

# The Jewish Journal

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Jewish Federation  
of Ocean County  
*Celebrating 49 Years!*

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Jewish Federation 732-363-0530 [www.ocjf.org](http://www.ocjf.org)

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See pages 16-17 for how.

Local News - see pages 4, 5 and 6

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## What Happened to the Holocaust?



By Keith Krivitzky, Managing Director  
Jewish Federation of Ocean County

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With the rise in antisemitism plaguing our community... and the perversion of genocide claims applied to Israel's approach in Gaza, this begs a few questions.

Has our approach to Holocaust education been misguided or missed the mark? Or are there just lots of Jew-haters out there – and no amount of education or engagement will work with them?

The answer may be both.

As you have seen me comment in previous updates, there are a lot of haters out there. More than we thought. And the more “acceptable” such sentiment beco-

**It is not enough for us to defend ourselves – we need to stand up for others who are targeted or persecuted.**

mes, the less it is called out and castigated, the more antisemitism we see and hear.

This isn't only true of antisemitism, and there are (sadly) many other forms of hate at play, but it seems that there is a particular affinity for blaming the Jews. There are many reasons for this, which we will save for another time. Let's just call this a truism we all wish weren't true.

So...the question is: has all of this Holocaust education we have invested in made a difference?

I believe the answer is yes – but as with many things, there are often unintended consequences and counter reactions, which we need to learn from. Our situation is complicated because we now live in a day and age where authority and expertise are often discounted or denigrated. (While that may be in part because of overreach on the part of those ostensibly possessing these characteristics, that is also a discussion for another time...).

One reality is that many in our society today don't wish to be constrained by mores and judgments imposed on them by others. Another is that shock and click-bait generate ratings and impressions and make careers for people who entertain unfiltered and uninhibited opinions, regardless of veracity or propriety. Hello Tucker Carlson and others....

However, there is another factor that I think is at play here. While the Jewish community has viewed Holocaust education as relevant beyond our community and embodying universal values, I am not sure that this is how the message has been perceived/received. Especially at a time of “me too-ism” when every particular identity or interest group wants their recognition and rights and entitled standing. The Holocaust in this context isn't unique or even paradigmatic; this is one barbarism and injustice among many, such as slavery and colonialism, et al.

I think that for some, the message of the Holocaust is about Jewish victimhood. BTW - I think that is true for some in our own community as well. And, except for that subset of a subset, why should Jewish victimhood be unique or more important than anyone else's?

I think that helps explain why Holo-

caust education has missed the mark somewhat. And that also provides a rationale as to why the term genocide has been misappropriated and rebounded against the originators of the term – why should Jews have a privileged position in the pantheon of hate or evil; the Jews are just as profane as any other group, perhaps more so.

Of course, this is itself a manifestation of antisemitism. The question is what can be done about it?

The Jewish Federation of Ocean County's approach is one good way, recognizing local Heroes Against Hate and working with the County to engage and educate students to become upstanders. It is not enough for us to defend ourselves – we need to stand up for others who are targeted or persecuted.

That is also an effective way to think about Holocaust education – focusing on those who resisted and fought back and not just the perpetrators. This is one of the things that our partners at Chhange do very well. We, as a Jewish community, need to invest more in these efforts.

We have a lot more work to do. Thanks for being partners and helping make a difference.

## Jewish Community Calendar – January 2026

Compiled by the Jewish Federation of Ocean County based on submissions from the event hosts – Events can be submitted at [www.jewishoceancounty.org/calendar](http://www.jewishoceancounty.org/calendar). Most of the Jewish Virtual University webinars are emergent with only a few days' notice and are updated on the page [www.jewishoceancounty.org/jvu](http://www.jewishoceancounty.org/jvu) and our facebook page [facebook.com/jewishocean](https://facebook.com/jewishocean).

### Thursday, January 1 – New Year's Day

**Thursday, January 1, 12:15 PM** (and every Thursday) – **Torah with the Times: Timeless Torah, Timely Wisdom**; study and discussion of the weekly Torah portion with Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein, see [www.jewishoceancounty.org/jvu](http://www.jewishoceancounty.org/jvu) for details

**Thursday, January 1, 1:15 PM** (and every Thursday) – **Queering the Parsha: A Weekly Study Group toward an LGBTQ+ Perspective on the Weekly Torah Portion**, with

Rabbi Nikki DeBlosi, Ph.D., a Laasok program cosponsored by Keshet and A Wider Bridge, see [www.jewishoceancounty.org/jvu](http://www.jewishoceancounty.org/jvu) for details

**Tuesday, January 6, 1:00 PM** (and every Tuesday) – **Grief After Loss Group** led by Rita Sason, Jewish Family and Children's Service, virtual online, 732-363-8010

**Thursday, January 8, 7:30 PM** (and the first Thursday of every month) – **Caregivers Group** led by Rita Sason, Jewish Family and Children's Service, virtual online, 732-363-8010

### Monday, January 19 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

For information, contact the event host or see related publicity in this issue of The Jewish Journal.

# Happy 2026 New Year to everyone!

# HELP WANTED

*Community Volunteer Opportunities — You can make an **IMPACT!***

## ENGAGE ADULT COMMUNITIES

The goal here is to find ways to engage the Jewish populations in adult communities/Shalom Clubs with the Jewish Federation and to connect them to other Jewish activities/opportunities.

- Identify contacts and key “network nodes” in these communities to serve as influencers, networkers, and communicators
- Manage and follow through on ongoing communications and sharing opportunities with these networks
- Help identify/explore/shape opportunities that can be offered/delivered to these communities to help strengthen ties with the Federation/Jewish community
  - Films
  - Topics
  - Speakers
  - Sponsorships of programs

## PLAN EVENTS

We organize approximately 3 in-person events a year, to enable our community to come together, connect, and celebrate (hopefully) with each other.

- We are looking for people to help spearhead the framing and organizing of these events
- While this can include logistics and actual set-up, prep...this ideally includes positioning, promotion, and framing of these events
- This also can include volunteering on-site and engaging with guests/others at these events...ideally to help build affinity and connection to the Federation and Jewish community

## HELP PROMOTE FEDERATION ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

We can always do a better job promoting our activities and impact, through media, email/other engagement, and delivery of promotional materials.

- Identification of new places to deliver materials
- Ongoing updates/communications to local papers and adult community newsletters
- Ongoing updates/communications/promotions through local synagogues/Chabads

## HEROES AGAINST HATE

The opportunity for this program goes beyond just event promotion and set-up. This can be a platform for expanding reach in the broader community and engaging other groups/individuals in the mechanism of countering hate, spearheaded by the Federation.

- Sticking with the framework for Heroes awards discussed thus far... help identify other groups, organizations, places to look for and nominate Heroes
- Explore ways to expand awareness of the awards and the event
- Expand recruitment of participants and sponsors for the event/program

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Some of the ways you can  
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### Patient Support

Help make patients feel more comfortable by spending time with them. Provide transport and discharge services.

### Nursing Support

Help nursing unit with stocking shelves, filling water pitchers, etc.

### Meal Program

Complete the meal satisfaction survey with patients.

## PJ PARENT AMBASSADOR

We now have over 1800 kids participating in our PJ Library program. We're looking for some parents who can commit to:

- Identify the needs of families, and develop engagement opportunities that meet their needs
- Develop, plan and organize intimate small-scale engagement opportunities at family friendly destinations or home-based gatherings
- Encourage parents to be involved in planning and organizing programs and gatherings

**LEARN  
MORE**

For more information unless otherwise noted, contact Sharron Greenberg at 732-363-0530 or [sharron@ocjf.org](mailto:sharron@ocjf.org).

## Local News

### Jewish War Veterans of the USA Update

"A Jewish Voice for Veterans, A Veterans Voice for Jews since 1896"

By Al Adler

November is a special month for Veterans with all the preparations for the various Veterans Day Celebrations. On Memorial Day we honor those veterans who gave their lives for their country. On Veterans Day we celebrate and honor all veterans who served our nation so well.

What is a Veteran? "A Veteran is someone who at one point in his or her life wrote a blank check payable to the United States of America for an amount up to and including my life."

November has been a very busy month for the Jewish War Veterans. On Sunday, November 9, members of JWV Post 126 from Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and Jewish War Veterans Ladies Auxiliary National President Carol Adler participated in the Philadelphia Veterans Day parade. The entire parade was broadcasted on National TV. National President Adler and Post 126 Commander Stu Wallet

held the JWV Banner despite the persistent rain that afternoon.

On Veterans Day the Jewish War Veterans participated in several Veterans Day Programs. Post 178 Ladies Auxiliary members Susan Karsh, Nancy Weinberger and Department of NJ Ladies Auxiliary Co-President Sandra Fritts, David Fritts and NJ State Commander Michael Steinhorn placed a wreath at the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Museum in Holmdel.

