, co-sponsored by ORA Northwest Jewish Artists, Co/Lab, the mikvah and the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, is the first step in a plan to bring more art from local artists into the mikvah space. (Rockne Roll/*The Jewish Review*)

duction of work that can be displayed at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center and at the mikvah itself.

"We had a broad spectrum of folks who really want to engage and want to study, learn, have something text-based to help immerse themselves in the study of Torah," Shuldman said, embracing the pun, "and we picked Shavuot because it's traditional for people to go to the mikvah."

It's also traditional to aesthetically enhance the objects used in Jewish rituals of all kinds, a concept that goes by the Hebrew name *hiddur mitzvah*, which translates to "beautifying the commandment." Its value is not lost on Shuldman.

"As artists, the honor of contributing to *hiddur mitzvah*, the honor of embel-

lishing and making a ritual spiritual experience more beautiful, is a gift," she said.

Another gift came in the form of a contribution from the Stern Grandchildren's Fund of the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation to put on the program. In the future, ORA hopes to raise additional funds to create an artistic residency program to create work for the mikvah; work which the artists involved would be compensated for.

"It's not just the honor alone," Shuldman said of the importance of a compensated residency. It's also recognizing that the artists' work has merit and value."

"As Jews, we have a very long history, and we rightfully and beautifully lean on that history," Banik said. But it's also important that we

have a present and a future, and as Jewish artists, we're part of that. We're part of a continuation of, the creation of, Jewish culture."

In addition to his arts education work, Banik is a prolific and multi-talented artist himself. Trained in furniture design, he has designed modernist Judaica while also painting, drawing, and working in other mediums.

"My art practice is always expanding, but it comes from a place of storytelling and trying to expand upon the groundwork that our forebears have laid; artistically, culturally, religiously," Banik said.

The program is co-sponsored by ORA, Co/Lab, Rachel's Well, and the MJCC. For more information, visit [northwestjewishartists.org](http://northwestjewishartists.org).

[jewishportland.org/subscribe](http://jewishportland.org/subscribe)

# 'This is my place' - Segal wins Rogoway Award

By ROCKNE ROLL  
*The Jewish Review*

Etti Segal hadn't planned to work as a Hebrew teacher in Oregon. But now that she is, she wouldn't have it any other way.

"I need to be here," she said. "This is my place."

Her commitment to that place, as Hebrew and Judaics Coordinator at Congregation Neveh Shalom's Foundation School, has earned her the 2024 Laurie Rogoway Outstanding Jewish Professional Award.

"At a time when antisemitism and anti-Zionism are looming and infiltrating our communities, and at a time where Jews yearn to unite around Israel and share their love of Judaism with others, we need people to bring us together to share their love and joy of Judaism and Israel and to educate our next generation," Jewish Federation of Greater Portland board member and Rogoway committee chair Jodi Fried said when presenting Segal with the award at the Federation's annual meeting Thursday, June 6 at Neveh Shalom. "Etti is a model educator and so much more."

Segal was born and raised in Israel, where she considered two possible career paths – teaching in special education or practicing law. She chose the latter, but plans have a way of changing.

"[My husband] started to speak about his dream to be a pilot," Segal recalled, "And I said, 'Yeah, go for it!'"

Flight school at Hillsboro Academy brought the couple and their then-10-month-old son to Oregon. Segal started volunteering at Neveh Shalom. The shul later helped her secure a visa where she



Etti Segal, right, accepts the 2024 Laurie Rogoway Outstanding Jewish Professional Award from committee chair Jodi Fried at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's 104th annual meeting Thursday, June 6 at Congregation Neveh Shalom.

could take on paid work, and she became a floating instructor at Foundation School. More than that, she continued to volunteer to teach Sunday School. She now also teaches adult Hebrew classes, and volunteers at a non-profit that forges connections between Israeli and American Jewish communities as well as administering a pair of WhatsApp groups for Israeli women and families in the area.

Building communities is what keeps Segal going – first for herself, and now for others.

