

A close-up photograph of a person's hand lighting a candle. The hand is holding a lit matchstick, and the flame is just touching the wick of a white pillar candle. In the background, several other lit candles are visible, creating a warm, glowing atmosphere. The person's arm is visible, wearing a dark blue sleeve.

The JEWISH REVIEW

Established 1959

Oregon and SW Washington's Online Jewish Newspaper

SPECIAL EDITION

ISRAEL UNDER ATTACK

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Federation aims to raise \$1M for Israel

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland has set a goal to raise \$1 million for emergency relief efforts in Israel, and your help can count double.

The Stern Family has committed to a \$500,000 matching challenge grant to support the Portland Jewish Community's fundraising efforts. Every contribution to the Israel Emergency Fund will be matched, dollar for dollar, up to \$500,000.

"We are incredibly appreciative of the Stern Family's generosity to lead our efforts in support of Israel," Federation President and CEO Marc Blattner said. "The needs in Israel are urgent and every dollar counts."

Funds will support trauma relief, financial assistance programs and much-needed supplies for victims of the recent attacks. One hundred percent of contributions will be directed to efforts on the ground in Israel. Nearly \$400,000 has already been raised as of press time.

Contributions can be made online at jewishportland.org/israelemergencyfund or by mail to the Federation (see page 8 for address)



Sen. Ron Wyden addresses the Greater Portland Jewish Community Gathering in Solidarity with Israel Monday, Oct. 9 at Congregation Neveh Shalom. Sen. Jeff Merkley and Reps. Suzanne Bonamici and Earl Blumenauer also spoke at Monday's event. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

'Am Yisrael Chai'

Scores gather in solidarity with Israel Monday

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

"We've gathered tonight," Sen. Jeff Merkley said, "Jews and Gentiles, to say no to terrorism and say yes to solidarity with Israel."

The Senator's words from the *bimah* of Congregation Neveh Shalom's main sanctuary to the standing-room-only crowd assembled within, the hundreds in an overflow room at the

synagogue and the thousands watching online were a brief summation of the multitude of feelings expressed at the Greater Portland Jewish Community Gathering in Solidarity with Israel Monday, Oct. 9.

Co-Sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, Neveh Shalom, and 32 other local Jewish organizations, the event brought over 1,200 people together –

with heightened security – to mourn, comfort one another and proudly declare, as Oregon Board of Rabbis Chair Rabbi Jonathan Seidel led the assembly in singing, "*Am Yisrael Chai*" – the people of Israel live.

"President Truman sent a message 75 years ago to the entire world when he recognized the

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COVER PHOTO: An attendee at the Greater Portland Jewish Community Gathering in Solidarity with Israel lights a memorial candle in the Isaak Foyer at Congregation Neveh Shalom in memory of the victims of the Simchat Torah terror attacks in Israel. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

Israeli community reacts to attacks

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

For Israelis living in Portland, Friday night was supposed to be a joyous occasion. It turned into anything but.

Gitit Dekel Stein was celebrating with friends that evening, when “We started to get in news from Israel on WhatsApp.” Israel was under attack from Hamas. Rockets and gunman were streaming into the southern part of the country. After a half an hour or so, Stein said, she and her friends turned on the television.

“Then we understood that something big happened but we couldn’t really know,” she recalled.

Stein called her family, who live in a small town 25 miles from the Gaza border. They were huddled in the saferoom in their home.

Eric Kornblit, an Israel Defense Forces veteran now living in Portland, was the recipient of a phone call Friday night. A friend in Ashkelon, where Kornblit owns an apartment, called to tell him what was going on well before news outlets in the United States were reporting anything.

“I said, ‘What are you talking about?’” Kornblit recalled. “He said, ‘You don’t understand; thousands of them broke through, they’re all over the south.’” They, too, were huddled in the saferoom of their home.

