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Campaign leaders see 'transformative' work

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

Each year, the Jewish Federations of North America arranges an overseas mission for fundraising leadership throughout the country to see the work they're supporting firsthand.

"The purpose is really not only to understand the work that happens overseas, but to also see the impact of that work," Wendy Kahn, the Chief Development Officer of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland said.

She and Jack Birnbach, the Federation's Campaign Co-Chair, spent eight days in Germany and Israel for that purpose early in July. What they saw, heard, and absorbed encompassed a far larger portrait of the past, present and future of the Jewish world.

Arriving in Berlin, Birnbach and Kahn joined up with 60 other professional and volunteer fundraising leaders from around North



Dance students at the Nevatim program in Berlin perform for the Jewish Federations of North America's FRD Leadership Mission Tuesday, July 9. Nevatim is a program of the Jewish Agency for Israel, which is supported by JFNA's overseas allocations through contributions from the annual campaign of local federations. (Wendy Kahn/The Jewish Review)

America. The rest of the group, mostly in their 40s and 50s, left a strong impression on Birnbach.

"The intellect in the room was very high, the engagement, the interest," he said of his fellow mission participants. "If people in the re-

tirement age that I'm in are concerned, they shouldn't be. We've got great people coming up behind us."

The group's first stop was Berlin-Gruenwald railway station and its Platform 17. From here, more than 50,000 Berlin Jews were de-

ported by the Nazis, first to the Polish Ghettos and, later, directly to Auschwitz. The platform features markers for each train that departed carrying Jews east.

"It's all down one side, and then you go flip to the other side, and you see that it even goes, even all the way to a spot where there's only 18 individuals and the war is essentially over," Kahn explained. "They were committed to killing Jews to the end, even though they knew they were going to lose and the war was over, they were going to get those last 18 people on."

Following a visit to the Memorial for Murdered Jews, the group visited Nevatim, a program of the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) that, among other things, is supporting Jewish children fleeing the war in Ukraine. Many of them are Ukrainian, but quite a few are Russian. At Nevatim, they're study-

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On this episode of the podcast:

Wendy Kahn and Jack Birnbach, JFGP

Letters from Camp

Sephardic Adventure Camp lives up to name

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

Every Jewish summer camp has something about it that makes it unique. In the Cascade mountains east of Seattle, however, is a truly singular camp experience – Sephardic Adventure Camp, the only Sephardic Jewish overnight camp in North America.

The Seattle area is home to one of the largest Sephardic populations in the country, and in the 1950s, that community – specifically Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation and Congregation Ezra Bessaroth, decided that their kids needed a chance to get in on the Jewish camp experience – the Sephardic way. Since then, the word about this unique camp experience has traveled literally around the world.

“We had two campers from Turkey. We had campers and counselors from Spain, from South Africa,” explained SAC’s Operations Director Jodi Fried, noting that while most campers come from the Pacific Northwest, the camp also draws from Florida, Massachusetts, California and other states. “We really have quite a wide reach.”

The camp uses the Sephardic liturgy of Turkey and Rhodes, the historical roots of much of Seattle’s Sephardic population, but the Sephardic atmosphere doesn’t end there. Ladino, the Judeo-Spanish fusion language, is a major focus of the camp’s programming – including a Ladino song contest styled on the reality TV series “The Voice.” For all the emphasis on Sephardic customs, it may surprise you to learn that a sizable portion of campers aren’t Sephardic at all.

“There’s something very different and very special about the energy of the Sephardic culture and about learning the history and learning about the songs,” Fried said. “And I think that that, you know, keeps campers coming back and keeps families wanting more.”

The programming also puts the “adventure” in Sephardic Adventure Camp. Many of the typical camp adventures are part of the experience – archery, water sports, craft projects, just to name a few. Horseback riding is also available and, for those who might be more adventurous still, the camp has

offered a rock climbing program for the last two summers. This isn’t a plastic climbing wall sort of program, either.

“The campers actually go outdoors and climb cliffs,” Fried said, “and it’s amazing to see their confidence soar.”

Each session also includes an overnight experience with tents and outdoor cooking – closer to a “camping trip,” perhaps, than “summer camp.” Sephardic Adventure Camp, then, truly lives up to its name.

SAC’s single three-week session has concluded for the year, but registration for next year will soon be available online for 2025 at sephardicadventurecamp.org.

“*Letters From Camp*” will feature stories from each of the five Jewish overnight camps in the Pacific Northwest over the course of the summer. Next issue: *Camp Keshet*. For more on Jewish summer camps, listen to “*Campfire Kehillah with Avi Orlov*” on *The Jewish Review Podcast*, available on all major platforms, and visit the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland’s camp resources page at jewishportland.org/inclusion-camping.

jewishportland.org/subscribe

From The Editor

By ROCKNE ROLL
Dear Reader,

You may have noticed an addition to the front page of today’s edition. Maimonides wrote in the Mishnah Torah that “There is no mitzvah as great as the redemption of captives.” In the spirit of the Rambam’s words, The Jewish Review will feature this banner on the front page of each edition until all hostages held by Hamas in Gaza are released. We do this to ensure that those held captive, living and dead, will not be forgotten and that the mitzvah of their return to their families and homes may be fulfilled soon. Our hearts are with them.

Rockne Roll is Editor of The Jewish Review.



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Maayan shines in accreditation report

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

Maayan Torah Day School has completed re-accreditation – with flying colors.