"In Israel, I don't need to look for community," she said. "The first thing I say [to Israelis relocating to the area] is, 'You're welcome to come to Neveh Shalom. But if you don't want to, if you prefer another community, it's fine. Just find a community to con-

nect with because it's very important to feel belonging to some community.'"

She also helps form that community for her own children, now numbering two, as they attend public school.

"[In Israel,] even if you are not religious, your kids will learn about the Jewish holidays. They will learn the songs," Segal said. "That's why I'm going to their school and volunteering; I'm teaching my children's classrooms about the Jewish holidays because I want my kids to feel belonging."

In helping connect others – of all ages- with their community and sense of Jewish identity, Segal has found for herself a sense of community – and purpose. It's a clarity that has swayed even her religiously observant father, who was previously eager for her to return to Israel.

"He understands that what I'm doing here is a mission and he's really proud of me," she said. "After the event for the Rogoway award, he said he spoke with his rabbi and his rabbi said, 'You see, I told you, if you have a mission like she has, teaching the Hebrew language, the Torah, the stories, the Jewish holidays, the Jewish values, we need people to do it.'"

The community she has – and helps to build – is not something she takes for granted.

"This is my place," Segal said. "Neveh Shalom, it's a family for me and for my family. During COVID, during these days with what's going on in Israel, my family and I always know we have a safe place to be, we have a safe place to ask for help if we need, we have a safe place to feel belonging."

# MEETING

(continued from page 1)

to our youth movements and educate and try to address what I think is one of the most pressing challenges in Israel, which is the internal one, the internal divisions and gaps and huge, huge polarization that we encounter,” Noam Schlanger, Dror Israel’s Engagement Director, said.

Dror Israel’s programs are diverse, tailored to the communities they serve, and broadly inclusive. From language programs to bicycle repair classes to a community garden that Schlanger helps run in his hometown, it’s not hard to find someone in one of Dror Israel’s signature blue shirts with red detailing engaged in building community.

“We have intimate connections to all the places we work in,” Schlanger said, “and we work in a lot of places.”

These connections have meant everything in the days, weeks, and months that have followed. From establishing a preschool for evacuees from Kibbutz Be’eri just days after the community was evacuated to the Dead Sea to programs that reunite young friends from cities in northern Israel who have been evacuated to different parts of the country and more – programs made



Above: Noam Schlanger of Dror Israel addresses the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's 104th annual meeting Thursday, June 6 at Congregation Neveh Shalom in Portland. "The amount of solidarity and of amazing dedication that people give of themselves is amazing," Schlanger said. Below left and right: Meeting attendees schmooze over cheesecake before the meeting. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

possible, in part, by contributions from Portlanders.

Schlanger came to thank those who gave and to share a slice of what is happening in the Jewish state as the war rages on.

“The amount of solidarity and of amazing dedication that people give of themselves is amazing. There’s a lot of change going on. A lot of people deciding that they’re not going back to their old life,” Schlanger said. “I have some friends that have said, ‘I don’t want to work in tech. I’m pivoting

my career towards public service.’ There’s a lot of this going on.”

-  
While Israel has faced a difficult year, American Jewish communities have experienced their own challenges – Portland being no exception.

“The past year, in particular since Oct. 7, has been one of the most challenging in terms of addressing the rise of antisemitism and anti-Israel activity in our local community,” Zeitzer said.

From the Portland Association of Teachers’ multifac-

eted campaign against Israel to the assault of a Jewish student at Reed College and so much more, antisemitic activity has exploded in the Portland area.

“Every day there’s another four, five, six phone calls that come to our office about these types of issues,” Blatner said, “and Bob [Horenstein] and Rachel [Nelson] have really been unbelievable on this whole issue.”

Michael Masters, the National Director and CEO

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of Secure Community Network, put the situation nationally in stark terms.

“For 4000 years, we have made a choice to survive,” he said of the Jewish people. “We’ve never faced that choice here before in the United States, and for most I think we never thought we’d have to, but we do.”

