



THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION

Community Pride Shabbat – a Source of Pride for All!



(l-r) Rabbi Jay TelRav, Cantor Micah Morgovsky, Rabbi Michael Moskowitz, Cantor Katie Kaplan, Rabbi Michael Knopf

(Courtesy of UJF) This coming June, Temple Beth El and Temple Sinai are partnering with United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF) to host a Community Pride Shabbat on Friday evening, June 6, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm at Scalzi Park in Stamford. This collaborative effort is open to all to join in celebrating the beautiful diversity that exists within our own Jewish community.

The word “pride” is an integral concept within the LGBTQIA+ community, representing broad themes like solidarity, collectivity, and identity, as well as resistance to discrimination and violence. Since 1970, June has been widely celebrated as Pride Month to commemorate the Stonewall Riots, a series of gay liberation protests in June of 1969. After receiving official designation in 2000 by President Clinton, Pride Month has

grown to become an annual celebration of the many contributions made by the LGBTQIA+ community to history, society, and culture worldwide.

The Community Pride Shabbat will begin at 5:30 pm with a picnic dinner – blankets and lawn chairs are recommended. In case of inclement weather, the pavilion at the center of Scalzi Park has also been reserved. At 6:15 pm, Rabbi Michael Knopf and Cantor Katie Kaplan from Temple Beth El and Rabbi Jay TelRav and Cantor Micah Morgovsky from Temple Sinai will lead a beautifully curated Kabbalat Shabbat service. There will also be a d’var torah by Rabbi Michael Moskowitz, the Scholar-in-Residence for Trans and Queer Jewish Studies at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah in New York.

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Former IDF Spokesperson Addresses Situation in Israel

BY NANCY SCHULMAN

United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien (UJF) is pleased to invite the entire community to a discussion of the current Israel situation with Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Conricus, former Israel Defense Forces (IDF) international spokesperson. This informative and highly anticipated event will take place on June 24 at 7:30 pm at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA), 2186 High Ridge Road, Stamford. A pre-event reception will be held for sponsors and UJF major donors.

Lt. Col. Conricus will speak to the attendees about the current situation in the Middle East and his experience as an IDF international spokesperson. He will discuss the challenges the IDF faces and the opportunities they have, including counterterrorism, the current conflict, and how they’re regarded in international media.

In more than 20 years of military service, Conricus held various positions in

infantry, international relations and military diplomacy. His service also included being the first IDF officer to be seconded to the



Jonathan Conricus

United Nations, serving in the UN Peacekeeping Operations Office of Military Affairs in New York. As the International Spokesperson of the IDF, Conricus was responsible for the IDF’s international traditional and social media operations, public affairs and public diplomacy. Conricus is currently a senior fellow at the

Foundation for Defense of Democracies. He also heads Conricus Communications, which focuses on strategic communications, public relations, crisis management, and media training.

“UJF is proud to be a source of continuous education and engagement, especially since October 7, 2023, when we heard from you, our community, that this was needed. I am so grateful that UJF has the opportunity to host Jonathan Conricus,” remarks Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO. “He continually provides his followers with

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Boots on the Ground

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation recently hosted two active IDF soldiers through UJF’s partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel. With a one-week reprieve from serving in the IDF, Maayan and Amit shared their story of October 7, 2023, and since, while engaging with over 500 community members - Jewish and non-Jewish - during their time in Stamford. The soldiers met with over 100 Stamford police officers at the Stamford Police Station as part of their visit. Jim Comstock, UJF’s Security Director, was instrumental in coordinating this meaningful visit. See more on pages 12-13.

(PHOTO CREDIT: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY)



From UJF's Chief Executive Officer Trying to Balance the Unbearable

BY DIANE SLOYER

Fifteen months have passed since October 7, 2023--a date that shattered our sense of security, upended daily life, and redefined what it means to lead a Jewish community in North America. As CEO of United Jewish Federation, I find myself, like so many of you, profoundly tired. Tired not



Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO

just in body, but in spirit - a fatigue shaped by the relentless balancing act between professional responsibility, community leadership, and the intimate realities of home life, all while the shadow of war looms over Israel and, by extension, all of us.

Each morning, I wake to the same barrage of headlines: updates from the front, stories of loss, and the ongoing struggle to bring hostages home. My phone pings with messages from colleagues in Israel - some displaced, some grieving, some serving on the front lines. It also pings with the harsh reality of antisemitism and security threats we face on an almost daily basis.

At work, I am called to be a source of strength, and I fear that one day I may not have the necessary strength because, like you and so many of our loved ones in Israel, we are tired! Our Federation's mission has never felt more urgent: providing trauma support, rebuilding shattered communities, and ensuring that the stories of October 7 - the immense losses, the heroism, the resilience - are not forgotten. We fund trauma counseling, help restore livelihoods, and support organizations that install bomb shelters so children can play in safety. Yet the work is never done. The needs are endless,

and the emotional toll is real.

I feel the fatigue in our community, sense the heaviness we all feel, and often struggle to answer questions, because frankly, there are no answers.

And yet, amid exhaustion, I am continually inspired by the will to go on. In Israel, I have seen farmers return to

their fields, harvesting potatoes where terror once reigned. I have witnessed communities rallying around the bereaved and volunteers mobilizing to support the displaced. Here at home, our community shows up - at vigils, in fundraising drives, in quiet acts of solidarity.

Recently, as I stood at the Israel Day Festival in Stamford, I watched children laughing, dancing, and playing—an image of pure joy that felt almost defiant in its resilience. Nearby, a powerful program honoring our heroes reminded us that our story is one of perseverance—of bringing light even in the darkest of times. Just weeks ago, we welcomed active-duty Israeli soldiers to our community, and I listened as they spoke with quiet conviction about their unwavering commitment to defend the homeland they love. Their bravery, paired with the laughter of our children and the steadfast resolve in our voices, reaffirms what we already know: the spirit of Israel and the Jewish people is unbreakable.

In the face of exhaustion, we choose resilience. In the face of loss, we choose life. And together, we will continue to walk this long road - tired, yes, but never alone. Am Yisrael Chai!

Former IDF Spokesperson Addresses Situation in Israel

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tremendous insights. I hope the community will make every effort to attend and learn about the Israel situation from Jonathan.”

Tickets for this event are \$54 until June 17, \$65 from June 18, and seating is limited.

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CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

June 6.....	8:06 pm
June 13.....	8:10 pm
June 20.....	8:12 pm
June 27.....	8:13 pm

UJF President's Message Why Consider Leaving a Legacy Gift?

BY BEVERLY STEIN

A legacy gift—also known as a planned gift or bequest—is a meaningful way to create a lasting impact that extends beyond your lifetime. While many people give during their lives to support causes they care about, a legacy gift ensures your values and passions live on. Whether large or small, it's a powerful way to shape a future that reflects what matters most to you.



Beverly Stein,
UJF President

Legacy giving is also deeply personal. It's more than a financial contribution—it's a statement about who you are and what you believe in. It tells your loved ones and your community what you stood for and what you hoped to leave behind. Your gift becomes part of your story, ensuring your values continue to inspire others. Legacy giving is a beautiful testament to the values, passions, and compassion that define us. Through a planned gift, you can provide enduring support to the causes that matter most, ensuring that your legacy leaves a positive mark on the world.

Importantly, you don't need to be wealthy to leave a legacy gift. Many people assume that planned giving is only for those with significant means, but this isn't true. Even modest gifts can have tremendous impact, especially when combined with those of others. Legacy giving is about intention, not income—it's about choosing to make a difference in a lasting way.

