



THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION

A Legacy Blooms in Stamford

BY DASSI LEWIS
(FOR THE JEWISH LINK)

Just behind Congregation Agudath Sholom (CAS) in Stamford, Connecticut, the Jim Benjamin Memorial Garden is a living legacy. It honors the life of Jim Benjamin, a beloved member of the Stamford Jewish community, whose deep love for gardening and quiet dedication to helping others continues to nourish both bodies and souls.

Rabbi Daniel Cohen, the rabbi of CAS, recalled the origins of this initiative. Benjamin was a member of both the Conservative shul and CAS. "He was one of the humblest community servants that I've known since I've been in Stamford over the past 20 years," said Rabbi Cohen. "He was extremely sincere in his devotion to God and a person who cared deeply about community. He led the chevra kadisha for many years, and he was a community builder. He had no airs about him. He 'walked humbly with



Jim Benjamin, z"l,
at the garden.

God," as it says in the Prophets."

Benjamin was a married man with two daughters who ran his own successful business. One of his greatest passions, however, was gardening.

Around 10 years ago, Rabbi Cohen was inspired while passing a local church. Outside was a "harvest now" garden, where congregants grew vegetables for the local food bank. He thought, "This is a great idea. Maybe we should do this at Agudath Sholom. We have people that can garden and we have a piece of earth... All it takes is some effort and some seeds, and then we can actually feed the hungry."

There was just one problem—Rabbi Cohen didn't know the first thing about gardening. Someone mentioned Jim Benjamin. "You need someone who is a quarterback," Rabbi Cohen said. "You can't just walk out there with the seeds. You

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Empowering the Next Generation of Jewish Leaders

(Courtesy of UJF) The Jewish communities of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien have experienced remarkable growth in recent years, fueled by new arrivals during the COVID-19 pandemic and a renewed sense of solidarity in the face of rising antisemitism following October 7.

As part of this growth, the community has seen increases in young adults and families of ages 21 to 45. NextGen, an affinity group of United Jewish Federation (UJF) of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien, serves to engage this cohort specifically through social and educational opportunities. NextGen is dedicated to strengthening the Jewish community and fostering meaningful connections.

"UJF sees a crucial opportunity to shape the future of our Jewish community and to meet the challenges," shared UJF Board President, Beverly Stein. "We need to empower leaders and philanthropists who will carry our community forward."

As such, NextGen is thrilled to announce the introduction of the Ben-Gurion Society (BGS). BGS is a national initiative designed to engage young Jewish adults through bold leadership, inspired giving, and diverse experiences. The goal of this initiative within UJF's NextGen organization is to build and sustain a vibrant Jewish community in Stamford, New Canaan, Darien, and around the world.

"Whether you're attending a young leaders' Shabbat or enjoying a happy hour with Jewish friends, the Ben-Gurion Society aims to provide a welcoming space to find or build your Jewish philanthropic community—something that can be hard to do on your own," said UJF's CEO Diane Sloyer.

"We are looking forward to celebrating our newest giving tier and joining with national leaders, while creating something meaningful and inspiring here at UJF," said NextGen Steering Committee Chair, Micky Reich.

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Interfaith Collaboration in Community Service

The Interfaith Social Ministry Collaborative hosted a well-attended social action event at Temple Sinai in June. Enthusiastic volunteers from First United Methodist Church, St. Francis Episcopal, St. John's Episcopal, Temple Beth El, Temple Sinai, and United Jewish Federation joined together in this meaningful project. Rabbi Jay TelRav of Temple Sinai celebrated how people of all faiths are called to service.

Participants funded and packed 700 Dignity Grows personal care bags for women and girls in need at AmeriCares Free Clinics, Building One Community, Domestic Violence Crisis Center, Help for Kids, Inspirica, Schoke Jewish Family Service, New Covenant Center, Pacific House and Person to Person. The group also prepared 500 sandwiches for clients at the New Covenant Center soup kitchen, with sandwich supplies provided by Temple Sinai Sisterhood.



From UJF's Chief Executive Officer

The Enduring Surge in Jewish Life Since October 7

BY DIANE SLOYER

I am honored to share with you the key findings from the Jewish Federations of North America's 2025 Survey of Jewish Life since October 7. This comprehensive study, conducted between March 5 and March 25, 2025, offers invaluable insights into how the Jewish community continues



Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO

to respond, adapt, and thrive in the wake of unprecedented challenges. The data not only reflects the resilience and dynamism of Jewish life in America but also provides a roadmap for how we at Federation, as communal leaders and partners, can best serve and support our constituents in the months and years ahead.

The war between Israel and Hamas has remained a central focus for many in our community. The study indicated that while the percentage of those following the news "very closely" has declined from 76% in March 2024 to 64% in March 2025, the level of emotional impact—though slightly reduced—remains significant. The data suggests a normalization of the crisis, even as

antisemitic incidents continue to rise. Our community is adapting, but the emotional toll persists, underscoring the need for ongoing support and engagement.

Perhaps the most encouraging trend, reflected in the study, is Jewish engagement. The data shows that this is not a fleeting phenomenon: 57% of those who were "very engaged" in Jewish life

before October 7 remain highly involved, and even among those who were "not very engaged" or "not at all engaged" prior to the crisis, 22% and 19%, respectively, are now participating at higher levels.

Why are people continuing to be engaged in Jewish life? The motivations behind this heightened engagement are multifaceted. Respondents cite a desire to:

- Increase understanding of the current situation in Israel (83%)
- Deepen personal knowledge of Israel (74%)
- Equip themselves to explain Israel to others (74%)
- Feel a sense of connection with other Jewish people (59%)

- Enhance their knowledge of Judaism (56%)
- Strengthen their connection to their own Judaism (40%)

This thirst for knowledge and connection is reflected in the ways people are engaging: 84% read news stories, 69% seek content from Jewish or Israel-related organizations, and 61% turn to knowledgeable friends. Digital platforms, podcasts, and social media continue to play a significant role, but in-person and virtual events remain vital touchpoints for learning and community building.

So, how are people connecting? Engagement is taking place across a range of settings. Jewish Community Centers, informal meet-ups, Hillel and Chabad organizations, social media groups, synagogues, and time spent with Jewish friends all serve as important venues for connection. The data also highlights the importance of personal invitations, interesting and relevant content, and seeing oneself reflected in the community as key drivers of participation.

When asked how these new engagements make them feel, respondents overwhelmingly

report positive emotions: belonging, welcome, curiosity, inspiration, and inclusion. However, some also experience feelings of awkwardness, anxiety, or uncertainty—reminding us that our work to foster inclusive, welcoming spaces is ongoing.

Engagement is strong across all age groups, with notable surges among midlife adults (55-74), single adults, and young families. This diversity underscores the need for varied programming and outreach strategies tailored to different life stages.

The data is clear: the surge in Jewish life since October 7 is not a temporary response but a profound and ongoing transformation. As leaders, partners, and philanthropists, we are called to meet this moment with creativity, compassion, and commitment. We must continue to invest in educational opportunities, foster welcoming environments, and build bridges across generations and backgrounds.

Let us draw strength from our shared resilience and the enduring bonds of community. Together, we can ensure that this surge in Jewish life not only endures but flourishes, strengthening our people and our future for generations to come, As One.

UJF President's Message

Keeping our Community Safe

BY BEVERLY STEIN

In a time when antisemitism is on the rise, the safety of Jewish communities—especially during gatherings and synagogue services—is increasingly at risk. Recent events in Washington, D.C. and Boulder, Colorado, have underscored this threat. In Washington, two Israeli embassy staffers were tragically murdered outside the Capital Jewish Museum, while in Boulder, a peaceful demonstration advocating for the release of hostages held by Hamas was violently attacked, resulting in multiple injuries.

These incidents serve as a stark reminder that such acts of hate can occur anywhere, including our own communities, and at any time. As we reflect on these events, it's crucial to recognize the importance of solidarity and mutual support. In times of fear and uncertainty, standing together is our strongest defense against hate.

We must continue to stand with one another and work to ensure that our synagogues, schools, and community spaces remain safe, inclusive, and welcoming. Together, we can push back against hatred and create an environment rooted in safety,



Beverly Stein, UJF President

unity, and resilience.

United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien (UJF) is committed to protecting our community through targeted security programs and preparedness initiatives. Thanks to your generous support, the Federation is equipped to respond swiftly in times of crisis and to build long-term safeguards.

One of our most important actions is our partnership with the Community Security Initiative (CSI). With CSI, our Federation has made major strides in strengthening local security. The hiring of James Comstock as our dedicated full-time Director of Security marks a major step forward in strengthening community safety. Additionally, securing a \$100,000 grant in 2024 from the Tepper Foundation will significantly enhance security for our early childhood programs. UJF expects to receive an additional \$66,000 grant in 2025. Jim also provides security guidance to Jewish organizations hosting events in Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien. He coordinates with local law enforcement to ensure proper coverage and routinely visits

events to connect with police on-site.

Some of the other key programs and partnerships include:

• LiveSecure Initiative

A \$62 million campaign launched by the Jewish Federations of North America to bolster security infrastructure at Jewish community centers, synagogues, schools, and other institutions across the country. UJF has benefited from the Live Secure program for the past three years and is now entering its fourth year, receiving approximately \$45,000 annually, which has allowed us to fund our Security Director, Jim Comstock.

• Regional Security Advisors

Local Federations, including the United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien, have hired dedicated security

professionals. Our Regional Security Director, James Comstock, leads efforts to assess threats, implement safety protocols, and provide training to over 15 local institutions. All of these services are provided to our local institutions at no charge.

• Community Security Standards and Training

Federations offer comprehensive training programs covering active shooter preparedness, emergency response, and threat assessment.

Together, We Are Stronger. Now more than ever, we must work as one to protect our community and uphold the values that define us. With your continued support, **AS ONE**, we can ensure that Jewish life remains vibrant, safe, and secure—for everyone.

CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

July 4.....	8:12 pm
July 11.....	8:09 pm
July 18.....	8:05 pm
July 25.....	7:59 pm
August 1.....	7:52 pm
August 8.....	7:44 pm
August 15.....	7:34 pm
August 22.....	7:24 pm
August 29.....	7:13 pm

UJF Women's Philanthropy Brings Community Together

(Courtesy of UJF) As the local and diverse Jewish community strives for connectedness and belonging, United Jewish Federation's Women's Philanthropy has spearheaded a reboot to bring women together in meaningful and productive ways. A thoughtful brainstorming session was held to discuss Women's Philanthropy and how it can impact UJF and the broader community.

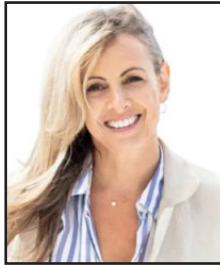
A key component of this cohort is doing good (*chesed*) for our community, while incorporating the Jewish values of *tikun olam* (repairing the world). Ongoing projects have included Dignity Grows and 3SQUARE, and David's Treasure Closet has been an annual event to stock the children's unit at Stamford hospital with toys for patients.

On an educational and social level, Women's Philanthropy has hosted an annual Spring Dinner, speakers, an educational day and more.

Moving forward Women's Philanthropy



Lilach Porges



Elina Furman

will host smaller scale events, drawing those with varied interest. These "Salon" events, hosted in private homes, will source female talent and expertise from our community, creating a more intimate setting for like-minded women to interact.

Women's Philanthropy will host its first "Salon" on August 6, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. The Salon will feature founder and creative director of Procode Dress, Lilach Porges, and Elina Furman, founder of *ORA Magazine* and Kahlmi, a baby massage brand, as the guest speakers. Space is limited, so visit www.ujf.org/WPSalon to register.

Schoke JFS Sunset Summer Beach Concert

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) Get ready for an evening of music, food, and fun at the Schoke Jewish Family Service (JFS) Sunset Summer Beach Concert on Tuesday, August 19, from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm at the Penfield Pavilion in Fairfield.

Join Schoke JFS for a night of live music by Otis and the Hurricanes, an open bar, and food (dietary laws observed), all with a stunning beach backdrop. It's the perfect summer evening you won't want to miss!