Shulamit Urenia, owner of Kashrootz Catering, was in



Above: Eyal Chernichovsky and Elias Stahl light memorial candles for the victims of the Simchat Torah attacks in Israel at Monday's solidarity event at Congregation Neveh Shalom. Below: A row of Israeli flags adorn the wall of the Neveh Shalom main sanctuary Monday night. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

Seattle visiting family for Simchat Torah. Her daughter, IDF Sgt. Melina Suarez, was with her, on leave from her unit to visit family for Sukkot. They both had their phones turned off for Shabbat, but because Suarez lives in Israel and didn't observe a second day of holiday on Sunday, she turned her phone back on Saturday night and discovered the news.

“I caught a glimpse of all the messages I was getting, and all these notifications from my news app, as well,” Suarez said. “I didn’t even know how to react at first, I just sent messages to all my friends.”

Her unit had been selected to take Shabbat off, but everyone was returning to base due to the emergency. She learned that her assistant company commander was dead and two friends from basic training were wounded.

“It’s really hard, you know? Because when you’re in the army, you know, that’s always a possibility,” she said.

Kornblit ended up breaking the news to some of those who had assembled for Simchat Torah services at Congregation Kesser Israel on Saturday morning.

“They had no idea,” he said. “I felt it was my duty to let them know.”

Kornblit is a past president of the synagogue and had been

looking forward to celebrating and dancing with the Torah. Instead, he was reciting from *Tehillim*, the Hebrew name for the Book of Psalms.

“I was very positive and praying, I’m *davening*,” he said, using the Yiddish word for prayer. “But at the same time, there was no joy to the celebrating Simchat Torah under such circumstances.”

Stein received more news from Israel as the weekend wore on – very little of it good.

“I haven’t slept, I’m so tired,” she said. “I heard that one of the friends of our community here, her eldest brother was killed, and we have another friend from the community, her brother and his son were kidnapped.”

Stein’s husband works at Intel and she works as a community engagement manager for the Israeli American Council, making her closely connected to the

See **ISRAEL**, page 7





Clockwise from top left: Security personnel inspect a handbag at the entrance to Congregation Neveh Shalom at Monday's Greater Portland Jewish Community Gathering in Solidarity with Israel; A standing-room-only crowd takes in the event; attendees line up at the security checkpoint to enter the gathering; event-goers embrace one another. Opposite top and bottom: Attendees of Monday's solidarity event light memorial candles for the victims of Saturday's attacks in the Isaak Foyer at Neveh Shalom. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

SOLIDARITY (continued from page 2)

State of Israel only 11 minutes into its existence," Sen. Ron Wyden recalled. "For my colleagues 3,000 miles from here in Washington, D.C. but more especially for the Israelis fighting for their lives tonight, 7,000 miles from here, let us commit loudly to an unshakable commitment our country made during Israel's first hours of life. The United States will always stand with Israel."

The gathering was a community response to the Hamas attacks on Israel on Saturday, including a barrage of rockets and the infiltration of thousands of terrorist gunman into cities, villages and kibbutzim throughout southern Israel on a Shabbat that also marked the observance of Simchat Torah and was just a day after the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

The death toll is still being tabulated as of press time, but several news outlets have confirmed that over 150 hostages were kidnapped by Hamas and are now being held in Gaza. Reports of sexual assaults and the intentional killing and mutilation of children by Hamas terrorists have also been confirmed.

"I stood in this very space as we completed the yearly reading of our sacred Torah," Neveh Shalom Associate Rabbi Eve Posen explained. "The holiday of Simchat Torah is usually one of joyous celebration as we dance together and hug our Torah scrolls. Instead, we found ourselves hugging the Torah but more one another, tight, hoping for comfort, longing for answers and praying that our physical stronghold of the Torah's values would somehow become a balm for our broken hearts."

"Who knew at the conclusion of our holiday of joy, I'd be

reading to you from the Book of Lamentations?" Congregation Kesser Israel Rabbi Sholom Skolnik said.

As he read out the words attributed to the prophet Jeramiah, "my eyes drip with tears," so, too, did the Rabbi's.

"Since Shabbat morning," Rabbi Skolnik continued, "I've been struggling to put together words. Ultimately, words have eluded me, eloquence has failed me. I have nothing to share with you, other than a broken heart."

