Together again!

JFGP celebrates 102 years

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland celebrated 102 years of supporting a vibrant Jewish community locally and globally at its annual meeting June 13 in the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Ballroom.

“I love seeing all these amazing faces in person,” said outgoing JFGP Board Chair Lauren Goldstein. “I’m thrilled to be here in person with so many of you. … but we have some amazing community members on Zoom as well, so I think that is the best of both worlds having a hybrid meeting.”

More than 150 people joined the hybrid celebration in person and on Zoom.

Later in the evening, Goldstein said she heard many times during the pandemic that Federation played a vital role as a community convener. “We needed to spearhead a communitywide collaboration. … When we come together as a community, great things happen.”

She praised the board for funding the community study that begins in October. The study See JFGP ANNUAL MEETING, page 8

CBI invites community “Back to the Plaza” for three summer Fridays

Plan to pack a picnic, welcome Shabbat with a joyful outdoor musical service, connect with community and enjoy the sunshine on the Beth Israel Plaza at 6 pm on three Friday evenings this summer. All are welcome at CBI’s beloved summer tradition.

“Back to the Plaza Part 5782” takes place outside the historic sanctuary at Congregation Beth Israel, 1972 NW Flanders St., Portland.

CBI Brotherhood will sponsor the July 15 Shabbat on the Plaza. CBI’s Social Action Committee sponsors the Aug. 19 event. The summer series wraps up Sept. 2 with the outdoor Kabbalat Shabbat sponsored by the WRJ/Beth Israel Sisterhood.
Women volunteers honored for service

The Jewish Women’s Round Table and the Jewish Review are once again collaborating to recognize outstanding women volunteers who have been selected by their organizations to receive the Round Table’s Song of Miriam Awards.

The awards are usually presented during a brunch event in June, however that event has not been held for the past two years due to the pandemic. Once again, in 2022, the continuing Covid situation caused the cancellation of the in-person event.

In this and future issues of the Jewish Review, a total of 14 Song of Miriam recipients for 2022 will be featured with their photo, a description of their work and why they are valued by the organizations that selected them.

Next year, JWRT is planning to resume the in-person brunch event, which is usually held in early June. The 2023 brunch will recognize the volunteers honored during the pandemic as well as a new group of outstanding women.

“Even though the pandemic has brought many things to a halt, it hasn’t lessened the need for committed volunteers to help worthy causes,” said JWRT President Marki Maizels. “We are again very grateful to the Jewish Review for ensuring that the efforts of these women are brought to the attention of the Jewish community.”

For more information about the Jewish Women’s Round Table and the Song of Miriam awards, visit JWRT.org.

SONG OF MIRIAM 2022 HONOREES, PART 1

Following are two women whose organizations selected them to receive the Song of Miriam. More honorees will be profiled in Jewish Review issues throughout the summer.

NIOMI MORM: Honored by Kol Shalom

Niomi Morr is a pillar of the Kol Shalom community. For decades, Niomi played music and sang with the Kol Shalom Music Makers. Her singing voice and harmonies added joy to celebrations and holiday observances. She has also actively supported childhood education in many ways.

When something needs to be done, Niomi jumps in to help. She has served on the Kol Shalom board numerous times including as secretary. As an active member of the Social Action Committee, Niomi worked closely with the Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good at the last full Oregon legislative session, focusing on housing issues.

Niomi shines in her work on the Membership Committee. She welcomes prospective members, learns about them, tells them about Kol Shalom and provides a “warm embrace” for those who join. Niomi’s attributes – kindness, authenticity, friendliness, heartfelt commitment to social justice and deep caring about others – make her a cherished and valued Kol Shalom member.

SUE WENDEL: Honored by the Next Generations Group

Sue Wendel has been instrumental in helping the Next Generations Group to grow and thrive. The group was founded in 2011 and includes Holocaust survivors and their offspring, refugees and community members who support preserving the lessons learned from history.

Sue finds speakers for the monthly get-togethers, organizes social events and volunteer projects, and provides communications to members. Her friendly, warm and organized manner helps members feel welcome and valued.

As a daughter of Holocaust survivors, Sue is compelled to honor the legacies of her parents, Hugo and Alice Kern, as well as all those murdered in the Holocaust, their survivors and descendants.

Through her dedication and hard work, Sue has helped to create a group that welcomes not only survivors and descendants, but anyone who supports the NGG mission of exploring the past, looking to the future, and sharing stories of courage, resilience and hope, not only with the community but also worldwide through the group’s online presence.

Community bids fond farewell to Brodkins

More than 150 people turned out to help Congregation Kesser Israel celebrate the contributions and vibrancy Rabbi Kenneth and Aviel Brodkin have shared with the local Jewish community during their 17 years in Portland. The contributions of both were detailed in a May 25 Jewish Review article: jewishportland.org/jewishreview/jr-stories/brodkin-farewell.

The June 19 dinner featured speakers praising many of those contributions. Gifts from the congregation included a tribute video on USB, a memory book, a challah board in the shape of Oregon and a photo of the Oregon coast by congregant Elie Bulka. Rebbetzin Brodkin presented gifts to several lay leaders.

