



Shalom08|25

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

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Cindy Gerber Tomlinson named new CEO of Jewish Federation

By Federation staff

The Jewish Federation of Reading/ Berks is excited to announce that Cindy Gerber Tomlinson has accepted the position of Chief Executive Officer and will begin on Aug. 11.

As CEO of the Federation, Cindy brings a passion for the Jewish community and a proven track record in leadership, relationship-building and strategic development to the role. She is eager to serve the Jewish community where she grew up and ensure that Federation remains an essential and dynamic presence in our Jewish community and the Berks County community at large.

Cindy’s career has been in the for-profit world, with over 25 years of experience working in business development, relationship management and research and analysis in various industries. She has worked with clients worldwide to support their strategic growth and expansion. Cindy is also an entrepreneur and founded Groove Consulting, LLC, with a focus on leadership and organizational development. Locally, she has been a workshop leader for the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance and Women2Women.

Cindy has a Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics from the University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor of Arts in Comparative Arts and Spanish from Washington University in St. Louis. She has studied in Mexico, China and the Czech Republic.

Cindy and her family are members of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom, and she



Cindy Gerber Tomlinson

received her Jewish education at Keshet Zion Hebrew School. In addition, Cindy has been involved over the years with Chabad-Lubavitch of Berks County. She has been a religious school teacher and member of Sisterhood at Oheb Sholom, and she has volunteered in the community through Berks County Power of the Purse, Wyomissing Lacrosse, the Reading Public Museum and the Reading School District. Her husband, Rick, and son, Zach, a senior at Wyomissing this year, are equally thrilled to be giving back to the Reading Jewish

community.

As a Berks County native, Cindy’s range of experience will allow her to serve our Federation and community with care and purpose; she is committed to enriching Jewish identity, education, and quality of life across generations of our Jewish community locally, nationally, and in Israel. She is looking forward to working with our Board, staff and volunteers, getting to know our community leaders and supporters, to deepen partnerships in the community.

Cindy succeeds Brian Chartock, who was the CEO for the last two and a half years. Cindy anticipates transferring her knowledge of the for-profit environment to the nonprofit world, championing the continued culture of philanthropy, community engagement and fiscal stewardship that her predecessor successfully engendered. She also awaits building upon the unified passion shared by the JFR Staff and Board and the successful emergency Israel campaign. Supporting the ongoing excellent work of the Jewish Family Service and the exciting new programming the JFR has been providing, Cindy will help maximize the existing efforts of the JFR to work closely with the Greater Reading Unity Council to educate the Berks County community and to combat antisemitism. Finally, she anticipates growing our Jewish community through fun, helpful and welcoming outreach activities and strategies.

Please join us in welcoming Cindy to the Federation!



The community gathered in June for the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks annual meeting. Clockwise from left, Sheila Bornstein, outgoing chair, with Brian Chartock, outgoing CEO, and Jonathan Avins, incoming chair; Carol Perlmutter, Gordon Perlmutter and Meir Mazuz enjoy breakfast; Jennifer Koosed and Debbie Goldberg enjoy an opportunity to schmooze.

Warm welcomes and powerful programs

By Richard Bradbury

Dear *Shalom* readers, I hope your summer is off to a terrific start. It's a little too humid for my liking but ... it's summer in Pennsylvania, and it's my favorite season! As you are all avid readers of *Shalom*, you've had the opportunity to meet me via our June '25 issue.



I arrived at the Jewish Federation in May after 17 years as the Director of the Arts for Olivet Boys & Girls Club of Reading, and 16 months as their Director of Grants. I cut my teeth grant writing and fundraising in 2007 as I began writing and managing arts-based grants for our Center for the Arts. Before returning home to Reading in 2006, I held multiple positions at Imagination Stage, a nationally recognized children's theatre in Bethesda, Md. Three not-for-profits in a row!

Looking back, I realize I have lived one-third of my life in service, and I consider myself fortunate to have the privilege to serve. Giving back whether through arts education for children, community theatre or to meet the needs of our communities in Reading and Berks, has always been an honor and personally fulfilling.

Not-for-profits exist to make a difference, not to make a profit. These service organizations exist in communities specifically to close a gap, fill a need or address concerning and urgent social issues such as poverty, inequities or, in the case of the Jewish Federation, the disturbing and frightening rise in antisemitism and white nationalism.

In my two short months with the Federation, I've had the privilege of witnessing and participating in activities and events I find to

be at the heart of giving and serving.

- My first event — prior to starting at the Federation — was Yom Hashoah. Though solemn and reverential, the evening was filled with fellowship while honoring the 6 million+ voiceless souls. I was particularly moved by the Holocaust Kaddish and Cindy Chronister's presentation of her grandparents' escape from Nazi-occupied Vienna.

- Shortly after, I attended a lovely and powerful event for Yom HaZikaron, where I had the opportunity to meet two extraordinary young people who serve in the Israeli Defense Force; they shared heroic and devastating stories of life in Israel as they proudly serve their people and homeland.

- I had some of the most enjoyable afternoons breaking bread with the sweet and charming members of JFS's Friendship Circle. They shared memories, they taught me more about Jewish culture and our community and we celebrated Sylvia Wenger's 99th birthday! Rabbi Michelson and his wife, Holly, were in attendance; they answered, with great humor and respect, little known yet often pondered questions about Jewish traditions.

- Sharing and giving is at the heart of Jewish Family Service's monthly food pantries run with enormous efficiency and goodwill by Carole, Sari, Margo and a team of JFS volunteers. Working with the team and meeting all the thankful families is so fulfilling, rather aerobic and great fun! I've spent two great mornings helping out — it's absolutely the spirit of Tikkum Olam! I recommend joining the good work and the fun!

- Noontime Knowledge presentations are like being back in school with your favorite teacher, and their mission is to be certain you are having a great time (but, really,

you're learning). The conversation is open, engaging and always entertaining! I thought I understood George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," but thanks to Dr. McConnell and Lars Potteiger, I have a new appreciation for this slice of American music, through a Jewish lens, so much more than before.

- Your Federation offers Mah Jongg on Monday afternoons and Movie Mondays once a month, plus Happy Hours that pop up monthly from one trendy watering hole to another. There are so many ways your Federation will help you, your family and friends experience kehillah (I'm catching on!). I was the "new guy" at each of these events, and I was always made to feel totally welcome and "at home." Please stop by! Even if you're the new guy ... or gal!

My BIG takeaway from the last six weeks at the Federation has been how everyone embraces the meaning of tzedakah. Everyone I've met has shown their passion and obligation to give — whether it's the gift of one's time (which is so precious), resources (and we all know what that is — smile!) and one's self. Please know that the Federation staff, board and our community appreciate your tzedakah. Your gifts give your Federation the opportunity to do something wonderful and meaningful for others.

To the members I've had the pleasure of meeting, thank you for welcoming me into your Federation, your home for Jewish Culture and Community. If I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you, please contact me at the Federation office and we'll schedule time to chat over coffee (or tea, or maybe, an adult beverage — smile!)

Have a wonderful and safe summer! You may reach me at 610-921-0624, or email me at richardb@jfreading.org.

Development

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



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Jewish Federation of Reading thanks our community members for their contributions to the Shalom newsletter

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so we can help tomorrow!

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Today
Tomorrow
Always

Yvonne Frey Oppenheimer’s remarkable legacy

By Tammy K. Mitgang

When Vicki Graff, Program Director of the Jewish Federation of Reading, invited me to write an article remembering Yvonne Frey Oppenheimer, I did not hesitate to accept her thoughtful offer. As I sat down to put my reflections on paper, I asked myself how can I capture in words the impact of this bigger-than-life personality and her selfless efforts to benefit our community? If you worked with Yvonne, you understand the challenge.

For decades, Boscov’s Department Stores, Inc. was and remains a retail success that has attracted many talented and innovative residents to the Berks County community, including Rob and Yvonne Oppenheimer. I first met Yvonne while working at Boscov’s in the public relations office. She and her husband had relocated from the Washington, DC area where she had worked as an administrator for The World Bank’s South Asia Region — Bangladesh Country Programs Division and Rob had worked for Hecht Company.

