

# Shalom04|26

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

## Your Federation Supports:

Jewish Education

Food Pantry

Friendship Circle

Community Shabbat

Reading Jewish Film Series

PJ Library

Jewish Family Service

Jewish Cultural Center

Israel & Overseas

Camp Scholarships

Israel Trips

Noontime Knowledge

Young Adults Division

Emergency Support

Richard J. Yashek Lecture

Transportation

Maimonides Society

Joint Distribution Committee

Meir Panim

Annual Campaign

Jewish Agency for Israel

Yemin Orde

School Education Programs

Greater Reading Unity Coalition

Israel Advocacy

Youth Events

Great Decisions Series

Community Holiday Programs

Women's Philanthropy

Counseling Services

Leo Camp Lecture

Lakin Holocaust Library

& Resource Center

Jewish Community

Relations Council

Jewish Federations

of North America

## Honored guests coming to Reading for Yom HaZikaron, Yom HaAtzmaut

By **Adi Shalev Smitheman**  
*Program Director*

The Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks is thrilled to announce that three honored guests from Israel will be joining us in Reading in April to observe Yom HaZikaron, Israeli Memorial Day, and celebrate Yom HaAtzmaut, Israeli Independence Day.

There will be multiple opportunities for the community to come together to meet our Israeli guests throughout the week of April 20. Please watch your email for details and invitations.

Why is it important for us in Reading to observe Israeli national days and uplift Israeli culture? Israel unifies all Jews, and it's a home for all Jewish people. We may have different opinions on politics, just like at home, but we can all agree that Israel is a deeply meaningful and vital homeland for our people.

Our interest and love for Israel builds bridges between the greater community and us. We celebrate Israeli national days because they are Jewish holidays; we amplify their memories and joys in our own community.

What should you look for and add to your calendar?



- Monday, April 20, at 7 p.m. at the JCC — Yom HaZikaron Observance. Honor Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror, and stand together in remembrance. Come together for moving personal stories, prayers for Israel, and moments of reflection.

- Tuesday, April 21, at 1 p.m. at the JCC — Open lecture led by our Israeli guests, sharing their personal Israeli stories.

- Tuesday, April 21, at 4:30 p.m. at RCOS Hebrew school — All kids in grades 4-7 are welcome to meet the Israeli guests, hear their stories and ask questions.

- Wednesday, April 22, 4:30 to 6:30 at Chabad — Join us for a fun Yom HaAtzmaut celebration!

- Thursday, April 23, at 2 p.m. at the JCC — Friendship Circle is hosting our guests and hearing their story.

- Thursday, April 23, at 5:30 at the JCC — Kids ages 12-18 are welcome to come and meet our guests, hear their unique stories and experiences, ask questions and have an open conversation.

If you would like to invite our guests for breakfast or lunch, please get in touch with Adi at [AdiS@JFreading.org](mailto:AdiS@JFreading.org) or call 610-921-0624.

This is the third year that our wonderful community is hosting Israeli guests, and they can't wait to meet you all and share their unique stories with you.

Please note that registration for all events is required due to security reasons.

## Shop small Israeli businesses in Reading

By **Adi Shalev Smitheman**  
*Program Director*

ESEK, a global platform dedicated to supporting Israeli small businesses—artists, designers, farmers, and creative entrepreneurs, by connecting them directly with Jewish communities and supporters around the world, brings the “Shuk” experience to life through curated pop-up markets hosted in Jewish communities.

We are lucky to have them at our Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration on April 22!

These gatherings re-create the atmosphere of an Israeli marketplace while introducing participants to the stories of the entrepreneurs behind the products. The Shuks provide a hands-on way for communities to engage with Israeli culture, hear personal stories and directly support small businesses through their purchases.

Founded in 2024, ESEK was created with the belief that economic support can be one of the most meaningful ways to strengthen Israeli society, especially during challenging times. By creating direct pathways between creators in Israel and communities abroad, ESEK transforms everyday purchases into tangible support for real people and their livelihoods.

Beyond the in-person experience, at the heart of ESEK is its online marketplace, available at [ESEK.biz](http://ESEK.biz), where customers

### Welcome to the Shuk!

By **Adi Shalev Smitheman**  
*Program Director*

Join us on Wednesday, April 22, between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. at Chabad of Berks to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's Independence Day!

What's in the Shuk (market)?

- Enjoy Israeli food
- A special opportunity to purchase handmade items from small Israeli businesses, provided by ESEK (see accompanying article).

- Arts & Crafts
- Fun Israeli music
- Honored guests from Israel, who will share their unique stories with us!

Come, have fun, schmooze, celebrate, and most importantly, enjoy!

Registration is required. Please check out JFR weekly email, JFR website at [www.readingjewishcommunity.org/](http://www.readingjewishcommunity.org/) or email Adi at [AdiS@JFReading.org](mailto:AdiS@JFReading.org)

We are looking forward to seeing you all at the celebration!

can discover curated collections of products made across Israel. Each item carries a story, whether it is handmade jewelry, art prints, olive oil from the Gaza envelope, or products created by reservists and their families. The platform allows supporters around the world to shop with purpose while learning about the individuals and communities behind the products.

In addition to markets and online sales, ESEK develops special impact programs that deepen the connection between supporters and Israeli society. One example is the Mishloach Manot for Reservists initiative, where communities sponsor

and send curated Purim gift packages filled with products made by Israeli small businesses. These packages are delivered to IDF reservists and their units as a gesture of appreciation and solidarity, while also supporting the businesses that produced the goods, many of which are run by reservists themselves or by families affected by the war.

Through its platform, pop-up markets, and community programs, ESEK aims to create a sustainable ecosystem where cultural connection and economic support go hand in hand, ensuring that Israeli creativity, resilience and entrepreneurship continue to thrive.

# Getting down to business

**By Richard Bradbury**  
*Director of Development*

Welcome to April, *Shalom* readers! Well, wasn't March a grab bag of weather? I believe Berks checked every weather box. Now that we've officially entered spring, I hope you are looking forward



to celebrating Passover and attending the numerous, diverse events Jewish Federation has planned for you and your family! Join us for concerts, special guests from Israel, audiences with published authors and shopping, noshing and socializing at the Shuk for Yom HaAtzmaut.

Let us stand together with pride for Yom HaShoah as we remember and mourn the 6,000,000+ murdered, and for Yom Hazikaron as we honor our soldiers who have fallen and given their lives in service of Israel, and those who have faced and endured unbelievable terror.

This version of my Development article is taking a decidedly business-ish turn. I love writing about my personal connections to the Jewish community and new discoveries of Jewish learning, and I will continue to do so. But for April, dear reader, allow me to share some exciting and important news I hope you will find informative and useful!

### Our Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks is scheduled for Sunday, May 31 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. This year we are planning a very special event that will be fun for adults, families, and their children. Thanks to our wonderful partnership with Yocum Institute of Arts Education and our personal connection to their new CEO, Vicki Haller Graff, our Annual Meeting will be hosted in multiple spaces at Yocum's home at 3000 Penn Ave. in West Lawn.

In addition to the traditional trappings of the JFR Annual Meeting: installation of new board members and officers, reviewing the Annual Report and approval of minutes and financials, the community will be treated to a kosher-style brunch in the Yocum's beautiful Art Gallery. During our meeting, the children attending will participate in a class/workshop taught by Yocum's extraordinary artists/educators. If weather permits, the children will also be able to burn off some energy in the Yocum playground.

Afterwards, get ready for a very special intergenerational treat to get everyone in a celebratory mood and ready for summer! Details about the children's workshop and the special treat will come shortly. Hint: break out your dancin' shoes!!

Registration will be required for everyone attending. Once it's open, you may register online or by calling the Federation at 610-921-0624. Parking at Yocum is plentiful, and their facility is completely accessible.

### United Way Giving

I have been giving to United Way of Berks County for years, and many of you have shared that you also give to the Federation through the United Way. Please accept our gratitude. I never had access to information to properly acknowledge your generosity, until now! Thank you, BIG TIME, to my JFR Development predecessor, Laurie Waxler, for letting me know that the United Way of Berks County shares giving information with its community partners.

Please direct your attention to our *Shalom* ad recognizing and thanking donors who directed their gifts to Jewish Federation via United Way. As you look through the list, you'll notice some JFR community members; please join me in thanking them for their gifts the next time you see them. Alongside the names, notice our "unique" giving level names. Need a refresher? Please check the February *Shalom* for the 2025 Honor Roll, meanings of each Hebrew word and the giving level each represents. Many of our friends have jumped one, sometimes two, giving levels through additional contributions through United Way.

For years, Jewish Federation has been awarded a United Way grant thanks to the dedication and empathetic work of Jewish Family Service. Our two monthly food pantries and the social services and humanitarian aid wing are awarded funding for supporting the needy in our Jewish community as well as our neighbors struggling with food insecurity in Reading/Berks. JFR is one of 33 United Way of Berks partners, and the funds we receive are the results of countywide workplace giving. United Way campaigns run annually from September through mid-November, and as a partner agency, Federation willingly and gratefully observes United Way's blackout period, during which partners do not solicit donations.

### OBCCA, Charitable Giving and YOU for Tax Year 2026

Allow me to go on record to say "I am not a tax adviser; rather, think of me as your Generosity Guide (smile)." As the Development Director for a charitable organization, I felt the changes to charitable giving for 2026 were not widely known, therefore important enough to bring to your attention in this new tax year.

The rollout of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act for tax year 2026 and beyond significantly changes how charitable giving affects your federal income tax deductions. In layman's terms, this new law means that even

"everyday" donors who give to qualified public charities, like Jewish Federation, will receive some tax benefits even if they don't itemize.

