



Shalom06|25

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

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IDF soldiers visit Reading for Yom HaZikaron, Yom HaAtzma'ut

By Vicki Haller Graff

We hope you had the opportunity to meet Yarden and Yoav, our two honored guests who were on a special IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) mission through the Jewish Agency. They visited our community for Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzma'ut, Israel's Memorial Day and Independence Day. We were one of 26 Jewish communities around the country to host a pair of Shlichim B'Madim (Soldiers in Uniform).

From Monday, April 28 through Friday, May 2, Yarden and Yoav met with so many people and groups in our community, from the children at Lakin Preschool to a joint religious school program for our students, to our teens and young adults, as well as our elders. They shared their individual stories with leaders from the Jewish community, with our community partners in government, nonprofits, the Greater Reading Unity Coalition and with our Christian partners. Yarden and Yoav also had the opportunity to visit Harrisburg to see the Capitol and, of course, to do some shopping.

One of the highlights was their emotional presentation on Yom HaZikaron, Israel's Memorial Day. They shared very personal stories of loss, and together we honored and remembered those who were killed while serving for Israel. The other highlight was, the next day, celebrating Yom HaAtzma'ut, Israel's Independence Day, as one community. It was a joy to see everyone wearing Israeli flag headbands, to see the children trying training exercises with Yarden and Yoav and to see so many people from our entire community coming together as one to celebrate our homeland.

Everyone who met Yarden and Yoav was truly moved by their stories of courage.



Above, Sandy Solmon and Doug Messinger graciously hosted a leadership event with our honored guests. At right, our guests with, from left, incoming Federation board President Jon Avins, CEO Brian Chartock, and current board President Sheila Bornstein.



Youth in our community met for a special joint Hebrew School program with our honored IDF soldiers.

Everyone learned something new about life in Israel, especially after October 7; moreover, we were able to experience Israel through them, and they served as perfect ambassadors.

Todah rabah — We thank Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, Keshet Zion Synagogue and Chabad-Lubavitch of Berks County for partnering with us on events throughout the week. We also thank Sandy

Solmon and Doug Messinger, Hank Butler of the Pennsylvania Jewish Coalition and The Greater Reading Unity Coalition (GRUC).

Next time we bring honored guests to the community, please mark your calendar and plan to attend. Yarden and Yoav's visit made a profound impact on those who met them, and we hope to include more and more people in future years.

Federation names new Development Director

By Laurie Waxler

Please join us in welcoming our new Development Director, Richard Bradbury, to our Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks family.

Born and raised in Reading and after having spent some time as an adult in Seattle and Washington, DC, Richard has lived in Shillington for the past 18 years with his husband, John, and their pets, Libi and Duncan.

Richard comes to Federation from Olivet Boys & Girls Club, where he most recently served as the director of grants. Prior to that, he was the director of the Center for the Arts Club (CFA) where he orchestrated arts education classes for members ages 6 to 18 years. With Richard overseeing numerous summer theatre camps, including 16 musicals, the camp was awarded the Pennsylvania Council of

the Arts "Best of the Best in PA" award in 2018.

Richard learned his grant writing skills early on, as his goal was to provide arts programming for the children at the CFA at no cost to the students and/or Olivet. Writing grant applications to a variety of different organizations, Richard proudly reached his goal year after year.

Richard remains involved in the local arts scene through community theatre, working with the Reading Theater Project, Fall Festival of the Arts and others. You never know where you might see him! He's excited to learn more about our Jewish community and looks forward to meeting new faces.

If you'd like to reach out to him, you can reach him at the Federation office at 610-921-0624 or email him at RichardB@jreading.org.



Richard Bradbury

Development

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

By Laurie Waxler

I remember when I started writing for *Shalom* and I titled my articles with “My Learning Curve.” I wasn’t quite sure what I was getting into and there was a lot to learn, but if I had to sum up my four years, I would say that most importantly, I’ve learned the value of having a Federation here in Berks County.



Our community was on the back end of Covid and while there was still some concern in the air, we, as an organization, were diving into Violins of Hope. It was one of the most meaningful things I’ve ever had the chance to be part of. I remember the feeling of awe when holding those small, lightweight violins and wondering what stories they could tell. The enthusiasm everyone had in learning about the violins, Jewish and non-Jewish, was palpable. While there have been many memorable

experiences at Federation, the violins were truly one of the best.

If I had to think of the worst, it would have to be the mental anguish of working for a Jewish organization after October 7th. Having visited Israel with the Momentum moms in the summer of 2022 and working with our Israeli Shlichim Adi and Ziv, I feel a personal connection to Israel. While I was so proud of our community for rising to the challenge of our humanitarian relief campaign, I still can’t wrap my head around the silence of the world while there are still 58 hostages in captivity. I didn’t have the option of blocking it out as I was receiving anti-Semitic hate emails to my inbox and getting daily updates on what was happening on college campuses and around the world.

Through both of these major events, it’s so clear to me why a Federation, here in Berks County, is so important. You don’t know what tomorrow brings and our Federation team works and

advocates for our community every day; whether you realize it or not. Without new and continued support, our future may be in question. While many of our larger supporters have passed, and many others are above retirement age, the time has come for our younger generation to step up and secure our future and I hope you will.

As I step away from my role as Development Director, I can only hope I’ve done some good, somewhere along the way. I’ve met some truly wonderful people and have had the best co-workers, who go above and beyond for our community and it’s really been a great experience. I will continue to volunteer with Federation and invite you to join me because, even though Federation is a fundraising entity, we can never have too many people willing to lend their gifts of time and talent to make our Jewish community the best it can be.

With much appreciation, Laurie.

Maximizing credit card benefits

By Laurie Waxler

Our Maimonides Society, a group of Jewish health care professionals in Berks County, met at the JCC on Sunday, May 18. Our speaker, Dr. Michael Haas, a local radiation oncologist and avid traveler, shared his hobby of maximizing credit card points.

Michael stressed the art of optimizing credit card points requires a lot of time and a hefty dose of organizational skills.

Michael shared several ways to actually use the credit card points you are accumulating ... for experiences, gift cards, and other perks, but his primary focus is travel.

The fact that everyone approaches travel differently, however, means there is no “one size fits all” method of utilizing the points. He stated several times in the talk that most people don’t optimize the benefits their credit card offers and if you don’t have

the time to really concentrate on it, a cash back card where you receive 1.5% or 2% might be your best option.

He listed a few important things you need in order to be a credit card guru. Most importantly, you must be organized; he manages his credit cards on spreadsheets.

You must ensure you meet the criteria to get the bonus you’re expecting. When it says you need to spend \$3,000 in the first three months, you can’t spend \$2,999 and expect the bonus. Never carry a balance or be late with a payment because those fees negate any benefits earned. Know what your credit card benefits are....flights, hotels, etc... and make sure you’re getting the right card for the benefits you’re seeking. He also explained that points diminish in value over time due to inflation, so you should use them in a timely manner. His



The Maimonides Society at Dr. Michael Haas' program on credit card rewards.

final tip was to be mindful of the annual fees and they need to make it all worthwhile.

Many thanks to Michael for a great talk. What was meant to be about 25 minutes turned into more than an hour of discussion and questions, and I’m pretty sure it could’ve gone on for

hours if attendees didn’t need to move on with their day.

It was clear Michael doesn’t do this to save money but as a fun hobby that maximizes his travel experiences. Next stop for him....New Zealand, and I have no doubt he’ll have a great time!

JFS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

This program provides 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. It can be used for medical appointments, synagogue attendance, shopping and other errands.

It is easy to participate. Purchase a book of 25 taxi tickets from the Federation at a cost of \$25. Each coupon is worth \$3. The phone number for Reading Metro Taxi is printed on the ticket book. Call the 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 passenger’s discretion. Coupon does not include cost of tipping.

This program is subsidized by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks



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Thanks for the honor of serving community

By Brian Chartock
CEO

Dear Friends,

As I prepare to step down from my role as CEO of the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks, I am filled with deep gratitude, reflection, and a profound sense of appreciation for this extraordinary community.

Serving in this capacity has been one of the greatest honors of my life. Over



the past two and a half years, I have had the privilege of witnessing the incredible strength, resilience, generosity, and compassion that define our Jewish community.

Together, we have met challenges head-on, celebrated remarkable milestones, and worked tirelessly to ensure a vibrant and secure Jewish future for generations to come.

From supporting our most vulnerable, to nurturing the next generation of Jewish leaders, to building bridges with our neighbors

and standing in solidarity with Israel—we have achieved so much.

And, none of it would have been possible without you. Your commitment, your voices, your volunteerism, and your philanthropy have been the foundation of our success.

To our partners, lay leaders, clergy, agency executives, and dedicated staff: thank you for your trust, your collaboration, and your unwavering belief in our mission. To the many individuals and families who opened their hearts to share their stories, their

needs, and their dreams—you have inspired me daily.

Though I am stepping away from this role, I will never step away from this community. I remain deeply committed to our collective future and confident that under new leadership, the Federation will continue to thrive, evolve, and lead with purpose.

May we go from strength to strength, With gratitude and warmest wishes,

L'Shalom,
-Brian

Socialize this summer with the JCC

By Vicki Haller Graff

Even though it's been quite a while since I've been in school, I still look forward to "summer vacation" and a more relaxed time of year.

This summer, the JCC is offering several social opportunities to get together with Jewish friends to schmooze or experience Jew-ish events. Enjoy drinks with other adults and arts or sports with like-minded members of our community.

We hope there is something for everyone — choose one event or add them all to your calendar! Sign-ups are on our website.

For the ticketed events below, we recommend you book as soon as possible, as space may be limited.

For the **Happy Hour** crowd, we hope to see you at the Bar Cart (713 Penn Ave., West Reading) on Tuesday, June 10, and at State Hill Craft Cocktails and Kitchen (1 Wellington Blvd, Wyomissing on Tuesday, July 22. Both events will run from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and feature complimentary appetizers and a cash bar. RSVP if you plan to come, and text a friend to meet you there! The more the merrier.

Performing arts lovers have two great options this summer. We are organizing group seating at **Berks Sinfonietta's "Gershwin Comes Alive"** concert on Saturday, July 12, 7:30pm at Immanuel UCC (99 S. Waverly Street, Shillington). Catch the Noontime Knowledge preview on Wednesday, July 2, at noon with director Dr. David McConnell and pianist Lars Potteiger.

We have 10 complimentary concert tickets to give away to those who sign up for Noontime Knowledge, and we will have a designated area to sit together at

the concert for everyone in our community who attends. Tickets are available through Berks Sinfonietta on a link on our website, readingjewishcommunity.org.


We are also organizing a group for **Ephrata Performing Arts Center's "The Producers."** This hilarious musical comedy takes audiences on a wild ride through the world of Broadway with laughter, intrigue, and over-the-top antics. Our group will attend on Sunday, July 27, for the 2 p.m. performance at the Sharadin Bigler Theater (320 Cocalico St., Ephrata). Tickets can be purchased on our website.

For our sports fans, we have two exciting family-friendly events in August!

On Thursday, Aug. 14, Federation is organizing a group at the **Reading Fightin Phils Celebrate Your Faith night**. Faith groups from around the region will be represented, and we hope to have a great Jewish community turnout. The game versus the mighty Akron RubberDucks begins at 7 p.m. at First Energy Stadium (900 Centre Ave., Reading). We will be invited to a pregame discussion with some of the players, and the game will be followed by fireworks! To sit with our group, purchase tickets on our website.

Then on Saturday, Aug. 23, Jewish Federation soccer fans can unite at the **Philadelphia Union game to cheer on Israeli forward Tai Baribo**. The game begins at 7:30 p.m. and will be played versus the Chicago Fire at Subaru Park (1 Stadium Drive, Chester). Tickets with the group must be purchased in advance, and they are available on our website.

We'll try to relax between fun events this summer. Hope to see you out in the community!



Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks



SAVE THE DATE

Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 1st 10am-12pm
at the JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing

Installation of board members, officers and
brunch to follow



June ☆ Sivan-Tammuz	
 Shabbat Candle Lightings	 Torah Portions
June 6 8:12 p.m.	June 7/11 Sivan Naso (Numbers 4:21-7:89)
June 13 8:15 p.m.	June 14/18 Sivan Behaalotecha (Numbers 8:1-12:16)
June 20 8:18 p.m.	June 21/25 Sivan Shlach (Numbers 13:1-15:41)
June 27 8:19 p.m.	June 28/2 Tammuz Korach (16:1-18:32)

Shalom

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The opinions expressed in Shalom are of the writers and not the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks



Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks

Arts and culture at Noontime Knowledge this summer

By Vicki Haller Graff
Program Director

Wednesday, June 11, 1pm – Sights Unseen at Berks History Center

In Leviticus 19:14 we are commanded, “You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind.” What if we, as Jews, take that a step further to find ways to experience the world and appreciate the perspective of those who are differently abled. We can open our eyes and minds to new ways of seeing.

This June, take a Noontime Knowledge field trip to the Berks History Center to see the inspiring exhibit “Sights Unseen” and learn more about it from its curator, Amber Vroman. This unique exhibition is a collaboration with the Vision Resource Center of Berks County and promises to offer visitors an inspiring experience. Join us on Wednesday, June 11, 1 p.m., at the Berks History Center, 940 Centre Ave., Reading. RSVP is requested, and the visit is free. Admission includes the exhibit and the whole museum.

In the mid-1970s, a remarkable project was undertaken by W. Marc Bernsau, who collaborated with four blind residents of Berks County on a unique photography venture. Each participant navigated the city of Reading with a camera, capturing images inspired by their senses of hearing and smell. The exhibit showcases these photographs, providing insight into the creative perspectives of the photographers and their experiences. Fast-forward to today, the Vision

Resource Center of Berks County also chose four clients to undertake the project once more, reminiscent of Bernsau’s approach in the 1970s. The creations of these four photographers will also be showcased, offering an intriguing “then and now” perspective.

Wednesday, July 2, noon – ‘Gershwin Comes Alive’ preview

Can you imagine American music without the composition of George Gershwin? To be honest, I can’t. His songs are the background to my childhood, from “I Got Rhythm” to “Someone to Watch Over Me.” Hearing them instantly brings a smile to my face.

We are pleased to welcome Dr. David McConnell, co-founder and director of Berks Sinfonietta, and Lars Potteiger, pianist extraordinaire, to Noontime Knowledge for a preview presentation of their upcoming concert, Gershwin Comes Alive. Their preview at the JCC will be Wednesday, July 2, at noon. This event is free and open to the community.

In the summer of 2014, Dr. McConnell co-founded Berks Sinfonietta, a chamber orchestra utilizing an intergenerational approach, bringing professional Reading musicians together with gifted high school and college students. He teaches at Penn State Berks and Alvernia University and received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in December 2002. A native of Philadelphia, he also holds degrees from Westminster

Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and Temple University in Philadelphia.

Dr. McConnell will present with jazz pianist Lars Potteiger, known for his ability to engage an audience and take command of a room. His playing was recently described by George W. Harris of *Jazz Today* as “always imaginative, adventurous and fully integrated into the music without a wasted note or a flash of virtuosity for its own sake.” Potteiger maintains an active schedule as a jazz performer. His discography includes several Grammy nominated recordings as well as a myriad of singer collaborations, composition and arranging records, and a solo album.

Our Noontime Knowledge program is a preview of the Berks Sinfonietta’s full concert, “Gershwin Comes Alive” to be held July 12 at 7:30 p.m. at Immanuel United Church of Christ, 99 S. Waverly St., Shillington. For tickets and information, visit BerksSinfonietta.org We have 10 complimentary concert tickets to give away to those who sign up for Noontime Knowledge, and we will have a designated area at the concert for everyone in our community who attends.

Planning to attend any or all of the Noontime Knowledge programs? Please let us know by emailing info@jfreading.org or calling 610-921-0624.

Would you like to present or recommend a presenter? Please contact Vicki Graff, Program Director, at vickig@jfreading.org.



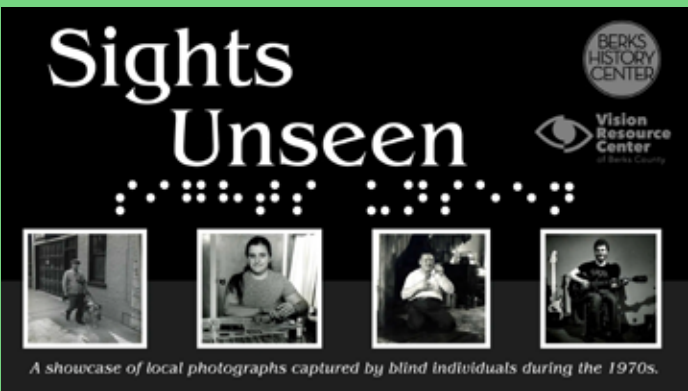
Above, author Arthur Magida shares the incredible Holocaust survival story from his book “Two Wheels to Freedom.”
At left, Mike Schein points to his autographed Soom Tahini, with Amy Zitelman, CEO of Soom Foods

NOONTIME KNOWLEDGE

this month at the Berks History Center, 940 Centre Ave., Reading, PA 19601

Sights Unseen:
presented by Amber Vroman, curator of the exhibit

Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at 1:00pm
at the Berks History Center
940 Centre Ave., Reading, PA 19601



Get an inside “look” with Amber Vroman, the curator of the Sights Unseen exhibit, a showcase of photographs by blind photographers from the 1970s, replicated in the present in partnership with Vision Resource Center of Berks County.

RSVP required: call 610-921-0624
or email info@jfreading.org
Noontime Knowledge is a free program, held twice monthly, provided by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks to educate our community on a variety of topics.



NOONTIME KNOWLEDGE

at the JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Ste. 125, Wyomissing

Gershwin Comes Alive Preview
presented by Dr. David McConnell and Lars Potteiger
Wednesday, July 2, 2025 at noon

Dive into the music of the great Jewish composer George Gershwin with Dr. David McConnell from Berks Sinfonietta and pianist Lars Potteiger as they present a preview concert/lecture of their upcoming Gershwin Comes Alive performance.



Join Federation for the full concert on Saturday, July 12, 7:30pm, at Immanuel UCC, 99 S. Waverly St., Shillington. Purchase your own ticket at berkssinfonietta.org

To RSVP call the JCC at 610-921-0624
or email info@jfreading.org
Noontime Knowledge is a free program, held twice monthly, provided by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks to educate our community on a variety of topics.



Looking back on Lakin Preschool

By Judy Synnamon

Lakin Preschool is closing!! I worked for Lakin Preschool starting in 1989 and retired in May 2022.

My family and I moved to Berks County in 1989, and when I initially called to inquire about the JCC, I was invited to visit and let my children play there while I visited homes. I couldn't resist that invitation!

After that, I never left the Preschool. Many of you know about my long tenure there. As soon as I retired, my husband became ill, and I spent the next two years caring for him. Now it is time for the Preschool and me to move on, the preschool to a partnership with the Yocum Institute, and me to a retirement community.

The preschool started in 1953 under the directorship of Rose Sack when her husband, Harry, was Jewish Federation Administrator.

Evelyn Thompson became the director in 1971. Norma Sigal was the Director after Evelyn, and I followed Norma, who was a wonderful mentor. Her personality always incorporated a warm, welcoming environment to children and families.

Our preschool had a great reputation in the county, and we were able to accommodate many families of all religions and ethnicities. I felt honored when we welcomed ministers' children and families who affiliated with other religions. They knew our environment was Jewish, warm, loving and educationally appropriate and stimulating.

The staff at the Preschool was fantastic. Carole Robinson and Beth Castor were there for more than 30 years as I was. Sylvia Thomas was with us for over 20 years. Those ladies were my anchors. I think the children could sense the warmth and friendship in the staff.

The children were so cute, and we have many fond memories. The children were learning how to be good friends and often hugged, cared for and guided

each other.

Many had a favorite activity at preschool. They loved coloring sheets and puzzle sheets, playing together, building block towers taller than they were and creating villages from Legos or massive roads and train tracks — it was so much fun! Playing with ferocious dinosaurs and animals was a favorite. Their imaginations were wonderful, and so much fun to watch them explore and grow.

Taking care of babies, shopping while wearing babies in carriers and cooking creations in the kitchen were also highlights. They loved to serve each other treats. The doll houses, space toys and castles were also big hits. Talking on cellphones and texting were also part of the play. Playing secretary and setting up appointments with phones and appointment books, or pizza delivery was also a favorite activity. They enjoyed playing veterinarian or pediatrician and inspecting ears, heartbeats and of course giving SHOTS! Creating a Book Store, Grocery Store or Pet Shop was fun for them. Story reading time was a must every day, and the children were very often mesmerized by the books we shared.

Outside play and running was also a must and a favorite. Our playground equipment was well used, and it was so rewarding to see them strengthen muscles while climbing.

Our Judaic curriculum was an important part of the school. The children loved being "Shabbat child" and enjoyed our Shabbat snacks of challah and grape juice. Families were invited in to participate in this activity. We celebrated Jewish holidays. We had Chanukah parties with dreidel games and gelt, Seders with matzah and preschool-made charoset, and costumes for Purim.

Many Jewish crafts were incorporated, making Seder plates, menorahs, dreidels, puppets, Baby Moses in the bullrushes, as well as special projects for Tu B'Shevat and



Whom do you recognize from these Lakin Preschool photos from the 1970s and '80s?

Yom HaAtzma'ut.

Listening to and learning Jewish music and watching videos about Jewish ideals and holidays was also enjoyed.

A favorite event was our Thanksgiving Show and Fall Festival. We spent each November learning about Colonial America and Native Americans. We utilized what we learned as a presentation to our families on the day before Thanksgiving. Many parent volunteers helped with this Fall Festival, and we always tied a giving project into this event. Parents volunteers also ran our once a year Dance Party and once a year Bike Town. It was important to offer fun, family-friendly events.

Educationally, we provided guidance for many children with many strengths and weaknesses.

We were always licensed by the Department of Education, and state

officials visited us periodically to make sure our program was acceptable. We started a certified kindergarten for children who needed another year to mature and for those who missed the deadline of their districts. We taught reading, math, spelling, social studies, and science according to Department of Education standards.

We also offered extended hours in the afternoon for children along with enrichment programs including, Soccer Shots, art classes, Academic Enrichment and child care. Lakin Preschool was a busy place!!

Thanks to Ken Lakin and family for this strong commitment in continuing the Preschool for so many years, and the leadership and mentorship we received from Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and the Federation. Thank you also for the support of Keshar Zion and Chabad.



BERKS

Sinfonietta

OUR 11TH SEASON



Gerswhin comes

ACTIVE

Lars Pottiger, piano

July 12, 2025 7:30PM

Immanuel UCC

Immanuel UCC, 99 S. Waverly St.
Shillington, PA

\$25 General Admission / \$5 Students
for tickets:
www.BerksSinfonietta.org

Purchase your own general admission ticket, but sit together in Federation reserved seating.




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Graduations and B'nai Mitzvah



George A R Balchunas, son of Cynthia and George Balchunas, graduated from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. George was the editor in chief of the Journal of Law and Commerce, he volunteered with the Securities Arbitration Clinic, and he competed with the moot court team at Fordham University in March. George will begin his law career at Tucker Arensberg Attorneys in Pittsburgh.



Luke James Berger is graduating with academic and athletic honors with a BA in Strategic Communications from Alvernia University. Since his sophomore year, he has been first seed on the university tennis team and was captain of the team in his senior year. Luke's education at Alvernia will continue as he pursues a master's degree in organizational leadership.



Connor Fogelman, son of Andrea Fogelman and grandson of Larry and Shelley Fogelman, had his Bar Mitzvah on Sept. 21. Connor is a seventh-grader at Wilson West Middle School, where he plays soccer, basketball and runs track. Connor had his first Aliyah and chanted from the Torah. He also chanted his Haftorah. The whole Fogelman family is very proud of Connor and all his hard work!



Leah C. Leisawitz, daughter of Michele and Benjamin Leisawitz, will be called to the torah as a Bat Mitzvah on June 7 at Keshar Zion Synagogue. Leah is a seventh-grader at Wyomissing Area Junior/Senior High School, where she is a member of the cross country team. Leah also participates in figure skating, skiing and tennis. Leah's Mitzvah project is spreading awareness about the Holocaust by presenting her great-grandparents' (Sid and Esther Bratt) stories of survival to schools, libraries, colleges as well as the Pennsylvania state Capitol.



Shira Merin was called to the Torah at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom in October. After years of study and preparation, Shira led parts of the service with poise, read from the Torah with confidence, delivered a thoughtful and heartfelt D'var Torah and shared the impact of their Mitzvah project. Shira embraced the responsibilities of Jewish adulthood with maturity and grace, inspiring everyone who attended. Since then, Shira has continued to embody the values of tikkun olam through her community service and was recently elected as a District Lieutenant Governor with the Key Club at Conrad Weiser High School.



Molly Nemirow, daughter of Geri and Mark Nemirow, graduated magna cum laude from Wagner College, Staten Island, N.Y., with a bachelor's degree in music-vocal performance and mathematics. She served as president of Hillel and received awards for her work with the campus and borough Jewish communities. She received an award at graduation for her dedication to music. An accomplished mezzosoprano, Molly was heavily involved in Wagner's choirs and the college's Opera Workshop and played French horn/mellophone in the Seahawk Band all four years at Wagner.



Jasper Platt, son of Gretchen and Alec Platt, recently graduated from Wyomissing Area High School. Jasper was a member of the Model United Nations Club, Mini-thon Club, Math team, Quiz Bowl team, Ski Club, Drama Club, Cross Country team and Lacrosse team. Jasper is the winner of Berks' Best 2025 in mathematics. In the fall, Jasper will be attending the University of Pennsylvania, where he plans to study math and philosophy.



Harry Weiss, son of Mark and Tracy Weiss and grandson of Jack and Teri Leftkowitz, graduated from Dickinson College with degrees in history (minor in Latin American studies) and Spanish language. At Dickinson he was a Presidential Scholar, a member of Sigma Delta Pi National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society, president of the Red Devil Sports Network, and played club baseball.



Maxwell Weiss, son of Mark and Tracy Weiss and grandson of Jack and Teri Leftkowitz, graduated from Wyomissing Area High School. Max plays varsity soccer and tennis. He will be attending Rochester Institute of Technology, where he will study computer science and new media design.



Samuel Weiss, son of Mark and Tracy Weiss and grandson of Jack and Teri Leftkowitz, became a Bar Mitzvah at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom in March. Sam is a seventh-grader at Wyomissing Area Jr Sr High School. He loves sports and plays soccer, basketball, baseball and lacrosse. He volunteers at Humane Pennsylvania as a Rescue Reader in the cat room.

Never accept antisemitism and other forms of hatred

By Margo Levin

Two months ago, something deeply upsetting happened to my family. One of my children was subjected to a horrific antisemitic slur at school. Sadly, this was not an isolated incident — it has happened before, both to our local school and to others around Berks County.

As somebody who works on building bridges among other communities, I felt compelled to speak out about this, especially given the rise in antisemitism. My husband and I teach our children to never stay silent and to be proud of who they are, I believe it's important to share and confront these experiences.

For that reason, I would like to share an op-ed written for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* by a colleague at the Jewish Federation of Philadelphia, Jason Holtzman.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to our office if you need assistance with any incidents in our local community.

I'm a lifelong Philadelphian. I was raised here, built my life here, and now work daily to advance a more just and pluralistic society in this city.

I've always believed in what

Philadelphia's founding promise is: liberty, fairness, and shared responsibility. But in this moment, as a Jewish Philadelphian, I — and many others — feel shaken by how far we are drifting from those values.

Last week, a disturbing incident took place at Barstool Sansom Street. Patrons ordered a light-up bottle service sign that featured a hateful message that mocked the identity and trauma of Jewish people.

What followed was even more revealing. One of the individuals involved later appeared on a platform known for promoting white supremacist views, where a Jewish business owner was smeared with a slur that has long been used to justify violence and exclusion.

In this moment, as a Jewish Philadelphian, I — and many others — feel shaken.

When challenged, the student claimed on social media that he was merely sharing "a provocative message." Let me be clear: Bigotry is not provocative — it's harmful.

Slurs don't just offend; they deepen fear, inflame tension, and contribute to a climate where people targeted question their safety in spaces that should feel like home.

As someone who works daily to build bridges across Philadelphia's diverse communities, I know that hatred — whether spoken, posted, or implied — doesn't exist in a vacuum. It shapes behavior. It forces people to hide parts of themselves. It erodes trust between neighbors.

According to the Anti-Defamation League's most recent "Audit of Antisemitic Incidents," Pennsylvania recorded the fourth-highest number of such incidents in the United States in 2024.

These aren't just statistics. They represent swastikas graffitied in schools, slurs hurled in the streets, online harassment, intimidation on college campuses, and physical threats against Jewish families and institutions. Far too many Jewish Philadelphians are adjusting their routines out of fear — mirroring findings from a recent American Jewish Committee report showing that, for the first time, a majority (56%) of American Jews say they have changed their behavior due to safety concerns.

Parents are having new and heartbreaking conversations with their children about how to stay safe. Students are asked to choose between their Jewish identity and social belonging.

That is not the Philadelphia we should aspire to be.

Far too many Jewish Philadelphians are adjusting their routines out of fear.

And yet, through all of this, Jewish Philadelphians remain deeply engaged in the fabric of our city — guided by a commitment to compassion, justice, and community care.

Our values call us to seek peace, build understanding, and support our neighbors. This spirit is reflected in ongoing efforts to foster dialogue and

respond to moments of need with empathy and solidarity.

At the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, where I work, we are growing our efforts to bring people together across lines of difference. We are expanding school and workplace programming, partnering with faith leaders, and working with allies from all backgrounds who believe — as we do — that hate has no place in our city.

But we cannot do this work alone. We need our city's leaders — in government, education, business, and culture — to speak out with consistency, not just in moments of crisis. We need policies that protect all communities. And we need public conversations that go beyond sound bites to address the complexity of identity, history, and belonging.

Philadelphia has always prided itself on being a city of bold ideals — revolution, resilience, and responsibility. We've been tested before, and we've come through stronger. This moment is another test.

Hatred directed at any group undermines the foundations of a just society. It isolates, divides, and makes us all more vulnerable. If we truly believe in brotherly love and sisterly affection, now is the time to live those values out loud.

Let's not respond with silence. Let's lead with clarity. Let's say — together — that there is no place for hate in our city. Not in our bars. Not on our campuses. Not in our streets. And not in our silence.

Philadelphia is better than this. Let's prove it.

Jason Holtzman leads the Jewish Community Relations Council at the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia.

JFS hospital, outpatient visits

By Carole Robinson and Sari Incledon

Jewish Family Service social workers visit Jewish patients at local hospitals, senior communities, nursing homes and rehab centers.

Our goal in these visits is both to be friendly and supportive at a difficult time, and to provide access to social services that supplement and complement the case managers at these locations.

If you or a loved one is at a local hospital or nursing home and would like

a visit, please call us.

If you or a loved one are treated at a hospital out of our area we are also available for follow-up visits upon discharge.

At times of ill health, stress or crisis, families are often looking for information about home care, transportation services, senior communities, nursing homes and rehabs. This is what we're here for.


Please call Jewish Family Service social workers for help at 610-921-0624.

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CENTERPIECE

Jewish Community Calendar – June 2025

Upcoming events offered by the Jewish Federation of Reading (listed as JCC, JFS, JFR), Keshet Zion Synagogue (KZ), Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom (RCOS), and Chabad-Lubavitch of Berks (Chabad). To learn more about any event below, read articles throughout the Shalom or see our online calendar at readingjewishcommunity.org/calendar.

Questions? Contact Amanda at 610-921-0624 or info@jfreading.org.

JFR Annual Meeting

Sunday, June 1, 10am – 12pm

Join your Federation community to enjoy a bagel brunch and cast your vote on the proposed slate of officers and board members for 2025-2026.

Location: JCC

RCOS/KZ Tikkun Leil Shavuot

Sunday, June 1, 7pm – 9pm

Join RCOS and KZ for an inspiring evening of learning and celebration as we commemorate the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.

Location: RCOS/KZ

Chabad Celebrate Shavuot

Monday, June 2, 5:30 – 7:30pm

Enjoy a delicious cheesecake and ice cream bar along with the Reading of the Ten Commandments and other Shavuot activities.

Location: Chabad

JFS Friendship Circle

Thursday, June 5, 1-3pm

Hallie Vaughan, dressed in uniform, portrays “The Hello Girls,” the volunteer signal corps of female telephone operators in WWI.

Lunch is \$7 at 1pm, free program at 2pm.

Location: JCC

JCC Arts, Culture, and Ideas

Monday, June 9, 1:30 – 3pm

A conversation with one of the greatest film makers, Martin Scorsese, about his storied career and the films that inspire him. Pre-recorded program with a different topic each month, hosted by the JCC.

Location: The Highlands at Wyomissing

JCC ROMEO Club

Tuesday, June 10, 12pm – 2pm

Retired Old Men Eating Out will meet for conversation and camaraderie. New members welcome; meets monthly.

Location: Paolo’s (2480 Lancaster Pike, Reading)

JCC Happy Hour

Tuesday, June 10, 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Join your Federation friends for a happy hour open exclusively for our event featuring appetizers from Taqueria Comalli and a cash bar. All are welcome.

Location: The Bar Cart, West Reading

JCC Noontime Knowledge

Wednesday, June 11, 1pm – 2pm

Get an inside “look” at the Sights Unseen exhibit, a showcase of photographs by blind photographers from the 1970s, replicated in the present

Location: Berks History Center, Reading



HAPPY SHAVUOT

For more event information visit
www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org/calendar

CENTERPIECE

Jewish Community Calendar – June 2025

Upcoming events offered by the Jewish Federation of Reading (listed as JCC, JFS, JFR), Keshet Zion Synagogue (KZ), Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom (RCOS), and Chabad-Lubavitch of Berks (Chabad). To learn more about any event below, read articles throughout the Shalom or see our online calendar at readingjewishcommunity.org/calendar.

Questions? Contact Amanda at 610-921-0624 or info@jfreading.org.

Chabad Magic and Folklore

Tuesday, June 17, 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Rabbi Yosef Lipsker and Dr. Paul Delfin teach us about magic and folklore in Judaism. Learn about dybbuks, golems, witches, magicians, and more!

Location: Exeter Community Library

JFS Friendship Circle

Thursday, June 19, 1pm – 3pm

Singer/songwriter Ken Pierson will entertain with classic rock, modern rock, and oldies. Sponsored by the Jacob Krumholz Fund. Lunch is \$7 at 1pm, free program at 2pm.

Location: JCC

RCOS Service by the Stream

Friday, June 20, 6pm – 7pm

Join RCOS at the Wertz Red Bridge Recreation Area for Shabbat services by the Tulpehocken. Open to the entire community. BYO picnic dinner to enjoy after the service.

Location: Wertz Red Bridge Recreation Area

JCC PJ Library Ice Cream Party

Sunday, June 29, 3pm – 4pm

We want to meet your family and connect our PJ Library friends while enjoying ice cream! All family members are welcome at this free event.

Location: Sweet Ride, West Reading

JCC Movie Monday

Monday, June 30, 1pm – 2:30pm

Watch An American Pickle starring Seth Rogen. Preserved in pickle brine for 100 years, an Orthodox Jewish factory worker wakes up in NYC and tracks down his great-grandson. PG-13, 88 minutes.

Location: JCC

JCC Noontime Knowledge

Wednesday, July 2, 12pm – 1pm

Dive into the music of the great Jewish composer George Gershwin with Dr. David McConnell from Berks Sinfonietta and pianist Lars Potteiger. A preview of their Gershwin Comes Alive concert.

Location: JCC

JFS Friendship Circle

Thursday, July 3, 1pm – 3pm

Celebrate July 4th with your Friendship Circle friends!

Lunch is \$7 at 1pm, free program at 2pm.

Location: JCC

JCC Gershwin Comes Alive

Saturday, July 12, 7:30pm

Join the Federation group for a concert of Jewish composer Geroge Gershwin’s greats. Purchase your own ticket at berkssinfonietta.org

Location: Immanuel UCC, Shillington



For more event information visit
www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org/calendar

By Carole Robinson

I spent a recent weekend reconnecting with my fellow Mountaineers at my 50th high school class reunion. Despite my initial trepidation, I had a great time catching up with classmates and reliving old memories. Even though I hadn't seen many of them since graduation, we felt the connection of shared history.

A common exclamation echoed throughout the room at our meet-and-greet, "You look exactly the same!" But we all had changed in so many ways. In addition to the physical changes like wrinkles and gray hair, we each had matured socially and emotionally. We evolved from self-absorbed teenagers into kinder versions of ourselves. Through the years, we learned to navigate life's challenges, respect diverse perspectives and choose to help and support those around us.

Those of us in attendance remembered our high school days fondly, but not everyone had a positive high school experience. My friend Dave and I both expressed regrets about how cruel our group collectively was to students who did not fit in. "Naomi" was a bright student with several strikes against her. She had a lisp, her clothing was unattractive, and she had an unpleasant body odor, probably from not being able to afford deodorant. Although we did not participate in the name calling and ostracizing, we were ashamed that we did nothing to stop it, failing to extend a hand in friendship. If we learned nothing else, the past 50 years taught us the importance of being a supportive, inclusive community.

What is a community? In the Jewish community, we share a cultural identity and pass down traditions and values. This



includes providing support during personal hardships, whether they are emotional, financial or health related. Jewish Family Service takes great pride in providing local community support.

We collaborate with other organizations, such as CommunityAid, to achieve common goals. CommunityAid is a nonprofit group dedicated to supporting local communities in central PA, including Reading. Their mission is to support those suffering from housing insecurity, food insecurity and other basic human needs by partnering with over 800 nonprofits that address these needs.

Through the sales at their store, they generate funds that directly benefit the local community through their partner agencies. Since 2009, CommunityAid has donated over \$25 million to local nonprofit organizations, including Jewish Family Service, to help us support those in the Reading area in need.

Some ways that CommunityAid supports Berks County:

- Their thrift store, located at 5370 Allentown Pike in Temple, offers affordable clothing and household items, making it easier for families to meet their needs.
- They provide Care Cards to their community partners, allowing families in crisis to shop for clothing with dignity.
- Your donations of gently used clothing and household goods support those most in need in the Reading area. For instance, every 10 bins of clothing donated provides 560 meals.

The organization truly lives up to its name, "Community" Aid. They care about people more than making a profit and show it by emphasizing values such as treating others with respect. CommunityAid believes that their staff is their #1 asset.

They want the staff to feel as if they are a part of their "community." In addition, they offer benefits such as 401(k) with 6% employer match, 50% employee

shopping discount, low premium health, dental, vision and life insurance, and leadership and growth opportunities.

Maria Esposito, Partnership Engagement Lead, is a textbook example of a staff member who achieved leadership and growth through CommunityAid. She is the first member of her family to earn a college degree, with a dual major in business and Spanish.

Maria invited me to join one of their "team huddles" and talk about JFS. Every morning, CommunityAid starts with a team huddle, focusing on a different core behavior each week, such as love, kindness, gentleness, or peace. According to Maria, "The dynamic of the huddles is to be a family. We all value the work each person does and the effort they bring to the organization."

On the day I attended, the core value was "patience." Team members exchanged ideas, solved problems, and offered encouragement to each other. It was uplifting for the team to share their struggles to be patient, celebrate their "wins," and begin the day as a caring community.

JFS, like our partner agency CommunityAid, builds bridges with other faith and cultural communities to contribute to the common good. We try to embody the mitzvah, "Be loving to your neighbor (as one) like yourself." Together, with one heart, we can build a stronger, more compassionate community for all.

And to my fellow Mountaineers, and everyone else in the class of 1975, cheers to becoming a more supportive, inclusive community!



Carole in 1975.

Food pantry volunteers keep up great work



Left, JFS volunteers and staff after a very rainy food pantry on May 13. Right, Sharon and Jeff Gernsheimer organizing food to distribute to food pantry clients on May 7th.



Many thanks to our
May Food Pantry Volunteers
who distributed food to 600 households!

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Allison Althouse | Pete Jacobson | Ellen Schwartz |
| Mary Anne Avins | Sid Lempiner | Paul Schwartz |
| Jeff Gernsheimer | Lisa Levine | Russ Shanahan |
| Sharon Gernsheimer | Annette Peppard | Oleg Umanov |
| Patty Hartman | Jenn Reilly | Phyllis Warshaw |
| John Incledon | Mike Robinson | Michael Warshaw |
| | Mike Schein | |

Fun, learning and more at Friendship Circle



At left, Zumba fun, At right, Yom HaShoah presentation by Jeff Gernsheimer. Joining him are Henry Singer, left, and Herb Karasin. Both events were part of Friendship Circle, a twice-monthly occasion for fellowship, fun and education at the JCC.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

Jun 5- “The Hello Girls”

Learn how America’s first women soldiers helped win World War I. Hallie Vaughan, dressed in uniform, portrays “The Hello Girls,” the volunteer signal corps female telephone operators.

Jun 29 - “Musical entertainment by Ken Pierson”

Singer/songwriter Ken Pierson will entertain with a diversified song selection of classic rock, modern rock, oldies. Song requests welcome. Program sponsored by the Jacob Krumholz Fund.



Friendship Circle is held twice a month on Thursday afternoons at 1:00 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.

“THE HELLO GIRLS”



JUNE 5 2:00 P.M.

at the JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd Wyomissing

Learn how America’s first women soldiers helped win World War I. Hallie Vaughan, dressed in uniform, portrays “The Hello Girls,” the volunteer signal corps female telephone operators.

To RSVP call 610-921-0624

info@jfreading.org

“MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT” BY KEN PIERSON



JUNE 19 2:00 P.M.

at the JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd Wyomissing

Singer/Songwrite Ken Pierson will entertain with a diversified song selection of classic rock, modern rock, oldies. He has been performing in the tri-state area for over 25 years. He is a talented musician, recognized for his strong vocals. Song requests welcome and you are encouraged to sing along.

Program sponsored by the Jacob Krumholz Fund

To RSVP call 610-921-0624

info@jfreading.org

Community members share family Holocaust stories



This year’s Yom HaShoah commemoration included Cindy Chronister sharing the story of her grandparentsKarl and Mathilde Reiser (z”l), and Jeff Gernsheimer recounting the survival story of his mother, Hilde Gernsheimer (z”l).

Federations call for boost in Jewish engagement

Jewish Federations of North America

A year and half after the October 7th attacks, the “Surge” in Jewish engagement among historically marginalized and underserved Jews is receding faster than the broader community, indicating that additional efforts are needed to engage them, according to Jewish Federations of North America data presented at the first Jewish Belonging Summit, an event done in partnership with SRE Network.

“Growing up, the Jewish community that I found so welcoming was often inaccessible to my brother who is Deaf, and that’s the same kind of problem I fear we are seeing in the data today. It’s concerning that many marginalized groups — who surged even more than others last year — are losing interest faster and reporting less positive experiences,”

said Mimi Kravetz, Jewish Federations Chief Impact & Growth Officer. “But we still have time to get it right by doubling down on accessibility, welcoming, and inclusion so everyone can fully participate.”

The latest data on the Surge found that 31% of the Jewish community is more engaged than before the attacks. While that figure is over double the estimated level from before the attacks, it is down from 43% the previous year, indicating the window to engage these members of the community is closing.

Whereas the Surge in general dropped 12 points overall, the Surge among LGBTQ+ Jews dropped from 49% to 21%; the Surge among financially vulnerable Jews dropped from 49% to 32%; and the Surge among Jewish households with a person with

a disability dropped from 46% to 30%.

While individuals across these groups were just as likely to offer a positive adjective when asked to give three words about their new experiences in Jewish engagement over the past year, they were also more likely than the general population to select negative words. Financially vulnerable Jews were more likely to use words such as “alienated,” “excluded,” or “turned off” to describe their experiences. People with a disability were more likely to say that they felt anxious and unsure when

showing up in Jewish spaces.

“Creating a culture of belonging for all Jews and their loved ones is one of the most important things our community can do right now to meet this moment,” said Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein of the Center for Jewish Belonging. “Behind each of these data points is a member of our community who wants to belong, and we must ensure that our processes and procedures work to uplift those who have been historically underrepresented.”

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BRAVER ANGELS ADDRESSES “POLARIZATION,” WE ARE NOT REFERRING TO HEALTHY DISAGREEMENTS OVER ISSUES OR PHILOSOPHY. WE ARE ADDRESSING HOW WE REGARD AND TALK ABOUT LARGE GROUPS OF PEOPLE -- PEOPLE WHO HAPPEN TO BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE POLITICAL AISLE.

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PJ Library celebrates Jewish joy for children and families — This summer with ice cream!

By Vicki Haller Graff

PJ Library, a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, held its annual PJ Library International Conference earlier this spring in Springfield, Mass, with representatives from nearly 100 PJ communities. As Program Director, I had the opportunity to attend the conference and represent the Reading/

Berks community.

PJ Library is rooted in the power of storytelling. Each month it delivers to children free Jewish books that serve as both mirrors and windows into Jewish life. Stories that reflect families' own experiences affirm identity and belonging, while those that offer glimpses into different customs,

traditions, and cultures spark curiosity and learning. This year's conference explored how PJ Library brings these values to life in our communities.

The conference theme of windows and mirrors underscored the transformative power of stories and the vital role PJ Library plays in empowering families to create and engage in Jewish life in ways that are personal and meaningful.

To bring that theme home to Reading/Berks, I'd like to develop some windows and mirrors here. Families with children under the age of 12 are invited to join me at one or both ice cream parties this summer — one at Sweet Ride in West Reading and one at Jen and Jessie's Creamery in Oley.

Both are opportunities to open some windows; I am looking forward to meeting

young families who I don't know yet and learn how PJ Library supports your Jewish life. We also have an opportunity to look into some mirrors; for families and children to see each other and develop new friendships or reinforce existing ones!

Families have two opportunities to attend a PJ Library Ice Cream Party (and you can choose to come to both!):

- Sunday, June 29, 2 p.m., at Sweet Ride at 542 Penn Avenue in West Reading

- Sunday, July 13, 2 p.m., at Jen and Jessie's Creamery at 798 Memorial Highway in Oley

Your RSVP is appreciated. The ice cream is on us, and we'll bring a couple of books and fun giveaways along too. Looking forward to enjoying a cool treat on a hot day with our families!



HERE'S THE SCOOP!

You are invited to a
**PJ Library
Ice Cream Party**

PJ Library of the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks is hosting free ice cream parties! Families are invited to one or both.

Sunday, June 29, 2pm
Sweet Ride
542 Penn Ave., West Reading

Sunday, July 13, 2pm
Jen and Jessie's Creamery
798 Memorial Hwy., Oley

RSVP to Vicki at vickig@jfreading.org or 610-921-0624.

Unity Coalition appears at City Hall



Thank you to Reading City Council for inviting the Greater Reading Unity Coalition to speak with you and share our goal of eliminating all forms of bigotry in our community. Through education, GRUC strives to promote mutual understanding and celebrate Reading's diversity. We look forward to partnering with council to help foster a harmonious community. The Coalition proudly includes our partners at the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks, the Reading Branch of the NAACP, the LGBT Center of Greater Reading, Bring the Change, the Islamic Center of Reading, the Islamic Society of Berks County, Alvernia University's Office of Justice, Equity, & Inclusion, and Centro Hispano.

—Debbie Goldberg and Margo Levin.

ERICA S. PERL
AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR
A NEW SUMMER-LONG PROGRAM!

iLLUSTRATION!

Recommended Ages: 6 and up!
First Meeting: Monday, June 16th at 1:00 PM

You will be able to meet and work with Erica throughout the summer to create your own graphic novel! Find your style and practice your drawing skills! Sketch pads and colored pencils are provided.


Erica S. Perl is a New York Times best-selling author and illustrator with a love for empowering young readers.

Stop by or call the library to sign up!


MORE INFORMATION COMING SOON!



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Federations horrified at murders in Washington

Jewish Federations of North America
Jewish Federations of North America are horrified at the murder of two people outside the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, DC, on the night of May 21.
Our hearts go out to the victims and to our colleagues at AJC-American

Jewish Committee, whose event was being held at the museum.
We are working closely with the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and our security partners to monitor the situation, gain a fuller picture of what transpired, and keep our communities informed.

The safety and security of the community is our top priority, and we will not rest until that safety is fully restored.
JFNA has joined with the Anti-Defamation League, Secure Community Network, Community Security Service, and Community Security Initiative of

New York to release updated security recommendations following the horrific murders of two Israeli embassy staff members..
If you need anything, our team is here to help in any way we can. Our hearts go out to the victims and their families. Baruch Dayan Emet.



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of Reading/Berks

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June 1 Tikkun Leil Shavuot 7PM-9PM	June 2 Shavuot Service 9:30AM	June 3 Shavuot Service 9:30AM Yizkor 11AM
June 5 Minyan 7PM	June 7 Bat Mitzvah Leah Leisawitz 9:30am	June 14 Shabbat Service 9:30AM
June 19 Minyan 7PM	June 20 Kabbalat Shabbat 6:30PM	June 21 Shabbat Service 9:30AM
	June 28 Shabbat Service 9:30AM	

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OR CALL 610-921-0624



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tickets at ReadingJewishCommunity.org



Busy springtime at Chabad



Top left, it was a great weekend for Chabad Hebrew School students at the Ckds, JEWQ Champion Shabbaton in New Jersey. CHS of Berks is so proud of our GOLD Champion, Melanie Leshner, and our SILVER medalists, Ari Bloom, Ziggy Cohen and Mara Musso. A bronze medal went to Izzy Gurwitz. The Shabbaton retreat was a culmination of months of Jewish learning and testing by students worldwide. .

Rabbi Yosef Lipsker giving the invocation at the Caron Treatment Center's New York Dinner.



Bottom left, a Mexican themed Shabbat dinner was held at Chabad, featuring an assortment of cactus plant candles. We were honored with 2 Israeli soldiers inspiring the crowd. It was a special Shabbat with a great atmosphere.

Bottom right, Chabad's Recovery Challa bake was an evening of fun and inspiration, recognizing the need for second chances.

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Federation Honorarium-Memorial Card Information

Please mail your payment with complete information to the Jewish Federation, PO Box 14925, Reading, PA, 19612-4925 or bring to the Jewish Cultural Center, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125, Wyomissing. You may set up a “savings account” for the purpose of sending cards. Please contact the Federation at 610-921-0624 for further information.

Contributions as of May 15

Jewish Family Service
In memory of:
Howard Schreiber - Carol and Bernie Gerber and Family, Sharon Syret
Fay Spitz - Robert and Sheila Spector

Federation Jewish Community Campaign
In memory of:
Fay Spitz - Evelyn and Jay Lipschutz

Harry and Rose Sack Adult Programming Fund
In memory of:
Fay Spitz - Albert and Nancy Sack

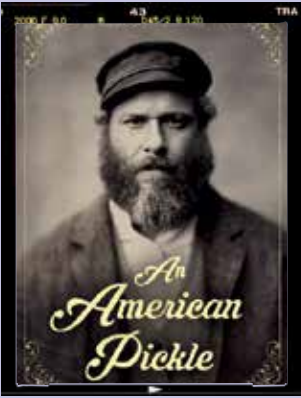
Honorariums and Memorials

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
Sue B. Viener Memorial Fund for PJ Library
Harry & Rose Sack Adult Education Fund
Evelyn Thompson Fund

Movie Monday at the JCC


June 30, 2025, 1pm



An American Pickle
comedy starring Seth Rogen

PG-13 | 88 minutes

Preserved in pickle brine for 100 years, an Orthodox Jewish factory worker wakes up in New York City and tracks down his great-grandson.



**Jewish Federation**
of Reading/Berks

Grab a seat for a Jewish themed movie each month at the JCC (1100 Berkshire Blvd., Ste. 125, Wyomissing). It is usually held on the 4th Monday of the month, and the popcorn and the movie are both free!

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Jewish Family Service is grateful to our committed volunteers!

Here are some ways that you can help:

Help Fight Hunger

Join us at a JFS Food Pantry to distribute food to our hungry neighbors.

Share your Professional Expertise

Present a program on travel, photography, or your unique interests or hobbies to our seniors.

Share your time

A small investment of your personal time can make a profound difference in someone's life. Visit a shut-in, shop for a homebound senior, or take someone to a doctor's appointment.

Donate your vehicle to JFS or donate clothing to CommunityAid

Enjoy tax benefits of donating a car or help our clients through our partnership with CommunityAid.



Contact Us
Carole Robinson at
610-921-0624

**Jewish Federation**
of Reading/Berks

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