Tickets are \$136 each, and all proceeds benefit Schoke Jewish Family Service, helping over 6,000 families across Fairfield County each year. Your ticket supports a cause that is vital to the community.

Grab your tickets today and get



Otis and the Hurricanes band

ready to dance the night away for a great cause. Tickets can be purchased at SJFSConcert.givesmart.com

UPCOMING DEADLINE

September 2025 Edition

Deadline: Monday, August 4, 2025

Email submissions to sandy@ujf.org

You should receive notification that your submission was received!

Jewish Wisdom for Life

(Courtesy of Chabad at Harbor Point) Chabad of Harbor Point's community of Young & Jewish professionals gets together every Wednesday evening in Stamford to discuss Jewish wisdom for life, and how the Torah's ideas can be healing for emotional and mental wellbeing. Every week's discussion is stand alone, so feel free to pop in for one. Generally the discussions are at Chabad @ Harbor Point. However in the summer, weather permitting, they will be on the boardwalk, in the park, or on the rooftop.

Join the fun, deep, meaningful discussions, every Wednesday at 8:00 pm.

To join Young & Jewish, go to youngandjewish.org or call 203-912-7708.



The Young & Jewish community gathers on the Harbor Point boardwalk.

Community Apple Picking Returns

(Courtesy of UJF) Back by popular demand! After last year's joyful turnout, the community apple picking event is returning to Silverman's Farm in Easton on Sunday, September 14 from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm - just in time to get into the Rosh Hashanah spirit.

Hosted by United Jewish Federation's (UJF) NextGen and PJ Library programs, in partnership with community organizations, this family-friendly event is open to the entire community.

Attendees will enjoy tractor rides, free farm admission for the family, and apple cider donuts. And in the spirit of giving, the Schoke Jewish Family Service truck

will be on-site to collect apple donations for those in need ahead of the holiday, adding a meaningful *mitzvah* (good deed) to the day.

"This is such a fun and meaningful way to welcome the New Year," says Melanie Vorm of UJF. "We're excited to bring everyone together again for a morning of connection, community, and sweetness."

While registration is free, participants will be required to purchase their own bags for apple picking at the farm. Pre-sign-up is required for security purposes. RSVP now at www.ujf.org/apples.

For any questions, contact Melanie Vorm at melanie@ujf.org.

Summer Fun with Chabad of Stamford

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Chabad of Stamford is kicking off the season with a full lineup of summer events designed to bring the community together through connection, inspiration, and fun.

For women, summer begins with "Torah & Tea" in July, a series of weekly classes on Tuesday mornings at 10:30 am that blend learning, fun and food. Highlights include a special "Lunch & Learn" by the pool, perfect for recharging with friends in a relaxed, sunny setting.

For little ones, "Tiny Treasures - Got Summer?" is back. These "Mommy & Me" classes for children ages 6 weeks to

3 years will be held outdoors in Chabad's meditation garden, Thursdays at 9:30 am on June 26, July 10, and July 17. There will be music, stories, sensory play, and hands-on challah baking, a summer favorite for kids, parents and caregivers alike.

Finally, for the men, Chabad has the Men's Summer BBQ on Thursday, July 10 at 7:15 pm, hosted at the home of Rabbi Moshe Shemtov. Men are invited to enjoy food, a relaxing atmosphere and great conversation.

For details and registration, visit www.stamfordchabad.org or email programs@stamfordchabad.org.

JCRC Update

The Importance of Interfaith Relationships

BY GARY JONES
UJF JCRC DIRECTOR

Interfaith relationship-building is among the most important responsibilities of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of UJF. JCRC has already engaged in a series of efforts to build these relationships with as many communities as possible. A few notable examples are our very successful interfaith seder; our ongoing work with the Interfaith Council of Southwestern Connecticut; and our



Gary Jones,
JCRC Director

participation in Stamford Day, the celebration of Stamford's cultural and religious diversity. However, the most important evidence of our commitment to engage in meaningful outreach is our restructured JCRC, which has formed two subcommittees, one of which is specifically devoted to outreach to diverse religious and ethnic groups.

These initiatives are generally confined to our Federation service area. However, earlier this month, I had the opportunity to join Jewish professionals (including religious leaders and educators) from across the country at a two-day conference with Evangelical Protestant leaders and thinkers in Washington. As you may know, Evangelicals are the largest Protestant movement in the country. In a time when religious affiliation generally, and particularly among mainline Protestant movements, is declining, Evangelicals appear to be maintaining their membership levels. Moreover, while many in the interfaith community are unfairly criticizing Israel and seem uninterested in supporting the Jewish community in the face of



(l-r) UJF Director of JCRC Gary Jones, Margaret Norman, Rabbi Abbi Sharofsky, Liat Alon, Sharon Brodkey, Bonnie Burdman, Dan Goldwin, Rabbi Josh Stanton at the June Evangelical conference in Washington DC.

levels of antisemitism not seen in many decades, many Evangelicals are rising to the occasion to support us. They understand the magnitude of the hate targeting Israel and are comfortable speaking out on Israel's behalf and in decrying antisemitism. Clearly, this is a religious community that the American Jewish community should get to know.

The program schedule for the Conference was interesting, rigorous, and diverse. Topics discussed included: religious polarization and the future of America; various categories of non-religious Americans; understanding AI through the lens of religion; and text study on the biblical creation story and its implications on the LGBTQ+ community from the perspective of both religions.

Having the opportunity to learn and develop relationships with bright and engaging people of goodwill is always a blessing. However, the opportunity to do so with people who genuinely care about us in a time when too many others are looking the other way when we need it most is exceedingly special. Finally, gatherings like these remind us that we don't need to agree with everything our neighbors believe to learn to respect and appreciate the good in our neighbors. That is a lesson that is too often lost in our hyper-political times.

Feel free to contact me at gary@ujf.org if you have any questions about the conference or anything else relating to our JCRC.

THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

"The New Jewish Voice" (USPS #184) is published by the United Jewish Federation Inc.
2009 Summer Street, Suite 302 Stamford 06905.

www.ujf.org for updates and donations

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Regional Police Gathering

(Courtesy of UJF) In early June, United Jewish Federation's (UJF) Regional Security Director James Comstock spoke at the Fairfield County Chief of Police Meeting. He described the Community Security Initiative and its work protecting local Jewish communities and organizations. Pictured: UJF Regional Security Director James Comstock with Police Chief Jim Heavey of the Greenwich Police Department.



Empowering the Next Generation of Jewish Leaders

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

BGS draws inspiration from the principles of David Ben-Gurion, Israel's visionary first prime minister. He believed in empowering young adults to harness their power, passion, and resources to create a strong and responsible Jewish community, both locally and globally.

BGS is open to individuals ages 21 to 45 who make a generous contribution of \$1,000 or more to United Jewish Federation. BGS donors will directly support vital programs and initiatives that address the pressing needs of the community.

The many benefits of being a member

of the Ben-Gurion Society include:

- Interacting with local and national networks of like-minded individuals passionate about philanthropy and community building.
- Receiving invitations to exclusive events at private homes featuring distinguished speakers.
- Engaging with community leaders and participating in business, social, networking, and volunteering opportunities.
- Collaborating, networking, and forging meaningful relationships that extend far beyond each event.

- Shaping the future of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien's Jewish community through collective action.

"Investing in your local and international Jewish community has the power to impact thousands of lives in countless positive ways—including your own," said Reich.

The founding members of NextGen's BGS group include Chair Micky Reich, Robin Fischel, Greg Waldstreicher, Molly Raelfolowicz, and Lee Soffer.

For more information about joining the Ben-Gurion Society or getting involved with NextGen, please contact Diane Sloyer@ujf.org

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Middle School Graduation

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) On June 11, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) of Stamford, Connecticut, held its Middle School Moving Up Ceremony at Temple Beth El, marking a meaningful milestone for its eighth-grade students. Each student took the stage to reflect on their time at BCHA—sharing cherished memories, valuable lessons, and gratitude for the supportive school community that helped shape their journey.

The program reflected the pride that the BCHA community has for each student at this important juncture, which resonated deeply with families, faculty, and friends in attendance. As the students go on to pursue their education in high school and beyond, the ceremony celebrates the academic growth, personal development, and strong sense of community that will continue to guide them in the years ahead.



Top Row (l-r) Layla Bahar, Ella Notik, Dani Raich, Elana Kohl, Liv Haron, Hannah Haron, Avigayil Chavkin, Victoria Angel, Evie Nerenberg
Middle Row: (l-r) Yasmin Wexler, Leah Pollack, Whitney Levin, Maggie Mosenkis, Stella Pachter, Adina Grunblatt, Mindy Segal, Noa Maymin Tzur, Simona Abada-Zern
Bottom Row (l-r): Noam Kahen-Kashani, Aaron Palker, Natel Katchko, Grant Bradley, Sunny Sendersky, Seth Weisel, Alexander Sverd
(PHOTO CREDIT: KAI ROISOVSKY PHOTOGRAPHY)

The Places They Will Go

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) The 2025 Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy High School graduation was a night of beginnings as the graduates moved on to the next phase of their lives. After a fulfilling, meaningful, and educational four years as part of the Bi-Cultural Hebrew High School family, graduates move on to a gap year in Israel for some and college for others.



(l-r) Graduates Gidon Teitel, Joseph Bildner, Sam Fox, Sydney Mann, Max Ferits, Yael Hochman, Raffaella Rascoff, Ora Muller, and Miriam Mann.
(PHOTO CREDIT: KAI ROISOVSKY PHOTOGRAPHY)

Temple Sinai's 2025 Confirmation Class

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) Annually, Temple Sinai celebrates the graduation of their confirmation class, a ceremony in which a young person affirms his or her commitment to Judaism. After B'nai Mitzvah, Temple Sinai offers the opportunity for students to continue their religious studies. During this year's spring ceremony, students shared their thoughts on how they see their life goals unfolding vis a vis their Judaism.



(l-r) Rabbi Jay TelRav, Morah Erica Santiago, graduates Alex Bowbeer and Jacob Silver, and Cantor Micah Morgovsky (Not pictured: Cooper Gendason)
(PHOTO CREDIT: HILDI TODRIN/CRAVE SONG PHOTOGRAPHY)

A VISIONARY LIFE PLAN COMMUNITY BECOMES A REALITY



The Groundbreaking Ceremony for Mozaic Concierge Living took place in May. This landmark Life Plan Community—the first of its kind in Fairfield County in over 30 years—will offer 164 luxury residences and a Health Center with Assisted Living, Memory Care, and Skilled Nursing. Exceptional amenities, including multiple dining venues and a wellness center with pool, are designed to promote a vibrant, healthy lifestyle. Completion is slated for 2027.

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To learn more or to meet with a Residency Counselor, contact us at:
203-396-1140 ■ info@mozaicl.org ■ mozaicconciergeliving.org



Celebrating the JCC's Youngest Graduates

(Courtesy of JCC) On Thursday, June 5, the JCC Sara Walker Nursery School celebrated its 2025 graduates at their "Moving Up" ceremony. Families, friends, and teachers gathered to honor this special milestone with songs, smiles, and lots of laughter. The nursery school is so proud of their students and can't wait to see all the wonderful things they'll do next!



JCC nursery school graduates perform for their family and friends. (ALL PHOTO CREDIT: HALEY BLAU)

Gan Yeladim Graduation

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) On Wednesday, June 11, Gan Yeladim, Chabad's "garden of children," celebrated its blossoming graduates! Families, friends, and teachers gathered to mark the occasion with joy, singing, proud smiles, and abundant *nachas*, as they reflected on a year of incredible growth and blooming potential.



The JCC Sara Walker Nursery School Class of 2025.

Congratulations Class of 2025!