**For the "nonitemizers" taking the standard deduction in 2026, you can subtract up to \$1,000 if filing single or \$2,000 if married and filing jointly from your taxable income.** For any donation of \$250 or more, you must obtain a written acknowledgement of your cash contribution (meaning cash, check, credit card, or payroll deduction). If you haven't filed your taxes for 2025, don't take your donation receipts to your tax preparer like I did. **This new law is for tax year 2026!** Start saving your charitable records and receipts. For donors who haven't given recently, 2026 is the year you may start deducting your donations!

**Households that itemize their deductions** will continue to deduct charitable contributions on their Schedule A. Starting in tax year 2026, those who itemize can only deduct charitable gifts that exceed 0.5% of adjusted gross income (AGI), meaning 0.5% of your AGI in donations will not count for deduction purposes. Example: Someone making \$100,000 would have a \$500 "floor", meaning they may only deduct contributions above \$500. Additionally, there is a new 35% deduction "cap" for high-income donors in 2026. Example: a \$10,000 donation would yield \$3,500 in federal tax savings.

To avoid the "floors" and "caps," taxpayers who itemize may want to consider opening a **Donor Advised Fund (DAF)** or, if you are 73 or older and taking **Required Minimum Deductions (RMDs)**, consider using your RMD as a donation to a qualified charity like Jewish Federation. RMDs are taxed as income unless gifted to a qualified charity.

*For any tax rule changes, individuals should absolutely consult a tax professional to understand how these specific changes relate to your personal financial situation. The 2026 tax law change for charitable giving now appeals to a wider audience of taxpayers, but please note there are major differences depending on your filing status and giving level.*

### A final thought

Thank you for your kind attention, readers. As always, my door at the Federation (as well as my phone and email) are always open! Please — reach out to me! I would enjoy getting to know you and to put a face to the names I read so often. I promise a completely casual meeting. No asks. No pressure. Just chat! We can meet for coffee, breakfast, lunch or a drink!

In the meantime, Chag Pesach Sameach. Wishing you and your loved ones a meaningful Seder.

# Development

Annual Campaign

Women's Philanthropy

Maimonides Society

Your Jewish Legacy

Chai Circle

L'Chaim Society

Book of Life

Letter of Intent

## Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks thanks the following individuals, businesses and Community members for contributing to our 2025 Annual Campaign through the United Way Berks County Campaign.

Rebecca Arrigali (*Tzedakah*)

Kirsten Block (*Tzedakah*)

Carpenter Technology Corporation (*Kehilla*)

Carpenter Technology-R118 (*Tzedakah*)

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Flamholz (*Mitzvah*)

Mr. Thomas F. Fredericks (*Ruach*)

Mr. Bret H. Krevolin (*Kehilla*)

Mr. David L. Morris (*Tzedakah*)

Yeviel Nevarez (*Kehilla*)

Ismerai Ninchetti (*Ruach*)

Mr. Hunter M. Noss (*Ruach*)

Mr. Steven E. Pottieger (*Kehilla*)

Drs. Lee and Jodi Radosh (*Tzedakah*)

Mrs. Marina Schneider (*Acharayut*)

Kyle Serman (*Kehilla*)

Mrs. Laurie M. Waxler (*Mitzvah*)

Mr. Jeff P. Wetzel (*Tzedakah*)



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COMMUNITY  
CAMPAIGN**

Please visit  
[ReadingJewishCommunity.org](http://ReadingJewishCommunity.org)

**Make your gift  
today!**



A Message from the CEO

# Rolling ahead!

**By Cindy Gerber Tomlinson**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Wishing everyone a Happy, Healthy and Joyous Passover 2026! Spring is springing, and what a beautiful time of year it is. Daffodils and crocuses are poking their heads through the softened and ever greening ground and blooming with color and hope. Spring is an inspiring time, and we have a lot of exciting things going on at the Federation!



I am so happy to announce that we are finally getting a new carpet! I know many of you have asked me about it, and it has been a very long time coming. We are sprucing up the JCC with color and happy patterns. We are turning it into a gorgeous place where people will want to congregate and socialize and enjoy great programming. A long overdue facelift as a result of good planning and preparation will make our space much more inviting and able to accommodate many more people as we continue to grow the Federation and the Berks County Jewish Community.

We had a wonderful time and learned a lot with Adi's mother and sister at the Jewish Iraqi cooking class. Lots of camaraderie and delicious food. What a treat it was! If you were not able to go, be sure to join us next time! Our Great Decisions series has been a huge success so far, and everyone involved is engaged and invigorated by the excellent leaders and intriguing discussions. Literatour continues to be well attended and offers so many interesting books and fascinating authors.

April is Israeli month, coinciding with Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel's national day commemorating the nation's Declaration of Independence on May 14, 1948. We are also celebrating Yom HaZikaron, Israel's official day of remembrance for fallen soldiers and terrorism victims, enacted into Israeli law in 1963. The entire week of April 20 we have fantastic opportunities for you to meet and interact with honored guests from Israel who will be here to share their lives with us and learn about us and our lives.

We have some very exciting new initiatives brewing at the Federation. First and foremost, I am very pleased



*Enjoying the result of an Iraqi Jewish cooking class in March, one of many fun, interesting activities from your Jewish Federation.*

to say that we are working with Jewish Federations of North America to establish a more robust and pervasive security program for the entire community. This will include the JCC as well as the RCOS and KZ building and the Chabad building. Not only will the buildings become more secure, but we will have additional security guards as well as ongoing training for the entire community so we feel prepared and empowered. We will be working on policies and procedures so that we will be aware of any threats, and those threats will be evaluated with expert, professional eyes. Stay tuned for more details as we launch this program.

A corollary to this is fighting antisemitism. Our strategy includes educational workshops for our Jewish community as well as reaching out to our non-Jewish partners in the greater Berks County community. We are working with the Greater Reading Chamber Alliance to educate the business community about antisemitism and ask for their support in standing with us. We are inviting them to our programs so they can learn more about what it means to be Jewish and to share our rich culture and heritage. We took them up on their wonderful offer to write a full-page article about the Jewish Federation of Reading for their magazine, *Commerce Quarterly*. We will even be promoting our programs on their website calendar of events.

On the fun and social side of things,

we will be starting a NextGen group, so if you or someone you know is between the ages of 22 and 45, this is for you! A NextGen group is a community-building and leadership development network tailored for young Jewish adults. These groups connect young adults through social events, networking, volunteer projects and philanthropic opportunities designed to build a strong future for the Jewish community. Programs will include Shabbat dinners, happy hours, networking and making new friends. We will be listening to the people in this group and will support them by providing programs that they want to have. Whether it's hiking, pickle ball, movie-going, wine and sushi, trips, or anything that will be fun and help grow relationships, we will do it.

We are pleased to announce that

we are starting a Historical Archive Committee. If you have pictures that you would like to share from events and moments together over the past 53 years, please send them to us! We have a fantastic start with pictures we received from Al Sack, Roger Schein and Judy Botvin. Those pictures are from the 1950s, '60's and '70's! We are putting them up on the Federation website for all to enjoy!

We are also starting a "Fun Club" or Social Committee. If you would like to help plan some events that are just plain fun — no educational aspect necessary — please let us know! This could be dinners at restaurants, dances, outdoor activities, game nights, anything that you would like to do together!

Please always remember, we are here for YOU! Join us in the fun!

## Shalom

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**General Offices:** 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125  
 Wyomissing, PA 19610  
**Phone:** 610-921-0624 **FAX:** 610-929-0886  
**Web site:** www.ReadingJewishCommunity.org

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



**CORRECTION**

Nancy Russo wrote "Syrian Jewish culture gets Jane Austen treatment in 'Sisters of Fortune' upcoming Literatour event" in the March *Shalom*. The story was published with an incorrect byline.

**It's Simcha Supplement time**

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

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

**DEADLINE IS APRIL 30.**

# Finding the right fit

By Susan Atkins Weiser

My father didn't talk about it much until later years, even though it meant a great deal to him. I asked him to record on paper his military experiences. He worked on it diligently. I could tell by the expression on his face that a series of mixed emotions surfaced as his razor sharp memory bank recalled the smallest details.

A slight young man at 115 pounds and 5 feet 5 inches, Carthell Bennett Atkins had a plan and a fierce determination. Born and raised in Franklin Co., Va., he eventually moved to High Point, N.C., to live with his sister. At 17 he joined the North Carolina National Guard. After two rejections because of his size and weight, he finally was accepted into the Army in Richmond, Va., on July 9, 1941 at the age of 18. He left for a two-and-a-half-year stint in the Panama Canal Zone.

While in Panama, a soldier friend of his from Reading wrote and received letters from his girlfriend back home. My father asked his friend, "Do you think your girlfriend would happen to know anyone I could correspond with?" As a result, my mother, Madeline Pollock and my father continued a letter-writing frenzy from 1941 until the end of the war in 1945. They met for the first time in January of 1944 in Reading while my father was on leave. They married three months later on April 5. My dad left that June of 1944 for the European Theatre.

Assigned to the 89th Infantry Division

I Co., 354th, Gen. George S. Patton's 3rd Army, he served as a scout and a sharpshooter. He crossed the Rhine River in an assault boat with oars at 2 a.m. on March 26, 1945. Eleven assault boats transporting 12 to 15 men in each were lost on this mission. The 89th ran the American flag up on the Lorelei at St. Goar.

Committed to battle at the city of Trier, they fought through the Rhineland and central Germany. The 89th and the 4th armored division liberated the concentration camp in Ohrdruf, witnessing 9,000 bodies in open pits. Discharged at the end of the war, he arrived in Reading in September of 1945 to be reunited with my mother.

My father owned C. B. Atkins Real Estate and Appraisals in Shillington. He volunteered for the VA for many years and served as the commander of the American Legion Reber Moore post in 1968-69. After his death in 2011, I inherited his military collection, which leads me to the point of this story.