One of the key reasons to consider a legacy gift is its long-term impact. Legacy gifts allow organizations to plan ahead, grow sustainably, and pursue projects that will benefit future generations. For organizations, legacy gifts offer stability and a foundation for the future. Unlike annual donations, which typically support current

operations, legacy gifts create a dependable stream of future funding that helps sustain programs, expand services, and invest in long-term growth. Legacy gifts also show that the person leaving the legacy gift has a deep level of trust in the organization's mission and future. This message of trust will resonate with others in the community

who will follow the donor's lead.

When donors share their plans to leave a legacy gift, they inspire others to do the same. This helps build a culture of generosity and forward-thinking within a community. It strengthens the bond between donors and organizations and sends a clear message about the importance of continued support for meaningful work.

Ultimately, leaving a legacy gift is an act of vision and generosity. It's a way to ensure that your beliefs endure, your story continues, and your impact reaches far into the future.

Through the *Life & Legacy* initiative, a partnership with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and United Jewish Federation, UJF supports legacy giving across the Jewish communities of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien. All local synagogues and agencies participate. As our community enters year 5 of this program, I am proud to share that our community has 610 promised gifts with an estimated value of over \$16 million.

If you're not yet a *Life & Legacy* donor, consider how you can leave your legacy and make a long-lasting impact on our Jewish community. Your gift will benefit generations to come.

To learn more about *Life & Legacy* opportunities, please contact Eric Ross at Eric@ujf.org.

Community Pride Shabbat – a Source of Pride for All!

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Keynote speaker, Rabbi Mike Moskowitz, a cisgender, heterosexual rabbi with three rabbinic ordinations from the Ultra-Orthodox world, has made an incredible impact upon trans acceptance within Orthodox Jewish practice. To borrow language from the queer experience, Rabbi Moskowitz describes his religious journey as, “I was assigned secular at birth, came out and identified as ultra-orthodox, and now I'm some version of religious non-conforming.” “I am grateful that Rabbi Moskowitz accepted the committee's invitation to be part of this program and will spend Shabbat in the community. He is a true visionary and

has supported countless families, especially within the more traditional streams of Judaism,” shared UJF's Deputy Director Eric Ross.

Cantor Kaplan shared, “I am so honored, as a clergy member in Stamford, to be part of this community effort to engage and support the Jewish and LGBTQIA+ members of our community. Celebratory events like this truly increase our community visibility.”

This is a free community event and open to all ages, but for security purposes, advance registration is required at www.UJF.org/Pride.

For more information, please contact Eric Ross at Eric@ujf.org or (203) 321-1373.

Celebrating the Rebbe's Legacy

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Each year, Chabad of Stamford honors the *Yahrzeit* (anniversary of passing) of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson z"l, whose life and teachings continue to inspire generations around the globe. This year marks the 31st anniversary of the Rebbe's passing, and Chabad will commemorate the occasion with an uplifting evening of music, wisdom, and unity.

The event, open to the entire community, will take place on Sunday, June 29 at 7:00 pm at Chabad of Stamford, 770 High Ridge Road. The evening will feature a musician playing soulful Chasidic melodies and a special keynote address by internationally renowned speaker Rabbi Yitzchak Schochet, visiting from London, England.

Rabbi Schochet is recognized as one of the most dynamic voices in contemporary

Jewish thought. Named one of the ten most influential rabbis in the UK by *The Jewish Telegraph*, he is a sought-after lecturer known for his wit, wisdom, and ability to connect deeply with audiences. His talks span a wide range of topics—from "The Kabbalah of Coffee: Your Life in a Cup" to "The Challenge of the Jew in the 21st Century." Whether unpacking the spiritual in the everyday or addressing complex social realities, Rabbi Schochet's insights

are both powerful and practical.

Rabbi Moshe and Leah Shemtov, co-directors of Chabad of Stamford, are honored to welcome Rabbi Schochet this year. "The Rebbe's vision continues to shape our community," said Rabbi Shemtov. "We look forward to an evening that will inspire and elevate all who attend."

To RSVP or learn more, visit www.stamfordchabad.org or call 203-3-CHABAD.

Join the Agudath Sholom Mission to Ft. Bragg

(Courtesy of Agudath Sholom) Congregation Agudath Sholom (CAS) is honored and proud to launch a partnership with the Jewish soldiers in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to support Jewish men and women in the United States Armed Forces.

The inspiration for the partnership was a visit to Stamford from Captain Ryan Murphy, a Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy graduate who is currently an Apache Helicopter Pilot at Fort Bragg. Upon visiting Stamford and Agudath Sholom, he shared the thirst of Jewish soldiers for deepening Jewish identity and community.

Rabbi Daniel Cohen, together with CAS member Lonnie Keene, a lawyer who practices veterans disability law and whose family is dedicated to the US Air Force, developed the idea with the support of Fort Bragg Jewish Chaplain Rabbi Scott Klein, as a partnership between CAS and the army base.

The first project will be a "Fly In" mission to the Fort Bragg base, in support of the Jewish soldiers and their community, on Sunday, July 27, returning on Monday



evening, July 28. The itinerary will feature Sunday brunch at Beth Israel Congregation with the local community, a synagogue tour with the congregation president, and an evening event with the community. Monday will include army physical training with soldiers, breakfast with the chaplains, meeting with command teams, religious support staff and garrison chaplain, and a meet and greet and learning with the soldiers.

The "Fly In" is open to the entire Jewish community. For more information, contact Rabbi Daniel Cohen rabbicohen@cas-stamford.org or Lonnie Keene lonnie53211@yahoo.com

Chabad of Stamford's JWC Summer Soirée

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Chabad of Stamford is excited to announce the return of its annual "JWC Summer Soirée," a signature event celebrating community, connection, and the spirit of summer. The gathering will take place on Wednesday, June 25 at 6:30 pm, at a private residence in Stamford.

Organized by Jewish Women Connected (JWC), the summer soirée invites women from across the community to an elegant garden party designed to mark the close of another meaningful year. Guests can look forward to an evening filled with friendship,

connections, cocktails, and food.

The event is an ideal opportunity to unwind, celebrate, and look ahead to the opportunities that summer brings for personal growth and shared experiences.

"The JWC Summer Soirée has become a cherished tradition in the Stamford community, offering women of all ages a chance to gather, connect, and be inspired," said Leah Shemtov.

For more information and to register, visit www.stamfordchabad.org or email programs@stamfordchabad.org.

Sunday Funday Scavenger Hunt

(Courtesy of UJF) UJF's PJ Library and NextGen are set to hit the trails for a morning of exploration and fun! On Sunday, July 20, at 10:00 am, families will gather at Mead Memorial Park's Bristow Sanctuary and Wildwood Nature Preserve in New Canaan for a short scenic hike and interactive scavenger hunt.

Led by event chairs Natanel Fuchs and Robin Fischel, participants will embark on a family-friendly trek, searching for hidden treasures along the trail—think bugs, birdhouses, and frogs!

While the little ones check off their scavenger hunt lists, parents can enjoy a relaxed morning walk, reconnecting with familiar faces and making new friends along the way.

And what better way to wrap up a summer outing than with a sweet treat? The adventure will conclude with ice cream from The Apple Cart Café.