“From the time that my family arrived in 2005, getting to know the Kehilah (community), working together to move our shul, strengthen our minyan, building our school and being together through simchah and sorrow, serving as Rabbi of Kesser has been an exhilarating experience,” said Rabbi Brodkin in farewell remarks. “... this Shul is a diverse community with a great legacy and a bright future. Long before my arrival in Portland, Kesser was a stronghold of unabashed love of Torah and mitzvot. And Kesser will be a bastion of Torah and mitzvot long after my departure.”

Rabbi Kenneth and Aviel Brodkin thank the community at a farewell dinner at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center.

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REGISTRATION OPEN
SIGN UP NOW

The Jewish Federation is excited to officially open registration for our rescheduled Centennial Trip to Israel! It’s a special year for Israel...its 75th anniversary...and we’ll be there to celebrate!

We have developed a fantastic itinerary that will include experiences planned for 2020 and some new/different ones, as well.

The opportunity for participating in a group b’nai mitzvah is available. See the 2023 Trip website for the draft itinerary and registration.

Priscilla & Tony Kostiner and
Kathy Davis-Weiner & Michael Weiner
Israel 2023 Co-Chairs

www.jewishportland.org/israel2023
PJA grad Eli Beard leads Israel team to national cup

BY DEBORAH MOON

Portland Jewish Academy graduate Elianna Beard scored the winning goal in the final of the Women’s National Cup in Israel.

Her team, FC Kiryat Gat, won the National Cup final 2-0 on May 30.

“I scored the first goal,” says Eli. “When I look back on my career, it’s definitely one of the most memorable moments for me.”

“I started playing soccer when I was 8,” says Eli. She played club soccer in Portland and then on her high school and college teams. “I started my professional career in 2018 playing in Champions League with a team from Kazakhstan. I made Aliyah in 2019, and this is my fourth season playing in the Israeli league. If I stay one more year in Israel, I will then be able to play with the National team, which would be a huge honor.”

The daughter of Peter and Leslie Beard, Eli graduated from PJA in 2010. She attended St. Mary’s Academy for high school and graduated from Marquette University in 2018.

FC Kiryat Gat won the league and the Athena Cup, in addition to the National Cup this season.

“Because we won the league, we have qualified for Champions League, the most prestigious club competition in European soccer,” says Eli.

Those games begin in mid-August, and Eli plans to be back with her team to compete in the European competition. She is currently in the United States. After visiting Richmond, Va., she came to Portland this week to visit family and friends for a week.

“Winning the league with my team was incredible,” she says. “I’ve put in a lot of work to get to this level but really wouldn’t be here without all the support from back home.”

At left, Elianna Beard shows off the National Cup she helped her Israeli team win last month, scoring the first and winning goal for FC Kiryat Gat. Above, the team celebrates victory in Israel’s National Cup Final.

Scholar/athletes recognized

Two teen athletes received a Harry Glickman Scholar/Athlete Award at the May 24 Mittleman Jewish Community Center Celebration.

This award was established in 2012 in honor of Harry Glickman, z”l, the “father” of professional sports in Oregon. This year’s recipients were Everest Sibony of Seaside and Lyla Paru of Beaverton.

Applicants were judged on academic and athletic achievement, as well as their commitment to community service. Each winner will receive a $500 scholarship for college.

Lyla Paru has been an all-star cheerleader at Oregon Dream Teams since her freshman year of high school. Her team placed third in the nation in 2019 and second in the nation in 2021. Lyla was also a member of Beaverton High School’s varsity sideline and competitive cheer teams. In 2020, she was the first cheerleader from BHS to be named to the All-State team.

Lyla volunteered her time at the beginning of the pandemic to assist more than 200 senior citizens in the metro area, helping them obtain Covid vaccine appointments. She is an active volunteer with Guide Dogs for the Blind and Potluck in the Park. Lyla works as both a lifeguard and youth gymnastics coach. She was a LINK crew member at BHS, mentoring incoming freshmen during her junior and senior year. She completed a rigorous course load at BHS including five AP courses and six dual-credit college courses through the BHS marketing pathway program and PCC. Lyla plans to attend the University of Oregon and major in advertising and business.

Everest Sibony is a four-year basketball letterman and two-year basketball captain at Seaside High School. He was the 2020-2021 Unanimous League Most Valuable Player, and his team won the league championship three out of four years. He was a three-year soccer letterman and two-year state champion. He was also a two-year golf letterman and league champion in golf.

His community service includes work with the Shape Up Across Oregon Exercise Program and the Tobacco/Alcohol/Drug Prevention Program. He was an Elks Hoops Shoot Regional Finalist. He is an Eagle Scout with the Boy Scouts. Everest was selected as SHS valedictorian and has a 4.0 GPA. He is student body president and won the social studies Award of Excellence. He will attend the University of Portland and play on the basketball team.

Above, the Harry Glickman Award Committee members Steve “Sudsy” Friedman, left, and Glen Coblens, right, present the Harry Glickman Scholar/Athlete Award to Lyla Paru.