Past JWV State Commander Bob Jacobs attended the Veterans Day program at Manchester Township. Post 178 Commander Dorit Attias participated in the Toms River Veterans Day parade.

Jewish War Veterans Ladies Auxiliary National President Carol Adler and Past State Commander Al Adler were invited to attend the Veterans Day Ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery. It was bitterly cold that day even though it was a sunny day with blue skies.



JWV Post 126 and JWVA National President Carol Adler participating in the Philadelphia Veterans Day Parade



Past JWV State Commander Al Adler and JWVA National President with a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier



The Army National Chorus



The amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery



Vice President J.D. Vance speaking at Arlington National cemetery and President of the USA Donald Trump seated

# Temple Beth Or welcomes you to join us!

**We pray from the depths of our hearts  
for true peace in Israel, an end to violence,  
and the safe return of all hostages to  
their families.**

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Call us at 732-458-4700 or email us at templebethorbrick@gmail.com.

Chaim Respes, Rabbi

Dr. Sharon Monter, President

We had a beautiful view of the festivities, and we were seated in the box seats at the amphitheater. The program began with a beautiful musical performance by the US band and chorus. Chaplain Kimberly R. Willis, Executive Director of the VA Chaplain Service, gave the opening prayer. The pledge of allegiance and opening remarks were given by National Commander of the AMVets Paul Shipley. The Honorable Douglas A. Collins, Secretary of Veterans Affairs, spoke on the importance of the VA to our veterans and their families. Vice President J.D. Vance spoke on the importance of our veterans throughout the history of our country. The highlight of the day was a speech by President Donald Trump.

After the program at the amphitheater, we were directed to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier where JWV National Executive Director Ken Greenberg, JWVA National President Carol Adler and Past State Commander Al Adler presented a wreath from the Jewish War Veterans.

On Friday, November 14, members of JWV Post 178 and JWV Auxiliary 178 collected donations for our disabled and hospitalized veterans in our veterans homes and hospitals. Special thanks go out to Post Commander Dorit Attias, Bob Jacobs, Al Adler, Bill Millington



and Barry Segal. From Post 178 Ladies Auxiliary were National President Carol Adler, Susan Karsh, Nancy Weinberger, co-Auxiliary President Bonnie Stein and Karen Kaye. Special thanks go out to Saker ShopRite in Howell and Human Resources Director Dawn Verga for their hospitality and support with our event.

A happy and healthy New Year to all our readers and we are looking forward to an exciting new year in 2026.

# Local News

## Beth Am Shalom, Lakewood, Begins a Torah Restoration Project

By Rabbi Eli Perlman

A special Torah Restoration Project was launched at Beth Am Shalom over the first weekend of November.

The importance of Torah Restoration cannot be overstated. The Torah is a gift from G\*d that lives in the heart of not just the Jewish People as it is also a model for civilization. Yes, the Torah grows in importance as it helps us all mature as individuals in our society, All the major monotheistic religions view the Torah as a holy book unlike any other. The Jews, Christians, and Moslems view it as holy. Of these three great religions, it is the only Bible all three recognize as being holy. The Koran is only holy to Islam. The “New Testament” is only considered holy to the Christians.

Thanks go to Cantor Jon Saouma. He recognized that some of our Torah scrolls were in desperate need of reconditioning, and he did something about it. He arranged for a scribe to examine them and restore them to a condition that would

make them Kosher to read. Then, he did something that gave our Beth Am Shalom family the opportunity to enhance the beauty of the Torah, something most Jews will never have the opportunity to do.

What an honor it was to be able to add crowns to the tops of the letters in the Torah. It felt so good to be able to do that. To make it even more meaningful to me, my granddaughter will be reading from that same Torah on her Bat Mitzvah next year. As we say in our prayers, L’dor Va’dor – from generation to generation. That is a most fitting phrase to say as that is what the Jewish People have been doing with the Torah all these millennia, passing it from generation to generation.

Again, thank you Cantor Jon for your vision and for driving this project to such a beautiful result.

For more information about this special ongoing project and the opportunity to participate in it, contact the Beth Am Shalom Office at 732-363-2800.



Watch for further information.

# France Promotes Alfred Dreyfus 130 Years after Treason Scandal

Falsely convicted Jewish military officer granted rank of brigadier general in move seen as symbolic step in fight against antisemitism



Captain Alfred Dreyfus (2nd R) speaks with General Gillain (C) after being awarded the Legion of honor award during a ceremony marking Dreyfus' rehabilitation, at Ecole Militaire in Paris, on July 21, 1906. (Photo by AFP)

By AFP  
November 19, 2025  
[timesofisrael.com](https://www.timesofisrael.com)

PARIS — France on November 18 promoted Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish army captain wrongly convicted of treason in 1894, to the rank of brigadier general as an act of reparation in a notorious case of antisemitism that has caused outrage for generations.

The law is seen as a symbolic step in the fight against antisemitism in modern France, at a time of growing alarm over hate crimes targeting Jews in the country in the context of the Gaza war. French President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu signed the promotion into law, and it was published



French Armies Minister Sebastien Lecornu (R) stands at attention during a wreath-laying ceremony to pay tribute to late French army officer Alfred Dreyfus, on November 11, 2023 at the Ecole Militaire, an active military academy in Paris. (Thomas SAMSON / POOL / AFP)

in the so-called Official Journal of new legislation. “The French nation posthumously promotes Alfred Dreyfus to the rank of brigadier general,” the law reads. Parliament’s lower house unanimously approved the legislation in June, and the Senate backed it earlier in November.

Dreyfus, a 36-year-old army captain from the Alsace region of eastern France, was accused in October 1894 of passing secret information on new artillery equipment to a German military attache.

The accusation, based on a comparison of handwriting on a document found in the German’s wastepaper basket in Paris, kicked off what would become known as the “Dreyfus affair.” Dreyfus was put on trial amid a virulent antisemitic press



Alfred Dreyfus with his wife Lucie, circa 1934. (photo credit: Dreyfus Family Collection)

campaign. But novelist Emile Zola then penned his famous “J’accuse...!” (“I accuse”) pamphlet in support of the captain.

**Despite a lack of evidence, Dreyfus was convicted of treason, sentenced to life imprisonment in the infamous Devil’s Island penal colony in French Guiana, and publicly stripped of his rank.**

But Lt. Col. Georges Picquart, head of the intelligence services, reinvestigated the case in secret and discovered the handwriting on the incriminating message was that of another officer, Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy. When Picquart presented the evidence to the general staff of the French army, he himself was driven out of the military and jailed for a year, while Esterhazy was acquitted.

In June 1899, Dreyfus was brought back

to France for a second trial. He was initially found guilty and sentenced to 10 years in prison, before being officially pardoned – though not cleared of the charges.

Decorated veteran

Only in 1906, after many twists, did the high court of appeal overturn the original verdict, exonerating Dreyfus. He was reinstated with the rank of major and decorated with a Legion d’Honneur award. He served during World War I and died in 1935, aged 76. Those who pushed for the law believe that if Dreyfus had been able to pursue his career under normal circumstances, he would have risen to the top of the French army.

France is home to the largest Jewish population outside Israel and the United States, as well as one of the largest Muslim communities in the European Union. There has been a rise in reported attacks against members of France’s Jewish community since the Hamas terror group launched a massacre from Gaza on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, and the IDF responded with a devastating military offensive.

*Times of Israel staff contributed to this report.*

## Securing Our Community

### Jewish Federation of Ocean County Helped Synagogues with High Holiday Security

Thanks to a special grant received by Jewish Federations in New Jersey, our local Jewish Federation of Ocean County (JFOC) was able to provide funding for High Holiday security to our congregational partners: Beth Am Shalom (Lakewood), Chabad of Jackson (Lakewood), Congregation Ahavat Olam (Howell), Congregation B'nai Israel (Toms River), Jewish Community Center

of Long Beach Island (Spray Beach) and Temple Beth Or (Brick). JFOC will also be working with our congregations on upgrading their security apparatus and setting up emergency operation plans. This is another example of how the Jewish Federation and its security partner – JFed Security – is enhancing our community’s security and assisting our congregational partners!

**See page 30 for more on  
Securing Our Community.**

## Local News

### Temple Beth Or, Brick, Held Many Different Events

Temple Beth Or has been buzzing with activity, warmth, and community spirit – truly living up to the phrase, “there’s always something brewing at TBO.” Our Sisterhood has hosted wonderful programs that brought people together in friendship and connection. “Torah & Touchdowns” and “Brews & Schmooze” led by Rav Chaim drew great crowds, blending learning, relaxation, and plenty of conversation.

