

# the Jewish Observer

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# Happy Chanukah

A PUBLICATION OF



Jewish Federation  
& Jewish Foundation  
OF NASHVILLE AND MIDDLE TENNESSEE

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DECEMBER 2, 2011  
6 KISLEV 5772



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# Major Gifts donors thanked for generous gifts at initial 2012 Annual Campaign event

The Jewish Federation launched its 2012 Annual Campaign with an event hosted by Phyllis Alper. Sandy Averbuch, Campaign chair, and Ellen Levitt, Major Gifts vice chair, thanked the 55 guests for their generous gifts and highlighted the many reasons why Federation giving is an important part of their yearly philanthropy.

Guests were inspired by next generation leaders Sara Hanai and Freya Sacks, who traveled on Federation-funded missions to Israel and Moldova to connect with Jews globally.

Joshua Fogelson, director of strategic development for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), inspired the crowd with his first hand accounts of the vital work of the JDC, Federation's overseas partner in helping Jews throughout the world. He recently returned from visits to the Jewish commu-

nities of Cuba and St. Petersburg, Russia.

The evening also highlighted the vital programs and services that enhance the Nashville community through partnership with our local agencies, such as caring for the elderly, dedication to building our Jewish community, and supporting Jewish education. "The lives touched through our important work, locally, in Israel and around the world make it my privilege to lead this effort," Averbuch said.

Barbara and Larry Speller, co-chairs for Major Gifts, said, "We are so pleased that the launch of the 2012 Campaign has inspired increased gifts and we are confident that this momentum will carry us forward." □



Gene Heller and Fred Zimmerman



From left: Joshua Fogelson, Ellen Levitt and Steve Riven



Sandy Averbuch, Annual Campaign chair  
Photos: Barbara Schwarcz



Joshua Fogelson and Phyllis Alper



Gil Fox and Steve Hirsch



From left: Mark Freedman, Dan Heller and Sarah Hanai

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# Best Jewish Nashville summons the best in each of us

By Mark S. Freedman

This is my first column in *The Observer* since becoming the executive director of the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee on Oct. 1. That being the case, I want to offer special words of thanks to everyone for the extremely warm welcome that my wife, Leslie Klein, and I have received following our arrival here in Nashville.

We are extremely appreciative to the many members of the Nashville Jewish community who have reached out to us and made us feel that we are now living in the best Jewish community of all. We look forward to being an integral part of Jewish life in Nashville for many years to come.

And in this first column (and I promise to resist writing in every issue of the *Observer* because as the publisher of the paper I want to hear and read many different Jewish voices on these pages) I would like to reflect on the Best Jewish Nashville (BJN) project. On the center pages of this issue of the *Observer* you will find a special feature that details the accomplishments of Best Jewish Nashville as the initiative enters its second year of operations.

When I recall my initial visit to Nashville to interview for the position I now hold, I was so impressed with the extraordinary effort that went into creating Best Jewish Nashville. It was a courageous and bold step taken by both the leadership and a broad swath of the Nashville Jewish community to effect real change in a world of Jewish philanthropy that is awash in change that has had a profound impact on many Jewish communities across the United States.

Under the leadership of Stephen Riven and his BJN committee, the



Mark S. Freedman

Jewish Federation took a long hard look at its funding model and decided it could do better. Neither the Federation donors, the beneficiary agencies or the annual campaign volunteers who ask for contributions were satisfied with simply funding deficits and settling for across-the-board increases (or cuts) depending upon whether the Campaign was up or down.

Everyone sensed that a more creative approach was called for to energize volunteers, empower agencies and account to the Federation's legion of generous donors. After an exhaustive study, the BJN committee identified three areas of future and unmet needs including engaging the "Next Generation," increasing services to seniors and developing quality programming to enhance Israel education and advocacy.

One year into BJN, it appears the Federation has hit a home run. Fourteen separate programs operated either individually or in partnerships and collaborations with every Jewish

institution in Nashville or with national Jewish organizations, are addressing each of the three priority areas identified by BJN and they are having impacts on multiple levels.

More Jewish clients are being served, more volunteers are engaged in assisting in the implementation of the various programs and projects, a new cadre of lay volunteers participates in the grant process and program outcomes are measureable and tangible, leading to greater accountability to the Federation's donors and prospective donors.

With all the progress that has been made, we are still fine-tuning the BJN process. We hope and expect that the inter-institutional partnerships that are being forged will lead to greater levels of innovation and experimentation. We know that there will be challenges along the way and we are working hard to temper the unexpected with patience and perseverance.

The bottom line we see thus far represents far more than the dollars and the volunteer time invested in the BJN process. We are seeing more interest in Israel-related programming and with trips and missions to Israel. We see more young people from the "Next Generation" joining our ranks through

social and business networking programs, Shabbat dinner outreach gatherings and by participation in social action projects. We are reaching more families than ever before through the highly successful PJ Library program and we are serving more seniors through the GJCC, the Jewish Family Service and through our local congregations. We have direct partnerships with Vanderbilt Hillel, and we are blessed to have not one, but two Israel emissaries in our community this year.

We are confident that we are on the right track with Best Jewish Nashville. Its origins are firmly rooted in the past achievements and proud history of the Nashville Jewish community which understood that our collective success was only as strong as each individual who played a part in making it happen. Now more than ever, the Federation stands ready to engage with every member of our community, for it is in each Jewish soul that we will continue to find the Best Jewish Nashville.

I want to close by wishing each of you a Happy Chanukah filled with light and with joy. □

Mark S. Freedman is executive director of the Jewish Federation of Nashville.

## Jeremy Ben-Ami, national president of J Street, will speak in Nashville on Dec. 12

Jeremy Ben-Ami, the founder and president of J Street and a former policy advisor to President Bill Clinton, will discuss his new book, *A New Voice for Israel* at Loews Vanderbilt Hotel on Mon., Dec. 12, at 7:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

In his book, Ben-Ami, whose grandparents were first-generation Zionists and founders of Tel Aviv, argues for why Israel needs an alternative Jewish voice in Washington to reform American Mideast policy and bring about a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian stalemate.

Ben-Ami argues that current U.S. policies toward Israel do not hold up against the current realities, and there



Jeremy Ben-Ami

is an urgent need for a pro-Israel agenda that includes compromise and engagement with the Palestinians.

Ben-Ami has

been profiled in *The Atlantic*, *The Washington Post*, and *CQ Weekly*. He was one of "50 People of the Decade" selected by *Ha'Aretz*, the influential Israeli daily newspaper, and *The Jerusalem Post* included him in its list of the "50 Most Influential Jews in the World." □

## Shirley Zeitlin chosen as winner of Stevie Award for Women in Business

By Kathy Carlson

It was just a regular weekend morning. Nashville Realtor and community member Shirley Zeitlin was brushing her teeth when the phone rang. When she picked up and got the news, she says, "I was stunned."

The founder and chief executive officer of Nashville's Zeitlin & Co. Realtors learned she had won the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Eighth Annual Stevie Awards for Women in Business.

Earlier, when a business colleague and account supervisor at Seigenthaler Public Relations, Ben Palos, broached the idea of nominating her for the award, she recalls thinking, "There's no way I'm going to be in the running for an international award in business." Wrong!

First, she learned she was among five finalists who included an executive vice president of international banking at Akbank in Istanbul, the president and CEO of iFinance Canada Inc. in Toronto, and two American executives: the presi-

dent and CEO of WomenOnBusiness.com and the president and CEO of KeySplash Creative Inc.

Then, last month, Palos told Zeitlin she had won. There were winners in 78 categories, chosen from more than 1,300 nominees from around the world. The official announcement was made on Nov. 11. This was the eighth year the Stevie Awards for Women in Business have been made. The name comes from the Greek name Stefanos, which means "crowned," the organization's website explains.

Zeitlin & Co., Realtors has been in operation for more than 30 years and specializes in transfers and relocations. Zeitlin has served as president and board member of the Tennessee Association of Realtors and the Nashville Board of Realtors. She has also served as a member of the board of the Federal Reserve Bank of Nashville, where she served as chairman in 1991. Zeitlin and her family have long been active in Nashville's Jewish community.

Right now, she's waiting to receive the award itself and says, "I'll enjoy having it in my office." □

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Rabbi Philip Rice gives the invocation during a Clergy for Tolerance breakfast at Loews Vanderbilt Hotel. UMNS photo by Mike DuBose.

## Faith leaders meet on immigration; Rabbi Flip Rice gives invocation

**N**early 300 faith leaders from across the state gathered together on Dec. 1 in Nashville to consider the ethical and moral impact of pending legislation that would affect immigrant communities statewide.

The Nashville Board of Rabbis signed on as sponsors of the event.

Clergy ranging from priests, pastors, imams, rabbis and monks attended a Clergy for Tolerance breakfast at Loews Vanderbilt Hotel to hear keynote speaker, William H. Willimon, Bishop of the North Alabama Conference of The United Methodist Church. Willimon is one of four Christian leaders who joined a federal lawsuit to try and stop Alabama's recent immigration legislation, which is considered to be the most extreme in the nation.

Rabbi Flip Rice of Congregation Micah gave the invocation. He said:

"The Movement within Judaism in which I was ordained as a rabbi has, since its inception in 1873, spoken out repeatedly in support of a generous, fair and non-discriminatory immigration policy. The Jewish people were and continue to be immigrants to the United States. We are especially aware that generous immigration policies have benefited Jews fleeing persecution and economic hardship, and we remember painfully the times when these policies have been unfairly restrictive.

"Having struggled to adjust to a society that did not always welcome our arrival, we understand the problems faced by today's immigrants and our faith demands of us concern for the stranger in our midst. The Book of Leviticus commands, "When strangers sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong. The

strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." [19:33-34].

"This principle permeates Jewish tradition and is echoed 35 times in the Torah."