Sarah Evans, the school's Accreditation and Learning Specialist, explained that Maayan was originally accredited by Advanced Ed in 2015, and that accreditation was typically a six-year rolling process. This was complicated by both the COVID pandemic and Advanced Ed's acquisition by Cognia, which is now Maayan's accreditor. The underlying process is a continuous one, however, and these obstacles were just delays on the milestones of that process.

"Accreditation is the work of continuous improvement," Evans said. When a school is in an accreditation year, it means that the school is doing a real thorough institutional analysis to uncover what we're really doing well and where we have the opportunity to get better, to improve."

"They want to see that there are good and clear systems in place, top to bottom," Maayan Director of Development Rabbi Daniel Borsuk said, "in terms of classrooms, in terms of administration, in terms of communication, in terms of everything."

The process focused on 30 evaluative standards in four key areas: culture of learning, leadership for learning, engagement of learning and growth in learning. Surveys were conducted with all the school's stakeholder groups, including students. Evaluative observations were performed by Evans and other senior staff at the school us-

ing an evaluation tool called ELIOT – Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool – after they were individually certified in its use.

"It is a standardized way to see and understand what's happening in the learning environment," Evans explained. "It's not so focused on the teacher, although these data certainly helped to inform what a teacher is doing well and what a teacher can improve, but it's student centered and it's learning environment centered."

Much more than evaluating achievement and outcomes, Cognia's process is focused on evaluating process and culture on a granular level. The result was a report, but not a report card – it's 91 pages long.

The net result, from a high level, is sparkling: Maayan exceeded Cognia's network averages in 29 of the 30 evaluation domains and received an Index of Educational Quality score of 350, well over the network average of 253 and the benchmark level of 300, indicating that while there are areas for improvement, there are also practices within the school that are truly noteworthy.

"There are always opportunities for growth and this just aligns so well to our mission, which is part of the reason I love this, this work," Evans said. "I'm all about continuous improvement."

"What Mrs. Evans was stressing so much throughout the year was that besides just being a stamp of approval, it really is the intention of the accreditation process to be a roadmap for improve-

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Kehillah High launches this fall with AJU course on Israel

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

While Jewish Portland has a plethora of options for children's education, the missing piece has long been formal coursework for high schoolers seeking to further their Jewish education.

That's changing this fall.

PDX Kehillah High, an umbrella program for Jewish educational opportunities for Greater Portland-area high school students, is launching with a college-level course on the history and culture of modern Israel through American Jewish University, led locally by Rabbi Gary Oren of Congregation Shaarie Torah.

Rabbi Oren explained that AJU's Jewish Learning Experience program for high school students began in Los Angeles, using the university's undergraduate accreditation to offer college credit for high school Jewish education programs as a way to keep high school students who weren't attending Jewish high schools interested in Jewish learning among the many competing demands on students' time as they prepare for life after high school.

"A local rabbi in L.A. said, 'Listen, the only way I'm going to get my kids to learn Jewish things after b'nai mitzvah is if there's some big carrots hanging out there,'" Rabbi Oren said. "Something that they see is good for them."

The program launched through six synagogues in Los Angeles, with a catalogue of courses for congregations to choose from to fit their particular students' needs and interests. The program is expanding outward this year to a number of other states – Portland will be unique in that its courses will be offered to the entire community rather than just through the educational program of a single synagogue.

"That was really important to me because if we want to have impact, then we need to try to help each other, get as many kids as possible involved," Rabbi Oren said. "That spirit of collaboration and cooperation is needed, and Portland's a place where that can happen."

The course he's teaching, titled "Introduction to the People, History, and Culture of Israel," looks at the leadup to Israeli independence in 1948, the different strains of Zionist movements before, during and since, as well as the lived experiences of Israelis and their Palestinian neighbors. The choice of topic was an important consideration for Rabbi Oren, given what Jewish high school students have experienced in the wake of the Oct. 7 terror attacks in Israel.

"We live in this time where everything's kind of upside down, and our kids are facing really hard challenges," Rabbi Oren said. "The number one antidote to that is education. Do they know who they are? Do they know their own story? Even if they don't want to talk back to someone else, internally, are they confident in their identity and story? Because you're not going to stop the outside world

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Rich-Levin joins JFGP as campaign admin

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Jakob Rich-Levin is back in the family business.

The son of a Federation professional in Florida, Rich-Levin joined the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland earlier this month as Campaign Administrator.

“Federation was always a place I saw myself ending up at,” Rich-Levin said.

It’s the latest step in a career of work in causes close to his heart. After graduating from the University of Florida in 2022, Rich-Levin joined the Humaine Society of North Central Florida, first coordinating their adoption programs and later as their office manager. He’d been fostering dogs through the organization – animals continue to be a passion of his, as he and his wife, Emily, have two dogs and two cats.

He’s also passionate about his Judaism. His mother is Israeli and he attended a Jewish day school in Florida through 12th grade along with eight summers at Camp Ramah, active synagogue involvement, and an eventual stint on the student board of Hillel at



Jakob Rich-Levin (JFGP) University of Florida.

“That’s really where I fell in love with Jewish nonprofits,” Rich-Levin said.

His wife, who works in education, is also from Florida. The pair were ready to live somewhere else and looked at Washington D.C., Denver and Seattle before selecting the Rose City.

“When I just saw this was open,” he said of the Campaign Administrator

role, “I knew that it was a perfect fit.”

He cited the vast array of activities and projects Federations take on as a motivating factor in pursuing the job.