We recently celebrated the anniversary of Marty Wassner’s Bar Mitzvah, a beautiful reminder of the joy and continuity our traditions bring. Our Hanukkah Party

was filled with light and ruach, and we proudly participated in the Brick Township Menorah lighting, sharing the festival’s message with our wider community. Each month, our “Pro-Neg” adds warmth and sweetness to Shabbat, reminding us how important it is to gather, greet, and grow together.

We invite everyone in Ocean County to join us for services, celebrations, learning, and social programs. Call the TBO Office and 732-458-4700 or email [templebethorbrick@gmail.com](mailto:templebethorbrick@gmail.com). Whatever you’re looking for in Jewish life – you’ll find it here. Because truly... there’s always something brewing at TBO.

# New York City Sets Guinness Record for Largest-ever Shabbat Dinner, with 2,800 at the Table

Meet the Jewish Guinness Book adjudicator who certified “The Big Shabbat” as record-breaking.



The moment The Big Shabbat broke the record for world's largest Shabbat dinner, held at the Javits Center on November 21, 2025 (Rob Buchwald)

By Lisa Keys  
November 23, 2025  
jta.org

Eight hundred and eleven pounds of potatoes, 402 challahs, 68 chefs, 59 people named David and 27 people named Rachel. It all adds up to the world’s largest Shabbat dinner, which was organized by Temple Emanuel’s Streicker Center and held at the Javits Center on Friday night, November 21.

Some 2,800 Jewish New Yorkers packed the top floor of Javits North on 11th Avenue to participate in The Big Shabbat – an official attempt to host the largest Shabbat dinner in history, as verified by the Guinness Book of World Records.

More than a year in the making, the massive dinner spotlighted dishes created by high-profile Jewish chefs (Bejjy Barhany, Jake Cohen, Joan Nathan and Adeena Sussman) and featured entertainment from the likes of Broadway stars Steven Skybell and Shoshana Bean, who performed “Sabbath Prayer” from “Fiddler on the Roof.”

The meal opened with an AI-generated video featuring humorous, Shabbat-related commentary from late Jewish luminaries like Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Albert Einstein, Golda Meir and Anne Frank.

Following the traditional Shabbat blessings – led by the celebrity chefs themselves, with a moving candle-lighting led by former Hamas-held hostage Omri Miran and his wife, Lishay – guests sat at long tables and dined on a multi-course meal that included salmon, miniature potato kugels, vegetable lasagna and several salads.

At precisely 8:56 p.m., an adjudicator for the Guinness Book of World Records, Andrew Glass – himself a Jew from Brooklyn, with a partnership with Acme Smoked Fish to boot – certified that the gathering was, in fact, the largest Shabbat dinner in history, with 2,761 participants. (There were almost certainly more people in attendance, but participants had to be in their seats at the time of the count.) Cheers erupted in the room, and Jewish a cappella group Six13 took to the stage to sing Queen’s “We Are the Champions.”

Thus it became official: New York City had broken the record previously held by Berlin, which hosted 2,322 participants at a Shabbat dinner in 2015. “At this moment in time, in New York, it is so meaningful,” said Kim Hartman, a co-chair of the event. “I hope that this is something that everyone who is here tonight remembers for their life.”

As the dinner drew to a close, my slightly starstruck self – though it turns out you can simply apply to become a Guinness adjudicator if there’s an opening, just like any old job – caught up with Glass about what made this night different from all other nights. Keep scrolling to read our brief conversation.

How did you get this particular assignment? Luckily for me, they were looking for a Jewish adjudicator, so I fit the bill. I was really excited to take this on, especially as a Jewish New Yorker. It was super ex-



The official count at The Big Shabbat – held at the Javits Center and organized by Temple Emanu-El’s Streicker Center – was 2,761 participants. (Rob Buchwald)

citing to be here at The Big Shabbat.

And how does this compare to other records you’ve adjudicated recently? Every record is super special in its own way – whether it’s a feat of mass participation, whether it’s a feat of human strength or ability or engineering. This one was super special – just the coordination to be able to serve a meal to almost 3,000 people is incredible. Credit to the chefs, credit to the staff. It is really a huge logistical feat.

You presented a certificate to co-chair Kim Hartman stating that the largest Shabbat dinner occurred. Logistically, on your end, do you create and print everything up ahead of time, assuming that a record will be set? How does that work? So, yes, they are presented with a certi-

cate that I come with on hand. That certificate does not have a final count on it, of course. But if they achieve the record, which in this case they did, I present that certificate, and they’ll get mailed one with the final number.

Tell me about a few records you’ve adjudicated recently.

Sure, I’ve been adjudicating records since 2016. I love it. My favorite ones in the last year – I saw the largest hip-hop orchestra with Jeezy in Las Vegas. It was incredible. I saw a man achieve two Guinness World Records simultaneously: The farthest distance swam wearing handcuffs, and the fastest time to swim around Manhattan wearing handcuffs. It took him about nine hours and 40 minutes – completely unbelievable.

Have you adjudicated any other Jewish records? No.

[Though we’d be remiss not to mention that several Jewish-adjacent records have been set in recent years, including the world’s largest strawberry, grown by an Israeli farmer in 2022, and the marriage of Jewish couple Marjorie Fiterman, 102, and Bernie Littman, 100, who became the world’s oldest newlyweds in 2024.]

Many congregations are conducting prayer services and classes online which may be accessible from a computer or a telephone. Contact each congregation for further information to access these events.

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# Jewish Federation of Ocean County IMPACT

## YOU Made an Impact through the Jewish Federation of Ocean County – Pitchon Lev

**M**ore than a quarter of Israeli households – comprising some 2.8 million people, including roughly 1 million children – did not have regular access to healthy food last year, according to the Israel's National Insurance Institute's just-released annual Food Security Report.

Thank you for helping us support our Jewish Federation partners on the ground in Israel with these food insecurity grants.



To: The Jewish Federation of Ocean County

Annabel Lindenbaum, Board Chair  
Keith Krivitzky, Managing Director  
Sharron Greenberg, Development and Programs Manager

On behalf of all of our staff and volunteers at Pitchon Lev I write to express our profound gratitude for your continued generosity. Your support and confidence in Pitchon Lev offer hope to Israelis who need it most. Darkness, crisis, and conflict have engulfed our lives these past two years but your steadfast partnership cuts through that darkness to shine a light of hope.

Your support represents far more than material resources. It exemplifies the Jewish values that unite us across oceans.

The partnership between the **Jewish Federation of Ocean County** and **Pitchon Lev** demonstrates your unwavering commitment to Israel's most vulnerable. We are deeply grateful for your role in our mission to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty in Israel.

Your generosity proves that the bonds linking Jewish communities worldwide are unbreakable.

In our darkest hours, you have reminded us we are never alone. Distance cannot diminish our connection. Your actions show why the global Jewish family remains resilient in the face of every crisis.

As we rebuild and heal, it is vital to know we can draw strength from friends and partners like you.

Your generosity fuels our determination to emerge stronger from this crisis.

With your continued support and deep commitment to Israel and its most vulnerable, we will continue to play our part in breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty.

With boundless gratitude and unshakeable resolve,

**Peleg Reshef**

Head of International Department

Israel Cell: +972-52-5251525 | Office: +972-3-5576021 | [peleg@plev.org.il](mailto:peleg@plev.org.il)



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## YOU Made an Impact through the Jewish Federation of Ocean County – Jewish Relief Network Ukraine

**S**adly, the weekend of November 23 brought more tragedy to Ukraine. Preliminary reports indicate 4 people were killed and 17 were injured when the city of Kharkiv was hit with a "massive" drone attack on that Sunday night. In two areas of the city, fires broke out in apartment buildings and infrastructure facilities. Extensive damage also occurred in the regions of Kharkiv, Chernihiv and Dnipropetrovsk.

Families continue to suffer from the ongoing trauma, particularly the children. Our work is more important than ever, and our staff are placing special emphasis on addressing kids' medical needs.

Psychologists meet with youngsters to work on various techniques to help cope with stress and anxiety. With encouragement and support from the mental health professionals, children develop internal mechanisms to overcome the ongoing challenges they face. The kids become more confident, resilient, and calm as a result of the therapy sessions. Most importantly, the treatment sessions help the children feel safe, knowing they are surrounded by adults they can trust, who will protect them.

In addition to mental health, we are addressing critical communication issues for kids, something that has become more prevalent over the past several years. Speech therapy is in great demand as youngsters struggle in school and at home, with pronunciation and vocabulary. Parents can ill afford the cost, so we are ensuring children receive the care they need, with one on one and group treatment sessions.