Yvonne wasted no time in settling into the area, immersing herself in caring for the needs of others. Beginning in 1995, she served as Director of Social Work Services and later the Director of Development for Rainbow Home of Berks County, a personal care home for people living with HIV/AIDS. She was a force to be reckoned with, promoting education and understanding of a stigmatized disease that had become the leading cause of death for all Americans ages 25 to 44.

Throughout my career working



Yvonne Frey Oppenheimer

in nonprofit management, our paths continued to cross. From the Reading Symphony Orchestra and the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts to Centro Hispano Daniel Torres and the JCC of Reading, to name a few, Yvonne was there — not simply sitting at the table but working it. She was a master connector bringing people and organizations together to everyone’s benefit.

In 2008, Yvonne called me to suggest a new career opportunity. By now, we had established a relationship that allowed us to “cut to the chase.” She was suggesting that I consider applying for a position as the Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Reading.

As you may remember, the Jewish Community Center was now under the umbrella of the Federation. The

sale of the large facility located near Hampden Boulevard was tied up in the courts, the Federation was carrying an unsustainable amount of debt, and the Jewish community, generally, was contracting. She explained that the current director had accepted a job in Philadelphia and that efforts to find a director who was willing to relocate to the area was unlikely due to the Federation’s current, untenable position. Then came the hook — she assured me that she along with other leaders in the community would support me, 100%. Although I knew that the Federation’s board and many volunteers were committed to working through this tumultuous situation, it was Yvonne’s promise that ultimately convinced me to interview for the position.

Along with the Board and its leadership, the Federation worked through several challenging years of transition. The JCC building was sold to the Reading School District, loans were paid off and a new location was established in Wyomissing. Area synagogues became satellite locations for programs and larger events were hosted throughout the community. Through it all, Yvonne was always there. Serving as the President of the Jewish Federation of Reading from 2006 to 2008, she was a rock — my rock.

A lifelong learner, Yvonne graduated magna cum Laude in 1995 from Alvernia University with a BA in Psychology and Communications and in 2001 was awarded an MBA specific to nonprofit management and economic community development.

She was an active member of The Association of Fundraising Professionals, a professional organization dedicated to best practices in fundraising and recognized by Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania with a Take the Lead Award, a well-deserved distinction.

I invite you to read her obituary, which details her many professional accomplishments to more fully appreciate her contributions to the Greater Reading community and the many lives she has touched.

How did you say, “No” to Yvonne? You didn’t. She had a wonderful rhythm to her speech and a lilt that could be sweet and direct, simultaneously. I often envied this gift. Her smile — contagious!

If she had one fault it was that her body that just could not keep up with her unrelenting pace. Persevering through years of failing health, Yvonne remained a champion for many who were marginalized and forgotten.

I feel blessed to have enjoyed her as a mentor and valued friend. May her memory be a blessing.

Obituaries

Yvonne Frey Oppenheimer, 82, of Denver, Colo., died on July 5.

Before moving to Colorado, Yvonne resided in Berks County since 1985. She was born in Columbus, Ohio, but from the age of 7 grew up in Miami, Fla. Yvonne had been employed by the World Bank from 1982-1985 in Washington and from 1995-2001 she worked for the Rainbow Home of Berks County, first as Director of Social Work Services and then as Director of Development. She was last employed as a Consulting Associate for Capital Venture, specializing in nonprofit fundraising and board development. Yvonne graduated from Alvernia University magna cum laude in 1995 with a BA in psychology and communications and in 2001 earned an MBA in nonprofit management and economic community development. As a community volunteer, Yvonne served on numerous board and committees for local nonprofits. She served as President of the Board of the Jewish Federation from 2006-2008. Some of the organizations she volunteered for include Alvernia University, Berks County Community Foundation, RACC, Centro Hispano, Reading Symphony Orchestra, Goggleworks, Planned Parenthood, Prospectus Berko, and Eastern Pa. Chapter of Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays. In 2012 Yvonne was the recipient of the Girl Scouts Take The Lead Award. Yvonne is survived by her husband of more than 63 years, Robert, two sons, Richard (Avon, Colo.) and Karl (Kent, Conn.) and five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Jake Gunter, 33, passed away on May 24 after a courageous battle with pulmonary hypertension.

Jake graduated from Wyomissing


High School and from the Fox School of Business at Temple University with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing degree in 2016. For the last seven years he worked as a sales support coordinator for Cigna in Baltimore. Fifteen years ago, Jake and his sister Brooke founded a charity that raised research funds for Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension. He will be missed by his parents, Ellice and Rich Gunter, now of Fairfax, Va., and siblings Justin and Brooke, nephew Gavin and many family members and friends.

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Kaye Goldsmith Ullman, 93, died on July 23.

Born in Philadelphia, Kaye was married to M. Robert “Cookie” Ullman for 73 years. She resided at the Highlands in Wyomissing for 12 years. Kaye’s ancestors immigrated to this country in 1835 from Bavaria, Germany and settled in Quincy, Ill., and Wheeling, W.Va. She attended Millersville University and met Cookie at a fraternity party at Franklin & Marshall College. They married in 1951. Kaye opened the first preschool program at the Jewish Community Center on North Fifth Street in Reading in June of 1952. Kaye was very active in many community programs and was on the board of Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom. In 1980, Kaye owned and managed a children’s clothing store at the Narrow Fabric Building at Vanity Fair. Kaye and Cookie traveled extensively throughout the world and every continent. Kaye is survived by her son, Stuart, Sarasota, Fla.; granddaughter Tara Ullman McCaffery, great-grandchild Kalib McCaffery, great-grandchild Jacob Robert McCaffery, and grandson Alexander Jay Ullman, Ph.D. and his wife, Kim Blanck, who recently appeared on Broadway in “Suffs.”

"ART, CULTURE & IDEAS"




THE HIGHLANDS AT WYOMISSING




JOY BEHAR, SUSAN LUCCI, SHERRI SHEPHERD AND JUDY GOLD IN CONVERSATION: MY FIRST EX-HUSBAND PRE-RECORDED PROGRAM

MONDAY, AUG 11
1:30 PM

CULTURAL CENTER AT THE HIGHLANDS AT WYOMISSING
2000 CAMBRIDGE AVE.





Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Art, Culture & Ideas is a monthly series.

Shalom

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Arts and culture at Noontime Knowledge in August

By Vicki Haller Graff
Program Director

**Tuesday, Aug. 19, noon –
Berks Nature Building and Grounds Tour**

Over the past few years, I've been slowly replacing the plants in my own yard with native plants to encourage pollinators and using reclaimed materials to create art for my yard. With that in mind, I'm eager to learn more about sustainable building practices and land use at Berks Nature.

On Tuesday, Aug. 19, at noon, join the JCC at Berks Nature, 575 St. Bernardine St., Reading, the leading agent for environmental conversation in Berks County. This event is free and open to community members of all ages.

We'll start with a tour of their LEED Gold certified building, The Nature Place. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Designs (LEED) certification is used by the US Green Building

Council for the verification of green buildings, which offer environmental, social and governance benefits. Everything from the materials used to build the furniture to the septic system to the gardens surrounding the building are intentional and designed to support the green environment.

Following the building tour and weather permitting, the Berks Nature staff will lead our group on a short trail walk. There are nearly 100 acres of Angelica Creek Park, the city-owned, public park surrounding the Nature Place. Don't worry, we won't walk the full park, just some easily accessible walking trails around the main building. We will be able to see the active restoration of the Angelica Creek floodplain, from cattail wetlands to blooming pollinator meadows.

**Wednesday, Aug. 20, noon—
Toytopia at the Reading Public Museum**
The following day, take a stroll down memory lane to

see some of the world's most classic toys and games dating from the early 1900s to 2000 and beyond at the Reading Public Museum's exhibit, Toytopia. Nostalgic toys such as Atari®, Erector Set®, and classic board games are featured as well as vintage toys from the collection of Dr. Ivan Bub, an active member of our Jewish community.