In 2023, SCN’s national command center saw a 112% increase in reports of antisemitic incidents nationwide. That’s why, in Portland, Community Security Director Jessica Anderson and her predecessor, Gene Moss have done more than 140 security assessments on facilities in Portland, more than 200 training programs helped secure nearly \$5 million in federal grant funds to help secure Jewish Portland’s institutions and people.

“In this reality, it’s natural for people to be afraid, to be scared, but we don’t need to be. We can, as we have done for thousands of years, harness our strength in the face of the hate we see today, and by standing strong, we can guarantee the strength and the vibrancy of Jewish life,” Masters said. “Just like Israel has an Iron Dome to



Above: Michael Masters, CEO of Secure Community Network addresses JFGP's annual meeting. "For 4000 years, we have made a choice to survive," Masters said. Below left: Meeting attendees take in Masters' remarks. Below right: Federation nominating committee chair Jack Birnbach introduces nominees for the Federation's board of directors.(Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

protect it, we are working to build a security shield over the entirety of the Jewish community in North America, and each and every one of you is a part of that.”

While the year very much did not go as planned, the goal to take insights from

last year’s community study and make plans based on them still moved forward.

Community leaders poured over the study’s findings for two months beginning in December and identified seven key areas to focus on: Israel, Jewish Literacy, Mental Health, Geography,

Volunteerism, Community Engagement and Poverty.

Blattner announced that the Federation is seeking to bring back a community *Shaliach* (emissary) from Israel, trained in community development, to live in Port-

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land for a two-to-three-year period, as well as starting dialogue groups about Israel-related issues.

“One of the hardest parts of this war is people not talking to each other. We live in our echo chambers,” Blattner said. “We don’t want to learn, and we don’t want to listen. We want to make sure we’re able to do that across the community itself.”

The Federation is also looking at bringing in a Jewish Life Educator to consult with organizations in the area, as well as programs addressing teen mental health and loneliness.

“I learned a long time ago that most people don’t die because of illness or hunger,” Blattner said. “They die of loneliness.”

The Federation will also hire a volunteer coordinator to work across the community, facilitating hands-on engagement opportunities, launching a market survey across different parts of the area to focus in on localized needs and setting up a micro-grant program to facilitate hyper-local opportunities for Jewish engagement.

“If you want to bring 10 people to your house to play bingo, we’ll give you \$180 to help host” Blattner said as an example. “We just want to be there to connect with them. Those kind of simple things make an enormous impact.”

On the other end of the scale, the Federation is in the initial planning stages of a “mega community event,” and working to provide more robust concierge services for newcomers to the area. Blattner also said that the Federation was working to put together financial literacy programs to provide tools to the quarter of Portland’s Jewish community that’s having



From left, Federation board chair Mindy Zeitzer and Federation President and CEO Marc Blattner share a laugh at the Federation's annual meeting. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

trouble making ends meet.

“I never forget the former CEO of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland,” Blattner said. “His name is Steve Hoffman. He once stood up at a conference and he said, ‘It’s not about how much money you raise, it’s about how many donors you have because donors are your referendum on whether you’re doing good work or not. The more donors, the more people believe and support the work that you’re doing.’”

The Federation saw a 12 percent increase in the number of donors from last fiscal year, indicating an endorsement of the work being done in Portland. The dollar figures were also promising.

Federation’s annual campaign raised \$4.1 million this fiscal year, in addition to the \$2.2 million contributed to the Israel Emergency Fund. Additionally, the Catalyst Fund to support Community Study implementation ef-

forts, supported by a matching grant from the Zidell Family, has already raised \$900,000 of its \$1.5 million goal, while a LiveSecure matching grant-supported Security Fund raised \$1.1 million of its \$1.5 million goal. On top of all that, Marvin Harris, z”l, of Prineville left his entire estate of \$3.4 million to the Federation for the support of Israeli orphans – the largest single gift in Federation history. All told, the Federation raised \$11.7 million this fiscal year.

“This was a record-breaking year in total financial resource development for our community,” Blattner said. “It’s really remarkable, and we couldn’t do it without all of you.”