Don't miss out on the chance to make summer memories with your family and community. Register at www.ujf.org/sundayfunday



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JCRC Update

Building Relationships and Alliances

BY GARY JONES
UJF JEWISH COMMUNITY
RELATIONS COUNCIL
DIRECTOR

As regular readers of this column will remember, one of the principal goals of the restructured Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) is to enable United Jewish Federation and the Jewish community to proactively establish mutually beneficial relationships with elected officials, interfaith and intergroup leaders and communities.



Gary Jones,
JCRC Director

With the alarming rise of antisemitism, we will need allies who understand our concerns and help us address them.

Of course, relationships need to work for both parties. While the Jewish community already does a lot to support the needy and to promote social justice for all, the more we understand the needs of our friends and neighbors, the easier it is for us to provide the support in the best manner possible, and to ask for it in return.

To build these relationships, the JCRC has formed two subcommittees. The purpose of the Political Advocacy Subcommittee is to develop and steward relationships with local State legislators and local elected officials. The purpose of the Interfaith/Intergroup Outreach Subcommittee is to develop relationships with faith leaders and leaders of the various racial and ethnic communities in our

Federation area.

During the first week of May, both subcommittees held their initial meetings. Under the leadership of Connie Freeman, each Interfaith/Intergroup Outreach Subcommittee member will be assigned the task of enhancing our relationship with leaders of a particular religious, racial or ethnic community. Under the leadership of Margie Abrams, Political Advocacy Subcommittee members will be assigned the task of enhancing our relationship with elected state legislators and/or city and town officials.

Subcommittee members will identify people they know and where they have connections to build on relationships they already have. The next steps will be to prepare a document outlining all of the connections. This will allow us to quickly and efficiently reach out to our friends and allies to show our support for them and, when necessary, to ask for their support. This effort will reach beyond the subcommittee. UJF Board members and other Jewish leaders and community

members at large are invited to share their contacts in order to help us build this relationship document.

Finally, our JCRC will prepare a one-page information sheet describing what UJF does and the impact that the Jewish community has in addressing the needs of the entire community. The sheet will also include bullet points designed to help make sure that our subcommittee members convey a consistent message in their relationship-building efforts.

How can you help? Please consider joining one of our subcommittees. Relationship building requires commitment, time and consistency. Especially in the context of the Outreach Subcommittee, in which the potential for relationship building is virtually limitless, we need more volunteers. The more connected we are, the more impactful we can be in building the relationships that our community needs.

Feel free to contact me about joining one of our subcommittees or anything else relating to the JCRC at gary@ujf.org.

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HOW TO REACH THE EDITOR:

Mail: Sandy Golove
 United Jewish Federation
 2009 Summer Street – Suite 302
 Stamford, CT 06902
E-mail: sandy@ujf.org **Phone:** (203) 912-9945

Send article submissions via e-mail to Sandy Golove at sandy@ujf.org marked "Stamford Voice" in the subject line. Expect an acknowledgment; please re-send if you do not receive one.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Journalist Shares Optimism and Insights

(Courtesy of Temple Sinai) The Joan Bruder Danoff Lecture each year brings an important figure in the Jewish world to Stamford's Temple Sinai. The talented podcaster and journalist Mark Oppenheimer joined over 150 people at Temple Sinai on April 27 to discuss how Jewish learning and cultural awareness serve us throughout our lives.

Starting from a place of optimism, Oppenheimer shared that despite ten years of increasing antisemitism in the United States, particularly experienced online, as measured by the Anti-Defamation League's metrics, we still live in the safest and most welcoming community in the history of the world for Jews.

Oppenheimer began by highlighting four responses he felt were insufficient to manage antisemitism and rising antisemitism:

- Practicing "SWAT team activism" by providing a quick dose of education about how to combat antisemitism and then expecting the recipients to be able to transform others' beliefs.
- Providing education on past genocides, including the Holocaust, to make people less likely to practice future atrocities.



Committee Members (l to r): Ruth Rothseid, Shelley Taylor, David Cohen, Joan Danoff, Mark Oppenheimer, Nan Gordon, Shelly Welfeld, Tamra Lichtman, Marty Newman



Danoff family (l to r): Charles Debrovner, Claire Poneman, Joan Danoff, Mark Oppenheimer, Pat Debrovner, Will Danoff.



Speaker Mark Oppenheimer with Joan Danoff and Rabbi Jay TelRav.

- Focusing on hyper-securitization of Jewish spaces to harden borders, including bulletproof glass, fences, and guards.
- Looking to the government to enforce restrictions and spending

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Yom Ha'Atzmaut Flag Raising

(Courtesy of UJF) Members of the Jewish community in Stamford came together at the Stamford Government Center on May 1 for the Israeli Flag raising in honor of *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* (Israel Independence Day) and the beginning of Jewish American Heritage Month. Bridget Fox, on behalf of Mayor of Stamford, Caroline Simmons, presented a proclamation declaring May 1, 2025, to be Independence Day of the State of Israel. Following the proclamation announcement, attendees gathered outside for the raising of the flag of Israel while they all sang "Hatikvah," the Israeli national anthem. Patrons of the event also saw a display of various inventions created in Israel that have changed the lives of millions of people around the world.



Bridget Fox, Mayor's Office Chief of Staff, presents Diane Sloyer with a proclamation honoring Israel's 77th birthday and Jewish Heritage Month.



Lenore Fogel, Shani Cohen, and Rabbi Eli Kohl of Young Israel Stamford



Bill Meyers, Diane Sloyer, and Kori Meyers



Nancy Mimoun, Jill Kaplan, Lenore Fogel, Dayna Patashnik, Robin Madden, and Daphna Kahane



UJF President Beverly Stein and UJF CEO Diane Sloyer raise the Israeli flag.

Gan Yeladim Celebrates Israel

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) At Gan Yeladim, the children joined in a meaningful and joyful celebration of *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel) with each class taking part in hands-on experiences that brought its beauty and significance to life. The *yeladim* (children) made bricks for the *Kotel* (Western Wall) and built a replica where they placed their mitzvah notes and shared photos of themselves or loved ones at the real Kotel in Jerusalem.

They explored the wonders of the land—touching salt from the Dead Sea, squeezing fresh oranges from Jaffa, and preparing their own Israeli salad and homemade hummus. Some classes even recreated the vibrant atmosphere of a real Israeli *shuk* (market) complete with delicious goodies and authentic produce.

The day ended with the entire school gathering to sing songs about the special land and to pray together.



Gan Yeladim's children bring the energy of a *shuk* to life, celebrating the flavors of Israel.

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UJF's NextGen Marks Israel's Independence Day

BY MELANIE VORM,
NEXTGEN DIRECTOR

Nearly 100 young Jewish professionals gathered at Temple Sinai in Stamford to celebrate Yom Ha'Atzmaut (Israel Independence Day) with an evening full of energy, flavor, and connection.

Guests were treated to a festive atmosphere, with Israeli music spun by a live DJ and a steady stream of dancing and mingling. Authentic Israeli cuisine catered

by L'Chaim, the new kosher restaurant in Stamford, including falafel, hummus, and Israeli salad, kept the crowd fueled for the night's festivities. The space was transformed with blue and white decor, helping to set the mood for a night that was equal parts joyful and meaningful.

"This event is everything NextGen is about-- bringing together the next generation of Jewish leaders to celebrate, connect, and strengthen our shared community," said Micky Reich, Chair of

NextGen, an initiative of United Jewish Federation. "Yom Ha'Atzmaut is a joyful moment for Israel and the Jewish people, and it was incredible to see so many people come out to celebrate."