Rice followed with a prayer said in Hebrew, English and Spanish:

"May our God, the God of our ancestors before, the God who instructed Abraham to leave his native land and go forth, protect and bless all the inhabitants of our country. May You help the divinity in each of us to recognize the divinity in all of us . . . Thus enabling us to tolerate, accept and love the differences in us all. . ."

"Please don't leave these moral and ethical matters to your politicians," Willimon urged, "Speak up as people of faith from your faith perspective and show the world that you have something to say on this issue."

Dr. Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, also encouraged his peers to act. "Now is the time for us to build the moral capital in houses of faith for the coming tsunami of anti-immigration rhetoric and anti-immigration laws. Now is the time for proactive collaboration among good willed people of faith so that we can advance the common good in the state of Tennessee."

Clergy for Tolerance is an interfaith coalition that seeks to encourage dialogue on federal and state immigration policy from a faith perspective. By utilizing state and national facts, examining faith traditions, and providing opportunities to express compassion for immigrants and refugees, the coalition strives to mobilize and educate people of faith to support comprehensive immigration reform on a federal level. □

### A statement by the President and Executive Director

The Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee

The Federation newspaper and Jewish community events:  
Where we stand

The Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee is committed to ensuring that individuals and organizations that are a part of the local and broader Jewish community play an active and meaningful role in Jewish communal life. We welcome and encourage the civil expression of diverse viewpoints that are in keeping with the fundamental mission and goals of the Federation which serve to enhance and enrich Jewish life, promote a cohesive Jewish community and strengthen our support and connection to Israel and with Jewish people throughout the Diaspora.

As the publisher of The Observer, the Federation publishes a variety of opinions on issues of Jewish interest. Not all content that appears in The Observer, in particular letters to the editor or opinion pieces, constitutes an endorsement or support by the Board of Directors of the Federation or the Editorial Review Board of The Observer.

In order to ensure fair and balanced content in The Observer, the Federation's Board of Directors has re-constituted an editorial review board whose purpose will be to maintain editorial balance in the publication and to serve the publisher and the editor of The Observer in an advisory capacity. The editorial review board will operate within guidelines and policies that have been established and approved by the Board of the Federation.

The Federation recognizes the autonomy of the decision and policy-making authority of each of its local partner agencies and congregations generally and specifically with respect to the use of their facilities. In presenting events and speakers of Jewish interest the Federation will work cooperatively with local, national and international Jewish organizations, and exercise its judgment to encourage the best interests of the Nashville Jewish community be served while allowing a full range of Jewish viewpoints to be shared with the community. *Co-sponsorship of an organization event or speaker by the Federation or by the Federation's Community Relations Committee does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of a particular organization's or speaker's point of view.*

In an effort to encourage that the facilities of the Gordon Jewish Community Center, which also serves as home to the Federation and is the community's primary venue for Jewish community events, remain accessible to organizations and speakers who represent a wide range of Jewish points of view, the Federation has agreed to support the GJCC by serving on a special GJCC committee through which the GJCC will determine which [Jewish] organizations and speakers will be permitted to have access to its facilities. We are hopeful that by lending support to the GJCC in this process, we contribute to assuring the Jewish community that a full range of Jewish viewpoints and interests are represented.

We hope that our community will join us in separating the issue of access to our communal facilities from acceptance and/or endorsement of the views offered during communal events. The Jewish people have a long tradition of encouraging and nurturing vibrant debate. We firmly believe that exposure to a broad range of perspectives will assist each individual member of the community in making their own appropriate and informed decisions.

We reaffirm, with this statement, our commitment to an open, inclusive and tolerant Jewish community. We will make every effort to ensure that Jewish voices within our community can be heard, and that the decisions we make about access to our community facilities are well-considered, well-informed, underscored by the integrity of our basic principles, and are in keeping with the fundamental mission and values of the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee and our partner agencies.

Martin Ted Mayden, President  
Mark S. Freedman, Executive Director  
November 28, 2011

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# commentary & opinion

## Community would benefit from open dialogue on Middle East

By Amy-Jill Levine

In June of 2010, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs convened national Jewish community leaders to draft a statement on civility, a statement now signed by hundreds of leaders including Irwin Venick (chair of Nashville's Community Relations Committee) and Avi Poster (the former chair). The statement notes:

Our Sages saw the fruit of arguments that were conducted *l'shem shamayim*, "for the sake of Heaven." They fervently believed that great minds, engaged in earnest search and questioning, could

find better and richer solutions to the problems they faced. They refrained from insisting on uniformity. They sought to preserve and thereby honor the views of the minority as well as the majority. They did so through their understanding of the great teaching of *Eilu v'elu divrei Elokim chayim*, "both these words and those are the words of the living God."

Such discussions over the Middle East are lacking in Nashville. Instead of listening to various views, our community in general has hunkered down into reinforcing positions rather than reconsidering them. J Street advocates have been called "self-hating Jews"; propo-

nents of Greater Israel (i.e., the proposal that Israel absorb the West Bank and East Jerusalem) have been called "disturbed fanatics." Where diatribe replaces dialogue, we all lose.

My point is not that every voice deserves equal hearing. I would not welcome voices, neither on the far left (because they regard Israel as a colonialist intruder on Palestinian land; because they incorrectly call Israel an apartheid state) nor the far right (because they believe that a Jewish state can only be established by the Mashiach and therefore support Ahmadinejad and his allies) that promote Israel's destruction. Nor would I welcome voices that pro-

mote hatred of all Arabs or Muslims, or ethnic cleansing.

But I am troubled that some voices that still hold to the dream of Israel as both a democracy and as Jewish are unwelcome in Nashville. The CRC and the Federation have invited speakers from the Israel Project, the Jewish Agency for Israel, and other advocacy groups; this week, Sherith Israel and Congregation Micah will host Morton Klein of the Zionist Organization of America. But unlike the State of Israel itself, Nashville's Jewish institutions have closed their doors to anyone remotely critical of current Israeli policies, with the exception of The Temple's invitation to Martin Bresler, chair of Americans for Peace Now and a member of the AJC Board of Governors. This is not a healthy position; indeed, it is not a Jewish one.

On Dec. 12, Jeremy Ben-Ami, the founder of J Street, will be in Nashville. J Street contacted Sherith Israel, West End Synagogue, The Temple, Congregation Micah and the GJCC: Not one venue, as yet, will open its doors to him. As with Yael Dayan in May, again the official Jewish community appears to be promoting silence, not dialogue.

Members of J Street have been called enemies of Israel. Ridiculous. It would be absurd to call the members of J Street Nashville Israel's enemies. And it would be similarly foolish to tag Ben-Ami with that label.

I am not a member of J Street; there are other organizations that promote a two-state resolution and preserving Israel as Jewish and as a democracy that I find more compelling (e.g., the Israeli organization Shalom Achshav and its U.S. counterpart, Americans for Peace Now). But with respect to questions about J Street, it seems wiser to hear what its founder has to say than to prejudice based on innuendo.

J Street, as far as I know, has never preached hatred; it has never done anything other than to promote what it sees to be a viable course for Israel's survival. According to its mission statement, "J Street represents Americans, primarily but not exclusively Jewish, who support Israel and its desire for security as the Jewish homeland, as well as the right of the Palestinians to a sovereign state of their own – two states living side-by-side in peace and security." Support for a two-state solution is hardly radical; it has been the official position of the U.S. government since the first Bush administration.

Surely we are not so inhospitable, and so convinced we are right that we do not need to listen to another voice — a voice that we might even find ourselves supporting if only we knew what it actually says. Surely we are not so uncreative that we cannot, when Ben-Ami comes, pose to him the doubts some of us have about his organization and so learn, directly, what exactly he and his organization promote. □

Amy-Jill Levine is University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies, Professor of Jewish Studies, Divinity School and College of Arts and Science, Vanderbilt University.

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## Akiva sheds light on light during evening of adult education

**A**kiva School presents Jewish Studies Night: A Night of Adult Learning for the Community, on Thurs., Dec. 15, at 7 p.m. Five classes in all, centering on the theme of light, will be offered in two sessions, so each participant can attend two classes taught by community rabbis, scholars and leaders.

In the first session, participants have a choice of three classes, listed in alphabetical order by teacher.

Shaul Kelner, assistant professor of sociology and Jewish studies at Vanderbilt University, will teach "Freedom Lights for Soviet Jews: Chanukah During the Cold War." From the 1960s through 1980s, American Jews mobilized in a worldwide campaign to free their 3 million brothers and sisters trapped and persecuted in the USSR. At Chanukah, like other Jewish holidays, American Jews held rallies and took political action to redeem Soviet Jews. The class talks about what was it like to mark the Festival of Lights back in the heyday of the Soviet Jewry movement. Those who lived through it are encouraged to bring their stories.

Rabbi Phil Lieberman, assistant professor of Jewish studies and law at Vanderbilt, will teach a class titled "Light in the Dark Ages." The class explores Jewish creativity in the medieval period, revisiting the notion that Jewish life in the middle ages was

gloomy by examining law and literature of medieval Jews.

Vanderbilt Professor of Astronomy David A. Weintraub's class is titled "Shedding Light on Dark Matter." For most of human history, we thought that light-producing objects (stars and galaxies) were the principal, dominant ones in the knowable universe. We now know better. Matter that produces light makes up at most five percent of all the stuff in the universe; "dark matter" makes up the rest and finding out more about that dark stuff is a major preoccupation of astronomers right now. The class discusses the luminous matter in the universe to help us understand the idea of dark matter. By the time we're done, some of the most bizarre objects we know about – black holes (which are very dark) – may seem very ordinary.

In the second session, Weintraub again will offer his class on dark matter.

Also in the second session, Rabbi Flip Rice of Congregation Micah will teach a class titled "You Light up My Life," in which participants will explore how the light of Torah teaches us more about ourselves as parents than about our children.

And Inbar Shaked, Jewish Federation shlichah to the Nashville community, will teach a class titled "Eight Sources of Light in Israel."