“From working with the elderly in the community to working with homelessness to education, Israel’s emergency response fund, the Ukraine response fund, hurricane response funds; we don’t need to help during hurricanes, but we do,” Rich-Levin said. “I think that’s the biggest thing that drew me to working at a Federation.”

Away from the office, Rich-Levin’s passions continue – comic books and the vast sphere of media that’s stemmed from those stories, Star Wars, and most prominently, Legos – a hobby he shares with Emily.

“It’s a great escape from the stresses of life, and you really can make whatever you want with it,” he said. “You can make so many different characters that don’t conform to the typical notions of Lego, nor the typical notions of our society. I think that’s incredible.”

Email Rich-Levin at jakob@jewish-portland.org.

JADE launches in Portland with Aug. 18 film screening, survey

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

JADE is coming to Portland – and it has nothing to do with gems.

JADE stands for “Jewish Association for Death Education,” a national organization working to educate Jewish communities about Jewish end-of-life practices and supporting families through dying, death and bereavement.

“We’re really just trying to inform people that this is what death and dying looks like from a Jewish perspective,” explained Rachel Crawford, JADE’s Jewish Death Educator in Portland. “It’s beautiful, and it’s rich and it’s rooted in history.”

Crawford is a longtime Portlander, a trained death doula and a leader of *Chevra*

Kavod haMet, one of Portland’s community Jewish burial societies. She also volunteers at Hopewell House, providing bedside companionship for the dying at this hospice.

“Once I found out that this was an area of life that you could become proficient in, I immediately knew that I found my passion,” Crawford said.

She recently joined JADE, an organization founded by David Zinner, retired executive director and founder of Jewish death and bereavement practice group *Kavod v’Nichum* (Honor and Comfort), and Susan Kramer, a career nonprofit leader and consultant with two decades experience.

The pair joined together, Crawford explained, “to in-

crease the knowledge and awareness of Jewish end of life practices for the average Jew.” To that end, Crawford is one of a network of educators in communities around the country – who come from the communities they serve – to provide education and programming around those practices.

The first, coming up Sunday, Aug. 18 at 11 am at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, is a screening of Cathy Zheutlin’s 2017 film “Living While Dying,” documenting her mother’s partner’s terminal cancer diagnosis and final days. Zheutlin, who works as Spiritual Life Coordinator at Cedar Sinai Park, has more than three decades of filmmaking experience. Future events may include

workshops on ethical wills, or demonstrations of *tahara*, the traditional preparation of a body for Jewish burial.

An important function of JADE, Crawford also explained, is to act as a resource. To that end, JADE maintains the *Hineni* Learning Tool, a catalogue of information about Jewish end-of-life traditions named for the phrase “Here I am” that is often repeated in the Torah. Those resources and more are available at JADE’s website, jadeinfo.org. There’s also an informational hotline available by calling 440-941-5233. There, JADE staff members can answer questions and, if coaching or in-person support is appropriate, connect

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PRIDE IN PICTURES





Photos by Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review

UO commencement speaker caps tumultuous year

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

Luda Isakharov's last moment in the University of Oregon's spotlight put quite a cap on a tumultuous year at the state's flagship public university.

Isakharov graduated this year with three undergraduate degrees – political science, global studies, and Russian. In addition, she served as the President of the Associated Students of the University of Oregon, the school's student government, her junior year. The ASUO President traditionally speaks at commencement exercises, but Isakharov passed the honor off to a senior. This year, the outgoing ASUO President returned the favor.

The delay placed Isakharov back into the cauldron of campus politics – like many colleges, UO was the scene of an anti-Israel occupation, with a tent encampment set up in a central portion of campus. (For more on the encampment, listen to “Campus Encampments with Rabbi Meir Goldstein” on The Jewish Review Podcast) While she had already officially graduated following winter term, she was regularly on campus working as a special assistant to the Board of Trustees, exposing her to all the vitriol that the encampment had to offer while also giving her a chance to continue advocating for students following her presidency.

“I kind of gained a thicker skin for all of that,” Isakharov recalled, “especially being president. People know I’m Jewish. People know I’m a Zionist. People know I have family in Israel. So I really had nothing to hide.”

Angry emails to her successors in student government and the university's administration came quickly, as did talk of a petition. None of this surprised Isakharov.

“I’d essentially already been canceled a long time ago,” she joked.

Nor did it sway her.

“I made it very clear to everyone from the beginning that it’s something I would not be stepping down from. It’s something I was really committed to,” she said. “It was really important for me to represent the community in a positive light after the really challenging year we had.”

A walkout was planned, with posters



Luda Isakharov speaks at the University of Oregon's commencement exercises Monday, June 17 at Autzen Stadium in Eugene. (Chris Pietsch/The Register-Guard/USA TODAY Network)

all along the footpath between the main campus and Autzen Stadium, where commencement was held, encouraging students to join in. Around a hundred of the 4,000 students in attendance made their move, standing up and chanting “Free Palestine” as they headed for the exits during remarks by UO President Karl Scholz – who spoke before Isakharov.

“Most people were booing or very annoyed that they were disrupting the commencement, but from my view,” Isakharov said. “It made me feel much better to speak because I the people who disagree with me or might take issue with me speaking are leaving.”

Her speech began, she recalled, on the idea of strength through the unity that only comes from welcoming a diversity of ideas.

“We were the strongest when we came into each other’s spaces and came into other people’s homes and learned about each other and were welcomed,” she said.