Everest Sibony with his award.
BY DEBORAH MOON

Portland-area athlete Josephine “Jojo” Zober Appling will be on the first Israel Softball Association 12U Israeli national team for one of the biggest international stages for youth softball, the European Massimo Romero Youth Tournament in Italy.

An event of the World Baseball Softball Confederation Europe, the tournament is the European championship for softball players 13 and under.

Team Israel includes players of Israeli citizenship and U.S.-born players with Jewish or Israeli heritage.

“We are excited to have assembled the first 12U Israel National Softball Team ever to compete at the EMRYT tournament in Italy this summer,” says ISA Executive Director Ami Baran. ISA is the governing body of all organized softball in Israel. “For decades, we have worked to build Israel’s youth program, and it is international opportunities like these that help to establish our country as a true competitor on the softball field.”

Jojo joined her first Little League team in 2018. She earned a spot on the All Star team two years in a row and was the MVP on her travel team for the past three seasons. Her favorite quote is from “A League of Their Own”: “The hard is what makes it great.”

Jojo is currently a member of Silver Bullets Larson 12U; she is a passionate player who thrives on the camaraderie of her softball sisters. She will join Team Israel at pitcher, first base and anywhere else her team needs her. She is looking forward to learning some new cheers in Hebrew.

“I’m really excited to represent strong Jewish women and show my passion for softball,” says Jojo.

The daughter of Elle Zober, Jojo’s Hebrew name is Rachel bat Esther, for Elle’s Aunt Roberta, who passed away shortly before Jojo was born. Her naming was at Congregation Neveh Shalom. Elle, Jojo and brother Stockton live in Aloha.

It was the family’s uncommon name, Zober, that first brought Jojo to the attention of the Israel team organizer. Early in the pandemic, JoJo Zober Appling was attending a virtual class presented by Monica Cecilia Abbott, an American professional softball player and silver medal-winning Team USA Olympian. Yarone Zober of Philadelphia saw the Zober name on the Zoom screen, and the two families connected.

Elle says she is not sure how the two Zober branches are related, but she is convinced they are. She shared the origins of the West Coast branch of the family: “My great-grandfather, Benjamin Zober, and his wife, Pauline, came to America from Bremen, Russia, in 1913 as part of a deal where my Great Aunt Sarah Zober was a mail-order bride. Benny was a pushcart vendor at the Pike Street Market. Records for all the family were not well kept, though we do know Benny’s brother, Morris, and his family died in the Holocaust.”

Yarone followed Jojo’s growth in softball, and when he was tasked with recruiting American players for the Israel team, he invited her to join the team. Yarone serves as team manager and David Siegel, of California, is the team coach.

Currently, the team meets Monday evenings on Zoom. They will be in Italy for 10 days in August and will be able to practice together before the tournament begins. The 2022 EMRYT Tournament will take place Aug. 10-13, 2022.

Initially, they turned down the offer because as a single mom, Elle felt the family could not afford it. But ISA has organized a fundraising campaign to help cover travel expenses for those players who cannot afford it: my.jnf.org/team-israel-softball.

Jojo is excited to play alongside girls from Israel and is excited to meet people from other countries.

“The world is huge, and you can have a lasting impact when you meet other people,” says Elle of the international tournament.

Elle is very proud of her daughter, and she’s not alone. “My grandparents were huge Dodgers fans, and I know they would be so proud of Jojo,” says Elle.

Beth Israel to host guest clergy from Israel and East Coast

This summer, Congregation Beth Israel will welcome two renowned guest clergy to the bimah for Friday night services.

Rabbi Galit Cohen-Kedem is coming from Israel to join CBI at 6 pm on June 24. Her talk is entitled “Your Mother is a WHAT? – Being a female Reform Rabbi in Israel (and why does this affect you).” Rabbi Cohen-Kedem is the spiritual leader of Kehillat Kodesh v’Hol, a member congregation of the Israel Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism, in Holon, Israel. She founded the congregation alongside a unique educational track of more than 200 students aged 3-13. Rabbi Galit appreciates humor and creativity as spiritual tools to grow and change the world.

The following Friday, July 1, also at 6 pm, CBI will welcome Cantor Marshall Portnoy as he leads the Kabbalat Shabbat service with Rabbi Michael Cahana.

Cantor Portnoy is the cantor emeritus of Main Line Reform Temple in Wynnewood, Pa. He is also adjunct instructor of art history at the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, and instructor of Hebrew, Judaica, music theory and art history at the Main Line Classical Academy in Bryn Mawr. A graduate of Yale, Cantor Portnoy was invested both by the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Hebrew Union College. His two-volume work, The Art of Cantillation, now in its third edition, has for more than 20 years brought the skill and the joy of reading Torah and Haftarah to tens of thousands throughout the globe. CBI uses his book for adult b’nei mitzvah and other trope classes.
Every year, we reflect on time as we prepare to graduate a new class of Portland Jewish Academy students. As a Jewish community, we mark time with a blessing, acknowledging and showing gratitude for the gift of arriving at this sacred and special time in our lives – shehecheyanu, v’kiyemanu, v’higiyanu lazman hazeh.