The celebration was part of NextGen's ongoing efforts to engage Jews in their 20s, 30s and 40s in meaningful, accessible ways, through social events, cultural programming, volunteer opportunities, and leadership development. Events like this one offer a chance for young professionals

to build community, express their Jewish identity, and deepen their connection to Israel in a vibrant, welcoming environment.

In a time when creating space for Jewish joy and pride feels more important than ever, the evening served as a powerful reminder of the strength and resilience of the Jewish community, especially among its rising leaders.

As the music wound down and the final goodbyes were exchanged, the message of the night remained clear: Am Yisrael Chai.



(l-r) Jeremy Weingarten, Michael Liesman, Matt Bennett, Eden Refaelovich, Ashley Mail, Julia Linsner, Hillel Segal, Chelsea Gifford



Participants enjoy interacting with one another as they celebrate Israel together.

Honoring, Remembering, and Celebrating

(Courtesy of BCHA) Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) students experienced a powerful three-day journey through Jewish memory and identity as the school marked *Yom HaShoah* (Holocaust Remembrance Day), *Yom HaZikaron* (Memorial Day), and *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* (Israel Independence Day).

YOM HASHOAH

Seventh graders led a moving Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony, sharing excerpts from survivor diaries to honor lives lost and underscore the sacred responsibility of remembrance.

YOM HAZIKARON

Upper School students, guided by Director of Jewish Programming, Morah Maytal and the *banot sherut* (emissaries from Israel) paid tribute to Israel's fallen soldiers and terror victims through heartfelt readings and moments of silence. The emotional ceremony reminded all of the sacrifices that allow us to live and learn in freedom.

YOM HA'ATZMAUT

The week concluded with joyful celebration as students marked Israel's Independence Day with a spirited assembly, outdoor games, music, and a community pizza party.



BCHA students assemble themselves into an Israeli Flag to show their pride for Israel. (DRONE PHOTO CREDIT: BCHA UPPER SCHOOL STUDENT GABRIEL HARON)

Together, these three days offered BCHA students a meaningful arc of memory, unity, and pride—from mourning and reflection to renewal and rejoicing. In honoring the past and celebrating the present, the school community reaffirmed its commitment to nurturing not only the minds but also the hearts and souls of the next generation of Jewish leaders.

Celebrating Israel at UCONN

(Courtesy of UConn Hillel)

UConn Hillel held its annual Israel Fest from April 8 through 10, featuring the art, music, food, culture and history of Israel. The event started with Artists4Israel creating Israeli and Jewish-themed airbrushed t-shirts for students. Hillel then hosted a screening of "Centered," the documentary about the late Senator Joe Lieberman.

Governor Ned Lamont and UConn President Radenka Maric joined in honoring the Senator's leadership, legacy, civic engagement, and support for Israel. The next day Hillel students created a *shuk* (market), featuring the sights, sounds and tastes of a traditional Israeli market. The Fest wrapped up with a visit by Egyptian activist Dalia Ziada. A scholar and expert on Middle Eastern geopolitics, she educated the community on the history and complexities of the region. Over 300 students participated in events. The Israel Fest was planned by Hillel's Jewish Agency for Israel *shlichah*, Shirly Afrimi, and students from the UConn Hillel board, Huskies for Israel student organization and BICEP (Building Israel Connections and Engagement Program) interns.



Israel fellow Shirly Afrimi (far right) with two Israeli exchange students.



Sophomore Eva Dannison, co-president and founder of the UConn Chapter of "Jewish on Campus", a national student advocacy organization, graces the Israeli food table at the *shuk* (market) at UConn Hillel.

Yom HaShoah Community Commemoration

(Courtesy of UJF) As antisemitism is on the rise, the Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) annual commemoration, convened by United Jewish Federation, had an additional impact on participants. The event committee of Jason Fischel, Jared Kanfer, Becky Kevelson, Leah Miller, Stacy Miller, and Barbara and Harry Webski hosted author Keren Blankfeld and 99-year-old survivor Ernest Nemeth. In addition to lighting candles, participants also joined in prayer led by local clergy.



Rabbi Jay TelRav Temple Sinai, and Reverend Mark Lingle, Associate to the Bishop for Congregational Care at New England Synod



Audience listens as Ernest Nemeth tells his story.



Holocaust survivor Ernest Nemeth.



Rabbi Michael Knopf of Temple Beth El



Diane and Rabbi Daniel Cohen, Congregation Agudath Sholom.



Barbara and Harry Webski.



Becky Kevelson introduces speaker Ernest Nemeth.



Stacy Miller introduces author Keren Blankfeld.

(ALL PHOTO CREDIT: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY)

Mark Oppenheimer Shares Optimism and Insights

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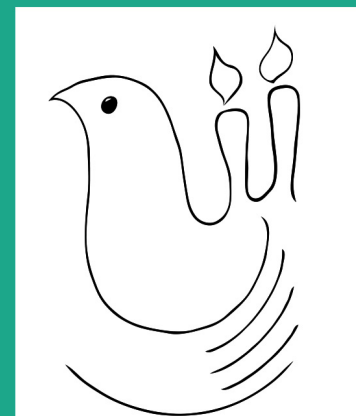
to manage antisemitism.

Rather than pursue these paths, Oppenheimer asserted that each one of us has within ourselves the capacity to engage in a vibrant Jewish life to combat antisemitism. He urged each person to:

- Show up as Jews and engage in Jewish institutions in every possible way, including affiliating with a temple, pursuing Jewish education, serving our community by attending shivah and weddings, and supporting Jewish institutions;
- Live the Jewish calendar and strive to celebrate one more holiday each year; and

- Model one's participation in our Jewish spiritual, intellectual, and communal lives so the next generation learns to live as courageous, proud, and thoughtful Jews who embrace their Jewish identity and defend Israel.

This annual lecture series, honoring longtime Sinai members Joan and the late Dr. Stuart Danoff, was endowed by their children, Nancy Danoff, Suzy Poneman, and Will Danoff. Thank you to the work of the Danoff Committee members: David Cohen, Joan Danoff, Nan Gordon, Mered Kopstein, Tamra Lichtman, Marty Newman, Ruth Rothseid, and Shelley Taylor.



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.

Temple Beth El Installs Rabbi Michael Knopf

(Courtesy of Temple Beth El) In a joyful and inspiring Shabbat morning ceremony, Temple Beth El officially installed Rabbi Dr. Michael Knopf as its new spiritual leader, marking a significant milestone in the congregation's more than 100-year history. The occasion heralds a new era of dynamic leadership and renewed community engagement.

Rabbi Dr. Knopf, known for his lifelong dedication to building a more inclusive and just society, centered the installation weekend around themes of community, spirituality, and *tikkun olam*—the Jewish imperative to repair the world. In his remarks, he shared a compelling vision for the future of Temple Beth El:

"This community is steeped in tradition yet vibrantly engaged with the world around us. I am honored to help guide us forward—deepening our spiritual lives, expanding our

commitment to learning, and living out our Jewish values with integrity and compassion."

The ceremony included readings and blessings from community leaders, as well as heartfelt reflections from some of Rabbi Knopf's mentors, including Rabbi Abe Friedman, Rabbi Joshua Jeffreys, and Rabbi Michelle Dardashti. Members of the Temple Beth El community also offered their own messages of welcome and support.

U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal, a longtime congregant, attended the service and delivered a personal message honoring Rabbi Knopf's leadership and steadfast commitment to social justice. The Senator also pledged his ongoing support and partnership.

