

Shalom04|22

The Journal of the Reading Jewish Community published by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

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Shabbat B'Yachad

Ukraine Relief Fund — Together we can make a difference

By Bill Franklin

With the Russian invasion now underway and multiple locations under fire, support for the Ukrainians and their Jewish community is needed urgently. The Jewish Federation of North America (JFNA) has already identified immediate and short-term needs totaling \$20 million and asked all Federations across the country to participate in the campaign.

Your Jewish Federation of Reading put out a call for monetary help in the beginning of March, with a matching opportunity of up to \$25,000 total. We are so proud of your quick action in answering that call and reinforcing the idea that the Reading Jewish community is there for others in their time of need. To date, we have raised \$28,560, resulting in an increased Federation's match so that \$57,120 is being sent to Ukraine through JFNA, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), The Jewish Agency for Israel, and the World ORT



(Organization for Rehabilitation through Training.) A portion of the matching funds was made possible by the Loretta Charnoff JFS endowment fund

Your donations will help secure the local community and its institutions, maintain critical welfare service and assist internally displaced people in multiple locations. It will aid in launching an emergency hotline, securing temporary housing for those in need, and purchasing satellite phones to allow people to maintain communications across the region. Recruitment



of Ukrainian and Russian-speaking volunteers to locate and provide proper shelter for women and children and providing Ukrainian and Russian-speaking psychologists for anyone who needs mental health assistance, especially children, is underway. Your donations also support the distribution of food, baby formula, sweets and snacks, blankets, and diapers, as well as toys, to be distributed to refugees that fled Ukraine. Assistance to those

who wish to make Aliyah to Israel is also being provided.

In times like this we can refer back to Hillel the Elder and his meaningful teachings ... "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And being only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?" Thank you to our donors who have answered the call. Donations are still being accepted by visiting our website or calling the office at 610-921-0624. There is no amount too big or too small to help; together, we can make a difference.

Federation takes helm at preschool

The Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks is pleased to announce the transfer of management of the Lakin Preschool for children ages 3-5 from Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom to the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Originally founded within the walls of the Reading Jewish Community Center dating back to the 1950s, the preschool was moved to the RCOS property in 2008 after the sale of the JCC near Hampden Boulevard.

Lack of space at the new JCC on Berkshire Boulevard. was the main reason for the original transfer, however the Federation has continuously funded the preschool with the help of the Edwin A. Lakin and Alma Lakin Philanthropic Fund.

The Federation is most appreciative of the dedication of longtime early education director, Judy Synnaron, who has managed the school for the past 22 years.

Judy has been with the school for more than 30 years and has had a wonderful positive effect on young minds over the years. She has seen the transition of a school that housed mostly Jewish children to a school that

now has more than two-thirds non-Jewish students, but it thrives because of her attention to detail and dedication to education. She has aligned the curriculum with moral and ethical instruction, teaching our children the strong values important to a giving society.

Judy has announced her retirement at the end of this school year, and we will be forever grateful for her dedication to our children.

With Judy's retirement, we welcome Holli Winick Viau as our new Early Education Director.

Holli joined our preschool family (in April 2021), and she and Judy have been working in tandem to oversee the preschool, waiting for the final approval from the PA Department of Education.

Holli earned her Master of Arts in Jewish Studies from Gratz College and a BS in elementary education from Millersville University. She has a wealth of teaching experience in the public, private school and Jewish school sectors and has been a welcome addition to our Federation and Lakin preschool family.

With the change of ownership, there is no plan to change the



Judy Synnaron, who has been with Lakin Preschool for more than 30 years, is retiring at the end of this school year

location from Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom in Wyomissing in the foreseeable future.

We look forward to continuing to have a strong presence in the Berks County community, providing top notch education for our young learners.

My Learning Curve

Our Jewish Family Service — A diamond in the rough

By Laurie Waxler
Development Director

Having been with the Federation for almost a year now, it has truly been a year of learning. The Federation does so much more than I ever imagined, and I've learned so much more about the people at the heart of what we do.



Carole Robinson was the kindergarten teacher at the Lakin Preschool when we arrived here in 2001, and while my kids were in the 2-year-old and 4-year-old classes, you couldn't help but notice all the wonderful things happening in that kindergarten classroom, not to mention Miss Carole's warm and welcoming smile. Fast-forward a few years, I start my job and am so happy to see that smiling face, once again, greeting me in her current role as Jewish Family Service director.

I think of Carole and Sari Incedon (past director and now part-time) as our shining stars, but I'm not sure our community sees everything they do. While they both organize a plethora of activities for our adults and seniors, more importantly, they are always willing to listen, make connections, and step in to help when they can. Carole and Sari spend a lot of time on the phone, but unlike many who are addicted to their phones for the social media aspect, they actually use it to talk to people. (A gift that seems foreign for some members of our younger generation.)

I can't tell you everything they do because much of it is confidential, but I know the life of a JFS social worker is more than 9 to 5. Food pantries, taxi tickets, meal delivery, senior placement, Friendship Circle, Noontime Knowledge, hospital visits, are all the things we see, but please know it goes much deeper. Carole says our



Sari Incedon and Carole Robinson

small community allows them both to have a much more personal relationship with their clients, allowing them to notice subtle changes, but also to be approachable when someone needs to ask for help.

Many thanks to both Carole and Sari for all they do for our community.

Development

- Annual Campaign
- Women's Philanthropy
- Maimonides Society
- Your Jewish Legacy
- Chai Circle
- L'Chaim Society
- Book of Life
- Letter of Intent



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Maimonides Society



"Mixing Medicine, Milieu & Misperceptions: Addiction"

*Lee Radosh, MD, FAAFP, FASAM
Tower Health Medical Group -
Addiction Medicine*

Sunday, May 15

10:00 am - 11:30 am

**Jewish Community Center
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Learn the latest about addictions including neurobiology, environmental influences, and highly effective treatments; shatter misunderstanding to help our patients, friends and family!

Open to all Jewish health care professionals in Reading & Berks County. Includes light breakfast & networking opportunities.

Register at readingjewishcommunity.org



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From the President's Desk

Our community avoids danger of indifference

By William D. Franklin
President

I was moved by the D'Var Torah that Dr. Irv Ehrlich wrote several weeks ago. He quoted Elie Weisel about indifference ... the ongoing plague in our world.



"What is indifference? Etymologically, the word means 'no difference.' A strange and unnatural state in which the lines blur between light and darkness, dusk and dawn, crime and punishment, cruelty, and compassion, good and evil.... Of course, indifference can be tempting — more than that, seductive. It is so much easier to look away from victims. Their

hidden or even visible anguish is of no interest. Indifference reduces the other to an abstraction."

These are great words of wisdom, but I am proud to say that they do NOT apply to our Jewish community. There has been a terrific community-wide response, matched by the Federation, for a special campaign to support our fellow Jews in Ukraine. We raised \$24,398 and will be sending almost \$50,000. For more details on how your donations help, see the article on the Ukraine campaign on Page 1.

To protect our city, Mayor Eddie Moran has started a new initiative to curb gun violence. Gun violence is a terrible plague threatening our communities today. I spoke to Mayor Moran and offered

the support of the Greater Reading Unity Coalition (GRUC). We have already begun efforts to collaborate with him and other community organizations on this vital project.

On another project, your caring support is providing \$140 gift cards to assist the chaplain at Berks County Prison to get Passover food for each of the 29 Jewish inmates. We will also be contributing Haggadahs and prayer books for them.

Our community has a long-term record of not being indifferent. We continue to support two food pantries. Carole, Sari, and our volunteers served 270 families last month. Fifty-nine of those families received food from us for the very first time. We also continue to

support food pantries in Israel through our financial assistance to Meir Panim and we help Yemin Orde's efforts to give home, school, and safe haven to 450 at-risk Israeli and immigrant youth from around the world. Kol HaVod — Bravo!

Norman Cousins, a 20th century political journalist, said, "Each man has inside him a basic decency and goodness. If he listens to it and acts on it, he is giving a great deal of what it is the world needs most."

Your continued decency and goodness give our community much to celebrate .

My thanks to Dr. Irv Ehrlich, who shared his D'Var Torah based on a sermon by Rabbi Michael Harvey.

The pandemic's impact on adults and seniors

By Laurie Waxler

The Federation hosted the final two sessions of four Sunday Morning Conversations: The Impact of the Pandemic in our Lives on March 20 and 27. The series was designed with the help of Rick Small, PhD, to offer practical tips in handling the stressors accompanying the pandemic. While the first two sessions focused on the younger generation, these last two were geared toward the 50-and-older crowd.

The March 20 session was moderated by Jeff Sternlieb, PhD, of MetaWorks, who believes we all have lost one or two layers of protection since the onset of the pandemic. He explained it may display itself as being more hardened, or the opposite, being more emotional than usual and possibly shedding a tear when we hear something sad. He further stated no one is immune to the emotional impact of the pandemic, and many psychologists and physicians have been affected as well.

While many people took advantage of the time at home to clean out their closets, few had the ability to clean out their "emotional closets." The unknowns of the pandemic have been difficult to handle, emotionally. He talked about missing the opportunity to mourn friends who may have passed during the pandemic. Virtual funerals left us with a feeling of unfinished business, and unwell friends made us feel inadequate because we couldn't help them.

Jeff talked about ways to overcome some of that stress and anxiety. When journaling, he believes writing is always better than typing and thinks it's a great option to put a name to your feelings. He also recommends "balancing your inside and outside" and is a big proponent of being grounded in nature and advocates



Jeff Sternlieb, PhD

for daily walks. It can also be helpful to put a name to what you're feeling ...instead of 'stress,' call it what it is...sadness, anger, loneliness, etc. Being unable to name the emotion may result in it leaking out into our daily behavior. By owning our emotions, we can then share them, which is all part of the healing process.

Daily check-ins and debriefing with co-workers at the end of the day was also suggested; finding a positive interaction and/or talking out the frustrations. Check to be sure everyone is eating and sleeping OK, and able to handle the stress of work-life and home-life during this difficult time. Just having the opportunity to voice frustrations can take some of the weight off their shoulders.

The March 27 session was moderated by Richard Small, PhD of Springfield Psychological and was focused on seniors and those caring for seniors. Rick felt the pandemic may have been the toughest for this population because they were the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus. Many seniors were afraid to leave their homes, and for those living in assisted living and senior communities, some



Rick Small, PhD.

were locked down against their will. Either way, seniors lost their access to family and friends. Many senior communities set up Zoom meetings, but without help, many seniors didn't know how to access these virtual meetings on their own, nor have access to social media. Loneliness was common for this subset, and many suffered decreased physical health because of it. For the family members, it was just as difficult because they lost access to their loved ones in one of their greatest times of need.

While not necessarily pandemic-related, Rick talked about when parents move into a senior community with a plethora of activities, it is not a given they will get involved. If they were not a joiner before they moved in, they probably won't be a joiner when they get there, which

can be frustrating for the children who think Mom and Dad should try everything.

Both Rick and Jeff addressed managing re-entry into the world. Jeff stated everyone has their own risk tolerance, and no two people will be the same. Everyone has a different level of trust and everyone will identify the small risks differently along the way. Spending time with grandchildren was noted as a big stressor for many people and there is no right answer, it comes down to your own comfort level. Rick referred to someone who hadn't been out to dinner since the start of the pandemic but once they went out, they were anxious to do it again. Sometimes it's taking that first step outside your comfort zone to gauge how safe you feel and then moving forward, one small step at a time.

One thing both providers noted was trying not to judge others based upon your perspective. There is so much unknown about the pandemic and too much conflicting information. They encouraged everyone to do what is comfortable and what feels right, while doing your best to not turn your back on someone who may not share the same viewpoint.

Jeff ended his talk asking attendees about their core values and to fill in the blank..."At the end of this pandemic I'd like my family to say I acted with the virtues of _____." It definitely gives us something to think about.

Many thanks to all the speakers involved who brought this important series to fruition to benefit our community.

Shalom

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It's Simcha Supplement time

If you had or are having a bar/bat mitzvah or graduation (high school or higher) in your family this Jewish year, share the good news with the community. Please submit a few sentences about the person and their accomplishment, along with a photo.

Text and photos can be sent to Marknem@aol.com or to the Federation office.

DEADLINE IS APRIL 30.

2 authors round up 3rd season of Literatour Berks

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Can inheritance be transcended by accidents of love? That is the question at the heart of "This Magnificent Dappled Sea," a novel that challenges the idea of identity and celebrates the ties that bind us together.

Join us at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 11. at the JCC with David Biro, author of "This Magnificent Dappled Sea". David Biro has a medical degree from Columbia University and a doctorate in Literature from Oxford University. He is a Professor of Dermatology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center where he also teaches



medical humanities. Dr. Biro has written the highly acclaimed "One Hundred Days: My Unexpected Journey from Doctor to Patient" (2000) and "The Language of Pain: Finding Words, Compassion, and Relief" (2010).