This year’s graduating class of 33 unique and wonderful students, our largest class in many years, shared their voices in a variety of ways as they reflected at graduation on their time at PJA. Some of these students have been with us since they were 2, while others joined for middle school amidst a worldwide pandemic. All of these students formed a beautiful kehillah (community) of school leaders who will go on to pursue their gifts and bring light into our world.

We celebrate our graduates for the beautiful people they are, congratulate them for the work they have done up to this point and the hope that they can advocate for a world more just and peaceful.

Below are some of the words I shared with our graduates at this year’s ceremony:

Whether you have been here since you were tiny or joined the class somewhere along the way, you have all added to the mosaic of this wonderful class. As our largest graduating class, you have truly become our beloved school leaders.

Over these years at PJA, a deep sense of Jewish learning, tradition and values have been instilled in you. Through your learning, you have become workers for the world charged with the task of repair, tikkun, of making this world a better, safer, more peaceful and just place for all.

You and your middle school classmates packed 154 bags of food for the Portland Backpack project and wrote notes of cheer to each child who will receive a bag. Through your capstone projects, you have researched and educated, become advocates and activists. Your projects include work in the areas of preservation of nature and environmental causes; food insecurity both locally and internationally; neurodiversity; children’s cancer and other illnesses; support for those in the local, national and worldwide Jewish community; refugee relief, health and well-being; animal welfare; genocide education and relief; support for the houseless; and education and greater awareness in the area of gender diversity.

We learn in Pirkei Avot, The Ethics of our Sages: Lo alecha ham-lachah ligmor, v’lo atah ben chorin l’hibatel mimena – You are not expected to complete the task, but neither are you free to avoid it. You have grown up hearing this quote, singing this song and learning through action and study that it is a Jewish value to make the world better.

We know that you will take the values imprinted on you from your homes and years of learning at PJA and continue to do what it takes to advocate and work for the things that are important to you, things that will make this world better for you and future generations.

Merrill Hendin is the principal of Portland Jewish Academy, a community day school offering preschool through eighth grade.
Jeanine Semon: Creativity still flowing at 92

BY SYDNEY CLEVENGER

When Jeanine Semon’s husband, Ed, used to leave for work every morning around 7:30 am, he would advise her to stay off the phone until after noon.

“That’s all he’d say,” says Jeanine, with a chuckle. “He knew my high-energy painting time was 9:00 in the morning. And then after 12:30, he knew I’d painted. And he was right.”

Ed Semon recently passed (April 25, 2022), but even while grieving, Jeanine can still feel his quiet support in her artistic endeavors.

“I’ve been painting for more than 65 years,” says Jeanine. “In all that time, Ed never had an opinion, a preference about my work, neither criticism nor compliments. All he did was go along with what I wanted, and he was always there to help with the children or cooking or whatever I needed, whether it was driving the car to New Mexico and West Virginia to show and teach, or to art museums and galleries in Chicago and Madison. He was a wonderful man.”

Jeanine Gassman grew up in Portage, Wis. After a year at the University of Wisconsin, she attended Parsons School of Design in New York. Disappointed in her New York choice, Jeanine returned to Milwaukee, taking art classes at the two arts schools available.

There Jeanine met Ed Semon. They married and had two boys, Bruce and Jesse. Later, daughter Betsy would follow.

When she was 26, Jeanine took her young sons to the Milwaukee Jewish Community Center, which had an art show.

“I looked at the paintings and was electrified,” says Jeanine. Asking about the art she learned there was an art class on Wednesday nights. “I said, ‘That sounds perfect.’ The following Wednesday, I was in that class, and from there I never stopped painting.”

Initially, Jeanine concentrated on Wisconsin landscapes. She grew to love the Native American philosophy of nature and its respect for creatures and trees. She made jewelry and learned stained glass. She began to exhibit her work and taught art classes in Menomonee Falls, Wis.; Phoenix, Ariz.; and Rome, Italy.

Jeanine describes her work as “healing art,” images that “give joy, comfort and make you feel good.” A friend undergoing chemotherapy set up Jeanine’s dolphin prints in her treatment room for comfort. The hospital in Menomonee Falls, where she and Ed raised their family, has Jeanine’s paintings on its walls.

When Betsy was in school, Jeanine returned to the University of Wisconsin and graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts at age 48.

Ed taught school and authored books. The couple rented space in Oregon many winters to visit Betsy, who worked at KEX Radio in Portland. During one of their stays, Ed suffered a stroke, and the pair moved to an assisted living facility. Several years ago, Jeanine and Ed moved to Rose Schnitzer Manor at Cedar Sinai Park.

“There are a lot of good, interesting people here and wonderful activities,” says Jeanine. “I am a people person; that’s why I live here.”

Jeanine Semon in front of one of her paintings.

In May, Jeanine’s work was displayed outside the Manor’s May Café, and she is considering teaching a class for residents. She is writing her third book about art. Several large canvases in her apartment display sketches of emerging scenes, some in colors she has never tried before. She is hoping to exhibit her work soon at the Hillsdale library, since her first exhibit was in her hometown library.