- Elias Stahl, an Israeli living in the Portland area, filled in some of the details of Saturday.

"In an instant, the worst nightmares of our country stabbed into our lives," he said. "They were not the soldiers of Syria or Egypt. They were bloodhounds of Hamas. Drilled not to take land, but to take lives to exterminate us. For the first time since the Nazis, the first time in many of our lives, we are

seeing a war of extermination against Jews."

Stahl described the family of a friend of his, living in Southern Israel, who barricaded themselves in their safe room as Hamas roamed the streets. As one of their sons held the door closed, a gunman forced his way in, shot the son holding the door, and forced the rest of the family out onto the street, where they were placed on motorcycles to be taken to Gaza. The mother, holding her infant daughter, jumped off the back of the moving bike and ran miles through the desert to safety, while the whereabouts of the seven-year-old son on the other bike, and her husband, are unknown.

"We wake up to entire families taken, children clinging to their mother's bodies in their kitchens," Stahl continued. "Not one person in Israel feels

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HOW YOU CAN HELP

Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Chair Mindy Zeitzer told the assembled crowd at Congregation Neveh Shalom Monday night that there were three direct steps each person could take to support Israel through its current crisis, which she spelled out in the acronym A.P.F.; Advocate, Go Public, and Give Financially.

"In times of quiet, Israelis are encouraged by the Western world to make peace with a genocidal neighbor, whose charter calls for Jews to be pushed to their deaths into the sea. In times of war, Israel is condemned when it defends itself and destroys weapons storage facilities that contains thousands of rockets and explosives that are earmarked for Israel's destruction," Zeitzer explained. "Each of us can be an advocate, an ambassador, especially for Israel and its just cause in these difficult times."

She also encouraged attendees to be as public as possible about their support of Israel; online, in person, and through local media.

Financial gifts to support the Israeli people can be directed to a number of sources, including the Federation's emergency campaign, is benefiting from a half-million dollar matching challenge grant from the Stern Family. (See "Federation aims to raise \$1M for Israel relief work," page 2)

"The people of Israel need our help now," Zeitzer said.

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safe today."

Multiple speakers made a point to clearly label the acts of Hamas as beyond any notion of legitimacy.

Unlike the Yom Kippur War, where there were many, many deaths, there were no civilian deaths then. This is unprecedented. Civilians, including women, children, a grandmother, captured," Rep. Suzanne Bonamici said. "This is terrorism, and these are war crimes."

"We've all seen the unimaginable accounts of Hamas terrorists acting on the orders of their genocidal leadership, targeting civilian women and children for kidnapping, rape, and murder," Sen. Wyden said. "Sadly, non-combatants die in war. But only the most monstrous criminals of history make it their goal to brutalize. Now, tragically, we are facing those criminals yet again."

There was sadness, grief, and anger on display. There were prayers for the victims, for the people of Israel, for the hostages, and for the Israeli Defense Forces, along with a moment of silence. But there was also a sense of unity, and even room for a little levity.

"We saw the slide a little while ago of all of the different



organizations that are here," Congregation Beth Israel Rabbi Michael Cahana noted. "Unprecedented, amazing that Jews can agree about anything."

"But today," he continued, "we agree all of those institutions, all of those synagogues, all of those organizations, that alphabet soup of Jewish life here in Portland, Oregon, we stand with Israel."

"This is no time for us to equivocate, we must be together, we must stand together, we must protest together, because our voice is strong," Pastor J.W. Matt Hennessee of Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church in Portland said. Pastor Hennessee is a leader in interfaith work in Portland and expressed solidarity on behalf of Portland's Black community.

"Let me also tell you that, as hard as this is and as difficult as it is to even walk in this room tonight, to be a part of this program tonight, I'm just grateful that we're here, and I'm grateful you're here and I'm grateful those are watching are here because this is our time."

The unity of purpose on display was not lost on Rep. Earl Blumenauer.

"I only wish that the spirit that I sense here tonight would be a little more in evidence in the House of Representatives," he said.