“I also thought it was really important to shed light on my values and who I am as a Jewish person. So I spoke about finding fulfillment in things that are not based in society’s standards for us,” Isakharov added. “I ultimate-

ly found the most real fulfillment and happiness in my Jewish community, in my spirituality, and I wished my class to all find the same kind of fulfillment moving out of university rather than what society will tell us to find fulfillment in, like our jobs and when we buy a house or how much we make.”

She concluded by telling on her own family story as the daughter of Soviet Jews who escaped the Communist Bloc to make a new, Jewish life in the United States.

“They came from a place where they were persecuted for generations simply for being Jewish, and now I get to stand and be a commencement speaker as a proud Jew, one generation later,” Isakharov said.

Her remarks had their own moment after commencement – they were shared extensively online, including by Chabad International’s social media accounts, where they received over 100,000 combined views and hundreds of comments, overwhelmingly positive.

“Most of the messages I got pointed out the duality of like people walking out and the negativity and then the positive side of my speech,” Isakharov

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ing performing arts, which a group of 60 students demonstrated for the visiting mission.

“They also shared about what their dreams were for their future,” Kahn said. “They came from a situation where they had no future, but because of what is being funded, they can think about a future.”

JAFI is funded by allocations from Jewish Federations across North America, including Portland’s. While emergency campaigns have become a staple of Jewish community giving, the infrastructure that makes those emergency initiatives so effective, Birnbach explained, is built in advance through ongoing support from Jewish communities. A prime example of that came from the American-Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC).

“They indicated that in just two days [after Russia’s invasion began], they had 18 sites ready to receive Jewish refugees,” Birnbach said of JDC. “That’s because they were already there. That’s because we, as a Jewish community, invested in that infrastructure that allowed them to respond so quickly.”

“[Federations and the agencies they support] do this all the time, we’re set up for those emergency situations,” Kahn continued. “So we have those relationships. We know where to go. We know what to do, and those families, whoever they are, can be taken care of and not have to sit there feeling hopeless and helpless.”

Just as groups like JDC and JAFI are known for laying the groundwork for critical emergency response, Jewish Federations have their own sterling reputation with those and other organizations, as Birnbach recalled learning from JDC.

“Jewish Federations have a great brand recognition and great reputation for spending money appropriately, investing money appropriately with these communities and so people are more likely to give and more likely to use these programs and want to work for them as well,” he said.

After two and a half days in Germany, the group was off to Israel. It was Kahn’s 10th visit to the Jewish state, but the first without her husband and

typical traveling companion. For Birnbach, it was his second trip to Israel, his first coming in 1986.

The visit was striking before they’d even stepped off the plane.

“Just before we got off the plane, our flight attendant said, ‘let me take a point of personal preference, bring our hostages home,’” Birnbach recalled upon landing in Tel Aviv. “The whole plane clapped.”

That flight attendant was not the exception – the focus on getting the hostages back was all-encompassing.

Kahn said that immediately upon stepping into the terminal at Ben Gurion International Airport, “there’s a big picture of the hostages and then all the way through the airport, pictures of hostage after hostage after hostage.”

“It is the constant narrative, whether you’re on the beach, whether you’re walking in the street, no matter where you are, there it is. It is a country enveloped in grief and sadness,” she continued. “Your head space and your heart space change immediately when you get off the plane.”

As if that narrative needed reinforcing, the group headed south to Kibbutz Nir Oz, which was attacked by Hamas on Oct. 7. One in four of its residents was killed, injured or kidnapped. The survivors remain in temporary housing.

“You see where the toys melted, where they set the houses on fire,” Kahn recalled. “There was nothing uplifting or hopeful about it.”

She recounted a story of a friend of one of the kibbutzniks who called him on the day of the attack saying his grandfather’s house at the kibbutz was on fire, and could he help. The friend arrived to find the grandfather, frail and suffering from dementia, and his grandchildren in the house, with Hamas closing in. They put the grandfather in bed and covered him with extra blankets – the elderly man served as a decoy so the children could escape.

“They believed in coexistence, and they were there to be at peace with their neighbors,” Kahn said of the residents of Nir Oz, “and they were then so violently taken and torn apart.”

“One of the people said, ‘I went back

continued on next page



From top: The Platform 17 memorial at Berlin-Gruenwald Station; the burned and melted remnants of a house at Kibbutz Nir Oz attacked by Hamas on Oct. 7; a hostage poster near the beach in Tel Aviv - one of many all over the city and the country. (Wendy Kahn/The Jewish Review)



The temporary memorial to the victims of the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas on the Nova Festival in Southern Israel. Each photo marks the location where its subject was killed - a permanent memorial is being planned. (Wendy Kahn/The Jewish Review)

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to my home, and there were a pair of shoes there that weren't mine, weren't part of my family's, but one pair of my shoes was gone, and what I think happened was somebody came in from Hamas, took off his shoes and put mine on and left," Birnbach recalled. "The depravity of that; it was a free for all."

The group also visited the site of the Nova Music Festival where 364 people were murdered and at least 40 kidnapped on Oct. 7. The festival took place in a broad, open field that was now a makeshift memorial.

"They had a stick in the ground, or a stake of some kind, and then a color photo of the person who perished there," Birnbach said. "There were just dozens of them, if not hundreds. It just went on and on and on in this field."

Israeli Police and security investigators have since concluded that Hamas did not have advance knowledge of the festival and had not initially planned to attack it – it was spotted by terrorists in light aircraft on their way to other targets, who then diverted to the festival site.