“This one is a series on creation,” says Jeanine, unrolling a set of five prints. “It is interesting because I discovered something psychologically about myself. Every one of these paintings has an exit. There’s a place to go out. … these guys are coming out of the water and they’re floating, and they can get out … these characters started as horses and as they migrated to the sides of the frame, becoming a different sort of water-sky creature.”

“They represent passages and freedom to me,” she says of the series.

Jeanine is on a brief painting hiatus while she mourns Ed. But she wants people to know that ideas don’t have an age limit.

“I think people ought to know that when you’re 92, creativity is still coming,” she says. “When Ed was sleeping, I had so many ideas in the evening. I think it’s healthy to see that older people can achieve.”

Find her books on amazon.com or jeaninesdream.com/.

Artists react to Judy Chicago exhibit on July 12

On July 12, three Jewish artists will discuss their reaction to the work of Judy Chicago, the subject of the current exhibit at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education.

“In Conversation, A Response to the Legacy of Judy Chicago” will be an in-person event in OJMCHE’s auditorium at 7 pm, July 12. Artists Sarah Diver, Shelley Jordon and Sarah Horowitz will share their reactions to the 35 pieces in the exhibit.

“Turning Inward, Judy Chicago, From the Collection of Jordan Schnitzer and His Family Foundation” remains at the museum through Sept. 23. The exhibit traces Judy Chicago’s development as an artist and Jewish woman across six decades, from her early formal vocabulary of geometric color abstraction and groundbreaking work with pyrotechnics to the powerful explorations of self-identity, the politics of gender and her personal formative experiences.

Tickets are $8 members, $10 nonmembers and $5 students and are available at ojmche.org/events/in-conversation-a-response-to-the-legacy-of-judy-chicago/.

OJMCHE expands hours, adds free first Saturdays

The Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education is once again open on Sundays. Museum hours are Wednesday-Sunday from 11 am to 4 pm.

This summer, admission is free the first Saturday of each month. Upcoming free Saturdays include July 2 and Aug. 6.
will give all the community’s Jewish organizations the data they need “to invest in a community that will be thriving.”

The Jewish Federation has contracted with the Cohen Center at Brandeis University to perform the study, looking at the Jewish community from Southwest Washington down to Lane County. This will be the most comprehensive scientific study ever conducted of our Jewish community.

The meeting celebrated Goldstein’s leadership over three challenging years.

“I cannot express the incredible role Lauren played in both convening our community and helping it move forward,” wrote JFGP President and CEO Marc Blattner in his weekly email after the meeting.

Mindy Zeitzer was introduced as the new chair of the Federation board, the fifth woman to lead Federation over the past century. Zeitzer is a past chair of the Federation’s campaign and allocations committees.

Federation board members completing their terms were Jack Birnbach, Karen Blauer, Ted Nelson and Ed Tonkin.

Craig Berne, Christie Moore and Jeffrey Weitz joined the board.

The evening also featured the presentation of the Laurie Rogoway Outstanding Jewish Professional Award to Missy Fry, a behavioral health social worker at Jewish Family and Child Service. Mayah Greenfield and Ike Salinsky each received an $1800 college scholarship from the Lillian and Gilbert Sussman Fund.

“This year, our unrestricted annual campaign increased by 5 percent, and we raised in excess of $400,000 for our Ukraine Fund. Together, our community generously contributed $4.2 million,” wrote Blattner, thanking Campaign Co-Chairs Ted Nelson and Jess Hilbert, and everyone who donated. See stories on page 9 about how some of those funds have been allocated to meet needs locally and in Israel.
Federation funds projects in Israel

For the 2022-23 fiscal year, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland granted $115,000 to 11 organizations that provide social services in Israel. “No funding from the Jewish Federation goes to fund the Israeli government, nor do any dollars fund projects ‘over the Green Line,’” emphasizes JFGP president and CEO Marc Blattner.

The Overseas Special Projects grants are made to organizations with smaller budgets (less than $10 million are given preference). Grants range from $5,000 to $20,000. The grants support projects that aid diverse populations including Jewish and Arab students in remote communities, special needs children, at-risk children, Holocaust survivors, underprivileged Ethiopian Jewish families, trans individuals and survivors of sexual violence. They also support mental health programs, STEM education and multi-cultural education.

Eight past OSP recipients received grants for projects again this year:

- Ofanim provides extracurricular enrichment in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to children living in peripheral communities in northern and southern Israel – Jewish and Arab, religious and secular, native born and new immigrants. Portland supports three groups in Kiryat Malachi.
- Neve Michael is a safe haven for over 280 needy children (ages 5 to 18 from all over Israel) who are at risk and whose biological parents can no longer care for them. Our funding will purchase “Personal Arrival Packages” for children who arrive at the center.
- Krembo Wings is Israel’s only all-inclusive youth movement. It brings children with special needs together with able-bodied peers. Our funding will support the operations of Krembo Wing’s new branch in Beit Shemesh, the first chapter to serve ultra-Orthodox children.
- Foundation for the Welfare of Holocaust Victims helps survivors. There are 168,500 survivors living in Israel today — 25 percent of whom are living in poverty. Our funding will provide financial assistance to 100 vulnerable Holocaust survivors.
- Beit Yossi provides a therapeutic home and intervention for severely underprivileged Ethiopian Jewish families in Ashdod. Our funding will support therapeutic intervention for 16 parents and 22 children.
- ERAN provides mental health first aid to all residents of Israel in emotional distress via the telephone, mobile phone and the Internet free of charge, anonymously and confidentially. ERAN operates 13 branches across Israel. Our funding will support ongoing training for volunteers in multiple branches.
- Ma’avorim (passageways, crossings or transitions) is a trans-led organization by and for the Israeli trans community. Our funding for Ma’avorim in partnership with Israel Gay Youth will be used for an Employment Assistance Coordinator position for the trans community, employer competence training, job seeker application assistance and coaching.