In 2025, I contacted the military museum in Carlisle and state Rep. Mark Gillen, head of the Berks Military History Museum and its addition, the Berks Holocaust Museum and Education Center, located in Mohnton. Even though Carlisle expressed interest in the entire collection, I decided after discussing it with Mark that the appropriate choice should be to retain the items in Mohnton.

There were many reasons, one



The Berks Holocaust Museum features a display with items from the World War II service of Carthell Barnett Atkins, father of Susan Atkins Weiser.

being the proximity of Shillington, where we worked and resided over the years. The Holocaust addition is a state-of-the-art, three-story facility of 4,800 square feet. It has ample parking, accessibility ramps at the entrances and a convenient elevator to maneuver with ease from the Holocaust section to the original Berks military museum, which opened in 2017.

The original section was built in 1873 and contained the Cyrus Hornberger wagon works. The Holocaust addition also offers displays and an auditorium

to accommodate programming, special events, education and discussions focused on history and veterans. Virtual tours are also available.

There is a comfortable seating area and bookshelves lined with pristine additions of reading material related to the military. It's a place for the community, veterans and their families to relax and enjoy. I am told this is the only museum of this size, content and focus in Pennsylvania.

There are no admission fees, though free will offerings are accepted and appreciated. The museum's maintenance and operating hours are handled by a core of dedicated volunteers. Displays are a work in progress, and sponsorship opportunities are still available. A grand opening date in the spring will be forthcoming and include extended hours.

To my surprise, in February a display case carefully crafted by museum volunteer and retired history teacher Jim Swope is now complete in the Holocaust addition. My father's story is presented through artifacts, photos, and military attire during one of the most epic periods of history.

I found the right fit. And the box of letters in original envelopes between a soldier and his future bride? They have been preserved as well.

Please look for the upcoming news on the grand opening and visit the entire museum to view and learn everyone's story.

## Obituary

**Eugenia "Jane" Polonski**, 71, passed away on March 26. Born in Russia, Jane immigrated to the U.S. on July 4, 1971. A woman of boundless energy and intelligence, she had a great passion for learning. Jane actively participated in a wide range of activities throughout the Reading Jewish community. She will be greatly missed and remembered by all who knew her and loved her. She is survived by her sisters Marsha Polonski (Solomon), Ella and Sophia Polonski; her children Rochelle Costigan, Jillian Costigan (Brian),

Valerie Costigan (Michael), and James Costigan (Jo); and grandchildren Mira, Zarah, James, and Julian, who were the lights of her life. She also leaves behind special friends Jen and Jacob Gurwitz and their four daughters, Mary Engleson, Robert Schneier, and Tatiana and Alex, special friends from Russia. Jane's family would like to thank Rabbi Lipsker and Chana and the Reading Jewish community for providing everything for her to be laid to rest with honor and respect. Jane's family encourages everyone to honor her legacy of learning by seeking out knowledge and sharing these insights with others.

## Join us for Yom HaShoah commemoration

By Adi Shalev Smitheman  
Program Director

The community is invited to commemorate Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) on Monday, April 13, at 7 p.m. at the Highlands.

We are lucky to have local Holocaust survivors join us for the

program, which includes a candle lighting and name reading of victims of the Holocaust with ties to our community. If you have a name you would like included, please email it to Adi at [AdiS@jfreeding.org](mailto:AdiS@jfreeding.org) by Friday, April 10. This event is open to the public, no registration required.

NOONTIME KNOWLEDGE

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



## ISRAEL'S HUMANITARIAN AID TO GAZA

BY MORAN SHALEV

Come to hear firsthand about the work that was done on the Humanitarian aid that was sent from Israel to Gaza

12:00 pm

Wednesday, April 15, 2026

READING JCC  
1100 BERKSHIRE BLVD., STE. 125, WYOMISSING

Registration is required at  
<https://www.readingjewishcommunity.org/>



## YOM HASHOAH COMMEMORATION

Holocaust Remembrance Day  
Monday, April 13  
7:00 p.m. at The Highlands  
2000 Cambridge Ave. Wyomissing



Join us for a special candle lighting and evening of remembrance for victims of the Holocaust.

Open to the public. No RSVP required.

Jewish Federation  
of Reading/Berks

# Federations respond to Michigan synagogue attack

## Jewish Federations of North America

Following the horrific terrorist attack on Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, Mich., Jewish Federations of North America are urging leaders in the U.S. House and Senate to increase funding for vital federal law enforcement and homeland security programs.

“At a time of historically high antisemitic incidents and persistent threats targeting religious and ethnic communities, federal investments in law enforcement capacity, intelligence, preparedness, and prevention are urgently needed,” said Eric D. Fingerhut, President and CEO of Jewish Federations of North America. “Given the threat environment, robust federal support for law enforcement coordination, intelligence analysis, and community protection programs are essential to preventing and detecting violence before it occurs.”

Jewish Federations call on Congress to support robust programmatic funding for the following:

- Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (Byrne JAG): Provides vital flexibility that local law enforcement

needs to address the unique security challenges facing the Jewish community

- Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS): Advances community policing nationwide by providing grants, training, and technical assistance to state, local, and tribal law enforcement

- COPS Hiring Grant (CHP): Reduces crime by providing direct funding for the hiring or rehiring of full-time sworn officers

- Community Policing Development (CPD) Microgrants Program: Essential for fostering specialized expertise, cultural competency training, and the development and implementation of Hate Crime Prevention and Response pilot programs

- Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN): Provides a coordinated enforcement framework that is essential to addressing antisemitic incidents and targeted threats

- Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force Program: Enhances state and local law enforcement capacity to investigate technology-enabled crimes

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI):

- Salaries and Expenses (S&E) account: dedicated to expanding the Bureau’s capacity to investigate domestic terrorism, foreign-inspired extremist activity, and bias-motivated crimes

Department of Homeland Security Preparedness Activities:

- Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and State Homeland Security Program (SHSP): grants that enable state and local jurisdictions to develop and sustain capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorism and other high-risk threats

Jewish communities across the United States have built a proven security infrastructure to respond to the growing threat landscape they face, costing \$765 million per year. This financial burden is not sustainable, and American Jews cannot bear it alone. Congress has an obligation to protect faith communities, ensuring they can practice freely, and must act now to help prevent further tragedies.

# Author delivers fascinating talk on Jewish heritage



Ronit Treatman

By Margo Levin

JCRC Coordinator

The Jewish Federation of Reading recently welcomed a special guest Ronit Treatman — an accomplished author, speaker, and community leader whose work focuses on Jewish heritage, culture, and reconnecting communities with their Jewish roots.

Born in Israel, Treatman spent much of her childhood abroad due to her father’s career as an Israeli diplomat, living in both Ethiopia and Venezuela.

Her global upbringing helped shape her deep interest in Jewish identity and the diversity of Jewish communities around the world. After serving in the Foreign Liaison Division of the Israel Defense Forces, she continued her education in the United States, studying International Business Administration.

Following the early years of raising her family in Philadelphia, Treatman

became active in Jewish media and education.

She went on to serve as a writer, editor, and eventually president of The Philadelphia Jewish Voice. During this time, she also created the educational blog and website Hands-On Jewish Holidays, which provides creative ways to experience Jewish traditions, holidays, and culture.

Treatman has lectured at conferences and events throughout the United States, speaking on a wide range of topics — from Jewish traditions and holiday practices to the fascinating history of kosher locusts.

Much of her work centers on engaging the descendants of anusim, Jews who were forced to convert to Catholicism during the Spanish Inquisition.

We will host Ronit next year. Stay tuned.

## WORDS TO ACTION

Recognize and respond effectively to antisemitism

Teens and parents are invited to **two simultaneous workshops**, led by **ADL facilitators**, that offer practical tools and a supportive space for both youth and parents.

**Sunday, April 26, from 12:30 - 2:30 PM**  
The Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks

Ages 13-18 are welcome, pizza will be served.  
For full details and to RSVP, please visit JFR website

JEWISH FEDERATION OF READING PRESENTS:

# IT'S OK TO LAUGH

COPING THROUGH DARK HUMOR

**BENJI LOVITT**

**SUNDAY 3RD MAY 7 PM**

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# Legacy of Jewish early-childhood learning continues at Yocum Institute

By Vicki Haller Graff and Elsa Mierzejewski

Yocum Institute for Arts Education

The Yocum Institute for Arts Education has a long tradition of incorporating the arts into a regular preschool curriculum. This connection to the arts makes our program unique in the area; our very young students, ages 2 through 6, learn creative drama, dance, arts and music in addition to playing, reading, and other preschool activities.

In the 2025/2026 school year, thanks to our partnership with the Jewish Federation of Reading, now we have added Jewish holidays into our curriculum. While we aren't a Jewish preschool in the same way that the Lakin Preschool was, teaching these holidays helps the Jewish preschool students (and their families) in our community feel seen and understood. It also creates an early, positive introduction to Jewish life for the non-Jewish students and families in the school.

Five holidays are integrated through the school year, focusing on a values-based exploration of holidays, history and customs to complement the existing curriculum and student experiences.

- Rosh Hashanah
- Sukkot

- Chanukah
- Tu B'Shevat
- Passover

This winter, the Yocum Institute for Arts Education's preschool and kindergarten classes learned about the Jewish holiday, Tu B'Shevat. Each class enjoyed hearing the story "Sammy Spider's First Tu B'Shevat" by Sylvia A. Rouss. Sammy Spider has become a familiar and favorite character, and the children enjoy helping to tell the story by saying "Silly Sammy, spiders don't ..., Spiders spin webs!" A little movement and song were enjoyed too in our learning about Tu B'Shevat. Thanks to Mrs. Elyse Horowitz for sharing the song "Plant A Tree for Tu B'Shevat" by Debbie Friedman. For art time, the children drew trees to celebrate.

In the May *Shalom*, you can look forward to reading about the preschool and kindergarten's Passover exploration! If you'd like to learn more or get involved, please contact me at Yocum: [vgraff@yocuminstitute.org](mailto:vgraff@yocuminstitute.org) or 610-376-1576 x 203.