Join Ivan and the JCC on Wednesday, Aug. 20, at noon in the Reading Public Museum, 500 Museum Road, Reading. RSVP is requested, and the visit is free. Admission includes the exhibit and the whole museum. All ages are welcome to attend this fun and interactive Noontime Knowledge!

Ivan will give a short talk on the toys he contributed to the exhibit, and then you'll have time to relive your childhood memories with the interactive displays from cherished toymakers, including Hasbro®, Duncan Yo-Yo®, Schleich®, Breyer®, Crayola®, KNEX® and many more.



Recent Noontime Knowledge programs, clockwise from left: Dr. David McConnell and Lars Potteiger from Berks Sinfonietta presented and engaging Noontime Knowledge talk on George Gershwin. FYVE Woodwind Ensemble played everything from Mozart to Van Morrison for a full house at Noontime Knowledge in May. Amber Vroman led a tour of the Sights Unseen exhibit at Berks History Center in July

NOONTIME KNOWLEDGE

at Berks Nature, 575 St. Bernadine Street, Reading, PA 19607

**Berks Nature
Building Tour and Trail Walk
Tuesday, August 19, 2025 at noon**



Join the JCC at Berks Nature, the leading agent for environmental conversation in Berks county. Tour their LEED Gold certified buliding, The Nature Place, and enjoy a trail walk.

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.



NOONTIME KNOWLEDGE

at the Reading Public Museum, 500 Museum Rd., Wyomissing

**Toytopia: Vintage Toys
presented by Dr. Ivan Bub,
contributor to the exhibit**

**Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 12:00pm
at the Reading Public Museum
500 Museum Rd., Reading, PA**



Take a stroll down memory lane to see and play with some of the world's most classic toys and games dating from the early 1900s to the year 2000 and beyond at *Toytopia*. Dr. Ivan Bub will talk about his vintage toy collections, some of which are featured in the exhibit.

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.



Community lecture: Armed Conflict in the Contemporary World

By Vicki Haller Graff

Paul Staniland, Ph.D., has many impressive credentials – he’s a professor of political science at the University of Chicago, sits on the faculty boards of the Center for International Social Science and Center in Delhi. He is also a nonresident scholar in the South Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and co-editor of the Cornell Studies in Security Affairs book series.

However Paul’s most important credential may be being the son-in-law to Sari and John Incledon. Thanks to that

connection, we are privileged to host him at the JCC for a lecture this summer.

Mark your calendar for Thursday, Aug. 7 at 7 p.m., and join us at the JCC (1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125, Wyomissing) for a free community lecture on Armed Conflict in the Contemporary World.

The world is experiencing a wave of conflicts within and between countries. In this lecture, Professor Staniland will provide an overview of trends in war and conflict, the geography of political violence, possibilities for conflict resolution and areas of emerging tension. He spoke to our community in 2017 on

a similar topic, though the world has certainly changed since then.

Paul’s research focuses on political violence and international security, with a regional emphasis on South and Southeast Asia. His first book, “Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse,” was published by Cornell University Press in 2014. His second book, “Ordering Violence: Explaining Armed Group-State Relations from Conflict to Cooperation,” was published by Cornell in 2021.

He received the 2022 Karl Deutsch

Award for contributions to the study of International Relations and Peace Research from the International Studies Association. He is writing a book about the effects of major power competition on “swing” states in Asia and beyond.

Outside of work, he is a proud Chicago Public Schools parent, amateur photographer and fan of the Chicago Bulls and McLaren F1.

Your RSVP is appreciated so we can be sure to have enough seats: let us know if you plan to come by emailing info@jfreeding.org or calling 610-921-0624.

Support Federation with FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS at Boscov’s stores

By Richard Bradbury

It’s time for Boscov’s Annual FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS event when our Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks joins other local nonprofits in selling shopping passes to friends and supporters.

A shopping pass costs a mere \$5, and that \$5 goes directly to the nonprofit agency. The more passes we sell, the more funds we raise for the Jewish Federation!

Shopping passes are worth 25% off a huge selection of merchandise at any Boscov’s Department Store (some exclusions do apply). Boscov’s Shopping Pass is ONLY GOOD on Wednesday, Oct. 22 (8 am to 11 pm – extended hours!).

You may also use your shopping pass for online purchases on Oct. 22. Customers who purchase a shopping pass may register to win a \$100 Boscov’s gift card — one winner at each store.

So, give yourself a little retail therapy and purchase a few shopping

passes for your family and friends. You’ll support your Jewish Federation while you shop!

For you “fundraisers” out there, consider selling shopping passes to your family, co-workers, neighbors, and friends.

Sell 10 passes and your Jewish Federation makes \$50! It’s that easy!

You can use your Facebook, Instagram or other social media platforms to spread the word. Every shopping pass sold is \$5 for your Federation.

You can purchase your Boscov’s FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS shopping passes at the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing, PA 19610.

Our offices are open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. Phone: 610-921-0624.

Fun Fact: Boscov’s FRIENDS HELPING FRIENDS event raises over \$3 MILLION annually for nonprofit organizations!

Please support the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks with a donation of \$5 in exchange for a shopping pass to



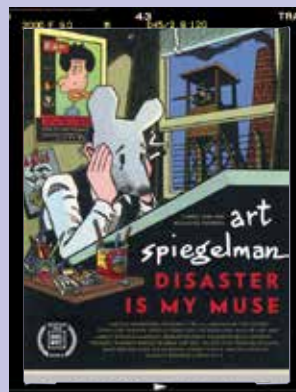
**Wednesday, October 22, 2025
8am- 11pm**

Shopping passes are worth 25% off a huge selection of merchandise at any Boscov’s Department Store, plus you’ll have a chance to win a \$100 Boscov’s gift card!

To purchase a pass please visit the Federation office at 1100 Berkshire Blvd. Suite 125, Wyomissing



Movie Monday at the JCC August 25, 2025, 1pm



Art Spiegelman: Disaster is My Muse

documentary about the Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist

98 minutes

Explore the work of cartoonist Art Spiegelman and the impact of his graphic novel Maus, about his parents’ survival of the Holocaust. A defender of free speech, Spiegelman has spoken out as book bans spread across the country.



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!

Armed Conflict in the Contemporary World

**A community lecture by Paul Staniland, Ph.D.
from the Univ. of Chicago**

Thursday, August 7, 2025, 7pm
at the Jewish Cultural Center
1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125, Wyomissing



The world is experiencing a wave of conflicts within and between countries. In this lecture, University of Chicago Professor of Political Science Paul Staniland will provide an overview of trends in war and conflict, the geography of political violence, possibilities for conflict resolution, and areas of emerging tension.

To RSVP call the JCC at 610-921-0624
or email info@jfreeding.org



Jews and sports

By Vicki Haller Graff

While there have been famous Jewish athletes, the stereotype is that we are not a particularly athletic people. However, you don't have to be a professional athlete to play on a school team or enjoy a seat in the stadium with friends. Join us this summer to cheer on some of our favorite local teams and make it a little Jewish along the way.

On Thursday, Aug. 14, Federation is organizing a group at the Reading Fightin' Phils Celebrate Your Faith Night. Families and adults are welcome

to join the classic American summer fun!

Faith groups from around the region will be represented, and we hope to have a great Jewish community turnout.

Our Reading Fightin' Phils play the mighty Akron RubberDucks at 7 p.m. at the First Energy Stadium (900 Centre Ave., Reading). We will be invited to a pre-game discussion with some of the players, and the game will be followed by fireworks!

If you haven't attended a Reading Fightin' Phils game in the past, it's

part baseball, part social event, part on-field spectacle. It's fun for all ages, especially together. To sit with our group, purchase tickets on our website, readingjewishcommunity.org.

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.

As a bonus, we invite you, your kids, or your family together to write a letter to Tai to share how excited you are to see an Israeli soccer star so close to home! Bring us the letters by Aug. 8, and we'll deliver them before the game. Who knows, maybe he will come say hello to our group!