GRADUATE DEGREES

Hannah Davidson, NYU Master's Degree
Brad Goldstein, Georgia Tech
Noah Green, Johns Hopkins Whiting School of Engineering
Alexander Seligson, USC School of Engineering
Arielle Deena Snow, Hofstra PhD Psychology
Sarah Ariel Snow, Fordham Law

COLLEGE

Amelia Chapman, University of California, Davis
Shalhevet Cohen, Yeshiva University
Maddie Davidson, Muhlenberg College
Rebecca Dayan, Washington University
Alexandra Hadge, Yeshiva University
Shira Held, Rutgers University, New Brunswick
Jaye Kaplan, Savannah College of Art and Design
Rina Devorah Marlowe, Queens College
Jakob Okun, Yeshiva University
Joshua Schulman, UConn School of Engineering
Lilah Steinberg, Wesleyan University
Joshua Wohlberg, Yeshiva University

HIGH SCHOOL

Joseph Bildner, BCHA
Evan Bilenker, The Leffell School
Lyla Dynner, SAR

HIGH SCHOOL CONT.

Maxim Ferits, BCHA
Samuel Fox, BCHA
Solomon Green, SAR
Yael Hochman, BCHA
Yisrael Kohl, The Frisch School
Molly Mann, BCHA
Sydney Mann, BCHA
Ora Muller, BCHA
Yishai Orbach, The Frisch School
Raffaella Rascoff, BCHA
Roni Rosovsky, SAR
Steven Shannah, SAR
Sophie Sigman, Westhill High School
Gidon Teitel, BCHA

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Simona Abada-Zern, BCHA
Victoria Angel, BCHA
Layla Bahar, BCHA
Kayla Bocian, The Windward School
Grant Bradley, BCHA
Avigayil Chavkin, BCHA
Adina Grunblatt, BCHA
Hannah Haron, BCHA
Liv Haron, BCHA

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONT.

Noam Kahen Kashani, BCHA
Nate Katchko, BCHA
Elana Kohl, BCHA
Whitney Levin, BCHA
Noa Maymin-Tzur, BCHA
Maggie Mosenkis, BCHA
Eva Nerenberg, BCHA
Ella Notik, BCHA
Stella Pachter, BCHA
Aaron Palker, BCHA
Leah Pollack, BCHA
Daniella Raich, BCHA
Jordana Rascoff, The Leffell School
Mindy Segal, BCHA
Sarah Singer, Shulamith School for Girls
Sunny Sendersky, BCHA
Alexander Sverd, BCHA
Seth Weisel, BCHA
Yasmin Wexler, BCHA
Ariella Young, Leffell
Noam Young, Leffell

**Names were taken from synagogue bulletins and parents emailing*

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A Symphony of Redemption

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford)

Chabad of Stamford recently hosted its 27th annual Jewish Women's Connected (JWC) Lag BaOmer event, titled "Symphony of Redemption". Designed to "nurture the nurturers," the evening brought together Jewish women of all ages and backgrounds for a night of inspiration, creativity, and connection.

Guests enjoyed a delicious spread of food and specially crafted cocktails before diving into hands-on activities. Each woman created a floral arrangement to gift to a loved one and decorated tambourines, symbols of joy and the song of redemption. Music and dancing followed, evoking the spirit of the women who led the celebration after the Exodus from Egypt, as described in the Torah.

The theme of women's spiritual strength and resilience was at the heart of the evening. Leah Shemtov shared the Biblical account of the Exodus, highlighting the pivotal role women played in ensuring the survival and redemption of the Jewish people. She then drew a powerful connection to the present, sharing the stories of two modern-day heroines whose faith and courage continue to inspire.

The first was Varda, the grandmother of Idan Alexander, who was recently released from Hamas brutal captivity in the terror



Leah Shemtov inspires attendees with powerful words of faith, resilience, and unity at Chabad of Stamford's JWC Lag BaOmer celebration.

tunnels of Gaza. Throughout her grandson's ordeal, Varda maintained unwavering faith, kissing the mezuzah and the Torah every day and speaking in her heart to Idan every day, affirming her belief that Hashem was with her grandson, protecting him.

The second was Tzeela Gaz, a woman tragically murdered on her way to give birth

to her fourth child. Months before her death, Tzeela, a therapist, posted online about the emotional challenges of living through difficult times in Israel, asking her followers what gives them the strength to go on. Her message called for courage, faith, and daily action in the face of hardship.

For Leah Shemtov, these women

exemplify what it means to live with inner faith expressed through outward strength. "We all carry faith within us," she shared, "but our task is to bring it into the world through our daily choices and actions."

To find out more about JWC's programs and events for women, please email programs@stamfordchabad.org.

A Colorful Kickoff to Summer

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford)

Chabad of Stamford brought the community together for an unforgettable Lag BaOmer celebration packed with fun, color, connection, and meaning.

With its second annual "Color Run," a bonfire with s'mores, a BBQ, inflatables, snow cones, music, community, Torah and *tefillin*, this event had it all. Families gathered for a meal of hot dogs, hamburgers, and sweet treats, while children enjoyed inflatables, arts and crafts, and icy snow cones under the spring sky.

One of the evening's highlights was the "Color Run." Everyone dressed in white and, at the call of "Ready, Set, Go," raced through clouds of bright multi-colored powder, laughing and cheering as they were transformed into walking rainbows.

After the run, the community gathered in the peaceful meditation garden for a *medura* (bonfire). Before the flames were lit, Morah Leah Shemtov invited the children by age group to come forward and each recite a line of Torah, hear the story of Lag BaOmer and give *tzedakah*. Nearby, adults and teens had

the chance to put on *tefillin* for a chance to connect spiritually and further elevate the experience.

As the fire crackled, kids enjoyed roasted marshmallows and more games with the Gan and Hebrew school *morahs* (teachers). From the laughter to the learning, and from the colorful, fun (and messy) games to the spiritual moments, the Lag BaOmer celebration was a perfect kickoff to summer.



Stamford's youngest runners celebrate Lag BaOmer in a swirl of powder and laughter during Chabad's second Color Run.

Lag BaOmer Bonfire and Barbecue

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS)

Young & Jewish from Stamford, JTT (Jewish Twenties and Thirties) of Schoke Jewish Family Service, Mem Global (formerly Moishe House) and United Jewish Federation, joined for a beautiful Lag BaOmer evening. Friends gathered around the fire, sang songs, and enjoyed delicious food fresh off the grill. Participants brought their instruments — piano, guitar, drums — for a night of song, warmth, and connection that stretched late into the night.



Wine, Cheese, and Conversation

(Courtesy of Chabad at Harbor Point) Young & Jewish in Stamford hosted a Shavuot evening of real conversation. Twenty-five anonymous questions were submitted — the kind you might not ask, but always think about. The result: a fascinating, honest, and meaningful discussion around the table, creating energy and camaraderie.

Visit youngandjewish.org or call 203-912-7708 to learn more about upcoming programs and events.



Gan Yeladim Brings Children Closer to the Torah

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) In the days leading up to Shavuot, Gan Yeladim launched an initiative in partnership with Chabad in Israel: the Children's *Sefer Torah* (Torah scroll) Project. This global Chabad effort offers every Jewish child, boys under the age of 13 and girls under the age of 12, the opportunity to own a letter in a Torah scroll being written in Israel.

Each participating child had a letter inscribed on their behalf by a trained *sofer* (scribe), fulfilling the very last commandment in the Torah: for every Jew to write a *Sefer Torah*. While most cannot physically write a Torah scroll, this project allows even the youngest children to fulfill this *mitzvah* (commandment) by acquiring just one letter, joining thousands of children around the world in a powerful act of Jewish unity.

Letters could be purchased for just one symbolic dollar, making it accessible to all.

They were gifted by parents, grandparents, relatives, and friends, making it the perfect present for a child, grandchild, newborn baby, or loved one in their life.

To bring the project to life in a developmentally meaningful way, Gan Yeladim wove it into its rich Shavuot curriculum. The children explored the story of the giving of the Torah through songs, storytelling, interactive activities, and crafts.

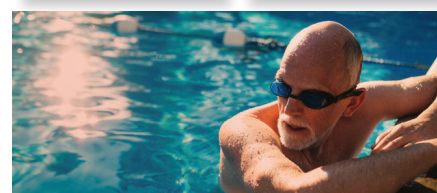
Every child who participated receives a personalized certificate, recognizing their letter in the Torah and marking their place in Jewish history. It serves as a lasting reminder that their connection to Torah is real, meaningful, and lifelong. Every Torah scroll contains 304,805 letters and even if one letter is missing, the entire Torah cannot be used. Chabad emphasizes to children that each of them, like each letter in the Torah, is unique and essential.

Gan Yeladim Welcomes New Toy-Ra

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Just in time for the holiday of Shavuot, Gan Yeladim welcomed a brand-new "Toy-Ra"—a life-sized Torah costume that brought the excitement of receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai to life. Children enjoyed giving big hugs to the newly donated giant "Toy-Ra."



EXPERIENCE STAMFORD'S *Most Anticipated* LIFE PLAN COMMUNITY



Mozaic Concierge Living is an exceptional luxury Life Plan Community located in the heart of Stamford, now under construction and opening in 2027. Thoughtfully designed for those who value sophistication, independence, and long-term peace of mind, Mozaic Concierge Living is more than a residence, it offers a grand lifestyle. With over 90% of residences reserved, select premium floorplans are still available but they won't be for long!

The opportunity to shape your future is now!



MOZAIC Concierge Living
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Welcome Center: 260 Long Ridge Road, Suite C-160, Stamford, CT 06902
Future location: 210 Long Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06902

To learn more or to meet with a Residency Counselor, contact us at:
203-396-1140 ■ info@mozaicl.org ■ mozaicconciergeliving.org



One Shabbat, One Community
December 12-13, 2025
Details coming soon!



Celebrating Unity at CommUNITY Pride Shabbat

(Courtesy of UJF) On Friday, June 6, over 150 community members gathered together for a Community Pride Shabbat at Scalzi Park. Held in partnership between United Jewish Federation (UJF), Temple Beth El, and Temple Sinai, this is the first time that

multiple agencies in the community have come together to celebrate Pride Month, and to share appreciation for the diversity that exists in the Jewish community.

Rabbi Mike Moskowitz, the Scholar-in-Residence for Trans and Queer Jewish

Studies at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah in New York, gave a stirring *d'var torah* about the need for embracing allyship as a Jewish value, because “we are all G-d’s children”. As stated by Rabbi Moskowitz, “Today we recommit to ending hatred by

loving each other the way that we would want to be loved by G-d.”

If you would like to help with the planning of next year’s Community Pride Shabbat, please contact UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross at eric@ujf.org.



Temple Beth El’s Rabbi Michael Knopf and Cantor Katie Kaplan, Temple Sinai’s Cantor Michah Morgovsky and Rabbi Jay TelRav, guest speaker Rabbi Mike Moskowitz, and UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross.



Send your New Year greeting to the entire community!

Greetings will appear in the September addition of
The New Jewish Voice

Wish our wonderful community a Shana Tova for \$36.

Deadline: Wednesday, August 6

Personal ads can be submitted along with payment by visiting
www.ujf.org/RHGGreeting

For business advertising information contact
UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross at eric@ujf.org



Stamford Day Brings Community Together

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation’s Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) Chair David Gordon, Meryl Gordon, and JCRC Director Gary Jones, represent UJF while greeting hundreds of participants in Mill River Park at Stamford Day, sponsored by the Mayor’s MultiCultural Council.



Mazal Tov to the Lilly Reiser Scholarship Awardees!

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien (UJF) is excited to announce the two recipients of the 2025-2026 Lilly Reiser Scholarship. Each awardee will receive a \$10,000 academic scholarship, renewable for up to four years, to assist them in reaching their educational goals.

Maxim Ferits – Stamford, CT will be entering his freshman year at Harvey Mudd College.

Eden Shahar – Ridgefield, CT is a current student at University of Connecticut.

“Among dozens of applicants, Eden and Maxim clearly demonstrated the most potential to live up to Lilly Reiser’s example, as a person who overcame significant



Eden Shahar



Maxim Ferits

hardship, prized education, and became a responsible and productive citizen. The entire process has been so meaningful to participate in. We are very excited to honor Lilly’s memory by fulfilling her wishes to assist young Jews achieve their academic dreams like she did,” said Nan Gordon, Chair

of UJF’s Lilly Reiser Scholarship Committee.