While Blattner was eager to recognize the contributions of the community, a moment was taken early in the evening to recognize him for 30 years of service to the Jewish Federation system, including 14 years as CEO in Portland.

“Throughout his tenure, Marc has demonstrated the love of Jewish people, his commitment to his community, his innovative approach, his ability to inspire people to follow him on one important journey after another,” Eric Fingerhut, President and CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America, said in a recorded message.

“Thank you for all of your work and dedication, both here and across the country,” Zeitzer said, presenting Blattner with a congratulatory cheesecake. “It has been a pleasure and honor to work with you.”

“I have to say a thank you to my wife, Sarah,” Blattner said. “To do this job takes a strong partnership and a great partner. We’ve moved four times for my career, which is not easy on a family. I just couldn’t do this without her support.”

A recording of the 2024 annual meeting is available online at [jewishportland.org](http://jewishportland.org).



Doug Blauer, left, and Jeff Robinson were elected to the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Board of Directors Thursday, June 6. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

## Blauer, Robinson join JFGP board

By ROCKNE ROLL  
*The Jewish Review*

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland welcomed two new members to its Board of Directors and celebrated four departing members at the Federation's annual meeting Thursday, June 6 at Congregation Neveh Shalom in Portland.

Joining the Board are Doug Blauer and Jeff Robinson. Blauer is the incoming chair of Federation's Jewish Community Relations Council, having served as vice chair since 2022. Blauer is also active with Neveh Shalom and previously served on the board of BB360. He's previously served as the head of the JCRC's Inter-group Outreach efforts, helped organize United in Spirit, a collaboration of religious and cultural groups from around the Portland area to combat the effects of the homelessness crisis, and is a member of the Portland Police Bureau's Bureauwide Advisory Committee. A fourth-generation Oregonian, Blauer is Chief Social Impact Officer at Shed Rain, the umbrella firm his family started in 1947.

"He's passionate about security and community engagement," Nominating Committee Chair Jack Birnbach said of Blauer at the annual meeting.

Robinson is a Professor of Communications at Portland State University, where he chairs his department. His research specializes in language and social interaction, as well as health communication. He and his family relocated to the area in 2009 from New Jersey. This is Robinson's second stint on the Federation's board; he has previously chaired the Super Sunday fund-

raising effort and the allocations committee and was part of the Community Study Advisory Committee. He is also involved at Neveh Shalom.

"I want to extend a big welcome to our two new board members, Jeff and Doug. I'm looking forward to working with you both next year," Federation Board Chair Mindy Zeitzer said.

Sarah Rosenberg Brown, Jodi Fried, Christie Moore and Jeffrey Weitz will be stepping down from the board following the conclusion of their terms.

"I want to send a special thank you to Sarah and Jody and Christie and Jeffrey," Zeitzer said. "It's been a pleasure to work with them."

Rosenberg Brown steps down after three years on the board. She's also engaged with Chabad of Northeast Portland, the Portland Kollel, and the Eastside Jewish Commons. Fried grew up in Portland after emigrating from South Africa in her childhood; she's Operations Director for Sephardic Adventure Camp as well as an empowerment coach for women and a podcaster. Moore steps down after two years of board service. She participated in the recent Wexner Heritage Program cohort and chaired Congregation Beth Israel's Education Committee, also sitting on the synagogue's board. Weitz has previously served on the boards of Neveh Shalom, the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, and Portland Jewish Academy and is on the Men's Camp board of BB360. He helped found Community Warehouse Furniture Bank and has been involved in many of Jewish Portland's construction projects over the last 30 years including the Rachel's Well Community Mikvah.

## Greenfield, Plawner receive Sussman-Shenker

*The Jewish Review staff*

Two names, two recipients in 2024 for Portland's preeminent Jewish college scholarship.

The Sussman-Shenker Scholarship Fund granted a pair of scholarships to Tali Greenfield of Lakeridge High School and Miriam Plawner of Beaverton High School at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Annual Meeting Thursday, June 6.