It's hard to believe summer is almost over, and the beginning of the school year and the High Holidays are right around the corner. Live in the summer a little longer with us and join us at a game!

PJ Library summer reflections

By Vicki Haller Graff

PJ Library, a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, delivers free Jewish books to children each month from newborns to age 12. Some stories reflect families' own experiences and affirm identity and belonging, while those that offer glimpses into different customs, traditions, and cultures spark curiosity and learning.

We have just over 50 families signed up for PJ Library in our community. I got to meet some of these families this summer at our two ice cream parties — one at Sweet Ride in West Reading and one at Jen and Jessie's Creamery in Oley.

Both events brought young families raising Jewish children together for fun and social time. I loved seeing parents meet other Jewish parents, watching kids play together, and hearing from these families directly about what they want in a Jewish community.

As a result, here's what I can offer back to them and you: I hear that you want to meet other Jewish families for fun, social, easy activities. I can help.

I'm working on getting Shabbat B'Yachad going again. This was a pre-pandemic program that I took part in as a parent, with my son. Jewish families host others for Shabbat dinner (and we may expand to lunch) to build relationships, practice the mitzvah of welcoming others, and celebrate Jewish life together.

I'm also working on some fun and intergenerational programming, like bringing Rak Dan here for Israeli dancing, bringing local authors in for our older elementary and middle school students, and of course,



At left, Eleanor enjoys ice cream from the lap of her mom, Keren. At right, Adina and Isaac play together at a summer PJ Library Ice Cream Party.



more ice cream parties.

I encourage all of our families to take advantage of the PJ Library and sign up to receive free Jewish

books at home!

And stay tuned for programming for you and your children. Grandparents are always welcome too!

R-Phils CELEBRATE YOUR FAITH

AFFORDABLE FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT, PHILLIES STARS OF TOMORROW PLAY IN READING TODAY!

Reading Fightin Phils
VS
Akron RubberDucks

Thursday, August 14
7pm game
\$18 group tickets
fireworks after the game!

reserve tickets at
ReadingJewishCommunity.org
or 610-921-0624

(610) 370-BALL **RPHILS.com**



Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks



SCAN HERE

PHILADELPHIA UNION

FEATURING ISRAELI FORWARD, TAI BARIBO!

PHILADELPHIA UNION
VS
CHICAGO FIRE

AT 7PM
AUGUST 23

Subaru Park
2501 Seaport Dr.
Chester, PA 19013, US
Meet at the Park!

tickets at ReadingJewishCommunity.org



Literatour Berks kicks off event featuring Judith Viorst

By Vicki Haller Graff

Literatour Berks will soon return for the seventh season, and we are very excited to kick off the series with acclaimed author for all ages, Judith Viorst. Join us at the JCC (1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125, Wyomissing) for this special talk on Sunday, Sept. 14 at 10 a.m. Tickets are \$25 for the public and \$18 for JCC members, and all of the proceeds support Literatour programming year-round.

A bagel brunch is included with your ticket, and her recent book release, “Making the Best of What’s Left: When We’re Too Old to Get the Chairs Reupholstered” will be available for sale and signing after her talk. More information and tickets can be found at readingjewishcommunity.org.

In a career spanning more than 50 years, Judith Viorst has captivated readers with her bestselling children’s books and collections of poetry reflecting



Judith Viorst

on each decade of life. Now in her 90s, Viorst writes about life’s “Final Fifth,” those who are 80 to 100 years old, though

this book will appeal to all readers.

She confesses, “I never ever send a text while driving, and not just because I don’t know how to text.” She discusses the afterlife (She doesn’t believe in it, but if it exists, she hopes her sister-in-law isn’t there). She complains to her dead husband (“I need you fixing our damn circuit breakers. I need you! Could you please stop being dead?”). And she explores the late-life meanings of wisdom and happiness and second chances and home. With a wit that defies age, Viorst navigates the terrain of loss. It’s a poignant dance between grief and levity that will resonate with those in their Final Fifth as well as anyone who has parents, relatives or friends in their 80s and beyond. This is Judith Viorst at her best.

Judith Viorst is the author of the beloved “Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day,” which has sold 4 million copies; the Lulu books,



including “Lulu and the Brontosaurus”; *The New York Times* bestseller “Necessary Losses”; four musicals; and poetry for children and adults. Her other recent books include “What Are You Glad About? What Are You Mad About?” and “Nearing 90.” She lives in Washington, DC.

Don’t miss this opportunity to hear from a Jewish literary star right here in Reading! And prepare to enjoy excellent Jewish authors on a variety of topics all year.

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.

“CAPTURE THE MOON AND AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE”



AUGUST 21 2:00 P.M.

at the JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd Wyomissing

Richard Bradbury, Federation’s new Development Director, will share his experience directing deaf, KODA (kids of deaf adults), and hearing children in their production of the Jewish tale, “Capture the Moon.” Richard will teach us some Hebrew sign language and some ASL.

To RSVP call 610-921-0624

info@jfsreading.org

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

RESTAURANT

770

JUDAICA SHOP

VISIT THE OHEL OF THE REBBE

No Charge

Each participant is responsible for personal expenses in NY, including food

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH

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Your Clothes Can Change Lives

Donate your gently used clothes to CommunityAid to help JFS (**partner #50100**) support those in need.



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AND DONATION CENTER
5370 Allentown Pike
Temple, PA 19560

or in our parking lot bin

Jewish Federation
of Reading/Berks
1100 Berkshire Blvd
Wyomissing, PA 19610

August 2025

Av - Elul

08.05 12:00 pm

JCC ROMEO
Tuesday, August 5, 12:00 pm
Retired Old Men Eating Out will meet at Paolo's for lunch, conversation, and comraderie. All retirees are welcome to attend.

Location: Paolo's, 2480 Lancaster Pike, Reading

08.07 7:00 pm

JCC Lecture: Armed Conflict in the Contemporary World
Thursday, August 7, 7:00 pm
University of Chicago Professor of Political Science Paul Staniland will provide an overview of trends in war and conflict, possibilities for resolution.

Location: JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing

08.11 1:30 pm

JCC Arts and Culture
Monday, August 11, 1:30 pm
Joy Behar, Susan Lucci, Sherri Shepherd and Judy Gold in Conversation about Behar's hilarious off-Broadway comedy: My First Ex-Husband. A prerecorded program.

Location: The Highlands, 2000 Cambridge Ave., Wyo.

08.14 1:30 pm

JFS Friendship Circle
Thursday, August 14, 1:00 pm
Friendship Circle Thursday Film Festival - this month, we'll watch American Pickle starring Seth Rogen.
Lunch is \$7 at 1pm. Movie starts at 1:30.

Location: JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing

08.17 3:00 pm

RCOS & Braver Angels "Depolarizing Ourselves" Workshop
Sunday, August 17, 3:00 pm
Explore your own unintentional ways of thinking and talking about those on the other side of the political spectrum. Based in mutual respect.

Location: RCOS, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing

08.19 12:00 pm

JCC Noontime Knowledge - Berks Nature
Tuesday, August 19, 12:00 pm
Join the JCC at Berks Nature, the leading agent for environmental conversation in Berks county. Tour their LEED Gold certified buliding, The Nature Place, and a trail walk.

Location: Berks Nature, 575 St. Bernadine St., Reading

08.23 10:00 am

RCOS Learner's Service
Saturday, August 23, 10:00am
Rabbi Michelson makes the Saturday morning service accessible to all as he talks through it at the Learner's service. For students and anyone who wants to learn more.

Location: RCOS, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing

08.23 7:00 pm

JCC Philadelphia Union Game
Saturday, August 23, 7:00 pm
Support Israeli forward Tai Baribo at the Philadelphia Union Game against the Chicago Fire.