Three organizations received grants for the first time:

- Mabat leads transformative programs on Israeli college campuses developing multi-cultural awareness, countering prejudice and racism, and promoting diversity and co-existence. Jewish and Arab students and alumni engage in year-long accredited leadership seminars and community volunteering. Our funding will support capacity-building for Mabat’s Alumni Network.
- Feuerstein Institute teaches people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of ability how to think, learn and function better. Portland is supporting “Aim Higher,” a program that helps high-potential Israelis from the Ethiopian community and the socio-economic periphery pursue their goals in higher education.

Federation allocates funds to 18 local organizations

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland has provided funding for 18 local organizations for fiscal year 2022-23. For the past eight months, the dedicated volunteer leaders on the JFGP Allocations Committee have met to discuss, review, evaluate and make very difficult decisions on how to allocate finite financial resources. This year, due to the success of the annual campaign, the committee was able to allocate 5 percent more than last year.

The committee used the additional $62,000 to provide increased funding to four agencies:

- Cedar Sinai Park – Increased funds will help with continued and increased need for PPE supplies, challenges related to recruiting and retaining nursing staff, and the financial impact from people not moving in during the pandemic.
- Jewish Family & Child Service – Increased funding will help JFCS address increased demand for mental health support and emergency financial/food assistance.
- Mittleman Jewish Community Center – During the pandemic, the MJCC had closings mandated by the Oregon Health Authority, membership losses (now growing again) and hiring challenges. Funding will help the MJCC as they resume more programs and services.
- Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education – With the increase in antisemitism and hate crimes, more funding will assist OJMCHE in providing critically needed community education and teacher training.

This year, 14 organizations received funding similar to last year. Agencies whose funding remained stable were B’nai B’rith Camp, NCSY, Chabad of Northeast, Chabad of Hillsboro, Portland Kollel, Greater Portland Hillel, Oregon Hillel, Chabad Reed, Moishe House, OneTable, Maayan Torah Day School, Maimonides Jewish Day School, Portland Jewish Academy and TIVNU: Building Justice.

“We recognize and appreciate the incredible work of every Jewish organization in town – and each is deserving of more funds,” says JFGP CEO Marc Blattner. “Limited financial resources, however, require difficult leadership decisions.”

“I am so proud of our Allocations Committee and their thoughtful deliberations,” says Blattner. “Among many competing priorities, the committee focused on the impacts of the pandemic and strengthening organizations as they come out of it. They also looked at special circumstances that may require more funding for an organization.”

The JFGP Annual Report will be published in late August, providing full details on how every dollar was allocated.
Chaplain's Corner

Broken but Blessed

The following is the invocation that Rabbi Barry Cohen shared at this year’s Jewish Federation of Greater Portland annual meeting on June 13.

What a year we just experienced. We made it through Covid, year two.
I have often felt a range of conflicting emotions simultaneously: anger, sadness, helplessness, hopelessness, compassion fatigue, regret … but also relief, joy, hope, compassion, love, reassurance. But these past weeks put me in a downward spiral. What I have been feeling, I could not articulate. It was complicated and nuanced.

When I was taking part in my chaplaincy residency in the Chicago burbs, our supervisor sent us to “the feeling wheel” when we struggled to identify our emotions. I could not find what I have been feeling on this feeling wheel, despite that the wheel lists more than 150 emotions.

I recently read an article by Dahlia Lithwick on Slate.com, “Why Politics is Both the Poison and the Cure.” She found the word that perfectly describes what I have been feeling, and what I wager many of us have been feeling.

Is this word in English? No. German? French? Russian? No. This word is from arguably the world’s most expressive language: Yiddish. The word I have been feeling is **tzebrokhnkayt**. This is roughly translated as “broken but blessed.”

**We feel this when we make it to another day, but at the same time admit that everything is not OK. As we feel broken-heartedness, we carry our shattered experiences and emotions with us. But this carrying gives us strength.**

Rabbi Irwin Keller teaches:

“We carry (our) brokenness with us, just as the Children of Israel in the desert carried in the Holy Ark not only the Tablets of the Covenant, but also the Tablets of the Covenant that Moses shattered when he came down the mountain. We each carry our shattered pieces with us.”

In so doing, we discover, we earn within tzebrokhnkayt a sense of wisdom. We exist in a state of not needing a quick fix but needing to be honored; and as we are honored, we take up the work of healing.