Kahn heard a story from the father of one of those murdered at the site, who now returns each day to recount his son's final hours to visitors in the hopes of finding his own healing.

"His son drove out three times. He went back and forth three times," Kahn said, transporting other festival goers with him until he was killed by Hamas on his fourth attempt. "Everything is out in the open. There's no hiding."

Kahn pointedly recalled the group's visit to the Peres Center for Peace in Jaffa where they heard from Irene Shavit, a 22-year-old former resident of Kibbutz Kfar Aza. Her fiancé, Netta Epstein, was killed on Oct. 7 – as the pair hid from Hamas terrorists in their home at the Kibbutz, a hand grenade came through the window into the room they were concealed in – Epstein leapt on to the grenade to protect Shavit.

"She had to jump over him four times, and it was so sad, because he died for her," Kahn said. "She's 22, he's not much older. My kids are in their 20s. They should have their lives ahead of them."

The center also hosted an exhibit by Israeli photojournalist Ziv Koren, including an image of a young couple, each of whom lost a leg on Oct. 7, holding hands in a hydrotherapy pool – an image that also stuck with Kahn.

"It's beautiful that they're healing together, but it's so messed up," she said. "I was surprised by how I felt so akin to them, like they were my children. And that's why we should continue to do this work, and why it felt so meaningful."

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While the group stood witness to the horror of the day, they also took in the inspired responses of the institutions and people of Israel, many of which are supported by the funds that these campaign leaders help raise. One such stop was Soroka Medical Center in Beer-sheba, one of three major trauma hospitals in the country. Word of the attacks started coming in around 6:30 am, a half an hour before shift change. The night shift stayed on to help with the attacks, Birnbach was told. Employees

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who were set to have the day off showed up. It didn't stop there.

"The interesting story for me was the cleaning crew, which is an outsourced service, they're really not employees. They showed up," he said. "Everybody just did something, and as a result, this trauma center, that, normally, can handle 300 people max, they handled over 600 that day, just because the community of employees showed up."

It also helped that the hospital had moved their helipad from the building's roof to the open space in front of the hospital, making landings easier for pilots and enabling a faster flow of patients into the hospital. The hospital is supported by JDC, which is supported by JFNA.

-

While they witnessed the communities that had kept Israel going in the days, weeks and months after Oct. 7 – folks that work with, and benefit from, the organizations and projects that North American Jewish Federations support – Birnbach, Kahn and the other members of the mission were building a community of their own.

"I have never met a better group of people. They were friendly, interested, interesting," Birnbach said. "This was an awesome group of people, and it is because they understand that building relationships with each other and with their communities is the key to our success."

"I sat with different people every day and the conversations were deep," Kahn said.

Those connections weren't just accidents – the people involved made a conscious, concerted effort to connect – with everyone.

"If you were sitting by yourself, somebody would say to you, 'Can I join you?' or 'Will you join me?'" Birnbach remembered, "This has been the pinnacle of my Federation experience."

The relationships formed continued to this day on a WhatsApp group. But it's not just a post-adventure group chat.

"I can reach out to them at any time, visit them in their communities. They're welcome here," Kahn said. "We went deep fast, and it will be forever."

-

During a group conversation about contributing to their local communities, Birnbach shared a conversation with David Heller, JFNA's National Campaign Chair. Heller asked Birnbach how he initially got involved with the Portland Federation.

"I said, 'Well, I was asked'" Birnbach recalled. Birnbach served on JFGP's Finance Committee, becoming its Chair, and also on the Allocations Committee, becoming its Chair. "This is a valuable place to direct my charitable contributions. My giving has gone up 20-fold since I started. It's because somebody asked me, and once I was asked, I was encouraged. Seeing the vast amount of things that we do locally, and now learning firsthand about what we do internationally, this is a great place to invest my time and my resources."

Birnbach had always had a sense of what the resources he, and other donors to Federation's annual campaign, contribute could do – but this was a unique chance to see it up close.

"We heard story after story after story," Kahn said, of the work they were supporting making an enormous difference for individuals, communities, and for the whole country of Israel. "It is transformative and lifesaving. That's not just hyperbole. It is fact."

For more on Kahn and Birnbach's experiences on the FRD Leadership Mission, listen to "Campaign Travelogue with Wendy Kahn and Jack Birnbach" on The Jewish Review Podcast, available on all major podcast platforms. For more on the Federation's Annual Campaign for Community Needs and how you can contribute, visit jewishportland.org/give.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE FIRST
GATHER, NETWORK & COLLABORATE (GNC)

Be a Part of Women's Philanthropy's NEW
Intergenerational Professional's Networking Meetup.
Wednesday, August 21 | 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Women's Philanthropy

Information/Register:
www.jewishportland.org/gncmeetup

MAAYAN (continued from page 4)

ment,” Rabbi Borsuk added.

There’s plenty to celebrate, too – Maayan ranked very high in student achievement for elementary-level subjects.

“Our current second and third graders have made-up for their COVID-related learning loss, and all of our students in Kindergarten and first grades who were performing below benchmark in 2022 in key areas of literacy scored at or above benchmark this fall,” Evans said.

Because Cognia’s network includes all manner of schools, most of which spend all day on these subjects, Maayan’s results in these areas are made even more impressive considering that educational hours are shared with Judaic studies.

Impressive, but perhaps not surprising, as Evans explains that general studies and Judaic studies reinforce one another.