Location: Subaru Stadium, 1 Stadium Drive, Chester

08.09 10:00 am

RCOS Tot Shabbat
Saturday, August 9, 10:00 am
Rabbi Michelson leads a musical shabbat program for children ages 0-7 and their caregivers. Open to all families. Stay after for the tasty oneg!
Location: RCOS, 555 Warwick Drive, Wyomissing

08.10 7:00 pm

KZ Trivia Night
Sunday, August 10, 7:00 pm
Challenge yourself and join your friends at Keshar Zion's Trivia Night. Everyone is welcome!
Location: KZ, 555 Warwick Dr., Wyomissing

08.14 7:00 pm

JCC R-Phils Celebrate Your Faith Night
Thursday, August 14, 7:00 pm
Celebrate Your Faith with your Jewish friends and communities of faith at a baseball game. The game begins at 7pm and fireworks follow!
Location: First Energy Stadium, 1900 Centre Ave., Reading

08.15 6:00 pm

RCOS Services by the Stream
Friday, August 15, 6:00 pm
Enjoy nature during this outdoor Shabbat service. Bring your own dinner to eat together after the service.
Location: Wertz's Covered Bridge Rec Area, Wyo.

08.20 12:00 pm

JCC Noontime Knowledge - Reading Public Museum
Wednesday, August 20, 12:00 pm
Take a stroll down memory lane to see classic toys from the 1900s to the 2000s at Toytopia. Dr. Ivan Bub will talk about his vintage toy collections, featured in the exhibit.
Location: Rdg.Public Museum, 500 Museum Rd., Rdg

08.21 1:00 pm

JFS Friendship Circle
Thursday, August 21, 1:00 pm
Meet Federation's new Development Director Richard Bradbury and learn about his personal interest in American Sign Language. Lunch is \$7 at 1pm, free program at 2pm.
Location: JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing

08.23 7:30 pm

RCOS Sisterhood Dessert Social & Havdalah
Saturday, August 23, 7:30 pm
Women and girls are invited to join RCOS Sisterhood for dessert and havdalah.
RSVP: silkstash@gmail.com
Location: Private home, address given at RSVP

08.25 1:00 pm

JCC Movie Monday - Art Spiegelman: Disaster is My Muse
Monday, August 25, 1:00 pm
Explore the work of cartoonist Art Spiegelman and the impact of his Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel Maus, about his parents' survival of the Holocaust. 98 min, not rated.
Location: JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing

A pillar of the community turns 100

By Sari Incledon

Jewish Family Service is pleased to present a tribute to longtime community member Shirley Boscov, who is celebrating her 100th birthday this month. Carole and I spent a lovely afternoon with Shirley in her art-filled home at the Highlands, getting better acquainted with her.



Shirley was born Aug. 18, 1925 in Brooklyn, N.Y., the only child of Russian immigrants Anna Zarin and Julius Kahn, who came to this country as young children and met in Brooklyn. Like many Eastern European Jewish immigrants, Shirley's parents worked in the needle trades. The Depression was a challenging time, but both her parents succeeded in building businesses. Her dad had a clothing manufacturing business in Manhattan. Her mom made all of Shirley's clothing and eventually opened a dress store where she did all the alterations.

Shirley was raised in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn and recalls enjoying indoor roller skating and playing piano. She took two buses to get to her lessons. She remembers receiving a call on her 10th birthday when she was at her friends house, telling her to come home right away. Waiting for her was a beautiful grand piano with carved wood legs and trim — that piano is still in Shirley's Wyomissing living room.

Shirley was always a serious student and graduated from Erasmus Hall High School at age 17. She started at Hunter College, with the dream of studying medicine, but her family discouraged that ambition. Women at that time were often



Shirley Boscov, who recently turned 100, continues to put her lifelong devotion to the arts on vivid display in her Wyomissing home.

not encouraged to pursue challenging professional careers. She transferred to Penn State and studied secondary biology education.

Shirley's face lit up as she described an especially happy time in her life — when she met and was courted by her husband

-to-be, Joe Boscov. At Penn State, Shirley had a friend from Reading also named Shirley whose sister Reba was visiting her. The sisters introduced Shirley to their brother, Joseph, an engineering student. Shirley and Joe dated every

Continued on Page 11

Food distribution going strong in summer



From left, Olivet Food Pantry volunteers Aidan Incledon and Marc Filstein, and youth volunteers at the SDA food distribution.

Many thanks to our June and July Food Pantry Volunteers who distributed food to over 600 households.

Allison Althouse
Mary Anne Avins
Cindy Balchunas
Marc Filstein
Sarah Flamholz
Sam Flamholz
Jeff Gernsheimer
Sharon Gernsheimer

Aidan Incledon
John Incledon
Pete Jacobson
Sid Lempiner
Lisa Levine
Paul Mintz
Annette Peppard
Jenn Reilly

Dan Reilly
Mike Robinson
Mike Schein
Ellen Schwartz
Jan Simon
Oleg Umanov
Phyllis Warshaw
Michael Warshaw

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SHIRLEY BOSCOV

Continued from Page 10

day until his graduation seven weeks later. When Shirley was a junior, Joe moved to Cambridge, Mass., to begin graduate studies at MIT. His studies were interrupted by World War II. Joe was recruited to Oak Ridge, Tenn. as part of the top-secret Manhattan Project. Shirley and Joe were married June 24, 1945, three days after her graduation. They were happily married for 59 years, and she remembered him as the best husband in the world.

The young Boscovs moved to Boston and Joe completed his master's degree. Shirley began painting, developing a passion for the visual arts that continues to this day. The next phase of their life took them to New York, where they first lived with Shirley's parents, then in Queens and finally in Kings Point, Long Island. Shirley was a busy mother of three and furthered her art studies learning to make sculpture and jewelry. For

two years she studied sculpture at night school in Queens with Louise Nevelson, known for her monumental wooden wall pieces and outdoor sculptures. Nevelson is considered one of the most important figures in 20th century American sculpture.

In the early 1960's the family moved to the Reading area, Joe's hometown. As an only child, Shirley loved being part of a large extended family and enjoyed meeting new people here. She continued her study of sculpture, traveling to Collegeville to study with Bernard Brenner, an award-winning sculptor who was teaching at the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1961, Joe founded Berk-Tek, which grew to be a top-tier producer of underwater and computer cables in the international market. When Shirley was in her late 30's she continued studying art at Kutztown. She worked in many media including woodworking, pottery, fused glass, sculpture and collage. The

couple built a home in Exeter Township, and she turned her barn into an art studio and a gallery for her and other artists to exhibit their work. The Boscovs enjoyed traveling the world and eventually wintering in Sanibel Island, Fla.

Shirley's family has grown to include her children, Reema, Jim and Amy; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. She has served our community by being a member of many boards including Kutztown University and Albright College, and she enjoyed working as a literacy volunteer. Shirley continues the generous philanthropic tradition that she and Joe started and generously supports the Jewish Federation as well as a host of nonprofits supporting social services, the arts and recreation and higher education.

On the occasion of Shirley's 100th birthday we wish her continued happiness with family and friends. We are fortunate that she is part of our community! Happy Birthday Shirley!



Jewelry making is another of Shirley Boscov's many artistic pursuits.

Friendship Circle activities going strong



Fun at Jewish Family Service's Friendship Circle, clockwise from top left: "Hello girl" impersonator Hallie Vaughan talking to Ingrid Soltysik on June 5; Judy Synammon and Brenda Seidel at Friendship Circle's Fourth of July celebration; Ken Pierson entertains on June 19. Lila Shapiro and Sylvia Wenger at the July Fourth celebration.

Friendship Circle meets twice a month with fun and educational programs and great fellowship. See the upcoming schedule below.



FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

Aug 14- "Thursday Film Festival"

"An American Pickle," a comedy starring Seth Rogen. Preserved in pickle brine for 100 years, an Orthodox Jewish factory worker wakes up in New York City and tracks down his great grandson (88min)

Aug 21- "Meet Federation's new Development Director"

Richard Bradbury, Federation's new Development Director, will share his experience directing deaf, KODA (kids of deaf adults), and hearing children in their production of the Jewish tale, "Capture the Moon." Richard will teach us some Hebrew sign language and some ASL.

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.