For more information or to sign up for the classes, call Akiva at 356-1880 or contact Daniella Pressner, Akiva's director of Judaic studies, at [dpressner@akivanashville.net](mailto:dpressner@akivanashville.net). □



The American Jewish Committee hosted some 30 lone American soldiers serving in the Israel Defense Forces far from their families, at its Jerusalem office for a Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 24. This year, the 10th time AJC has hosted the event, there was no longer an empty chair at the table marking the captivity of Gilad Shalit. (American Jewish Committee)

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# Ben & Jerry's co-founder explains how to do well by doing good

By Suzanne Kurtz

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A scoop of Ben & Jerry's may taste like heaven, and for company cofounder Jerry Greenfield, the business of making ice cream has a spiritual side as well.

"There is a spiritual aspect to business, just as there is to people," Greenfield told a crowd of 300 recently at a networking event for the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington.

The ice cream company known for its colorful pint-size containers, funky flavors and creative marketing has implemented smart business practices that have advanced its bottom line as well as its do-good corporate culture.

Raised on suburban New York's Long Island, Greenfield, 60, and his longtime friend and business partner Ben Cohen met in gym class in junior high school after discovering a shared dislike of running track. They were chubby kids who always enjoyed eating, Greenfield said, and both attended Hebrew school and had their bar mitzvahs at the Reform Congregation of Merrick.

Though a self-described "cultural Jew," Greenfield said that his religious education helped sensitize him to discrimination, marginalization and the needs of "other people in society and around the world."

In his mid-20s, after being rejected from some 20 medical schools and not content with working as a lab technician, Greenfield split a \$5 Pennsylvania State University correspondence course in ice cream-making with Cohen and embarked on a new business venture.

In 1978, with \$12,000 scraped



Ben & Jerry's co-founder Jerry Greenfield recently spoke at a Jewish Federation of Greater Washington event. (Jewish Federation of Greater Washington)

together from loans and savings, they opened Ben & Jerry's Home-made, Inc. in a renovated gas station in Burlington, Vt. Their single storefront venture would grow eventually into a \$300 million global ice cream empire owned by the Unilever Corp.

Neither Greenfield nor Cohen is still active in the day-to-day running of the company. Instead, Greenfield said, his present role with Ben & Jerry's holds "no responsibility and no authority," joking that it should be a position that those

attending the federation event also strive for in their careers.

But their vision for an ice cream company that would be both profitable and care about the needs of society has left a lasting impact on both employees and customers.

"Simply operating this way had so many benefits for the company," said Greenfield, as he detailed some of the values-driven business practices that also saw him and Cohen named U.S. Small Business Persons of the Year in 1988.

One oft-cited example of Ben & Jerry's socially conscious business practices is its purchase of \$8 million annually of chocolate brownies baked at the Greyston Bakery in Yonkers, N.Y., a nonprofit that offers job training and hires workers who might have a difficult time finding jobs elsewhere, such as ex-convicts, former substance abusers and welfare recipients.

"We came up with this popular flavor [for using the brownies] and the bakery is pretty happy with it, too!" said Greenfield.

In 1984, when the company needed to raise additional capital to grow the business, they let their Vermont neighbors "get a scoop of the action" by holding an in-state public offering.

"People of essentially any economic situation could participate," said Greenfield, and one in every 100 Vermont families became shareholders in the company. "As the business supported the community, the community supported the business."

In 1985, the company made a public stock offering and also established the Ben & Jerry's Foundation. It began donating 7.5 percent of pretax profits to nonprofit organizations — the highest percentage of any publicly traded company at the time, he said.

"As you give, you receive," Greenfield said. "As you help others, you are helped in return."

He added, "And just because the idea that the good that you do comes back to you is written in the Bible and not in some business textbook doesn't mean that it is any less valid." □

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# In Detroit, Jewish resurgence led by young aims to transform city

By Dan Klein

DETROIT (JTA) — Blair Nosan grew up in the Detroit suburb of West Bloomfield, attended the University of Michigan and then, like thousands of other young Jews from the beleaguered state, moved away.

Though she grew up in a heavily Jewish area Nosan, 26, had felt disconnected both from her Jewish identity and the nearby city, which was undergoing its own debilitating population drain. Over the last decade, 25 percent of Detroit's residents have taken flight. Some 5,000 young Jews left Michigan between 2005 and 2010, according to a 2010 survey by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit.

But then Nosan came back.

In 2009, she moved to Detroit to work in its burgeoning urban agriculture scene, eventually starting her own pickling company, Suddenly Sauer.

Nosan was startled to learn that she was part of a significant migration of young Jews to the Motor City — a young Jewish renaissance that has been as unexpected as it has been successful. It's evident not just in numbers but in a resurgence of Jewish activity and vitality in the heart of Detroit, including among Jews who had never been Jewishly active.

"I did not expect to find a Jewish community at all," Nosan told JTA, echoing the sentiments of many of Detroit's new Jewish residents. "Most of the Jews were living in Detroit as participants in the Jewish community, but with their Jewish identity in mind were trying to fill in the blanks of this long history we had had in the city but weren't raised with."

Over the last few years, a slew of new programs from the institutional to the grass roots and from suburb to city have blossomed in the Detroit area.

Detroit's first Moishe House opened in June in midtown, and its occupants — five from the suburbs of Detroit and one from Los Angeles — have been holding five or six Jewish events a month. The most recent was a sauerkraut workshop taught by Nosan that attracted 16 people.

At a bar in Royal Oak, a suburb near Detroit, Rabbi Leiby Burnham began a weekly program in 2007 called Torah on Tap to talk about Judaism in a bar setting, with the drinks paid for by an anonymous donor. Starting with seven people, the event now draws as many as 100 per week.

The most striking example of the transformation of Jewish life in Detroit is at the Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue, the last remaining synagogue in the city. Detroit once was a major hub of Jewish life, with 44 synagogues. But after race riots in the 1960s and economic decline, most of the city's whites — Jews included — left for the northern suburbs, repeating a pattern taking place in cities across America.

In 2008, the 90-year-old Conservative shul was in dire straits — open only once a week, often unable to assemble a minyan and without a rabbi (the last one had died in 2003). The board was considering packing it in and selling the historic four-story building.

"Some didn't think we had a future," said David Powell, who has attended Isaac Agree for decades. "We continued to plod along until reinforcements came."

Starting a few years ago, those reinforcements began to come in the form of young social activists and entrepreneurs who were drawn to the city by its growing arts scene and revitalization programs that offered subsidized rent and unique employment opportunities for social justice work. Many of the Jews among them came to the synagogue, in the process changing it. They began running services, serving on the board and organizing events of the sort that the old shul had never seen: Israeli film screenings, potluck dinners, Israeli folk dancing. Community activists also used it as a gathering place.

"The synagogue wasn't meeting the needs of the city, and it was struggling," said Oren Goldenberg, a filmmaker and prominent activist in the community. "It needed to adapt."

Isaac Agree became more and more popular. Services were held three days a

week rather than one. Events were organized to celebrate all the holidays. The synagogue started offering Hebrew lessons and even conversion classes. And now every Friday night it hosts a Shabbat dinner.

"I liked Isaac Agree because it stayed; it's been here the whole time," Nosan said. "That's a poignant point of entry for the community — what's already here and been here, and figuring out new energy that's being brought to the table."

In the past few years, Isaac Agree has more than tripled its membership households, becoming the only conservative synagogue in Michigan not to suffer a decline, according to the 2010 federation survey.

"There are definitely more Jews here than there were a year ago," said Goldenberg while having coffee in Avalon International Breads, a bakery co-founded by Jackie Vicks, a 20-year resident of the city who joined the synagogue last year. "I live here. When things change, I know it."

Some of the new Jewish revitalization programs, including Torah on Tap and Detroit's Moishe House, are receiving support from CommunityNext, a program started by one Detroit returnee based on the idea that creating cultural activities and a strong cultural center is as important as jobs to retaining and attracting young adults to Detroit.

"Young Jews are not going to move to suburbs, they're going to move to cities," said Jordan Wolfe, the Detroit native who launched the program in 2010 after returning to the area in

2007 following a stint in California's high-tech sector. "They're willing to take jobs as a waiter if there's something to do."

CommunityNext's strategy is to support both Jewish culture and Detroit's revitalization.

The program, which was funded in the first year by \$60,000 from two anonymous donors and another \$40,000 from Detroit's Jewish federation, organizes Jewish events and offers Jewish entrepreneurs small business loans and free office space. CommunityNext also supports nonsectarian Detroit revitalization projects such as Come Play Detroit, which helps organize intramural sports leagues. In its first year, Come Play Detroit created 27 leagues in nine sports involving 4,500 people.

"We're building community, but the larger agenda is Detroit," said Rachel Lachover, CommunityNext's associate director. "People are moving back. People are talking about Detroit."

In August, the federation teamed up with Come Play Detroit to set up fundraising sports tournaments across the country, raising \$100,000 for 25 rent subsidies to help people move to Detroit on the condition that they hold community events once a month — the Moishe House model.

"I've enjoyed becoming part of the Detroit Jewish community," said Allie Gross, an L.A. native now living at Moishe House. "It's changing as a lot of young people move back in. There's a sense of urgency. People are excited about what Detroit's offering. It's very exciting." □

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# Can Tel Aviv become a center for fashion?

By Jessica Steinberg

TEL AVIV (JTA) — For Israeli fashionistas, last month's inaugural Tel Aviv Fashion Week proved what they've known for years: Israeli fashion is creative, current and worthy of worldwide attention — and, hopefully, sales.

"I wanted to help my business and help my country," said organizer Ofir Lev, deputy CEO of the Israel Textile and Fashion Association and a former model. "I wanted to show that there is fashion and creativity in Israel."

Lev drew on his extensive contacts abroad to bring together foreign fashion writers and Italian star designer Roberto Cavalli in Tel Aviv for the three-day fashion fest.

While the Israeli fashion scene has been around for decades, starting with Lea Gottlieb and her Gottex swimwear empire, it has been many years since there was any kind of public fashion extravaganza.