*Vicki Haller Graff is executive director and Elsa Mierzejewski preschool director at the Yocum Institute for Art Education in West Lawn.*



## Letter to the Editor: Recalling fond memories of Reading

Editor:

In 1997 I moved from Reading to my "homeland," Denver, Colo., with my late husband, Ivan. Since then, thanks to my friends and *Shalom*, I have kept in touch with the Reading community. I have the highest admiration for the hardworking staff of the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks, both in the past and today.

I enjoyed reading articles in the March *Shalom* by those staffers who described going to national conferences for Jewish leaders. Back in the 20th century (!) as editor of *Shalom*, I represented Reading at some of those events. I recently sent some of the earliest copies of the publication (May 1973, May 1974 and November 1975) to be included in the community

archives. I also sent some old photos of JCC nursery school and theatrical productions, in which my family happily participated. I expect other readers will search their photo albums and share their memories, too.

Denver has a large, diverse Jewish community where I treasure being near my family and friends. But my thoughts often turn to Reading, where I raised my daughters Stephanie, Andrea and Victoria and where Ivan and I played active roles in the community. As Adi observed in *Shalom*, a small community like Reading/Berks offers its members opportunities for participation not always found in larger cities.

I admire the vision of Cindy Gerber Tomlinson and her staff as they invite

everybody to participate in shaping the future of the community. If many step forward to share their feedback and ideas, the Federation will enjoy

a bright future. I'll be "with you" from Denver!

Judith Botvin  
Denver, Colo.

*Congratulations to*  
**Boscov's**  
*On being recognized as*  
*Olivet Boys & Girls Club's*  
**Partner for Great Futures Honoree, 2026**  
*Thank you, Jim Boscov, for all you do for our Berks County community!*

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks presents:  
**VIP kick-off event with the comedian Benji Lovitt**

**NextGen  
HAPPY  
HOUR**

**Followed by Benji Lovitt comendy show!**  
**Sunday, May 3  
5:00-6:30 PM**  
First drinks and refreshments on us  
Ages 25-45 are welcome  
RSVP at <https://www.readingjewishcommunity.org/>

**HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL PROGRAM** | **MONDAY MAY 11 6:30PM**  
*at Exeter Community Library*

**SPEAKER**  
*Jeff Gernsheimer*

In this educational Holocaust memorial program, Jeff Gernsheimer will speak about his late mother Hilde's experiences escaping Nazi Germany. Jeff's family's story touches on Kristallnacht, the Kindertransport, Sobibor Death Camp, and the SS St. Louis. The program offers an opportunity for children and their parents/guardians to learn and reflect together. Appropriate for ages 10 and up.

**REGISTER ON EXETER EVENTS CALENDAR OR AT THE CODE BELOW**

# Purim around the community



There were plenty of Purim celebrations around the community this year. Clockwise from top left, Chabad Hebrew School students display the wooden graggers they made during the school Purim celebration; costume fun at the Reform Congregation Oheb Sholom Purim Carnival; fun and hilarity at the Purim Spiel; and "Purim in Outer Space" at Chabad.



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Jewish Federation gratefully acknowledges these community members to thank them for their generosity to our 2025 Annual Campaign.

**Mrs. Judy Botvin (Ruach)**

We apologize for inadvertently omitting your name on the original list of donors.

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# Helping Harvest community kitchen

By Carole Robinson  
Jewish Family Service

Mike and I travelled to Maine to see our 12 year old grandson compete at the Maine State Championship Swim Meet. We watched in amazement as Milo, following a hard day of swimming, quickly polished off two large quesadillas and looked around the table for more food. It's been many years since I've had to prepare family meals for hungry teenage athletes and I've almost forgotten the vast quantities of food needing to be purchased, prepped, and prepared on a daily basis.



As all parents know, feeding one hungry teenager is a challenge, so imagine feeding a whole community! That's exactly what Helping Harvest does and I learned how they do it during my recent tour of the Helping Harvest Community Kitchen.

The Community Kitchen, located in the Goggleworks II building on Washington Street, is a 7,000 square foot state-of-the-art commercial kitchen. It opened in April 2025, allowing Helping Harvest to accept bulk food donations that were not previously able to be accepted for distribution. From April-Nov. 2025, the Community Kitchen packaged more than 43,000 heat-and-eat-ready meals and 14,000 frozen Thanksgiving meals for distribution to seniors and other neighbors at food pantries. They also prepared hot congregate meals to community partner organizations, serving an additional 4,000 neighbors.

Helping Harvest President Jay Worrall described the Community Kitchen as a "food rescue operation," saving food from waste and redistributing it to people facing food insecurity. It is an outlet for food that is hard to package for individual consumption and turned into congregate meals. These meals go out hot and ready to serve. Most of the 500 congregate meals prepared weekly go to New Journey Community Outreach, churches, and low-income neighborhoods.

According to Worrall, the three Community Kitchen full-time chefs — Production Chef George Adams, Chef Melanie Galarza, Director of Culinary Operations, and Assistant Production Chef Chris Kochel — are very creative. When the Community Kitchen received a large delivery of breakfast sausage patties, they ground the patties up to make sausage gravy for brisket. They also took a shipment of apple cider bread, sliced it, and made it into French toast.

While I was touring the facility, Chef George showed us one of the self-cleaning ovens. It can cook up to 200 pounds of chicken at one time, and it can be set for three different cooking temperatures at once, saving a lot of time. Chef Melanie opened a packaged congregate meal, releasing a heavenly aroma and displaying the roast chicken with sweet potato hash. The chefs season everything themselves and make their own sauces, keeping people healthier by using very little salt and no preservatives.

In addition to the cutting-edge ovens, the Community Kitchen is also equipped with a packaging machine that can package meals in 1-3 compartments. Its capacity is 100 meals a minute. These are the individually packaged heat-and-eat meals, like old-fashioned TV dinners, but with healthier, more nutritious contents.

Other equipment that I saw in the Community Kitchen included three walk-in coolers, prep tables, storage racks, and 6 hose wheels. There is a focus on cleanliness and everything is designed to be hosed down. The chefs keep the kitchen clean on a daily basis and outside cleaners give it a deep clean on a weekly basis.

One special feature of the Community Kitchen that I learned about on the tour is the

culinary arts training program. Culinary students from RACC and Wilson High School come to the kitchen to learn about food preparation and packaging from seasoned chefs. The kitchen is also staffed with volunteers. The volunteers help prep, peel vegetables, cut apart chicken, package food, and assist with clean-up. Worrall noted, "The energy is really cool."

Worrall emphasized that the work in the Community Kitchen is driven by local philanthropy. Although Helping Harvest distributed 11.1 million pounds of food in 2025, they receive very little government support. Helping Harvest and its Community Kitchen depend on donations from retail partners and charitable gifts, such as the \$15,000 check donated by the Jewish Federation in January.

While I am no longer finding creative ways to feed a house full of hungry teenagers, the Community Kitchen needs to create meals every day to feed our hungry neighbors. Their ability to provide healthy, nourishing meals depends on the generosity of donors. Together we can repair the world, one congregate meal or heat-and-eat meal at a time.



*Chef George demonstrates some of the equipment at the Helping Harvest Community Kitchen in Reading. A larger view of the facility is below.*



## HONORED GUESTS FROM ISRAEL ARE COMING TO FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE



**APRIL 23, 2:00 P.M.**  
**at the JCC, 1100 Berkshire Blvd Wyomissing**

**Meet our guests from Israel and hear their unique story and experiences, ask questions, and have an open conversation.**

To RSVP call 610-921-0624

[info@jfreading.org](mailto:info@jfreading.org)

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

Many thanks to our Food Pantry volunteers who distributed food to over 500 households in March.

- |                    |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| Mary Anne Avins    | Annette Peppard |
| Cindy Balchunas    | Jenn Reilly     |
| Paula Bub          | Mike Robinson   |
| Jeff Gernsheimer   | Susan Rundle    |
| Sharon Gernsheimer | Mike Schein     |
| Katie Huey         | Ellen Schwartz  |
| John Incledon      | Russ Shanahan   |
| Pete Jacobson      | Oleg Umanov     |
| Sid Lempiner       | Phyllis Warshaw |
|                    | Michael Warshaw |

# Pantries going strong



Mike Robinson and Oleg Umanov packing meat at the JFS SDA food pantry on Mar. 10

A BIG thank you to our hamentashen delivery team who helped spread Purim cheer!

- |                           |                 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Cindy Balchunas           | Mike Robinson   |
| Jeff and Sheila Bornstein | Robert Schneier |
| Paula Bub                 | Judy Synnamon   |
| Sue Farrara               | Sharon Syret    |



## 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 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.

*Program subsidized by The Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks*

## Learning at Friendship Circle



Chazz Aden, constituent services advisor for Rep. Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz, following a presentation to Friendship Circle on March 5. Pictured are the late Jane Polonski, Chazz Aden, Judy Synnamon, Lila Shapiro, Ingrid Soltysik and Louise Zeidman

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

# FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

### Apr 16- "Songs and Stories of the American Revolution "

Matthew Dodd brings to life the exciting days of 1776, using rousing period songs and stories that put the songs into the context of the time. Dressed in colonial garb, he sings and plays guitar, banjo and mandolin. **Program sponsored by the Jacob Krumholz Fund**

### Apr 23- "Honored guests from Israel"

Join us for a special program with our friends from Israel. Come and listen to their story, followed by Q&A.



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.

# APRIL 2026

Upcoming events offered by the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks (listed as JCC, JFS, JFR), Keshet Zion Synagogue (KZ), Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom (RCOS), and Chabad-Lubavitch of Berks (Chabad). To learn more about any event listed here, read articles throughout the Shalom or see our online calendar at [readingjewishcommunity.org/calendar](http://readingjewishcommunity.org/calendar). Contact 610.921.0624 or [info@jfreaing.org](mailto:info@jfreaing.org) with questions.

SUN	MON	TUE
05 Passover	06 Passover	07 Passover RSOC Lunch and Learn - 11:00 AM at The Highlands
12 RCOS/KZ Post B'Nei Mitzvah - 11:30 AM at RCOS ----- CTeen - 12:25 PM at Chabad	13 Erev Yom HaShoah Adult Education - 2:00 PM at KZ	14 Yom HaShoah JCC Romeo Club - 12:00 PM at Paolo's
19	20 Erev Yom HaZikaron Yom HaZikaron Observance - 7:00 PM at JCC	21 Yom HaZikaron Erev Yom Ha'atzmau Meet the Israeli guests - 1:00 PM at JCC ----- Meet the Israeli guests, kids program - 4:30 PM at RCOS
26 Words to Action - 12:30-2:30 PM at JCC ----- Garden Party - 4:30 PM at Chabad	27 Movie Monday, "The Farewell Party" - 1:00 PM at JCC	28 Literatour Berks "The Girl Bandits of the Warsaw Ghetto" - 12:00 PM at JCC

# NISSAN - IYAR, 5786

WED		THU		FRI		SAT	
01	Erev Pesach  Fast of the First Born Breakfast - ? AM at KZ ----- 1 <sup>st</sup> night Passover Seder - 6:00 PM at RCOS ----- Passover Seder - 7:30 PM at Chabad	02	Passover JCC closed  Second night Seder - 6:00 PM at KZ	03	Passover JCC closed	04	Passover
08	Passover JCC closed	09	Passover JCC closed	10		11	Tot Shabbat - 10:00 AM at RCOS ----- Mediterranean Nights and Balis Appreciation Award - 6:30 PM at RCOS
15	Noontime Knowledge: "Israel's Humanitarian Aid to Gaza" by Moran Shalev - 12:00 PM at JCC	16	JFS Friendship Circle   1:00 PM at JCC ----- Rachel's Mandolin Concert - 7:00 PM at WCR Center for the Arts	17		18	
22	Yom Ha'atzmaut  Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration - 4:30-6:30 PM at Chabad	23	JFS Friendship Circle   1:00 PM at JCC ----- Meet the Israeli guests, teens program - 5:30 PM at JCC	24		25	
29		30					

# Seder teaches us that redemption is unpredictable

**By Rabbi Brian Michelson**  
*Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom*



Every Passover, we prepare for the familiar choreography. The Haggadahs are stacked on the table. We find last year's matzah crumbs in our books. We sing the Four Questions, someone debates the correct horseradish-to-charoset ratio, half the people think the horseradish is too hot, and the other half complain that it has no flavor. At least one person insists their grandmother's brisket recipe is the only authentic one.

Passover is, in many ways, the most scripted evening in Jewish life. We know the order. In fact, we call it the seder — the order. And yet the great irony of the seder is that it tells the story of the most disruptive, surprising moment in Jewish history: our liberation from Egypt.

The Exodus was not orderly. It was messy, frightening, miraculous and utterly unexpected. One day, the Israelites were slaves to Pharaoh; the next, they were walking into the wilderness with dough that had not even finished rising. Freedom arrived before anyone felt fully prepared. Which makes me wonder if Passover invites us to ask a fifth question — one that never made it into the Haggadah: When was the last time you let yourself be surprised by freedom?

We often approach the seder like archivists of memory. Our task is to preserve the story exactly as we received it. That is beautiful and sacred work, but memory alone is not the goal of Passover. The Torah does not say, "Remember that your ancestors were slaves." It says, "In every generation, a person must see themselves as if they personally left Egypt." Egypt — Mitzrayim in Hebrew — literally means "narrow places."

This is a far more challenging expectation. It means Egypt is not only a place in our ancient history. The story asks us to look honestly at the narrow places of our own lives: the habits that trap us, the fears that limit us, the assumptions that keep us from imagining something new. It challenges us because sometimes we grow comfortable in those narrow places.

The Israelites did it. During their wanderings, they famously complained that, despite being slaves, Egypt had better food. Freedom, it turns out, can feel unsettling. It requires uncertainty, courage and a willingness to walk toward something we cannot yet see.

So perhaps this year at the seder table, alongside the Four Questions, we might quietly add another: Where might freedom still be possible?

Maybe it is in a conversation we've been avoiding.


Maybe it is in forgiving someone — or ourselves.

Maybe it is in stepping toward a calling we've postponed because the timing never seemed perfect.


The Israelites did not leave Egypt because everything was perfectly arranged. They left because the moment arrived. Passover reminds us that redemption rarely appears when we expect it or when it is convenient. It appears in the middle of the night, urging us to pack quickly and to trust the journey ahead. This might be the most unusual message of all for a holiday built around ritual order: the real miracle of Passover is not that we retell the same story every year. It's that the story still has the power to change us.

So this year, after the matzah is broken and the wine is poured, take a moment to listen carefully. Beneath the familiar words of the Haggadah, there is still a whisper of possibility. Freedom, it turns out, may be closer than we think.

**April Nissan-Iyar**



Shabbat Candle Lightings



Torah Portions

<p><b>April 3-Passover</b> 7:13 p.m.</p> <p><b>April 10</b> 7:20 p.m.</p> <p><b>April 17</b> 7:27 p.m.</p> <p><b>April 24</b> 7:34 p.m.</p>	<p><b>April 4/17 Nissan Pesach</b> (Exodus 12:21-51)</p> <p><b>April 11/24 Nissan Shemini</b> (Leviticus 9:1-11:47)</p> <p><b>April 18/1 Iyar Tazria-Metzora</b> (Leviticus 12:1-15:33)</p> <p><b>April 25/8 Iyar Acharei-Kedoshim</b> (Leviticus 16:1-20:27)</p>
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## Happy Passover

The Jewish Federation of Reading wishes you a meaningful Passover.

We will be closed Thursday- Friday, April 2-3, as well as Wednesday- Thursday, April 8-9, in observance of Passover

Passover begins on Wednesday April 1, at sundown, and ends at sundown on Thursday, April 9.



CHABAD OF BERKS INVITES YOU TO

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# Our community puts Torah in action after tragedy

**By Rabbi Yosef Lipsker**  
*Chabad Center of Berks County*

*Ein lecho ben chorin elo mi she'osek baTorah* — There is no truly free person except one who lives with Torah.



At first glance, this feels almost contradictory.

Passover is the story of liberation, of a broken people walking out of Egypt, shaking off chains, finally breathing as free human beings. After generations of crushing slavery, we were no longer owned, no longer controlled.

And then, almost immediately, we accepted the Torah.

Obligations. Laws. Discipline. Is that freedom?

Yes. It is the only real freedom.

Because a life without direction is not freedom, it is drift. A life without boundaries is not liberation, it is chaos.

A person who answers only to impulse is not free, he is a slave to something far less noble.

The Torah does not take away our freedom. It gives it shape, purpose, and meaning. It lifts us above instinct and randomness and guides us to live deliberately, responsibly, and with dignity.

And if you want to see what that looks like, don't look in a book. Look at our community.

Just recently, a woman in our community, Jane, was tragically struck by a car and sadly succumbed to her injuries. In that moment, no one asked, "Is this my responsibility?" No one paused to calculate cost, time, or inconvenience.

People moved. Immediately. Instinctively. Powerfully.

Bean Funeral Home stepped in and took responsibility in a way that went far beyond what anyone could expect, without hesitation, without concern for compensation.

The Chevra Kadisha, the Ritual Committee, showed up with quiet strength and unwavering presence. Thank you to Lisa Levine, Laurie Waxler, Linda Bloom and Jodi Musso, whose service on the Ritual Committee was marked by dignity, care, and dedication.

Individuals, often unnoticed, took care of every detail, including the sacred needs connected to the cemetery, with kindness and devotion.

Special thanks go to Jen and Jacob Gurwitz, who welcomed Jane as a grandmother to their children and stood by her with warmth and care; and Esther and Russ Shanahan, who offered to do everything in their power to help with whatever was needed;

This wasn't coordination. It wasn't policy. It wasn't even fully rational.

It was something deeper.

It was Torah in action.

It was the result of generations of living with a system that teaches us that

another person's pain is our responsibility. That dignity is not optional. That care is not a favor — it is an obligation of the soul.

This is the "restriction" people question.

This is the "burden" of Torah.

And this is what creates a community that refuses to stand still when someone is in need.

This is what binds us together in a way that logic alone never could.

When we left Egypt, we did not simply escape slavery, we redefined freedom. We chose a life where we are not enslaved to ourselves, but committed to something higher. A life where responsibility is not limiting, it is elevating.

A life where, when crisis strikes, we don't look away.

We show up.

That is freedom.

That is Torah.

That is Passover.

**By Rabbi Ted Prosnitz**  
*Kesher Zion Synagogue*

You already are familiar with the frequency of 4 in Passover: the 4 sons; the 4 questions/di fir kashes. There are also 4 Jewish New Years. This Hebrew month, Nisan, is the first month of the year.



Nisan comes in the springtime. Its original name in the Bible was Aviv, literally, spring. It is a time of the earth awakening from its winter sleep, and a time of spiritual reawakening.

Our month of April begins with Passover, the Festival of Freedom. It is often celebrated at home, sometimes with

multiple generations present. But why must we go through the whole Haggadah? Surely we have heard and know the story of the Exodus! It is because at the seder we say, "b'chol dor vador.../in every generation one must look upon himself as if he personally had gone out from Egypt."

The lessons learned from that experience are embedded atzmo/in our bones, and inscribed on our hearts. We have been taught how, wherever we live, to treat the stranger. "Do not oppress or wrong a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Ex. 22:20).