“Even if you’re spending half the day on Judaic studies, you’re really doing high level, complex critical thinking and that scales across the day,” Evans said of how the work of Judaic studies influences proficiency in other subjects.

Beyond just achievement, Rabbi Borsuk explained that Cognia’s analysis credited Maayan with having “cultivated a model of collaborative leadership” and building a “phenomenal student-centered culture where all stakeholders are actively engaged in supporting the mission, purpose and beliefs which have which has successfully created a positive, warm and welcoming community.”

The evidence of that is readily apparent – Evans

sees it every day.

“I’ve heard from many of those kids that they’re so excited to come to school every day,” she said. “I sometimes reflect on how incredible that is. Imagine a student who has experienced real challenges with access and success and learning. Their job at this time of life is school. They spend seven hours a day in the school building, in a place where the work is incredibly challenging, and yet they’re excited to come to school. That’s amazing.”

With the report completed and reviewed by Cognia, the process is far from over – it never really ends. Now comes the time to look at areas for improvement and act on them.

“We need to create smart goals, create a timeline and be able to track progress towards those goals,” Evans said. “At the three-year point, we have a check in with Cognia and they’ll evaluate how we’re doing against our goals.”

And so the cycle continues – a cycle that not only provides value to the school, but to the community it serves.

“It’s an objective evaluation of what we’re doing,” Evans said of the accreditation process. That’s helpful to us because it’s our intention to provide the best product to the families who entrust us with the education of their children. But it’s also helpful for prospective families. If you’re looking for a private education for your child, how are you to know that what you’re paying for is really quality? That’s where accreditation comes in.”

UO (continued from page 8)

said. “I wasn’t bashing anyone. I wasn’t putting anyone down. I was just sharing my story and sharing light.”

She’ll now carry that light into the world, but she remains concerned for the university she’s leaving behind.

“I saw them given to the demands of people who broke university policies over and over; people who were antisemitic and disrespectful to Jewish students and saw no consequences for that kind of behavior,” she said. “Jewish students followed the rules, took the high road and did not really see any reward for that. In fact, I think they suffered

from the fact that they took the high road.”

Isakharov has all the confidence in the world, however, for the UO Jewish community she was a part of.

“I left the university so overwhelmed with hope because I’ve never seen a more unified Jewish community. We had the highest levels of Jewish students attending holidays, attending Shabbat dinners, both at Chabad and Hillel. Jewish students proudly wearing their *magen david*. Jewish students talking about Israel, supporting each other, showing up for each other,” she said. “In that way. All the events awoke something really beautiful.”

JADE (continued from page 5)

Portlanders with Crawford.

JADE is also currently conducting a survey in Portland to identify community needs and interests around Jewish end-of-life education. That survey, which takes five to 10 minutes, can be found at forms.gle/scDZGSMZG3twL-5m7A.

Registration for JADE’s screening of “Living While Dying” is available at lu.ma/6ceb09yo.



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OJCF opens B'nai Tzedek program, OJCYF

Oregon Jewish Community Foundation

The Oregon Jewish Community Foundation is excited to announce open registration for two remarkable youth philanthropy programs. These programs aim to engage young individuals in the spirit of tzedakah and community service, nurturing future leaders in philanthropy.

The B'nai Tzedek Program offers an inspiring opportunity for youth aged 12-18 to participate in philanthropic activities through quarterly gatherings focused on community service. This program is designed for those who hold a charitable fund at OJCF and are eager to make a difference.

With a minimum contribution of \$250, OJCF will match it with an additional \$250 to establish a personal B'nai Tzedek Youth Fund in your child or grandchild's name. Annually, participants will select a local Jewish charity to support, making meaningful contributions from their fund. Over time, the fund can grow through additional contributions, allowing for even greater impact.

Funds to start the tzedakah fund can come from B'nai Mitzvah gifts, babysitting earnings, or birthday and Chanukah presents. This program demonstrates that significant change can be achieved with modest contributions.

The program's Family Kickoff Event is Sunday, Sept. 22 at 1-4 pm at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center in Portland. At the kickoff event, parents, grandparents, and youth

fund holders will participate in the Dignity Grows hygiene kit pack initiative and learn about the work of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland (JFGP). Following this, there will be a meet and greet for B'nai Tzedek families with an introduction to the program.

Future quarterly gatherings for youth fundholders will also be on Sunday afternoons, incorporating community service and Jewish holiday themes. The upcoming dates are December 8 at Cedar Sinai Park, March 9 at OJMCH, and June 8th with a focus on Israel. Mark your calendars and join us in making a positive impact on the Jewish community and beyond.

Additionally, the Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation is an award-winning program for Jewish and Jewish-adjacent teens in grades 9-12. This monthly program offers participants the chance to serve on a youth-led board of directors, engage in fundraising, plan a benefit dinner, put out a request for grant proposals, and take part in site visits and grant-making discussions to support causes they care about. Register now to secure a seat on the 2024-2025 youth board, with limited spots available. Rising freshmen and sophomores are especially encouraged to apply.

For more information about the B'nai Tzedek Youth Funds, the B'nai Tzedek Program, or OJCYF, please visit ojcf.org or contact Susan Berniker at susanb@ojcf.org or 503-248-9328.

KEHILLAH (continued from page 4)

from doing crazy things or antisemitic things, but you can build up the Jewish people to be really confident in who they are."