Following the service, attendees gathered for a celebratory Kiddush lunch. The weekend concluded with a community service project benefiting the Elayne and

James Schoke Jewish Family Service of Stamford, reinforcing the congregation's deep commitment to service and outreach.

Temple Beth El Board President Jeff Cohen reflected on the significance of the moment. "An installation is more than a ceremonial passing of the torch in Jewish tradition. It is a moment of sacred commitment between a rabbi and their congregation."

Rabbi Dr. Knopf holds ordination and master's degrees from the American Jewish University and earned his Doctor of Ministry from Union Presbyterian Seminary. A widely published author, his work explores Jewish ethics, spiritual practice, and communal leadership.

Temple Beth El looks forward to a future of continued growth, learning, and impact under Rabbi Knopf's guidance.



From the Therapist

The Power of Communication and Connection

BY REBEKAH KANEFSKY, LPC, LMHC

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) May is Mental Health Awareness Month. It's a time to reflect on how emotional well-being is closely tied to the quality of our relationships and the ways we connect. In today's digital world, love and connection are everywhere on screen, from reality shows like *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* to dating apps with millions of users. But despite this constant focus on love, feelings of loneliness are on the rise.

In 2024, a study by Hinge and research firm DCDX revealed that 82% of Gen Z respondents reported feeling lonely, even while being highly connected online. This trend spans all age groups, highlighting a disconnect between digital engagement and emotional fulfillment.

At Schoke Jewish Family Service (Schoke JFS), as a therapist, I see this disconnect often. Many clients come seeking help with love, loss, or relationship challenges. One common theme I observe is the longing for real, meaningful connection, something that dating apps and online communication often fail to provide.

While technology was designed to bring people together, it often creates emotional distance. Renowned therapist Esther Perel has noted that while people may feel a sense of intimacy through screens, something important is missing. What's often lost is the depth that comes from in-person communication, the kind where people

feel truly heard and seen.

At Schoke JFS, my colleagues and I witness the powerful impact of simply being listened to. In therapy, clients are not looking for quick solutions. They are seeking presence, empathy, and a safe space to be understood. This kind of connection can be deeply healing.

Mental Health Awareness Month is a meaningful opportunity to consider how we care for our emotional health. Beyond meditation or self-care apps, in-person connection is essential. Whether it's meeting a friend for coffee, attending a local event, or joining a community group, real-life interactions nourish our mental and emotional well-being in ways digital tools cannot.

Schoke JFS encourages the community to take small steps toward deeper connection this spring. Put down the phone, turn off the screen, and spend time with someone in person. Ask questions, listen fully, and show genuine interest.

For those feeling disconnected or overwhelmed, support is available. Schoke JFS offers counseling services in a compassionate, confidential setting, helping individuals build stronger emotional foundations and healthier relationships. Learn more at: www.ctjfs.org/counseling

Let connection be part of your care. In a world that often feels disconnected, face-to-face communication can bring us back together.

Becoming the Next Generation of Philanthropists

(Courtesy of UJF) Thanks to the generosity of the Louis J. Kuriansky Family Foundation, the Kuriansky Teen Leadership Institute (KTLI), formerly called Kuriansky Teen Tzedakah Corps, completed another successful year in training the next generation of philanthropists. KTLI is a premier leadership program of United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF), designed to instill local teens with the knowledge and skills necessary to become future Jewish leaders and philanthropists.

KTLI participants have engaged in monthly classes and discussions to establish the goals and values of their cohort, to learn about both Jewish and secular charitable organizations, and to understand how to evaluate the effectiveness of their work.

As part of the culmination of the

program, participants commit to helping to raise funds for a nonprofit organization(s) of their choosing – each of which will receive at least \$1,000 to help their efforts. The KTLI group selected the recipients based on the values they learned about during the program:

- Tzedakah/Charity: Elayne and James Schoke Jewish Family Service of Fairfield County
- Tikun Olam/Repairing the World: buildOn
- Gemilut Chasadim/Loving Acts of Kindness: Jewish Agency for Israel's Fund for Victims of Terror

UJF Community Shlichah (Israeli Emissary) Eden Refaelovich, who ran KTLI this year, said, "It was so special getting to work with and form bonds with these amazing teens."



Representing the 2024-2025 KTLI cohort - (l-r) UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross, Jakob Zelazny, Gabriel Lesser, Hannah Bahar, Eden Cohen, and UJF Shlichah Eden Refaelovich

Friendship Day 2025 Shines Brightly



Friendship Day 2025 Kick Off!

(Courtesy of Friendship Circle) Sunday May 4 was the most successful Friendship Day in the organization's history. Friends of Friendship Circle of Fairfield County and participants came out over 700 strong to Westhill High School to support the organization's biggest fundraiser of the year. This year's walk has raised over \$150,000 to date!

The day's festivities bookended the traditional walk around the track, with the starting line marked by a red ribbon-cutting ceremony under the Friendship Circle arch. Both before and after the walk, families and friends enjoyed a wide variety of entertainment, as well as lunch catered by Kivi Attar from Accents Grill in Baltimore. Many of the activities were run by Friendship Circle volunteers.

Teen volunteers enjoyed the fun day out with their special friends, participating in the different events together. Adult volunteers helped to run the bumper ball station, as well as face painting, carnival games and sports. Community families and supporters also enjoyed the fun family day.

Crowd favorite Inventor Mentor returned once again with his variety of live science experiments. Critter Caravan,

beloved at both Children and Adult Circles during the year, brought their animals. Super hero laser tag was open to all. In addition, a sports item auction run by volunteer Jared Casden helped to raise additional funds for Friendship Circle and add even more excitement to the day. News 12 covered the event and ran the segment on the 6 o'clock news to help spread the word about the mission of Friendship Circle further.

Friendship Circle Director Malya Shmotkin said, "What a wonderful day! Each year I am inspired and uplifted by all of our friends and supporters who come out to show their belief in our shared mission. It is wonderful to see the mix of old and new friends coming together and celebrating the beauty of friendship. I am so grateful for all of our teen volunteers and the amazing parents who support them. To me, there is nothing more beautiful than the friendship shining so brightly today and all year around."

To learn more about the Friendship Circle and how you can become involved, please contact Director Malya Shmotkin at malya@friendshipct.com.



Three generations of Friendship Circle : (l-r) Ellen Weber, Haddie Fischel, Robin Fischel.



Sharing A Friendly Moment: Mascot, Stephen Rappaport, Dovi Zucker and Howie Schwartz.

JScouts Spread Random Acts of Kindness

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) This month, Chabad of Stamford's JScouts Mitzvah Clubs took to the streets of Stamford on a mission to spread kindness and connection throughout the community. Armed with handmade gifts from their very own charm bar and flower shop, Chabad's young Mitzvah scouts approached strangers with big smiles and beautiful surprises—all in the name of making someone's day a little brighter.

What made this experience so powerful wasn't just the joy of those receiving the gifts—but the pride and courage the young JScout members showed in giving them out. For many, it was their first time stepping out of their comfort zones to approach someone new, and they did so with warmth and enthusiasm.

The reactions were priceless: smiles, thank-yous, and even a few happy tears. But perhaps the most lasting impact was felt by the givers themselves. For Shternie and Mussie Shemtov who run the program, "The experience was a beautiful reminder



JScouts Mitzvah Club members travel to light up the streets of Stamford with handmade gifts and heartfelt smiles.

that even the smallest gestures—offered with love—can leave a lasting impression. We are incredibly proud of our JScout members for choosing kindness and making Stamford a little warmer, one act at a time."

For more information about JScouts, a monthly Mitzvah club for boys and girls in 3rd to 7th grade, email programs@stamfordchabad.org

B"H

Shavuot

WITH CHABAD OF STAMFORD

<p>PRE SHAVUOT FARMERS MARKET</p>	<p>SUNDAY JUNE 1 10 - 11:30AM</p>
<p>"TED TALKS" TORAH WORTH SPREADING</p>	<p>SUNDAY JUNE 1 9:15PM</p>
<p>HEAR THE TEN COMMANDMENTS</p>	<p>MONDAY JUNE 2 11AM & 6PM</p>
<p>ICE CREAM PARTY + DELUXE DAIRY BUFFET</p>	<p>MONDAY JUNE 2 11AM & 6PM</p>
<p>"ESS-IN" LUNCH</p>	<p>TUESDAY JUNE 3 12:30</p>

WWW.STAMFORDCHABAD.ORG/SHAVUOS
770 HIGH RIDGE ROAD STAMFORD CT

Fairfield County Comes Together to Celebrate Israel

(Courtesy of UJF) Through a collaborative partnership between United Jewish Federation, the Stamford JCC and The Jewish Federation of Fairfield County, hundreds gathered at the Stamford JCC for the annual “Fairfield County Celebrates Israel Festival” on Sunday, April 27. Both adults and children enjoyed the day. Attendees had the opportunity to shop at the ESEK Fair which had products made by small businesses in Israel, enjoy kosher food, and be creative with arts and crafts. Patrons also got to listen to in-depth stories and updates on the war in Israel from a pair of Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldiers and got to witness a powerful music performance by Israeli singer and songwriter, Gilad Segev and the Heroes Independence Concert. The event united Jews from across Fairfield County as they all celebrated the beauty and good that Israel has to offer the world.

THANK YOU TO THE EVENT SPONSORS:

GOLD

Katchko & Sons Construction Services
Leonard Kundel Holistic Dentistry
The Pickel Law Firm
Siegel, Colin, and Kaufman, P.C.

SILVER

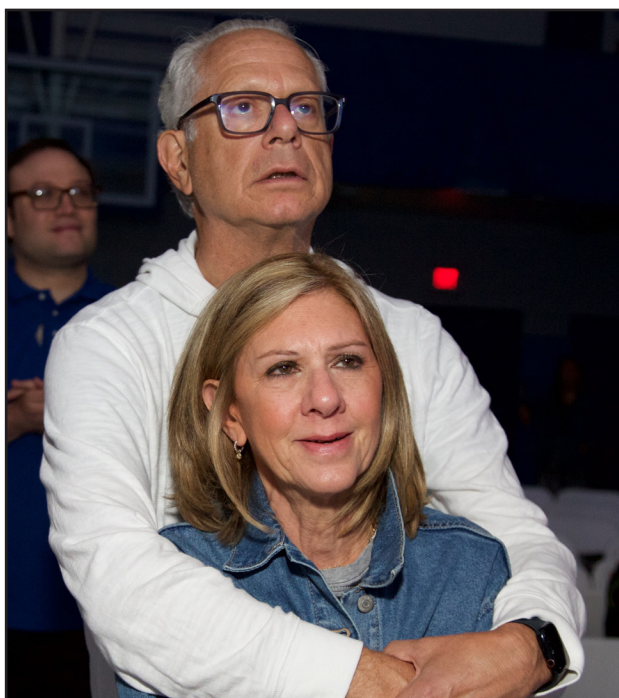
Paul's Marble Depot
Hanna & Mazer Dental Group

BRONZE

4D's Landscaping and Home Improvement
BreakThru Fitness
Events by Marylee

Castro Construction
Green Mechanicals
Greener Acres

High Class Limo
Elite Concierge Physicians
Master Na's Traditional Martial Arts





לזכרה של עמית מן, פראמדיקית מד"א,
שבמקום להסתתר עם תחילת המתקפה,
רצה למרפאה בקיבוץ בארי לטפל בפצועים
והייתה זאת בגבורה תחת אש כבדה במשך שעות ארוכות
תוך אזעקת עזרה.

In memory of Amit Man, paramedic,
who instead of hiding when the attack began,
ran to the clinic in Kibbutz Beeri to treat the wounded
and bravely did so under heavy fire for many hours
while calling for help.



Soldiers' Personal Stories Keep Community Connected

(Courtesy of UJF) In an ongoing effort to educate the community at large about Israel and the ongoing war efforts, United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien (UJF) recently hosted two Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers.

The visit was coordinated by Eden Refaelovich, UJF's *Shlichah* (Israeli emissary), in partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel. The soldiers shared personal stories and had in-depth conversations, which made an impact on the local community. From schools to police stations, the soldiers traveled around the area, giving their first-hand account of not just how they responded to the October 7 attacks but also what actions they took to protect Israeli citizens during that difficult period.

Given IDF regulations, there was limited publicity of their visit. Throughout their four days with UJF, both Maayan and Amit met with over 500 people, including many from the non-Jewish community. The soldiers also sat down for various Q&As at community members' homes and at the Fairfield County Celebrates Israel Festival where they were welcomed with open arms.

Thank you to the extended Waldstreicher family and the Furman/Landauer Family for serving as hosts and extended family for the guests. Maayan and Amit both shared how it was so meaningful for them to see how much the Jewish community here cares about them, the hostages, and Israel. They return home with stories to share and truly feel they are not alone.



UJF's NextGen members hear from visiting IDF soldiers about their experience in the war in Israel. Special thanks to Molly and Adam Rafalowicz for hosting.



UJF worked with the Mayor's office to plan for visiting IDF soldiers to connect with local US Armed Service Veterans. Both Maayan and Amit were warmly received, and the group was engaged in a very meaningful dialogue. (PHOTO CREDIT: AVIVA MALLER PHOTOGRAPHY)



Truck Company 2 of the Stamford Fire Department warmly welcomes Maayan and Amit.



Maayan and Amit prepare for a ride in the ladder bucket, giving them a skyscraper view of Stamford and an experience to remember.



UJF's *Shlichah* Eden Refaelovich and visiting soldiers Amit and Maayan sharing their personal stories as part of Congregation Agudath Sholom's Yom HaZikaron program.



Maayan and Amit lower the Israeli flag.



Maayan and Amit visit the Early Childhood Education Center at Temple Sinai.



Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy High School warmly welcomes Maayan and Amit.



United Jewish Federation showed the visiting soldiers the fun side of Stamford at Third Place by Half Full Brewery.



Mayaan and Amit were happy to celebrate Shabbat at the Stamford JCC Sara Walker Nursery School.



The Jewish Student Club at the King School hosted the soldiers for lunch.



Maayan and Amit shared their stories and answered questions at a community briefing held at the Stamford Jewish Community Center.

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:

Sandy Golove

Diane & Rabbi Daniel Cohen on the birth of a grandson, son to Sara Malka & Avi Petrushka.

Ruchail & David Feldman on the birth of twin sons.

Sabrina & Robert Fox on the birth of a son.

Iva & Amichai Freed on the birth of twin sons.

Esther & Choni Grunblatt on the birth of a son, Avraham Eitan Grunblatt.

Alyson & Scott Koblick on the birth of a daughter, Lily.

Bill Nabel on the birth of a granddaughter, Leah Susanna Lake, daughter of Hannah & Benjamin Lake.

Rachel & Michael Sackman on the birth of a daughter, Riley Jordan Sackman, granddaughter of Gayle & Howard Rothman.