In his novel, set in a small Italian village, 9-year-old Luca Taviano catches a stubborn cold and is subsequently diag-

nosed with leukemia. After an exhaustive search, a match turns up 3,000 miles away in the form of an unlikely donor: Joseph Neiman, a rabbi in Brooklyn, N.Y., who is suffering from a debilitating crisis of faith. As Luca's young nurse, Nina Vocelli, risks her career and races against time to help save the spirited redheaded boy, she uncovers terrible secrets from World War II — secrets that reveal how a Catholic boy could have Jewish genes.

PJ Library author

Kids 12 and under are invited to meet PJ Library author Melissa Stoller at Exeter Community

Library on Sunday, April 24 at 4 p.m. Stoller is the co-author of "Planting Friendship: Peace, Salaam, Shalom" a new title on display at the Storywalk outdoors at Exeter Community Library. It is on display now through mid-May.

Stoller will join is for an interactive outdoor program with crafts, prizes and fun for kids of all ages. Her visit is sponsored by PJ Library of Reading.

Registration for both events is available on our website: <https://readingjewishcommunity.org/>

Thank you to the sponsors and patrons of Literatour Berks for making these events possible.

Holocaust drama next in Reading film series

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Bristling with suspense and moving in equal measures, "Valiant Hearts" tells the true story of exceptional bravery and survival against all odds.

Reading Jewish Film Series continues with an in person for a screening of "Valiant Hearts" on Wednesday, April 13, at 7 p.m. at Fox Berkshire!

Tickets are available online at www.foxshowtimes.com or at the box office for \$8 or \$6 for JCC members. We can't wait to join together in person for this year's Reading Jewish Film Series after two years apart!

Starring acclaimed French actress Camille Cottin, the story recounts the odyssey of

six Jewish children in August 1942 who are forced to take refuge where no one will ever think to look for them: amidst the Louvre Museum artworks hidden in the Château de Chambord.

Between fear, outbursts of laughter, and unexpected encounters, the children learn about independence and discover solidarity and friendship in the midst of tumultuous circumstances.

The character played by Camille Cottin was inspired by Rose Valand, a conservator at Paris's Jeu de Paume Museum and a member of the resistance who, for the full duration of the war, spied and documented artwork thefts carried out by Nazi officers.



Bold and colorful art returns to JCC

By Amanda J. Hornberger

This month the JCC is happy to host artwork by community member Perry Levine!

Levine describes her art as rich in color and bold in texture and her pieces are several different sizes and color schemes.

Perry began creating her artwork during the pandemic, and we're thrilled to see such creativity come out of that time.

The show is on display at the JCC April 1-29, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m.

– 4:30 p.m. and is open to the public.

There will be an exhibit opening reception held from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, April 3, at the JCC, and it is open to the public.

All the pieces are available for purchase and can also be found on Perry's Etsy shop PALartsss. The shop link is www.etsy.com/shop/PALartsss

We invite you to explore this art during the month of April and support a young Jewish artist from Reading.



DIVERSITY IN ISRAEL GADEER KAMAL MREEH

We are honored to host Gadeer Kamal-Mreeh, the Jewish Agency's first Druze emissary to the US, who made history as the first Druze woman to become a member of the Knesset.

Gadeer will talk about the Druze community in Israel, her personal story, diversity in Israel, what it means to be an Israeli Druze, and the Israeli-Arabs of Israel.

Monday, May 9th at 7:00 via Zoom

For more information and registration link, check JFR weekly email or website
For questions, email AdiS@JFRReading.org



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Tech Tuesday

Yom Hazikaron

Art Exhibits

Yom Hashoah

Annual Meeting and Picnic

Purim Carnival

Richard J. Yashek

Memorial Lecture

Kristallnacht Remembrance

Youth Events

Purim Masquerade Party

Bridge

Chevra

Mahjong

Trips to NYC/Philadelphia

Lakin Holocaust Library

& Resource Center

Shabbat B'yachad

Community Calendar

MOMentum group meets for first time

By Amanda J. Hornberger

On March 14, a group of 13 moms gathered for the first time to begin the MOMentum Year-Long Journey!

The MOMentum Year-Long Journey empowers women to connect to Jewish values, engage with Israel, take action, and foster unity, without uniformity. It includes a profound, personal eight-day experience in Israel, during which women explore the Jewish homeland, take in inspiring Jewish wisdom, and join a global Jewish sisterhood.

Our group will be traveling to Israel July 4-11. It currently includes 14 participants including three community leaders: Amanda Hornberger, Margo Levin and Jennifer Koosed. We have one spot open if anyone is interested in joining our group.

That evening, the moms got to know one another, and we found that we share many things in common and also have a lot of unique experiences. What we loved was that no one in the room knew every person there. We have a really diverse group of women, and I can't wait to see how the group comes together through this trip and year of growth.

We asked each mom to bring a photo of her family, and we shared our hopes and dreams for our trip to Israel (for many of us it will be our first time in Israel) and for our time together. Our hopes and dreams, in addition to the hopes and dreams of Federation for sponsoring the trip, will grow and evolve over our journey this year.

Our group will be gathering monthly before and after our trip and we'll be



sharing our journey with the community through *Shalom* and our social media channels. Come along with us as we turn our hopes and dreams into reality.

Memory in the (JCC) Living Room this April

By Amanda J. Hornberger

One of the many benefits of having our Israeli Shlichah Adi with us is learning new things and how holidays are commemorated or celebrated in Israel. I'm happy that we'll be replicating a program that Adi attended in Israel, this April for Yom Hashoah.

In commemoration of Israel's Holocaust Memorial Day (Yom HaShoah), we will hold Memory in the Living Room or Zikaron Basalon. This is an Israeli

program featuring testimony from a Holocaust survivor and a brief discussion with a younger audience.

We're lucky to have local Holocaust survivor Mariette Jacobson and her daughter Rachel join us for Memory in the Living Room on Monday, April 28 at 7 p.m. Mariette will share her family's experiences and show you family photos from her life in France before, during and after the Holocaust.

In order to have an intimate

conversation and make you feel like you're in a living room, space is limited to 20 people. We would love our youth to attend and hear a first-hand account of the Holocaust from a survivor, something that will not be possible in future. This program is geared for ages 12 and older.

To register please email info@jfreeding.org or call 610-921-0624. We hope to host another Memory in the Living Room event with Sidney and Esther Bratt in the near future.



Mariette Jacobson, right, with her daughter Rachel.

Join us for Yom Hashoah

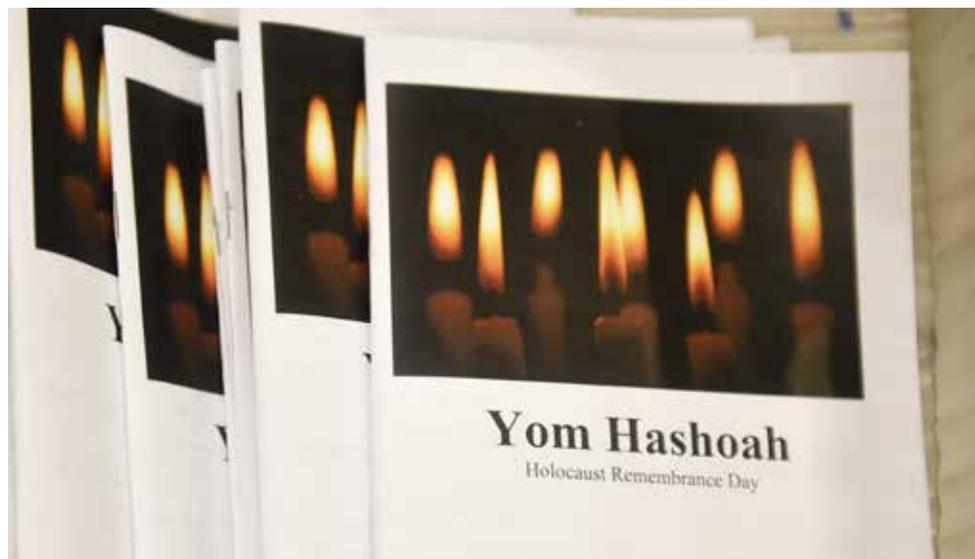
By Amanda J. Hornberger

The community is invited to commemorate Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) on Wednesday, April 27, at 7 p.m. at the Highlands.

We are lucky to have local Holocaust survivors join us for the program which include a candle lighting and name reading of victims

of the Holocaust with ties to our local community. If you have a name you would like included please email it to Amanda at amandah@jfreeding.org by Friday, April 22.

This event is open to the public. Current guidelines at the Highlands require masks for all guests. This may change closer to the event date.



Israeli cooking class

ISRAELI BREAKFAST- SPINACH SHAKSHUKA

Join Adi, our Shlichah, for in-person Israeli cooking!

We will learn what classic Israeli breakfast is and cook Spinach Shakshuka

Tuesday, April 26th at 5:30pm

\$18 - JCC members | \$27 - non-members.

RSVP - AdiS@JFReading.org or JFR weekly email/website

Vaccination required

Class in private Wyomissing home

Limited space | Masks recommended

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The Maimonides Society Steering Committee, from left, Gordon Perlmutter, Tatyana Erlikh, Jeff Driben, Jeff Sternlieb (speaker), Andy Waxler and Linda Bloom. Missing from photo: Lee Radosh.

Maimonides Society returns

By Laurie Waxler

The Maimonides Society held its first meeting of 2022 on Sunday, March 6, at the Jewish Community Center. It was a successful morning, and approximately 20 health care professionals heard from Jeff Sternlieb, PhD, about health care provider burnout.

Jeff Driben welcomed everyone and was grateful they could finally get together in person, as many have all been tucked away in their offices due to the pandemic. A variety of providers attended, and the group as a whole had some great conversations surrounding the crux of the talk.

One pearl of knowledge shared by Dr. Sternlieb that could benefit anyone: It's not healthy to work when you're feeling burned out, no matter what job you have. He also emphasized the need to invest in self-care of the mind and body and suggested it can be helpful to gather in groups at the end of the workday to share

some of the emotional aspects of the day.

The pandemic has taken its toll on everyone, and while our health care professionals are taking care of the world, they are also feeling overburdened and underappreciated. No doubt many people, in any job, might share the same frustrations these days.

Following the talk and a light breakfast, the attendees were able to chat and get to know each other a little better.

Our next Maimonides event will be held on May 15 at 10 a.m. at the JCC. Lee Radosh, MD, will be talking about addiction medicine, educating the group on the neurobiology, environmental influences, and highly effective treatments of addictions and hopefully, eliminate some of the current misunderstandings.

Maimonides Society events are open to all Jewish health professionals in Berks County. Please contact Laurie Waxler if you're interested in attending. LaurieW@jfreeding.org.

NOONTIME KNOWLEDGE: Public Sculpture at the Reading Public Museum

with Sarah Howells, art historian
Tuesday, April 26, at noon, JCC



This three-part series features Sara Howells, co-founder of the arts nonprofit Triptych Foundation. Reading is the third largest art city in Pennsylvania, and this new series aims to introduce the community to our hidden celebrities.

The first talk in the series will focus on public art found at the Reading Public Museum. This will include favorites like the 1975 bronze, "Boy with Gulls" that can be seen peeking out from along the trail as one passes the hospital complex. This naturalistic work of a young boy trying to catch birds while pole sitting is a memorial gift from Eugene Fizz to his wife Marilyn. One of the more colorful pieces is "Untitled" by Sam Martin. This contemporary landscape artist enjoys sparking conversations between his pieces and the audience; This freeform sculpture has been compared to many things from a plant to alien visitor—and all of them are correct! "Mother Bear with Cub" by George Papashvily is a hidden gem. It offers a candid glimpse of a tender moment between a mother bear and her child. Carved from a single slab of granite, this work straddles abstraction with an attention to texture that makes these bears come alive in our hearts.

Talk 1: Public Sculpture at the Reading Public Museum on Tuesday, April 26 at noon.

Talk 2: Murals Around Berks County on June 21 at noon.

Talk 3: Bears, Frogs, and Other Creatures In Our Communities TBA

Noontime Knowledge, designed to educate on a variety of topics, will be held on the third Tuesday of each month at noon. Everyone is invited to attend at no cost to participants. Please make a reservation if you would like to attend by calling Carole at 610-921-0624 or email CaroleR@jfreeding.org.



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The Yashek family and their contribution to Berks

By Laurie Waxler

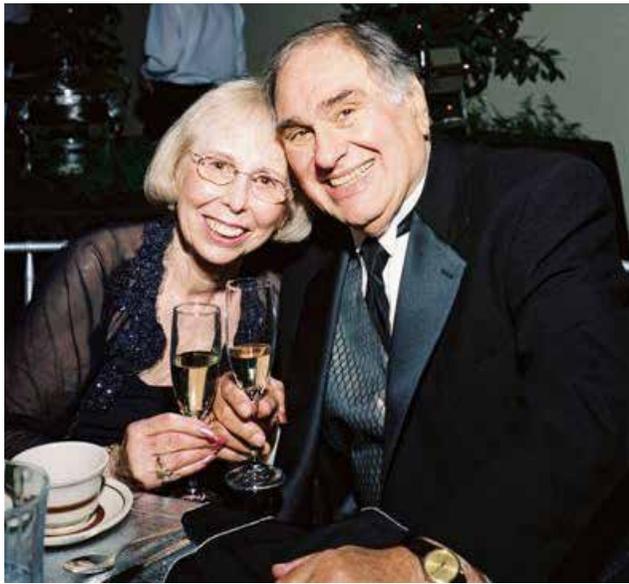
The Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lecture was a great success at Albright College on Wednesday, March 23, many thanks to the continued generosity of Rosalye Yashek and her family. I had the pleasure of speaking with Rosalye and her daughter Kimberly Yashek Lockhart, to get some history on how the lecture came to be, and as usual, I learned a great deal about a man I never knew, but wish I'd had the privilege.