The course is developed by the iCenter in Chicago, North America's largest foundation for education about Israel, and will meet twice a month from 6:30-8:30 pm on Monday evenings beginning in late October and extending through a closing ceremony on the first day of Shavout in June. Upon successful completion, students will receive three transferrable college credits

through AJU. Class sessions, which will include dinner, will meet at Portland Jewish Academy in SW Portland. The program is supported by PJA, the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, the Eastside Jewish Commons and Congregation Shaarie Torah.

Rabbi Oren was previously Vice President for Non-Degree-Granting Programming at AJU and credits Jewish educational experiences he took on in his 20s as what

truly ignited his love for Judaism and set him on the course he's on now.

"There's a lot of ways to do this, but my spark came through Jewish learning," he said. "It's the stuff that I really love to do. That's why I'm volunteering to do this."

The hope is that others will join him under the PDX Kehillah High umbrella, developing programs tailored to their interests and expertise and the needs of Portland's Jewish high school students to create a broad, diverse range of opportunities for

those students.

"The idea is that kids can go to one central location and find out what's available to them," Rabbi Oren explained, "especially non-synagogue kids."

Tuition for "Introduction to the People, History, and Culture of Israel" is \$1,300, with generous scholarships available through AJU and PDX Kehillah High, supported by OJCF and the Federation. For more information, email Rabbi Oren at pdxkehillahhigh@gmail.com or visit pdxkehillahhigh.org.



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Security Corner

Be ready for High Holidays

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

AUG 14

AUG 8

By **JESSICA ANDERSON**

I know it's hard to imagine that High Holidays are right around the corner - we're still enjoying summer and have yet to crack the lid on August. However, October will be here soon, and it's not too soon to think about organizational planning around High Holiday events and our individual roles within the communities of which we are a part.

To help us prepare, Secure Community Network will be hosting a series of training webinars in August and September. There will be two types of webinars: safety classes and informational presentations on how organizations can better prepare for events. Over the next couple of months, I'll highlight the courses as they become available and provide information on what the classes will cover as well as links to registration.

The idea behind the classes is that events will be smoother, more enjoyable, and less stressful if organizations take time to plan for a wide range of considerations. Planning means knowing ahead of time how you're going to react, what your options are for dealing with something, and knowing ahead of time how to handle different scenarios and conditions. Individuals also play an important role in helping their organizations navigate issues that arise. For the first time, SCN will be conveniently offering two versions of all its safety trainings, in the morning and early evening. For individuals, taking time to be trained in some of SCN's core safety classes



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.

means you play an informal role in safety responses by being prepared. You can step up and be a leader if there's a medical emergency. You can step in and lead people out if there's an evacuation. If you're trained in any of the safety classes SCN offers, you will be a step ahead of everyone else, everywhere you go in life.

Upcoming classes: (all times Pacific)

Tuesday, Aug. 6 at 11am and again at 5:30 pm: The Power of Hello: Practical Skills and Considerations. Used effectively, the right words can be a powerful tool. Synagogue clergy, staff, members, and volunteers can contribute greatly to enhancing security by understanding how to identify behavioral indicators and taking precautionary actions to safely mitigate the impacts of a potential attack. Simply saying "hello" can prompt a casual conversation with a person, providing an opportunity to observe and establish a connection. Initiating a "hello" enables individuals to observe and evaluate suspicious behaviors, empowering them to lower risk and obtain help when necessary.

Wednesday, Aug. 7 at 11am and 5:30pm: When Seconds Count: How to Stop the Bleed® to Save a Life. Severe bleeding can cause shock or death within five or 10 minutes, and the number one cause of preventable death after injury is bleeding. Training the community to know how to act quickly to stop the bleed will undoubtedly save lives in the midst of an incident. Join the Secure Community Network for a webinar to learn lifesaving bleeding control skills using the nationally recognized Stop the Bleed® curriculum, led by Jewish communal security training experts.

Thursday, Aug. 8 at 11am and 5:30 pm: Committing to Action: A Training on Situational Awareness and Countering an Active Threat. An active threat event is unpredictable and evolves quickly. These events are typically over in three to five minutes. Knowing how to disarm danger before it occurs and what to do once it happens can save lives. Please join the Secure Community Network's training on Situational Awareness and Countering an Active Threat, where

See **SECURITY**, page 16

Jobs Board

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland is hiring a
Director of Jewish Life and Learning

Learn more and apply at

jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/jewish-jobs/directorofjewishlifelearning

See the latest Jewish jobs at jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/jewish-jobs

Clergy Corner

Tisha B'Av an opportunity to reflect on the year

By RABBI DANIEL BORSUK

The summer is a season full of joy and relaxation. On the Jewish calendar, however, we find ourselves yearly at the ninth of the month of Av in the midst of summer. For generations, the ninth of Av has been the day when we mourn tragedies both current and historic. Tisha B'Av is a time of reflection, where we focus on the suffering that our Jewish nation has incurred over many centuries, including the destruction of our Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

This past year brings new tragedy, with the largest loss of Jewish life in the past seven decades. Israel has been in our hearts and minds throughout the year. Tisha B'Av is a time where we link our current suffering to a spiritual pattern of history, and we long for a safe return to a secure, holy, and spiritual land of Israel.

It would then seem quite appropriate that we utilize this Tisha B'Av to its fullest. But as much as the suffering of our people is well known, observance of the day of Tisha B'Av is not as widespread as other parts of the Jewish calendar. In terms of popularity, it's hard for a day of mourning to compete with festive celebrations. It is certainly easier to connect and participate in a Passover Seder or Chanukah Menorah lighting than to mourn. And spiritually, we gain from using that joy to connect with God. But what is the purpose of

mourning? How will focusing on our sadness make a difference to the world, or even to ourselves?