Lilly E. Reiser (1924-2020) was born in the small town of Moravska-Ostrava in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (now the Czech Republic). Having suffered the inhumanity and indignity of forced labor and internment during the Holocaust at Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and Bergen-Belsen, Lilly was eventually liberated from Bergen-Belsen by British soldiers. She emigrated to the United States in 1945 and was able to obtain her degrees only because of the generosity of various Jewish communal organizations that provided her with the scholarships necessary to do so. Lilly completed her undergraduate education at Hunter College and went on

to achieve a graduate degree from Columbia University’s New York School of Social Work. She proudly served as a social worker in the New York City Public School system for over 50 years. Ever thankful for the financial support she received from the organized Jewish community, Lilly wanted to provide similar support to deserving and financially challenged students of Jewish faith.

The Lilly Reiser Scholarship, administered by UJF, provides academic scholarships to Jewish students with need from Connecticut or New York. The application window for the 2026-2027 Lilly Reiser Scholarship will open in early 2026. For more information, please contact UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross at eric@ujf.org.

A Legacy Blooms in Stamford

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

first have to get them going in your own greenhouse at home.” Benjamin didn’t hesitate. He jumped in to lead the effort.

Alongside Meredith Cohen, then chair of the shul’s chesed committee, Benjamin got the garden growing. Volunteers, including Benjamin’s and Cohen’s own children, came together week after week to plant, weed and harvest. Hundreds of pounds of produce were delivered to the Lower Fairfield County Food Bank, feeding families in Stamford, Greenwich, Bridgeport, Darien and New Canaan.

Then COVID hit, and life paused. The garden went dormant. Later, Benjamin became ill and could no longer tend to the project he loved. He later passed away.

“I spoke about the garden in his eulogy,” said Rabbi Cohen. “It was more than a garden—it created memories, forged community, and brought holiness into the world. I knew we had to revive it. We decided to bring it back and name it in his honor: The Jim Benjamin Memorial Garden.”

Benjamin’s family embraced the idea wholeheartedly. His wife, Amy Fishkow, and their two daughters, Rachel and Sarah now lead the charge each Sunday morning,

planting, weeding watering and harvesting. “Rachel said Dad was ahead of his time with organic gardening and believed that everyone should have fresh produce. He wanted to give to those who didn’t have the opportunity to have fresh vegetables. He was very proud to take the produce every week to the food bank... he’d come home and say, ‘It’s 22 pounds of produce today!’”

Fishkow continued: “Now it will serve again—with volunteers helping out. Rachel and Sarah and I are there every week. When volunteers come and bring their kids, they learn what a weed is, what a flower is, and what a vegetable is. It’s a great way to meet others, to learn and to give back. It’s like continuing the circle of giving and tzedaka.”

The garden has become a multigenerational mitzvah project. Cohen, who helped launch the original garden with Benjamin, is overjoyed to see it flourishing again. “Jim was an avid gardener and the biggest mensch you’ll ever meet,” she said. “We knew food banks weren’t getting fresh produce—they have mostly canned and processed food. We wanted to change that.”

Cohen admits she had no gardening experience at the start. “I had just moved from New York City, where I had lived for 16 years. But Jim inspired me. Now my husband

and I do a ton of gardening at home. Seeing the garden overgrown during COVID was heartbreaking. It’s so fulfilling to walk by now and see it growing. Working in the garden now feels like a double mitzvah. We’re growing food for people who need it and honoring Jim.

“It’s therapeutic—being outdoors, getting your hands in the dirt, breathing fresh air. It’s going back to the fundamentals of life. We have our phones, cars and smart TVs. This takes you away from all that. And you walk away feeling accomplished.”

Daughter Sarah Benjamin echoes that sentiment. “When my dad started the community garden, he put his heart and soul into it. Gardening brought him joy, but helping others brought him the most joy. We want to continue to honor the amazing person my dad was. This garden is the perfect way to give back and connect with the community.”

Every Sunday morning through the spring and summer, volunteers will gather behind the shul to weed, plant and harvest. “You can



A recent gardening session.

sign up on our shul website. You can sign up to be a part of the garden, even if you’re not a member,” said Rabbi Cohen. “Then you’ll be added to our WhatsApp group to get real-time updates on what we’re doing each week.”

To Benjamin, it was never just about vegetables. It was about people—connecting, caring and creating community. “We know that Jim is smiling down on us every Sunday morning,” Fishkow said.

To volunteer, sign up at www.congregationagudathsholom.org or contact Solomon Green, Garden Chair, at sgreen25@sarhighschool.org or 203-724-7519.

Mark your calendars

Community Commemoration

Remembering October 7th, 2023

Sunday, October 5, 2025, 7:00 pm

Temple Beth El, 350 Roxbury Road, Stamford





Legacy Through Family Recipes

(Courtesy of UJF) On May 28, United Jewish Federation (UJF) of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien celebrated its first year of the Life & Legacy, Legacy Plus program. Life & Legacy promotes legacy giving as a cultural norm and is a communal effort to help Jewish organizations build their endowment funds to ensure their future in perpetuity. UJF successfully launched the program five years ago during the COVID-19 pandemic and with ten local agencies and synagogues has experienced tremendous success in all aspects of the program.

The ten organizations taking part in Life & Legacy

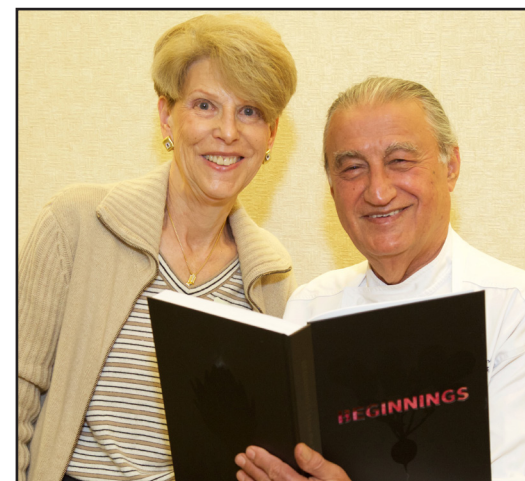
include Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy, Chabad of Stamford, Congregation Agudath Sholom, Friendship Circle, Stamford Jewish Community Center, Schoke Jewish Family Service, Temple Beth El, Temple Sinai, and Young Israel of Stamford. To date, the Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien community has formalized over 60 percent of their 610 legacy commitments.

World-renowned Israeli Chef Moshe Basson was the featured guest speaker and was interviewed by Dr. Linda Gornitsky, not just a wonderful cook herself, but mom to Chef Marc Weber, owner of OnTheMarc Catering. Basson spoke about legacy

through family recipes and prepared samples of two dishes that attendees were able to taste. Leon Hanna and Aviva Maller also shared stories about the importance of food in their middle eastern households and legacies.

“Nothing says heritage like food. They are interchangeable,” Maller stated. “Our food was inextricably connected to our heritage. My food, now that I am far removed from where I was born, has even become more important.”

To learn more about how to make your legacy commitment, please contact eric@ujf.org.





(PHOTO CREDIT: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY)

Bits & Pieces



BY SANDY GOLOVE
To submit information to Bits and Pieces, call (203) 912-9945 or email sandy@ujf.org.

MAZEL TOV TO GROWING FAMILIES:
Lynn & Harvey Berman on the birth of a grandson,

Sandy Golove

son of **Miriam & Rabbi Avi Berman**.

Maxine & Rick Brody on the birth of a grandson, son of **Lauren & Matthew Cohen**.

Brooke & Max English on the birth of a daughter.

Hillary & Ken Gaizler on the birth of a granddaughter, **Chloe Paige Gaizler**, daughter of **Michele & Dave Gaizler**.

Madelyne Kirch on the birth of a granddaughter, **Olive Gabriela Shapes**, daughter of **Lee Shapes & Clarisa Callejas**.

Debora & Scott Kove on the birth of a daughter, **Bayla Tamar Kove**.

Marcy & Marty Nirschel on the birth of a grandson, **Elliot Bowie Stone**, son of **Annley and Russell Stone**.

Claudia & Keith Silver on the birth of a granddaughter, **Sasha May Silver**, daughter of **Gabi & Andrew Silver**.

Eileen Springer & Fred Springer on the birth of a granddaughter, **Sophie Maya Springer**, daughter of **Amy & Paul Springer**.

MAZEL TOV ON MARRIAGES/ENGAGEMENTS:

Tamra & Scott Lichtman on the marriage of their son, **Eli Lichtman to Meredyth Ohringer**.

Jill & Hugh Mainzer on the engagement of their son, **Zach Mainzer to Levana Kampeas**, daughter of **Michelle & Nick Kampeas**.

Dinah Miller Marlowe & Seth Marlowe on the marriage of their son, **Rabbi Noah Marlowe to Dr. Ayelet Abelow**.

Guy Sasson and Jane Berzner on their marriage.

Alexandra Talsky and Thomas Shannon on their marriage.

MAZEL TOV OTHERS:

Lisa Manheim, recipient of the Women of Action Award from the Israel Cancer Research Fund.

Ruthie Price, recipient of the Shamash Award from the Israel Cancer Research Fund.

Gloria Green and Nat Samberg, recipients of the George and Ziporah Freedberg Excellence in Spiritual Hineni Award.

MAZEL TOV TO B'NEI MITZVAH:

Zoe Binstock: granddaughter of **Judy & Jeff Cahn**.

Magen Coleman: son of **Elior & David Coleman**.

Eliana Furmansky: daughter of **Jessica & Adam Furmansky**.

Ezra Goldstein: son of **Hilary & Ari Goldstein**.

Daniel Lederman: son of **Aviva & Greg Lederman**.

Nina Levine: daughter of **Robert Levine & Kerstin Kohlenberg** and granddaughter of **Andrea & Martin Levine**.

Yael Rosenfeld: daughter of **Jen & Ed Rosenfeld**.

WE MOURN THE LOSS OF:

Benaya Chikvashvili: father of **Sarit Tzuk Hormadaly**.

Robert Goodman: father of **Jeff Goodman**.

Howard Katz: husband of **Helene Katz**; and father of **Neil, David and Michael Katz**.

Carlos Lopez: father of **Julio Lopez**.

Shirley Miriam Madwed: mother of **Bert Madwed**.

Bella Malc: mother of **Mae Rudawitz**.

Paulette Moskowitz: mother of **Alan Moskowitz**.

Marion Shearer: mother of **Joan Schwartz**.

R. Leonard Weinberg: father of **Sandy Weinberg**.

Ursula M. Wing: mother of **Sandra Gottlin and Mark Gorwitz**.

Phyllis Brandwene: mother of **Debbie Brandwene Lese**.

Majid Khaghan: husband of **Mojgan Khaghan** and father of **Neda Khaghan, Mojdeh Khaghan Danial and Payam Khaghan**.

A Message from UJF's Community Shlichah Strengthening the Jewish Bond Across the Ocean

BY EDEN REFAELOVICH

I grew up in Nesher, a city in northern Israel, where I was part of a program called Partnership2Gether (P2G). Since elementary school, I have taken part in activities that helped build strong and meaningful connections between Jews in Israel and Jewish communities in the United States.

In Nesher, we worked closely with Broward County, Florida, through a sister-city partnership that's been going strong for years.

When I moved to Stamford, I felt it was important to continue this mission and to help others experience the same kind of connection I was lucky to have growing up. That's why I started two new projects with our partners in Afula-Gilboa, Israel.

The first is a Student Pen Pal Project between students at BCHA (Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) and students at Emek Charod School in Israel. Every week, I meet with the students at BCHA, and together



Eden Refaelovich

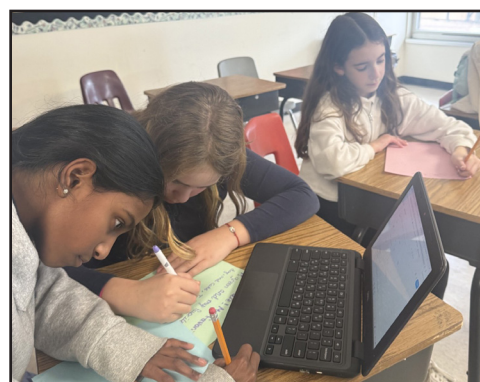
with Noga, a teacher in Israel, we've helped students exchange videos, pictures, and emails. The students are excited to get to know kids their age in Israel and to learn about Jewish life in another country.

The second is a Family Pen Pal Project that connects families from Stamford, New

Canaan and Darien with families in Afula-Gilboa. We launched a pilot with 12 families, matching them based on shared interests, kids' ages, and hobbies. The response has been amazing! Families are talking regularly, sharing traditions, and even dreaming about visiting each other in the future.

It's been so special to see new friendships growing, and to realize how strong and deep a connection can become—just because we all share something so meaningful: being Jewish.

If you want to be part of the Pen Pal experience and connect with a family in Israel, you can still sign up here: <https://www.ujf.org/PenPal>



BCHA students Suri Nayini, Isla Benjamin and Maytal Moreen write letters to their penpals.



BCHA Israel club students Nili Steinberg and Julia Tobin enjoy Israeli snacks.

The Stamford JCC's J Gala

(Courtesy of JCC) The Stamford Jewish Community Center's 2025 J Gala was a joyful celebration of the vibrant community and a night to honor some special individuals who help it flourish. The JCC proudly recognized honorees Zoe and Dan Schwartz for their

outstanding dedication and presented the JCC Emerging Leader Award to Sara Simon for her inspiring contributions. Funds raised at the J Gala support critical scholarships and mission-driven programs, helping ensure access, inclusion, and community for all.



Honorees Zoe and Dan Schwartz.



The JCC Emerging Leader Award recipient, Sara Simon with her husband Mitch.

(ALL PHOTO CREDIT: HALEY BLAU)

MAZEL TOV

Do you know someone who just had a baby, a birthday, a bar/bat mitzvah, a wedding, or special celebration?

Send them a greeting by scanning the QR code below, visit www.ujf.org/tribute, or call 203-321-1373

Thinking of You...

Send your sympathies to someone who fell ill or to the family of someone who recently passed by scanning the QR code below, visit www.ujf.org/tribute, or call 203-321-1373

Schoke Jewish Family Service Celebrates 50 Years

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) On May 18, the community came together for An Evening with Schoke Jewish Family Service, commemorating 50 years of service. It was a night filled with warmth, gratitude, and celebration as Schoke JFS honored the agency's extraordinary staff with the 45th Annual Mitzvah Award, recognizing their tireless commitment to serving others.

A highlight of the evening was the Japha Family Emergency Assistance Program paddle raise, which raised critical funds to support families and seniors across Fairfield County facing growing challenges.

Schoke JFS extends thanks to all donors, sponsors, committee members, staff, volunteers, and Board members who made this milestone celebration possible.



(l-r) Amanda Geffner, Lysa Cannon, Rebekah Kanefsky, Licia Kendall, Toby Lazarus PhD, Erika Gadson, Matt Greenberg, Elizabeth Hinds, Hannah Pollack, Marina Sapir, Bonnie Russo, Isrella Knopf, Lielle Sugar, Steve Schwartz, and Jen Bernstein, 45th Annual Mitzvah Award recipients.



Featured comedian Talia Reese had the crowd laughing out loud.



Ken Neuhaus, Schoke JFS Board Chair, Erika Gadson, Schoke JFS Chief Operating Officer, and Matt Greenberg, Schoke JFS President and CEO.

(PHOTO CREDIT: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY)

UJF Reading Partners Celebrates Twenty-Six Years

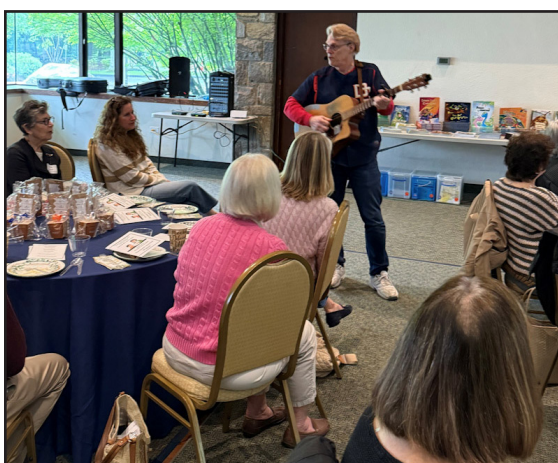
(Courtesy of UJF) The United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien Herbert and Sarah M. Gibor Reading Partners program marked 26 years with a May gathering of volunteers, teachers, and supporters. Over 60 people enjoyed a festive breakfast in recognition of their dedication. The guest speaker, Daryl Cobb, a multi-talented children's author, storyteller, singer/songwriter, and school assembly performer, had everyone taking part and singing.

UJF Reading Partners Director Lenore Fogel said, "I consider it an incredible honor

to have collaborated with our volunteers over the past years to help encourage and support a love of reading in Stamford's children. Being able to read opens the door to all possibilities."

Reading Partners is a program that pairs volunteer reading tutors with children in grades K-3, one hour a week, at local Stamford public schools and community centers.

If you are interested in learning more about the Reading Partners program, please contact Lara@ujf.org



Guest Speaker Daryl Cobb sings with attendees at Reading Partners Appreciation Breakfast.



Reading Partners co-founder Susan Kreiger addresses the volunteers.

WACKY WEDNESDAYS WITH PJ LIBRARY

Wednesday, July 2

Harbor Point Commons Park
101 Commons Park S, Stamford

Wednesday, July 9

Stamford JCC
1035 Newfield Ave, Stamford

Wednesday, July 16

Chestnut Hill Park
354 Chestnut Hill Road, Stamford

Wednesday, July 23

Barrett Park
Newfield Ave & Burdick St.

Each week will feature fun PJ Library activities and ice-cold popsicles from 4:30-5:30 pm.

Participants are encouraged to wear their wackiest hats, outfits, costumes, or pajamas!

For security purposes, advanced registration is required at www.ujf.org/wackywednesdays



“Brothers in Arms” Create Meaningful Moments

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Each Friday afternoon for the past three years, two familiar faces have taken turns bringing warmth, kindness, and fresh challahs in Chabad’s signature pink bags to doorsteps across Stamford. Brothers Nate and Wyatt Elsner have been volunteering for Chabad



Wyatt and Nate Elsner kick off their *mitzvah*-filled Friday afternoons by putting on *tefillin* with Rabbi Moshe Shemtov, before heading out to deliver “Loaves of Love” across Stamford.

of Stamford’s “Loaves of Love” program, turning a weekly *mitzvah* (good deed) into a meaningful act of community connection and care. When the chance arises, they also make time to put on *tefillin* with Rabbi Moshe Shemtov.

Nate, 17, is a rising senior at AITE and a student who balances academic excellence with athletic dedication. A proud member of the National Honor Society, he’s passionate about math, science, and technology. He’s also a champion pole-vaulter on Westhill’s track team, a leader in his school’s Jewish Club, and someone who loves the outdoors—whether running or simply enjoying nature.

Wyatt, his older brother, a rising sophomore at the University of Cincinnati, is pursuing a degree in chemical engineering. A graduate of Stamford High School’s early college studies program and also a former member of the National Honor Society, Wyatt is equally at home in the lab as he is on a rock wall. He’s an avid rock climber and a fan of card games and magic on and offline.

For Leah Shemtov, who runs the “Loaves of Love” project, what truly stands out about the brothers is “their calm, steady presence and unwavering willingness to help others. They’re known as the most helpful brothers

around, always willing to say yes when help is needed, and never expecting credit in return.”

The brothers’ connection to Chabad of Stamford runs deep. Both Nate and Wyatt graduated from Gan Yeladim Preschool and celebrated their bar mitzvahs at Chabad, forming lasting relationships and a strong foundation in Jewish life and values.

As a family, the Elsners love spending time together. Whether they’re traveling, skiing, or hiking, they prioritize shared experiences and quality time.

For Chabad of Stamford, the brothers’ volunteering is a strong reminder that the most impactful acts often come quietly and consistently. Through their simple yet meaningful Friday volunteering, these brothers have become a source of light in the Stamford community, one “loaf of love” at a time.

Chabad is grateful to this dynamic duo who volunteer and bring smiles to so many in the Stamford community. To volunteer with Chabad of Stamford’s various *mitzvah* projects, email programs@stamfordchabad.org

UJF Hosts “October 8” Screening

(Courtesy of UJF) On May 7, United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien hosted two screenings of the documentary “October 8” at the AMC Landmark 8 Theatre in Stamford, which gave an insightful look into the explosion of antisemitism on college campuses, social media, and on the streets of America since the October 7 attacks. Asaf Romirowsky, executive director of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East and co-author of *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief*, and Talia Kahn, a PhD student at MIT and featured in the film, engaged in meaningful dialogue with attendees.



(l-r) Asaf Romirowsky, event chair Shira Schwartz, Talia Kahn, and UJF CEO Diane Sloyer

Celebrating Mimouna

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation’s community Shlichah, Eden Refaelovich, whose family is Moroccan, brought Mimouna, a festive Moroccan-Jewish tradition that marks the end of Passover, to Stamford for an evening of celebration. There were traditional Moroccan sweet treats, henna tattoos, and music, and attendees learned about a new tradition. A true sense of community made it a memorable night.



Attendees show off their new henna tattoos.



Attendees learn about the Moroccan-Jewish tradition of Mimouna.



Aaron's Place

A Kosher Comfort Room

Aaron's Place, on the ground floor of Stamford Hospital provides kosher snacks, drinks and meals, in a comfortable environment.

If you are caring for a hospitalized loved one or waiting for tests, this comfort room is a place to regroup and refresh.

Information is available at the hospital front desk. The code, in Hebrew letters, is on the door of the room.

For more information about Aaron's Place, visit www.ujf.org/aaronsplace

Aaron's place is a project supported by the United Jewish Federation, the Sichel Family, Stamford Hospital, and private donations.

Summer Begins for Friendship Circle

(Courtesy of Friendship Circle) On a Sunday afternoon in June, about 30 members of the Friendship Circle family met up at the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport. Volunteers and their special friends and family enjoyed being together. To begin the afternoon, everyone joined together for songs and prayer. Adding to the excitement, this event welcomed Friendship Circle alumni currently in college

to reconnect with their friends.

Friendship Circle families and their friends spread out throughout the zoo to see the animals and exhibitions. Friends took photos together, talked to the animals and enjoyed the sunny day.

Friendship Circle Director Malya Shmotkin said, "Beardsley Zoo is always a favorite and a great way to round out the

year. It was a fun and special morning for everyone!"

The mission of the Friendship Circle is to bridge the gap between special needs and typical youth through shared experience, empower special needs youth with the skills they need to live a productive and independent adult life, give parents and families much-needed respite, and nurture

a sense of awareness and communal responsibility in teens.

For more information about becoming involved with the Friendship Circle, please contact Director Malya Shmotkin at malya@friendshipct.com



Friendship Circle alumnus Jonah Rosenberg with Josh Wachsman.



Alumna Ruthie Price with Max Berger and his mom Shira.



Friendship Circle participants join in "circle time."



Sophie Rosenfeld, Chana Goldstein, and Abby Ekanazi measure themselves against the big cats.

Honoring Holocaust Survivors

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) On June 4, the Schoke Jewish Family Service (JFS) Anachnu program hosted Holocaust Survivor Day at Congregation Agudath Sholom, with around 70 guests in attendance, including survivors aged 80 to 99. The day was filled with profound moments of reflection and celebration, as everyone came together to honor the strength, resilience, and legacy of these individuals.

"Holocaust survivors were treated to live music by Leon Skolnik, which led to a lot of dancing and joy, followed by a kosher lunch. But it was the spirit of community that truly defined the day, bringing people together to acknowledge the immense sacrifices and stories of survival that shape the shared

Jewish history," said Marina Sapir, Anachnu Program Manager at Schoke JFS.

Schoke JFS extends gratitude to the dedicated volunteers who provided invaluable support, from driving survivors to the event, to greeting and serving guests and a special thank you to Congregation Agudath Sholom and United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien for their generous support in making this meaningful event possible.

Through the Anachnu program, Schoke JFS remains devoted to supporting Holocaust survivors and seniors within the community, ensuring their voices are heard and their legacies honored.

To learn more or to get involved, visit: www.ctjfs.org/anachnu



Schoke JFS Anachnu program participants are honored at Holocaust Survivor Day.



Join Women's Philanthropy

In celebration of Tu B'Av

FIND LOVE & JOY IN WHAT YOU DO

HEAR FROM

LILACH PORGES

FOUNDER & CREATIVE DIRECTOR, PROCODE DRESS

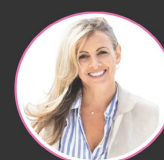
ELINA FURMAN

FOUNDER, ORA MAGAZINE & KAHLMI

AUGUST 6

7 - 9 PM | PRIVATE HOME IN STAMFORD

Women's Philanthropy Salons connect like-minded women who are deeply committed to creating a strong and connected Jewish community.



Elina Furman



Lilach Porges

SPACE IS LIMITED- RSVP AT WWW.UJF.ORG/WPSALON

Celebrating Another Year with Reading Partners

(Courtesy of Reading Partners) As the 26th year of Reading Partners draws to a close, celebrations for the students were held throughout the district. At each elementary school, volunteers and students celebrated the children's reading accomplishments with a certificate, gift book and snacks. Each tutor spoke about their children's efforts and successes throughout the year and a good time was had by all.

A Reading Partner spends one hour a week at a local elementary school reading with two students, 30 minutes each. If you are interested in obtaining more information or would like to become a Reading Partner for the 2025-2026 school year, please contact Lara at Lara@ujf.org.



Children at the Julia A. Stark Elementary School in Stamford display their certificates of accomplishment.

3SQUARE Packs Food to Feed the Hungry

(Courtesy of UJF) During the academic year, 3SQUARE, a program of United Jewish Federation, provides "in-need" elementary school-aged children in Stamford with a bag of food to sustain them through the weekend, when they don't have access to school lunches. Most of these children are chronically hungry and don't have regular access to food. The bags, designed for discreet tucking into backpacks, contain a variety of healthy foods such as shelf-stable milk and cheese, dried fruits, granola bars, beans, soups, fruit and pudding cups, beef jerky, cereal, juice boxes, tuna, and crackers. Volunteers shop weekly at the local food bank and supplement the bag with fresh fruit.

3SQUARE has been feeding the hungry for 11 years and during the 2024-25 academic year supplied 52 bags a week to children in need. This impactful project is funded by a generous grant from the Claire Friedlander Foundation.



Jaye Kaplan, Nancy Mimoun, Jill Kaplan, Daphne Kahane, Robin Madan, and Pogo the dog.

Israeli Shlichim Come Together for JCC Summer Camp

UJF Community Shlichim Eden Refaelovich (*far right*) will be working over the summer with fellow Shlichim Liav and Gaia at the Stamford Jewish Community Center Summer Camp starting in late June.



United Jewish Federation Operation Rising Lion

**ISRAEL
AT
WAR**

Israel Emergency Fund

The people of Israel need our help now!

Visit www.ujf.org/risinglion to donate

History Day Winner Examines the Nuremberg Code

(Courtesy of the Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County) Each year, the Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County (JHSFC) participates in the Connecticut History Day, a yearly educational program of the Connecticut Democracy Center. The program is open to any public, private or religious school student interested in creating a project and developing their perspective and understanding of history. The winner receives \$100 plus a framed certificate.

This year's History Day Winner examines the Nuremberg Code. People are aware of the Nuremberg Trials but what about the Nuremberg Code? Rachel Mathew, a South Windsor High School ninth grader, set out to find out about the Code after searching for a topic that would fit into the 2025 Connecticut National History Day theme, "Rights and Responsibilities in History."

Rachel's carefully documented research paper, "Medicine and Morals, How the Nuremberg Code Protected the Rights of Patients While Defining the Responsibility of Physicians," was awarded the 2025 JHSFC Special Award. It was considered the "Outstanding Entry that Best Incorporated Jewish History, Heritage or a Jewish

Personality."

In addition to examining periodicals and conducting interviews with experts on the Code, Rachel also studied a transcript of the Nuremberg Trials, personal statements from victims of experiments and the full text of the Nuremberg Code.

As a result of her investigation, she concluded, "The Nuremberg Code was a document created in the wake of the horror conducted during World War II when the world realized the extent of medical procedures that were not ethical and caused harm to patients....The document defines the rights of patients in medical research while outlining the responsibilities of doctors and the moral boundaries they cannot cross. Although the text was not legally binding,...it fathered the field of bioethics."

Although entry into History Day was not a class assignment, Rachel wants to thank two South Windsor teachers, Jay Garrish and Jeremy Walz for their feedback. When Rachel is not conveying her thoughts on paper, she enjoys reading, running and watching favorite TV shows.

For further information on this program, please go to historydayct.org.



Rachel Mathew with Jeremy Walz, her social studies teacher.



Rachel Mathew displays her History Day prize certificate.

Shabbat de Mayo

(Courtesy of Chabad at Harbor Point) Over 40 young Jewish professionals gathered for a fun and meaningful Shabbat dinner filled with vibrant Mexican flavors — tacos, nachos, margaritas, and more. Great food, atmosphere, and great friends made for an unforgettable evening. To join this warm and vibrant community of young Jewish professionals in Stamford, visit youngandjewish.org or call Levi Deren at 203-912-7708. Young & Jewish can be found on Instagram @YoungAndJewish.



UJF Lion of Judah Gathering

Thursday, September 18th
6:00pm in a private home

Featuring Jewelry Designer, Freida Rothman

Event Chair: Nancy Mimoun
Register at www.ujf.org/lion

*Lion's of Judah make a household gift of 5k or more to the annual campaign

From The Shlicha's Kitchen

Mom Limor's Homemade Bread Rolls

★★★★★

Ingredients:

- 4.4 lbs or 2 kg All-purpose flour
- 8 Tablespoons sugar (½ cup)
- 2 Tablespoons salt
- 5 Tablespoons dry yeast
- 5 to 5½ Cups lukewarm water (start with 5 cups)
- 1 Cup vegetable oil
- 1 Egg

How to make:

1. In a large bowl, mix the flour, salt, and 4 tablespoons of sugar.
2. In a separate bowl, mix the remaining 4 tablespoons of sugar and the yeast with 2 cups of the water (taken from the 5 cups).
3. Stir well to dissolve the yeast. Let it sit 2 min until foamy.
4. Once the yeast is activated, pour it into the flour mixture.
5. Add the remaining 3 cups of water and the oil.
6. Mix everything until a smooth, soft dough forms.
7. Cover the dough (with a plastic wrap or a large kitchen towel) and let it rise until it doubles in size.
8. After the dough has risen, shape it into rolls and place them on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, spaced apart.
9. Let the rolls rise again for about 15 minutes.
10. Brush the tops with beaten egg.
11. Optionally, sprinkle sesame seeds on top.
12. Bake in a preheated oven at 375°F (190°C) until the tops are golden brown. Check the bottoms to ensure they are baked through.
13. When ready, transfer the rolls to a tray lined with paper towels or a clean kitchen towel to prevent soggy bottoms.

TIP
If the dough is too sticky, add a bit of flour.
If it's just slightly sticky, add a little oil.
If the dough is too stiff, add a bit of water and mix well.

BON APPÉTIT
לחם טוב

RECOMMENDED



United Jewish Federation
of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien
Serving Greater Fairfield County

Emergency Security Fund

Saving lives, building community

**COMMUNITY
SECURITY**
INITIATIVE

Through the Tepper Foundation and Jewish Federations of North America, United Jewish Federation has been able to access a one-time security grant for \$33,333.00 and can access an additional \$33,333.00 as a match.

This fund provides crucial grants to local Jewish institutions offering programming to children aged 0-5 to address heightened security needs that have arisen.

This timely and critical grant ensures that early childhood sites are sufficiently protected.

The Tepper Foundation will generously match up to \$33,333.00 on money raised through July 31, 2025. Visit www.ujf.org/securitymatch or scan the QR code below to give TODAY!

Please give generously so UJF can access this additional grant to pass along to our community as our security commitment and costs increase.



LIFE & LEGACY

Life & Legacy Testimonial

Each edition of the New Jewish Voice features the testimonials of community members just like you who have declared their intent to leave a legacy gift to a Jewish organization in the Stamford, New Canaan and Darien Jewish community. This program is funded by United Jewish Federation and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

Learn why they look to secure our Jewish future and discover your reasons to join them. Together, we can all work to guarantee the future of the Stamford Jewish community we love. For more information, contact Lenore Fogel at (203) 321-1373 or at lenore@ujf.org

PETER POSER AND CARYL FERBER POSER TESTIMONIAL

Four generations of our family have enjoyed and benefited from living in Stamford. Three generations met their spouses because of Federation-related activities and who knows, maybe our granddaughter, Scarlett will someday make it four!

The first generation, Beverly and Stanley Ferber, moved to Stamford in 1967 and became involved in Jewish life and by example taught their daughters, Caryl and Stacy, to embrace their responsibility to Judaism and community. Caryl and I met through the Young Leadership Program at New York UJA. We moved to Stamford in 1989 becoming the second generation of active community



Peter Poser and
Caryl Ferber Poser

members, joining Temple Beth El and becoming involved with the Jewish organizations that support Jewish life. Having served on numerous boards and committees throughout the years we now proudly watch the third generation, our children, Ariel and Stephen Bedik, becoming active board members committed to Jewish life in Stamford.

My father-in-law told us when we moved to Stamford "If you want to live in a Jewish community you have to actively support the Jewish community." Life & Legacy allows us the opportunity to continue that support well beyond our lives and for generations to come.

United Jewish Federation
of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien
Serving Greater Fairfield County

NextGen and PJ Library are celebrating summer!

Scavenger Hunt Hike & Ice Cream

Step into your favorite sneakers and join us for a fun-filled family hike, as we embark on a thrilling quest to discover hidden treasures! Kosher ice creams from the on-site cafe will be given to everyone at the end to ensure a really COOL day.

Sunday July 27th, 10 -11:30am
Mead Memorial Park, 241 Park Street, New Canaan, CT
(Meet at The Apple Cart Cafe)

\$5 per person or \$12 per family

RSVP www.ujf.org/summer

PJ Library **NEXT Gen**

Life & Legacy Honor Roll

United Jewish Federation is proud to partner with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation to bring the Stamford, New Canaan and Darien community the Harold Grinspoon Life & Legacy Program. Through communal efforts, the following individuals have made a commitment to one or more Jewish communal institutions to secure our Jewish future. The names in blue indicate that formal actions have been taken.

For more information, contact Lenore Fogel at Lenore@ujf.org, or Diane Sloyer at (203) 321-1373 or dianesloyer@ujf.org.