Greenfield and Plawner have both been part of the Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation and have been active with the Jewish Student Unions at their respective schools. Both are active members of Congregation Neveh Shalom and both have attended Jewish summer camp: Plawner at B'nai B'rith Camp on the Oregon Coast and Greenfield at Habonim Dror's Camp Miriam in British Columbia.

Greenfield will attend Washington University in St. Louis to study Political Science and potentially advance to law school. Plawner will attend Boston University.

"I'm honored to receive the scholarship and this recognition of my work within the Jewish community," Greenfield said. "I'm excited to take all my passion and what I've learned within the Portland Jewish community to the St. Louis

See **AWARDS**, page 10

# OJCYF announces grants, invites applications for Youth Foundation Board

By SUSAN BERNIKER

*Oregon Jewish Community Foundation*

The Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation awarded a total of \$68,000 in grants to community nonprofit organizations this spring. The 34-member youth board prioritized grantmaking to local Jewish organizations and nonprofit organizations that combat Antisemitism in educational institutions, address the urgent concerns of gun violence and the mental health of youth, and to organizations that align with the enduring Jewish values of human dig-

nity (kavod), and justice (tzedek).

OJCYF is a nationally celebrated program of the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation that encourages a lifelong passion for philanthropy and social activism. Now in its 21st year, the program offers a meaningful leadership opportunity for Jewish or Jewish-adjacent 9th-12th-grade teens who want to make a difference in the community through tzedakah. Participants learn and apply leadership skills, experience what it is like to serve on a board of directors, make new friends by work-

ing with like-minded peers to fundraise and plan a youth-led benefit dinner, and decide what important causes to support and what organizations to fund through discussion, site-visits, and grant-making.

Registration is open for OJCYF 2024-2025. Interested teens, parents, and guardians are encouraged to attend a virtual info session on June 23 or 25 to learn more. Early bird registration ends June 30. Details about OJCYF and the application process are available at <https://ojcf.org/programs/ojcyf>.

## AWARDS (continued from page 1)



Plawner (Courtesy Photo)



Greenfield (Courtesy Photo)

Jewish community.”

Greenfield said that the vibrance of Jewish life in St. Louis, and at Washington University specifically, were significant factors in her choice of school, as well as proximity to her grandparents.

I was really drawn to the size of the campus and the fantastic academics,” she said. “I’m excited to explore a new city, to be immersed in a more diverse city”

The scholarship, long known as the Sussman Scholarship, was renamed earlier this year in honor of Arlen Shenker, husband to Lois Shenker, the daughter of scholarship fund founders Lillian and Gilbert Sussman, to commemorate Arlen Shenker’s 85th birthday.

## LGBTQ+ mikvah event is June 30

*Portland Open Beit Midrash*

Come to Rachel's Well Mikvah and celebrate Pride by learning with the Portland Open Beit Midrash about LGBTQ+ possibilities for the use of mikvah Sunday, June 30. Individual immersions can be arranged, or just come to learn. All bodies welcome and affirmed. By RSVP only; fill out the contact form at [pdxopenbeitmidrash.org](http://pdxopenbeitmidrash.org).

## Jobs Board

See the latest Jewish jobs at [jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/jewish-jobs](http://jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/jewish-jobs)

**The Mitzvah PROJECT**  
Days of Doing Good  
Kicking off this summer with Friends at Tryon Creek.  
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For Young Adults 21+  
Snacks and lunch provided  
FREE TO PARTICIPATE  
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## ***Survivors soak in the sunshine***

Jewish Family & Child Service hosted its annual picnic for Holocaust survivors Thursday, June 6 at Cook Park in Tigard. Dozens of survivors, their families and JFCS volunteers enjoyed a salmon salad lunch and the Klezmer stylings of local musicians. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)



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## We don't have to be scared

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## NEXT ISSUE

**Issue date Deadline**

**JULY 3**

**JUNE 27**

By **JESSICA ANDERSON**

As I've settled into this role, one of the recurring questions I receive is about the incidents that happen around town and across the state. I share examples of what gets reported to me and provide an average number of incidents per month. Besides sharing all incidents with Federation CEO Marc Blattner and SCN (for inclusion in national reporting numbers), I've often felt that locally, the list went into a "black hole," save for sharing it with organizations preparing their Nonprofit Security Grant Program applications. Data interpretation can be subjective, but my conclusion is that the data shows we don't have to be scared of being Jewish. It doesn't mean nothing happens, but that incidents are typically low-consequence and do not occur between people in the physical world. It's my opinion that the data supports this view, but I've long wanted more transparency so people could gauge that for themselves.