The evening concluded with a rendition of *HaTikvah*, the Israeli national anthem lead by Neveh Shalom Cantor Eyal Bitton.

"Tikvah means hope," he said. "We need hope now more than ever. We need your voice."

In their own words: Stories from Israel

The Jewish Review *invited members of the community with conenction to, or living in, Israel, to share their stories from the recent attacks on Israel. Opinions expressed in these submissions do not necessarily reflect those of the Jewish Review or the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, its governing board or the staffs of either the newspaper or the Federation. These submissions have been edited for clarity. Some of the accounts are graphic in nature.*

If you wish to share your own story, please email editor@jewishportland.org with the subject line "Am Yisrael Chai." Please limit submissions to approximately 400 words.

-
My niece, Debbie Mathias, and her husband, Shlomi, threw themselves on their 16-year-old son, Rotem, shielding him from their murderers. They were shot at point-blank range. Rotem was seriously wounded in his abdomen by a bullet that had passed through his mother slowing down its velocity and likely saving his life and was left to bleed out alone in their kibbutz apartment, which the murderers had set on fire as the attack continued, for nearly twelve hours. He tried to call my niece, his aunt who is a therapist specializing in PTSD for victims of terrorism in Southern Israel. She and her three daughters – all social workers – chatted with him on WhatsApp along with a physician, keeping him alive and focused. He kept saying he was going to die. He went blind, he couldn't stay conscious, he had lost his sense of smell. The trauma physician had him describe the wound and told him how to stop the bleeding.

Finally, after almost twelve hours, IDF soldiers directed to the place by his aunt were able to get through the battle and evacuate him to a hospital in Beersheba where he underwent two surgeries. His face was black with soot; he was unrecognizable. He reached my

sister (his grandmother) and my brother-in-law, Professor Ilan Troen, an internationally acclaimed expert on the Middle East conflict, from the hospital. They rushed through rocket fire to be at his side.

A nephew was called up to *milluim* (reserve duty) from London; he had a 104-degree fever when he landed and was rushed to forensic headquarters to provide DNA to help identify the remains of his sister. As of this writing, her remains have yet to be identified and no funeral can be planned. My niece's two daughters were in their kibbutz apartment when they heard explosions and gunfire. They locked themselves in their safes and turned off their phones to avoid detection. They cowered in fear for 24 hours while family members frantically called them, fearing they had been abducted or murdered. They are now with their grandparents, my sister and brother-in-law, with the rest of the five siblings and many grandchildren, in Omer in Southern Israel – still in the line of fire. Just today there were alerts in their village.

Dark days.

-Michael Rosenberg

The following was sent to my daughters in Portland yesterday morning (in Israel) after the holiday in the US ended:

Dear Daughters,

At the moment, physically, we are all fine. But our hearts are broken at the tremendous loss for our families and friends and our people living in the area of Gaza.

Here on our *Yishuv* (settlement), there are almost no families that do not have husbands, children or grandchildren who are in the army, who will be participating in the Israeli response in the south, and if necessary, in the north.

During the *davening* (praying) on *Shemini Atzeret*, we saw a stream of young men get up from their seats and leave. They brought their phones to shul, knowing that they might

get called up. Most did.

Our closest friends have multiple sons who are in combat units in the south. My grandson is in a fighting unit in the south. Our granddaughter is in a fighting unit in the south. G-d speed them, and G-d protect them. G-d please protect all of our soldiers and our people.

Since yesterday, the jets have been consistently circling, guarding our skies. We really don't know if, and when, Nasrallah in the north or Tehran in the east might launch their next wave.

It is hard to say what will happen in the next days and weeks, but it is my fervent hope that we will have the courage to do all that is necessary to destroy this threat entirely. Our response must not be one of punishment, or vengeance, but rather prevention of this happening again. That will only happen through the destruction of the Hamas organization, its allies, and its followers, and a strong response to Iran. Meanwhile, we fully expect that Iran's northern puppet Hezbollah is likely to join in with their hundred thousand rockets aimed at our heartland.