28 Anonymous
29 Anonymous
Craig Adler
Adrienne & Michael Alexander
David Amsellem
Alice & David Andersen
Jeri Appel
Mark Appel
Ricky Snow Arbron
Suellyn Bache
Monica Becker & Edieal Pinker
Rachel Tyd & Robert Beldock
Gayle & Mitchell Bell
Debra & Michael Berg
Dina & Paul Berger
Karen & Ira Berk
Devra Jaffe- Berkowitz & Parry Berkowitz
Lynn & Harvey Berman
Berkun Family
Darona & Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein
Jen & Andy Bernstein
Melody & Claude Bernstein
Bruce & Nancy Blasnik
Judith Block
Ilana Springer Borkenstein & Daniel Borkenstein
Jodi & Richard Boxer
Amy Bubel
Henry Bubel
Blake & Daniel Bueckman
Rita & Michael Buttermann
Judy & Jeff Cahn
Kate & Peretz Cik
Roberta & Alan Cohen
Andrea & David M. Cohen
Diane & Rabbi Daniel Cohen
Malerie Yolen-Cohen & Jeff Cohen
Judy & David S.* Cohen
Mimi Cohen
Rachel & Ephraim Cohen
Saul Cohen*
Marsha Colten
Kahla & Gordon Cooper
Randie Katz & Lawrence Cryer
Tracy & Nahum Daniels
Janice Steinberg & Stephen Davidson
Andrea Dener
Elayne Dener
Rabbi Yisrael Deren
Helen & Marty Donner
Fran & Bob Dorf*
Shoshana Dweck
Heather & Glenn Dynner
Debra & Dan Faizakoff
Michelle Fanwick
Esta & Jay Feinsod

Sharon & Michael Feldstein
Peggy & Jerry Fensterstock
Linda Hurwitz & Richard Fine
Robin & Jason Fischel
Gail Berman & David Fogel
Stephanie & Howard Fogel
Lenore Fogel
Ilan Fogel
Miriam Lavinsky & Morton Folb*
Beverly Frank
Sharon Franklin
Robin Frederick
Julia & Eli Freedberg
Connie & Alan Freeman
Maxine & Jay Freilich
Susan Frieden
Rachel & Keith Friedman
Marc Friedman
Donna & Edward Fuhrman
Nancy & Mark Funt
Heidi & Harrison Ganz
Lisa & Gadi Gavronsky
Lesley & Dennis Gehr
Gary Gepner
Carole Gladstone
Herbert Gladstone*
Sylvia & Herb Gladstone*
Leslie Glenn
Michael Gold
Abby Goldberg
Cyndy & Eric Goldberg
Marilyn & Irving Goldblum
Alicia & Jason Goldstein
Caryl & Melvin Goldstein*
Judy & Howard Goldstein
Sharon & Bruce Goldstein
Meryl & David Gordon
Nan & Paul Gordon
Linda Gornitsky
Loralee & Philip Granowitz
Shira & Ethan Green
Allison & Frederic Greenbaum
Sharon & Larry Greenberg
Susan & Edward Greenberg
Pam Ehrenkranz & Matt Greenberg
Rhonda Greif
Grecia & Ron* Gross
Caryn Halbrecht & Tommy Haendler
Jeremy Hager
Michael Handel
Scott Handelman
Kayla & Leon Hanna
Wynd Harris
Jacqueline Herman
Elissa & James Hyman
Rebecca Isenstein

Shara & Rabbi David Israel
Sari & Alan Jaffe
Meryl & Ron Japha
Anne Liss Johnson
Sadae & Michael Kadish
Judith & Grant Kallen
Peggy Kalter
Helene & Harvey Kaminski
Chanie Kamman
Ronny & Ira Kaplan
Roni & Jan Kaplowitz
Jason Kaplowitz
Lisa & Arnold Karp
Jeannie Kasindorf
Jessica & Ilan Katz
Joy Katz
Larry Katz
Judith & Sheldon Katz
Neil Katz
Mark S. Kaufman
Betsy & Peter Kempner
Madelyne Kirch
Liz & Marc Kitay
Elissa & Philip Klapper
Sally Kleinman
Harris Kligman
Naomi & Rabbi Eli Kohl
Susan Kostin
Arthur Kramer*
Claudia Kraut
Norma Kraut
Erica Kraypohl
Jeannie & Brian Kriftcher
Carol & Allen Krim
Elizabeth & Scott Krowitz
Nina Kuch
Svetlana Kunin
Jackie & Marshall Kurland
Lorraine & David Kveskin
Helen & Ed Kveskin
Lieba & Steve Lander
Hannah & Ilan Lastoff
Dallice & Ian Lazarus
Shelley Leibowitz
Lois Stark & Gary Lessen
Helene Levine*
Marla & Jason Lewis
Sharon & Jeffrey Lewis
Elizabeth Libner
R. & J. Licht
Ronnie & Gary Lilien
Carol & Peter Lilienthal
Vered & Mark Links
Lisa & Seth Linzer
Pamela Feldstein & David Loewenberg
Eleanor & Mort Lowenthal
Stu Madison
Lisa & Jeff Manheim
Norma & Milton Mann*
Susan & Len Mark
Dinah Miller Marlowe
Seth Marlowe
Chris Maroc
Rhonda Schaffer-Maron & Jeffrey Maron
Melanie Massell
Sandra Mehl*
Michal & Rabbi Levi Mendelow
Janice & Jake Meyer

Wendy Goldberg Miles
Nancy Zinbarg Mimoun
Cecile E Minkoff
Bennet Moskowitz
Marguerite & Kenneth Neuhaus
Becky & Omer Neumeier
Rose* & Bruce Newman
Judge Stanley Novack*
Marsha & Louis Panzer
Leah & Doni Perl
Robin Evans & Jeffrey Perry
Beth Shepherd Peters
Dr. Shay Pilnik
Michele & Scott Piskin
Caryl Ferber Poser & Peter Poser
Tanya Barton- Radin & David Radin
Enid Randall*
Bonita & Stephen Rappoport
Judith & Robert Raymond
Lisa & Harry Rich
Judy & Adam Rin
Jamie & Toby Ring
Betty & Dan Roberts*
Sonia & Brian Roitman
Linda & David Roitman
Romanowitz Family
Arlene & Carl Rosen
Julie & Remi Rosenberg
Natalie & Mark Rosovsky
Irma Ross
Jaime & Eric Ross
Sandra Ross
Sally & Jim Rothkopf
Ruth Rothseid
Terry Newman & David Rubin
Linda & Leonard Russ
Bonnie Russo
Edith Samers
Renee Samson*
Sharyn & Richard Sarner
Sharon L & Charles H Saul
Edward Schachter
Leah Schechter
Hilde Scheraga*
Jayne & Bud Schiff
Judy Schneiderman
Nancy Schiffman
Alana and Jed Selkowitz
Carol Ruth & Herman Shepherd*
Monica Smyth & Michael Schlessinger
Elayne & James Schoke*
Daniel Schwartz
Chaya & Levi Segal
Betsey & Arthur Selkowitz
Myrna & George Sessa
Diane & Steve Shaby
Debbie Katz Shapiro
Leon Shapiro
Tara & Richard Shapiro
Jessica & Laurence Sheinman
Leah & Rabbi Moshe Shemtov
Marsha Kaiser Shendell
Rosalyn Mae Sherman
Stephanie & Bob Sherman
Malya Shmotkin
Ronnie Ness Sichel & Steven Sichel
Jerome and Bracha Silber

Lisa & Grant Silver
Miriam Landsberg-Silverman & Eliezer* Silverman
Paula Simon
Gloria & Randy Skigen
Marty Skrelunas
Diane & Elliot Sloyer
Michal Fox Smart
Brenda & Bruce* Smith
Ed Smith
Marilyn Sofer
Greta Solomon
Miriam & Steve Sosnick
Sandy & Moshe Speter
Ed Spilka
Cantor Micah Morgovsky & Rabbi Benjamin Spratt
Eileen Springer
Fred
Beverly & David Stein
Betsy & Michael Stone
Gladys & Greg Teitel
Julie & Rabbi Jay TelRav
The Estate of Judith Bragin*
The Estate of Sheila Carmine*
The Estate of Thomas Gilmartin*
The Estate of Ronald Gross*
Rebecca Tipermas
Hildi and David Todrin
Gail & Steven Trell
Pamela & Richard Vogel
Janet Wainright
Phyllis & Harvey Walzer
Annie & Jeremy Watman
Shternie & David Wayne
Ellen & Richard Weber
Linda Gornitsky & Harvey Weber
Dana & Carl Weinberg
Marian Weinberg
Leon Weisburgh
Janet Welkovich
Barbara Kasman & Art Wernicke
Barbara & Ken White
Leigh Wilson
Robyn & Mark Winarksy
Howard Wolfe
Navah & Naftali Wolfe
Dana Horowitz & Peter Wolly
Neda Khaghan & Robert Yaghoubian
Rita & Abe Yellen
Marcia Gordon & Seth Young
Sheryl & Dan Young
Lauren & Joe Zalis
Joan Zinbarg*
Renee Zinn
Navah & David Zizmor
Shira & Mitchell Zucker

**Of Blessed Memory
This is the list provided to UJF at time of publishing. We apologize for any names that have been omitted. Please let us know and the missing names will be added to the next issue of the paper. Names in blue have finalized their commitment at the time of publication.*



Israeli Firm Will Help US Conquer Plastic Waste Crisis

Plastic Back's innovative low-temperature chemical recycling technology converts hard-to-recycle plastics like PVC into valuable byproducts.

**BY ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN/
ISRAEL21C**

Israeli company Plastic Back, which chemically reverse-engineers plastic waste for upcycling, has announced a strategic partnership with a US-based recycler to establish the first-of-its-kind sustainable waste-management facility in answer to the growing global plastic waste crisis.

With over 400 million tons of plastic waste produced annually worldwide—and less than 6 percent effectively recycled—millions of tons of waste end up in landfills or leak into the environment, contributing to an estimated resource loss of \$120 billion per year, according to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Traditional recycling methods

remain inadequate in managing the sheer volume of plastic waste generated.

Plastic Back's innovative low-temperature chemical recycling technology, which converts hard-to-recycle plastics like PVC into valuable byproducts, was developed at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in collaboration with the university's tech-transfer company, Yissum.

By breaking down plastic waste into reusable petrochemical components, Plastic Back reduces landfill waste, decreases reliance on virgin raw materials, and supports a circular economy.

The company's mission is to upcycle 100,000 tons of plastic waste by 2030, setting a new benchmark for sustainable

plastic recycling. The types of plastic it can treat include polypropylene, high-density polypropylene (HDPE), low-density polypropylene (LDPE), multilayer plastic, mixed plastic and polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

"We see the PVC chemical recycling segment as a major opportunity," said Plastic Back CEO Tal Binder Cohen explaining that PVC is considered a huge bottleneck in the chemical recycling industry. Plastic Back uniquely separates the chlorine from the carbon backbone and then converts the carbon chains to short liquid hydrocarbons.

Binder Cohen said that support from the BIRD Foundation (Israel-U.S. Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation), the Israel Innovation Authority

and the Israeli Ministry of Energy, "enhances our ability to commercialize our solution in the US and close the loop on difficult-to-treat PVC waste streams."

Cofounder and VP-R&D Uri Stoin, who invented the technology with Prof. Yoel Sasson, said the company's chemical process breaks down the plastic and converts it into crude oil-like substances (naphtha), which can be refined into new plastics.

This not only reduces plastic waste pollution and plastic waste in landfills but also decreases dependence on virgin raw materials, providing a sustainable solution for the petrochemical industry.

10 Best Israeli Shows and Films to Catch on Netflix

Fauda is far from the only high-quality Israeli content on international platforms. The variety is surprisingly broad and not to be missed.

BY YULIA KARRA/ISRAEL21C

As the year 2025 begins, streaming platforms are rushing to update their catalogs, including their Israeli-made content.

Netflix seems to have the biggest variety of Israeli content to choose from, carrying the hit show "Fauda," probably the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of Israeli content that has taken the world by storm.

But Israeli content is not only action and special ops. It's also comedies, melodramas, crime thrillers and much more.

ISRAEL21c has compiled a list of the 10 best Israeli movies and TV shows available on streaming giant Netflix.

10 ISRAELI SHOWS AND FILMS TO WATCH ON NETFLIX

1. "Borders"

"Borders," an eight-part series, follows the story of Avi, a young man from Tel Aviv who joins Israel's Border Police to settle scores with Arabs from Jaffa, with whom he previously had a conflict. But his problematic past threatens to undermine his new career.

The show was created by film director Meni Yaesh and stars Ben Sultan as the main character, Avi. Sultan is a brother of Niv Sultan, the star of another hit Israeli show – "Tehran."

The original title of the show, produced and aired in September 2023 by HOT, is actually Border Police. However, when Netflix bought the rights to this Israeli cop series, they decided to go for a less contentious approach when translating the title from Hebrew into English.