Heed the lessons Western Wall stones can teach us

By Hudi Lipsker

I stood at the Kotel this past Shavuot amid thousands; a sea of white shirts and whispered prayers.

For most of the night, the roar of voices wrapped itself around me so tightly that I could hear nothing distinct, only the hum of the Jewish nation breathing as one. Then the chazan began reciting the Aseret HaDibrot, the Ten Commandments, and his voice did something I can still barely explain.

It wasn't louder, like a sudden burst from hidden speakers. It was simply present, threading its way through the crush of people until every syllable reached my ears untouched, as though each word had been handed to me personally. In that moment I thought of the days of old, when every Jew in the Beit HaMikdash, the Holy Temple, could hear the Levites singing no matter how many thousands filled the courtyard.

Maybe nothing was amplified. Maybe Heaven just cleared a path for sound.

And my mind leapt farther back still, to Sinai, when all souls, even the yet unborn, heard the same words with perfect clarity.

For the first time, I truly felt that story, instead of merely recalling it. I was receiving the Torah again, right then, with the entire Jewish nation — those standing next to me, those fighting on the frontlines for our country, those exiled throughout history, and the souls above who had already stood at Sinai, millennia ago. My own soul stirred with a strange, sweet nostalgia, as if it were whispering, "We have done this before. Welcome back".

This year, we have been counting days, yes, the traditional 49 from Passover to Shavuot, the Omer count, but also the long, raw count since rockets split the sky and beloved souls went silent. Each night, we added not only a number to the Omer, but a silent prayer that this would be the only number to keep rising, and that no more names would be added to lists we never wanted to write.

Still, we kept counting.

Not to escape grief, but to insist on meaning. Because receiving the Torah isn't just a commitment. It's a comfort. A way of saying: we are still here. We are still choosing each other. Even when the ache is loud. Even when the answers don't come.

We count so we don't forget who we've lost, and to remember why we keep going.

Someone told me about a boy whose father never came home from his tank unit.

A boy who had dreamed of buying tefillin with his father — a father's hands guiding his son's, straps tightening like a gentle oath. The only thing the son received back from the blown up tank was a scorched pair of leather boxes, the remains of his father's tefillin.

When the time of his Bar Mitzvah came, volunteers stepped in to fill the space no one else could. Near the Kotel — The Western Wall, he stood with a thin leather pouch in his hands, his name embroidered in gold thread, a verse about angels lifting him high. People who had never met him formed a living circle, soldiers shaking dust from their boots, grandfathers leaning on canes, tourists clutching unfamiliar prayer books. They helped him wrap the new straps around his arm, each loop a quiet promise that he would never walk alone. When he murmured the blessing, tears spilled; his, the people around him, and maybe even the stones'. And in the hush that followed, it felt as if the Wall itself exhaled: Master of the World, look how Your children take care of each other.

If the stones of Israel could speak, they would not break into lofty poetry.

They would speak like the streets — gritty, warm, alive. They would recall sandals scraping toward the shuk, mothers balancing baskets, children wrestling pitas too big for their hands. They would hum with the beat of drums

in Tel Aviv, with guitars strummed from balconies at midnight, with laughter ricocheting through alleyways where no politics live, just neighbors.

They have seen more than wars and victories. They've carried the boots of soldiers, the knees of those who dropped to pray, the arms of brothers holding each other without needing to explain why.

They have stood through mourning.

They have stood through joy.

They have heard prayers, not always spoken. Sometimes in the way a hand rests against the Wall, Sometimes in a glance skyward, a breath caught in the throat, a whisper only the stones and G-d could hear.

They have witnessed not just battlefields, but the soft, daily courage of people building a life in the face of everything.

These stones have seen hostages taken, in silence, in fear, in darkness. And they have seen them return, worn, trembling, alive.

They have felt every footstep, every breath held and released, every mother who fell into them as if stone could catch what the heart could not hold. They remember the songs in the streets, the flags lifted by hands that still shook, the first anthem sung by voices that didn't believe they'd live to hear it, the fire in eyes that had every reason to give up, and didn't.

They remember coffee cups passed between strangers and hearts exchanged without a single word. They've heard Hebrew, Arabic, Russian, Aramaic and French, sometimes all within 10 quick steps. They have collected every kind of tear. Tears on the beach at dusk, when a soldier finally lets his guard down, tears at funerals — yes, too many, and the bright, unstoppable tears of Yom Ha'atzmaut-Independence Day fireworks that chase away the dark, if only for a moment.

They have held barefoot weddings at the Kotel, the leaping feet of soldiers

dancing in circles, the quiet of those who have seen everything and judged nothing. They have carried shepherds and teenagers, kings and bus drivers, made space for the grieving and the joyful. The stones never ask what you believe, only whether your footsteps are real, and whether your heart is open enough to hear the silence beneath everything.

And in Jerusalem, it is different. There, the stones speak louder. They carry the weight of high priests and prophets, of promises and prayers. Jerusalem is where I feel most at home. It touches something in me that no other place can reach. It knows me. And I know it.

And when I stood amongst thousands on Shavuot, it felt as though the holy city itself was listening with me. Maybe that's why the chazan's voice reached me the way it did, threading through the crowd not with volume, but with certainty. Not because it was loud, but because something ancient and pure was carrying it. That night, something in the air felt the same as Sinai, not in thunder, but in presence. We were hearing words we already knew in our bones, and somehow, despite everything, they still reached us.

They still belonged to us.

Torah has always moved this way, from mother to child, hand to hand, word to word, strap to trembling strap, and even now, it finds us again.

So we will keep counting days, wrapping arms, pressing palms to ancient stone.

We will keep drafting ordinary miracles out of coffee refills and wedding dances, out of sirens and the hush that follows, out of voices that always, somehow, find a way to be heard.

The stones of Israel are cheering us on carrying exile and return, silence and song, whispering that every time we receive the Torah together, we prove again that light can travel farther than darkness ever imagined.

REFORM CONGREGATION
OHEB SHOLOM

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OURSELVES

THE FIRST STEPS TOWARD
CIVIL ENGAGEMENT

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FOR PEOPLE OF FAITH, CIVIL DISCOURSE BEGINS IN RECOGNIZING THE IMAGE OF GOD IN OUR CONVERSATION PARTNER. SINCE WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD, OUR APPROACH SHOULD INVOLVE MUTUAL RESPECT. RESPECT, NOT AGREEMENT, IS AN ESSENTIAL KEY FOR A HEALTHY DISCUSSION. THIS INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP IS AN INVITATION TO EXPLORE OUR OWN UNINTENTIONAL WAYS OF THINKING AND TALKING ABOUT THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM.

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.

←

AT RCOS

SUNDAY,
AUGUST 17

FREE
PROGRAM

3:00 - 4:30
PM



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Register Now

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The class will Not only improve your reading/pronunciation skills but will also improve your understanding and appreciation of the High Holiday liturgy and service.

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Happy hour time in West Reading



Paul Schwartz, Jon Avins and Sue Wilson enjoy our summer Happy Hour at the Bar Cart in West Reading.

Federations raise concerns about security costs

Jewish Federations of North America

Security costs for the Jewish community amount to \$765 million per year, Jewish Federations of North America President and CEO Eric Fingerhut told the House Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence in a July letter calling attention to the enormous security costs paid by the American Jewish community and urging further action to protect faith communities.

"A typical Jewish organization spends 14% of its annual budget on security, with the costs of a security guard costing \$90,000 a year and a fulltime community security director costing \$160,000 a year, on average," Fingerhut wrote in the letter. "We also know that these measures are critical for Jewish life to flourish, finding that 60% of Jews say that security precautions make them feel safer. They see the addition of police, security guards, and hardening of buildings as the most effective. With antisemitic incidents and attacks continuing to grow, it is critical that Congress act to defend faith communities."

These security costs, which are unique to the Jewish community, are prohibitive, making government support crucial to ensuring that Jewish communal life can continue to flourish.