Lucy Schwartz & Saryah Sober on the birth of a daughter.

Stephanie & Tamir Sugarman on the birth of a son, grandson of Helen Felder and Roz & Renan Sugarman.

MAZEL TOV ON MARRIAGES/ENGAGEMENTS:

Sandy and Moshe Speter on the marriage of their grandson, Yitzy Glazer, son of Debbie and Avi Glazer, to Tamar Lasson, daughter of Chaya and Jonathan Lasson.

Linda Galarza Spilka and R. Edward Spilka on the engagement of their son, Nathaniel Hugo Spilka to Dalia Rivka Bauman, daughter of Sherri & Gary Bauman.

Sharon & Simeon Wohlberg on the marriage of their son, Joshua Wohlberg

to Shira Borochoy, daughter of Devora & Ronan Borochoy.

MAZEL TOV OTHERS:

Talia Orbach on the new release of her first book, *Shades of Yellow*. Talia is the daughter of Shani & Gil Orbach.

MAZEL TOV TO B'NEI MITZVAH:

Lucy Bernstein, daughter of Alyssa & Michael Bernstein

Michaela Kooris, daughter of Jessica & David Kooris

Stephen Pachter, son of Lauren & Daniel Pachter

Alex Rosenfeld, son of Brenna & Sam Rosenfeld

Julia Tobin: daughter of Laura & Seth Tobin.

WE MOURN THE LOSS OF:

Judith Altmann: mother of Steven Altmann and Howard Altmann.

Abraham (Abe) Cogan: long-time CAS congregant

Nadine Fox: mother of Andrew Fox and Nicole Fox.

Eileen Heckerling: mother of Jeremy Heckerling.

Roslyn S. Jaffe: mother of Elise Brown, Richard Marcus and David Marcus.

Ronald Marcus: father of Elizabeth Adams Marcus and Sarah Katherine Marcus.

Paulette Moskowitz: mother of Bruce, Gary, and Alan Moskowitz.

Dr. Jack Rice: father of Michele Piskin and Drew Rice.

Claire Savitt: mother of Jordan Savitt.

Shirley Schiff: mother of Steve Schiff.

Marion Shearer: mother of Joan Schwartz.

Allen Siegel: father of Tamra Lichtman.

Anna Marie Stark: mother of Anthony Stark.

Ellen Sternfeld: mother of Debbie Youngstein.

Dr. Morton Wertheimer: husband of Carol Wertheimer; father of Shira Green, Naomi Bacharach and Aviva Will.

Elissa Zonis: mother of Jonathan Zonis.

Babies, Babies Everywhere!

(Courtesy of UJF) April was full of Shalom Baby visits! United Jewish Federation Deputy Director Eric Ross stopped off to bring "Shalom Baby" bags and visit with proud parents Tova Weinstock and Micky Reich, Saryah Sober and Lucy Schwartz, and Ruchail and David Feldman.

UJF delivers "Shalom Baby" bags to all new Jewish babies in town, and "Shalom Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien" bags to all new Jewish arrivals. If you know of someone who recently moved to the area or welcomed a child into their family, please contact Eric Ross at Eric@UJF.org.



Tova Weinstock with baby Hindy after receiving their Shalom Baby bag from UJF's Eric Ross.



Saryah Sober was happy to receive a Shalom Baby bag.



Grandpa Craig, dad David Feldman, and big sister Ruby are excited to welcome home twin boys.

BCHA Students Finish in Top 30 in Stock Market Game!

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) We're proud to announce that two Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) students, Sophie and Zoey, have finished in the Top 30 in all middle schools in Connecticut in this year's Stock Market Game—a remarkable achievement, especially during one of the most volatile months in recent stock market history.

The Stock Market Game is a renowned online simulation that introduces students in grades 4–12 to the world of investing, economics, and personal finance. With nearly 20 million participants since its inception, the program helps students build skills for financially responsible and



Sophie and Zoey finished in the top 30 in the Stock Market Game.

independent futures.

"These students' strong performance showcases their critical thinking, research, and decision-making skills. Mazal Tov to both of them on their success—we're so proud of their accomplishment!" said Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, Head of School.

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



BCHA Students Participate in Book-Design Process

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) Through participation in an innovative project developed at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) called “The Lab”, sixth grade students played an integral role in creating a new story-design process. Building on that work, the children’s book *I Am King Chameleon, I Demand to Be Seen!* was written by Ben Okon - BCHA alum, Google strategist, and bestselling author of *Dinos Love Donuts* and the *Younger Me Academy* series - with BCHA students!

“The Lab”, launched during the 2023-2024 school year, is a first-of-its-kind project designed through a year-long collaboration between BCHA English teacher Laura Miller and Okon, her former student. In this real-life innovation lab, students developed, tested, and refined story ideas, stimulating their creativity, teamwork, analytical skills, and resilience well beyond the bounds of a typical classroom project.

For Okon, the experience was significant. “I can’t think of a more fitting capstone to

Younger Me Academy than introducing all the things I’d wished I’d known when I was a younger ME.”

Each student produced a unique children’s story through a process that generated more than five hundred story ideas and more than one hundred manuscripts, all rigorously created and tested through a structured process inspired by leading innovation labs but customized specifically for BCHA. Okon developed *King Chameleon* to commemorate the experience, born from

The Lab’s ideas and brought to life with feedback and guidance from Miller and her students.

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy continues to raise the bar by providing its middle school students with groundbreaking opportunities to transform classroom literacy into real-world authoring experiences.

As one participating sixth grader acknowledged, “This project has given me many new skills and taught me how success comes after hard work.”



Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy students with bestselling author and BCHA alumnus Ben Okon (on Zoom).

Managing The Emotional Toll of Caregiving



Certified Bereavement Counselor Terri Agliardo addresses caregivers.

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) In April, forty dedicated aides attended an insightful in-service session on “Compassion Fatigue” led by Certified Bereavement Counselor Terri Agliardo. This event was hosted through the Schoke Jewish Family Service Home Companion Program.

Agliardo discussed the emotional toll of caregiving, often referred to as the “cost of caring.” It’s the process of deeply

empathizing with those in emotional pain that can leave caregivers vulnerable to burnout. She also explored the key differences between “compassion fatigue” and “burnout” to help everyone better understand and manage the emotional demands of their work. The session ended with a calming mindfulness meditation to help everyone recharge and refocus.

Lockdown Drill Enhances School Safety

(Courtesy of UJF) In late March, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy in Stamford participated in a lockdown drill aimed at improving school safety and preparedness. The exercise, conducted with the help of local authorities, featured key safety experts, including United Jewish Federation’s Regional Security Director Jim Comstock, Stamford Police Officer Lou Scarano, and Sol Redlich, a volunteer with Community Security Service (CSS).

The drill simulated an emergency situation, allowing both staff and students to practice the necessary procedures for lockdown situations. “Our goal is to ensure that everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency,” said Comstock. “It’s crucial to stay proactive in training and reinforcing these safety measures.”

The event also served as a reminder of the importance of collaboration between schools and local law enforcement to maintain a safe learning environment. Officer Scarano emphasized the role of drills in preparing everyone to respond quickly and efficiently, saying, “Preparation is key, and these drills make all the difference.”


Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy has long prioritized the safety of its students and staff, with ongoing efforts to ensure that everyone is well-prepared for a variety of scenarios.