I've recently settled on a solution that I hope will be helpful and informative. Starting this week, you'll find a link to an ongoing list of incidents on the Security page on the JFGP website (<https://www.jewishportland.org/security>). While it's not quite "live," I intend to update it multiple times a month. The current version starts in January 2024 and covers incidents across the state. By the numbers, Portland sees the most incidents when compared to other cities. That's partly a function of size and population



*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.*

but also could be the result of more familiarity with the incident reporting function on the JFGP website (also at the above link). Corvallis and Eugene have also dealt regularly with similar issues and their proximity and connection to the Oregon Bias Hotline often sends their reporting in that direction.

What's on the list? The list consists mostly of incidents that are reported to me directly, or through someone else. I know there are inadvertent omissions in this first iteration, and I will reduce those moving forward. Additionally, I reserve the right to withhold an incident for some reason. I've added a few glossary items for awareness and will potentially use the list to communicate best practices where there are opportunities. You'll also see that I've anonymized the submissions, which I felt was the right way to approach this public share. I promise you that incident specifics will continue to be shared with community leaders as they relate to community security. For example, if someone is seen suspiciously canvassing a synagogue, I'm going to share the specifics of that

in real-time with leaders in the area.

What's not on the list? I have not included incidents that I've learned of from the DOJ Bias Hotline or the ADL. We three talk regularly and share information, but non-public incidents from another agency are not mine to share. I've also not shared every report of graffiti, protests, and posters/stickers. Generic phishing examples are not included and though cyber vulnerability awareness is a big gap for many non-profits, my focus is on incidents that are more obviously antisemitic. Occasionally, I'll provide the outcome of the incident (an arrest for example), and I'm comfortable continuing that practice when I know it's public information. In several incidents, police investigations occurred or are ongoing, and I've not indicated that.

My goal for the list is that our community is more informed about what's happening and tuned in to what they should be reporting. I'll be looking to improve on this process and if you have any suggestions or feedback, please feel free to reach me at [janderson@securecommunitynetwork.org](mailto:janderson@securecommunitynetwork.org).

# Never Alone

## Hostages, Heroes... and Rudy Rochman

By ELISSA WALD

These past few days, I have been so struck by the difference between Israel and the U.S. when it comes to national solidarity. Consider this contrast between the two:

Israel rescues four hostages and the whole country loses its mind with joy. Dancing in the streets. Dancing on the beach. A TV anchor unable to break the news to his viewers without crying on camera. Because the operation took place on Shabbat, secular Jews all over Israel ran to their Orthodox neighbors, who would have no way to hear about it otherwise, to tell them the news or to leave notes on their doors.

Meanwhile, as we speak, there are also 5 American hostages languishing in the dungeons of Gaza. Quite possibly being beaten, sexually violated and tortured, as many Israeli hostages have been. Have any of you heard a single non-Jewish American express the slightest concern about them? No one here thinks about them. No one here talks about them. If anyone anywhere gives the slightest f\*\*\* about any of them, I haven't seen a shred of evidence. It's like a total non-event. And why would this be? Is it because they're Jews? Is it because Americans just don't share this familial feeling? I suspect it's both.

The other point I want to touch on before moving on is the almost unbelievable ingenuity this rescue took to pull off. There can be no doubt it will be studied by military strategists for decades to come. Avi Isaacharoff, co-creator of the action TV series "Fauda," reportedly said it was more incredible than anything he could possibly dream up for the show. I fully expect a dramatic reenactment to be included in the next season.