Richard Yashek, Rosalye's husband of over 50 years, was born in Luebeck, Germany, in 1929, the oldest child of Lucy and Eugen, and by age 16, he was a Holocaust survivor. Noticing changes throughout his young childhood, Richard didn't realize their impact until later. By the time he was 12, he was not allowed to attend public school, his family was barred from the local swimming pool and all Jews in Germany were forced to wear yellow stars of David that he described as the size of an adult hand.

In the fall of 1941, Eugen and Lucy received notice their family was to report for transport to work in the east, via what became known as the Hamburg Transport. They were allowed two suitcases, 50 pounds each, and a rucksack. With no idea where they were going, they were told to include warm clothes and a week's worth of food. Traveling for three days and nights without stopping, they arrived in Riga, Latvia, and were marched through the snow toward the Jungferhof Camp, approximately 3 miles away. Upon arrival, Richard stayed with his father because he was 12, and his 10-year-old brother, Jochen, remained with his mother. The men and women were then separated and their personal belongings were confiscated. In 1942, Richard's mother and brother were relocated to a fish factory by the Duena River, from where, Richard learned later, there were no survivors and there was no fish market. They were actually taken to the Bikernieki Forest and killed. Richard and his father were subsequently relocated to two more camps (including the Riga Ghetto) before 1944 when his father contracted typhoid fever. While Eugen survived typhoid, he was too weak to survive the next selection process by the Nazi soldiers, and perished at the hands of the Nazis.

On his own, Richard endured two more camps, Stutthoff and Burggraben, both in Poland. On March 22, 1945, Richard, who was then 16 years old and weighed only 97 pounds, was found hiding in a potato cellar by Russian soldiers and was finally free. He was quoted as saying, "We had survived by sheer luck and desire ... Our survival was not a demonstration of strength of character. It was just the desire to survive for another day, escape the bitter cold by staying in the confines of a building, get through the night and then survive another day."

Arriving in the New York Harbor on Nov. 10, 1949, Richard soon moved to Pottsville and began working in the family exterminating business. Four years later, he found the love of his life in Williamsport, Miss Rosalye Levine, a local librarian. Rosalye remembers Richard popping the big question on New Year's Eve, and they were married in November of 1954. The newlyweds moved to Lancaster, where Richard began managing the Ehrlich Pest Control office there. Twenty years later, they relocated to Reading, closer to the Ehrlich home office where Richard became vice president and both he and Rosalye began to make their huge footprint in our community. Richard sat on the boards of the Federation and Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and was very active in raising funds for RCOS' new building



Rosalye and Richard Yashek

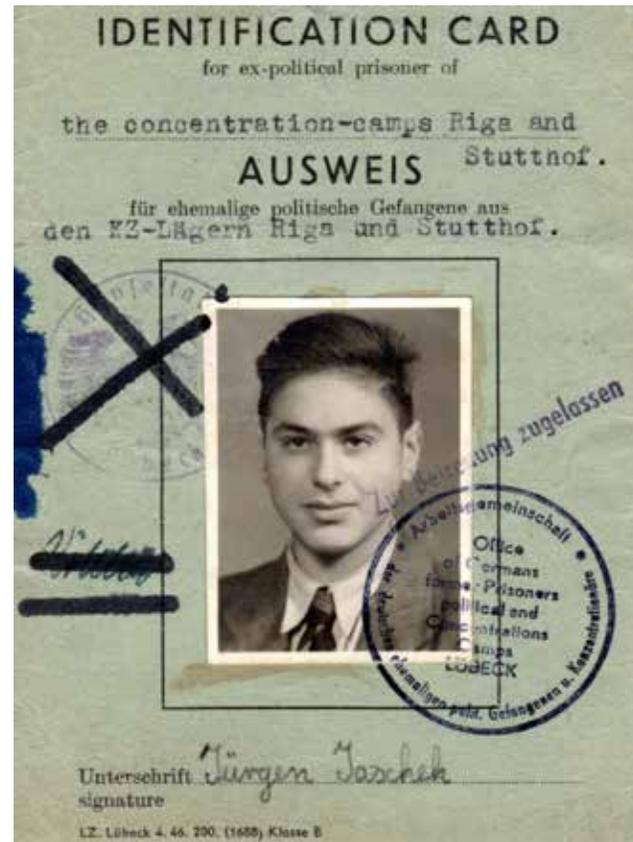
in Wyomissing. Rosalye was active with Sisterhood and Hadassah.

While Richard would discuss his time in the concentration camps with Rosalye, he didn't speak about it with his children or acquaintances, which is not uncommon in survivors. In the 1980s, a family member asked him if he would to speak about his time in the camps to her Sunday School class. Apprehensive to do so in-person, Richard agreed to be recorded. Scording to his daughter, it was a very emotional experience but also opened new doors. According to Rosalye, Richard decided it was time to tell his story. He began speaking to local high schools, accompanied by his wife and their best friends, Sid and Esther Bratt, for added support. Richard went on to write a book entitled "The Story of My Life," which is how his two daughters learned of his experiences and he even dabbled in poetry as recommended at a "Survivors of the Riga Ghetto" gathering in the Catskills to help in the healing process.

The Federation and Albright College worked in tandem to create the Holocaust Center in 1993, and in 2004, they wanted to add a speaker to provide further education. Dan Tannenbaum, past Federation president approached Richard and Rosalye about assisting with the funding and the answer was a resounding yes. As a Holocaust survivor, Richard believed in the importance of educating people about the atrocities. Unfortunately, he passed away in 2005, just before the lecture came to fruition, but the family has made the commitment to fund it every year, supporting continued Holocaust education.

Victor Hammel, Richard's cousin and business partner, described him as "a remarkable human being. Having survived a concentration camp as a young boy where his parents and younger brother perished, it would not be unexpected that he would be bitter or broken in spirit. The opposite was true. Anyone who knew him was impressed with his enthusiasm for learning, his generosity of spirit, and his zest for life, symbolized by the ease with which he laughed and with one of the broadest smiles imaginable."

Next time you walk into Yashek Hall at RCOS, or attend the Yashek lecture at Albright, or wander the halls of Reading Hospital and find a plaque honoring the doctors who cared for Richard when he was sick, remember this story and remember the hardworking, generous man with the big smile, despite the hardships he endured. Richard and Rosalye, and many others like them, are an important part of the foundation of our Jewish community and we will be forever grateful for their contributions.



"For a better understanding and to respect all people, it is now up to all of us who have experienced intolerance and hate, to do what needs to be done in our communities. We can do this by talking to our children, and their children, to foster good will and understanding among all people."

- Richard Yashek in a letter to Pastorin Anne Rahe

The River by Richard Yashek

*The day is warm this July Sunday near Riga
The Duena is about 1,000 meters wide
The SS guards are not around this morning
I take an 8-meter long 1/3-meter wide plank and get
the paddle that I surreptitiously carved from a pine board
for so many weeks.
I ease the heavy 8-ft plank into the edge of the water
The waves lapping over the top of it. I strip to the waste
and ease myself onto the plank, kneeling, I dip the paddle
into the water and push my craft off.
I look behind me for the guards, there are none.
The wind whips up some small white caps, the water laps
over the plank it is exhilarating to fight the waves, wind and
current. The near shore recedes, what if a guard sees
me....thinks I'm fleeing? They are not watching.
What lurks there, a few rowboats are pulled onto the shore.
I push on paddling like this is exciting.
The far shore gets nearer, it is empty I am afraid to go
the last few meters for fear of being seen and deemed to be escaping.
The wind and surf excite me
I feel like an explorer
Searching for new frontiers.
I fantasize that I am the master of a real ship
The Duena is flowing into the Baltic Sea,
a friend for me from the beaches in Travemuende so many
kilometers away. So far in the past....
If I could just be a bottle, drifting with the currents.
No more hunger, no more beatings, no more fear of
To-morrow and the day there after.
What will the future hold?
This moment, it does not matter, I'm "free"
It is 1942 the German Armeie is still advancing.
The allies are still loosing the battles and do not hold their
own. Will evil prevail?
The wind gets stronger, will it hinder me from paddling
back? Will my paddle break? Will something unexpected overtake me?
I turn my "boat" around and face the shore
I left for a few moments of exhilaration.
What will be to-morrow?*



The Yashek family.

Forgetfulness

By Carole Robinson

Winnie the Pooh once famously said, "I do remember, and then when I try to remember, I forget." While most of us can get a chuckle out of Pooh Bear's words (I know my husband said he is saving this quote for a later date), for those dealing with family members who suffer from Alzheimer's disease, this is not a laughing matter.



What is Alzheimer's and how can we be on the lookout for warning signs of this frightening disease? Alzheimer's is a neurodegenerative disease that usually starts slowly and progressively worsens. It affects more than 5 million Americans and is the most common form of dementia.

Sounds scary, right? How can you spot the signs of Alzheimer's and get help faster? How can you tell the difference between normal aging and dementia? Most of us get a little more forgetful as we grow older. It might take us longer to remember things or we become more easily distracted.

These changes are a normal sign of aging. Although some forgetfulness comes with age, such as forgetting which word to use or losing things from time to time, a decline in a person's cognitive function serious enough to interfere with daily life may be an indication of dementia.

The Alzheimer's Association has published a list — "Is it Alzheimer's? Ten warning signs." (These warning signs may apply to dementias other than Alzheimer's disease.)

1. Recent Memory Loss That Affects Job Performance
2. Difficulty Performing Familiar Tasks
3. Problems with Language
4. Disorientation of Time and Place
5. Poor or Decreased Judgment
6. Problems with Abstract Thinking
7. Misplacing Things
8. Changes in Mood or Behavior
9. Changes in Personality
10. Loss of Initiative

While you may look at this list and say I can relate to some of these (my daughter who is currently sleep-deprived while raising two girls under the age of 2 can attest to this), here are the biggest things you should look out for:

- Repeatedly asking the same question, not remembering the answer or



A long line of cars waits to pick up items from Jewish Family Service's monthly SDA food distribution, part of a long-standing effort to help the hungry in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

even that they just asked it

- Unable to perform daily tasks safely (e.g., neglecting to turn off the stove or forgetting to serve a meal)
- Losing the ability to have comprehensible conversation
- Not knowing where they are, how they got there or how to get home
- Losing judgement to the point of affecting the well-being of others or themselves
- Unable to solve simple problems (e.g., adding numbers together)
- Leaving items in inappropriate places and not being able to retrieve them
- Rapid mood swings for no reasons
- Drastic shift in personality, becoming irritable, suspicious, or fearful
- Becoming extremely passive and/or requiring cues to get them involved in everyday activities

For around-the-clock information and support, contact the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline: 800-272-3900. A consultant will inform you about local programs and services as well as

discuss the signs of Alzheimer's and other dementias. People who are concerned about these warning signs should see a physician for a complete examination. My hope is that these warning signs can help you or a loved one get help faster and slow the progression of this awful disease.

While on the topic of "forgetting," I would be remiss not to mention our hamantashen and meal deliverers and JFS Food Pantry helpers. A big thank you to Cindy Balchunas, Barb Bender, Sue Farrara, Raymond Gehring, Anzie Golden, Pete Jacobson, Myron Kabakoff, Eddie Kazin, Lin Langlois, Sid Lempiner, Jeanine Levy, Debra Montanino, Mary Neville, Annette Peppard, Jen Reilly, Mike Robinson, Mike Schein, Jannine Shapiro, Sharon Syret, and Corinne Wernick. These volunteers help to ensure that those who most need our help are not forgotten.

Maya Angelou said it best — "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Jewish Family Service

Food Pantry

Friendship Circle

Counseling Services

Transportation

Financial Assistance

Hospital and

Home Visitations

Living with Loss

Information and

Referral

Case Management

Holiday Programs

JFS MOVIE MONDAY

Join us for a movie of Jewish interest and popcorn on the 4th Monday of the month at 1 p.m. at the JCC. Call Brenda at 610-921-0624 to reserve your seat; walk-ins are welcome if seating is available.

“WALLENBERG: A HERO'S STORY”

Monday, April 25, at 1 p.m.