Lithwick ended her words by quoting the autobiography of Howard Zinn, *You Can’t Be Neutral on a Moving Train*. (Of note: he was a World War II Air Force bombardier.)

“To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places … where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act. … The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.”

This past year, in too many of our “presents,” we felt tzebrokhnkayt. Despite the pain, the tragedy, the fear, the brokenness, we recovered. We healed. We helped one another. We shared compassion, strength and love. Through these “presents,” we have obtained the wisdom that we are still allowed to hope … that it is our obligation to hope.

In the coming months, we may continue to feel tzebrokhnkayt. But let’s embrace that emotion and realize it is the key to navigating these challenging times to make our community even stronger, more vibrant, interconnected and interdependent.

Cain y’hi ratzon.

So may this be.

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

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If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something.
Two Portlanders tapped for Wisdom Fellowship

Two Portlanders, Beth Israel Executive Director Josh Kashinsky and TischPDX Executive Director Eleyna Fugman, are among the 41 Jewish Wisdom Fellows announced June 14 by Hadar.

Hadar is an educational institution that seeks to empower a generation of Jews to create and sustain vibrant, practicing, egalitarian communities of Torah learning, prayer and service. Hadar’s Jewish Wisdom Fellowship is a collective learning and thought leadership project for Jewish professionals. Over five weeks, cohorts of Jewish professionals, executives and clergy will engage with some of the most pressing social, moral and spiritual questions confronting our communities and the world.

“I am pleased to be a part of Hadar’s JWF this year,” says Fugman, who studied at Hadar in 2015. “I was impressed by their curriculum and by the fact that they were able to make Talmud learning accessible to me as a queer Jewish woman not raised with a Jewish education and with limited Hebrew.”

Kashinsky will be part of the Executive Cohort.

“I’m looking forward to study-ing with a diverse group of executives and with some incredible Jewish educators,” says Kashinsky. “I find the more that I can ground my work in Jewish values and the rich tapestry of Jewish tradition, the stronger the work is. I’m thankful that the CBI community is supportive of continued professional growth and learning for myself and our staff.”

Before joining Congregation Beth Israel, Kashinsky had worked at both JCCs and Hillels. He has also worked professionally as a theater director and producer. A graduate of UCSB and Sarah Lawrence College, Josh grew up in the Silicon Valley and enjoys being back on the West Coast after a decade living in the Northeast.

June 30: TischPDX applications due

Diverse Jews in their 20s-40s who are engaging their peers in ‘Jew-ish’ programming, art and activities are invited to apply for the next cohort of TischPDX by 5 pm, June 30.

The 10-16 month program is for young Jewish community builders, organizers, artists, hosts, and conveners who are unaffiliated with established Jewish community and interested in bolstering their leadership capacity in bringing together Jews across Portland. The cohort meets monthly for Torah study, exploration of Jewish yearly cycles and skills workshops within a framework of anti-oppression theory and practice.

For a link to the application or questions, email Derekh@TischPDX.org.

June 24: Young adult Pride Shabbat dinner

Young adults are invited to join a welcoming, LGBTQ+ friendly Pride Shabbat dinner at 6 pm, June 24, at the Eastside Jewish Commons. OneTable host Angel (they/them) presents the free event, “New Song – A Queer-Led Learning Shabbat.”

“Come join us! My name is Angel, I’m a trans Jew with a background of 15 years of grassroots organizing and education,” writes Angel. “Together with my co-organizer, Erez, we envision a regular Shabbat event in Portland that balances reverence for tradition with a supportive, fun learning environment. We welcome Jews of all backgrounds and experience.”

For questions, email abbie@OneTable.org. RSVP at dinners. onetable.org/landing/Portland.

July 10: Cantor Vitells receives Nemer Award

The Harry R. Nemer Award dinner honoring Cantor Emeritus Aaron Vitells will be 5-9 pm, July 10, at Congregation Shaarie Torah, 920 NW 25th Ave., Portland.

Each year, the Shaarie Torah Men’s Club presents the Nemer Award to someone who has left a mark on and given back to the Shaarie Torah community. The Men’s Club will honor Cantor Vitells for “all of his hard work and energy to make CST a more joyful, open and thriving community.”

As he prepared to retire last November, Cantor Vitells reflected on a life that has been spiritual, unconventional and occasionally harrowing. Vitells was raised on a farming cooperative in Beit Shearim, Israel. He served in combat in the Golan Heights during the Yom Kippur War. He graduated from medical school with a specialty in emergency medicine. He met his American-born wife, Diane, at a Paris conference devoted to Indian traditions and philosophy. After several years in Israel, they moved to the United States, where he worked in hospital emergency departments and began studying with a cantor.

Vitells stepped into the cantor’s role at Shaarie Torah in the mid-1990s when his predecessor became ill and was unable to perform the Passover services. Asked to lead the High Holiday services also, he spent the summer studying the prayers while still performing his medical duties. He retired as a doctor in 2017 and as cantor 2021.

Tickets are $54 per person. RSVP before June 28 at tinyurl.com/nemerdinner2022.
July 10: Judaism and the Psychedelic Renaissance

On July 10, Co/Lab will host “Judaism and the Psychedelic Renaissance: A Portland Gathering,” 10 am-6 pm, at the Eastside Jewish Commons.