In the 1970s, a fashion week was held twice a year at the Tel Aviv Hilton, recalls designer Gideon Oberson, who is also known for his swimsuits, and buyers came from the United States and Europe. But the Israeli manufacturing industry then was quite different, with at least a dozen fashion companies manufacturing entire collections for export.

"Now we don't have companies doing fashion, but we have solo designers, at least four or five talented ones emerging each year," Oberson said. "I think this fashion week was created to

offer information, to create a bit of a hubbub and make some noise."

And, of course, to generate orders and positive media coverage. But does Tel Aviv have any chance of becoming a major stop on the fashion circuit?

Lev says he's already planning another Fashion Week for next April. He's intent on getting Israeli-American Elie Tahari as well as Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Italian designer Miuccia Prada and fashion luxury house Dolce & Gabbana on board. Everyone is just "two phone calls away," Lev says.

The challenge is to get everyone to Israel, and the country's reputation as a dangerous place — albeit undesired — makes it an uphill fight.

"We have to battle with a Wild West existence," said designer Dorit Frankfurt, who heads a well-established Israeli label that exports overseas. Frankfurt, who has manufactured her collection since 1983 at her own factory in Tel Aviv, showcased her spring collection during Fashion Week.

For Sasson Kedem, a creator of artsy, architecturally styled pieces for women who also served as a mentor on the one season of "Project Runway Israel," said Tel Aviv Fashion Week — referred to here as TLV FW, in Fashion TV style — was an opportunity to show the world that "we're not just about bombs."

"We're very clever," Kedem said, referring to his fellow design colleagues. "But we are different because of this place. We have passion, and we have to grab our opportunities because no one can take our inspiration from us."

Lev and his partner Motty Reif, a producer known for Beverly Hills Fashion Week, say Israel's security situation is part of what encourages Israeli fashion creativity.

"It's not an easy life here, it pushes us to be very creative, makes us think differently and improvise," Lev said. "We're brave because of the situation we live in."

A handful of well-known Israelis already are established in the fashion world, including Alber Elbaz from the Parisian house of Lanvin and designer to the stars Yigal Azrouel.

Well-known Israeli designer Ronen Chen, who exports his women's collection to the United States and Europe, was conspicuous in his absence from Fashion Week. He said the timing wasn't good — he's already working on next winter, and the shows focused on spring 2012 — and he acknowledged a certain amount of ambivalence regarding the concept.

"Here in Israel, we don't do shows in order to get orders — there's just a link missing," he said. "Department store buyers aren't going to come here to order our clothes because we don't have a long enough track record, we don't have the standards necessary. I just didn't know if it was worthwhile."

Designers had to spend some \$7,000 each on runway shows, and some of the younger designers split the costs, with each sharing a half-hour show with one or two others. Lev estimated that the week cost about \$2 million, including costs for

flying in Cavalli and the fashion writers, and putting them up at Tel Aviv hotels. He did snare some sponsorship, including from Maybelline USA and several Israeli companies, such as the women's magazine HaIsha and retailer Renuar.

Still, it wasn't easy. The city of Tel Aviv-Jaffa did not offer any financial assistance, except for free space at HaTachana, the recently refurbished Ottoman-era train station in Jaffa. Lev likes to compare Israel to Denmark, a similarly sized country that sponsors a 2 million euro fashion week each year.

"The growth of the Israeli design industry was 8 percent last year; that's something," he says. "That's a lot and I want to show it off."

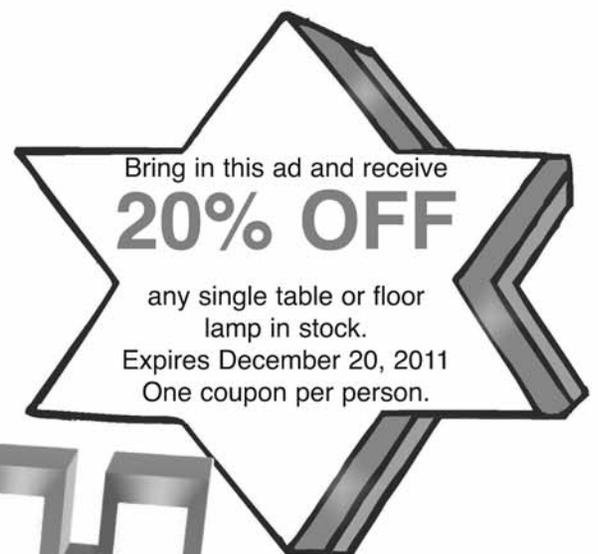
Lisa Armstrong, a journalist for the British Telegraph, wrote about Israeli soap star and designer Dorit Bar Or, the designer of Pas Pour Toi.

"Israeli editors declared the local flavour of her collection a bit parochial," Armstrong wrote. "To outsiders, it was exotic: entirely black (despite the enviable climate, they're not exactly embracing The New Colour), with impeccably executed gold embroidery, a lot drawn from Arab designs — and gorgeous gold earrings in the shape of leaves that curved up the lobes."

That's the idea, says Kedem: Israel is not Paris, but Israeli designers excel at "translating the land."

"You see the Mediterranean in our clothing," he said. "We do intimate clothing that offers the feel of our country." □

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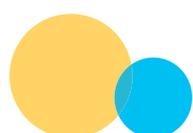
**YOU gave us great feedback including:**

- offer opportunities to engage the next generation of young adult leaders
- increase the programmatic offerings to seniors
- offer programs targeting Israel education and advocacy training
- encourage agencies and congregations to work together to offer programs
- serve Jews in outlying geographic areas
- enhance educational opportunities about what are the needs of Jews in Israel and worldwide, and what Federation is doing to address those needs.

We have heard you and have been hard at work to implement your ideas and feedback.

Two committees; the Grants Committee and the Local/Global Committee have dedicated time and energy to work with our agencies and congregations to offer the programs YOU IDENTIFIED AS CRITICAL.

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**Here is a list of the newly funded programs offered in 2010-2011 as a DIRECT RESULT OF YOUR FEEDBACK:**

### ENGAGING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERSHIP

#### **Next Generation Satellite Suburb Shabbat Dinners and Programs - The Temple/GJCC**

This unique program's goal is to provide a series of Friday night dinners and educational programs in communities of new Jewish population growth: Hendersonville, East Nashville, Franklin, etc. The dinners will target next generation Jewish adults and families who are not currently receiving Jewish services in their areas and connect them to the larger Jewish community.  
\$11,000.00

#### **PJ Library - GJCC and GJCC Preschool, Temple Playschool, and Micah Children's Academy**

The PJ Library is a program that sends Jewish-content books and music free of cost on a monthly basis to children from age 6 months to 6 years. The three preschools will work together to market the program to both affiliated and unaffiliated families in Nashville and Middle Tennessee.  
\$13,000.00

#### **Vanderbilt Hillel Senior-Class Leadership and Community Engagement Initiative**

This project will engage the senior class in social, community service, networking, and educational activities in order to establish potential long-term connections for the seniors to the Nashville Jewish Community and Hillel.  
\$6,000.00

#### **Next Generation Engagement - Jewish Federation, Hillel, and The Temple**

A dedicated Young Adult Engagement Associate now staffs JMingle, Federation's Young



Adult Division, Hillel's graduate student programs, and Temple young adult programs. In addition, he works with all the congregations and agencies in identifying program and engagement opportunities. This program's goal is to enhance and increase opportunities for Jewish young adult engagement in Jewish life.  
\$24,250.00

### SERVING SENIORS



#### **Thank Goodness It's Thursday - GJCC**

Thank Goodness It's Thursday is a weekly lunch and learn program for senior adults at the GJCC. Participants are offered a hot lunch, exercise, and Jewish educational and social programs. This grant adds the hot lunch/nutrition component to this program. \$10,000.00

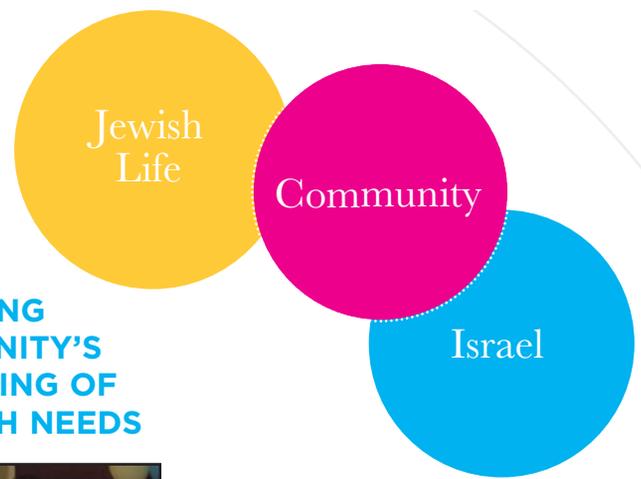
#### **Directory for Jewish Seniors - Jewish Family Service**

JFS has compiled a comprehensive, large-print directory of all services, programs, and activities available to the Nashville Senior Community. This directory is available free of charge to you and your senior friends and relatives.  
\$3,400.00

#### **Senior FYI - Jewish Family Service**

This day-long educational series for boomers and seniors, centered on timely topics of concern for the senior population. Topics included long term health care, powers of attorney/wills/estate planning, successful retirement planning, and other topics requested frequently from JFS.  
\$2,400.00

# Nashville New Initiatives



## INCREASING ISRAEL EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY



### Increase your Israel IQ: From Argument to Advocacy - Community Relations Committee

A series of engaging and informative seminars for adults led by experts on a variety of issues related to Israel and Israel Advocacy (including effective advocacy skills, contemporary issues, land and people, critically analyzing Israel in the media, issues and current events in Israel etc.). Also includes a series of facilitated Jewish dialogues enabling several groups of 6 - 8 participants to discuss Israel-related topics in a civil and open manner. \$15,350.00

### J-Connect - Congregation Sherith Israel

J-Connect is a cutting-edge weekly program where Jewish middle-school and high-school students engage with master teachers in Jerusalem in a virtual classroom (on a large screen TV) and discuss Jewish text. Video and music from cyberspace are interwoven and the students end up with a profound connection to Jewish text and the land of Israel. Students gain a sense of life in Israel, its challenges, its rewards and its realities. \$4,000.00