The next days and weeks will be painful, but our prayers and our fighting forces will see us through to the end. And may Hashem protect us all.

-Steven Bloom

I was born in Israel in 1945 and grew up in a kibbutz in the Galilee named Beit Alpha. I have many family members in Israel who are suffering through this terrible period. My legal career in energy took me to Israel many times, and I had great joy in watching Israel become an economic superpower.

The events we are all experiencing right now, the existential fears, sadness and worry, are familiar to me from infancy. My earliest memory, as a three-year-old, is in 1948; my father running with me into a bomb shelter as the mortars shot by Palestinians and the Iraqi army rained down on our kibbutz

from the top of Mount Gilboa. After we moved to America, I watched and dreaded every war and plane hijacking, every bus bombing, every boycott.

This threat to our existence has gone on for almost a century. I have lived long enough to see Israel go from being the darling of the left to the enemy of the left. I have seen Israel offer practically every concession for peace, to an Israel that no longer seems to want peace, to an Israel that is practically in a civil war with itself.

It is not easy to be Jewish in this world, but it is a joy to be Jewish in Portland. This community, its incredibly effective institutions like BB Camp and PJA that our grandchildren enjoy and the youthful can-do spirit it has shown from the moment we arrived truly keeps me going on tough days like these. It is wonderful to be Jewish in Portland.

My advice for the Jews of Portland is to remember, in the midst of all this fear and horror, that Israel, the miracle of our times, will survive and our broken hearts will be restored when the Portland community again visits Israel. We have been here for three thousand years, and we are not going anywhere.

- Shua Bar-Lev

In 1998, after living in Israel for two years, my husband and I were so excited to formally make *Aliyah*! Having no family in Israel, our neighbors, new friends and community quickly became "like family."

We ate together, celebrated together, prayed together, mourned together.

We returned to the U.S. in 2013 assured that we now have family in Israel. Our bonds are deep and strong.

Miraculously, during those 15 years and until now, no one of our immediate circle experienced untimely death or serious injury from a terrorist attack. Still, I knew that I am Israe-

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li and any loss is my loss! Any loss is someone's child, someone's parent, someone's sibling, someone's friend. And we mourned together.

But this! The horror! The shock! The atrocity! This turns my blood cold. And I can't get warm.

To discover friends and their three adorable babies had been brutally murdered by watching video footage a terrorist had recorded on their phones and sent to their contacts! To learn two children's parents were butchered in front of them and the precious children were missing?! Unable to even conceive of the horrors they might be experiencing at the hands of such monsters, unwilling to even go there. Thank God they were found safe three days later, but the roller coaster of emotion!

How to tell my autistic grandson that three (and counting) of his childhood playmates are dead...

The agony of still not knowing. My heart is fragmented. Ripped into so many pieces. My thoughts hurt.

Reading Torah helps. Hugs soothe. Somehow the old folk songs and dances are a balm. But there are no words.

I'm so torn. I want to wipe out Gaza so Hamas can't thrive there anymore! But how can I wish this pain, or worse, cause this pain on someone else's parent? Someone else's sibling? Someone else's child? Someone else's friend?

-Nehama Bennett Teasdale

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Oregon Hillel Holds Vigil

Approximately 100 students and community members attend a candlelight vigil at the University of Oregon Monday night in honor and memory of the lives lost in the war in Israel and for the safe return of those held hostage. The event was organized by a group of University of Oregon students, with the support of Oregon Hillel and Chabad of University of Oregon. (Romie Avivi Stuhl for The Jewish Review)

ISRAEL (continued from page 3)

area's tight-knit Israeli community. She doesn't know when she'll be able to return to the country.

Suarez can't get back to Israel fast enough – her combat search and rescue unit needs her, but she is having trouble getting a flight out of the United States.

"These past couple of days have just been really difficult for me, knowing what my friends are going through and being here, so far away, feeling helpless," she said.

Urenia knows an IDF soldier who had attended Jewish summer camp here in Oregon who was killed during the initial incursion. Her daughter has been in the army for two-and-a-half years, but when she returns this time, it will be different.