Additionally, Tisha B'Av brings up a lurking challenge for our behavior - as just one person, what impact can we possibly have on global and heavenly affairs? Our individual observances surely seem irrelevant in the face of millions of Jews and billions of people!

The Mishna in Sanhedrin famously notes a difference between the creation of people and of the rest of the living creatures. Each type of animal was created as a full species, with thousands of creatures. But when God created man, He only created one man, and then one woman, and from them we all descend. The Mishna explains that *Hashem* wanted us to know that the entire universe is all fitting to have been created just for each one of us. None of us are too small. Every person is capable of creating an everlasting and global impact. We must not underestimate ourselves and sell ourselves short. Both in the eyes of people and God, our actions carry great weight.

We know many examples of individuals whose heroic actions and devotion to others have saved hundreds of lives. In every profession, there are people who have single-handedly made a difference to the world through their ideas, inventions, and persistence.

But we must not dismiss the rest of

us who have not achieved such accomplishments. True change cannot be measured only by what the eye sees. Our inner growth and personal improvement are of the utmost importance and create impacts that only God can measure.

This is the call of Tisha B'Av. Let us use this day to focus on the pain of our brothers and sisters in the land of Israel - the hostages, the wounded, those fighting to defend our land, and those who have lost relatives and friends. This year has seen so much heartbreak and suffering. As individuals, we mourn these losses, and through that we can inspire ourselves towards inner growth and improving the lives of all those around us.

May we merit that instead of a country full of sirens and rockets, we will be able to witness the fulfillment of the beautiful prophecy of Zecharia: "Elders will again sit in peace in the streets of Jerusalem... and the streets of the city will be full of children playing joyfully."

Rabbi Daniel Borsuk is Director of Development and Seventh and Eighth Grade Judaics Teacher at Maayan Torah Day School in Lake Oswego.

The Jewish Review regularly invites local clergy to share their insights with the community. These opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Review, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, or its staff.

rss.com/podcasts/jewishreviewpdx

Events

More upcoming community events online at jewishportland.org/community-calendar

Aug. 2: JFCS Grief Connection

No cost grief group at 10 am on Zoom. For more info or to join, visit jfcspartland.org/grief-connection.

Aug. 2: First Friday Shabbat Dinner

Free Shabbat dinner at 7 pm at Tigard Chabad. Registration online at jewishtigard.com/firstfridays.

Aug. 4: Grief and the Jewish Heart

Pre-Tisha B'Av grief ritual at 10 am at Beit Am in Corvallis. More information at bio.site/griefritual.

Aug. 4: Tefillin for Israel

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

Aug. 4: 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 pifdnews@gmail.com

Aug. 8: EJC Author Talk - Death Trip: A Post-Holocaust Psy-

chedelic Memoir

Authors Seth Lorinczi and Vanessa Veselka discuss Lorinczi's new book at 7 pm at the Eastside Jewish Commons. Free, registration requested at ejcpdx.org/events.

Aug. 9: JFCS Community Connection

Open community discussion group on Zoom at 10 am. For more information, visit jfcspartland.org/services/counseling.

Aug. 11 EJC Blood Drive

Red Cross blood drive from 9 am – 2 pm at the Eastside

Jewish Commons. Sign up at redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive with sponsor code "eastsidejewish."

Aug. 11: Hadassah Evolve Picnic

Family picnic hosted by Hadassah at 10:30 am. \$18. For more information, email dmigdal@hadassah.org

Aug. 12: EJC And Co/Lab Present Legend of Destruction

Screening of Israeli Academy Award-winning film at Eastside Jewish Commons at 7 pm. Free, registration requested at ejcpdx.org/events.

Obituaries

Submit obituaries to The Jewish Review's online form at form.jotform.com/JFGP/jr-obituary

RAYMOND LEBOFF

It is with sorrow that Congregation Kol Ami announces the death of Raymond Leboff, z"l, the father of our member Lori Abeson. Raymond died Sunday, July 14. His funeral was held Thursday, July 18, in Los Angeles.

LARRY HARWIN

Congregation Neveh Shalom is sorry to announce the passing of Larry Harwin, z"l, who died on July 25 at the age of 82 in Michigan. He was predeceased by his wife, Maxine Harwin, z"l and is lovingly remembered by his children, Marc

Harwin, Sam (Naomi) Harwin, and Julie (Aaron) Fidler; his grandchildren, Lillian Harwin, Ruby Harwin, Eytan Fidler, Michah Fidler, Renana Harwin, and Layla Harwin; and his sister, Cheryl Adler. The funeral will be held on Sunday, July 28 in West Bloomfield, Mich.

SECURITY

(continued from page 14)

you will learn lifesaving actions you can take during an active threat incident.

Thursday Aug. 15 at 11am: Securing the Synagogue. Numerous elements contribute

to safe and meaningful High Holidays. The course will review some considerations that organizations should prepare for as they develop their High Holiday events.

Please consider registering for these and other upcoming classes. Registration and

a full schedule of webinars can be found at <https://www.securecommunitynetwork.org/high-holidays>.

Due to the offering of these national webinars, I will not be hosting safety Zoom training during August and September. As always, if

you would like to report or discuss a safety concern, you can reach me at janderson@securecommunitynetwork.org, at 872-273-9214 or report an incident through the security page on the JFGP website: <https://jewishportland.org/security>.



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