Yet, we were not destined to wander in the wilderness forever. The Haggadah tells why we were redeemed: "...latet lanu et ha'aretz/God brought us out from there to bring us in and to give us the land that was promised to our forefathers (Deut. 6:23). We

were led to the Promised Land, where the Children of Israel lived, where there was a United Monarchy under Kings David and Solomon, where we had a land of our own.

We will observe Yom HaShoah/ Holocaust Remembrance Day on Monday night, April 13 and Tuesday, April 14. The lives lost in that conflagration cannot be counted or forgotten. At our Passover seders, participants may have included those who came before us and those who will live on past us. But Yom HaShoah reminds us that there are families that no longer have anyone to recall prior generations. We can bring them to mind by lighting a Yellow Candle. When we say, "Never Again," we must stand up to hate in all its forms.

God's hand in history is evident not only in ancient times but in our own day. Also in April we will celebrate our nation's renewal on Yom HaAtzmaut/Israel Independence Day. David Ben-Gurion, who became Israel's first prime minister, said, "In Israel,

to be a realist you must believe in miracles." When the people were endangered by idol worship, the Hebrew prophets warned of consequences for failing to heed Hashem. As messengers of the Divine, they urged king and commoner to follow the path of righteousness. The words of the Nevi'im reach us still, even as the role of the prophets has transitioned to the sages and become democratized through widespread learning. What was gained can be lost if we fail to treat others as we would be treated, to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God (Hillel, Shabbat 31a; Micah 6:8).

April ends in the Hebrew month of Iyyar. Even before April's showers were associated with May's flowers (first in 1557), Iyyar was associated with flowers making trees brilliant, as its biblical name of Ziv implies. Let it be a time of spiritual and ethical growth as we count up to the Festival of Weeks and the commemoration of the Revelation at Mt. Sinai. Come to the Tikkun Leil Shavuot!

## Happy New Year!



### RACHEL'S MANDOLIN

Honoring Rachela Zelmanowicz-Olewski, a young Polish Jewish mandolinist who survived Auschwitz by playing in the women's orchestra. Rachel's Mandolin is a tribute to her resilience and to the sustaining power of music. Liberated from Bergen-Belsen, Rachela later built her life in Israel. The concert also illuminates the largely untold story of the mandolin during the Holocaust, a story of survival, strength, and the enduring spirit of music.

Adam Levin (USA) and Jacob Reuven (Israel) form Duo Mantar, a rare and dynamic chamber pairing devoted to Israeli and Jewish music and to expanding the mandolin-guitar repertoire. Their Naxos release Music from the Promised Land reached No. 1 on the Billboard Traditional Classical Albums Chart.

Thursday, April 16, at 7:00 PM  
WCR Center for the Arts, 140 N. 5th St. Reading, PA 19601  
\$25 - JCC members | \$36 - non-members

Please reserve your spot at <https://www.readingjewishcommunity.org/> or check the JFR website/email



**Congregation Shaarai Shomayim Presents:**  
**Bearing Witness, Building Hope**

# ISRAEL

Led by Rabbi Jack Paskoff

August 2-10, 2026

*Join Rabbi Jack Paskoff and fellow members of Congregation Shaarai Shomayim engaging in Israel not as observers, but as participants—through presence, service and deep listening. Traveling from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, we will encounter communities living with the realities of conflict and resilience, volunteering alongside local partners and learning directly from grassroots leaders working toward dignity, security and coexistence. Through hands-on service, courageous conversations and shared Jewish practice, this Journey creates space to bear witness, wrestle with complexity and affirm our responsibility to one another.*

**ON THIS JOURNEY, WE WILL:**

- Engage with Israel's stories of resilience through shared moments, in-depth discussion and humanitarian outreach from the Gaza Envelope and beyond.
- Explore Jerusalem's spiritual and civic heart through panoramic views, Shabbat reflection and meaningful community encounters.
- Engage diverse Israeli and Palestinian voices through meaningful dialogue with grassroots leaders and peacebuilders.

...and SO much more!

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# Powerful film depicts first hours of October 7th

By Amanda J. Hornberger

Amanda was serving as COO of Jewish Federation of Reading on October 7, 2023 and Adi asked her to share her reflections on the local screening of "12 Hours in October."

The weather on March 11 was one of the nicest days of 2026, thus far. Temperatures approaching 80 degrees. Sunshine. The last place you wanted to be was inside a movie theatre.

Except for many of us in the Reading community, it was the only place we could be. That night a screening of "12 Hours in October" was held at the Goggleworks Film Theatre followed by a Q&A with producer Perry Hiiman. The film is a dramatic depiction of the first 12 hours of the Hamas terror attacks on Saturday, Oct. 7, 2023.

I remember that day well. I woke up to a *New York Times* alert that Israel was under attack, and I immediately reached out to Ziv Laskin, our Shlichah at the time, as well as Adi Shalev, who was living back in Israel. The rest of that day included updates from JFNA, reaching out to the rest of the Federation board and staff and trying to figure out what was happening in Israel. We had no idea then the wide-reaching impact of that day's events and what it meant for Israel, the world and our local community.

But now, 2.5 years later, we do know that nearly 1,200 Jews were murdered on October 7th, the largest loss of Jewish lives since the Holocaust. We know that 251 hostages were taken by Hamas into Gaza, with the last one not being released for 843 days. And sadly, our community knows and has experienced the rise in antisemitism that the global Jewish community has seen since Oct. 7, 2023.

Given all we know, why would we want to watch a film about that day's events? I cannot answer for everyone in the audience that night but for me personally, I had to see it. I had to bear witness to the true stories of the events of that day. I had to remind myself what happened and why the stories of that day are so important to remember and share.

"12 Hours in October" is a dramatization of the events of October 7th based on interviews, phone calls and other documentation from that day. The film starts and ends with actual footage from that day, but the rest of the film is a dramatization based on actual events. As Perry stated before the screening began, it is a difficult watch. It was difficult to

watch as a female, witnessing the sexual violence directed toward women that day. It was difficult and heartbreaking to watch as a mother, to see the impossible choices made by mothers that day. It was difficult to watch as a human, to view the violence and hatred one group of people had for other humans. But it was necessary.

As discussed in the post-screening Q&A with Perry, led by Luba Karchevsky, the goal of the film is not commercial success. It is to bear witness to the reality of that day and to ensure the truth is not forgotten but shared. In an era of "fake news", propaganda and misleading social media posts, "12 Hours in October" stands as a testament to the realities faced by individuals in the kibbutz and at the Nova festival that day. Unfortunately, as with many films you leave with more questions than answers. How did Hamas manage to break the barriers? Who helped Hamas plan the attacks with such precision? How were so many hostages able to be taken back into Gaza? Where was the IDF for 12 hours that day?

You may not think that a dramatic depiction of October 7th is needed. But I would challenge that assumption and say it is. While documentaries are well and good, many people do not prefer that genre. Dramatizations, while different than documentaries, can be truth and fact based. "12 Hours in October" is similar in that vein to "Schindler's List" or "Hotel Rwanda," difficult to watch dramatizations of the Holocaust and genocide. They serve a purpose to remind us of the difficulties of that time, the agonizing decisions made by individuals and the truth that often, there was no one coming to save you. Just as it is important to continue to tell the stories of the Holocaust and Rwandan genocide and other atrocities, it is vital that the truth and stories of Oct. 7, 2023, continue to be told.

Perry was asked what his hope for the film would be and he said to share it. The film is available on streaming platforms. Watch it. Share it with friends. Share it with coworkers. Share it with somebody who maybe doesn't believe the reality of that day. Let it serve as a conversation starter because we cannot forget the realities of that day. We should never forget the lives of those lost that day for simply being who they were. Jews living in the land of Israel. May their memories continue to be a blessing.



A powerful evening at a screening of "12 Hours in October" at the GoggleWorks Center for the Arts followed by a Q&A with producer Perry Hillman.

SAVE THE DATE 


# Bus Tour

TO WASHINGTON, DC  
CAPITAL JEWISH MUSEUM, LUNCH, AND MORE



JCC members \$100  
Non-members \$118

THURSDAY, MAY 28  
MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW

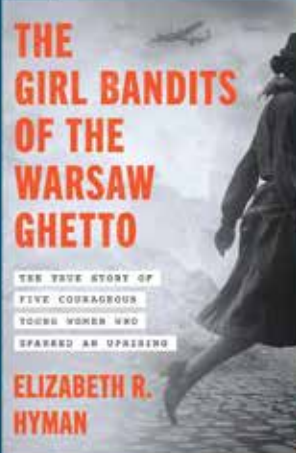


## LITERATOUR BERKS

CELEBRATING AUTHORS AND BOOKS

TUESDAY, APRIL 28TH  
12:00 PM AT THE JEWISH FEDERATION

# ELIZABETH HYMAN



**THE GIRL BANDITS OF THE WARSAW GHETTO**

THE TRUE STORY OF FIVE COURAGEOUS YOUNG WOMEN WHO SPARKED AN UPRISING


ELIZABETH R. HYMAN






AUTHOR OF:  
**THE GIRL BANDITS OF THE WARSAW GHETTO**

The history of five young, courageous Polish Jewish women—known as "the girls" by the leadership of the resistance and "bandits" by their Nazi oppressors—who were central to the Jewish resistance as fighters, commanders, couriers, and smugglers.

Join us for an afternoon with Elizabeth Hyman, author of *The Girl Bandits of the Warsaw Ghetto: The True Story of Five Courageous Young Women Who Sparked an Uprising!* Elizabeth will be leading a discussion of her novel as well as signing & selling copies during the event.

NOONTIME KNOWLEDGE PROGRAM 

VISIT THE FEDERATION WEBSITE

JEWISH FEDERATION OF READING/BERKS • 1100 BERKSHIRE BLVD., SUITE 125 • WYOMISSING, PA 19610  
Call 610-921-0624 to RSVP or visit [www.readingjewishcommunity.org](http://www.readingjewishcommunity.org) for information!

