



UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS STUDENT  
BOARD MEMBERS NIKI SCHEINBERG,  
LEAH GREENBERG, ELI APEL,  
NOAH CHENSASKY, NATHAN LIGHT,  
GILA KARASIK



JAMIE BAROFF, NOAH CHENSASKY, AND  
LEAH GREENBERG TABLE IN THE UC

## Student Highlight: Noah Chensasky

As soon as Sophie sent the email asking me to join the University of Memphis Hillel Executive Board, I was there to help with anything. Today, I see myself as a key part of today's Hillel and its success. It's an honor to help shape our Hillel into a community that meets the needs of Jewish college students in Memphis.

What we need is not simply a place to go. I love going to the Hillel house, but right now I need something more than a spot for the occasional study break. Students need organized events that give us a reason to gather. We need opportunities to engage each other with different Jewish ideals or topics. My Hillel is more than a building, it's our

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STUDENTS FROM UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS  
AND RHODES COME TOGETHER FOR  
HAMENTASCHEN BAKING WITH COMMUNITY  
SHLICH A MEITAV MENACHEM

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building, where we all hang out and talk, and build that sense of community that I was looking for as a Jewish student at Memphis. I'm at every event, every Bagel Brunch and Shabbat Dinner, every session of the Jewish Learning Fellowship.

There is something I've always appreciated in Judaism, and it's something that Sophie builds into our culture. Our Hillel is about having an open mind, and always asking questions and not just accepting something at face value. When we're together, Sophie leads by provoking a topic, and then we talk about it together, with her as an advisor. It's inclusive, welcoming, and it's working.

The next step is growing the community, which is already happening.

Recently, we took Hillel to the University Center on campus, where people approached our table. We had the opportunity to tell curious students what we're about and how we're building the momentum of what we want Hillel to be. People are taking the new Hillel hamsa stickers, putting them on their laptops, and the more this happens the better. Gen Z knows social media, and we're helping Sophie with that, taking pictures, putting them on our stories.

Students have been reaching out to us saying "I'm not from Memphis, and I'm Jewish, and I didn't know there was a Hillel, but I saw a sticker or noticed the Instagram page, and Facebook." Our friends and others see it and want to be a part of that.

Of course they do. It's a great time to be a part of Hillel. Sophie is at the head of it, and I'm an active student leader right behind her. 🌟

#### HILLEL STUDENT BOARD

Eli Apel	Nathan Light
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JEWISH LEARNING FELLOWS BREAK  
BREAD TOGETHER BEFORE CLASS

## Inaugural Jewish Learning Fellowship Inspiring Students

Each week, a select cohort of students meets on campus to discuss big questions about Jewish identity, community, and continuity.

Hillels around the country use the same core curriculum about navigating college through a Jewish lens to spark meaningful conversation between Jewish students on campus, deepening their connection to one another and to Jewish peoplehood.

For some, the Jewish Learning Fellowship seminar is the first time they have engaged in text study since their Bar or Bat Mitzvah; for others, the seminar is their one break during the week when they get to learn for the sake of learning without having assignments or tests hanging over their heads.

The sacred time of the Jewish Learning Fellowship extends beyond the class itself now too — students often opt to arrive early and enjoy dinner together or linger afterward and play board games with their new friends. 🌟



## ASK THE RABBI BRUNCH AND LEARN

A recently piloted Ask the Rabbi Brunch and Learn featured former Hillel Director Rabbi Jeremy Simons. During the weekly bagel brunch, he shared his Jewish journey and discussed the role his home synagogue, Temple Israel, plays in the larger Memphis Jewish community. Students had a safe, open space in which to ask Rabbi Jeremy the burning Jewish questions on their minds. This gave students a sense of the offerings available to them in the larger Memphis Jewish community. Based on its success, we hope to scale Ask the Rabbi Brunch and Learn next school year, so each month we host a different rabbi from the Memphis Jewish community.

# Shabbat Shul Hop Builds Community

This semester, Hillels of Memphis launched the Shabbat Shul Hop, a new community partnership initiative where local Memphis synagogues host Hillel students for Friday night Shabbat services and a home-hospitality hosted meal by a member of that congregation. We piloted this program in partnership with Baron Hirsch Congregation. They set it all in motion when they approached Hillel about bringing together our local Memphis college students with their visiting Memphis Jewish Federation-funded Yeshiva University Fellows. For some Hillel students, this was their first time experiencing Shabbat in an Orthodox setting, and they left feeling inspired to reconnect to their own Jewish roots.

David Fleischhacker, executive director of Baron Hirsch, noted that “our Yeshiva University Fellows have had such a positive impact throughout the community — from children in our day schools to adults in our senior facilities. The one group that seemed the most obvious was the one we had not yet touched — college students. So we were excited to plan this event together, and are thrilled that students from University of Memphis and Rhodes College enjoyed spend-

ing Shabbat together. Our Fellows look forward to getting together with Hillel again.”

“I was thrilled when Baron Hirsch reached out about bringing our respective students together, and thought it would be an incredible opportunity for students from both campuses to get to know what life is like for students at Yeshiva University in New York” says Hillel Director Sophie Bloch.

“This partnership was also an incredible opportunity for the students who observe Shabbat to host their friends and peers at one of their home synagogues. Instead of bringing Shabbat to Hillel, we brought Hillel to Shabbat. I am so grateful to Baron Hirsch for inspiring this sort of partnership as well as to the Somer family for hosting our Shabbat meal — the students are still raving about the brisket!”

We will be replicating this program with other synagogues based on the incredible success we had at the inaugural Shabbat Shul Hop with Baron Hirsch. We to hope to partner with each of the Memphis congregations in this capacity at least once a school year.



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