Based on the true story of Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who was responsible for saving 100,000 people from the Nazi Holocaust. Wallenberg risks his life and reputation to protect Jews in Budapest, Hungary by offering them passports and refuge. Winner of four Emmy awards. (3 hours)

Please note the change to 1 p.m. rather than our usual time

Opportunities to learn at the JCC



Some great learning opportunities at the JCC. At left, Jennifer Koosed leads a Noontime Knowledge program on Exodus in the Arts, looking at the story from the Torah and its impact on our culture. At right, Hallie Vaughan brings history alive in her depiction of three American female spies during a Jewish Family Service Friendship Circle program.

JFS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The purpose of this program is to provide transportation to members of the Jewish community, age 60 and over or those with disabilities, who have no other way of getting around. It allows participants to retain their independence and keeps them from becoming homebound and isolated. This service can be used for medical appointments, synagogue attendance, shopping and other errands.

It is easy to participate in the taxi program. Purchase a book of 25 taxi tickets from the Jewish Federation at a cost of \$25. Each coupon is worth \$3. The phone number for Reading Metro Taxi is printed on the taxi ticket book. Call the taxi company and arrange your ride. At the end of the ride, sign your coupon(s) before giving them to the driver. Tipping is left to the discretion of the passenger. The coupon does not include the cost of tipping.

This program is subsidized by the Jewish Federation.

Friendship Circle April programs

Friendship Circle is held on the first and third Thursdays of each month at 1 p.m. at the JCC. An optional lunch is served, followed by an entertaining or educational program or holiday celebration.

Programs are free; optional lunch is \$7. Contact Carole at 610-921-0624 to make lunch reservations.

Thursday, April 7 - Meet local artist Perry Levine

The JCC Art Gallery is showcasing the artwork of Perry Levine in April. Her art is rich in color and bold in texture. Perry will explain the artistic process behind her abstract creations.

Thursday, April 21 - JCC Passover Seder and Meal, 10:45 a.m.

Jewish Family Service invites you to a Passover Seder led by Sari Inledon and Carole Robinson. Reservations are required by April 8. Call 610-921-0624 or email CaroleR@JFReading.org to RSVP or with questions. Please note the time change for this program (10:45 a.m.).



A work by Perry Levine

More winning Violins of Hope essays

As part of our Violins of Hope program, local students were invited to write essays on what they learned from the experience. For grades 6-8 students were asked, *How can you influence others to make better decisions in the future to promote unity in your school and community?* Our second place winner was Katerina Wengrowski, a 7th grader from Wyomissing Junior-Senior High School.

Students in grades 9-12 focused on the Violins of Hope as a creative way to remember that in the face of genocide, we are responsible to remember Yitzhak Lamdan's reflection of "never again". Students were asked, *In what ways can you take action to ensure that "never again" becomes a reality in your school and community?* Our second place winner was Jakob Bolig, a junior at Oley Valley High School.

Third-place essays will be published in a future issue.

Essays are presented as written without editing.

By Katerina Wengrowski, 7th grade

Promoting unity between each other is one of the most important things for us as humans. It helps us understand each other, and help one another to make good decisions. Promoting each other to make good decisions in the future is not only important in our world, but in our community and schools. School and community are the places where everyone knows each other, and knows what is going on throughout the school and community. This is how words and news spread, the bad, but also the good. The good is what sets the tone for better decisions to be made, and to spread. Everyone is connected in a way, through influence. Friends influence each other, family members impact each other, and this is how good community decisions start. So how can I influence others to make better decisions in the future to promote unity through community and schools? Leading by example, spreading empathy through words and actions, and acknowledging differences between each other are just some important ways that can influence others to make better decisions in the future to promote unity throughout school and community.

Everybody needs a starting point, an example, a guide, a leader. Everyone needs to know where to begin. I believe that leading by positive example is one way that influences others to make better decisions to promote unity in school and community. People are most separated when they don't have common ground between each other, or when they don't have a connection point. Leading by positive example helps people form a connection because they have someone or something to connect to. One kind action leads to a chain reaction, which leads to other kind actions. Kindness cannot always be spread in that way. Some people may need an idea of how to spread this kindness. This is why a leader should be involved because not everyone will just go up to a stranger and help them. There needs to be someone who will begin this "chain reaction." Once this person begins, they will usually become successful in promoting others to become leaders as well. How can this be used to promote unity in school and community? In school, it is not always easy to be a leader, especially in front of friends, and in front of people that you are with everyday. Stepping out of your comfort zone cannot always be easy as well, but it can be worth it for the person that you are going to help. This can eliminate bullying, and promote kindness and positivity. Leading by positive



Essay contest second place winner Katerina Wengrowski of Wyomissing Junior-Senior High School, center, with, from left, Regina Barletta, guidance counselor; Andrea Landrum, English teacher; the JCC's Amanda Hornberger and Dr. Corey Jones, principal.



Jakob Bolig of Oley Valley High School finished second in an essay contest inspired by "Violins of Hope."

example in community can be the exact same way, and it can be difficult to stand up for a stranger. Helping a stranger can be hard, but it can also benefit you, and the person that you are helping. Leading by positive example is just one way that can influence others to make better decisions in the future to promote unity in school and community.

Empathy, "The ability to understand and share the feelings of another." Spreading empathy is very important within human nature. Anyone can spread empathy, and spreading empathy through words and actions is another way that can influence others to make better decisions in the future to promote unity in school and community. Empathy can be spread through actions or through words. In school, one way to spread empathy through unity could be to put up posters showing how to be understanding of each other's feelings. The posters could have sayings on them like, "Be gracious" or "Spread love." This would be an example of spreading empathy through words. One way to spread and show empathy through actions could be to compliment people, and make them feel good about themselves. Or, if someone is having a hard time, you could reach out to peers to help and guide the person through the difficult time that they may be going through. A way to spread empathy through actions between neighbors and community could be to reach out to each other. If a neighbor or community member needs care or help, then it would

be a good idea to go to their house, and bring them a home-cooked meal or care for their home. One way to show empathy towards neighbors and community members through words could be to compliment each other, just as you would to classmates in school. This could influence each other to compliment and help other people as well. By doing so could unify a group. As you can see, spreading empathy through words and actions is yet one more important way that can influence others to make better decisions in the future to promote unity in school and community.

Acknowledging differences between each other is another key course of action that can influence others to make better decisions in the future to promote unity in school and community. Difference is what makes us who we are. We are all different and unique in our own ways, but is also what makes us the same. Because we are all ourselves, means that we all have something in common, difference. In school, when somebody is different from everyone else, then it can be hard for them. Especially when nobody understands them, or what understands them makes them different. When classmates and friends acknowledge differences between each other, they become more understanding of what makes each of them different. Understanding and acknowledging are two different things. Just because someone understands something about somebody else, doesn't always mean that

they will respect and acknowledge that difference. Noticing and acknowledging differences is very important. We need to remember that just because we are all different, doesn't mean that we can't acknowledge and understand that. In community, one of the most important things is to acknowledge differences between each other. Especially when we are dealing with strangers. If someone else in the community is different, we shouldn't judge them because of it, we should embrace them. That goes for school as well. Embracing and acknowledging differences can lead to friendship, and understanding of each other. This is something that can unite us. If we acknowledge our differences, then we can embrace them. To summarize, acknowledging differences between each other can help influence others to make better decisions to promote unity in school and community.

To conclude, leading by example, spreading empathy through words and actions, and acknowledging differences between each other are just some important ways that can influence others to make better decisions to promote unity throughout school and community. To start with, leading by example will provide a guide for one another. That will lead to friendship, and common ground between each other. Next, spreading empathy through words and actions can help people show an understanding of each other's feelings. And lastly, acknowledging differences between each other will help us get a clear understanding of the people around us. All of these ideas are important when trying to influence others to make better decisions in the future to promote unity in school and community.

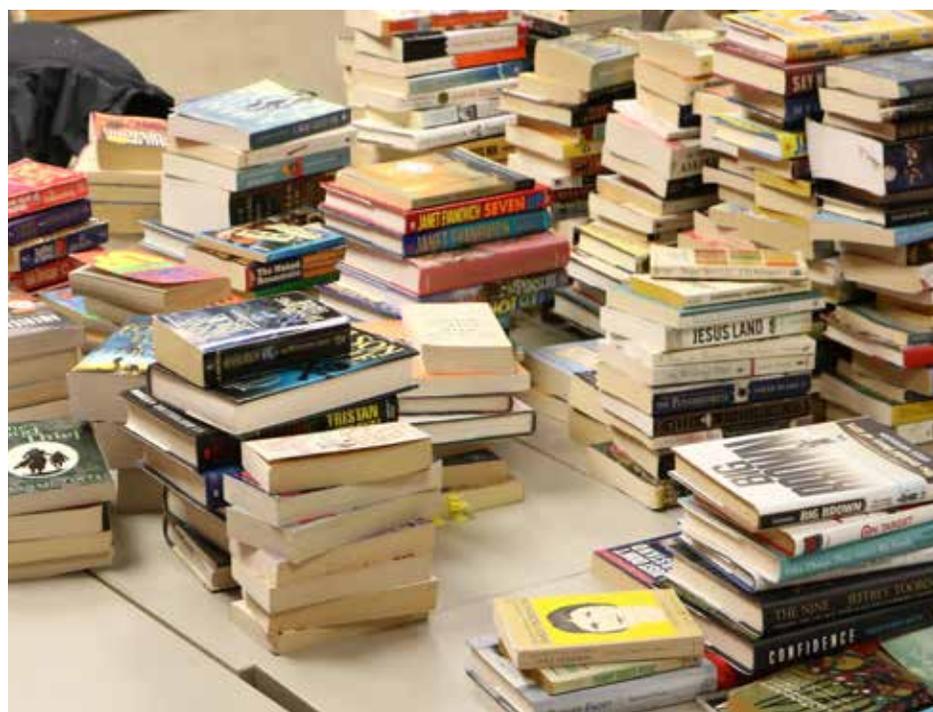
By Jakob Bolig, 11th grade

Learning From Our Past

"Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." A monumental quote from the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom during the Holocaust, Winston Churchill, and an eerily germane thought. History is riddled with appalling acts of violence and outright atrocities; despite this, many recent atrocities seem to be oddly similar to the past. Though each historical event is vastly distinctive from one another, we must all rally to learn from humanity's past mistakes and be certain that we will not repeat them for an exceptional future. Both upstanding and unacceptable actions spread like wildfire amongst people, compelling them to act similar to those around them. This is precisely why we all must not just advocate for but launch into action against all disrespect, oppression, and persecution, to be sure that Yitzhak Lamdan's reflection of "never again" becomes reality in today's world and the future world others will inherit.

The horrible atrocities of the Holocaust were produced due to the incessant persecution of the Jewish people and began with small seemingly insignificant stereotyping and prejudice. These simple acts of hate and discrimination escalate rapidly into widespread violence if left unchecked. And because of this premise, good people must end hate against anyone at its source. By speaking up against hate when others won't, by standing up for those unable to defend against the bombardment of oppression, and by just doing what is morally right, we have the power to terminate hate and the possibility of it escalating into something far more dangerous. "Never again" is possible; however, we must be united to combat all hate.

Kesher Zion collects, distributes books



The Kesher Zion Social Action Committee has successfully completed our Book Drive! We want to thank the entire community and everyone who donated books. We were able to distribute these books to the Federation sponsored food pantry, the Olivet Boys and Girls Club, the local prison, and the Gov. Mifflin Library. The books were appreciated by all the recipients. Thank you again for helping us with our mitzvah project!

Challahs by Chana

ENHANCE YOUR SHABBAT EACH WEEK WITH DELICIOUS, FRESH, HOME BAKED CHALLAH - PLAIN OR WITH TOPPINGS.



\$7 EACH CHALLA

Toppings include sesame, everything or crumb.

Please specify when you order

Orders must be in by Tuesday each week

Text Chana Lipsker @610-334-1577

All proceeds go to support Camp Gan Izzy of Berks

SAVE THE DATE

KESHER ZION'S
ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL
MEETING

SUNDAY MAY 1ST, 2022
11:30AM

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

JOIN US!
April 23rd at 10:00am*

Tot Shabbat

Join Rabbi Michelson for a musical, story-filled interactive hour for children through grade 2. Members & non-members welcome. No registration required. Future Tot Shabbat dates: May 14th & June 25th.

* Tot Shabbat will be outside, weather permitting.

It's a fantastic feeling to be free

By Rabbi Yosef Lipsker
Chabad of Berks

Setting aside for a moment some of the tensions out there, this year was a welcome return to the traditional Purim festivities. With many activities over the past couple of years being curtailed, or being done in very different — restrictive — ways, it was good to see the community buzzing again, with young and old enjoying the loudest and merriest festival of them all. There was noise, atmosphere,



communal spirit and joy. There was Megillah, partying and fun. People dressed up, smiling and laughing. It was good to feel normal again.

Right after Purim is when we begin seriously thinking about Pesach.

Seder nights, with the family joining in, and special atmosphere, are worth all the effort that precedes them.

The close proximity of Purim to Pesach is deliberate. Let's examine this for a moment.

The two festivals, Purim and Pesach share something in common: rescue and redemption. On Purim, the Jewish nation was rescued from total annihilation and genocide. On Pesach, the Jewish

nation was rescued and liberated from the oppression, persecution and cruelty of Egypt.