### Community Israel Education Initiative - Nashville Jewish Educators' Network (includes Congregation Micah, Sherith Israel, The Temple and West End Synagogue)

The Educators proposed the hiring of a community-wide Israel Educator to improve the quality and frequency of synagogue and community-wide Israel programming. The Israel Educator will be responsible for the Get Connected Teen Israel Trip kallah, one Israel-themed program at each synagogue school, programs with P2K partners in Hadera, and an annual Israel Educators' Retreat. \$10,000.00

### Building Blocks Workshop - Congregation Micah and Akiva School

In order to generate excitement about Jerusalem, Israel and Jewish history, a team of professional educators and architects helped children and their families construct a 400-square-foot



model of the city of Jerusalem, the Warsaw Ghetto, and Masada out of Legos. Four different build sites involved as many as 200 children and families. This workshop is preceded and followed up with lessons relating to Israel. \$6,500.00

## INCREASING OUR COMMUNITY'S UNDERSTANDING OF GLOBAL JEWISH NEEDS



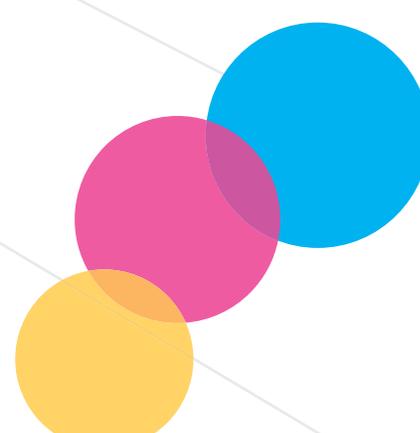
**Young Emissary/Community Shaliach Program** - One of the most effective ways to strengthen ties to Israel, deepen relationships to Israel, and increase Israel education locally is to bring a talented young Israeli to spend a year serving as an educational emissary. Our Shlichah works with all age groups and Jewish organizations to offer Israel-themed cultural, educational, and social programs geared toward increasing Jewish awareness, knowledge and pride. \$15,500.00 (two-year funding commitment)

**Young Adult Missions Trips** - The goal of the young adult mission trips is to attract promising young leaders who are active in our community as well as those who are new to us and send them as educational ambassadors to Israel and areas



of the world where Jews are most in need. After their travels, we will expect participants to educate our community first hand about the the needs of Jews, the services provided by our Federation-funded organizations and the remaining gaps in service. This year we sent 4 candidates to the JFNA's National Young Leadership Mission to Israel and 4 candidates in partnership with the Greensboro Federation to Camp Delet in Betsy, Moldova. \$24,000.00

**Worldwide-Partners' Speaker Series** - In order to provide educational opportunities for the entire community, we invited leaders from our longtime partner agencies, The Jewish Agency for Israel and the Joint Distribution Committee to bring current and up-to-the-minute briefings regarding emerging social needs and programs worldwide. This past year Dr. Misha Galperin, Vice President of JAFI, spent two days speaking with leadership, community members, rabbis, and young adults. \$4,500.00



# Thank You!

Your gift funds new initiatives PLUS provides additional support for Jewish needs in Nashville, Israel, and worldwide.

*Happy Chanukah*  
*to the*  
*Entire Nashville Community*



# The word on new Chanukah books for kids

By Penny Schwartz

BOSTON (JTA) — Judah Maccabee, meet the Golem of Prague. And Rebecca Rubin, Engineer Ari, and Nathan and Jacob, two brothers who are part of a modern American Jewish family.

They are among the characters who take center stage in this year's crop of new children's books for Chanukah, the eight-day Festival of Lights that begins this year at sundown Dec. 20. The lively mix includes the recent release of an e-book version of a popular chapter book and a dazzling work of design by a renowned paper artist.

**Hanukkah, Oh Hanukkah!** Illustrated by Olga and Eleksey Ivanov. Marshall Cavendish (\$12.99); ages 1-4

A brightly illustrated book version of the popular song features double-page paintings of a family — and their smiling pet dog — celebrating each of the eight nights of Chanukah. Sing along as they light the menorah, dance the hora, eat latkes and play dreidel. An endnote explains the origins of the Hebrew and Yiddish versions of the song, a mainstay of the holiday. Music and lyrics are provided. (A PJ Library selection)

**Engineer Ari and the Hanukkah Mishap** Deborah Bodin Cohen, illustrated by Shahar Kober. Kar-Ben (\$7.95); ages 4-8

Board a Chanukah train ride set in Israel, the latest addition to the award-winning series of "Engineer Ari" books that will especially delight train-loving kids. A stubborn camel provides the obstacle as Engineer Ari heads home with a trainload of Chanukah treats and toys. A Bedouin farmer named Kalil comes to the rescue, and together they celebrate the first night of Chanukah. Lively cartoon-like illustrations animate the fun and hopeful story. An author's note explains the building of the first railway line between Jaffa and Jerusalem.

**Nathan Blows Out the Hanukkah Candles** Tami Lehman-Wilzig with Nicole Katzman; illustrated by Jeremy Tugeau. Kar-Ben (\$7.95); ages 4-8

"Is it Hanukkah? Is it Hanukkah?"

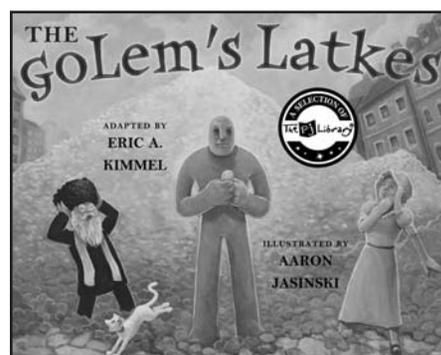
Jacob's big brother Nathan repeats the question, and many others, again and again, annoying Jacob. Jacob tries to understand that his brother's autism causes him to think and act differently, but sometimes Jacob loses his patience. Jacob is embarrassed in front of new neighbors when Nathan blows out the Chanukah candles as if it were a birthday celebration, but he defends Nathan when a new friend makes fun of his brother. The family's creative response brings everyone together in a fun-filled Chanukah celebration. The story tackles a serious issue without being heavy-handed. (A PJ Library selection)

**Chanukah Lights** Michael J. Rosen, Robert Sabuda. Candlewick Press (\$34.99); ages 5 and up

This gift book, a stunning collaboration between award-winning writer and poet Michael J. Rosen and master pop-up artist Robert Sabuda, is one that kids might have to pry away from their parents — or they can enjoy together. Rosen in simple language traces the history of celebrating Chanukah and its aspiration for freedom from ancient times to today, from the ancient Temple to the desert, across oceans, to shtetls and the cities of immigrant families, to an olive grove on a kibbutz in Israel. Sabuda's mesmerizing paper creations emerge miraculously from the folded pages. The artwork is outstanding in both its detail and the simplicity of the images it evokes.

**The Story of Hanukkah** David A. Adler, illustrated by Jill Weber. Holiday House (\$14.95); ages 4-8

Who was that guy Judah Maccabee and what does he have to do with Chanukah? Parents and educators seeking an informative and engaging book about the historic origins of the holiday will be attracted to David Adler's signature straightforward style. Adler, the award-winning and popular author of more than 200 books for children, including "The Kids' Catalog of Hanukkah," is skillful at enlightening readers unfamiliar with the two-millennia-old story of the great military victory of the Maccabees over religious persecution by their Greek rulers and the miracle of the oil. Jill Weber's illustrations evoke ancient times with the golden glow of the Temple and dramatic battle scenes of mighty Greek warriors on horses and elephants. The story ends with a modern family celebrating Chanukah. Back pages include Weber's recipe for latkes and instructions for playing dreidel.



**The Golem's Latkes** Adapted by Eric A. Kimmel, illustrated by Aaron Jasinski Marshall.

Master storyteller Eric Kimmel

delivers a deliciously mischievous Chanukah spin on an old world legend of the Golem of Prague, a kabbalistic creature with magical powers to help the Jewish people. When Rabbi Judah of Prague leaves his new housemaid Basha with a long list of chores for the holiday celebration, he cautions her not to leave the hardworking golem alone in the house. The only way to get the golem to stop working is to tell him, "Golem, enough!" Kimmel writes. Kids will delight in the inevitable hilarity when Basha takes off to visit her friend and leaves the golem alone making latkes. The fried potato pancakes pile up higher and higher, out the windows, and take over the city streets. A festive ending gathers the whole city for a latkes-eating Chanukah celebration. Jasinski's memorable illustrations show the fantastical golem painted more like a Gumby-style robot than a frightening ghoul. Double-page spreads place readers in the action, from the cobblestone streets of Prague to the mountain-high towers of golden potato latkes. (A PJ Library selection)

**Candlelight for Rebecca** Jacqueline Dembar Greene, illustrations by Robert Hunt. American Girl (6.95 paperback/e-book available for Kindle and Nook readers) Ages 8 and up

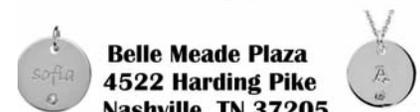
Set in 1914, Jacqueline Dembar Greene's historical novel is the third in a series of six popular American Girl books featuring Rebecca Rubin, a Jewish girl who lives with her family on New York City's Lower East side. Originally

Continued on page 20

## Happy Chanukah



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HAPPY CHANUKAH

# (The Origin of) A Hanukkah Present!

By Mark Binder

Long ago there was no such thing as Chanukah presents. And then in Chelm, the village of fools...

"I want a Christmas present," said five-year-old Shmeenie Schlemiel.

"A what?" said her father, Jacob Schlemiel, the carpenter.

"A Christmas present," Shmeenie said firmly. "I was playing in the market with a girl named Alexandra. You wouldn't believe how many Christmas gifts she's going to get! I don't want that many, just one."