Not since Entebbe has the IDF pulled off a rescue mission with this level of brilliance andchutzpah. Truly we have reasons to kvell.

On this note, let us turn to the promised intro to our national treasure, Rudy Rochman.

I met Rudy in Seattle, where he spoke at Temple de Hirsch Sinai. It's worth remarking upon that he stood on the bimah and held an audience of around 400 absolutely spellbound for 90 straight minutes without reading a word of his talk. He spoke off the cuff and he was galvanizing. He has the kind of charisma that's on par with figures like Barack Obama or Bill Clinton. He creates a sense of authentic connection with whomever he addresses. He appeals to people on every point of the Jewish spectrum, from the very Orthodox to the totally secular and Reform. When he concluded his talk, he received a standing ovation.

At that event, I learned that until he was 7 years old, he had never known quite how to identify himself. He was born in Paris but moved to Israel at the age of 3 and again to the U.S. when he was 5, where his family settled in Miami. His mother's family was Sephardic and from North Africa and his father's was Ashkenazic. People were always asking him what he was, and he didn't know what to say. Was he French? Israeli? American? To every member of his extended family, he represented a different "other" category to at

least some extent.

But when he was 7 years old, he boarded a tour bus in London with his mother and the driver pointed to her shirt, which bore the word emet — "truth" — in Hebrew letters.

"Hey," the bus driver, who was a neo-Nazi, said. "Is that shirt written in Jewish?"

"It's written in Hebrew," said his mother, "which is a Jewish language, if that's what you're asking."

"So you're Jewish?"

"Yes, I am."

"Then get off my bus!" the driver ordered her. "I don't want any Jews on my bus."

Rudy's mother, who was a strong and proud woman, said, "I don't know who you think you are, but I'm not going anywhere. I have just as much right to be on this bus as anybody else."

That's when the driver got up, seized her by the shoulders, and physically threw her off the bus.

"And that was the moment," Rudy told us, "when, for the very first time, I knew exactly what I was. I was a Jew."

It was also the moment when he resolved that from that day forward, he was going to cultivate every single quality he needed — physically, mentally, emotionally, intellectually and ideologically — to never again be helpless in the face of Jew hatred.

And that's exactly what he's spent his life doing.

Rudy served in the Paratroopers Brigade of the IDF directly following high school. Then he began his undergraduate education at UCLA, where he earned an Associate's degree. But after that, he decided to transfer to another school in order to earn his B.A. and — as counterintuitive as it might seem — he asked the internet what the most antisemitic institution of higher learning in the U.S. might be. Upon learning that it was Columbia University (my own alma mater), he decided to go there.

And it was there that he began a career as a stunningly effective Jewish-Israeli activist with a very impressive track record of persuasion within one of the hardest environments to work within: the college campus.

One of the first other Jews he met there was an active anti-Zionist activist. After they became friends, that young man ended up leaving school before his own graduation to join the IDF.

While earning his B.A. in Political Science at Columbia, Rudy founded the school's Students Supporting Israel (SSI) chapter and served as its president.

He is now working on a documentary series called *We Were Never Lost*, which highlights the Jewish communities in Africa. In the course of making the film, he languished for 3 weeks in a Nigerian prison when he was suspected of sympathy with Biafran separatists in their conflict with the nation's government. He was subsequently cleared of all wrongdoing, and has since returned to active duty as a sniper

See WALD, page 14

# Events

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

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

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

## June 20: OJCF Life and Legacy Celebration

Celebration of legacy donors through OJCF at 5 pm at the Eastside Jewish Commons. Free. For more information or to RSVP, email [rachaele@ojcf.org](mailto:rachaele@ojcf.org).

## June 21: EJC Free Noontime Concert

Performance by Mike Van Lieu at Eastside Jewish Commons at noon. Free. More information at [ejcpdx.org/events](http://ejcpdx.org/events).