# As One

We inspire Jewish Connection



With your partnership, we cultivate these moments of connection and belonging that ensures that Jewish life flourishes for generations. It strengthens security, advocates for our people's safety and empowers our communities to protect themselves.



# Remembering Gordon Perlmutter

*Community members share their memories of our former board Chair, Gordon Perlmutter, who contributed so much to the Jewish Federation.*

## Bill Franklin

Gordon was one of those rare individuals who seamlessly embodied great intelligence with wonderful optimism and humor. I first met Gordon when I interviewed with the Jewish Federation of Reading Search Committee. Along with the other committee members, his astute questions to me and answers to my questions convinced me that the JFR was a place where I would enjoy working with its leadership for the community. The committee asked me questions for more than an hour, but the only one I remember was the last one, which was asked by Gordon. He asked if I knew the famous person who also got a graduate degree from MIT. Fortunately, after we all stopped laughing, I got the answer right — Benjamin Netanyahu. It was a great question because he and the committee learned of my knowledge of and connection to Israel and I learned the same about him.

Gordon served our community in so many ways. He was an active member of Keshar Zion serving on its board, attending services and participating in its events. Gordon was instrumental in the formation of the Foundation of the JFR and served as its first chairman. And, of course, he was a vital member of the JFR serving on its board and its Finance Committee. His thinking process was to define and understand the problem, gather data, consult with others, decide the course of action and work to see that it was successfully implemented. With these skills he guided me, defining the Federation's purpose and ensuring that through the annual budget we achieved those goals.

Gordon was and Carol is very active in the World Affairs Council of Greater Reading. Together they understood that education gives people the facts about issues, allowing them to discuss those issues knowledgeably, understand each other, which would then enable them to create good community relationships. They were most helpful in establishing a partnership between the World Council and JFR to bring in speakers to educate the community on the Middle East. Together we worked to bring in renowned speakers such as Dennis Ross, who served under three presidents in Middle East affairs and Joseph Braude, an author and Middle East specialist.

I had many meetings with Gordon even when he no longer served on the JFR board. I would call him for background information and advice on issues I was dealing with. He would drop in to discuss issues on Israel and JFR's financial support for Israelis and American Jews. He was informed and



informative, curious and wise. And we worked to reach an agreement that we were both happy with. In recent years, Andi and I enjoyed many dinners with Gordon and Carol bringing each other up to date on family, community, the world and laugh a lot!

Gordon was a great resource and made many important contributions to our community. He was one of the finest people I have had the privilege to know and work with.

Thinking of Gordon, Andi remembered Hannah Szenes' poem: "There are Stars"

There are stars whose light reaches the earth even after they themselves are no more. And there are people whose memory lights the world after they have passed from it. These lights — which shine in the darkest night — illumine for us the path.

He will be missed. May his memory be a blessing to us all.

## Tammy Mitgang

Gordon Perlmutter was one of the kindest and most "human" beings I have been blessed to have in my life. Thoughtful and intellectually curious, he was a consummate learner and championed the World Affairs Council of Greater Reading. Gordon was right, left and all gray matter brilliant. Never boastful, he was a hands-on volunteer leader who gave of his time and talents, generously and effortlessly.

A gifted and esteemed radiologist, Gordon quietly advocated for those in need of health care and championed programs that helped the disadvantaged and underserved. When I felt the need for a second opinion on a concerning imaging study, Gordon was my first call. I trusted his professional advice but also counted on his wise counsel throughout my professional career in nonprofit management. He was both a mentor and a friend.

Gordon could do it all but more importantly, he gave his all to his family, friends and the community he loved. His contributions have and will continue to

## Obituary

Gordon S. Perlmutter, 86, of Wyomissing, died Feb. 27. During his distinguished medical career, Gordon practiced at West Reading Radiology Associates and Reading Hospital. He was named a Fellow of the American College of Radiology and served as president of the Pennsylvania Radiologic Society.

A lifelong learner with many interests, Gordon was a member of Keshar Zion Synagogue and a dedicated supporter of

the Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks. He also participated actively in the World Affairs Council of Greater Reading.

Gordon is survived by his wife, Carol; his children and their spouses, Michael and Cheryl Perlmutter of Chesterfield, Mo., and Andrew Perlmutter and Marianna Lvovsky of Washington, DC; his siblings Grace Harris of Lutz, Fla., Dr. Lawrence and Wendy Perlmutter of Slingerlands, N.Y., and Rabbi Saul Perlmutter and Shoshana Zonderman of Northampton, Mass.

be important and meaningful to those whose lives he touched. May his memory be a blessing.

## Pete Jacobson

I always enjoyed his company, especially at Paolo's. It was very sociable and enjoyable. I will certainly miss his terrific personality.

## Rabbi Brian Michelson

I have known Gordon Perlmutter for almost 30 years. In that time, I knew him as a dedicated and proud member of the Reading/Berks Jewish community. He served the community with both his time and treasure, and he was happy to see all parts of our community thrive. He and Carol attended and supported programs at the Federation and the synagogues. He usually did so with a broad smile and welcoming demeanor.

## Arthur Fischman

Very fond memories shared with Gordon and Carol at the Great Decisions Program.

Also the multiple emails with Gordon, I detailing information on early 3D printing, Gordon discussing current medical happenings.

## George Viener

The Jewish community of Reading benefitted from the strong leadership Gordon provided for many years.

## Carole Robinson and Sari Incledon

We are grateful for Gordon's commitment to the well-being of the Reading Jewish Community. As Federation Board President and as a member of many committees, Gordon was instrumental in ensuring the Federation's continuity and faithfully participated in a wide range of Federation programs. Jewish Family Service remembers Gordon as a longtime food pantry volunteer. He was always willing to pitch in whenever asked. We will miss him and his smile.

## Rabbi Yosef Lipsker

I was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of my dear friend Gordon Perlmutter.

Working together with Gordon through the Federation was always a true pleasure. Beyond the responsibilities and meetings, what I will remember most was the warmth of our personal connection. Whenever we saw each other, we always found a moment to exchange a few warm words in Yiddish. Those little conversations meant a great deal to me. Gordon always spoke with pride about his family, and I remember how he would tell me about his brother who was a rabbi. We shared many smiles and enjoyable moments through those simple, heartfelt exchanges.

One memory that stands out especially was shortly after my family arrived here in 1997. Gordon and Carol joined us for a very special occasion the upsherenish, the third birthday haircut celebration, of my son. It meant a great deal to us that they came to share that moment with our young family. What made the day even more memorable was that it was also Carol's birthday, Nov. 2. Their presence brought warmth and joy to what was already a very meaningful day for us.

Gordon had a gentle spirit and a

warm heart. It was always a pleasure to see him, to speak with him and to share a laugh together. I will always cherish those memories.

May his memory be a blessing, and may Carol and the entire family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.

## Ziv Laskin

There are people you meet in life who stay with you in your heart, people who make you smile the moment a memory of them comes to mind and who have a real impact on your life. That is what Gordon was for me.

Conversations with Gordon were always fascinating. He knew so much, yet he was always humble and patient. You could see in his eyes the warmth of his heart, a truly good and genuine person. I remember that after October 7, Gordon would always ask about my family and how we were doing. There was always real care and concern in the way he asked.

I remember the activities I would lead at the Federation, or sometimes in the synagogues. I would always look forward to seeing Gordon there and to the smile on his face when our eyes met. I simply enjoyed being around him — talking, laughing and sharing those moments together.

I miss you, Gordon. I wish we could sit together again over a cup of coffee or at a restaurant overlooking the lake. I want you to know that you are always in my thoughts, and that thinking of you still makes me smile.

## Amanda Hornberger

I first met Dr. Perlmutter as one half of the sweet couple I would find at nearly every Federation event I planned. No matter the topic, Gordon and Carol would be in attendance, show support and greet me with a kind smile. As the years passed and I got to know Dr. Perlmutter better, I was struck by his kindness, willingness to teach me about Jewish traditions and customs as well as his knowledge about the history of the Jewish community in Reading. Dr. Perlmutter was well read, well traveled and always had an interesting story to tell. I loved that I could discuss not only current events, but historical topics with him and I always came away learning something or being challenged to think about a topic in a new way.

I cherish stories about how he and Carol met and fell in love, his time in Israel, and the many ways he supported and volunteered at Federation and the JCC over the years. Dr. Perlmutter always had a special spark, a twinkle in his eye and a kindness that could not be matched. During my last years at Federation he was a support and advocate in my role as interim CEO and COO and his presence and wisdom on the board of Federation and the Foundation were critical to me in my roles. Even after leaving Federation, Gordon kept in touch, always happy to see me, share a laugh and care about me and my family. I was deeply saddened to learn of his passing. The JCC won't be the same without him and he will be greatly missed. May his memory be a blessing.

## Your Clothes Can Change Lives

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



**CommunityAid**  
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or in our parking lot bin

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

# A busy month for Federation activities



Rabbi Brian Michelson, Adi Shalev-Smitheman and Cantor Stuart Binder led a Pajama Havdalah program.



Thank you to Niv Sadeh, Shaliach in Philadelphia and RootOne educator, for coming to Reading to talk to some of our teens about how they can travel to Israel and Europe with the help of RootOne. For more information please email [Nsadeh@phillyjcc.org](mailto:Nsadeh@phillyjcc.org)



History of the Conflict with Yuval Moha, Shaliach of Jewish Federation of Delaware.