The letter comes just weeks after the United for Security Emergency Mission, which brought 400 national Jewish leaders from over 100 Jewish Federations and



representatives of nearly 50 Jewish organizations came to Washington, D.C., to sound the alarm about domestic terror threats against the Jewish community and meet with lawmakers from both parties to ensure they understand that congressional action is urgently needed.

In light of these challenges, Federations are advocating for a Six-Point Security Policy Plan to protect Jewish communities and other at-risk populations. The plan includes:

- Expanding the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to meet growing demand
- Providing dedicated federal funding for security personnel
- Enhancing FBI capabilities to detect and disrupt domestic terrorism
- Increasing support for state and local law enforcement
- Holding social media platforms accountable for spreading antisemitic hate

Prosecuting hate crimes aggressively to ensure accountability and deterrence

"It is a fundamental right for all Americans to practice their faith freely and without threats and intimidation," Fingerhut added. "We urge this Subcommittee to advance concrete, bipartisan solutions that address the growing threat environment and reflect the urgent needs of faith-based and vulnerable communities nationwide. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that federal policy keeps pace with the rising tide of hate."

August Av-Elul	
	
Shabbat Candle Lightings	Torah Portions
August 1 8:00 p.m.	August 2/8 Av Devarim (Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22)
August 8 7:52 p.m.	August 9/15 Av Va'etchanan (Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11)
August 15 7:43 p.m.	August 16/22 Av Eikev (Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25)
August 22 7:33 p.m.	August 23/29 Av Re'eh (Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17)
August 29 7:22 pm	August 30/7 Elul Shoftim (Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9)

All Around the Town

Mazel tov to **Jim Boscov** on his recent marriage to Judy Engel and best wishes to his mom, **Shirley Boscov**, on this happy occasion.

Send good news to Marknem@aol.com or call 610-921-0624.

Until next time: Shalom!

REFORM CONGREGATION
OHEB SHOLOM



Happy hour
Wednesday, September 17

MIMMO'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT
290 MORGANTOWN ROAD
6:00-8:00 PM

Parking * Cash Bar *Appetizers

Please join us for Kabbalat Shabbat on
FRIDAY August 15th, 2025 at
6:30PM



For more information please contact
KESHERZIONOFFICE@GMAIL.COM
(610) 374-1763

Approach encounters with curiosity, not judgment

By Rabbi Leor Sinai

There needs to be symmetrical cultural preparation for participants in immersive encounter programs for Israeli and American Jewish teens.

Teens across Israel and in Jewish communities throughout America participate in transformative encounters that shape their Jewish identity, their relationship with peoplehood, their relationship with Israel and their overall worldview. Yet despite the profound impact these cross-cultural meetings can have, a significant asymmetry exists in how these young people are prepared for their encounters with each other.

The current landscape

Agencies and youth movements in the field of immersive Israel experiences for teens provide mandatory training workshops for Israeli teens before they engage with American participants. These programs recognize that Israeli teens, coming from a society where Jewish identity is often taken for granted as the cultural norm, need preparation to understand and relate to American Jewish experiences of Diaspora life, minority status and voluntary Jewish engagement.

Meanwhile, these same agencies, while offering excellent leadership development and Israel education, typically provide minimal cultural preparation for American participants that is focused on understanding Israeli teen perspectives and experiences. As a result, the American teens often come to the interaction with general knowledge about the country but limited understanding of the lived experiences of their Israeli peers.

This gap is critically urgent. The state of war has fundamentally altered the reality for Israeli teenagers. Many are dealing with trauma, loss and the psychological impacts of living under constant threat. The normalcy of their teenage years has been shattered.

When these teens enter programs with American Jewish peers, they bring this weight with them — yet their American counterparts often lack the cultural preparation to recognize, understand or appropriately respond. American participants and even staff may inadvertently cause harm through well-intentioned but culturally insensitive comments or approaches to engagement.

There is also the fundamental challenge of cultural interpretation that affects every interaction between Israeli and American Jewish teens. Even simple

conversation between peers is actually a complex cross-cultural encounter where the same words, gestures and concepts can carry vastly different meanings.

Israeli teens often communicate with a directness that can be jarring to American teens. What an Israeli teen intends as honest, straightforward communication might be perceived by an American teen as rude or aggressive. Conversely, what an American teen intends as polite consideration might be interpreted by an Israeli teen as insincerity or avoidance. These misinterpretations become particularly problematic when discussing sensitive topics.

Even seemingly neutral topics carry different cultural weight. When an Israeli teen talks about military or national service, for instance, they're discussing what a universal experience that shapes their entire peer group. When an American teen discusses college choices, they're describing a freedom that many Israeli teens can barely imagine at the age of mandatory military service. This can create unintended feelings of privilege, guilt or resentment if not properly contextualized.

The case for education diplomacy

Education diplomacy cultivates trust to achieve mutual benefits in the pursuit of specific goals, using diplomatic skill sets to communicate beyond obstacles.

American Jewish staff and teens can be trained to focus on getting to know their Israeli peers as individuals before engaging in discussions about larger political or cultural issues.

Education diplomacy creates space to hear and understand different narratives while maintaining clarity about core principles. This is particularly crucial when Israeli teens may have experienced events that have shaped their worldview in ways that American teens, living in comparable safety and stability, cannot fully comprehend.

Effective diplomacy looks for ways that all parties can gain from engagement. Education diplomacy explores how meaningful connection between Israeli and American Jewish teens can benefit both communities. American teens gain a deeper understanding of resilience, community solidarity and the complexity of Israeli society. Israeli teens gain perspective on Diaspora Jewish life, different approaches to Jewish identity and the support of a global Jewish community.

Diplomats are trained in active listening, cultural sensitivity and nuanced

communication. Education diplomacy applies these skills to conversations about Israel, Jewish identity and shared experiences. This includes training American teens to recognize signs of trauma, understand appropriate ways to express empathy and navigate difficult topics with sensitivity.

Diplomacy prioritizes sustainable relationships over short-term victories. Education diplomacy focuses on building lasting understanding rather than winning immediate arguments. This approach is essential when working with teens who may be processing trauma, as it prioritizes emotional safety and genuine connection over ideological alignment.

A call for symmetrical preparation

The time has come for agencies investing in teen immersive Israel experiences to prepare American staff and teens for cross-cultural encounters. This preparation might include:

Cultural competency training: Understanding Israeli society, culture and current realities.

Trauma-informed communication: Learning to recognize signs of trauma and developing skills for supportive, non-judgmental interaction.

Education diplomacy skills: Training in active listening, cultural sensitivity, relationship-building and navigating difficult conversations.

Historical context: Understanding both the American Jewish experience and Israeli historical narrative, including how current events fit into longer patterns.

Emotional intelligence development: Building skills in empathy, self-awareness and cross-cultural communication.

Conflict resolution techniques: Learning to engage productively across difference and disagreement.

American Jewish youth movements and agencies have an opportunity to pioneer a new approach to preparing their teens for Israel experiences and encounters with Israeli peers, ensuring that American Jewish staff and teens arrive not just as tourists or advocates, but as skilled and sensitive cultural ambassadors ready to build meaningful relationships across differences.

The goal is not to eliminate disagreement or create false consensus, but to ensure that when disagreements or misunderstandings arise, they occur within a framework of mutual respect and understanding, creating the foundation for relationships that can withstand complexity and conflict.

The stakes could not be higher. By investing in symmetrical, sophisticated preparation for both sides, we can ensure that these encounters fulfill their transformative potential, creating bridges of understanding that can last a lifetime.

The future of Am Yisrael and Jewish Peoplehood depends on it.

Rabbi Leor Sinai is the principal of consulting agency Sinai Strategies, dedicated to advancing purpose-driven global causes by serving as a cultural interpreter between potential collaborators.

Jewish Family Service thanks

Joshua Price

for his generous donation of a car to Jewish Family Service Car Donation Program. Proceeds from the sale of his car fund our JFS supportive services.

Donating a vehicle, running or not, is as simple as making a phone call and it's tax deductible! For more information, contact Carole at 610-921-0624 or caroler@jfsreading.org.



Welcome a New Jewish Year
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Wishing you and yours a Happy, Healthy & Sweet New Year!