## June 21: Shabbat on the Plaza

Outdoor Shabbat service at Congregation Beth Israel at 6 pm. For more information, visit [bethisrael-pdx.org](http://bethisrael-pdx.org).

## June 21: Moishe Pod

## Shabbat Dinner

Shabbat dinner at Moishe Pod Portland West at 7 pm. Email [moishepod-portlandwest@gmail.com](mailto:moishepod-portlandwest@gmail.com) for more information or to RSVP.

## June 22: ESH: A Havdalah Rave

Dinner, Havdalah ceremony and dance party at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 7 pm. \$12. More information and tickets at [ejcpdx.org/events](http://ejcpdx.org/events)

## June 23: JGSO Helping Hands

In-person genealogy question session at Multnomah County Library Hollywood Branch at 10:15 am. Free. For more information, email [jgsoregon@gmail.com](mailto:jgsoregon@gmail.com).

## June 23: 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 23: BB Camp

## Friends and Family Day

Camp summer kick-off and facilities dedication at B'nai B'rith Camp at 11 am. Register at [bb-360.org/events](http://bb-360.org/events).

## June 23: 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 28-30: Ten Grands

Multi-piano performance at the Patricia Reser Center for the Arts Friday, June 28 at 7:30 pm, Saturday, June 29 and Sunday, June 30 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm. \$49. For more information, visit [tengrands.com](http://tengrands.com).

## June 30: Walk for the Living 2024

Walking event in honor of Holocaust victims and survivors at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education. For more information, email [3gnorthwest@gmail.com](mailto:3gnorthwest@gmail.com).

## June 30: Israeli Dancing for Everyone with Allison Victor

Israeli dance open session at Eastside Jewish Commons at 1 pm. Registration required at [ejcpdx.org/events](http://ejcpdx.org/events).

## June 30: The Burned Piano Project Concert Series

Concert with unique art-instrument at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education at 2 pm. \$10. For more information, visit [ojmche.org](http://ojmche.org).

## WALD (continued from page 13)

and paratrooper within Israel's current war with Hamas.

He is one of my Zionist heroes and the many clips online of him engaging with anti-Israel protestors are truly inspiring to watch. I have never seen anyone more informed, self-possessed, disarming, calmer or better at persuasion.

Am Yisrael Chai.

*Adapted from "Jewish Unity, Jewish Ingenuity, and Rudy Rochman," published June 13, 2024.*

*Elissa Wald is the author of the "Never Alone" Substack, approaching local and global events from a liberal Zionist perspective. Subscribe to "Never Alone" online at [neveralone.substack.com](http://neveralone.substack.com). Opinions expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the views of the Review, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, or its staff.*

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## Obituaries

### ROBERTA GOLDSTEIN

Congregation Beth Israel mourns the loss of Roberta (Bobbie) Goldstein, z"l, who passed away on June 8, 2024, at the age of 83.

Roberta is survived by her children, Mark Goldstein (Lauren) and Jeff Goldstein (Kendra); grandchildren, Amelia, Olivia, Jack, Evan, Sadie and Bodie; sister, Sydney Levine (George); and niece and nephew, Cari and Craig.

Roberta was preceded in death by her husband, Michael, z"l, and son, David, z"l.

The funeral was held at Peninsula Temple Shalom in Burlingame, Calif. Tuesday, June 11.

Donations in Roberta's

memory can be directed to Congregation Beth Israel's Jennifer Barnum Luria Early Childhood Center.

### SARAH STARKS

It is with great sadness that Congregation Shaarie Torah announces the passing of Sara Lee Starks, z"l.

Sara passed away on Wednesday, June 12, 2024 in Dallas, Texas.

She is mourned by her husband, Rick Starks, her sister, Liz Stanley, Liz's fiancée, Marinel Miklja, her brother, Robert L. Savell, her four children, her eight grandchildren, as well as all of her nieces and all of their families.

A memorial service will be held in Dallas at a later date.

*Submit obituaries to The Jewish Review's online form at [form.jotform.com/JFGP/jr-obituary](http://form.jotform.com/JFGP/jr-obituary)*