Matthew Dodd  
Presents

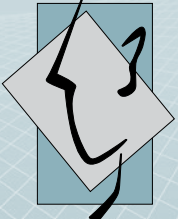
*Songs and Stories  
of the  
American Revolution*



**Thursday, April 16, 2pm  
at the JCC  
1100 Berkshire Blvd Suite 125**

*Sponsored by the Jacob Krumholz Fund*

**Pediatric and Adult Patients  
Treating Ear, Nose, Throat Problems  
Thyroid Nodules, Neck Masses & Sinusitis**



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**HEAD  
&  
NECK**  
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Jeffrey S. Driben, M.D., FACS, ECNU  
Scott J. Cronin, M.D., FACS  
Adam P. Vasconcellos, M.D., FACS

Nurse Practitioner:


Bettina L. Heinsohn, CRNP

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Providing diagnostic and rehabilitative services for all types of hearing loss, for any age group.  
Hearing and Balance Disorders  
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In House Hearing Aid Repairs



**April 16<sup>th</sup>  
Minyan**  
All are welcome!  
7:00PM - 7:20PM



**DAVEN WITH A MINYAN!**

---

**April 17  
Kabbalat Shabbat**  
6:30PM



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# 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.



JOIN US AT CHABAD OF BERKS FOR A



**LAG B'OMER BONFIRE**  
**AND SMORES BAR**  
**TUESDAY, MAY 5<sup>TH</sup> 5:30 PM**



## ISRAELI GUESTS PROGRAMS APRIL 2026

<b>Yom Hazikaron Observance</b>	Monday April 20, 7:00 pm, JCC	Stand together in memory of Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror	Open to everyone
<b>Open lecture</b>	Tuesday April 21, 1:00 pm, JCC	Hear the stories of our Israeli guests, ask questions and have an open conversation	Open to everyone
<b>Hebrew school</b>	Tuesday April 21, 4:30 - 5:30 pm	meet the Israeli guests, hear their stories, and ask questions. Hosted at RCOS	All kids in grades 4 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration</b>	Wednesday April 22, 4:30 - 6:30 pm	Join us for the Israeli Shuk (market)! Hosted at Chabad	Open to everyone
<b>Friendship Circle</b>	Thursday April 23, 2:00 pm, JCC	Friendship Circle is hosting our guests and hearing their stories.	Open to everyone
<b>Teens program</b>	Thursday April 23, 5:30 pm, JCC	Meet our guests, hear their experiences, ask questions, and have a conversation.	Ages 12-18

Please watch your email for details and invitations.  
If you would like to invite our guests for breakfast or lunch, please get in touch with Adi at [AdiS@JFreading.org](mailto:AdiS@JFreading.org) or call 610-921-0624.  
Please note that registration for all events is required due to security reasons.





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1PM

For more information email us at [keshetzionoffice@gmail.com](mailto:keshetzionoffice@gmail.com) or call (610) 374-1763

# Fun, fellowship around the community



Kesher Zion Rabbi Ted Prosnitz visited Berks Encore – Mifflin and shared. Special thanks to KZ Social Action Committee member Lisa Levine for providing hamantaschen for the audience to enjoy after the presentation.



Berks County teens joined more than 4,000 peers from around the world for the International Cteen Shabbaton in New York, leaving with a renewed sense of Jewish pride.



Chabad organized a beautiful day in Lakewood, N.J. for a group of ladies doing Passover shopping and getting a glimpse into some volunteer organizations.



Kesher Zion Synagogue President Susan Wilson was honored to attend the Iftar dinner at the Islamic Society of Berks County, a meaningful connection highlighting the spirit of community.

## PASSOVER AT KESHER ZION

Wednesday, April 1st  
Fast of the First Born  
Siyyum and Breakfast  
9:00AM

Thursday, April 2nd  
Passover Service  
9:30AM

Saturday, April 4th  
Shabbat Service  
9:30AM

Thursday, April 2nd  
Second Seder at KZ  
6:00PM

Wednesday, April 8  
Passover Service  
9:30AM

Friday, April 3rd  
Passover Service  
9:30AM

Thursday, April 9  
Passover Service  
and Yizkor  
9:30AM

For more information email us at [keshertzionoffice@gmail.com](mailto:keshertzionoffice@gmail.com)  
or call (610) 374-1763

JOIN CHABAD OF BERKS COUNTY

# CELEBRATE SHAVUOT

HEAR THE TEN COMMANDMENTS & ENJOY A DAIRY BUFFET

**FRIDAY  
MAY 22<sup>ND</sup>  
5:00 PM**

FEATURING  
SHAVUOT ACTIVITIES,  
ICE CREAM PARTY,  
AND A CHEESECAKE BAR!

**FREE  
ADMISSION**

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HUMANKIND

# YOUR JUDAISM HOLDS A MESSAGE THE WORLD WANTS TO HEAR. IT'S TIME TO UNLOCK IT.

Four Lessons



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**The Message  
of Abraham**



03  
**Educating  
Children**



02  
**Is Morality  
Obvious?**



04  
**It Will Get  
Better**

Join us for a four-session course  
with Rabbi Yosef Lipsker  
Beginning Sunday, May 3, 2026 at 10:00AM



**Federation Honorarium-Memorial Card Information**

Please mail your payment with complete information to the Jewish Federation, 1100 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 125, Wyomissing 19610, or bring to the Jewish Cultural Center at the same address. 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 March 13**

**Jewish Federation**

In memory of:

- Jane Polonski** - Sheila and Jeff Bornstein
- Gordon Perlmutter** - Peter Jacobson, Ryan Spengler, Marsha and Joel Adelman, Jesse Pleet, Amanda Hornberger and family, Sara and Jonatha Schack, Aaron and Caleb Schack, Sharon and Ron Berman, David Sacks, Eunice Boscov, Arthur Fischman, Catherine and Joe Frank, Margaret and David Pendergast, Marc and Marcia Filstein, Rick and Mindy Small, Carrie and Stephen Latman, Josh and Robyn Latman, Vicky and Gary Lazaroff, Jilianne Nelson, Karen and Martin Jacobson, Sheila and Jeff Bornstein, Debbie Goodman, Carol and Bernie Gerber, Barbara Moskovitz

**Jewish Family Service Friendship Circle**

In memory of:

- Jane Polonski** - Jonathan and Jan Simon, Lila Shapiro and Jannine Shapiro

**SAVE THE DATE!!**

*Jewish Federation Annual Meeting*

Sunday May 31<sup>st</sup> 10am to 1 pm.  
Yocum Institute for Arts Education  
3000 Penn Ave. West Lawn, PA

**A short meeting, a great nosh and LOTS of family fun!**  
Pssst...bring the kids!! Activity details to follow.

**save the date**

**Friday May 15th at 7PM**

**May 15th TEACHER APPRECIATION & NEW MEMBER SHABBAT**

Join us for an ice cream oneq immediately following the service.

**THANK YOU**

OHEB SHOLOM

**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 Fund for Adult Programming
- Evelyn Thompson Fund
- Yvonne Frey Oppenheimer Fund for Community Engagement

**Jewish Family Service**

In celebration of:

- Jo Cohn's retirement** - Kimberly Murphy

In memory of:

- Jane Polonski** - Vicki Graff
- Gordon Perlmutter** - Sandee and Neal Nevitt, Betsy and Al Katz, Sue and Mel Blum, Vicki Graff, Yvonne and Manny Wittels, Sharon Syret, Sue Wachs, Phyllis Dessel, Andy and Laurie Waxler, Martin and Norma Beckerman, Andy and Corinne Wernick, Sallie and Michael Bleshman, Mike and Sue Farrara, Gary and Sheila Lattin, Linda and Harry Rinker, Michael Gordon, Clifford Reed, Jill and Michael Haas, Brenda Seidel, Sarah and Sam Flamholz, Jill Skaist, Lynn and Richard Gordon

**Yvonne Oppenheimer Fund for Community Engagement**

In memory of:

- Gordon Perlmutter** - Rob Oppenheimer, Jonathan and Jan Simon

In honor of:

- Rebecca Bub's engagement** - Carol and Bernie Gerber

**Holocaust Library & Resource Center**

In honor of:

- Andy and Corinne Wernick's new residence** - Jonathan and Jan Simon

In memory of:

- Gordon Perlmutter** - Maralyn and Ken Lakin, Esther Bratt, Kate Mohn, Jamie, Krista and Natalie Gebbia, William Poller
- Stuart Cohn** - Kate Mohn

**PJ Library**

In memory of:

- Gordon Perlmutter** - Dena and Vic Hammel

Jewish Federation of Reading/Berks presents:

**WELCOME TO THE SHUK**

Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israel's independence day) celebration

- Israeli food
- Arts & Crafts
- Israeli music
- Israeli guests
- ESEK** Purchase from Israeli businesses

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 22**

- Registration is required
- 4:30 - 6:30 pm
- Chabad of Berks

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

<https://www.readingjewishcommunity.org/> 610-921-0624

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# Happy Passover



Fresh Kosher Boneless Chicken Breast Fillets

**8<sup>69</sup>**  
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Fresh Kosher Cut Up Chicken Fryers

**4<sup>49</sup>**  
lb



Fresh Kosher Whole Broiler Chickens

**4<sup>49</sup>**  
lb

We have a selection of Kosher for Passover cakes and cookies made by Molly's Bakehouse.



Gunter's Honey  
12 oz

**2 for \$5**



Streit's Fruit Slices  
8 oz

**4<sup>49</sup>**



Rokeach or Yehuda Gefilte Fish  
24 oz

**7<sup>59</sup>**



Kedem Concord Grape Juice  
64 oz

**4<sup>99</sup>**



Streit's Chocolate Chip or Coconut Macaroon  
10 oz

**6<sup>49</sup>**



Manischewitz Potato Pancake Mix  
6 oz

**2 for \$5**



Streit Matzo Ball & Soup Mix or Matzo Ball  
4.5 oz

**2 for \$6**



Geffen Roasted Chestnuts  
5.2 oz

**2 for \$7**



Streit's Passover Matzos  
5 lb

**REDEEM POINTS**  
MAR 19 - APR 9

**FREE**

with **100 WEIS REWARDS POINTS**  
REDEEMED AT REGISTER

LIMIT 1 PER HOUSEHOLD