"Just one?" Jacob scratched his beard. "Sweet one, Jewish people don't get Christmas presents."

Shmeenie frowned, nodded, and said, "All right. I want a Chanukah present."

"A Chanukah present?" Jacob was stunned. Who ever heard of such a thing! "Chanukah is not a holiday for presents. Candles, latkes and dreidels are enough. We Jews give gifts on Purim. Now on a birthday..."

"I know," Shmeenie nodded. "But I want a present before that. I want a Chanukah present."

"No," Jacob shook his head. Then he softened. "Listen, if we were wealthy, I might, but we are not. Where would the money for this gift come from? You want to eat less food?"

"What about the tzedakah box?" Shmeenie pointed. "You put money in

there every day."

"But that is for others who are less fortunate than us. For food and shelter. Some people aren't as lucky as we are to have so much. Besides, if I bought a gift for you, I would have to buy gifts for your brothers, Abraham and Adam."

"So?!" Shmeenie smiled brightly. "Mama needs a new apron, too."

"We don't have enough money!" Jacob snapped. "No Chanukah presents! End of conversation!" Jacob slammed his fist on the table.

He didn't have to look to know that his daughter was crying. In fact, it was better that he didn't, because if he saw her tears he would promise her anything. And he couldn't. Already there wasn't enough.

Shmeenie sniffled, and then when she saw her father wasn't going to change his mind, she ran to her room, slamming the door behind her.

But Shmeenie Schlemiel was persistent. She pestered her mother and her brothers. They all just laughed and said no. Impossible!

"What's so wrong with Chanukah presents?" she wondered aloud one day as she walked through the streets of Chelm. "Gifts are wonderful things!"

"Yes," said a voice. "Gifts are wonderful things."

Shmeenie looked up and saw Chaya Levitsky, the synagogue caretaker's wife.

"That's exactly what I've been trying to tell my family," Shmeenie said. "But they keep telling me nobody gives

presents for Chanukah. I just want to know why!"

Chaya Levitsky nodded. "Does your family love you?"

"Yes."

"And do you love them?"

"Absolutely."

"So, who needs to give gifts?"

Shmeenie looked at Mrs. Levitsky and patiently explained. "People don't need to give gifts. People want to give gifts."

"Then you should give gifts," Mrs. Levitsky said.

"But I don't have any money." Shmeenie said, exasperated.

"Ahh. So now you know how your family feels."

"But..." For a moment the little girl looked as if she was going to cry. Then she composed herself. "Do you want to know the truth? I don't really want to give gifts. I just want to get one. Just a little doll."

"I understand," Mrs. Levitsky said. "Do you know what they call a gift that is an obligation?"

Shmeenie shook her head.

"Taxes." Mrs. Levitsky laughed, patted Shmeenie on the head, and walked off.

Frustrated, Shmeenie stomped her feet in the snow for a good five minutes, and then she had an idea...

\*\*\*

On the first night of Chanukah, after the candles were lit, while the latkes were frying and Adam and Abraham were spinning their dreidels, Shmeenie sneaked off to her room.

Jacob and Rebecca exchanged nervous looks, but neither said a word. A few moments later, the little girl came back with a small bag.

"Everyone, come here!" she said brightly. "I have presents for you."

The family gathered around, and from the bag, Shmeenie took out four scrolls of paper and tied with hair ribbons. She solemnly handed them out.

As one, the Schlemiel family slipped off the ribbons, unrolled the papers and read:

My gift to you  
Is love from me  
It doesn't cost much  
And it's given for free  
It will never run out  
Or go away  
That is my gift  
For you today.

You have never seen so many tears of joy in one room.

A moment later Abraham and Adam and Jacob and Rebecca ran from the room. In another moment they were back with little gifts of their own — small dolls made from scraps of cloth and pieces of wood. Even Jacob gave Shmeenie a small seven-sided dollhouse with real windows and doors that opened.

The laughter from the Schlemiel house that evening filled the entire village of Chelm with joy.

"Chanukah presents, who would have thought?" Jacob Schlemiel said to his wife just before bed. "Let's just not make a habit of it..." □

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This is the somewhat abridged version of the title story from *A Hanukkah Present!* by Mark Binder, an award-winning author and spoken-word storyteller. "A Hanukkah Present!" was the finalist for the National Jewish Book Award for Family Literature. It is available in soft-cover on iTunes, and now in an ebook edition for the Kindle, Nook and iPad. Purchase online, or if you still need convincing, please try another story free at <http://lightpublications.com/hanukkah/>

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# Community marks Chanukah with host of events

It's time to dust off the menorahs, practice spinning the dreidel and get ready to celebrate Chanukah 5772. This year, Chanukah starts on the evening of Tues., Dec. 20, (or the 24th of Kislev) and continues through Wed., Dec. 28.

There are plenty of ways to mark the eight days this year in addition to lighting candles and frying up latkes at home. Nashville's congregations and other Jewish organizations are preparing a host of events, and we're listing them below. [Chabad of Nashville was firming up Chanukah plans at press time, so please check its website, [www.chabadnashville.com](http://www.chabadnashville.com), or the next issue of the Observer for more information. Also, please check with your congregation for additional activities that may still be in the works and for any applicable fees.]

**The Gordon Jewish Community Center's annual Hanukkah Festival** takes place on Sun., Dec. 18, from 3-6 p.m. It kicks off with children's performances from 3-3:30 p.m. Enjoy Bernie's famous latkes hot off the griddle and all the dinner trimmings from 3:30-6 p.m. There's a carnival with games, prizes and bouncies, a vendor fair, a PJ Library reading and Early Childhood Learning Center book fair. This year also features something new, with a tween dance party and game room. For tickets, fees and information, contact Claire Bernstein, [claire@nashvillejcc.org](mailto:claire@nashvillejcc.org).

**Congregation Micah: Annual Chanukah Family Potluck Dinner**, Fri.,



Sherith Israel chanukiah

Dec. 16, from 6-7:30 p.m., with Shabbat service following at 7:30. Micah will provide the chicken, latkes and dessert. Bring a nondairy side dish that serves eight to ten people. Share stories; sing songs with the rabbis, Lisa Silver, the Micah Kids Choir; and celebrate the Festival of Lights. For fees and information, call 377-9799.

**West End Synagogue: Chanukah Zimriah (Songfest) and Carnival**, Sun., Dec. 11, at 10 a.m. All students are asked to report to school at 9:45 a.m. The car-

nival begins at 10:30 for families with infants through seventh graders. There will be Chanukah games, activities, crafts, balloon art, air brush tattoos, a latke toss and edible dreidels. There will be a latke lunch and sufganiyot (doughnuts) prepared by Religious School grandparents. It is free and open to the community. The event is sponsored by the West End Synagogue Religious School, the Jewish Federation of Nashville, WES Families with Young Children, WES Mens Club and a grandparents committee. For information, call 269-4592.

**Congregation Sherith Israel: Annual Latke Supper**, Sun., Dec. 25, beginning at 5:30 p.m. with lighting of the Limor Menorah. Dinner follows at 6 p.m. Be there for food, music and lots of fun. For fees and information, call 292-6614.

**The Temple - Congregation Ohabai Sholom:**

**Get in the Holiday spirit with Next Dor for a Latkes and Vodka holiday soiree** on Sat., Dec. 10, at 7 p.m. The event is hosted by Andy and Julie Baker and will be held at 1114 Sharpe Ave. in East Nashville. RSVP by Dec. 7. Contacts for Next Dor are Rabbi Shana Mackler, Joel Abramson, or Temple member Jeff Sonsino.

**The Temple Preschool celebrates Chanukah** a day early, on Mon., Dec. 19, from 2:15-3:15 p.m.

**A Chanukah dinner with lots of latkes** is set for Fri., Dec. 16, following Shabbat services at 6 p.m. The celebration also includes birthday blessings and songs from the junior choir. For costs and to RSVP call 352-7620 no later than Tues., Dec. 13.

**Temple's W.E.L.L. program** (Women Engaged in Living and Learning) holds a Chanukah party potluck and gift exchange on Wed., Dec. 21, at 5:30 p.m. at the home of Annie Solomon. Bring a wrapped gift (\$15 limit), your Chanukah candles and a dairy/vegetarian dish to feed eight. R.S.V.P. to Pam Harrison, 430-8325.

A mini-Chanukah celebration is set for Fri., Dec. 23, with **Jmingle's Latkapalooza** set for 6:30 p.m. on Sat., Dec. 24. □

## Toast young adults' new website, NowGen Nashville, at pre-Chanukah party

Mark the birth of a website for NowGen Nashville, the Jewish Young Adult Community of Nashville, at a launch party and Chanukah celebration on Thurs., Dec. 15, at the Gordon Jewish Community Center. When the event starts at 6 p.m., there will be people, food, music, giveaways (think commemorative guitar picks, for one thing) and - free latkes. Special thanks to our sponsor, Reliant Bank.

The website, [www.nowgen-nashville.org](http://www.nowgen-nashville.org), is designed to help community members ages 22-40 stay in touch and updated on activities and events. It has been in the works for the past few months.