Each day the staff and volunteers at JRNU are working hard to provide the children of Ukraine a safe, stable, and happy childhood, despite the very difficult and frightening circumstances in which they live.

Together we save lives and restore hope.



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732-534-5959**

# IAI Teams Up with US Contractor for New Light Aircraft for Israel's Border Defense

Memorandum of understanding signed with L3Harris for development of Israeli variant of Sky Warden, originally an agricultural and firefighting plane.



This image from 2021 shows a Sky Warden aircraft, which is based on the Air Tractor AT-802. (L3Harris)

By Emanuel Fabian  
October 21, 2025  
[timesofisrael.com](https://www.timesofisrael.com)

Israel is advancing the procurement of new light attack aircraft for border defense, with a memorandum of understanding signed last week between American and Israeli defense contractors for the development of the planes.

The Israeli Air Force has been planning, since at least late 2024, to establish several new squadrons that would operate light aircraft on Israel's borders with the Gaza Strip, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt, under the Israel Defense Force's various regional divisions. The squa-



Palestinians break into the Israeli side of Israel-Gaza border fence during a Hamas-led invasion and slaughter in southern Israel, October 7, 2023. (Reuters/Mohammed Fayq Abu Mostafa)

drons would fly light planes equipped with machine guns and other munitions to thwart large-scale infiltration attacks, as well as conduct long-endurance surveillance missions, according to IAF officials.

The decision to establish the light aircraft squadrons came following lessons learned from Hamas's October 7, 2023, onslaught in southern Israel. The IAF's probe of the October 7 attack found that fighter jets were ineffective at gathering intelligence of Hamas's ground invasion in real time, and helicopters were exposed to anti-aircraft fire.

On October 15, the American defense contractor L3Harris and Israel Aerospace Industries announced they had signed a memorandum of understanding to jointly develop an Israeli configuration of L3Harris's Sky Warden aircraft – also known as the Skyraider II – which was originally developed from the Air Tractor AT-802, used for agriculture and firefighting.

The Israeli configuration of the plane will be known as Blue Sky Warden, the companies said in a statement. "The collaboration establishes an integrated team that will combine L3Harris' low-cost, high-endurance Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft with IAI's proven systems," the statement read.

The Blue Sky Warden will be equipped with an IAI computer to "host Israeli-specific software and special capabilities," the companies said, adding that IAI would also "supply and integrate its mission equipment and lead flight tests and airworthiness campaigns" with Israel's Defense Ministry and the IAF. Boaz Levy, president and CEO of IAI, said the



This undated image shows a Sky Warden aircraft, which is based on the Air Tractor AT-802. (L3Harris)

Israeli firm was "excited to collaborate on this important program with L3Harris, a long-standing and trusted partner."

L3Harris' Sky Warden platform, we are delivering a tailored solution that meets the evolving needs of the Ministry of Defense and Israeli Air Force," he said, according to the statement.

The standard version of the Sky Warden is also being produced by L3Harris for the US Special Operations Command. The Air Tractor AT-802, the original version of the aircraft, is already in use in Israel by the Fire and Rescue Service's Elad aerial firefighting squadron.

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# Honoring Rabbi Arthur Waskow – Activist, Pioneer and Prophet

The progressive Jewish leader fused radical activism with transformative spirituality



**Rabbi Arthur Waskow at the 2014 Climate March in New York City. Photo by Jay Michaelson**

By Jay Michaelson  
October 21, 2025  
forward.com

At the 2014 Climate March in New York City, Rabbi Arthur Waskow, who passed away on October 20 at the venerable age of 92, rode atop a makeshift Noah's Ark. The float was constructed by Auburn Seminary and a coalition of faith organizations to highlight the deep connections between religious values and environmentalism. I was honored to be on that ark alongside him, and, looking out on the throngs of marchers, I snapped a photo and showed it to him. "The Rebbe and his legacy," I said. "What legacy?!" Reb Arthur responded, then a spry 80 years of age. "I'm still right here!"

This was Rabbi Arthur Waskow: prophetic, wise, cranky, witty, insightful, and decades ahead of his time. Like his contemporaries who have also recently left us – Rabbi Michael Lerner, for example – Reb Arthur (as his students called him) transformed how Jews understand themselves and their religion's relationship to political engagement.

To an inner circle of Jewish social justice activists and Jewish Renewalniks, Rabbi Waskow was indeed one of our rebbes. Together with his wife Phyllis Berman, he co-created a form of Jewish spirituality and consciousness that wove together progressive, even radical, political engagement with ritual and liturgical innovation. Paraphrasing what was once said about the Velvet Underground, there weren't a lot of people in this inner circle, but all of them went on to become spiritual leaders and activists too.

But Reb Arthur's legacy extends far beyond his fans to hundreds of thousands of Jews who don't even know they've been influenced by him.

In 1969, Waskow created the "Freedom Seder," a new version of the Passover

Haggadah that, in his words, "connected the Jewish exodus from Egypt with the struggle for Civil Rights in America and Social Justice around the world." This may seem banal today, but in 1969, it was unheard-of. While there were plenty of radicals, hippies and artists who were Jewish (Abbie Hoffman, Jerry Rubin, Allen Ginsberg, the list goes on and on), few embraced Judaism as such, as a religious and communal tradition with something worthwhile to teach. Meanwhile, while we've all seen that photo of Abraham Joshua Heschel marching with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in fact large segments of the Jewish community were antagonistic to antiwar activism, civil rights activism, and the array of left-wing political causes that animated that period known as the Sixties.

Rabbi Waskow brought these threads together. Well before doing so became a buzzword, Waskow made Judaism newly relevant to a generation of young American Jews. He created new rituals on old foundations, and breathed new life into old words. Just consider his book titles: *The Bush is Burning!* Radical Judaism faces the pharaohs of the modern superstate; *Godwrestling*; or one of his newest, *Handbook for Heretics and Prophets: A New Torah for a New World*. (Those are only three of twelve, I hasten to add.)

This work continued for decades, through the Shalom Center, which Waskow founded, and later in ALEPH: The Alliance for Jewish Renewal, which, for a while anyway, brought together Waskow's political radicalism with the emergent spirituality of Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi and others.

Truthfully, though, there was always a tension – often productive, sometimes less so – between these two directions. (Waskow may have coined the phrase 'Jewish Renewal' in 1979, but there are different versions of that story.) Reb Arthur had little interest in meditation and mysticism; his was, in the words of another book title, a down-to-earth Judaism. He loved Jewish ritual, wrote a book about Jewish holidays, and, with Berman, proposed to transform Jewish languages of prayer and of God. Yet he had little patience when contemplative practice turned too inward or turned away from the problems of justice toward mystical or theological speculation.

Conversely, Waskow's radicalism often chafed against the sensibilities of many Jews. He was a left-wing activist long

before he was a Jewish spiritual leader and was outspoken from beginning to end. The Freedom Seder cited not only Gandhi and King, but Nat Turner and Eldridge Cleaver; it was published in the leftist *Ramparts* magazine; it was first hosted by the left-wing Jews for Urban Justice. His was not a polite liberalism.

One remarkable example: In 1969, Waskow delivered a Yom Kippur sermon at Washington's Tifereth Israel synagogue demanding that congregants confess and atone for "paying soldiers to burn Vietnamese babies alive... supporting a system of grocery stores that starve some children into apathy and death... paying and applauding policemen who gas, shoot and beat Black people..." and many other sins. The response was just what you'd expect: in the words of one account, "a burst of indignation" from attendees who said he should focus more on issues that affect Jews. Ours is not the first time in which the Jewish Establishment has disowned and demonized Jewish Leftists.

And while Waskow may have mellowed somewhat with age, he didn't mellow that much. In later years, he was excoriated for his criticisms of Israel's actions in Lebanon and in the Occupied Territories; his peace work with Christian and Muslim leaders; and his opposition to the ADL and defense of the so-called 'Ground Zero Mosque.' Waskow was not always shaking his fist at the sky; after all, yet another of his books is called *Seasons of our Joy*. But he lived his life as a prophet, and prophets are rarely popular in their times – just ask Jeremiah.

Still, Waskow's legacy – now I can use the term – runs deep and wide. He helped create Jewish environmentalism; if your synagogue is reducing its carbon footprint, in part it has Reb Arthur to thank (though he would be the first to say that such steps are pointless without collective political action). He and Berman transformed Jewish liturgy in ways that rippled out well beyond progressive communities. And broadly speaking, Reb Arthur pioneered the entire notion that social activism and Jewish spirituality – not only Jewish identity and moral teaching, but also Jewish ritual and text and myth – enrich one another.

These teachings are still prophetic today. So, as Reb Arthur would surely insist, I will give him the last words, taken from the Dayenu liturgy in the original 1969 Freedom Seder:

The struggles for freedom that remain

will be more dark and difficult than any we have met so far. For we must struggle for a freedom that enfolds stern justice, stern bravery, and stern love. Blessed art thou, O Lord our God! who hast confronted us with the necessity of choice and of creating our own book of thy Law. How many and how hard are the choices and the tasks the Almighty has set before us!

For if we were to end a single genocide but not to stop the other wars that kill men and women as we sit here, it would not be sufficient;

If we were to end those bloody wars but not disarm the nations of the weapons that could destroy all mankind, it would not be sufficient;

If we were to disarm the nations but not to end the brutality with which the police attack black people in some countries, brown people in others; Moslems in some countries, Hindus in other; Baptists in some countries, atheists in others; Communists in some countries, conservatives in others, it would not be sufficient;

If we were to end outright police brutality but not prevent some people from wallowing in luxury while others starved, it would not be sufficient;

If we were to make sure that no one starved but were not to free the daring poets from their jails, it would not be sufficient; If we were to free the poets from their jails but to train the minds of people so that they could not understand the poets, it would not be sufficient;

If we educated all men and women to understand the free creative poets but forbade them to explore their own inner ecstasies, it would not be sufficient;

If we allowed men and women to explore their inner ecstasies but would not allow them to love one another and share in the human fraternity, it would not be sufficient.

How much then are we in duty bound to struggle, work, share, give, think, plan, feel, organize, sit-in, speak out, hope, and be on behalf of Mankind!

*Rabbi Jay Michaelson is a contributing columnist for the Forward and for Rolling Stone. He is the author of 10 books and won the 2023 New York Society for Professional Journalists award for opinion writing.*



Combating Hate

Heroes Against Hate



Sheriff Michael Mastronardy



Daniel Hoffman



Christ Episcopal Church

Monday • December 22, 2025 • 5:30pm

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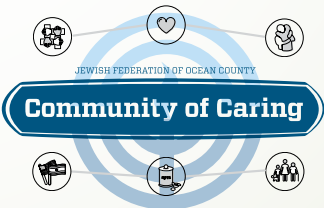
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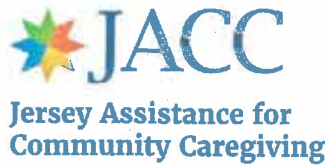


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# Combating Hate

## Chhange's Annual Educators' Art Workshop

# The Light of Resistance



Khatchig Mouradian, PhD, Lecturer in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies (MESAAS) at Columbia University, is the author of *The Resistance Network: The Armenian Genocide and Humanitarianism in Ottoman Syria, 1915-1918*. His presentation will explore the spectrum of actions that constitute resistance and, by focusing on one form in particular, show how ordinary behavior can become acts of resistance in extraordinary times.



As Executive Director of the New Jersey LGBTQIA+ Youth Equity Commission, Kate Okeson works to grow and sustain meaningful support for educators and educational leaders in inclusive education spaces. Her arts enrichment workshop will connect historical context and creative responses in the middle and high school classroom through the medium of 'zines (small-circulation, self-published magazines).



Arlene Smelson, Chhange's Art Educator, has been instrumental in creating the organization's student art installations over the past decade. Her presentation will guide teachers on the best ways to take what they learn in the workshop back to the classroom.



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# Why Pomegranates, a Rosh Hashanah Staple, are Disappearing from Israeli Farms

This fruit represents abundance, love and God's blessings. Loved by King Solomon, the fruit is valued for its beauty and health benefits. But farmers of this ruby-red member of the Seven Species complain that growing it is overly expensive.

By Sue Surkes  
September 23, 2025  
[timesofisrael.com](https://www.timesofisrael.com)

Rani Bar Nes, 80, a farmer from Moshav Bitzaron in southern Israel, has been growing fruit for 40 years. Ten years ago, he planted pomegranate trees on his land near Kibbutz Negba, believing that the fruit, increasingly in demand for its health benefits worldwide, would do well as an export crop. He was wrong.

Today, Bar Nes is the chairman of the fruit division at the Plants Council. He told The Times of Israel that while there were no exact figures, his estimate of the number of dunams farmed for pomegranates – a fruit of deep cultural and religious significance in Israel, particularly popular around the upcoming Jewish New Year – had fallen from around 20,000 (5,000 acres) in 2018 to just 6,000 (1,500 acres) last year.

He added that 6,000 tons of the fruit were produced in 2024, or half as much as in 2018.



View of a field of pomegranate trees in Moshav Kfar Achim, south central Israel, September 8, 2019 (Mila Aviv/Flash90)

Israeli farmers, he explained, were unable to compete with Egyptian and Turkish growers in the international market. “Their costs are a quarter of ours, and they sell for half of what we sell,” said Bar Nes.

Complaining that water prices are astronomical in Israel while pests increase as the state prohibits more and more chemical pesticides, Bar Nes pointed out that Israeli farmers were burdened with excessive surcharges – such as pension contributions paid to foreign laborers. “A foreign worker costs me NIS 400 [\$120] per day, including benefits, ac-



Fruit farmer Rani Bar Nes from southern Israel (Plant Council)

commodation, food, and more,” he calculated.

“My son, Shay, will continue the business. Otherwise, I would have closed down,” he said. While farmers will be paid NIS 1.20 (\$.36) per kilogram (2.2 lbs), according to Bar Nes, there is a huge variety in retail prices. Pomegranate prices in Jerusalem, according to the chp produce comparison site, range from NIS 3.90 at



Jewish children learn about the customs of Rosh Hashana at a kindergarten in Moshav Yashresh, central Israel, October 1, 2024. (Yossi Aloni/Flash90)

Rami Levy in Ramot and Givat Shaul, to NIS 17.90 at Shufersal Express on Keren Hayesod Street and at Hadassah Hospital. In Tel Aviv, the differences are even starker. Shufersal Sheli (My Shufersal) is selling for NIS 3.90 per kilogram, while Shufersal Express in Ahimeir Street is trying its luck for NIS 29.90.

### A symbol of bounty

According to the Agriculture Ministry, Israelis consume around four kilograms

*Continued on page 30*



**"For the Lord thy God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, and grapevines, figs and pomegranates; a land of oil olives and date honey."**

**Deuteronomy/Devarim 8:7-8**

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## FedBeat from JFNA – Jewish Federations of North America

jewishfederations.org

### Federations Shift to Rebuild Israel After Raising \$908M in Emergency Funds



From JFNA  
November 10, 2025

With the war in Israel winding down and all the living hostages safely home, Jewish Federations of North America are winding down the two-year Israel Emergency Campaign and transitioning into a new phase of work called Rebuild Israel, a holistic effort to support Israel's recovery and to help Israelis and Israeli society flourish in the aftermath of the war.

Details of Rebuild Israel, key elements of which began in the emergency campaign, will be unveiled at the 2025 General Assembly, to be held in Washington, D.C., from November 16-18.

"When we launched the Israel Emergency Campaign on October 8, 2023, we knew that only the Jewish Federations system could mobilize the resources we needed to support Israel, but we had no conception of the unbelievable extent to which the effort to support Israelis in their darkest hour would develop," said Jewish Federations of North America President and CEO Eric D. Fingerhut.

"As Israel begins to turn the page and its needs transition from emergency to rebuilding, it's time for the 141 Federations in our system to prioritize and further our efforts to Rebuild Israel."

The unprecedented Israel Emergency Campaign raised a remarkable \$908 million, providing immediate lifeline services, medical trauma and relief, economic relief and recovery, and community resilience and rebuilding through over 4200 grants to 877 NGO partners, including support for 208 communities and across Israel.

"The contributions of North America's Jewish community to supporting Israel have been remarkable. As we look to the future, we are proud that – as we have done throughout our history – the Jewish Federations system will once again play a pivotal role in helping Israel continue strengthening itself as a bastion of flourishing Jewish life," said Jewish Federations of North America Chair Gary Torgow.

As the world stood by in stunned silence on 10/7 after Hamas terrorists attacked, brutalized, and murdered Israelis, Jewish Federations of North America immediately mobilized a historic campaign in support of the Jewish state.

Federations were able to quickly leverage long-standing partnerships on the ground and use decades of experience to respond to the crisis and organize the Jewish communal response. The system surpassed its initial goal of \$500 million

in mere weeks to cover medical supplies, humanitarian aid, and emergency medical care.

In the weeks and months that followed, the effort expanded to serve the evolving needs on the ground. The effort provided lifeline services such as food, shelter, and support to Israelis displaced from their homes; medical supplies to hospitals, ambulances, and emergency response units; economic relief to businesses and families suffering as a result of the war; and community resilience and rebuilding, including a significant focus on post-trauma relief.

Federations took special care to support populations who have particular or specialized needs during this emergency, including Arabic, Amharic, and Russian-speaking populations, at-risk youth, the LGBTQ+ Community, Young Children, Women, Bedouin Communities, and People with Disabilities.

The campaign relied on the decades-old core partnerships with the Jewish Agency for Israel, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), and World ORT, as well as the deep ties and relationship local Federations have built over the years through partnerships with sister cities or regions in Israel. These partnerships encouraged people-to-people connections and shared endeavors that have resulted in deep relationships, particularly post-10/7.

The Jewish Federations Israel Emergency Loan Fund provided a lifeline to busi-

nesses across Israel severely impacted by the war and without access to traditional banking credit. Through its Investment Committee, the Loan Fund allocates funds to fully vetted loan platforms who each provide loans to small businesses in a particular set of markets and sectors, including agriculture.

Through the ReGrow program, Jewish Federations supported the farming communities of Western Negev through grants of \$12.5 million to urgently replace equipment destroyed and looted by Hamas terrorists, allowing them to resume farming in time for the first spring planting season after 10/7.

The Federations-supported Victims of Terror Funds, housed at the Jewish Agency, distributed more support in the two years of the war than it had in its entire 21-year history before the war.

When the war with Iran broke out in the summer of 2025, Federations once again stepped up to support the resurgence of lifeline needs, allocating \$13 million to the relief efforts through 24 partners

"The Jewish people's commitment to supporting Israel has never been stronger," said National Campaign Chair David Heller. "With this historic campaign, we have written the latest chapter in the history of our people and look forward to writing the next one as we work to further strengthen Israel and its unbreakable bonds with the North American Jewish community."

### Federations Mourn Return of Dror Or's and Meny Godard's Bodies from Gaza



From JFNA  
November 26, 2025

Jewish Federations of North America mourn the heartbreaking return of the body of Dror Or, murdered at age

48 during the October 7 attack on Kibbutz Be'eri and posthumously taken into Gaza by Palestinian Islamic Jihad. His remains were transferred to Israel on the night of November 25 and identified by Israeli forensic experts in the early hours of the next morning.

Dror's wife, Yonat, was also murdered on October 7. They leave behind three children – two of whom, Alma and Noam, were kidnapped to Gaza and freed in November 2023. The return of their father's body, two years to the day after their own release, underscores the depth of their family's tragedy and the unbearable toll of this war on innocent civilians.

We also remember Meny Godard, 73, of Kibbutz Be'eri, whose body was returned from Gaza on November 13. Meny was murdered on October 7 alongside his wife Ayelet, 63, by Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists, leaving behind four children, seven grandchildren, and a large extended family grieving their loss.

As we mourn with the Or and Godard families, we continue to demand the return of all hostages – living and deceased. Two murdered hostages remain in Gaza: Sudthisak Rinthalak, 43, of Thailand, and Ran Gvili, 24, killed at Kibbutz Alumim. We will not rest until every one of them is brought home.

Jewish Federations stand with the families in their grief, strength, and unyielding resolve. We honor Dror's and Meny's memories, we hold their families close in our hearts, and we reaffirm our unwavering commitment: no effort will be spared until all hostages are returned.



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## **Jewish Federation of Ocean County**

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### **From Israel Emergency to Israel Recover**

**The Jewish Federation of Ocean County Moves Forward with Your Support**

**We have used up our Israel Emergency funds by making the grants below totaling \$10,400.**

**You have helped to enable important impact after October 7 through our Israel Emergency grants totaling over \$200,000! Thank you!!**

**\$1800 to Lev Otef for a special retreat on November 13  
for hostage families to plan for what they need**

**\$2500 to Lev Otef for ongoing Dolphin retreats at the Reef –  
their main therapeutic program**

**\$2500 to Kav L'Noar for ongoing mental health support for youth  
dealing with post-October 7 stuff – a great program**

**\$1800 to Koby Mandell Foundation – which has been running camp programs and  
retreats for children connected with the hostages and others dealing with trauma**

**\$1800 to Crossroads for their ongoing work helping  
youth at risk on the streets of Jerusalem**

### **NOW is the time to switch to Israel Recover grants.**

**Help us enable even more impact as Israel continues to recover.  
Donate today: [www.jewishoceancounty.org/IsraelRecover](http://www.jewishoceancounty.org/IsraelRecover).**

**There is a long road ahead and even more assistance is needed.**

**YOU can make an impact through the  
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FedBeat from JFNA – Jewish Federations of North America  
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At the heart of this unbreakable spirit lies the Jewish Federations - the bedrock of Jewish communities around the world. We're the collective force that keeps Jewish life thriving, not just in times of crisis, but every single day.

As one, we uplift Israel and Ukraine by offering our unwavering support. As one, we take a stand against the rising tide of antisemitism. As one, we pledge to ensure the safety and security of Jewish communities worldwide.

Our mission is fueled by the generosity of community members like you. Your annual contribution empowers us to provide humanitarian aid to our allies, combat antisemitism, and nurture vibrant Jewish communities.

As one, we will lead the way to a brighter tomorrow where Jewish life flourishes for generations to come. Join us, and we will rise as one.

Study: Instagram Algorithm Drove Extremist, Antisemitic Merch to 1.5B Views



From JFNA  
November 25, 2025

A new report from the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), released on November 25 in partnership with the Jewish Federations of North America, shows that the social media platform Instagram is algorithmically promoting accounts that sell extremist, antisemitic and racist merchandise, helping them reach 1.5 billion views and generate over \$1.3 million in estimated sales.

The report, “Hate for Sale: How Instagram Helps Sellers of Hateful Merchandise Reach a Billion Views,” provides evidence that Meta’s rollback of key content moderation policies earlier this year was followed by a nearly fourfold increase in views on accounts pushing

Nazi-themed and racist “hate merch.” All 11 accounts identified were recommended by Instagram’s own algorithm.


"When it comes to spreading hate and antisemitism, we know that social media has played an outsize role, which is why the Jewish community has made addressing this issue a plank of our six-point plan to combat antisemitism. This report is an important reminder that social media companies can and should be doing a lot more to enforce their rules and keep our communities safer," said Jewish Federations President and CEO Eric D. Fingerhut.

- Key findings from the report include:
- 1.5 billion views across 11 accounts that promote and sell hate merchandise
  - A 3.75x increase in views after Meta weakened hate speech enforcement
  - Posts mocking George Floyd’s death, glorifying Nazis, and selling t-shirts with slogans like “Life is a race. Be a racist”
  - At least two accounts boasting tens of thousands of sales, with estimated revenues of \$839,700 and \$499,750 respectively
  - Use of AI-generated hate content, which Meta is failing to consistently label as AI

“Instagram helps extremists make money out of antisemitism and racism,” said Imran Ahmed, CEO of CCDH. “By withdrawing critical safeguards, Meta has allowed hate to flourish. Extremist content, including posts that glorify Nazis, spread Holocaust denial, demonize Jewish people, and joke about slavery, is promoted and monetized by their algorithms. Every time someone buys a shirt from one of these hate merchants, it funds more propaganda, and it stains the

reputation of every company that enabled the sale.”

The report also shows how leading e-commerce platforms – Shopify, Wix, and Payhip – hosted these online stores. CCDH contacted the companies to alert them to the “hate merch” sold on their platforms. Wix and Payhip replied, saying they made the independent decision to remove the identified merchandise.



Jewish Federations of North America welcome the return to Israel of the body of Sudthisak Rinthalak, 43, of Thailand, who was murdered on October 7 while farming at Kibbutz Be’eri.

We hope that the return of his body provides some comfort to his family.



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**January 4th** 10:00 AM New Year's Brunch, \$50 a person  
**January 9th** 7:00 PM Most Wonderful Crime of the Year Murder Mystery \$75 Adults, 10% off Senior/Military  
**January 10th** 7:00 PM Chef's Night Out, Italian Dinner \$50 Adults, 10% off Senior/Military  
**January 14th** 6:30 PM Princess Tea with Elsa, \$20 Adults, \$10 Children  
**January 15th** 11:00 AM National Best Hat Day with Victorian Presentation, Alisa Duprey, \$50 Adults, 10% off Senior/Military  
**January 16th** 7:00 PM Chef's Night Out, Prime Rib Dinner \$75 Adults, 10% off Senior/Military

**January 17th** 7:00 PM Most Wonderful Crime of the Year Murder Mystery \$75 Adults, 10% off Senior/Military  
**January 21st** 6:30 PM Name that Tune Teatime Bingo \$20 a person  
**January 23rd** 7:00 PM Old School Night Out with Dinner Buffet \$50 Adults, 10% off Senior/Military  
**January 24th** 7:00 Tea & Tastes: An Elegant Evening of Food Pairings, \$42 Adults  
**January 25th** 3:00 PM Wicked Tea Party \$50 a person  
**January 28th** 6:30 PM Princess Tea with Elsa, \$20 Adults, \$10 Children  
**January 29th** 6:00 PM Tea Club, a complementary event  
**January 30th** 7:00 PM Rockabilly 50's Dinner Show, \$50 Adults, 10% off Senior/Military  
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**Email your submission to [jfoceditor@ocjf.org](mailto:jfoceditor@ocjf.org).**

**We invite our community members to submit original poetry or short essays (500 words or less) to the Jewish Journal. All submissions are subject to our editorial review, and we do not promise that all will be published. Email your submission to [jfoceditor@ocjf.org](mailto:jfoceditor@ocjf.org).**



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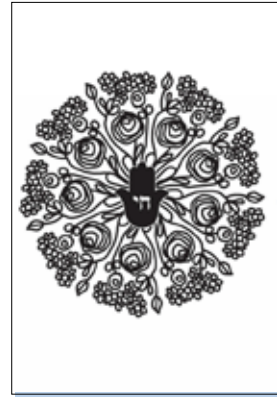
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## Ancient Synagogue Uncovered in Israel Reveals Jewish Life Alongside Rise of Early Christianity

Basilica-style structure found in Yehudiya Nature Reserve contained walls facing Jerusalem



Archaeologists uncovered a 1,500-year-old synagogue in Israel's Golan Heights, revealing the region's deep Jewish roots. (iStock; Mechael Osband)

By Andrea Margolis  
October 24, 2025  
[foxnews.com](https://www.foxnews.com)

A 1,500-year-old synagogue was recently uncovered in northern Israel – a discovery that sheds light on the enduring Jewish presence in the region that also gave rise to early Christianity.

The synagogue was found in the Yehudiya Nature Reserve in the Golan Heights, known in the Old Testament as Golan. Its discovery was announced by the University of Haifa on October 5. The structure measures roughly 43 feet wide by 56 feet long. Influenced by ancient Roman civic architecture, the synagogue was built with a basilica-style layout.

Earlier surveys suggested a synagogue was in the area, but its location was a mystery until now.

Excavators previously found some 150 fragments in the area, including column drums, decorated basalt stones and menorah decorations. Some materials were reused in an abandoned Syrian village in the reserve.

“Now, following a focused excavation, the structure itself has been revealed for the first time: two courses of ashlar stones forming the southern wall, with three openings,” the university's press release said. “Nearby, two lintels were found close to their original positions, one of them decorated.”

The benches, the openings of the wall fa-

cing Jerusalem and the columns were all characteristic of ancient Israeli synagogues.

Archaeologist Mechael Osband said the column drums were laid along a path in the village, which intrigued excavators. “Already at the start of the excavation, dozens of architectural fragments were uncovered, and later, to our surprise, the southern wall of the structure was revealed, with three openings facing Jeru-



Archaeologists say the structure mirrors other early synagogues found across the Golan Heights region. (Mechael Osband)

salem,” said Osband. Dror Ben-Yosef, an archaeologist with the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, said he plans to make the synagogue accessible to tourists once the excavation is complete.

“In addition to this synagogue, about 25 other ancient synagogues have been discovered in the Golan, testifying to the strong Jewish presence there,” he said. “These synagogues served not only for prayer but also as centers of study and as the core of Jewish literacy. Sages visited these buildings and disseminated Jewish knowledge to all members of the community, from the young to the old.”

The Golan Heights was predominantly Jewish during the Roman and Byzantine eras, though it still hosted early Christian communities. The region is just east of Galilee, which has been the setting of several exciting archaeological finds in recent months.

The remains of the world's oldest known nursing home were recently discovered in Hippos, an ancient Christian city near the Sea of Galilee. Last month, Israeli officials announced that a treasure



The Golan Heights continues to yield archaeological finds that illuminate its long-standing role in Jewish history. (iStock)

hoard tied to a forgotten Jewish uprising was found in Galilee.

Andrea Margolis is a lifestyle writer for Fox News Digital and Fox Business.



Experts say the synagogue's size and design reflect a prosperous Jewish community in ancient northern Israel. (Mechael Osband)

Readers can follow her on X at @andreamargs or send story tips to [andrea.margolis@fox.com](mailto:andrea.margolis@fox.com).

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## Holocaust Survivors Alert

If you are a Holocaust Survivor who has never applied for compensation, or was turned down previously, there are new funds and guidelines. For more information, you may call the

Claims Conference in NY at 646-536-9100 or go to their website: [www.claimscon.org](http://www.claimscon.org). Click on survivor resources, then click on compensation programs. They have a FAQ (frequently asked questions) section which should be read prior to applying.

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# JEWISH FAMILY AND *changing lives...*

## How to Take Care of Yourself When You Can't Take Care of Yourself

Our Wall Street Journal columnist searches for new ways to cope as a caregiver.



By Elizabeth Bernstein  
 November 28, 2025  
[wsj.com](http://wsj.com)

I've been helping to care for my elderly parents for six years.

I consider it a privilege. Yet lately I've felt overwhelmed — exhausted by sustained fear, grief, chaos and, yes, frustration. I know I need time for myself. But that's just not a possibility as I juggle caregiving with work, family and, now, the holidays.

So I sought advice on coping from others who have been through an extended period of caring for a sick or dying loved one. I felt comforted knowing that I'm not alone and buoyed by their message that adjusting their mindset gave them strength when they were at the end of their rope.

"Caregiving is the toughest time in many people's lives," says Alexandra Drane, the founder and chief executive of Archangels, an organization that supports unpaid caregivers. "They're caring for their loved ones, work, kids, families and friends, and it can take them to the breaking point."

The holidays add even more pressure, Drane says. Caregivers may not be able to participate in celebrations or may feel pressure to appear festive. For those whose loved one is dying, the cheerful nature of the season can heighten their grief and loneliness.



### What helps

The caregivers I spoke with stressed the need to maintain a routine, hard as it may be: Try to sleep enough. Eat healthy foods. Exercise regularly, preferably in nature.

Yet mental strategies are the most effective ways they've found to alleviate their anguish — all year long. They write their feelings down in a journal or talk to friends or mental-health professionals. Some chase laughter, watching funny movies or comedy clips. (Several mentioned dogs!) Many people meditated or prayed.

Allison Gilbert, an author who took care of both of her dying parents, found it helpful to remind herself to be grateful for the time left. Dominick Perrotta, an insurance adjuster who cared for his dying mom, repeated this mantra every time a negative thought popped into his head:

*Continued on page 27*

Together with the **Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference)** and a grant from the State of New Jersey, the Jewish Family and Children's Service of the Jewish Federation of Ocean County has been providing the sacred obligation of pikuach nefesh (saving a life in jeopardy) to Holocaust Survivors for many years. We realize that unless you are impacted directly, you may not fully appreciate how important this work is. **Every dollar you contribute will be matched 25 times!**



# CHILDREN'S SERVICE

## ...making a difference

### Take Care of Yourself

Continued from page 26

“This is not helpful.” And whenever she became overwhelmed while caring for her dying husband, Deirdre Fagan reminded herself to take things minute-by-minute. “The farther we look back and the farther we look forward, the less happy we are,” says Fagan, a professor who wrote a memoir about her experience. “If we can manage life 60 seconds at a time, nearly anything becomes manageable.”

Here are some other coping strategies that stood out.



#### Share your feelings

Pretending that you're not hurting will just make you feel worse. Telling others what you're going through – even those you don't know well – broadens your support network.

Mai Weston, a 47-year-old stay-at-home mom in San Diego, says that she's a naturally private person. But as the primary caregiver for both her mother and her father – who is 81 and has end-stage lung cancer – she's learned that she feels better when truthful about struggling. When people ask her how she is – even those she doesn't know well, like other soccer parents – Weston explains that her father is dying and that “it sucks, really, really bad.” Sometimes the response is awkward, but often they want to know more, which she finds comforting. She's also been frank with her three children, aged 10 to 17, which she believes has helped them cope with their own feelings. “This has been the hardest experience of my life so far, and expressing that openly has been cathartic,” she says.

#### Do capacity check-ins

It's important to listen to your body.

For five years, Tecca Thompson has lived with and cared for her 81-year-old mom, who has dementia. She also takes



**Tecca Thompson with her mom at a parade in Columbus, Ohio, in 2023 (Tecca Thompson)**

care of her partner, who has a chronic health condition. There's little time to take breaks – or money to pay for backup care. When she's at her breaking point, Thompson takes short pauses she calls “capacity check-ins.” After a difficult doctor's appointment with her mother recently, Thompson says she felt her whole body tensing up. She took a drive to settle down, stopping to chat with a friend who owns a nearby business. Thompson says these short breaks help her cope with the tiny losses that hit unexpectedly, such as the time her mom forgot that she loved coffee. “Caregiving asks you to grieve a little at a time while still showing up every day,” says the 57-year-old, who lives in Columbus, Ohio, and runs a women's wellness business. “These pauses let me feel those moments instead of pushing through them.”



#### Set energy boundaries

People who are ill may be down, stressed or angry. You'll need strategies to prevent yourself from absorbing this heaviness.

When Catherine Duncan's mother-in-law was dying of pancreatic cancer years ago, she was anxious, scared and deeply sad. As her primary caregiver, Duncan found herself mirroring her mother-in-law's energy. She felt locked in a fight-or-flight response. Then she learned from a holistic doctor how to create an

Continued on page 31

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December 19	4:15 PM
December 26	4:19 PM
January 2	4:25 PM
January 9	4:32 PM
January 16	4:39 PM
January 23	4:47 PM
January 30	4:56 PM



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## Securing Our Community

# Secure Community Network

November-December 2025 Report

By Michael G. Masters  
National Director & CEO  
Secure Community Network  
December 10, 2025

As we enter the winter holiday season, including Hanukkah, celebration and security must go hand in hand. Ensuring every member of our community can gather safely and confidently remains our highest priority.

This season brings increased events and celebrations across our synagogues, schools, and institutions. Disturbingly, the season has also brought increased instances of individuals attempting to disrupt, and even destroy, aspects of Jewish life – just in the last two weeks, we have seen these destructive forces at work, from New York to Los Angeles: individuals and groups working to intimidate members of our community, inhibit our ability as Jews to enter our facilities, and even work to intentionally disrupt our activities once inside. This is unacceptable and must never be accepted.

At SCN, our team of professionals is focused on ensuring that our facilities can have secure, welcoming celebrations. We are focusing on guidance, training, and coordination.

SCN and Jewish Federations of North America recently released updated event security guides for lay leaders and security teams. These practical, step-by-step resources help organizations of all sizes plan effectively – and are especially important in light of recent critical incidents targeting Jewish event venues.

At the same time, we continue to enhance our proactive threat management efforts through the largest, most connected network of information sharing in the

Jewish community nationally, seamlessly integrated with security professionals and law enforcement partners at every level – inviting all of our partners to participate in the hope that we may enhance the safety of our community, not operate in silos.

We have seen the impact of this: in Philadelphia, SCN and partners were credited by authorities for providing information that led to the guilty plea of an individual who sent dozens of threatening letters to Jewish institutions across multiple states – a clear demonstration of the effectiveness of our integrated, real-time threat management model.

At November's General Assembly of the Jewish Federations of North America, our team at SCN, along with Federation partners, and under Jewish Federations of North America's leadership, discussed the evolving threat landscape and the expansion of our Regional Threat Capability at length.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are proud of the progress we have made in strengthening the security and resilience of Jewish communities across North America – expanding threat-management capabilities, deepening law-enforcement coordination, delivering targeted training, and supporting communities through high-risk incidents. We will continue to scale solutions that work, ensuring communities are prepared for the challenges ahead.

As we close out the year, I wish us all chazak v'nitchazek – may we be strong as a community, and may we continue to strengthen one another. Thank you for your partnership and your commitment to this sacred cause. Stay safe.

The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) established the Secure Community Network (SCN) in 2004. The SCN is a nonprofit organization that works to ensure the safety and security of the Jewish community in North America. The SCN's mission is to help individuals and organizations develop a culture of awareness, preparedness, and resilience through training, consultation, and information sharing. The SCN works with over 300 independent communities, 146 federations, and 50 partner organizations, as well as with partners in the public, private, academic, and non-profit sectors.



## Pomegranates

Continued from page 14



A 3D illustration of Solomon's Temple (estt, iStock at Getty Images)

(just under 9 lbs) of pomegranates per year, including byproducts such as pomegranate juice. Around a fifth of this, or 18%, is bought in the run-up to the High Holidays, starting with Rosh Hashanah.

During the Jewish New Year, it is customary to have pomegranate seeds on the table and to pray “that our merits increase as [the seeds of] a pomegranate.” As any learned Jewish child knows, the fruit is traditionally said to contain 613 seeds, symbolic of the Torah's 613 commandments – although if you open a few specimens and count, you discover that the number varies.

The pomegranate, native to Asia Minor, Transcaucasia, Iran, and Turkmenistan, and one of the first fruit trees to be domesticated in the eastern Mediterranean, was one of the fruits found by the biblical spies sent to scout out the Land of Israel and is one of the Seven Species with which the land is blessed. Remains of the fruit from the Neolithic period, and possibly the Early Bronze Age, have been found in the country at sites including Arad, Gezer, and Tel es-Sultan (Jericho).

Representing abundance, fertility, love, and God's blessings, pomegranates inspired the decoration on the capitals of two pillars on either side of the entrance to King Solomon's Temple and were embroidered in gold into the hem of the garment worn by the High Priest. The calyx is said to have inspired the shape of King Solomon's crown, and probably many royal crowns that followed.

With its red peel enclosing hundreds of juicy, jewel-like, ruby-colored seeds, it features in the Song of Songs. The male lover describes his beloved woman's temples behind her veil as “like a pomegranate split open.” He says her thighs “shelter a paradise of pomegranates with rare spices...” and wishes he could give her a drink of “spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate...”

That the pomegranate endures as a Jewish symbol is evidenced by its incorporation into Jewish art and design, from challah covers to the finials that decorate the rollers within a Torah scroll. In the latter case, they are known as rimonim, the Hebrew word for pomegranate. (Rimon is also the Hebrew word for a grenade, which resembles the fruit.)

The pomegranate tree, beautiful throughout the seasons, flowers between Passover in the spring and Shavuot in the early summer. Its fruits ripen in the early fall, just in time for the Jewish New Year.

But although pomegranates are central to Jewish tradition and iconography, farmers such as Bar Nes worry that their cultivation will soon be unsustainable in the Jewish state. “A farmer plants a fruit tree for 40 years, but every year, the people in government change their minds about things like customs duties. You don't know what to plant,” said Bar Nes. “The state doesn't understand that agriculture isn't for one year, or that agriculture gives us food security.”

“I could do other things, and so could my son,” he added. “Maybe we should all close down, move to Tel Aviv, and have an easier life.”



Pomegranates on sale at the Mahane Yehuda Market in Jerusalem, September 24, 2019 (Hadas Parush/Flash90)



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Take Care of Yourself

Continued from page 27

“energy boundary.” One way to do this is to visualize an imaginary bubble surrounding your body that prevents all negative energy from reaching you. (Need more help? Imagine the bubble is covered on the outside with mirrors that reflect any energy coming at you.) Duncan, a 61-year-old minister in Minneapolis, says that learning to create an energy boundary helped her feel more grounded. “There was still sadness, but I wasn’t overwhelmed,” she says. “And I was better able to be present for my mother-in-law and help her have a peaceful death.”



India Duncan and her husband in Florence, Italy, in 2020 (India Duncan)

Consider this sacred time

Several readers said they remained strong by viewing caregiving as a rare and holy opportunity as they helped their loved one transition from life to death.

When India Duncan’s husband was diagnosed with gastric cancer in 2019 at age 55, she reorganized her priorities – dropping all social engagements and hobbies – to take care of him, while also dealing with insurance companies and doctors. The stress made her physically ill. To cope, Duncan, 61, told herself that her husband’s decline and death was a sacred time and that she was part of a spiritual transition. Throughout his two-year illness, she meditated, prayed, talked to her husband about spirituality and recited


Buddhist chants for him. That is what she was doing when he died peacefully while she was sitting on his bed. Duncan, who has sold her home to travel full time in an RV, says that focusing on the sacredness of the experience helped her accept her husband’s death. “I knew that I was part of something really important and that it deserved all of me,” she says.



No regrets

My caregiver experience started when my dad had a devastating stroke in 2019. We lost him about three years later, but now my mom is critically ill. I’ve moved in to help her. What strategies support me? Focusing on the small “wins,” such as a call with a friend, a good laugh, or, especially, mom having a nice day. Being careful to talk to my partner about something other than caregiving. Daydreaming about a future with less stress. And, as always, cuddling with my dog, Scout.

The biggest boost comes from remembering that this is the daughter I want to be. It’s not always easy. Sometimes I have to step outside and breathe deeply or cry. But I’m spending time with, and helping, my mom. I plan to have no regrets.



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