2. "Seven Figures"

Another Israeli series title altered in translation is "Seven Figures," which in the original Hebrew is "Six Zeroes."

3. "Nevsu"

Channel 12-produced "Nevsu" won the 2018 International Emmy Award for comedy series. Although the show ended in 2021, the rights were purchased by Netflix, giving "Nevsu" a new life and a whole new audience.

The Israeli show tells the story of a mixed family, an Ethiopian father and an Ashkenazi mother, as they navigate raising their mixed-raced toddler in a complicated reality.

4. "A Body That Works"

Starring Gal Gadot's best friend, actress Rotem Sela, "A Body That Works" is about an infertile couple, Elie and Ido, who decide to hire a surrogate to carry their child. The plotline focuses on the complex relationship that develops between the couple and the woman who is set to give birth to their baby.

Israeli TV star Yehuda Levi plays Ido, while "Fauda" star Lior Raz portrays Elie's secret lover, adding spice to the seven-episode first season.

5. "Between Walls"

Set in the Old City of Jerusalem, "Between Walls" is an Israeli documentary about Platoon C, a special border police unit that operates in the capital's Old City, prone to terror attacks. To add even more tension, the platoon is made up of Jews, Christians and Muslims, sometimes conflicted between their faith and their duty as cops.

The movie premiered on HOT in 2021 but has only recently been added to the streaming platform, which could attract a whole new audience.

6. "Black Space"

"Black Space," the Channel 13 suspenseful crime drama that premiered in 2020, revolves around the investigation of a school shooting,

which thankfully is not a common occurrence in Israel. Police initially arrest three Arab custodians but later discover that the details don't add up.

The plot for this Israeli series is very loosely based on the case of 13-year-old Tair Rada, who was stabbed to death in a school bathroom in the city of Katzrin in 2006. Roman Zadorov, a custodian at the school, was convicted of the murder, but in 2023 the conviction was overturned. The case remains unsolved to this day.

7. "Kissufim"

Released in theaters in Israel over the past summer, the feature film tells the story of a group of Israeli soldiers who volunteer at Kibbutz Kissufim, located next to the Gaza border, in 1977.

"Kissufim" writer and director Keren Nechmad based the film on the experiences of her father, who served next to Gaza and lived in the kibbutz around the time Israel signed a peace treaty with Egypt in 1979.

The film was shot in Kissufim in the summer of 2021. On October 7, 2023, the kibbutz was ravaged by Hamas terrorists, who murdered 17 people there and kidnapped Shlomo Mansour, a Holocaust survivor, who is now 86 years old and still held captive in Gaza.

8. "The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem"

Since the show's release on Yes, and later Netflix, three years ago, "The Beauty Queen of Jerusalem" has become a certified classic of Israeli-made television.

Based on the terrific novel by Sarit Yishai-Levi, the Israeli series depicts a multigenerational family in Jerusalem. The story spans the Ottoman, British and Israeli

rule of Jerusalem, providing a vivid and picturesque backdrop to the dramatic lives and secrets of the Armoza family through the years. The series features some of Israel's best-loved actors, and gives a sneak peek into the Israel of old and new.

9. "Checkout"

Taking wacky to a completely new level is "Checkout," Israel's number one TV comedy. In recent years, the show has truly become part of Israeli folklore. Quotes from the series have transformed into the country's most circulated memes.

The show follows the antics at a fictional supermarket, focusing on its employees and customers. It is so very funny because each of the characters is one you've encountered millions of times, now distilled down to their quirky, annoying or unique essence. The show's cast is a roll call of Israel's finest comedic actors, and while the plotline might seem very place-oriented, the story it tells is utterly universal.

10. "Fauda"

Last but not least, this list would not be complete without "Fauda." The hit TV show, which captivated audiences around the globe, manages to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a complex, non-obvious way without glossing over its violence and ugliness while still retaining an action-packed, fun beat and an array of likeable characters from both sides.

The fifth season of "Fauda" is currently in development, expected to be released sometime around 2026. While we wait for the new episodes to arrive, it's a great time to catch up on the four previous seasons.

73 Fun Facts About Israel

To celebrate Israel's 77th birthday, we bring you 73 weird, wacky and remarkable things about this tiny country in the Middle East you may not know.

CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS ISSUE

BY NICKY BLACKBURN

28. When Israel was founded in 1948, there were only 806,000 residents. The population reached two million in 1958. At the end of 2024, the population passed the 10 million mark. The population is 74% Jewish, 21% Muslim, 5% Christian, and the rest foreign citizens.
29. Israel is a youthful country. In 2024, 28% of Israel's population was under the age of 14, and only 12% was older than 65.
30. Not surprisingly, given the number of them, Israelis love kids. According to a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development published in 2024, Israel's fertility rate is about 2.9 children per woman, compared to the world average of 1.5.
31. Helping that along, Israel has advanced major breakthroughs in fertility. The country performs more in-vitro fertilization per capita than any other country, and it's free for the first two babies in women under the age of 45.
32. In 2024, the most popular baby names in Israel were Mohammad for boys and Avigail for girls.
33. Life expectancy in Israel is among the highest in the world. According to the latest data from Statista, in 2022 life expectancy for men in Israel stood at 80.7 years, and 84.8 years for women.
34. Israel is home to the largest known dog cemetery of the ancient world. More than 1,400 dog skeletons, most of them puppies, were found at the Ashkelon site. They were buried sometime in the fourth and fifth centuries BCE, and even now, no one knows why.
35. One of the world's greatest archeological finds since the Dead Sea Scrolls was discovered in a prison in Israel in 2005. The 1,800 year old inscription "Jesus is God" was found in a floor mosaic as Megiddo Prison expanded. It is now on show in a museum in Washington, DC. The Christian biblical name for Megiddo is Armageddon.
36. According to a new report by Startup Nation Central, AI firms in Israel now account for 30 percent of the country's 7,000+ startups, but are bringing in 47% of all investment. There are currently some 2,170 AI startups in Israel today.
37. Israel ranks fourth globally in AI advancements, behind the US, China and the UK.
38. New AI software from Canotera can predict with 85% accuracy if a lawyer can win or lose a legal case, helping lawyers assess liability and predict how a case will turn out.
39. In 2025, Israel ranks first globally in terms of its number of technology unicorns per capita. (A unicorn is a privately held startup valued at over \$1 billion.) As of 2025, the country had 90 active tech unicorns, and its startups raise billions of dollars in investments annually.
40. In a recent study, five Israeli universities were ranked among the world's best institutions for producing graduates who went on to found US-based unicorns. The Technion-Israel Institute of Technology was ranked first, with graduates at least 25 times more likely to become founders of US-based unicorns. Reichman University was ranked second, and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem came in fourth, fifth and sixth, respectively.
41. In 2024, Tel Aviv ranked first in Israel, and ninth globally, as a top city for startups according to StartupBlink's Global Startup Ecosystem Index. The tech capital of Israel scored almost 64 points on the index. Jerusalem ranked second in the country, with just 8.5 points on the index.
42. In March, Google parent company Alphabet purchased Israeli cybersecurity company Wiz for \$32 billion, making it the biggest acquisition in Israeli history, the biggest acquisition by Google, and the biggest acquisition ever in cybertech.
43. A new startup that emerged from stealth in 2024 has developed an AI system that can detect and fight wildfires. Inspired by Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system, FireDome has a mechanical launcher that deploys capsules containing fire retardant. It goes into operation this year in the US.
44. Israel has the largest fortified underground hospital in the world: the three-floor, 2,000-bed Sammy Ofer Fortified Underground Emergency Hospital at Rambam Health Care Campus in Haifa. It was used extensively through the current war.
45. Two of Israel's largest hospitals, and a hospital in Philadelphia, are working with a robot called Gary that does all sorts of tasks on the wards including chatting to patients, taking medical notes and even cleaning and mopping floors.
46. Caesarea-based company IceCure Medical has developed a minimally invasive treatment to destroy benign and cancerous tumors of the breast, kidney, lung, liver and other organs by freezing them with liquid nitrogen. Of all Israel's amazing medical advances, this is just one that stands out.
47. In Israel, people are taught from an early age to turn off the tap while they brush their teeth, to save precious water.
48. In Israel, a meal without a salad is not considered a meal. Even breakfast.
49. Tel Aviv has over 4,000 Bauhaus buildings, the largest concentration of Bauhaus buildings anywhere in the world.
50. During Passover in Israel, supermarkets are not allowed to sell chametz (forbidden foods like bread and cakes), and if you bring the products to the checkout, they cannot be scanned. Large sections of the shops are covered in plastic sheets.
51. In Hebrew, Merry Christmas is *Chag Molad Sameach*, which means Happy Festival of the Birth.
52. In Israel, the most common way to mop the floor is by doing what's called a *sponja*: flooding the floor with water and using a long-handled squeegee to push the dirty water outside or down the nearest drain.
53. Israeli toilets have two handles: A smaller one that releases less water to flush down #1, and a larger one that elicits more water to get rid of #2.
54. Israel's Parliament, the Knesset, has 120 seats because it's modeled after the Second Temple-era Knesset HaGedolah (the Great Assembly), a leadership body of 120 sages, prophets and scribes.
55. When Israel was founded, the Knesset met regularly in a movie theater in Tel Aviv called Kessem (Magic) Cinema. The legislative assembly met there throughout 1949 until moving to Jerusalem.
56. Israel may have been called Zion, Ever or Judea. The new country finally decided on Israel, the name suggested by the country's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion.
57. 85 percent of Israeli households get hot water from rooftop solar heaters, compared to less than 1 percent in the United States.
58. In Israel it is legal to write the Jewish calendar date on all official documents, including checks, instead of (or in addition to) the Gregorian date.
59. The main compounds of the cannabis plant were first isolated, analyzed, synthesized and named in Israel.
60. Israel was the first country to ban underweight models from participating in fashion shows.
61. Since 2020, Israel has ranked as one of the top 10 happiest countries in the World Happiness Report. Even after the last year and a half of war, Israel came in at 8th place for happiness in the 2025 report, and first place for social connections.
62. From October 2023 to December 19, 2024, 1,667 demonstrations and protest events have taken place in Israel. The majority of these demonstrations called for the release of the hostages and the resignation of the government. At least 10 of these protests had more than 100,000 participants. In the months since then, the protests have continued to increase in both frequency and size.
63. Comprised entirely of deaf and blind actors, the company, Nalaga'at (please touch), based in Jaffa, includes a restaurant where visitors eat in the dark and are served by blind staff.
64. In 1952, acclaimed scientist Albert Einstein was offered the post of president of Israel. He declined, however, citing ill health and a lack of experience "dealing properly with people and... exercising official functions."
65. HemaShock, an Israeli medical company, developed an exsanguination tourniquet that squeezes the blood from the patient's limbs and sends it to the core organs where it's needed most in cases of hemorrhagic shock or heart attack.
66. Israeli company Beyond Oil developed a powder that can remove carcinogenic toxins from fried food.
67. In 2025, Gal Gadot became the first actress to receive a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. "I'm just a girl from Israel," she said, while sharing an emotional shoutout to her family in Hebrew.
68. The world's heaviest strawberry was grown in Israel in 2022 at the Toot BaSadeh farm in Kadima. The berry weighed in at 289 grams (about 10 ounces), or 290 with the stem. Regular strawberries weigh just 15 or 16 grams.
69. Israeli company Watergen developed an atmospheric water generator that can create clean drinking water from the air. It has been deployed in disaster situations all over the world.
70. Israeli company Beewise developed the world's first autonomous beehive. It can house up to 40 bee colonies (around 2 million bees) and take care of their health and upkeep with a simple app.
71. Israeli students won an international award for producing real honey without bees, using a bacterium programmed to "learn" how to make honey.
72. The record for the greatest number of passengers ever flown by a commercial airliner happened in May 1991 as part of Operation Solomon, when Israel evacuated 1,086 Jewish Ethiopians from their home country on an El Al Boeing 747. Two babies were born on the flight, bringing the number to 1,088.
73. The first ever Israeli flag, flown in Jerusalem on May 14, 1948, was hand-sewn and colored with blue crayons.

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