Pre Rosh Hashana
HONEY CAKE BAKE

Discover different ways to make honey cake

Tuesday, September 16 at 7:00 PM

All ingredients provided — just bring your apron and a smile!
Take home your very own honey cake to share with family and friends for a sweet New Year.

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RSVP by Sep. 10th to www.ChabadofBerks.org/RSVP

Israeli performer featured in RCOS Night of Music

Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom

On Saturday Sept. 13, at 7 p.m., this year's RCOS Night of Music features Micha Biton, a pioneer of Israeli ethnic rock who is renowned in Israel and has traveled the world solo and with his band. He is a survivor of the October 7, 2023 attacks, during which he spent 13 hours in his safe room with his wife and four children. Twenty

members of his friends and neighbors in his hometown of Moshav Netiv Ha'asara, a Gaza border community, were murdered that day.

Micha says: "I have learned to tell my story from a place of light and faith. How? Because we survived. Because our prayers and God saved us. Because we made it out of the inferno and met people

who are embracing and lifting us up. There is a lot of light and power in that despite all the pain for those who were not so lucky. There is no doubt that if your life was saved, there is light."

In October 2024, he released his album "Waiting For a Miracle," a musical reflection on his thoughts and reactions to the events of October 7 and after.

To support Micha and the Night of Music, we have several levels of giving, which will be recognized in the evening's program.

If you plan to attend, please write the amount you will contribute in the appropriate blank below. Ticket price per individual is \$18 (Chai). Minimum recommended donation is \$100.

Please donate whatever you can, whether you can attend or not. 10% of all donations will be contributed to a charity of Micha's choice, in his hometown.



Micha Biton

The link for the event is ohebsholom.org/kozloff-night-of-music.

Have you always wanted to play mah jongg, but didn't know how to begin? We can help!

Beginner's Mah Jongg Clinic

Wednesday, August 27
1pm - 2pm

at the JCC
1100 Berkshire Blvd.
Wyomissing

RSVP or questions to:
info@jfreading.org or 610-921-0624



WE NEED YOUR HELP

In Making Keshar Zion's **BINGO** Fundraiser a Success!

Please consider donating in one or more of the following ways:

Game Sponsor: We will be awarding monetary game prizes starting at \$40.00

All sponsors/donors will be recognized during the event

Gift Baskets: We are looking for raffle prize donations to add excitement and attract more participants to our event. Prize ideas are as follows:

- Gift Cards to Local Businesses
- Gift Baskets
- Lottery Baskets
- Themed Baskets (movie night, spa day, cooking, etc)
- Tools/Home Improvement Kits
- Candy or Snack Baskets
- Liquor Baskets

Any amount or donation would be greatly appreciated! Please do not hesitate to contact either Susan Wilson or Lauren Valentine for additional information

Susan - wexler718@hotmail.com 610.301.2083	Lauren - lfsoccer52@comcast.net 484.336.0129
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Focus on teen interfaith outreach

Jewish Federations of North America

In June Jewish Federations convened community leaders from across North America in the Student to Student program, which teaches Jewish teens to be interfaith ambassadors in their communities.

The program's fourth annual Coordinators' Conference in St. Louis included both veteran and new representatives from among 38 partner communities across the United States and Canada.

"There is no better antidote to rising antisemitism than meeting Jews who are proud of their heritage and identities, which is why this program is more important now than ever before," said Rabbi Andrew Terkel, CEO of Be the Narrative. "We know this program increases interfaith understanding and fights antisemitism at its roots. It's thrilling that the program has now expanded to nearly 40 communities and continues to grow."

Since its origins in 1992 as an initiative of the JCRC of St. Louis with six participants, Student to Student

has helped thousands of Jewish teens become leaders in their local communities by promoting cross-cultural interaction and understanding.

In the 2023-2024 school year alone, 497 Jewish teen participants shared their Jewish identities and heritage with 17,000 non-Jewish students, helping build bridges between communities.

With 13 new communities added in the past year, STS continues to grow, reaching Jewish teens in their local areas.

At a time of rising antisemitism, especially in K-12 schools, STS programs are vital to inspiring Jewish teen leaders to proudly own and share their Jewish identity. Not only do student coordinators become more empowered in their own Jewishness, they gain the confidence to present their cultural heritage with others.

It also has positive implications for their mental health. A Jewish Federations BeWell study found that teens who consider being Jewish important reported higher levels of overall well-being.

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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 July 18

Jewish Family Service

In memory of:

Jake Gunter - Sue and Alan Weisberg and family, Solange Israel-Mintz and Paul Mintz,

Alice Lebair - Laurie and Andy Waxler

Halyse Cole - Laurie and Andy Waxler

Yvonne Oppenheimer - Debbie Goodman and family, Paul Delfin, Vic and Dena Hammel, Gordon and Carol Perlmutter, Sue Wachs, Laurie and Andy Waxler, Andy and Corinne Wernick, Esther Bratt, Sharon Syret, Susan and Mel Blum, Helene and Henry Singer, Anzie Golden, Michael Atwood, Eunice Boscov, Vivian Stephenson

Federation Jewish Community Campaign

In honor of:

Ari Levin’s graduation - Debbie and David Goldberg

The birth of Bernie and Barbara Fromm’s new great-granddaughter - Debbie Goodman

The birth of Mike and Susan Fromm’s new granddaughter - Debbie Goodman

Cheryl and Eric Farber’s 50th wedding anniversary - Lynn and Richard Gordon

Judy and Jim Schwank’s new home - Jonathan and Jan Simon

James Boscov and wife on their marriage - Debbie Goodman

Cindy Gerber Tomlinson’s new role as CEO of the Jewish Federation of Reading - Susan and Mel Blum

Ilene and Jeff Weizer’s son’s marriage - Debbie and David Goldberg

In memory of:

Jake Gunter - Robin and Allan Sodomsky, Sam Sodomsky, Sue Wachs, Doris and Elliott Leisawitz, Eunice Boscov

Yvonne Oppenheimer - Mary Ann Oppenheimer, Judy Schwank, Susan and Michael Fromm, Neil Hoffman, Rick and Mindy Small, Karen and Dean Umemoto, Brad Brisman, Haia and Meir Mazuz, Carol and Bernie Gerber, Adam Considine (Borders Lodge & East West Hospitality), Alvin and Betsy Katz, Eunice Boscov

Fay Spitz - Marsha and Joel Adelman

Doris Levin Fund

In honor of:

Carole Robinson and the help she gave - Judy Synnamon

The birth of baby Ella to Adi Shalev-Smitheman and husband Craig - Jonathan and Jan Simon

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

Harry and Rose Sack Adult Programming Fund

In honor of:

Taryn Simon’s graduation - Albert and Nancy Sack

Susan Pollack Esposito’s induction in the Berks County Tennis Hall of Fame - Jonathan and Jan Simon

In memory of:

Yvonne Oppenheimer - Judith Botvin

Holocaust Education

In honor of:

Leah Leisawitz’s bat mitzvah - Sue Wachs, Debbie Goodman, Jonathan and Jan Simon

Shirley Kauffman’s granddaughter’s wedding - Esther Bratt

Vic Hammel’s special birthday - Anzie Golden

Jewish Family Service Friendship Circle

In honor of:

A wonderful birthday celebration and the work Carole and Sari do- Sylvia Wenger

Jewish Family Service Food Pantry

In memory of:

Howard Schreiber - Margaret Thomas

Leo Camp Lecture

In honor of:

Cantor Prosnitz being ordained as conservative Rabbi -Jonathan and Jan Simon

Jewish Family Service

In honor of:

Sari and John Incledon’s 50th wedding anniversary - Nancy Osborn and Marty Beilinson

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

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE NEEDS:

PLASTIC GROCERY BAGS FOR OUR FOOD PANTRIES!





DROP YOUR BAGS AT OUR OFFICE 1100 BERKSHIRE BLVD SUITE 125 MONDAY TO FRIDAY 9:00 AM TO 3:00PM.

 Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks