



Shalom 01|19

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

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Shabbat B'Yachad

Civil Rights & Social Justice Weekend

By Amanda J. Hornberger

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"—Martin Luther King Jr.

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks invites you to join us for a civil rights and social justice weekend, Jan. 18-21. In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day three events have been planned for that weekend around the themes of civil rights and social justice.

Friday, Jan. 18 — Following Shabbat services at Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, Roy Waterman, Criminal Justice Project Manager at the Jewish Public

Affairs Council, will be the Oneg speaker. Waterman's topic is "Building Alliances Between Jews and Communities of Color". He will be speaking about criminal justice reform and civil rights. Free event.

Saturday, Jan. 19 — Concert by the Afro-Semitic Experience at 7 p.m. at 555 Warwick Drive in Wyomissing. This group of Jewish and African-American musicians plays a unique blend of Jewish and Afro-diasporic melodies and grooves. Suggested donation of \$5 per person. (See article on page 4 for more details).

Monday, Jan. 21 — Join us for our first

MLK Jr. Youth Day of Service sponsored by PJ Library and PJ Our Way of Reading. Teenagers age 12 and up will do an on-site service project at the Greater Berks Food Bank and learn more about our county partner for Jewish Family Service's monthly food pantry. Kids under 12 will be at the JCC completing two in-direct service projects for Tower Health/Reading Hospital. Free event includes lunch for participants. (See article on page 3 for more details).

To RSVP for any of these events please email info@jfreading.org or call 610-921-0624.

Another season of Hanukkah fun



The Hanukkah season started with two nights of great fun with events at the Body Zone ice skating rink and the Berkshire Mall, both sponsored by Chabad of Berks in conjunction with the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks. Students from Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom's Lakin Preschool, left, sang during the mall event. And as is traditional, the highlight of the Body Zone event was a menorah carved out of ice while participants enjoyed skating and delicious food. See pages 13 and 16 for more Hanukkah photos.

THE JCC INVITES YOU TO
SAVE THE DATE!

Community
Shabbat
March 7, 2019

"One Community. One Voice"
Hosted by Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom
555 Warwick Drive Wyomissing
6 p.m. Service
7 p.m. Dinner

In Partnership with Chabad Lubavitch of Berks,
Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks, Keshet Zion
Synagogue, & Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom



Federation enriches lives

By **Richard Nassau**
Development Director

Our work is dedicated to the Jewish community. Your contributions to Federation ensure that every member of our community will have opportunities to connect with other members of our community. That is Federation's commitment to you. Federation is our community's resource for every age, belief, and background. It is able to bring us all together because of your support.



Starting a new calendar year always reminds me of Mr. H, a donor I had the privilege to know and work with many years ago. We worked together to create his Jewish legacy, establishing a fund for the benefit of children with financial need. The fund would only become active at Mr. H's death due to a contribution from his estate. Decisions about the fund were to be overseen by a committee at Jewish Family Service.

After Mr. H died, the fund helped children with financial need. It also helped bring the community together in new ways. One was how the fund committee was selected from a diverse cross-section of the community. Members represented different interest groups with a common interest of serving children. Many knew each other but had little opportunity to get together and work together.

The committee established guidelines to ensure Mr. H's intent was carried-out. Fund dollars assisted children with critical medical needs that were beyond a family's limited resources or health insurance. Fund dollars provided scholarships to qualified students, allowing them to pursue educational opportunities closed to them because of finances.

Mr. H's legacy allowed the committee to bring together community leaders to address some underlying issues confronting children with financial needs. Coming together to find common solutions helped start new connections between organizations. It also educated the community about the large number of Jewish families with children that

are living below poverty. A group that often goes unnoticed.

You never know where community connections will lead. I did ask Mr. H why he wanted his Jewish legacy to benefit children with financial need. He said it was because of Rebecca Gratz.

In April 1855, well before Mr. H was born, Rebecca Gratz and a group of Jewish women founded the Jewish Foster Home in Philadelphia. It was one of the earliest Jewish orphanages in the United States.

We don't often think of Jewish orphans today. Mr. H was one. Ms. Gratz and the other Jewish women saw it as their responsibility to provide for "Jewish orphans and destitute children." Mr. H was a recipient of their foresight, of their Jewish legacy.

Our legacy is to remain a vital resource where Jewish ideas and ideals come together to create a vibrant, healthy Jewish community. The Jewish Federation is committed to celebrating Jewish life and maintaining Jewish connections.

For more information about creating your Jewish legacy contact me at Federation.

Israeli organization aids California in wake of wildfires

From online news sources

Israeli nongovernmental organization IsraAID sent an emergency response team to California to help communities affected by the unprecedented fires that have killed more than 80 people and destroyed more than 13,000 homes and buildings, laying waste to a total area of more than 400 square miles.

After a request from local communities, IsraAID got to work on conducting a needs assessment of the population in affected areas, promoting community resilience and recovery and distributing relief items to families staying in temporary accommodation after losing their homes in the fires.

During his visit to California, Yotam Polizer, the co-CEO of IsraAID, said: "We've seen a lot of disaster zones over the years, but this is a whole different level of devastation. Everything has been burned to the ground, and there are so many people still missing."

IsraAID's team included Israeli and U.S.-based mental health specialists, who worked with partner organizations on the ground to support affected communities as they recover and promote community resilience.

This is not the first time that IsraAID has sent aid in the wake of deadly fires in California. In October 2017, a team of seven aid workers — including Polizer — helped out in evacuation centers in the Napa Valley after a series of wildfires



swept the state, killing 44, causing \$14.5 billion in damages and forcing 90,000 people to evacuate.

IsraAID has extensive experience responding to disasters in the U.S. and all over the world. In 2018 alone, the organization provided aid to victims in Florida in the wake of Hurricane Michael, North Carolina, after Hurricane Florence, to the Philippines, Indonesia, India, Kenya

In addition, Watergen USA, the American subsidiary of the Israeli

company, sent emergency response vehicles, or ERVs, carrying an innovative Israeli machine that pulls drinking water out of ambient air to provide hydration to police and firefighters dealing with the aftermath of massive wildfires. The Watergen GEN-350 can produce up to 156 gallons of water per day from the ambient air. It has an internal water-treatment system and needs no infrastructure to operate except electricity, which is supplied from a generator and charging stations on the ERV.

Development

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[Women's Philanthropy](#)

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Women's Philanthropy



Jewish Women: Their Pivotal Role in Society

Letty Cottin Pogrebin

Tuesday April 16, 2019

Author - *Deborah, Golda, and Me: Being Female and Jewish in America*

Advocate – a founding editor *Ms. magazine*

Activist - co-founder National Women's Political Caucus

From the President's Desk

Planting seeds for our environment and community

By William D. Franklin
President

Recently diplomats from almost 200 countries, including the United States, agreed to keep the Paris climate agreement alive by adopting a detailed set of implementation rules. The deal will require every country in the world to follow uniform standards to measure planet-warming emissions and track their climate policies. Further, it calls on countries to step up their plans to cut emissions ahead of the next round of talks in 2020.

On Jan. 20 and 21 we celebrate Tu B'Shevat — the birthday of trees. For centuries, Jews around the world celebrated this holiday by planting trees and enjoying the seven species mentioned in the



Torah: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. The early Zionists saw Tu B'Shevat as an opportunity to restore the ecology of ancient Israel by planting trees as well as a symbol of the renewed growth and flowering of the Jewish people returning to their ancestral homeland. Today, Tu B'Shevat celebrates Jewish environmentalism and continues a connection to the land of Israel.

As Jewish citizens of Reading and the world, we need to continue our 3,000 plus year old value of being environmentally responsible and implement actions to fight the climate change we face. Like the custom of planting trees, the Reading Jewish Federation is embarking on strategic planning. Our purpose is to plant the proper 'seeds' to further connect us and insure the continued viability of our Reading Jewish community. Initial results show that

our 'planting' activities need to bear fruit such as programs that continue to engage our traditional members as well new and younger families. Criteria for new programs and services are that they be fun, educational, mind-expanding and promote Jewish values. In the spirit of Tu B'Shevat we recognize that planning for the future requires preserving our environment. As such, environmental educational programs and youth and adult service programs to clean up our community's environment will be new initiatives soon to be introduced. Your participation and input as to how our community can be more environmentally responsible and 'plant' for the future will be helpful and appreciated.

May your celebration of Tu B'Shevat be sweet as you enjoy the ancient plants of the land of Israel—wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates!

JCC to honor King with Youth Day of Service on Jan. 21

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Youth and parents are invited to the first Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Day of Service sponsored by PJ Library and PJ Our Way of Reading.

Building on the success of our Family Volunteer Day in November the JCC will be organizing a day of service for our youngest community members and their adult helpers.

Tweens and teenagers 12 and older are invited to the Greater Berks Food Bank for a morning of food packing. This on-site service project will allow teens to see first-hand how the Greater Berks Food Bank works and how it operates as a food provider for our own Jewish Family Service monthly food pantry. Community service hours will be provided to all participants who need a record of them for school.

Youth under 12 will stay at the JCC and work on two indirect service projects. The first is a build a bear project where our youngest volunteers will stuff bears for patients in local children's hospitals. Then we will be creating clothing care packages for patients at Tower Health/Reading Hospital.

Both projects are perfect for kids ages 3 and up. An adult must remain with all participants under the age of 12.

Everyone is invited to stay for lunch at the JCC after our morning of service. RSVP is required by Jan. 16 so we can ensure the Greater Berks Food Bank has enough volunteers and to have the proper set up at the JCC. RSVP to info@jfreeding.org or 610-921-0624. This volunteer opportunity is free and includes lunch for those who RSVP by Jan. 16.

Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Day of Service

Monday, Jan. 21, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

We need YOUR help to make our first MLK Jr. Youth Day of Service a SUCCESS!

Donations Needed:

- New sweatshirts (all adult sizes)
- New sweatpants (all adult sizes)
- New socks

Adult Volunteers Needed:

- Chaperone volunteers at the Greater Berks Food Bank (1-2 adults)
- Help sort and organize clothes for service project (2-3 adults)

RSVP to info@jfreeding.org or 610-921-0624

Donations accepted through Jan. 18 at the JCC.

Georgetown students find some success counteracting BDS

By Shaun Ho

Jewish News Syndicate

In recent years, anti-Israel movements have spread to college campuses across North America, manifested by the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement. Georgetown University is no exception. Though the BDS movement at Georgetown gained momentum in recent years, it was rejected in 2017 by the university administration and hasn't gained ground since then. Moreover, anti-Israel activities significantly died down, making Georgetown a relatively safe space for pro-Israel and Jewish students alike.

What can explain this success story? One important factor is that the Georgetown Israel Alliance (GIA) — the university's pro-Israel student group — adopted strategies that are more effective on today's college campuses. By focusing on proactivity rather than reactivity, engaging in dialogue with students of different political stances and presenting Israel through a more critical and holistic lens, GIA has successfully set the narrative in the discourse surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and presented Israel's case well on campus.

One idea was to be more proactive rather than reactive when it came to advocating for Israel. Pro-Israel groups on campus tend to react whenever anti-Israel campaigns or sentiment pop up in our college community. For instance, in 2017, anti-Israel student activists staged a protest during Georgetown's accepted students' visiting weekend. They held up signs depicting Israel as an apartheid state, which made many Jewish students feel unsafe.

To respond to this, GIA staged a counterprotest to show prospective

Jewish students that Georgetown is safe for pro-Israel and Jewish students — and hopefully, everyone else, for that matter. Still, while such counterprotests are important, they aren't an effective long-term solution because the narrative is still shaped by the anti-Israel protesters.

So instead of just defending Israel from rhetoric on the offensive, we focused on information and raising awareness. To that end, we hosted a panel discussion on "What is Zionism, Really?" We hosted events that tie Zionism to other issues, so that students see Zionism as a positive force. We are increasing our efforts to engage in dialogue with other students on campus. Talking with students who hold widely different views doesn't necessarily change their minds, but the discussions themselves allow for greater understanding among us. It also allows us to present accurate information to students not familiar with the Mideast and its complex issues.

Following President Donald Trump's controversial decision to relocate the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, we set up a table in the main square of Georgetown, open for talk. We weren't trying to persuade anyone that Trump had made the right decision; some of us in GIA didn't even agree with it. But we wanted to ensure that they had a better understanding of where we were coming from. And we did reach out to pro-Palestinian students. Though we haven't been able to engage in dialogue with anti-Israel activists, we were effective in clarifying certain facts and showing others that we are open for dialogue.

And we are working on presenting Israel through a critical and holistic lens. In doing so, we want to humanize other students' perception of Israel and to

ensure that they are informed about the Jewish state — culturally, historically, economically. The Israeli government and its policies are open for criticism because we want to give a space to speakers with different viewpoints. One of our major campus programs featured Israeli opposition leader Tzipi Livni.

Of course, we try to avoid tactics that are easily attackable or perceived as propaganda. While our strategies have been effective, they may not necessarily work on other campuses. In many ways,

we at Georgetown are fortunate for our international Washington location and the fact that there isn't a strong anti-Israel presence on campus in the first place, compared to other colleges in North America. But it's worth pointing out that when rational, calm heads prevail, we can make gains in battling BDS, and not by using older, louder, more defensive strategies of pro-Israel activism.

The writer is a student at Georgetown University and an intern at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs.

Shalom

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Jewish and African-American music highlight of special concert

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Self-described as an American roots jazz band with a difference, the Afro-Semitic Experience is an unique musical experience for all ages!

Keshet Zion Synagogue, Reading Branch of NAACP, Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom and Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks invite the community to a special concert by the Afro-Semitic Experience on Saturday, Jan. 19 at 7 p.m. at 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing.

The Afro-Semitic Experience is a group of Jewish-American and African-American musicians who have been performing, recording, and teaching together for 20 years. Their friendship ignites their passion and purpose: Together, as a band, they merge their musical roots, Jewish and Afro-diasporic melodies and grooves, combining the core

concepts of ase and shalom — power, action, unity, and peace. Their music embodies the radical notion that people of different faiths, races, and beliefs can come together, and celebrate and build community.

The band's repertoire is a mix of original compositions and arrangements of pieces curated from Jewish and African-diasporic cultures. Their music reaches out to a distinct, open-minded listening audience; their intentional merging of jazz with the spiritual and the sacred has allowed them to share our music in concert as well as at services in houses of worship across the United States.

Since 1998 the Afro-Semitic Experiences has been playing in traditionally sacred spaces, national and regional music festivals, on college campuses and the occasional jazz club. The group has recorded eight CDs and



its members are in the midst of composing music for their ninth.

Join us for this special musical experience! Suggested donation of \$5 per person for the concert. RSVP requested to info@jfreeding.org or 610-921-0624 by Jan. 18.

Fox East to join in global partnership to screen documentary on Holocaust Remembrance Day

By Amanda J. Hornberger

In November 1940, days after the Nazis sealed 450,000 Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, a secret band of journalists, scholars and community leaders decided to fight back. Led by historian Emanuel Ringelblum and known by the code name Oyneg Shabes, this clandestine group vowed to defeat Nazi lies and propaganda not with guns or fists but with pen and paper. The group told the truth and risked everything so that their archive would survive the war, even if they did not.

Their story is being told for the first time as a feature documentary. "Who Will Write Our History" mixes the writings of the Oyneg

Shabes archive with new interviews, rarely seen footage and stunning dramatizations to transport us inside the Ghetto and the lives of these courageous resistance fighters. The documentary is written, produced and directed by Roberta Grossman and executive produced by Nancy Spielberg, the team that brought us "Above and Beyond" (part of the 2016 Reading Jewish Film Series).

The Lakin Holocaust Library & Resource Center, Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks and Fox Theatres are proud to co-host a screening of "Who Will Write Our History" on Sunday, Jan. 27, at 1 p.m. at Fox East, 4350 Perkiomen Avenue, Exeter Township (next to Boscov's East).

Joining hundreds of other venues around the world in partnership with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) the screening will be part of a global screening event for International Holocaust Remembrance Day, held annually on Jan. 27, the day of liberation for Auschwitz.

A discussion led by Dr. Jennifer Koosed, a member of the Holocaust Studies faculty of Albright College, will follow the film.

Admission is \$5 and tickets can be purchased at FOX EAST beginning at 12:30 p.m. the day of the screening. Cash and checks are accepted.

We hope you can join us for this special one-time only event.

Special Jewish Heritage Night at Reading Royals

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Join us for a fun day of hockey at Jewish Heritage Night at the Reading Royals! This special event will be an amazing afternoon of community comradery filled with great ice hockey. Game time is 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 3, at Santander Arena, with doors opening at 1 p.m.

Tickets are \$20 which includes group

seating with special access to the Coke Lounge, an area for our group to gather and socialize. Snacks and soft drinks are included in the ticket price. Everyone who purchases tickets through our group link will be given a free item at the game. Another special treat will be the High Five Tunnel Experience. This experience allows guests in our group to greet players as they go out on the ice at the start of the game.

To purchase tickets in our group you must use the following link: <https://royals.isportstix.com/order/group/JewishFed/> (the link can also be found on our website). If you have any questions or issues purchasing tickets please contact Amanda Hornberger at amandah@jfreeding.org or 610-921-0624.

We look forward to sharing an afternoon of Royals hockey with you on Feb. 3!

Jewish film series continues with Dutch thriller

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Summer 1963, Rivonia, South Africa. Ten political activists (including Nelson Mandela and his inner circle of black and Jewish supporters) face a possible death sentence for conspiracy to commit sabotage after they are arrested by the apartheid South African government. In English and Afrikaans with subtitles, "An Act of Defiance" is an intriguing drama and the next film in the Reading Jewish Film Series.

Screening on Wednesday, Jan. 9, at FOX EAST, "An Act of Defiance" is a historical thriller set during South Africa's apartheid era and follows a gutsy lawyer as he risks everything to defend Mandela and his inner circle.

Dutch filmmaker Jean van de Velde captures a dark period in South Africa's history, while paying tribute to the legendary figures who fought to end segregation and corruption in their country.

"An Act of Defiance" has been a hit at Jewish film festivals around the world and was Winner of Best Feature Film at the Dayton Jewish Film Festival 2018 and Winner of Best Film at the UK Jewish Film Festival 2017.

The 2019 Reading Jewish Film Series is co-sponsored by the Rubin Educational Fund of the Jewish Federation of Reading and Fox Theatres.

Admission is \$5 per film. All films will be shown on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at FOX EAST, 4350 Perkiomen Avenue, Exeter Township (next to Boscov's East).

Tickets can be purchased at the theater beginning at 6:30 p.m. the day of the screening. Cash and checks are accepted.

The remaining dates and films for the Reading Jewish Film Series are as follows:

Jan. 9 — "An Act of Defiance"



Feb. 6 — "And Then She Arrived"

March 6 — "Scandal in Ivansk"*

April 10 — "Heading Home: The Tale of Team Israel"

*Special event following screening

92nd St. Y Programs

Game Nights

Community Shabbat

Reading Jewish Film Series

Great Decisions

Interfaith Mitzvah Day

Yom Ha'atzmaut

PJ Library

PJ Our Way

Leo Camp Lecture

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

The Anti-Defamation League and civil rights

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Led by Amy Feinman, Northeast Area Civil Rights Counsel at the Anti-Defamation League, the December session in the ADL's Glass Leadership Institute focused on civil rights.

According to Fineman, the ADL focuses on the following civil rights areas: criminal justice reform; educational equality; free speech; immigration and refugee rights; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) rights; race and racial justice; religious freedoms; voting rights; and women's equality.

Fineman explained that often the ADL files amicus curiae (or friend of

the court) briefs on cases in which it wants to show support for a specific civil rights issue.

For example, the ADL filed an amicus curia in the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals, *Doe v. Boyertown Area School District*. At issue in this case is the local district's policy allowing transgender students to use the restrooms and changing facilities consistent with their gender identity. ADL, which has provided anti-bias training to schools in Boyertown through its No Place for Hate program for more than a decade, filed a brief supporting Boyertown's inclusive policy. In the brief, the ADL drew on

its experience as a provider of anti-bias education programs to show that inclusive policies like Boyertown's are in the best interests of all students and promote safe and successful school environments. The brief also highlights that Boyertown's policy is not only constitutional but necessary to ensure compliance with anti-discrimination protections under federal law.

Later our class was split into six groups covering three different ADL civil rights policy questions and with each group representing various sides of the policy debate.

The policy questions were: Should ADL support efforts to limit advertising

on public transportation to "commercial speech"? Should tech companies proactively remove hatemongers from their platforms? Should ADL Support a Right to Counsel for Immigrants facing deportation? All three were actual policy questions debated by the board of directors for the ADL in order to create ADL's policies on civil rights issues.

Overall it was a fun night (in an actual courtroom) arguing and examining real civil rights issues facing our country. If you would like to learn more about the ADL's work on civil rights please visit <https://www.adl.org/what-we-do/discrimination>

Survivors compensated on Kindertransport anniversary

From online news sources

Julius Berman, President of the Claims Conference, announced that as a result of ongoing negotiations between the Claims Conference and the German government, an agreement was

reached on the 80th anniversary of the Kindertransport, to provide compensation payments for child survivors of the Kindertransport. "Our team has never given up hope that the moment would come when we could make this historic

announcement," said Berman.

The Kindertransport started in 1938 when British authorities agreed to allow an unspecified number of children under the age of 17 to enter the country from Germany and German-annexed areas

(Austria and Czech lands) (Source USHMM). It became evident after Kristallnacht (the night of broken glass), that the situation for Jews in Germany was reaching crisis proportions. Jewish families began urgently searching for any avenue to get their children to safety. Over 10,000 children were saved from death when parents, who were desperate to save their children from the horrors of life under the Nazis, found refuge for them in England – often tragically relinquishing their babies and infants to the care of older children for the possibility of getting them to safety. In heartbreaking scenes on train platforms, these children were often torn from their parents' arms and, in virtually every case, never saw them again.

Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat, Claims Conference Special Negotiator, said of this achievement, "This payment comes at a time when we are commemorating 80 years since these children took their fateful journey from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia to Great Britain. After having to endure a life forever severed from their parents and families, no one can ever profess to make them whole; they are receiving a small measure of justice."

Greg Schneider, Claims Conference Executive Vice President said, "We must all take a moment to commemorate this recognition and sacrifice. No one can imagine the pain on train platforms as the Kindertransports began and the extraordinary steps these parents took to give the opportunity for life to their children – a life those children led without mothers, without fathers, and in many cases, without family of any kind."

The Kindertransport Fund will open January 1, 2019 and begin processing eligible applications. Although some survivors were provided a small payment in the 1950s, prior payments under compensation programs will not bar claimants from receiving this new benefit. The specific eligibility criteria were determined by the German government.

A Special Thank You to

Reading Eagle Mini Pages Cops N Kids Books

*For their donations to the first
Reading Jewish Community Family Volunteer Day!*

Introducing the Get Together program sponsored by PJ Library!



**Make Jewish
moments
into memories!**

- Applications **November 26, 2018 to April 30, 2019.**
- Families will receive **up to \$100 reimbursement** if they get together with at least two or more other families.
- Get Togethers can be anything families want to do with **two or more other families.**
 - Jewish holidays or Shabbat/Havdalah;
 - Family volunteering or service projects
 - Something else they think of!
- **Parent-only** and **PJ Our Way** kid Get Togethers are also allowed.
- Families must be a **current PJ Library or PJOW subscriber family** to be eligible to sign up to host.
- For more information visit <https://pjlibrary.org/gettogether2018>

Questions? Please email GetTogether@pjlibrary.org or Amanda Hornberger, AmandaH@jfreeding.org your local PJ Library Coordinator

Obituary

Jack Schnee, 86, of Florida and formerly of Reading. Jack was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., attended New York University and served in the Korean War. He was owner of Hamilton Luggage in Reading, a former U.S. Tennis Association official, and a former president of Keshet Zion Synagogue.

Jack is survived by his wife, Judy; his children: Tzvi Schnee, Howie Schnee and Marla Baksic and her husband, Steven Baksic. Other survivors include his grandchildren: Emily, Jared and Brittany Baksic and Arlo and Abraham Schnee.

Thanks, Phyllis

By Sari Incledon, M. Ed.

Jewish Family Service has been very fortunate to have Phyllis Dessel help us throughout the year when community members have questions about health insurance and need assistance choosing a plan.



During the fall when Medicare Open Enrollment occurs Phyllis meets individually with clients at the JCC and answers questions and helps them choose between Medicare Advantage Plans or traditional Medicare and a supplement. She also reviews client's medications to help them choose the most economical Part D drug plans.

Phyllis also helps people in choosing a plan through the Affordable Care Act. It is possible to review plans and sign up

online, but many find it helpful to have the guidance of someone who is familiar and knowledgeable about the process and the available plans. New retirees can sign up at any time of the year for Medicare and Phyllis is available to help them as well.

If you need help with any of these programs call Sari at JFS at 610-921-0624 or email Sari@jfreading.org and we will arrange a meeting.

Phyllis grew up in Highland Park, N.J., and graduated from Penn State with a degree in social work. Her career in social work included stints in several fields — children and youth, the prison system and drug and alcohol treatment. Since 1980 she has resided in Berks County and worked for the County Office of Aging for 20 years as a supervisor for Adult Protective Services and then as Quality Manager.

Now retired, Phyllis also enjoys tutoring for the Literacy Council and playing Mahjong. She is very proud of her son Ian Jacobi, PhD., a professor of fluid dynamics in the



Phyllis Dessel

Aerospace and Engineering Department of the Technion in Haifa. We are so fortunate that she is willing to share her expertise with JFS and the Jewish community.

Hanukkah fun and more at Friendship Circle



Friendship Circle held a big celebration Dec. 6 with a Hanukkah Klezmer concert and party featuring Philadelphia's Bob Cisik Duo returning to Reading by popular demand with a varied program of Klezmer and holiday favorites. At left, Louise Zeidman leads some spirited dancing. At right, Hallie Vaughan portrays first lady and political activist Eleanor Roosevelt during the Nov. 29 Friendship Circle program. Friendship Circle, a program of Jewish Family Service, meets Thursdays at 1 p.m. for lunch followed by a fascinating program at 1:45. Check the Centerpiece for each month's events.

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

Surveys show alarming findings on European anti-Semitism

From online news sources

Growing anti-Semitism has prompted 38 percent of European Jews to consider leaving Europe, a new report by a European human rights agency reveals. The report was compiled by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, or EUAFR, which was established to uphold human rights and fight all forms of racism. According to the report, 89 percent of Jews surveyed said that anti-Semitism in the EU had risen significantly in the past five years, with 85 percent saying that anti-Semitism was the most serious problem they faced. The report is based on the largest survey on anti-Semitism conducted anywhere in the world, which included 16,400 respondents from 28 EU member nations.

Nearly one-third (30 percent) of respondents said they had personally experienced anti-Semitic attacks. Of the tens of thousands of Jews surveyed, 80 percent told the EUAFR that they had refrained from reporting anti-Semitic incidents to the police or other authorities, thereby skewing official reports on the scope of anti-Semitism in a number of countries. A third of respondents said they chose to stay away from Jewish events or Jewish institutions out of fear for their personal safety.

Respondents reported that the most common anti-Semitic comments they encountered included "Jews have too much power and influence"; "Jews exploit the Holocaust for their own interests"; and "Israel treats the Palestinians like the Nazis treated the Jews."

Meanwhile a CNN poll about the state of anti-Semitism in Europe found equally alarming results. One-third of respondents said they knew only a little or nothing at all about the Holocaust. The poll surveyed more than 7,000 people across Austria, France, Germany, Britain, Hungary, Poland and Sweden. Nearly a quarter of the respondents said Jews have too much influence in conflict and wars. More than a quarter believe that Jews have too much influence in business and finance. Nearly one in five believe most anti-Semitism is a response to the behavior of Jews. Roughly a third say Jews use the Holocaust to advance their own goals. Just 54 percent say Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish state.

New York Times columnist Bari Weiss reported that in a forthcoming book, "Anti-Semitism: Here and Now," scholar Deborah Lipstadt discusses a 2013 study of overtly anti-Semitic letters, emails and faxes received over the previous decade by the Israeli

embassy in Berlin and the Central Council of Jews in Germany. Most came from educated, middle-class Germans.

Nations across Europe are seeing parties grow in power despite leaders with a history of downplaying the Holocaust and support from anti-Semites. Meanwhile there have been a large number of physically violent acts committed against Jews in Europe are perpetrated by radical Muslims. And there is the anti-Semitism of the far left that masquerades as anti-Zionism and anti-racism.

The overarching theme here is a conspiracy theory in which Jews are seen as spreading evil in the world.

Yaakov Hagoel, vice chairman of the World Zionist Organization, said recent developments provided strong evidence that decisions taken to combat anti-Semitism must be implemented immediately: "We expect ... legislation and enforcement, budgets to implement decisions, education (about anti-Semitism), public outreach and security at Jewish institutions. Jews are loyal citizens of the countries where they have decided to live, and the governments of those European countries have a responsibility to ensure their safety."



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Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner, second from left, leads teens and seniors in a discussion of Hanukkah.

A hands-on Hanukkah event at JCHS

By Rabbi Barry Dov Lerner

Reading Jewish Community High School

JCHS marked the seventh day of Hanukkah with a morning of hands-on experiences.

First, Barbara Lerner taught the students how to make Ashkenazi “Cheese Latkes” and the students reviewed how to crack an egg and separate yolks out and how to whip up stiff egg whites and mix with cottage cheese for a delicious yet simple alternate to potato latkes.

Rabbi Dov reviewed with them the legend of Judith and Holofernes, which was the basis for the European dairy alternative pancake, as opposed to the fried dough creations of the Middle Eastern cultures, renewed together as sufganiyot or doughnuts. This “midrash” provided a feminine heroine based, according to some scholarship, on the Biblical Judge Deborah and the narrative about Yael and Sisera. In this fashion, women as well as men demonstrated military dedication as did the Maccabees.

Students then made sufganiyot, which were outstanding, and everyone was able to enjoy them as Better Together participants joined the students.

Rabbi Dov brought four samples of how hanukiyot — Hanukkah candelabra in contrast to the Jerusalem Temple Menorah — were created for the lamps or candles, and how they each became part of a tradition.

The first was a baby gift, given to the Lerner on the birth of a son, and in this fashion became a Lerner tradition of giving a hanukiyah to a family on the birth and arrival of a new life and light in a family. This one was personalized with the Hebrew/Jewish name of the new arrival.

Another item was a Hanukkah box made in Jerusalem by a tinsmith as a commissioned work of art. This is based on a custom based on Jewish law, which holds the householder responsible for



A Hanukkah box.

damage caused by fire from Hanukkah lights put outside to “publicize the miracle of Hanukkah.” When the streets are narrow there is danger to passers-by and a chance the lights will go out too early. Hence a box with several chimneys, glass doors and windows to see the lights and enclosed to protect against the wind and the passer-by.

We then shared a brass hanukkah that had a beautiful story. Rabbi Dov, decades ago was called to officiate at a funeral for a man who died and whose wife was very ill and bed-ridden. She had become a Jew when they married more than 60 years previously, never had children and devoted her life to serving veterans hospitals in New York.

The funeral was arranged by the New Jersey State Police and the brother and the observant Roman Catholic, Italian family of the widow. They wanted an authentic Jewish funeral.

Rabbi Dov explained that he conducted such a funeral and burial but that he was the only living Jew at the funeral. Four months later, the widow also died, and once again the brother called Rabbi Dov to be the “family rabbi,” and once again he conducted a funeral as the only living Jew present. A year later, the rabbi was honored to officiate at the dedication of a joint headstone.

” After the unveiling, the brother invited

me out to his car and gave me a box, and it contained two brass candlesticks for Shabbat and a hanukkah,” Rabbi Dov said. “He explained to me that while the family thought about keeping these objects, they believed that the candlesticks and hanukkiyah should be used by Jews to celebrate sacred days as living memories.”

That year, when Barbara cleaned the hanukkiyah for Hanukkah, she accidentally hit what turned out to be a switch and it was a music box, playing beautifully “Maoz Tzur.”

Rabbi Dov then led a brief discussion about how wonderful it would be for all Jews to feel about our symbols and days to want to see them observed.

When Rabbi Dov came to JCHS seven years ago, he began weaving Israel into courses in a way that emphasized Israeli creativity, ingenuity and contributions to human welfare. He told the students that he wanted their memories about Israel to be built on medical research and human health, food and recipes, art and dance and song rather than emphasize Israel as a military might.

There are important lessons and discussions about support for Israel from allies, especially the United States and world democracies, in the past and future. There are lessons which involve the IDF, air force, military superiority and as more than one author has put it, Israel can’t afford even one defeat on the field of battle.

At this Hanukkah celebration, it appeared that the teens and seniors all agreed that our bond with Israel would and should be one of hope and support for Israel and humanity, rather than dwell on military success. The rabbis chose Zechariah 2:14-4:7 as the haftarah for Shabbat Chanukah. As it states: This is the word of Adonai to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, said Lord of the hosts.

Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Awards

The Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco has issued a national call for nominations for a prestigious national award that honors Jewish teens who are making the world a better place. The award grants up to 15 Jewish teens with \$36,000 each in recognition of their leadership in meaningful community service projects and social change initiatives.

Anyone interested in nominating a teen or any teen interested in applying can visit www.dillerteenawards.org to begin the nomination/application process. The deadline for nominations is Dec. 18, and the deadline for applications is Jan. 8. Jewish teens who are 13 to 19 years old on Jan. 8 are eligible.

For more information, email dillerteenawards@sfjcf.org or call 415-512-6432.

Join us next time!
January 12th at 10:00am

Tot Shabbat

Members and non-members are invited. No registration is required. Tot Shabbat services are held Saturday mornings at 10:00 am at Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing unless noted. Please call the Temple office with any questions, 610.375.6034.

A musical, story-filled, interactive hour for children through grade 2. Bring your family & friends to celebrate with Rabbi Michelson & stay for a pint-sized one of juice, challah, fruit, & child-friendly treats!

FUTURE TOT SHABBAT DATES:
February 23, March 23, April 13
May 18, & June 8

*Intergenerational Tot Shabbat at The Highlands

JCHS students take closer look at some interesting ammunition

By Jacob Sileski

Rabbi Dov showed Better Together participants used shells from Israel. How are they related to Hanukkah? Jacob Sileski led a group of students who researched the cartridges and produced the following report:

An analysis of the 14 brass bullet casings retrieved from the Golan Heights reveals few but intricate details about their origin and likely use.

The first group of four casings are Israeli 5.56 x 45mm NATO. There are four different headstamps in this group, the oldest casing being stamped "10-72 צת", the characters stand for "T'aasiya Tz'vaeet" or the [Israeli] "Military Industries"; the presence of the "10-" is unknown; "72" stands for 1972, the casting date of the casing ("Bev Fitchett's Guns Magazine"). The other three casings in this group are stamped the same: "TZ 77", "TZ 79", and "TZ 81". "TZ" are most likely the translated characters of "צת"; the numbers are

for the respective dates, 1977, 79, and 81. However, it is fully possible that the "TZ" stamps are a result of a mistake from the "Texas Foundries Inc." ("List of military headstamps"), in which "TX" was supposed to be how the casings were stamped. If this second hypothesis is correct, then there are four groups of casings; if these three casings are Israeli and not Texan, then there are only three specific groups of casings.

The next group of two casings are labeled "FN 76" the head stamp also includes a small circle with a cross extending horizontally and vertically, the symbol resembles a telescopic sight. The chart from "Bev Fitchett's Guns Magazine" includes this symbol in group (b) labeled "7.62 mm 1962", this diagram also lists this group of casings having been made in Israel; however, this diagram lacks the "FN 76" marking. It is most likely that these casings were also made in Israel, their manufacturing location is not known. If these casings were not



Jewish Community High School students, from left, Jacob Sileski, Ruby Nemeroff and Will Levin look over used shells with a connection to Hanukkah.

made in Israel, they may have been manufactured in Belgium, meaning "FN" stands for "Fabrique Nationale" or "Fabrication National"; in this case their location of casting is not known. The marking "76" stands for 1976.

The last group of eight casings are labeled "WCC 79"; "WCC" stands for "Western Cartridge Company" in Eaton, Illinois; "79" stands for 1979".

All of these rounds are 5.56 x 45mm NATO, those casted in America would have been casted to be fired by American M16s; these were not casted for the Vietnam War having been made post 76, excluding the single casing made in 1972. The single round, or four rounds that were made in Israel were casted to be fired by Israeli Galils, Negev, and reused Belgium FALs and American M16s.

It is most likely that the original purpose of these bullet casings as a whole was to be shipped to European Armies for stockpiling or training purposes, coincidentally these rounds found their way to Israel in which they were used by Israelis at the Golan Heights. If the bullet from 1981 is mislabeled, or was placed in

this group of casings after the fact then this group of casings were used during the Yom Kippur War. If all of these casings are labeled correctly then these were actually used in 1982 Lebanon War, the aged brass of these bullets explains that these casings were likely not used after possible dates.

The answer according to Rabbi Dov was that indeed they were from Israel's Golan Heights, a Merkava tank training ground. He found them there, took them and thought to create a Hanukiyah from them to suggest that today's IDF soldiers are modern Maccabees.

An IDF reservist and teacher asked him not to do so. Better that we celebrate the re-dedication of the State of Israel for its contributions to science, research, medicine, agriculture, engineering, software and digital creativity — not for doing what they were required to do to preserve the State of Israel.

Better that we turn to Hanukkah as a symbol for life and pray for the day when war and conflict will no longer mar the landscape of the Middle East, for Israel and all her neighbors.

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- Game Date: Sunday February 3rd 2:00PM
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The power of planting a tree

By Rabbi Brian Michelson
Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai taught: "If you have a sapling in your hand and someone tells you the Messiah has arrived, first plant the sapling and then go out to greet the Messiah" (Avot d' Rabbi Natan B31). This teaching, by one of our most important sages, is certainly counterintuitive. Before running out to greet the long-awaited Messiah, one must first finish the seemingly mundane work of planting a tree.

The spiritual and practical nature of trees and tree planting is celebrated most fully during the holiday of Tu b'Shvat, the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat (this year Jan. 20-21). In ancient Israel, the 15th of Shevat marked the beginning of the tax year for the tithing of fruit trees. Ten percent of all produce was set aside for the

support of the poor, the landless Levites, and priests.

After the exile from the Land of Israel, Tu b'Shvat lost its importance until the 16th century, when the Kabbalists of Tzfat found new meaning in the holiday. For these mystics, God was viewed as a Tree of Life expressed through the tree of the Sefirot (Divine attributes), and Tu b'Shvat became a day of renewing the Divine Tree of Life. They created a Seder where they ate more than 15 varieties of nuts and fruit from trees in four courses marked by four cups of wine, corresponding to the four mystical levels of the universe.

With the modern Jewish settlement of the Land of Israel, the planting of trees became a way to tie Jewish communities all over the world to the Land of Israel as thousands of trees are planted in Israel by Jewish National Fund each year. More recently, Tu b'Shvat has become a Jewish Earth Day, where we both celebrate God's creation and commit ourselves to becoming better caretakers of the earth.

This ecological vision was a concern of the past as well. A story is told in the Babylonian Talmud:

One day, Honi was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree. He asked him, "How long does it take for this tree to bear fruit?" The man replied, "Seventy years." Honi asked, "Do you think you will live another 70 years?" The man replied, "When I came into the world, I found carob trees. Much as my parents planted these for me, so I plant these for my children." (Talmud Bavli Ta'anit 23a)

Planting trees, a laudable act for both its practical benefits and spiritual symbolism, exemplifies the responsibility of each generation for cultivating resources for the next generation. As Rabbi Yochanan taught, redemption is linked to our care for the sapling, symbolic of this next generation—the carob tree planter's children and their descendants. On this Tu b'Shvat, may we commit ourselves to caring for the future of our earth and our children.

Congregational News

Save the date



April 6, 2019
Rabbi Brian Michelson's
20th Anniversary Gala

Save the date for Rabbi Michelson's 20th Anniversary Gala on April 6

Members of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom are in the midst of planning a festive 20th Anniversary Gala to celebrate Rabbi Brian Michelson's tenure at the Wyomissing synagogue.

This celebratory evening will include dinner and dancing and will be held on Saturday, April 6, at The Crowne Plaza in Wyomissing.

Please save the date in your calendar. The entire community is invited to attend.

As a special tribute to Rabbi Michelson, the congregation is working with Rieck's Printing in West Reading to publish a lovely, full-color program/memory album. Everyone in attendance will receive a copy. This book not only offers the

opportunity to place business ads, but event organizers at RCOS are offering congregants and friends the opportunity to place either a personal ad or purchase a memory page (or half-page) to share a message to the rabbi.

Funds raised through ads or memory pages placed in the book will go toward the music program at RCOS, something that is near and dear to the rabbi's heart.

For more information about how to purchase an ad or memory page, please visit the RCOS website at ohebsholom.org.

Those who do not have internet access or prefer to communicate by phone may contact Karen at Rieck's Printing directly at 610-685-1227.

Learning opportunities for our community's young children



At left, children take part in the Lakin Preschool Torah Tots, an enrichment program offered monthly during Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom's Sunday Religious School hours. The RCOS Tot Shabbat program, right, meets monthly on a Saturday with a fun introduction to Jewish prayer and practice.

LOCAL CONGREGATIONS AND SERVICE TIMES

CHABAD CENTER OF BERKS COUNTY (610) 921-0881
Saturday mornings: 9:30 a.m.; Friday evenings: 6:30 p.m.

KESHER ZION SYNAGOGUE (610) 374-1763
Weekly services Saturdays: 9:30 a.m.; Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM (610) 375-6034
Fridays, Jan. 4 and 11: 6 p.m. Shabbat services.
Saturday, Jan. 12: Tot Shabbat, 10 a.m.
Friday, Jan. 18: Service at 7 p.m. followed by Oneg speaker at 8.
Friday, Jan. 25: Shabbat service, 7:45 p.m.

CONGREGATION SHOMREI HABRITH

January Tevet- Shevat



Shabbat Candle Lightings

January 4
4:33 p.m.

January 11
4:37 p.m.

January 18
4:45 p.m.

January 25
4:53 p.m.



Torah Portions

January 5/Tevet 28
Va'eira (Exodus 6:2-9:35)

January 12/Shevat 5
Bo (Exodus 10:1-13:16)

January 19/Shevat 13
Beshalach (Exodus 13:17-17:16)

January 26/Shevat 20
Yitro (Exodus 18:1-20:23)

Do you remember?

By Tootie Moyer

Hi all your senior "youngsters". Here I am again with some things I think some of you will remember.

- Women were addressed by Miss or Mrs., not "you guys"
- Junior High School is now Middle School
- All your bad habits and problems are now "baggage"
- Young men shaved every day. Today the in thing is stubble on the face
- Birth announcements in the *Eagle* were in larger print so we could see it all
- When only cowboys wore jeans

• Broadway shows cost \$25, now the tickets are \$100 and up with no famous names in the show

- Atlantic City was just sun, ocean and rooming houses, there were no security cameras everywhere
- Most homes had a large console radio – today it is a boom box.
- Little girls wore shoes, not flip-flops
- You could buy chicken feet and unborn chicken eggs
- We washed all our babies' diapers
- Milk was 10 cents a quart and bread was 15 cents a loaf. Of course, you

don't remember, you are not 94 years old like me.

- State Theater had only cowboy movies and a piano player
- Here are some names that you and I will remember:
- Lon Chaney
 - Katharine Hepburn
 - Tom Mix
 - Martha Raye
 - Sophie Tucker
 - Jane Withers

I don't remember silent movies so I guess we are not that old, or maybe our parents didn't have money to give us for a movie. Here are some names

that I don't remember but maybe you do:

- Theda Bara
- Lillian Gish
- Buster Keaton
- Harold Lloyd
- Rudolph Valentino

We communicate with our kids and other people, and we do not use texting. Try it sometime; you will like to hear a voice of your caller. Every one of us is different but in the same way. In all of our hearts we are the same — we all want love, good health and peace.

See you later. Enjoy every day anyway you want.



The JCC's Romeo Club will meet on **Tuesday, January 8, 2019 for lunch at 12 p.m.** at Wyomissing Family Restaurant. Please note the change in date due to the New Year's holiday.

REFORM CONGREGATION OHEB SHOLOM & THE JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL INVITE YOU TO ATTEND OUR



ONEG SPEAKER SERIES

**Building Alliances
Between Jews and
Communities of Color**

Presented by Roy Waterman



**FRIDAY,
JAN. 18TH**

Roy Waterman works for the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. In his role as the Criminal Justice Project Manager, he focuses on educating the Jewish community on criminal justice reform. He fosters relationships between Jews & communities of color, works to improve law enforcement practices, & develops projects to support communities in crises. Roy assists in mobilizing these communities against the modern day Civil Rights violation we call Mass Incarceration.



SHABBAT SERVICE AT 7:00 PM. SPEAKER/ONEG AT 8:00 PM

Appreciation is extended to the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks for supporting the Speaker Series oneg.



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Trace Your Ancestry
Saturday, January 19 • 1pm

Betty Sustello from the Berks County Genealogical Society will help guide you through the beginning steps of researching the branches of your family tree.

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Sunday, January 27, 2019 at 1 p.m.
FOX EAST, 4350 Perkiomen Avenue, Reading
\$5 Admission (cash or check only)

Special post-film discussion led by Dr. Jennifer Koosed, Holocaust Studies Faculty, Albright College

Sponsored by The Lakin Holocaust Library & Resource Center, Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks and Fox Theatres



Meir Panim helps Russian immigrant thrive in Israel

American Friends of Meir Panim

Three years is a long time in the life of a teenager, especially one growing up in the Hamas rocket-ridden southern Israeli city of Sderot. Yet 17-year-old Netanel Naftelayev has not only survived under adverse conditions — he is one of Sderot's shining stars.

The first time we met Netanel, he was participating in the Meir Panim sponsored after-school youth club in Sderot. At that time, his dream was to become Prime Minister of Israel. Today, the accomplished young man sets his sites on not only changing Israel but also changing the world. "From ninth grade, I was part of a group of representatives in the Sderot municipality Youth Council, which influences decisions made in City Hall promoting youth issues and advancing the day to day lives of young people in Sderot," explained Netanel. "This experience gave me a lot of confidence to speak in front of people, but it also taught me that politics can be messy. Today, I am more excited about becoming a leader in the world of high-tech."

Netanel's family immigrated to Israel from the Caucasus, a very primitive area in southern Russia. People from that region often face unique challenges in the country as most do not have formal education nor an

appreciation of army service. As serving in Israel's army is often a fast track to success, many of them live in poverty. "Everything changed for the better when I started attending Meir Panim's after-school club," noted Netanel. "I have been coming two to three times a week for years. This absolutely opened my mind to possibilities that I never knew existed and introduced me to various types of people that I otherwise never would have met."

Meir Panim supports three youth clubs in Sderot. Located in refurbished bomb shelters due to the constant threat of rockets from Gaza, these after-school programs provide disadvantaged children and their parents with tools to break out of the cycle of poverty and become independent, productive members of society. Club participants receive mentors, who help with homework and create a caring environment. Israel Defense Force soldiers volunteer at the clubs, teaching participants about the army and inspiring them to join. These influences and support help participants break free from their challenges and become leaders.

Netanel is a perfect example of the importance and success of these programs, which are supported with local dollars through the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks' Israel Now

campaign. The outstanding high school senior excels in mathematics, physics, philosophy and English to such a degree that he was offered a job in Amsterdam by someone who writes a blog about soccer and has a large following.

"I was invited to compete in an international robotics and engineering contest against 30 teams in Israel as part of a robotic group in Sderot," he explained. "The competition took place in America and the team I lead came in first place. I was offered a job on the spot but decided to return to Israel, continue my education and join the Israeli army."

Netanel studies Administration Communication and new media marketing, which includes display advertising, content marketing and social media promotions that encourage consumers to interact with brands, build brand awareness and increase sales. He participates in the International Organizational "Magshimim." This is a special government sponsored program that teaches 10th-, 11th- and 12th-graders programming and website applications in order to prepare teens to serve in IDF cyber units.

"My plan now is to serve in the IDF's cyber unit and/or intelligence," shared Netanel. "My goal is to reach the highest levels in Israel's army, study programming for robotics and open a start-up company.



Netanel Naftelayev

Though, I have to say that my present favorite activity is new media marketing."

Netanel credits two turning points in his life that gave him the push and encouragement to succeed. The first is participating in Meir Panim's youth club from the time he was in fifth grade and the second was being chosen as part of a delegation to the United States representing Israeli youth from the Gaza strip when he was in seventh grade. "These experiences opened me up as a person and gave me the confidence to communicate in public events and realize that I can succeed far beyond what I was exposed to in my small city," said Netanel. "Without Meir Panim and the experiences I was given, I most likely never would have achieved my potential."

Yemin Orde's high school wins national honor

Friends of Yemin Orde

Yemin Orde High School, located inside Yemin Orde Youth Village, has clinched a top spot on a ranking of outstanding high schools in Israel. The ranking, published by Israel's Ministry of Education, evaluated high schools according to the academic, social and ethical achievements of their students, and placed Yemin Orde among the top 4.3 percent of all 1,664 high schools across Israel.

"We are grateful for this recognition by the Ministry of Education and I thank each of our educators and staff members for making a meaningful difference in the lives of our at-risk youth and in their future," said Shmuli Bing, Director, Yemin Orde Youth Village. "We will continue with our important mission to provide the best education and care for our students and will strive for nothing less than the best in the upcoming year."

Yemin Orde Youth Village is supported with local dollars through the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks' Israel Now campaign.

Out of Israel's 1,664 high schools evaluated, 292 achieved the highest rank from the education ministry. Of these 292 top-ranked high schools, only 72 received the highest exemplary ranking, which included Yemin Orde High School. Educators at Yemin Orde, as well as other

top-rated high schools cited by the government, will receive personal cash bonuses from Israel's Ministry of Education as a reward for their schools' outstanding achievements.

The Israel-wide evaluation considered the improvements in student achievements compared to the previous school year.

Rated elements of academic achievements are:

- Percentage of children eligible for a Matriculation Certificate. A matriculation certificate in Israel indicates a student's academic readiness for higher education.

- Percentage of children with outstanding academic achievements (high level of English, mathematics, humanities and science)

Rated elements of social and ethical achievements are:

- Non-dropout rate
- Percent of graduates joining the military, national service or gap-year leadership program (Mechina, in Hebrew)
- Community Service
- Percentage of special education students

In a letter to Yemin Orde High School, Dassi Be'eri, Director, Israel's Department of High School Education at the Ministry of Education, said: "...Including (Yemin Orde High School) on this list is a symbol of appreciation for your leadership and for the meaningful work of the educational staff. I see great

importance in commending the educators who make a difference, who advance each child beyond their expected abilities, who influence and contribute to shaping the future of their pupils and bring them to academic, personal and social excellence. Congratulations to the leadership of the school and the entire educational staff."

Most of the 430 at-risk teens who attend Yemin Orde's high school are first generation Israelis — or their parents are first-generation Israelis — and are from Israel's lowest socio-economic sectors.

Many of its at-risk teens have suffered trauma from destructive childhoods framed by elements such as extreme poverty, family dysfunction, abandonment, loss and violence.

Yet, with the help of highly-dedicated staff and a successful and innovative educational methodology, called the Village Way, the hearts and minds of these fragile youth heal, as they thrive to embrace hope for their future as productive citizens of Israel.

"This recognition by Israel's Ministry of Education is a validation of our vision, which is to transform at-risk youth from survival to leadership in Israel," said George Blank, Board Chair, Friends of Yemin Orde. "Clearly, a strong academic foundation is

critical in a knowledge-based economy such as Israel. Congratulations to the entire staff."

Yemin Orde Youth Village's remarkable success at transforming the lives of Israel's at-risk youth provides a paradigm shift in the educational philosophy for Israel's growing population of underserved and fragile youth. In 2006, Israel's Ministry of Education urged Yemin Orde educators to create a blueprint to expand the Village Way methodology to other youth villages and schools, nationwide. Village Way Educational Initiatives (VWEI) launched with this mission in mind.

Today, VWEI serves as Israel's national resource center for the Village Way methodology. The Village Way Educational Institute is a unique educational think tank that generates and disseminates customized plans to 44 partner educational communities throughout Israel. These partners are youth villages, residential therapeutic communities and public high schools with large populations of at-risk youth, including schools in Arab communities.

VWEI has impacted 14,200 at-risk youth and 1,775 educators in Israel. The goal by 2021 is to partner with 61 educational communities in Israel, thereby impacting 25,000 at-risk youth and 2,800 educators.

Children from across community gather to celebrate holiday



By Chana Lipsker

On Sunday, Dec. 9, Chabad Hebrew School and Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom's Religious School got together to celebrate Chanukah at Chabad.

What a wonderful and special morning it was to have so many Jewish kids in our community celebrate the holiday in such a fun way.

Activities ranged from filling and decorating donuts, to making chocolate gelt from molds and then marshmallow dreidels. The students then enjoyed an olive oil demonstration — generously sponsored by our Jewish Federation — and learned how this was the oil that was used in the menorah in the Holy Temple. They got to compete at squeezing olives after learning the process of making oil in this interactive workshop that included the history of the Chanukah story.

The students also got to sing special Chanukah songs with RCOS student cantor Meara Lebovitz.

Everyone left on a high with Chanukah party bags filled with a dreidel, gelt and other goodies along with Chanukah gelt from Rabbi Lipsker.

Thank you to our Jewish Federation for sponsoring the olive press — one of the highlights of our program.



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7:30pm Saturday February 23rd

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ATTENDEE NAMES: _____ PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____ NO. OF ADULTS ATTENDING _____ x \$20 = \$ _____

Migraine relief from an Israeli neuro-modulation device

Israel21c.com

Fourteen percent of American adults suffer from migraines or severe headaches. Among women between the ages of 18 and 44, the number soars to 23 percent. There is no cure for migraines, and over-the-counter pain relief medicines do not always work.

One of the most promising treatments is occipital nerve stimulation, where a small pulse generator is implanted at the base of the skull to send pain-relieving electrical impulses to the brain.

What if the same effect could be achieved without surgery — and for a lower cost than the tens of thousands of dollars required for an occipital nerve implant? That hypothesis launched Shmuel Shany and Amit Dar on their journey to establishing Neuro Relief. Neuro Relief is developing a noninvasive neuro-modulation device that could be available for purchase in your local pharmacy for less than \$500. The device looks a bit like Geordi's visor in "Star Trek: The Next Generation," except it sits on top of the head.

The Neuro Relief neuro-modulator stimulates six nerve branches in the brain that regulate pain and mood. Each electrode in the device delivers a charge strong enough to penetrate the skull. Amit Dar explains, "It needs to be done without causing pain to the patient and not causing damage to scalp tissue."

The device is rechargeable, can be adjusted to a variety of head sizes and connects to both a mobile phone app and the cloud, so that a patient's experience can be compared with others to deliver a precise electrical "dose."

By "dose," Dar explains that the device can dial up and down the six electrodes individually, holding out the possibility to create a treatment plan personalized for each patient.

Neuro-modulation prevents the secretion of chemicals in the brain that trigger pain. But it also modulates the "activation threshold" of the neural system, so that the next time a migraine trigger is present (whether that's stress, lack of sleep or even chocolate), the nerves will not react as severely as before. Neuro-modulation

is mostly side-effect free.

One study of the product conducted last year demonstrated an average 80 percent reduction in pain symptoms. That's double the rate for implanted devices and far more than a couple of Tylenol tablets can achieve. "We compete mainly against the strongest painkillers," explains Neuro Relief CEO Shany. "We are not targeting patients whose symptoms are alleviated with Advil but those who require drugs frequently."

The Neuro Relief device is meant to be used only during a migraine attack. Since it can fold up to the size of a sunglasses case, it's small enough to carry in a purse or backpack.

Dar and Shany are not newcomers to the field of neuro-modulation. The two started and sold NESS-Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation Systems, a company that builds neuro-modulation products to help stroke survivors move paralyzed arms and legs.

Neuro Relief's product will not be available until sometime this year. There are still a few trials to complete, including a study with 56 patients now

underway.

Neuro Relief started by targeting migraines because the clinical evidence from implanted devices has already demonstrated that neuro-modulation works. But the same neuro-modulation techniques can be used for other indications.

Next on Neuro Relief's list is depression. Dar reports "remarkable results" from a clinical trial at a mental hospital in Israel. Neuro Relief's anti-depression model could come as early as 2020.

There are other companies working on brain stimulation to treat depression, mostly using magnets. "But these are large machines that can only be used in a clinic," Dar says. "We wanted something that could be used at home, that allows for self-treatment."

"At the end of the day, we will have a solution for multi-indications, although each needs its own regulatory approval and may need a different device," Dar says.

In the meantime, the company is inching closer to giving migraines the boot from your brain.

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THE KABBALAH OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Sunday, January 20th - Tu B'Shevat
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ICORPA.org alvernia.edu ohebsholom.org churchofsaintbenedict.com

Israeli startup restores speech abilities to stroke victims, others

Israel21c.com

When Danny Weissberg's grandmother was overcome by a stroke 10 years ago, she lost the ability to speak intelligibly, and their family lost the primary way to communicate with its matriarch. In the wake of his grandmother's sudden impairment, the young engineer resolved he'd find a way to help.

The result is Voiceitt, a Tel Aviv-based startup that has developed deep learning, signal processing and customizable speech recognition technologies to provide a synthesized voice for those whose speech has been garbled. The beneficiaries won't just be Weissberg's grandmother, of course. Each year, millions of people have their speech impaired due to strokes and aneurysms, diseases such as cerebral palsy and Parkinson's, brain injuries from accidents, and other medical conditions. Voiceitt's first product is a mobile app

that converts non-standard language into readily understood speech. It's already in beta testing with more than 200 users in four different languages. The company is also working to integrate its software with voice-driven technology such as Amazon's voice assistant Alexa. The goal is to allow individuals who normally require assistance to take control of their own needs — turning on lights, controlling the TV and asking for basic information, for example.

"As the world becomes more and more voice enabled, speech recognition becomes such an important thing in our life," said Weissberg, a software developer with a master's degree in philosophy. "It will be a basic human right to have accessibility to this technology."

At the heart of Voiceitt's offerings are deep learning algorithms, which are trained on a limited vocabulary of up to 80 calibrated words or phrases. Adding to the challenge is the sparsity of data —

due to the difficulty of obtaining language samples. The model is then fine-tuned for each user because speech patterns are unique to each individual and their condition. "Everyone's impairment is different, but there are certain similarities within a particular group of speech impairments," said Stas Tiomkin, Voiceitt's co-founder and CTO. "We work very hard to collect speech samples and build a generic acoustic model that then gets customized."

Among those Voiceitt is helping are a 17-year-old New York woman who, following a harrowing auto accident, is wheelchair-bound and has severely impaired speech. Another user's disabilities confine him to a wheelchair, but he plans to use the app at a fast food restaurant, taking drive-through orders. A middle-aged Israeli man with cerebral palsy uses the technology to help control his television. While other language assistance devices require pointing with

a device or detect glances, Voiceitt offers a more natural way to communicate. Tiomkin points out that, according to speech and language pathologists, there is evidence that engaging in conversation can help develop brain functioning and improve speech. "In that sense, this isn't just an application for communication, it's a therapy," Tiomkin says.

Voiceitt's next frontier is enabling speech detection with a far broader range of vocabulary, so that it could render free-form conversation fully intelligible. The company estimates that there are 100 million individuals worldwide who can't communicate and be understood with their voices. But they see the market as potentially far larger. At least 5 percent of individuals can't use voice-enabled AI devices due to disabilities, strong accents or age, including an estimated 8 percent of those over the age of 65.

Israel making revolutionary breakthroughs in cardiac care

From online news sources

Israel is making revolutionary breakthroughs in the world of cardiology,

according to the *Jerusalem Post*, reporting on statements by Professor Michael Glikson, director of the Integrated

Heart Center at Shaare Zedek Medical Center.

Out of the \$400 million that is invested in the country for research and development in life sciences, over half is invested in medical devices. Of this sum, 16 percent is spent on cardiovascular devices. Israel is number one in the world in patents per capita in the medical field, and a significant part of it goes to cardiovascular disease. At times, the successful discoveries that are conceived in Israel are then marketed by American and other companies around the world.

Speaking at a *Post* diplomatic conference, Glikson walked the audience through several major innovations being implemented at the hospital that were born from Israeli innovation. One was the transcatheter aortic valve replacement procedure for severe narrowing of the aortic valve. This procedure spares a patient from undergoing painful surgery and, using a catheter, brings a new valve into its place in the heart to restore normal flow. Similarly, the mitral valve

can be repaired by a clip using the principle of a stapler that staples the two leaflets of the valve together

He also demonstrated how pacemakers have continued to decrease in size, so much so, that it's possible to implant a capsule — like a pacemaker (leadless pacemaker) without a pacemaker box and leads, using the groin as an entry site without leaving any surgical scar. Another tiny chip-like device for monitoring heart rhythm (implantable loop recorder) is injected under the skin and performs like an EKG machine that can remain in the patient's body for up to three years.

Wearable monitoring vests, 3D Mapping algorithms, new stents for coronary and other vessel occlusions, and devices to protect the brain from blood clots that embolize from the heart are all new technologies used regularly in cardiology daily practice. Many of these technologies started as new ideas that were conceived in Israel, to be subsequently marketed worldwide.

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom invites you to

A Tropical Night Under the Stars

Reading Public Museum Planetarium
Friday, February 1, 2019 (no snow date)

Warm up on a winter night with the taste of the Islands! Dinner sponsored by Island Noodles, owned by congregants Boris & Tatiana Schneider. Enjoy soba noodles & seasonal vegetables simmered in a light island sauce with the option to add teriyaki chicken.

6:30: Dinner
7:00: Service featuring song leader & guitarist Gabriella Michelson
7:30: Planetarium Show
8:30 Dessert





Joyce Eisenberg & Ellen Scolnic are

The Word Mavens

two ladies who know the difference between pulkes and a pushke

The Word Mavens will entertain and engage you with their humorous, fact-filled look at Jewish holidays, customs, foods, and more. They will share funny stories, Yiddishisms, beloved traditions and little-known facts they uncovered while writing their best-selling *Dictionary of Jewish Words* and their new book, *The Whole Spiel: Funny essays about digital nudniks, seder selfies and chicken soup memories.*

They'll answer questions like:

- Who are the ushpizin and why are they here?
- What's the difference between shnecken and rugelach?
- Why are there so many Yiddish words for a no-goodnik?

It's unanimous! The Word Mavens are always a big hit!

"Everyone is still talking about how funny it was. Our members loved everything about your talk. They said it was the best program we ever had."
— Barbara Goldstein, Sisterhood Pres., Temple Beth Tikvah, Wayne, NJ

Reading Hadassah
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Please return this RSVP form with your check to the Temple payable to RCOS by Friday, Jan 25th. Your check is your reservation. Members and non-members are welcome to attend with a reservation

Attendee names: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Number of Adults attending _____ x \$12 = \$ _____

Number of seniors, children & college students attending _____ x \$10 = \$ _____

Number of children 3 years and younger attending: _____

Dinner and Show Fee:
\$12: Adult 18-64 years of age
\$10: Seniors (65+ years of age), children (ages 3-17) & college students
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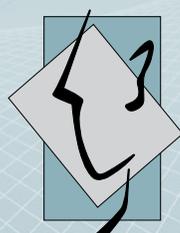
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Contributions as of Dec. 14

Edwin and Alma '51 Lakin Holocaust Library & Resource Center

In honor of:
Rosalye Yashek's special birthday – Doris and Elliott Leisawitz

Federation Jewish Community Campaign

In memory of:
Charles Lock (Lisa Levine's father) – Ellen and Don Abramson, Jill, David, Seth & Remi Nuddle Southeastern Berks Internal Medicine Associates
Jack Schnee – Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer, Carol and Bernie Gerber, Anzie and Edward Golden
In memory of **Dr. Sanford Sternlieb (Jeffrey Sternlieb's father)** – Anzie and Edward Golden

In honor of:
Samantha Weisberg's wedding – Debbie, David, Scott, Mark and Abby Goldberg

Jewish Family Service

In honor of:
Herb Schneider celebrating his 101st birthday – Louise Zeidman

In memory of:
Sy Youngerman – Richard and Mindy Small
Dr. Sanford Sternlieb – Cheryl and Eric Farber
Charles Lock (Lisa Levine's father) – Sharon and Julian Syret
Jack Schnee – Cheryl and Eric Farber, Sharon and Julian Syret

Get well/speedy recovery:
Al Diamond – Ruth Isenberg

Honorials and Memorials

Contributions may be made to the following Funds:

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Federation Jewish Community Campaign | \$10 |
| Jewish Family Service | \$10 |
| Leo Camp Lecture Fund | \$10 |
| JFS Food Bank | \$25 |
| JFS Taxi Transportation Program | \$25 |
| Holocaust Library & Resource Center | \$18 |
| Doris Levin Fund | \$10 |
| PJ Library Fund | \$10 |
| Harry & Rose Sack Fund | \$10 |
| Evelyn Thompson Fund | \$10 |

JFS Food Pantry

In honor of:
Sarah Simon's engagement – Sue Schlanger
Zach Simon's engagement – Sue Schlanger
Marriage of Bruce and Sharyn Cohen's daughter Jackie – Sue Schlanger

Friendship Circle Fund

In honor of:
Sarah Simon's engagement – Glenn and Gaye Corbin

Get well/speedy recovery:
Dr. Eric Bluestone – Glenn and Gaye Corbin

In memory of:
Charles Lock (Lisa Levine's father) – Glenn and Gaye Corbin
Eli Ellner – Glenn and Gaye Corbin
Sy Youngerman – Ethel Engel

Sue B. Viener Memorial Fund (PJ Library)

In honor of:
Danielle Radosh's Bat Mitzvah – Michele and Ben Leisawitz
Sharon and Ron Berman's daughter Kate's wedding – Michele and Ben Leisawitz

Israeli orthopedist teaches deformity treatments in Africa

From online news sources

Director of the Pediatric Orthopedics Unit Professor Mark Eidelman from Rambam's Ruth Rappaport Children's Hospital in Haifa recently led a training for dozens of doctors from Africa to treat pediatric orthopedic deformities.

"There are many people in Ethiopia with problems that are taken care of in other countries at much earlier stages," Eidelmantold the *Jerusalem Post*. "In Israel, like in many other Western countries, they know how to diagnose problems on time and treat them in a timely manner. This helps these patients to enjoy a higher quality of life and prevent their conditions from deteriorating."

Fifty doctors from Ethiopia and surrounding countries participated in the four-day course in The Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa. "The institutions

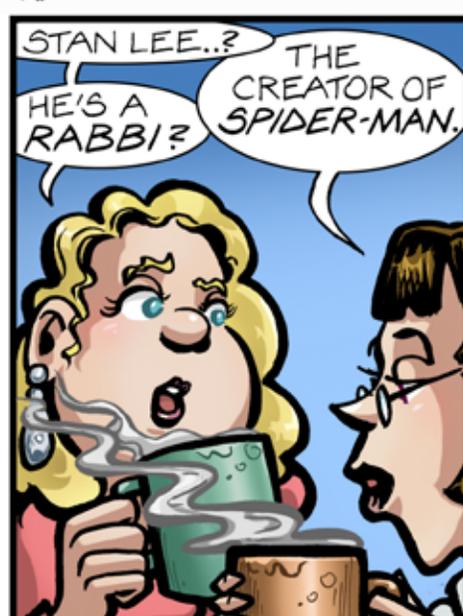
in Baltimore are considered the best in the field in terms of training and teaching, and the city hosts the leading conferences and courses," Eidelman continued. "Unfortunately, most of these doctors don't manage to secure entry visas for the U.S., and as such, are denied access to this information. This is the reason why we decided to bring the training to them."

Two doctors from the U.S. joined him on his mission, Professor John Herzenberg, a senior doctor in the field from Baltimore, and Professor Christof Radler, also renowned in the field.

The course was sponsored by CURE International, a nonprofit dedicated to providing medical care to children suffering from orthopedic and neurological conditions, along with POSNA, the Pediatric Orthopedics Society of North America.



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