"No mom wants their child to go to war," she said.

On the other hand, Urenia explains, "I really admire and respect her character and her love for Israel and for the people. She made this commitment to protect Israel."

Kornblit will not be returning to the front lines.

"I really want to go," he said. "My mind is saying, I want to go, I want to fight because I hate to feel helpless."

After being caught in terrorist attack while visiting Israel when he was 20 years old, Kornblit was motivated to make *aliyah*, moving to Israel and joining the IDF. He joined an elite infantry unit and was deployed to the northern border and to the West Bank on numerous occasions. He is looking for opportunities to go and volunteer.

"I do have to make my way to Israel somehow and do something. I don't know what that is," he said, "but I feel like I have to go and support."

While his fighting days are over, he may find himself in Urenia's shoes before too long.

"I have a 19 year old son, who was born in Israel, and he is really also struggling with this. He says, 'I want to go over there. I want to go to the army,'" Kornblit said. "There's a part of me that thinks it might be good for him to go to the army. But there's a part of me that's like, I don't want to put my child in harm's way."

As a parting note, Kornblit emphasized the importance of optimism as the situation continues to unfold.

"Israel has a capable, potent military force, it has the training, it will win," he said. "But it's like a football game. If you don't believe you're going to win, you may not, so you have to believe and you have to have faith in what you do."

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Editor

Rockne Roll
editor@jewishportland.org

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How to Talk to Your Kids About Scary Situations

Adapted from PJLibrary.org

Sometimes scary things happen in our community—tragedies, threats, natural disasters, or acts of antisemitism. And while we do our best to shield our children from the scarier parts of life — what do we do as parents, educators and community members when these things hit close to home? How do we talk to our children and support each other through these events? As parents and educators who work with children, we can continue to reassure our kids—and each other—that we will be there to protect them and do what we can to keep them safe.

The Jewish Education Project hosted a webinar featuring Dr. Samantha Vinokor-Meinrath and noted expert Dr. Sivan Zakai, for parents, educators, and colleagues to address concerns and questions that young children may have about the ongoing violence targeting civilians in Israel. The full webinar is available to watch on the [Jewish Education Project Facebook page](#). Key takeaways include:

Do not be afraid to discuss the situation with your children (children will learn about this moment -- whether directly from you or from others) – it's far better for you to frame and set the tone for your children to process this. You do not need to have all the answers. You do need to listen to what those questions are and reply to your child the way that only you know how. Dr. Zakai also has beautiful scripts for parents and grown-ups to use on kveller.com.

Reassure your children that they/we are safe. If appropriate explain safety protocols and policies in place at their school, your synagogue, JCC etc. that are put in place to keep them safe.

Limit access to social media and violent

videos.

Embrace moments of Jewish joy with your children.

Look ahead to Jewish holidays, open and read PJ Library books together, celebrate milestones like a b'nai mitzvah.

Talking to Your Kids (General)

The Child Mind Institute recommends parents do the following after a frightening incident like a tragedy or an evacuation:

- Break the news.
- Take the cues from your child.
- Model calm.
- Be reassuring.
- Help children express their feelings.
- Be developmentally appropriate.

Young children need brief simple information that should be balanced with reassurance. Upper elementary and early middle school children can handle the information parents have about the school's safety plan. Upper middle school and high school students may have strong and varying opinions about causes of violence in school and society. Parents should stress the role that students have in maintaining safe schools.

The following posts include comics and talking points to help assuage fears children may have about the coronavirus or quarantine:

[Helping Children Cope via the American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
[How to Explain Scary News to Kids via Scholastic](#)
[Helping Children with Tragic Events in the News via PBS Kids for Parents](#)

JFCS hosts Community Connection on Israel

Jewish Family and Child Service will hold a special edition of their Community Connection support group on Zoom Friday, Oct. 13 from 10-11 am to provide support surrounding the situation in Israel. To login, visit tinyurl.com/jfcs-connection. More resources available at jfcs-portland.org.

Events

jewishportland.org/community-calendar

<https://rss.com/podcasts/jewishreviewpdx/>