The idea of redemption is a key component in the narrative of our nation. The story of the Jewish people is one of constant fluctuation. We rise and fall, and rise again. Each rise is a redemption from the shackles of oppression to the freshness and relief of freedom — and its accompanying opportunities.

It is also about another kind of redemption — personal relief and solace from that which often oppresses us in our daily lives.

Judaism encourages us to find redemption and freedom from the

vicissitudes caused by the daily struggle to just survive, and to find calm, meaning and a sense of purpose and fulfillment.

With two such powerful symbols of relief and redemption, Purim and Pesach — separated by a mere four weeks — we are urged to get into that freedom mode. To feel the intoxicating energy of liberation as celebrated on Purim, with the festivities embracing us, and to not leave go. To keep up the momentum all the way to Pesach.

The message of freedom is too important.

It's a fantastic feeling to be free!
Wishing you a Happy & Healthy Pesach — celebrating the Holiday of Freedom!

Help us support our hospitalized

By Carole Robinson and Sari Incledon

For many years, Jewish Family Service has been able to get the names of all Jewish hospital patients, both affiliated with congregations and non-affiliated from Reading Hospital and St. Joseph's. This allowed us to visit as many patients and families as possible and provide social service and friendly supportive visits. Fortunately, we continue to receive daily emails from Reading Hospital of all Jewish patients, unless they request that their names not be shared.

Unfortunately, after the merger of Penn State Health and St. Joseph's

Hospital, this information is no longer available from them. Despite several conversations with St. Joseph executives, they claim HIPAA and security concerns prevent them from proactively sharing this information. In addition, because so many Jewish patients are unaffiliated, the information is not made available to our rabbis.

If you, family members or your friends are hospitalized at Penn State Health-St. Joseph's Hospital, please be aware of the need to contact us and/or your congregation to receive supportive services and a personal visit.

Please call 610-921-0624 if you have any questions.

B"H

JOIN CHABAD OF BERKS FOR OUR TRADITIONAL SEDER

PASSOVER SEDER

WITH MEANINGFUL DISCUSSIONS AND A WARM FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE

FIRST SEDER
FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 7:30 PM

AT CHABAD
2320 HAMPDEN BLVD. READING

Gourmet four Course Meal
Shmurah Matzah · Wine

\$36 ADULT · \$18 CHILD

RSVP by April 2 to office@chabadofberks.org

Reform Congregation
Oheb Sholom Invites You
to Attend Our



Featuring Associate
Professor of Art History
Penn State Berks
Dr. Samantha Kavky

**Friday,
April 22nd**

Samantha Kavky is an Associate Professor of Art History at Penn State University, Berks and a co-editor of the on-line Journal of Surrealism and the Americas. She teaches courses in European and American art from the Renaissance to the present as well as interdisciplinary courses combining art history with Women's Studies, history and psychology. Her research focuses on the early 20th century movements of Dada and Surrealism, especially the artist Max Ernst.



Dr. Kavky will be sharing her knowledge of the most recognized, loved and successful Jewish artist; Marc Chagall. Chagall presents us with a unique marriage of figurative imagery and modernist abstraction, of Jewish experience and Christian symbolism, and of both secular and spiritual concerns.

Shabbat Service at 7:00 pm. Oneg/Speaker at 8:00 pm



PASSOVER SERVICES 2022

SERVICES WILL BE HELD BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIA ZOOM

SATURDAY	APRIL 16	9:30AM
SUNDAY	APRIL 17	9:30AM
FRIDAY	APRIL 22	9:30AM
SATURDAY	APRIL 23	9:30AM

SATURDAY 4/23 SERVICE WILL INCLUDE YIZKOR

THE SHABBAT ZOOM LINK WILL BE USED FOR ALL OF THESE SERVICES

PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT THE KZ OFFICE SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

Keshet Zion Synagogue	555 Warwick Drive	Wyomissing, PA 19610
www.keshetzion.org	Office: (610) 374-1763	Fax: (610) 927-6248

A lesson in freedom vs. slavery as we observe Pesach

By Rabbi Brian Michelson
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom



I once did an experiment with a group of kindergarten students for a lesson revolving around the festival of Passover.

As we discussed the meaning of the holiday, I realized that these young children had no idea what slavery

meant. What it was like to "suffer" at all.

I explained to them that to truly understand Passover, each of us must first understand what it feels like to be a slave. Therefore, they were going to become my slaves for the rest of the morning.

I had them line up carrying their chairs and we marched up and down the hallway. A few stopped to ask why we were doing this, but the drill sergeant in me came out. No one was supposed to speak unless spoken to.

Back and forth we went, and I know their chairs were getting heavier and the fun from this entire experiment was gone for them.

Then to make matters worse, I made them sit and watch while the rest of the school stopped for a snack. You could see how tired and hungry they had all become, even in the short time that we had been doing this.

We returned to the classroom — I allowed them finally to have their snacks — I asked them how they

felt during our simulation.

A few spoke of being tired and said that they did not think that they could ever be a slave because it was too much work. A couple of them told me that it was no fun watching the other children eat while they had nothing and that they did not like having to follow all of my directions and rules. They had begun, in their way, to understand what it must have been like to be a slave in Egypt. They did not like not having enough food, or not having TV or toys with which to play. They did not like being dominated in a way that made them feel unimportant.

Afterward, I asked them to define slavery for me. One student told me that being a slave is the need to follow all the rules. I reminded him that freedom, at least according to Judaism, is not the absence of rules. Our religious school has rules to protect students and teachers from getting hurt. Our society has rules, that we call laws, to protect all of us. As Jews, we have the commandments, which are rules that God expects us to follow. Pesach reminds us that freedom does not mean that we can eat anything and do whatever we want regardless of its impact. There are rules to follow; however, they are the rules we choose to follow as classmates, a community, and as a country.

Pesach is not about freedom from rules and regulations. It is about the freedom to become the person each of us has the potential to become. May we be inspired, this Passover, to reach higher, dream bigger, and get closer to the best person each of us can be.

I wish you a Pesach Samayach v'Kasher!

ZIKARON EXHIBIT

MEMORY EXHIBIT



Throughout Israel's history, different songs have been written about specific soldiers using their own words or in their honor. Between 2001-2013 there was a special project on 'Galei Tzahal' station called "we will soon become a song", "עוד מעט נהפוך לשיר".

Join us and get to know the soldiers stories and their unique songs through this visual and musical exhibit.

The opening night on Tuesday, May 3rd at 6 PM

The exhibit will be open between Monday-Friday, May 3-13 from 9:00am-4:30pm

On May 11 the exhibit will be open until 8pm

The Jewish Federation of Reading, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125, Wyomissing, PA 19610

For questions, email AdiS@JFReading.org or call 610-921-0624

Credit for the exhibit: Netta Asner-Minster



COMMUNITY PESACH SEDER

HOSTED BY RCOS

FRIDAY, APRIL 15

6:00 PM

\$36 PER PERSON (11 AND OVER)

\$20 PER CHILD (2-10)

**Limited financial assistance available by calling Jewish Family Service at 610-921-0624*

Join us for our first community Seder in two years. We will share a fun, family-friendly reading of the Haggadah and a special Kosher-for-Pesach meal.

Your payment is your reservation and only fully paid reservations will be honored.

Please send checks made out to "RCOS" to Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, 555 Warwick Dr. Attn: Passover Seder, Wyomissing PA 19610

Reservations must be received by Friday, April 1. No late reservations can be accepted.

Funded in part thanks to a grant from Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks.



A Jewish version of 'Wordle'

From online news sources

In yet another addition to the world of Wordle offshoots, an Australia-based Jewish community organization has created Jewdle — a distinctly Jewish version of the wildly popular online word game. While versions of Wordle exist in other languages, including Hebrew and Yiddish, Jewdle offers words from English, Yiddish, Hebrew and Aramaic and is different in a few key ways.

Unlike Wordle, which asks players to guess a five-letter word using codebreaker's logic, Jewdle players have to guess six-letter Jewish words, increasing the game's difficulty. Jewdle also throws in a Jewish educational component, adding explanations and context once a player gets a word right. "This seemed like a really

perfect way to create Jewish relevance within a very popular, secular context that so many people around the world are accessing right now," Alon Meltzer, director of programs at the organization Shalom and the game's creator, told J-Wire.

After joining the more than 2 million people who have started playing Wordle, Meltzer decided to make a Jewish-themed version, which came with a set of unique challenges. "We decided to do six letters instead of five because of the phonetic differences in writing out many Hebrew and Yiddish words," Meltzer explained. "You often need to use a 'ch' or 'sch' combination or an 'ah' suffix. Five letters was a bit too limiting."

Jewdle can be played at <https://www.jewdle.app>



Israel helps Lebanese, Syrians and Egyptians evacuate Ukraine

From online news sources

Israel helped evacuate Lebanese, Syrian and Egyptian nationals from Ukraine, according to its Foreign Ministry, reported *Haaretz*.

A ministry spokesperson reported that citizens of several countries in the region, including those officially in a state of war with Israel had evacuated the country by boarding a bus organized by Israeli diplomats on the Polish side of the border.

The ministry added that the Israeli embassy in Kyiv is ready to "help Israeli residents from East Jerusalem".

Haaretz journalist Fadi Amun stated on Twitter that a Lebanese citizen with a group of Arab Israelis informed him that he had no other way of fleeing the country amid escalating conflict following Russia's invasion. An Israeli official, he said, allowed him to join the evacuation bus.

As the evacuation was taking place, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lior Haiat was quoted by *Haaretz* as saying: "We'll help anyone who we can help to get to the border. We can't help him cross the border."

"We've helped a Lebanese student yesterday, and we know that there are

other students from other nationalities that are joining the Israeli buses, especially from the north. We estimate that there were about 2,000 Israelis that left Ukraine in the last three days since the war started. They joined 4,500 that left earlier in the last 10 days."

Israel also planned for the arrival of around 10,000 Ukrainian Jews in the early March.

The Ministry of Immigration and Absorption said: "We call on the Jews of Ukraine to immigrate to Israel — your home."

It's Kauffman's again!



Wednesday, May 11th

3:00pm - 6:00pm

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
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\$13 Quarter Apple Cake

\$12 Kauffman's Chicken BBQ Platter

\$23 Quarter Apple Cake &
Chicken BBQ Combo Platter

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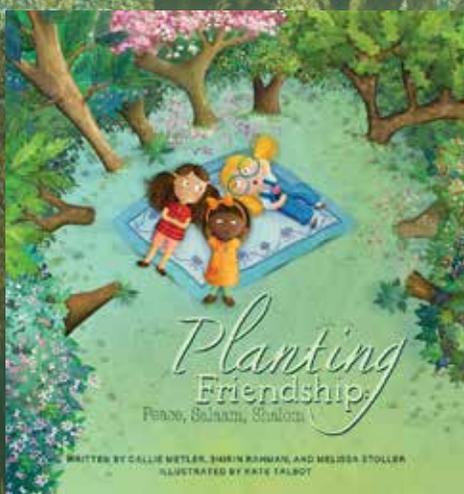
Pre-Order Starts April 11th

www.ohebsholom.org



Planting Friendship: Peace, Salaam, Shalom

by Callie Metler, Shirin Rahman, and Melissa Stoller



Sunday
April 24
4 p.m.

Exeter Community Library
with Melissa Stoller

To register, visit:

www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org/home/literatour

Literatour Berks is a program of Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks in partnership with Exeter Community Library.



Join us for a fun Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration!

By **Adi Shalev**

Ready for a fun celebration with games, music and good food?

Join us on Thursday, May 5, between 4:30 and 7 p.m. to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day!

Where? RCOS/KZ parking lot, 555 Warwick Drive in Wyomissing

What's the plan?

• **Moshava food truck:**

We're thrilled to have Moshava from Philadelphia, coming to Reading for the first time! They bring their twist on Israeli street food! Typically, you can find them slinging pita sandwiches by Drexel

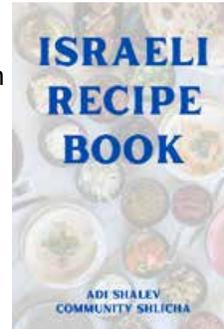


University, at breweries or the streets of Philly. You don't want to miss them!

• **Visit Israeli cities:** Come and explore the different cities of Israel! Be creative, answer questions, play games, and enjoy Israeli prizes!

• **Yom Ha'atzmaut gift bag** (pre-registration required): Treat yourself to a special gift bag that I created to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut! What's included?

• **Unique recipe book to enhance your own collection!** A special recipe book with all the recipes I taught the community during my three years as a Shlichah. It contains 31 scrumptious Israeli and family recipes,



and tantalizing new offerings to tickle your palate — all lovingly shared by my family and me! Extra pages are available for you to add your recipes.

Custom made spatula.

Israeli treats and surprises.

Arts & crafts

Israeli music

Have fun and schmooze with our community after we couldn't for so long!
Looking forward to seeing you all at the celebration.

For more information and registration links, check JFR weekly email/website www.readingjewishcommunity.org/ or email Adi at AdiS@JFRReading.org

Israeli cooking class



Adi Shalev leads an Israeli cooking class featuring falafel. The next class is scheduled for Tuesday, April 26, at 5:30 p.m., featuring a spinach shakshukah breakfast. Join Adi for a fun, flavorful way to learn about Israel..

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE

VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM

Enjoy tax benefits when you donate your vehicle to JFS.



Contact Carole at 610-921-0624 or CaroleR@JFRReading.org or go to <https://careasy.org/nonprofit/JFS-Reading>.

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More events around the community



Ellen Germain, special envoy for Holocaust issues at the U.S. State Department, delivers the 16th annual Richard J. Yashek Memorial Lecture March 23 at Albright College.

The "Great Decisions" series returns to the JCC for a fascinating discussion of world affairs.



At left, the last night of the lecture series "Jewish communities and their immigration to Israel." At right, the JCC Young Adults program celebrates one year.



ABOUT US

Nestled in the foothills of the magnificent Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania, Camp Harlam provides the finest in Jewish Camping. Established in 1958, Camp Harlam has developed a strong tradition of success and excellence based on a highly skilled staff dedicated to the spiritual, physical, social, and emotional well-being of each child, while building relationships that last for life.

Camp Harlam has a +300-acre facility, a population of approximately 550 campers each session, and a staff of over 225 exceptional role models.

The mission of Camp Harlam is to create a vibrant, fun, and caring camp community that enriches and strengthens Reform Jewish identity and values while cultivating lifelong friendships.



OUR COMMUNITY

The Camp Harlam family consists of smaller communities within Junior Camp, Senior Camp, and the Gasher (Counselor in Training) Program. Junior and Senior Camps are further broken down into units based on a child's school grade to create a more intimate and age-appropriate experience for our campers.

JUNIOR CAMP

Participants in Junior Camp are divided into five units, based upon grade level: Carmel, Sharon, Kineret, Arava, and Galil - they're all named after regions in Israel! Educational, arts, aquatic, athletic, and adventure activities are designed to guide children in an exciting summer of growth and opportunity.

SENIOR CAMP

Campers live in their own community villages in camp. Senior campers experience a challenging and fun summer featuring some of the elements of Junior Camp Programming, as well as facets of youth group programming that focus on team-building, group decision-making, and leadership training.

STAFF LEADERSHIP & SUPERVISION

Approximately 50% of our staff are former Camp Harlam campers. Our staff come from throughout the United States and around the world, including Israel and the United Kingdom. We pride ourselves on strong supervision and programmatic excellence. Our camper to staff ratio is 1:4 (Junior Camp) and 1:7 (Senior Camp).



ACTIVITIES

We offer a balance of group and individual activities. Our activities focus on skill development and personal enjoyment. We are constantly working to make our programs fit the needs and interests of our campers and to fulfill the values-based mission of Camp Harlam.

Here's a sample of the types of activities we offer:

ADVENTURE: Climbing wall and tower, canopy course and zipline, mountain biking, low ropes challenge course

NATURE/CAMPING: Hiking, scouting, campouts, outdoor cooking, and gardening

ARTS: Arts and crafts, ceramics, cooking, photography, videography, wood shop, dance, drama, music, music production, science

ATHLETICS: Archery, basketball, gaga, soccer, roller hockey, gymnastics, frisbee golf, lacrosse, volleyball, yoga, baseball/softball, tennis

JEWISH LIFE: Immersive and interactive services, Hebrew integration, Jewish music, Israeli dancing, experiential programming, Middot (character building)

WATERFRONT: Instructional swim, free swim, water polo, Zumba/water fitness, swimming and boating in the lake, out-of-camp rafting

SPECIAL EVENTS: Maccabiah (Color War), carnival, cookouts and overnight programs, concerts, artists in residence, sports clinics, talent shows, inter-camp sports competitions, intra-camp sports leagues



TYPICAL DAILY SCHEDULE

- 7:30 am - Boker Tov/Wake-Up
- 8:00 am - Breakfast & Morning Assembly
- 8:45 am - Cabin Cleanup
- 9:30 am - Activity Periods, including group programs & individual choice programs
- 12:30 pm - Lunch
- 1:00 pm - Menucha/Rest Period
- 2:00 pm - Activity Periods, including Free Swim & afternoon snack
- 5:00 pm - Shower Time
- 6:00 pm - Dinner
- 7:00 pm - Evening Program
- 8:30 pm - Milk & Cookies
- 9:00 pm - Lilah Tov/Good Night



THINKING ABOUT CAMP?!

SET UP A TOUR: We offer summer and off-season tours of camp! You'll get to meet staff, see our beautiful grounds, and get a feel for what it's like to be a Harlam camper.

JOIN US FOR AN EVENT: Check out our day-long Rookie Day programs and our Taste of Camp overnights in the summer and off-season! Plus, we offer open houses, and virtual events throughout the year.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE: Visit CampHarlam.org for even more info.

GIVE THE GIFT OF CAMP: Camp Harlam is constantly growing and innovating - and the generous gifts of our camp families, alumni, and greater community help more children have the lifechanging experience of a summer at Harlam.

An Israeli's view of Yom Hazikaron

By **Adi Shalev**

Yom Hazikaron is marked every year on the fourth of Iyar (unless that date occurs on Shabbat, in which case it may be moved forward or back a day). Yom Hazikaron honors and commemorates fallen soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces and victims of terrorism. This Memorial Day is also in commemoration of deceased members of the Israeli Police, the General Security Service, and the Mossad.

Yom Hazikaron starts at sundown, with the Tzifira (a memory siren), marking a one-minute standing silence at 8 p.m. The flags are lowered to half-staff.

When the Tzifira starts, it breaks the silence and enters my soul. Right after the Tzifira, memorial ceremonies take place in every city in the country, and TV programs air in memory of the fallen, one after the other. Communal "singing evenings" with Yom Hazikaron songs take place everywhere. Sometimes it is hard to watch because of the tears and sometimes you cannot even sing along.

My uncle Rafi, Zikhrono Livrakha, was an IDF officer. He died 33 years ago in a tragic car accident while on duty. Every

year, on Yom Hazikaron, my uncle's boarding school holds a ceremony in memory of the fallen soldiers who attended the school. Therefore, every year, this is the place where my family goes to hear the siren and attend the ceremony.

On Erev Yom Hazikaron, all places of entertainment, colleges, stores, and most workplaces close early, so people have the time to attend a ceremony in the evening. The unique atmosphere starts then and continues throughout Yom Hazikaron. The air feels heavy, the radio plays only Yom Hazikaron oriented songs, and on the TV there are only shows related to Yom Hazikaron and to the soldiers' stories. Every school will have a ceremony, starting in elementary school through high school. Everyone stops what he or she is doing, even if driving, and stands while the siren is on, to respect and remember.

The next morning, on the day of Yom Hazikaron, hundreds of ceremonies take place in military cemeteries, memorials, educational institutes, military bases, and public institutions across the country.

Most people, including my family, go to a military cemetery.

The day starts with a two-minute Tzifira at 11 a.m. that opens the memorial

ceremonies at each military cemetery. Tens of thousands of people and masses of soldiers honor the memories of the fallen by placing memorial wreaths, saying kaddish, and remembering them with stories. Next to each grave, there will always be two soldiers who are there to remember and respect the fallen in case this soldier does not have anyone to come. Imagine thousands of people in each cemetery.

My family and I stand around my uncle's grave and listen; crying, hugging, and supporting each other... every year. When the ceremony is over, people go back home. We are usually the last people left at the cemetery.

At sundown, Israel's mood changes to one of celebration for Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day. The flag goes back to the top of the pole. The formal ceremonies for Yom Hazikaron were first held on the same day as Yom Ha'atzmaut in 1949. However, the combination of grief and the happiness of Independence Day created an emotionally difficult atmosphere, and every year, there are many questions. Is it humanly possible to make such a sharp switch from sadness to joy? How do bereaved families, such as mine, manage to celebrate? Should

a weekday be between the two special days to allow for recovery?

Many people say that this balance between sadness and joy is what it is all about. There is an inseparable connection between the sacrifice of the soldier's lives and our lives in an independent state. This connection symbolizes the complexity of life itself, which naturally and often instantaneously moves between sadness and joy. Haim Nachman Bialik said "And in their deaths, they ordered us to live" We honor, remember, and cherish them, and at the same time do our best to make our small country a wonderful place to live.

I, personally, do have some issues with the sharp transition from Yom Hazikaron to Yom Ha'atzmaut. I see how difficult and painful it is to make that transition. On the other hand, I understand the unbreakable connection between these two important days, that in a lot of ways symbolize my country.

Please join us for the community Yom HaZikaron Memorial Ceremony on Tuesday, May 3, at 7 p.m. at the JCC, to commemorate the bravery of the IDF soldiers and victims of terror.

In-person and online options are available.

KZ Trivia Hybrid Event
Sunday, May 15, 3 p.m.
More details to follow

Thinking about buying or selling?