There's also a NowGen Nashville Newsletter of updates for the young adult community. Keep track of potlucks, socials, community service and more by signing up with Federation Community Engagement Associate Joel Abramson at [joel@jewishnashville.org](mailto:joel@jewishnashville.org). □



happy chanukah

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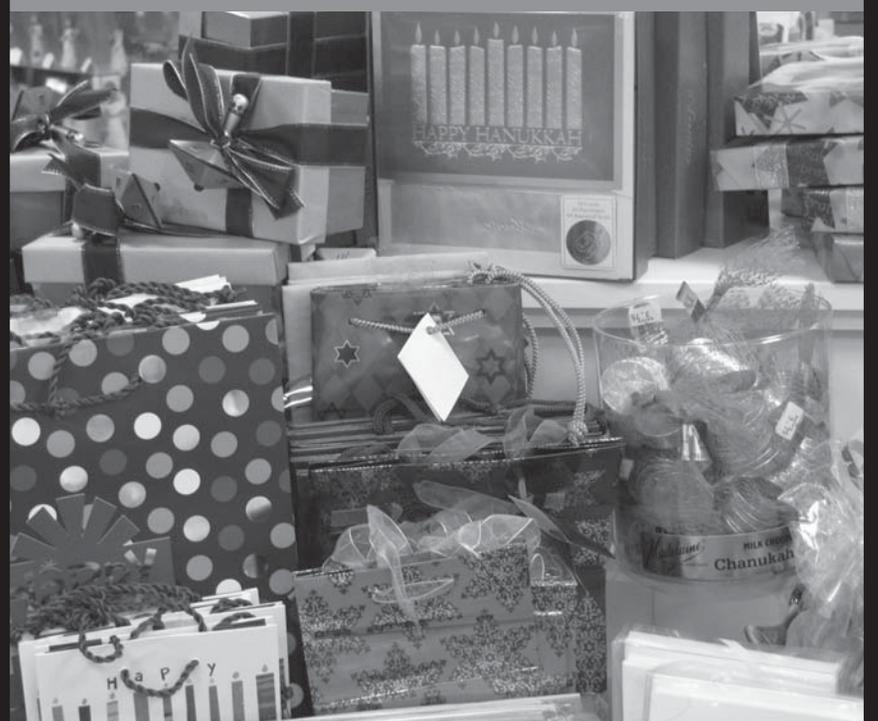
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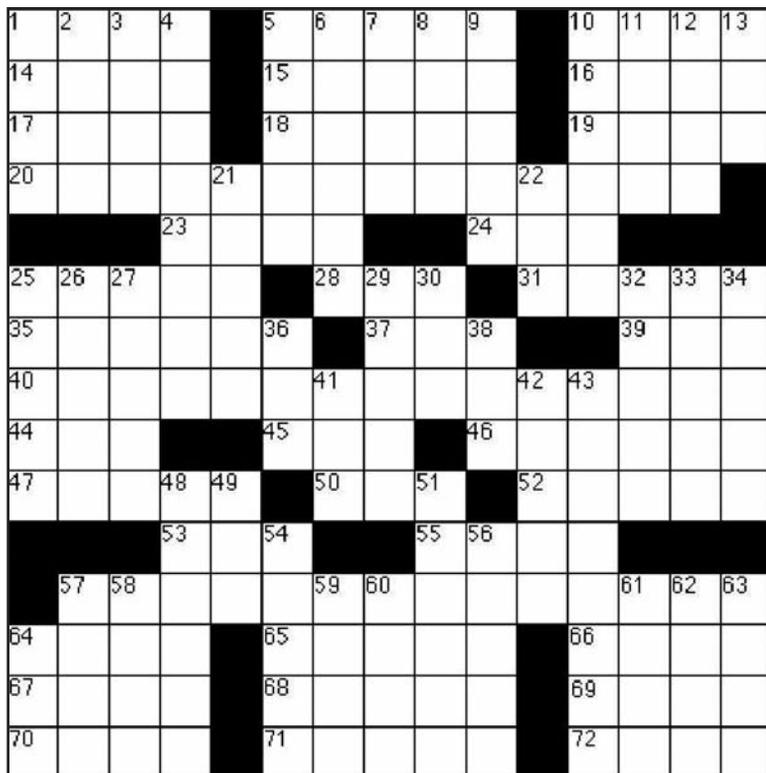
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### ACROSS

1. 19th century political cartoonist
5. AFTER AN "L", WITH THE SHREDDED POTATOES FRIED
10. A late Prophet
14. A nurse of the Orient
15. The air, in Arles
16. "\_\_\_ on over at 6:00. We'll be home by then."
17. Puerto \_\_\_
18. The Indian, for one
19. Feminine plural pronoun, second person, in Hebrew
20. TWO SONS OF MATITYAHU (MATTATHIAS), in Hebrew
23. Prefix for things Copenhagen-ish
24. Neshama, in Nice
25. Something like a cell, but with a dedicated line from the office
28. Sra., in English
31. "He went on and on, with all kinds of \_\_\_(ands)."

35. \_\_\_-dabra
37. Acronym preceding an alias
39. How Josephus would have written 551 (in Latin)
40. CHANUKAH COMMEMORATES \_\_\_ OF THE CLEANSED AND SANCTIFIED TEMPLE
44. One of the Three Stooges
45. Priest of Israel, Samuel's mentor
46. Hazak, in English
47. The Tablets were enshrined in the \_\_\_ the Tabernacle
50. Cow language
52. Danny \_\_\_\_, great Celtic guard
53. The \_\_\_ is to the U.S. as the RUP is to India (These are not the intl. monetary abbrs.)
55. Avraham \_\_\_\_, Israel's Interim President for 20 days in 2000
57. WE LIGHT CANDLES ON \_\_\_ OF CHANUKAH (3 words)
64. Melee, urban or prison event
65. Many highway departments have an "Adopt-\_-\_\_\_" program
66. Country of the fictional Leopold Bloom
67. "Oh, I really like you \_ \_\_\_."
68. Relation of one number to another
69. Horse steering aid
70. Hindu sacred literature
71. Great singer, once led The Police
72. Signs indicating all seats taken

### DOWN

1. "There's \_\_\_ a piece of bread left" (obsolete English)
2. Girlfriend, in Grenoble
3. A sugar subst.
4. "You darling" – starting with an Olde English word
5. It's sure hard to get \_ \_\_\_ these days.
6. Dashboard indicator of RPM's
7. City on the Dnieper
8. Significant periods of time
9. Portuguese for password
10. "That's no mirage walking across the dune. That's \_ \_\_\_."
11. \_\_\_-cross, form of off-road racing
12. Sign of good or not so good
13. One-hundredth of a yen
21. Hora or debka
22. Mommy, in Metulah
25. Ma\_\_\_ Gandhi
26. Revile
27. Sappho or Achilles
29. Keillor's medium
30. We warm up at après-\_\_\_
32. Son or daughter, especially one who carries on parents' cause
33. "\_\_\_ have I loved you," in "Angel," Aretha Franklin
34. Sear
36. Fruit drink
38. Electrical counterparts to D.C.'s
41. American \_\_\_\_, beetle/fungus-devastated street tree
42. Computer games maker
43. Mechanisms that start actions
48. African-American singer, "Voice of the Civil Rights Movement"
49. Enemy
51. Get
54. Prevaricators
56. Stop following, as a gumshoe?
57. Unit wall or floor surfacing for bathroom, kitchen
58. You lift it to be able to check your engine oil, etc.
59. Thankfulness, abbr.
60. "\_\_\_ \_00", weekly report on the top pop music singles
61. Rabbi Marvin \_\_\_ of Simon Wiesenthal Center
62. Threesome
63. Lieberman, Boxer, et al, abbr.
64. \_\_\_ Kook, for example

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Solution on page 21

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# New Jersey teens make friends in Nashville, help repair flood-damaged homes

By Kathy Carlson

**O**n the back deck of a house near Opryland on a warm fall day, several teens talk country music with a young mother holding her baby son. The teens sport kippot; she wears a silver cross on a chain necklace.

The teens, all high school students from New Jersey, have come to Nashville with two rabbis to help repair homes damaged in the May 2010 flood that brought more than a foot of rain and millions in damage across Middle Tennessee.

Ten of the group of 17 boys attend Torah Academy of Bergen County; the others attend four different public schools. All are active in New Jersey NCSY, the Orthodox Union's international youth program. They were in Nashville from Nov. 9-13 and worked with Southeast Nashville Flood Recovery on homes in Antioch and the Pennington Bend area.

The Jewish disaster relief group Nechama put the NCSY group in touch with Southeast Nashville Flood Recovery, said Rabbi Ethan Katz of New Jersey associate regional NCSY director, who led the group with Rabbi Josh Kahn of Torah Academy.

The New Jersey group spent Shabbat at Congregation Sherith Israel with Rabbi Daniel Levitt, walking to shul from the Holiday Inn Vanderbilt while Commodores fans walked to Vanderbilt Stadium for a football game. On Saturday night the group played laser tag and took in downtown Nashville. It was a first trip to Nashville for most of them.

"Nashville is beautiful," Katz said. "The people are so nice."

Alex Mabe, a senior at Matawan High School, worked with Jacob Smalkin, Roger Blumin and Michael Abelev to rebuild the deck on Jennifer Griffith's house. "Thank you so much," she told the teens, holding 10-month-old son Easton.

In May 2010, she and her son made it out of their house as water from the Cumberland River was reaching her calves, she said. It took about four months to be able to move back into the house,

she said. The New Jersey teens have helped to restore the outside of the house — projects like repairing the rainsoaked deck, washed-out driveway and front steps that became useless after they sank into the mud. Those jobs took a back seat to repairing the interior and getting the family back into the house, she said.

Her house wasn't in a flood plain, so there was no flood insurance, she said. FEMA grants helped, and she is thankful for volunteers who donated labor.

Taking a break from the deck work, the teens and Griffith found they both like Toby Keith and Brad Paisley, though there was a difference of opinion on Taylor Swift.

Katz has been directing the leadership missions since the program's beginning.

"We have a responsibility to help others in need — Jews and non-Jews alike — and to make this world better than the day before," he said in a written statement. "These students are not afraid to get down-and-dirty to help strangers or to share their joy of Torah in distant Jewish communities." □



Michael Abelev takes a turn with power drill to repair a flood-damaged deck as Rabbi Josh Kahn in background and Jacob Smalkin (right) look on.

## The word on new Chanukah books for kids

Continued from page 15

published in book form in 2009, it is newly available for electronic reading devices. Rebecca is uneasy when her class is assigned an art project to make a Christmas table decoration because her Jewish family doesn't celebrate Christmas. Rebecca grapples with timeless, universal questions about acceptance and religious freedom that resonate with readers from all backgrounds.

**Playing Dreidel with Judah Maccabee** A play by Edward Einhorn. Theater 61 Press (\$14.95); ages 12 and up

Edward Einhorn is the artistic director of a New York-based theater company who served as the director of the Festival of Jewish Theater. Einhorn's play is a fantasy that travels in time between a modern-day synagogue and ancient Israel. As the young Jonathan spins a dreidel, singing the familiar dreidel song, he is startled by the appearance of an old man dressed in

armor. The conversation between Jonathan and Judah Maccabee starts out like a comedy routine, each questioning who the other is, but over eight days a warm relationship develops between the young adolescent and the ancient battle-wary warrior that sheds a contemporary light onto the long arc of Jewish history and ritual. Educators may find this a unique play for performing or reading aloud. □



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## Honors

The Nashville Coalition for the Homeless honored local volunteer Ben Morton with the Phyllis M. Frank Volunteer Award at its regular monthly meeting on Nov. 17 at the Nashville Rescue Mission. The Phyllis M. Frank Volunteer Award is named after its first recipient, **Phyllis M. Frank**, who is an advocate to end homelessness and the past chair of the Nashville Coalition for the Homeless. She is a founding board member of Room in the Inn, Matthew 25 and the Campus for Human Development.



Ben Morton and Phyllis M. Frank

## Professional notes

Jane R. Snyder has announced the formation of An Extra Pair of Hands to provide a wide variety of personal and family support services to the Nashville community. She will also be able to assist out-of-state families who may require a local, "hands-on" representative to make sure the needs of their elder family members are being met in a safe and timely manner.

## Sympathy

... to the family of **Elise Levy Steiner**, 94, who died peacefully at home Nov. 26. She was preceded in death by

her beloved husband, Berney B. Steiner; her parents, Elise and Jacob Levy, and her sisters, Jacklyn Pergament and Jeanne Levy. She is survived by her daughter, Lisa Small (Stephen) and her grandsons, Charles Small and Jonathan Small. Elise was born in New Orleans, La., and, as a new bride in 1936, moved to Nashville where she lived until her death. An avid golfer, intrepid traveler and gourmet cook, she lived life fully. While she never held a salaried position, she became a community leader and a professional volunteer for the many groups whose causes she believed in. She began her volunteer career with the American Red Cross during World War II, first rolling bandages and serving coffee and meals to the troops moving through Union Station. Eventually she chaired almost every committee at the Nashville Chapter and was affectionately known by the staff as "Mrs. Red Cross." Her other passions included Fifty Forward (formerly known as Senior Citizens), where she served as president of the Board and the first chair of the Endowment Fund; the Nashville Section, National Council of Jewish Women: president of the Board; The Temple: secretary and later, treasurer of the Board, as well as Sisterhood president and National Sisterhood Board member; The United Way: chair of allocations; Nashville Women's Golf Association: Board chair; and Council on Aging: president of the Board. Other groups such as the Nashville Symphony, Jewish Family Service, Children's Family Service and the Girl Scouts, asked her to head their fundraisers or serve on their boards. And these were lifelong commitments; in fact she chaired the boards of both Senior Citizens and Council on Aging when she was 85. Elise Steiner received numerous honors over the years for her philanthropy and her leadership,

including the YWCA Woman of Achievement Award, and the Mary Catherine Strobel Award for Community Volunteer of the Year. However, it was the host of lifelong friends she made that she treasured, sec-

ond only to the love of her family. Memorial contributions may be made to the Nashville Chapter of the American Red Cross, Fifty Forward, Jewish Family Service or The Temple Endowment Fund.

## Reconfigured library at GJCC open for business

By Kathy Carlson

Carrie Mills is excited about her latest assignment within Nashville's Jewish community. She wears a lot of professional hats – singer, songwriter, artist, advertising manager for The Observer and the Gordon Jewish Community Center's gallery curator, and now, she's helping revitalize the GJCC Library.

"I was asked to restore the library," she says. "People in the community were missing it." Mills used her background in the arts to help reconfigure the now-shared library space to "restore the integrity of the library space while sharing it" for youth activities.

Now, she wants people to know the library is back in business.

There's now a core group of library volunteers who are learning how to circulate books, process returned books and catalogue new holdings.

A computer has been moved into the library area so books can be processed, and the area is open during the days for people to use, she said.

The group is exploring future uses and programs for the library, including

the possibility of book readings for both adults and children next year, she said. Other ideas include a Facebook page, applying for grants, and creating a committee to distribute books no longer on the shelves.

Future meetings and activities will be announced. Mills encourages anyone who is interested in helping in the library to contact her at [carrie@nashvillejcc.org](mailto:carrie@nashvillejcc.org). □

Solution to crossword puzzle on page 18



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Simchas and Celebration Issue

January 20, 2012



Please limit your submission to 300 words and send it to [judy@jewishnashville.org](mailto:judy@jewishnashville.org) with "special simchas" in the subject line.

# Henry Pipes' Eagle Scout project brings outdoor track to GJCC

**H**enry Pipes, a local neighborhood resident and longtime member of the GJCC, has been hard at work over the past year. He has put in many hours towards a goal he set for himself as an Eagle Scout and as a community member.

The GJCC outdoor track was recently completed by Pipes with the assistance of the GJCC Health & Wellness Director Harry Baker and several school, scout and neighborhood volunteers. Pipes has spent many hours out on the Highway 70 side of the GJCC campus moving earth, brush and mulch to lay down the half mile track.

In October 2009, 14-year-old Henry made a slideshow presentation of his Eagle project idea to the GJCC Board to see if they were interested. (At the time, there was a simple foot-worn path, with some hand dug ground leveling/trail building involved.) They liked the idea, but wanted to discuss it fur-

ther. A few days later, Bernie Pargh called and made arrangements to walk the proposed trail with Pipes and his father. Pargh liked what he saw and the project was approved by the Board and by the Jewish Federation.

Pipes worked out the final details through the winter and planned to break ground on the project in the spring of 2010, but the flood, school and life delayed the project until the spring of 2011.

In Feb 2011, his father received a message from Baker that he was interested in building a one-mile trail around the GJCC, and was looking for a few Scouts to get involved as an outlet for some merit badge opportunities. He informed him of his son's pending project and later met to show him what was already in the works.

Baker's plan was much more ambitious. It was for an approximately one-mile, 3-4-foot wide machine-carved path, completely mulched, circling the entire GJCC property. They met half

way, and kept Pipe's original ½ mile layout, and Baker's commitment to help by using a tractor for earth and wood chip moving.

The trail is more than 8.5 football fields long and contains the equivalent of about two tractor trailer loads of wood chips. The track begins by the Holocaust Memorial and continues down into the field; a beautiful walk where all of the

wildlife that calls the GJCC campus home can be seen during a leisurely stroll or a quick jog.

This was part of Pipes' Eagle Scout project for Troop 42, the GJCC's Boy Scout Troop. The Troop has been sponsored by the GJCC for years and meets every Monday night at 7 p.m. in the Tot Spot Room. Only 3-5 percent of all scouts reach Eagle Rank. □



Henry Pipes works on the new GJCC outdoor track.

## around the town

### Jewish music history

The community is invited to join West End Synagogue's Cantor Lane for a weekly exploration of Jewish music history from Temple chants to klezmer, from cantorial to choral, jazz, pop, rock and from shtetl to Broadway, on Tuesday mornings from 10-11:15 a.m. (No class on Nov. 13.) There will be audio examples, video clips and even a sing-along or two. Refreshments will be served. For information, call 269-4592.

### Adoptive families bowling party

Jewish adoptive families are invited to be the guests of Jewish Family Service at the Hillwood Strike and Spare on

Mon., Jan. 16 (Martin Luther King Day), from 1 to 3 p.m. for a fun-filled afternoon. Join us for one game of bowling plus laser tag, bumper cars, roller skating, glow golf and much more. Call Teri Sogol at 354-1662 by Jan. 5 to RSVP.

### TigerSharks Keep swimming

The new season of the GJCC TigerSharks Year Round Swim begins on Jan. 2 and new members are welcome. Practice is Monday through Thursday at two different time slots depending on the age of the swimmer. Swimmers age 5 to 8 swim from 4 - 4:45 p.m. and swimmers age 9 to 18 swim from 4:45 to 5:30 p.m. To sign your child up, contact Yvonne Hall at Yvonne@nashvillejcc.org or Josh Hall at josh@nashvillejcc.org or call them at 615/356-7170.

## Buy Israel!



**T**hroughout the United States and in many parts of the world, there is a concerted effort to delegitimize the State of Israel. One of the tactics being used is a boycott of Israeli products. This action has been seen in several locations in our country.

In an effort to counter that boycott and support Israel, many Jewish communities and organizations have urged Americans to buy Israeli products. The Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation of Nashville and The Observer want to make it easier for Nashvillians to find Israeli-made goods by publishing a list of the products and where to find them, locally.

We need your help. If you know of available products and the stores that carry them, email that information to judy@jewishnashville.org. Food, clothing, jewelry, wine, etc., whatever you have found, please share it with our community.

See the updated list, below and send your additions to judy@jewishnashville.org or call 354-1637.

Israeli silver jewelry - area TJMaxx stores  
Geffen Pickles - Belle Meade Kroger  
Sabra Hummus and dips - area grocery stores and Costco

Eden Feta Cheese - Trader Joe's  
Dorot frozen garlic and herbs - Trader Joe's  
Telma products - Publix  
Moroccan Hair Oil treatment - Cosmetics Market  
Sweet Clementines (oranges) - Costco  
Cedars Halva - Whole Foods refrigerated section  
Streit's Quinoa and Israeli Couscous - Harris Teeter  
Jaffa Oranges - Publix  
Muscato wine by Golan Wineries - Bud's Wine and Liquor, Green Hills  
Carries musical instruments made in Israel - Gymboree Play & Music, Cool Springs  
Yehuda Yahrzeit candles - Whole Foods  
Yehuda matzos - Kroger  
Yehuda and Aviv matzo products - Whole Foods  
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Naot shoes and sandals - Cute and Comfy Shoes, Green Hills

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