“What does it mean to be a psychedelic Jew? To me that’s an exciting question. An important question – and one we’re going to explore for the first time as a community here in Portland,” says Co/Lab founder Rabbi Josh Rose of the in-person gathering.

“Even five years ago the question would have sounded ridiculous,” he says. “But psychedelics have huge implications for our understanding of spiritual states and for the treatment of trauma and depression. The Jewish community should approach this with curiosity and open-mindedness.”

Rabbi Zac Kamenez, founder of Shefa: Jewish Psychedelic Support, will keynote the July 10 gathering in person. He sees great promise in the responsible exploration of the nexus of Judaism and psychedelics. He has said, “(Psychedelics are) going to inspire a creative, spiritual renaissance that puts the Jewish people back in touch with that burning core that sits at the heart of our mystical tradition.”

The July 10 event will include a history of psychedelics in Judaism from Madison Margolin, a leading figure in the Jewish psychedelic movement and author of the Times of Israel article “Was Moses Tripping When He Saw the Burning Bush?” Psychedelic guides will be on hand to share what guided psychedelic therapy might look like and feel like. And Jon Dennis, a prominent Oregon lawyer and activist in the psychedelic field, will talk about Oregon’s central role in the psychedelic renaissance.

An Oregon measure on therapeutic psilocybin use passed in November 2021 and takes effect in 2023. The July 10 program will explore the impact of the new law on individuals who have psychedelics experiences in a therapeutic context. The Jewish community has an opportunity to help them integrate these experiences and new ideas into their Jewish lives and practices.

“I want everyone to feel welcome at ‘Judaism and the Psychedelic Renaissance,’” says Rabbi Josh. “Jews with a traditional approach, secular Jews, the psychedelically experienced and those who wouldn’t touch the stuff. Truly, it’s open to anyone who cares about Jewish ideas and has a curious mind.”

Tickets and more information are available at colabpdx.org/psychedelics. Tickets are $54.

Obituaries

ALVIN KLASS

Alvin Manly Leon Klass, 90, of Canby, passed away June 2, 2022, from complications of diabetes and congestive heart failure. He is survived by his wife, Nancy; his children, Gregory, Daniel (Iman), Kayla (David) and Leah (Keith); grandchildren, Kamen Klass, Marli Klass, Lila Reich, Leila Klass and Anisa Klass; great-grandchildren, Dana Schull (Dave), Mikel Lomsky (Amy) and Lee Vogt. He was preceded in death by his son, Bradley; and sister, Rhoda Lomsky.

Alvin was born Nov. 12, 1931, to Joe and Rose Klass in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. After Alvin graduated from high school the family moved to Portland. He received his Certificate of Naturalization while serving in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War.

Alvin studied at Portland State University and received his Doctor of Medicine from the University of Oregon Medical School, now OHSU, in 1963.

He interned at Los Angeles County Harbor General Hospital, completed his residency in ophthalmology at OHSU, and entered private practice in Northwest Portland in 1968. In 1989 he closed his practice to become the administrator of the Teamsters Medical Center, retiring in 1999.

In 1978, Alvin’s sister introduced him to Nancy. Alvin and Nancy were married 44 years.

Alvin was active in the Washington County Master Gardener Program for many years receiving the Master Gardener of the Year award twice for volunteer services.

After retiring Alvin volunteered with the Clackamas County Money Management Program and the Lan Su Chinese Garden. Alvin enjoyed reading, music, opera, traveling and cooking.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date. In memory of Alvin, the family suggests a donation be made to the Lan Su Chinese Garden or a garden of your choice.

Grief can feel so lonely. Jewish Family & Child Service’s clinicians acknowledge this and are passionate about providing community and connection around and through one’s grieving process. Now, in addition to JFCS’ weekly Community Connection Zoom-based group, JFCS is providing Grief Connection. This no-cost, drop-in group meets the first Friday of every month. It provides an opportunity for people to share their experience, learn from one another, support others, or simply just attend and be present.

“Grief Connection creates an opportunity for our community members to meet and engage with others who they may not know have shared experiences,” says JFCS’ Clinical Director Douglass Ruth, LCSW, CCTP.

Grief Connection does not substitute for Walking Beside You, a grief-processing group that Missy Fry, LCSW, CAGCS, behavioral health social worker, co-facilitated with community chaplain Rabbi Barry Cohen. A third cohort of Walking Beside You will begin in fall 2022.

Missy is facilitating Grief Connection and encourages all comers to give it a try (registration is not required).

“As human beings, we have a need to express our pain” including grief, which has no cure, she says. She validates those experiencing any kind of loss: “There’s no wrong way to do this; there’s nothing wrong with you; this is a normal response to losing someone or something that you love. ... We may always feel this wound internally, but it doesn’t mean that we will feel broken externally forever.”

As one grief-processing group participant shared, “When I’m in this group, I feel completely connected to myself. I know that others know what I’m going through.”

For more information, contact Missy Fry at MissyFry@jfcs-portland.org. For the Zoom link, visit jfcs-portland.org/grief-connection.