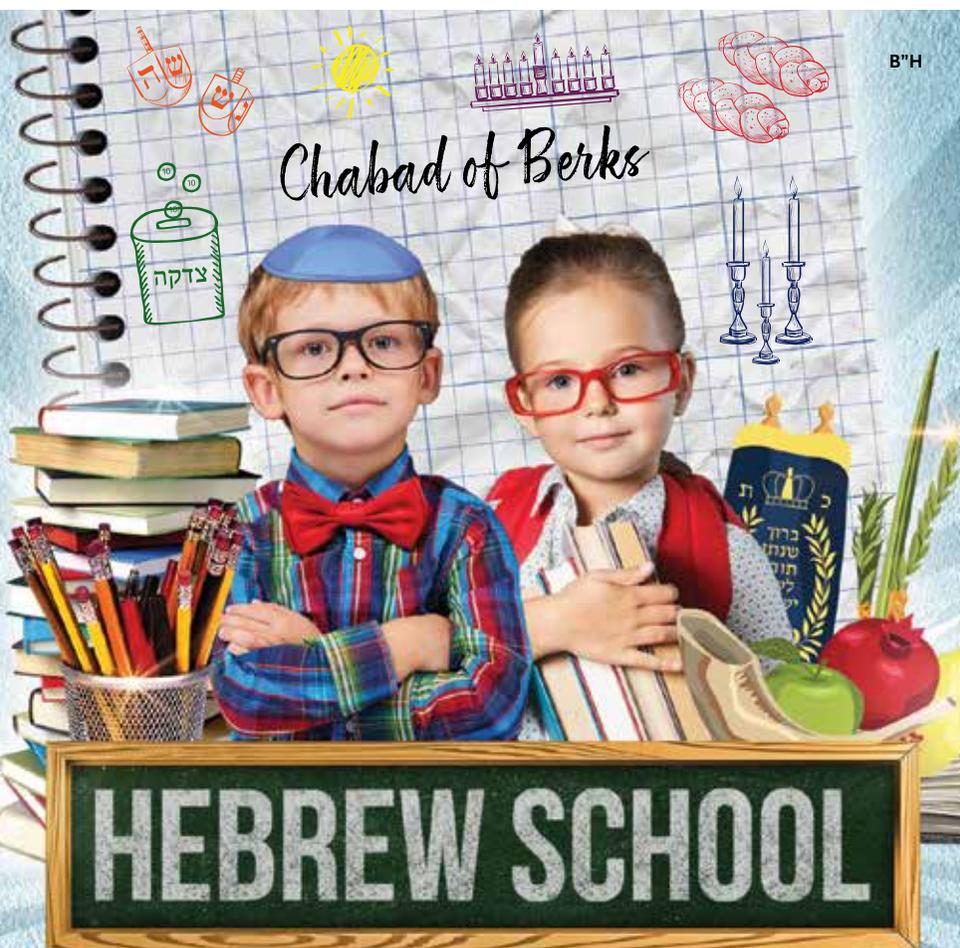


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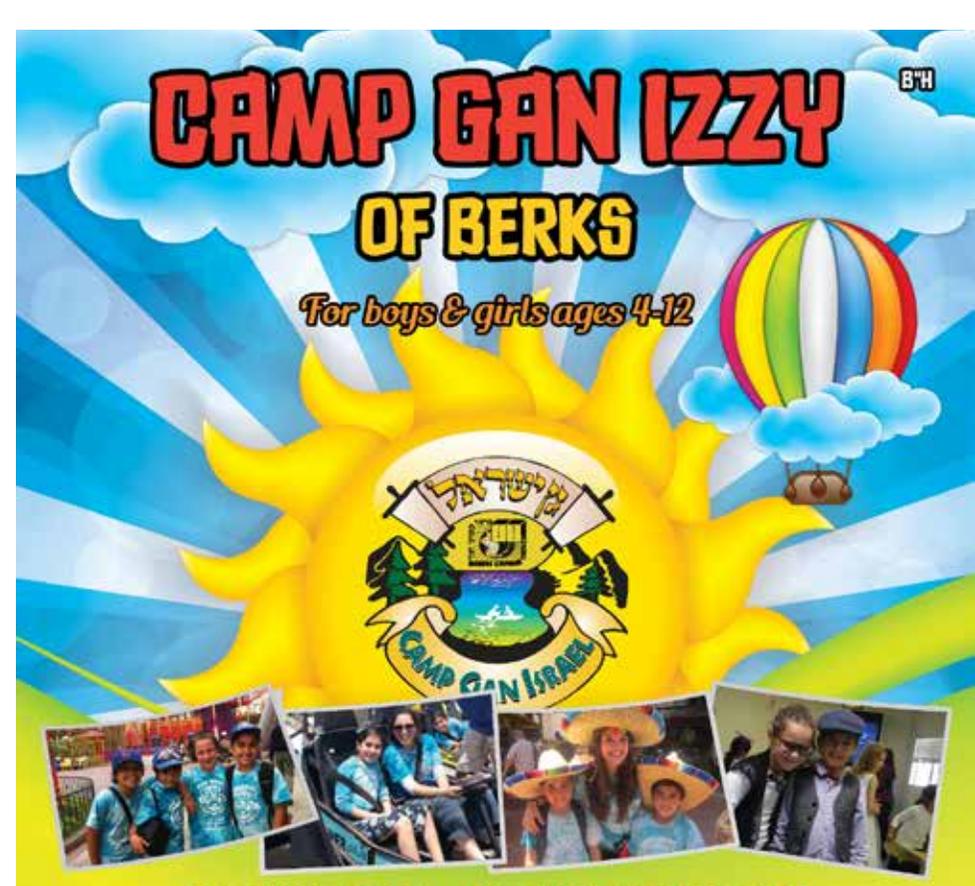
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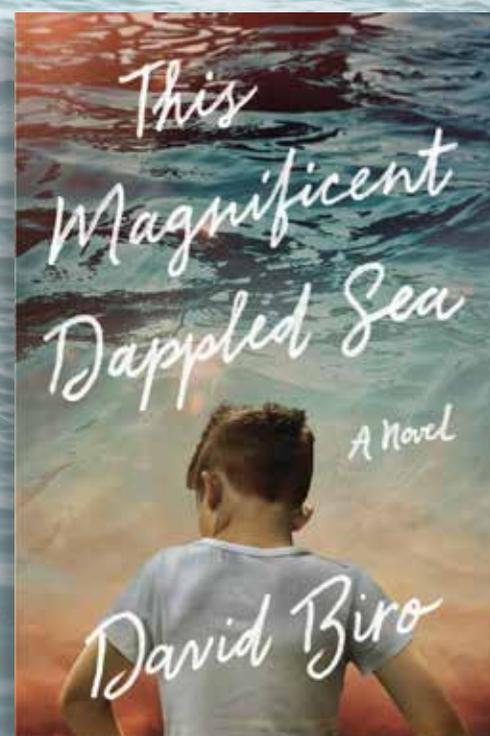
A series of recent JCC programs appealing to a wide range of ages and interests. Clockwise from top left, the Find Your Voice program for tweens meets via Zoom in February, Paint and Sip Night participants show off their work, and online programs from the JCC teach about immigration trends in Israel and women in the Jewish state's armed forces.

This Magnificent Dappled Sea

by David Biro

Monday
April 11th
7 p.m.

at the
Jewish Cultural Center
1100 Berkshire Blvd, Suite 125
Wyomissing, PA 19610



To register, visit:
www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org/home/literatour
Literatour Berks is a program of Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks in partnership with Exeter Community Library.



All Around the Town

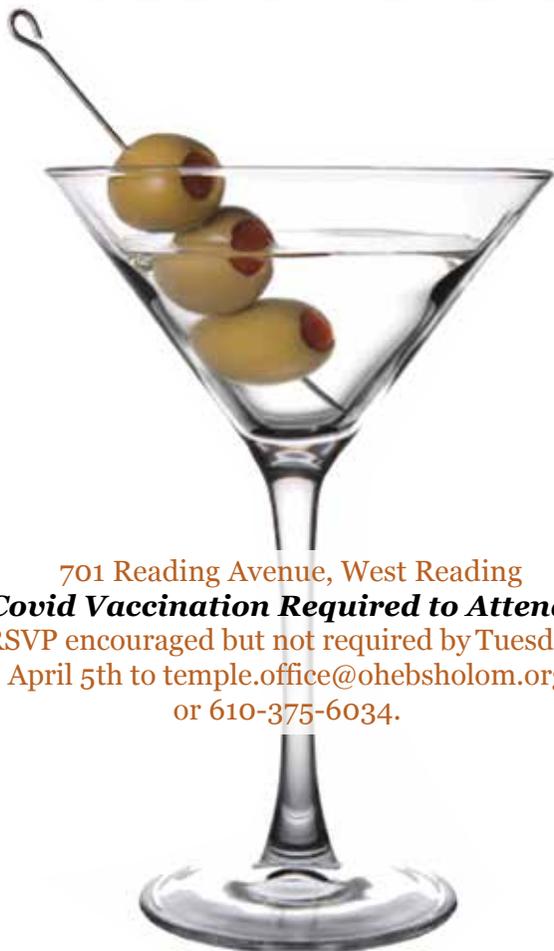
Mazel tov to **Jan and Jonathan Simon** on the birth of their granddaughter Helen Cora Brown on March 14. Helen's parents are **Sarah and Adam Brown**.

We love good news about members of our community! Please share it by emailing Marknem@aol.com or calling 610-921-0624.

Until next time: Shalom!



**JOIN US FOR
HAPPY HOUR
IN A PRIVATE ROOM AT
SQUAWK
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701 Reading Avenue, West Reading
Covid Vaccination Required to Attend.
RSVP encouraged but not required by Tuesday,
April 5th to temple.office@ohebsholom.org
or 610-375-6034.

**APR. 7TH
6 TO 8 PM**

Obituaries

Marsha A. Goldberg, 71, of Reading. Marsha was a graduate of Reading High School and worked at the Reading Hospital for many years. She enjoyed spending time with family and traveling with friends. Marsha is survived by her many nieces and nephews.

Anne Goldstan, 91, formerly of Reading, and spent the last 10 years living in Canada and Florida. Anne was a former member of Keshet Zion Synagogue and a past president of the B'nai B'rith Organization, in which she was very active. She attended a fashion school in New York and enjoyed

traveling with family and friends. She is survived by her son Wayne Goldstan of Reading and her daughter Linda, and her husband, Ron Felton, of Miami, and her grandson Joshua Michael Felton. She is also survived by her brother Morton Meiskin of New Jersey and her partner of the past 10 years, Brian Lechem

Wendy Frank, 64 of Groton Mass., raised in Reading, was the daughter of the late Marilyn and Gerald Frank and was an RCOS member. Wendy, a music therapist, devoted her life to promoting creative expressions through music and art. She is survived by her husband, Ray Ciemny, children Jonas and Lia and sister Susan Viskin.

Poetry corner

*From a window in my bedroom
on a Sabbath afternoon
not long ago
I saw 9 doves (I think they were doves)
perched on a wire
Shortly there were 25 or more
And then
the whole crew but for a few
flew away together like a flock
who knew each other name-by-name*

*Who was the leader?
the coordinator?
Who knew just the second in time
when they should take off in flight
together?
Just one of the small
mysteries in this world of them
Left to us to ponder and to wonder*

—Nancy J. Knoblauch

ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OP

*I look out my window and what do I see?
A bird, a flower and grass that is green,
Everyone is so happy, no one can be mean.
The sun will soon be shining here,
I will be reading a book and drinking a beer.
I will soon be swimming in a pool,
In today's lingo, I will really be cool.*

*I hope all of you have a happy every day,
this is all I really have to say.
I am now going to daydream about the
happy days to come,
I can't sing a note,
so I am going to hum.*

—Tootie Moyer



Marjorie "Tootie" Moyer was born in Reading and has lived here her entire life. She has 4 children, 3 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren. Tootie is well-known for her festive walking canes created to celebrate each season and holiday. Look for butterflies and flowers soon! In addition to her love for every type of craft, Tootie enjoys writing poetry. She keeps a tablet and pencil by the side of her bed to jot down poems that come to her in the middle of the night. Above is her latest creation.



HOLY SPARKS

Celebrating Fifty Years of Women in the Rabbinate



Rabbi Sally Priesand's ordination as the first woman rabbi in America set in motion the first steps toward inclusion, diversity, equity, and empowerment of new cohorts redefining Jewish leadership over the past 50 years.

"Holy Sparks" features the works of 24 leading contemporary Jewish women artists evoking the identities and consecrated paths of 24 women rabbis who were "firsts" in their time. This exhibition is a collaboration between HUC-JIR's Dr. Bernard Heller and Skirball Museums and The Braid.

Join us for a special virtual tour with

Jean Bloch Rosensaft, Director, Dr. Bernard Heller Museum.

Wednesday, April 20 at 7:00 pm

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZlqdu-pqj8pHtMy4oe1JEu0qAWQFbiBti-F>

Berks native's journey into her Spanish roots

Baltimore Jewish Times

At Temple Adas Shalom in Havre de Grace, Md., Berks County native Sarah Pardo O'Donnell is the principal of the Adolph Nord Religious School. And now, she can add Spanish citizenship to her list of credentials.

O'Donnell is the daughter of Mike Pardo and the late Eve Pardo. She grew up in Pennside and attended Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom.

In 1492, the Spanish crown exiled its Jewish community, creating a Sephardic Diaspora. Among those Jews were O'Donnell's ancestors on her father's side of the family. More than 500 years later, O'Donnell applied for Spanish citizenship through Spain's Law of Return.

In 2015, the Spanish legislature unanimously passed the Law of Return, allowing for descendants of Sephardic heritage to apply for Spanish citizenship, *The Jerusalem Post* reported. As of October 2021, 34,000 people had been granted Spanish citizenship under the plan, more than 3,000 had been denied and 22,000 had not yet received a response.

In addition to her work for the Adolph Nord Religious School, she works as a Spanish teacher for Baltimore County's public school system.

O'Donnell can't remember a time when she wasn't aware of her family's history, particularly of their expulsion from Spain.

"This [history] has actually been very present always in my life," she said. "My [maiden] name is Pardo; it's a Sephardic last name."

O'Donnell's grandmother spoke Ladino, a Romance language spoken by Sephardic Jews, and she came to the United States from Salonica in Greece. O'Donnell said the town had a historic Jewish population, many of whom were descended from Spanish exiles, and in the past was referred to as "the Jerusalem of the Balkans."

O'Donnell's interest in Spain's culture and language stems largely from her family history. In addition, while attending college, her family hosted a Jewish exchange student from Venezuela, with whom she forged a strong friendship. It was an interest that manifested itself when she majored in Spanish and lived for a year in the Spanish city of Seville.

While O'Donnell has essentially no information on the names or stories of her ancestors who were exiled, that doesn't stop her from thinking about how it must have been for them.

"I'm sure they were fearing for their lives, and at that moment in time keeping their Jewish identity and keeping their religion was their driving force in leaving the country," she said. "It was who they were. And to be very honest with you, this whole process has really connected me to my Judaism."

O'Donnell first became aware of the Spanish law that might offer her a path to citizenship in 2015, when her Irish husband, Niall, told her about it. At the time, applicants were required to speak Ladino, so she initially declined to pursue it. But several years later, when Spain dropped the Ladino requirement, she listened to her husband when he said "this law was made for you."

She started the process of obtaining her citizenship in July 2019. The process was lengthy and laborious. She had to prove descent from Spanish Jews exiled in 1492, prove a current connection to Spain and pass a Spanish language exam and a citizenship exam in Spanish. In addition, she had to find particular types of officials to translate her documents into Spanish and approve them, and other forms of red tape. She finally received her letter of naturalization in the mail on Dec. 18, making her a citizen of Spain and recently received her Spanish passport.

"This is not something where you can just go on Ancestry.com, say you

have a Spanish last name and you're automatically granted citizenship," O'Donnell said.

As challenging as the process was, O'Donnell considers herself lucky, in part because the program stopped accepting applications in 2019.

"This was not an easy task for most people," O'Donnell said. "This citizenship, while it was meant to really welcome back all the Jews who were expelled, it was an extremely, extremely difficult process, which is why the fact that I was able to gain this citizenship is so incredible."

One point in O'Donnell's favor was that her mother, Eve, had seen fit to frame all of the immigration paperwork of her husband's family and hang it up on the walls of their home. This left O'Donnell with easy access to many of the documents she would later need.

"When I say this has surrounded me my entire life, it has literally surrounded me, up on the walls, my entire life," O'Donnell said.

O'Donnell hopes someday to retire part time to Spain with her husband and possibly



Sarah Pardo O'Donnell with her naturalization letter (Courtesy of Sarah Pardo O'Donnell)

purchase property in Seville. She also hopes her children will become Spanish citizens as well, something that should be made easier by her own citizenship.

"If my family could prove, over 600 years later, that they descended from

these Jews who were expelled from Spain because of their Jewish identity, that is a huge driving force for me to teach that to my children, and have them know their identity and their heritage," O'Donnell said.

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Jewish Federation
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A community prayer for Ukraine



The Jewish community had a strong presence at a prayer vigil for Ukraine at Reading's Calvary UCC Church. Clockwise from top left, Sandra Fishman, Margo Levin, Judith Kraines and Amanda Hornberger meet state Attorney General Josh Shapiro; Rabbi Brian Michelson addresses the crowd; and a packed house takes in a musical performance.

Yom Hazikaron Community Ceremony

Did you know? For Israelis, Yom HaZikaron is one of the most important days of the year as we recognize those who sacrificed their lives for Israel. We see it as our opportunity and responsibility to share the meaning of this day.

Please join us for the community Yom HaZikaron Memorial Ceremony on Tuesday, May 3 at 7:00 pm, to commemorate the bravery of the IDF soldiers and victims of terror.

**Tuesday, May 3rd at 7:00 pm at Reading JCC
1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125, Wyomissing, PA 19610**



In-person and online options are available
Email Adi at AdiS@JFReading.org or check JFR weekly email/website for the zoom link



Demand for Hebrew lessons jumps in Gaza as Israel eases work restrictions

From online news sources

In a brightly lit classroom in Gaza, a teacher spells out Hebrew words on a whiteboard, followed attentively by Maher Al-Farra and dozens of other Palestinians hoping to take advantage of an opening up of employment opportunities in Israel.

Increased demand for the classes at the Nafha languages center follows a new offer of work permits by Israel as it has moved to calm border tensions following an 11-day conflict last May with Hamas, the Islamist group that rules the Gaza Strip.

It now offers 10,000 permits allowing Gaza residents to cross the border to work in Israel — a new source of income to a region where 64% of the population is estimated to live in poverty and unemployment runs at 50%.

Ahmed Al-Faleet, the center's owner, said the number of people enlisted to learn Hebrew has increased four-fold to reach 160 students per course since Israel began giving work permits in the last quarter of 2021.

"These courses allow anyone who gets a permit to read signs, documents written in Hebrew, and communicate with (soldiers) on Israeli checkpoints. If an employer speaks only Hebrew, it enables the worker to deal with him," he told Reuters.

Some 2.3 million Gazans live in the narrow coastal strip, largely unable to leave to seek work abroad and squeezed by 15 years of restrictions imposed by Israel, which has fought four wars with Hamas and other armed groups since 2008. Gaza also borders Egypt, which imposes its own restrictions on crossings.

Before a Palestinian uprising erupted in 2000, some 130,000 Gazans worked in Israel. Palestinians said Israel had in 2005 barred laborers after pulling troops and settlers from Gaza. No one expects



A school in Gaza, where job opportunities in Israel have led to increased interest in Hebrew lessons.



Israeli President Isaac Herzog visits a first-grade class on the opening day of the new school year in September.

the cautious increase in the number of work permits to end the long-running conflict between Israel and Hamas, who fought four wars since

the Islamist faction seized control in Gaza in 2007.

But for the dozens of workers and merchants enrolled in the class at Nafha, the change offers the prospect of earning, in Israel, the equivalent of a week's wages in Gaza. "I came here today to learn Hebrew so I can handle things at my work inside (Israel) easily," Farra told Reuters.

Israeli liaison officer Colonel Moshe Tetro said the new jobs would improve Gaza's economy and "would also serve calm and security stability." Eassam Daalis, a senior Hamas official, said Israel was eventually expected to offer 30,000 work permits, which economists say could allow workers to earn an average of 500 shekels (\$156) a day, equivalent to what some can earn a week working in Gaza. "Every week I go back home happy to my family with 2,000 shekels (\$625). I also give to my mother and my father," said Jamil Abdallah, 31, from Jabalya in northern Gaza.

Gaza economist Mohammad Abu Jayyab noted that the offer of permits was one of a series of economic steps agreed under a political settlement brokered by Egyptian, Qatari and United Nations negotiators following the May war. "These are not unilateral Israeli initiatives," he said. With tensions brewing over clashes between Jewish settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank and the eviction of Palestinian families in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah the situation could change quickly.

Israel has tied the offer of more openness to improved security following May's war and has accused Hamas of investing in building its fighting capabilities rather than resolving the humanitarian problems facing Gaza. "If the security situation remains stable and calm the state of Israel would open up more and more," said Tetro.

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*Pre-registration required for the Yom Ha'atzmaut gift bag.

To register, email AdiS@JFRreading.org or check JFR weekly email / website



Loads of local fun at Purim



Plenty of fun at Purim Under the Sea at Chabad, a family event co-sponsored by the Federation.



The Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom Purim Spiel made a triumphant return with an evening filled with hilarious Rodgers & Hammerstein song parodies.



Friendship Circle celebrating Purim. Ellen Schwickrath, Lila Shapiro, and Ian Bachrach singing Purim songs Robert Schneier portraying Haman in the Purim spiel.

Lakin Preschool children enjoy a sweet Purim celebration

Herzl Museum in Jerusalem now appealing to Israeli Arabs

From online news sources

The state-funded Herzl Museum in Jerusalem is in the first stages of appealing towards the Arab-Israeli community and is translating all of the exhibits into Arabic.

Chairman of the Herzl Museum Uri Zaki discussed the effort in an interview with the *Jerusalem Post*. "When I discovered last year that the museum operates in eight different languages, yet Arabic, that is an official language in Israel, wasn't one of them — I asked our team to start working on changing this reality" he says.

The Herzl museum includes audiovisual 4D film exhibits about Herzl's path to Zionism, his activities in the Zionist political movements and comparing Herzl's vision for Israel as outlined in his book "The Old New Land" to Israel's achievements in practice.

The museum is managed by the World Zionist Organization, and Zaki was appointed as chairman as a senior member of the left-wing Meretz political party. His wife is Minister of Environmental Protection Tamar Zandberg, who is also a former leader of the Meretz party.

Theodor Herzl was an Austro-Hungarian Jewish journalist and political activist, considered as the father of modern political Zionism. Herzl formed the Zionist Organization and promoted Jewish immigration to Palestine in an effort to form a Jewish state. Herzl is considered to be the "Visionary of the State" of Israel.

"Herzl's heritage deserves to be exposed to the Arab public through the Herzl Museum," says Zaki and adds that "Arab Israelis need to hear about the Zionist story through Herzl's eyes and therefore, I thought this was important that our museum be made accessible to

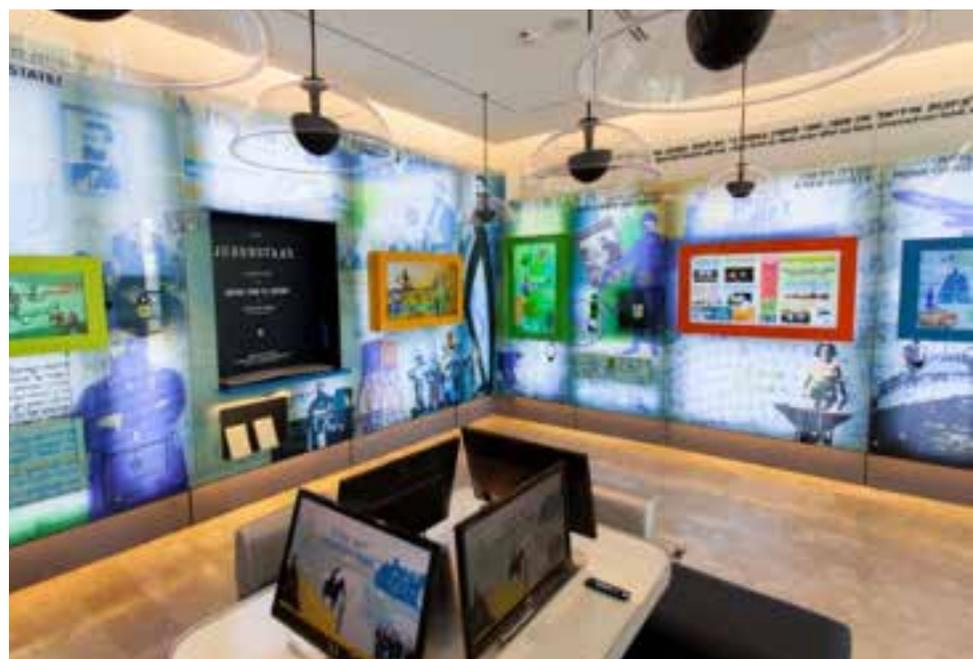
the Arab public."

Zaki explains that the first stage is subtitles in Arabic that have already been translated and created. The subtitles are being implemented in the audio-visual aspects of the museum. "The second step will be dubbing the videos into Arabic as we have done in other languages."

The third stage will be, according to Zaki, "training Arabic speaking instructors and tour guides, while also discussing with them how to deal with difficult questions and situations that will arise among Arab Israelis."

What message is important to you to get across to an Arab student who will visit the museum for the first time? "Herzl himself told us that we know we will succeed according to our attitude towards the Arab minority in Israel. His legacy to us was how we should treat the Arab minority within us. It is important for the Arab public to know Herzl's legacy since this is the source of the establishment of the state. There are also negative elements in Arab history when it comes to Zionism and I would like for them to hear out what Herzl had to say. Herzl was in favor of integration and equality. He wrote about it in his book. He was in favor of freedom of vote and many more elements regarding Arabs in Israel.

"I want them (the Arab-Israeli community) to have a chance to learn about Zionism and to know that we are making an effort to give them a chance. It is important to me in my perception to be exposed to other audiences as well as to the ultra-Orthodox society." Zaki reveals that he has already started a soft launch approach toward Haredi (ultra-Orthodox) opinion-makers "As opposed to the Arabic speaking public,



An interactive Zionist wall at The Herzl Museum, meant to educate about Zionism.

with the Haredi population we don't need on subtitles in Yiddish at the moment," to translate anything, we're not working he says jokingly.

April Adar II-Nissan



Shabbat Candle Lightings

April 1
:10 p.m.

April 8
:18 p.m.

April 15
:25 p.m.

April 22
:32 p.m.

April 29
:39 pm



Torah Portions

April 2/1 Nissan
Tazria (Leviticus 12:1-13:59)

April 9/8 Nissan
Metzora (Leviticus 14:1-15:33)

April 16/15 Nissan
Pesah (Exodus 12:21-51)

April 23/22 Nissan
Shemini Shel Pesach (Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17)

April 30/29 Nissan
Acharei Mot (Leviticus 16:1-18-30)

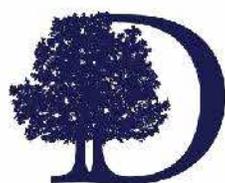
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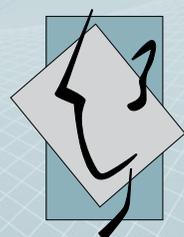
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Contributions as of March 18

Federation Jewish Community Campaign

In honor of:

Amanda Hornberger's wonderful work in managing and presenting the Literatour series – Margie and Alan Leisawitz
Brody and Charlie Hammel's B'nai Mitzvah – Howard and Victoria Hafez
Chelsea Hafetz's Bat Mitzvah – Howard and Victoria Hafetz

In memory of:

Helen Cook (Jan Simon's mother) – Dena and Vic Hammel, Debbie Goodman and John Moyer, Anzie and Edward Golden

Jewish Family Service

In memory of:

Gil Aberg (Mimi Gavigan's father) – Myron and Karen Kabakoff, Jan and Jonathan Simon
Gloria Robinson (Mike Robinson's mother) – Myron and Karen Kabakoff, Sam and Sarah Flamholz, Jan and Jonathan Simon
Helen Cook (Jan Simon's mother) – Jim and Jackye Barrer, Gordon and Carol Perlmutter, Louise Zeidman
Anne Goldstan – Louise Zeidman

JFS Food Pantry

In honor of:

Birth of Jan and Jonathan Simon's new granddaughter Helen Cora Brown – Sue Schlanger
Barbara and Bernie Fromm's 65th wedding anniversary – Debbie Goodman and John Moyer

Honorials and Memorials

Contributions may be made to the following Funds:

- Federation Jewish Community Campaign
- Jewish Family Service
- Leo Camp Lecture Fund
- JFS Food Bank
- JFS Taxi Transportation Program
- Holocaust Library & Resource Center
- Doris Levin Fund
- PJ Library Fund
- Harry & Rose Sack Fund
- Evelyn Thompson Fund

Doris Levin Memorial Fund

In memory of:

Gloria Robinson (Mike Robinson's mother) – Louise Zeidman

Friendship Circle Fund

In memory of:

Gloria Robinson (Mike Robinson's mother) – Glenn and Gaye Corbin

Evelyn Thompson Fund (Lakin Preschool)

In honor of:

Birth of Sue and Mike Farrara's grandson Landon James Farrara – Jan and Jonathan Simon
Birth of Sue Wilson's grandson Paxton James Chabin – Jan and Jonathan Simon
Birth of Jan and Jonathan Simon's new granddaughter Helen Cora Brown – Beth and Bob Caster

In memory of:

Helen Cook (Jan Simon's mother) – Beth and Bob Caster

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