Stamford Police Officer Lou Scarano, CSS Volunteer Sol Redlich, and UJF Regional Security Director Jim Comstock

Through UJF’s security initiative, all Jewish institutions should reach out to Comstock for a security/vulnerability assessment, cyber security assessment, cyber security training, grant awardee procurement support, security training, or any general questions. Comstock can be reached at the Federation offices, (203) 321-1373 and by email at comstockj@csiny.org.

To request organizational training, please visit the Community Security Initiative (CSI) website at www.csiny.org and submit a request.



Mark your calendars for
JONATHAN CONRICUS
on Tuesday, June 24

REGISTER AT WWW.UJF.ORG/CONRICUS

A Season of Blessing and Renewal

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Each spring, the children of Gan Yeladim participate in a beautiful tradition that connects them to nature, the Jewish calendar, and the values at the heart of Gan. During the month of Nissan—the first in the Hebrew year—they have the opportunity to recite *Birkat Ha'ilanot*, a blessing said upon seeing fruit trees blossom for the first time that season.



Children at Gan Yeladim gather together near the blossoming fruit trees.

This *mitzvah* (blessing) reflects a central Jewish belief: that G-d is constantly renewing creation. As trees burst into bloom, the blessing encourages people to pause, marvel at the world's beauty, and internalize the promise of growth and change.

At Gan Yeladim, a Jewish Reggio-inspired preschool, the themes of the presence of *Hashem* (G-d), the beauty of nature and the opportunity for constant renewal and growth are woven into every part of the learning experience. The school strives to bring the classroom outdoors and nature indoors—using natural materials

in projects, exploring the seasons and nature through hands-on discovery, and encouraging responsibility for the environment. Programs with local partners like the Bartlett Arboretum, Stamford Museum and Nature Center and others further this mission, offering children opportunities to plant, learn, explore, understand and become caring custodians of the earth.

Birkat Ha'ilanot holds special meaning because the fruit trees were planted years ago by former Gan parents, Lael and Danielle Shapiro. Their thoughtful gift continues to bear fruit—both physically and spiritually—as children gather beneath the blossoms each year to reflect on the beauty of creation and the hope of renewal.

For Leah Shemtov, Director of Gan Yeladim, “In a world that’s always changing, the sight of once-bare branches in bloom offers a powerful lesson: even after long winters, both nature and the human spirit can blossom anew.”

Gan Yeladim Pampers Moms

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Gan Yeladim recently hosted its annual “Pampering Morning,” a well-deserved treat for their busy moms. The morning began with breakfast, followed by a relaxing session of yoga, breathing, and stretching led by Becky Rastegar (@flowingwithbecky). It was a rejuvenating experience, filled with grounding, movement, and meaningful connection. Gan is planning to offer more classes and opportunities for moms to recharge and rejuvenate in the near future.



Gan Yeladim moms enjoy breakfast before diving into a morning of yoga, breathing, and relaxation.

BCHA Students Enjoy Musical Theater and Guitar Classes

(Courtesy of BCHA) Concordia Conservatory and Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) are proud to announce their ongoing partnership, launched in 2024, to provide weekly guitar and musical theater classes for students in grades 2 through 5.

This collaborative program was made possible through the vision and planning of Head of School Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, Lower School Principal Tricia Hoff, and Concordia Conservatory Executive Director Kathleen Suss. As part of the initiative, Concordia Conservatory has supplied guitars for all fourth and fifth grade students, ensuring each child has their own instrument for both classroom instruction and at-home practice.

“Concordia Conservatory is thrilled

to bring high-quality music education to BCHA through our dedicated faculty, Lee Metcalf and Lauren Mickley,” said Suss. “The academic environment at BCHA is inspiring, and the students are engaged and eager to learn. This program exemplifies our mission as a community music school—to make music education accessible and enriching for all.”

“We’re thrilled about our partnership with Concordia Conservatory. Having professional musicians teach fundamentals, guitar, and musical theater has been amazing. This collaboration has truly enriched our music curriculum and given students hands-on, real-world experience. We’re incredibly grateful for this opportunity,” says Hoff, BCHA Lower School Principal.



Students participate in a Musical Theatre Workshop led by Concordia.




Shailee Raz, Grade 4, smiles through her guitar lesson with Concordia.

Chabad Gone Fishing

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Gone fishing—Gan Yeladim style! Gan’s little explorers had a blast connecting with nature and catching tadpoles, turning curiosity into discovery.





CALLING ALL

2025 Graduates

Do you know someone graduating from high school, college, or graduate school in 2025?

If yes, we'd love to celebrate them in our next issue of the New Jewish Voice!

Email their name, graduating from what school, going to what college (if applicable), and/or gap year or job to Sandy Golove at sandy@ujf.org to get their names published in our next issue!

Pastapalooza with PJ Library!

(Courtesy of UJF) On the Friday after Passover, PJ Library joined in on the festivities at Temple Beth El's (TBE's) "TeeBeEs Pastapalooza" Shabbat. TBE Engagement Coordinator Dayna Patashnik prepared tables full of fun arts and crafts activities to celebrate the end of Passover. UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross read the PJ Library book *Alligator Seder*, to whet the kids' appetites. Rabbi Michael Knopf brought Shabbat in with songs and the blessings over the candles, wine (grape juice), and challah. And finally, TBE volunteers had been hard at work cooking up a huge variety of pastas and sauces, even gluten-free, for all to enjoy.

Through PJ Library (ages 6 months - 8 years old) and PJ Our Way (ages 9-12), United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF) proudly sends over 7,200 Jewish-themed books per year to Jewish children in Fairfield County, absolutely free. The Federation-funded program is designed to strengthen the bonds between parents and children, as well as grandparents, through stories about Jewish traditions and values, and to build connections with other PJ Library families in the Jewish community.



Stephen and Scarlett Bedik have fun with arts and crafts.



Ainsley and Ruby eagerly await the pasta feast.



Families enjoy a PJ Library read-aloud with UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross.

Are you a former PJ family with extra gently-loved PJ Library books lying around collecting dust? If you'd like to donate them back to the community so they can be put to great uses, please reach out! For more information or to get involved locally, please contact UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross at Eric@ujf.org.

"Schlissel" Challah Bake

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) On the first Friday after Pesach, over 20 women gathered on Chabad of Stamford Co-Director Leah Shemtov's porch for a special post-holiday event: an outdoor *Schlissel* (key) Challah Bake. Surrounded by joyful energy of community, the participants rolled up their sleeves and kneaded with purpose—infusing each challah with personal prayers and intention.

The tradition of *Schlissel Challah*—baking challah with a key on the Shabbat following Passover—is rich with meaning. Symbolizing the "key" to divine blessings and sustenance, this custom is rooted in a centuries-old Chasidic hope for health, abundance, and spiritual renewal in the weeks after leaving the "bread of affliction" of Pesach behind.

Under Leah Shemtov's guidance, the women shaped their dough in various key shapes, with many even placing small keys inside or on top of their challahs to carry forward the tradition. That evening, their beautifully braided loaves graced Shabbat tables across Stamford, bringing with them a taste of connection and continuity in this meaningful tradition.

The event was more than just a baking session—it was a reminder of the power of community, tradition, and the small rituals that nourish our homes in big ways.

Chabad of Stamford will be continuing the Challah Club series with more shapes and flavors on June 20 and June 27. For more information or to get involved, email: programs@stamfordchabad.org.



Shaping tradition under the open spring sky—women gathered on Leah Shemtov's porch for a fun and meaningful Schlissel Challah Bake, kicking off Chabad's new "Challah Club" series.

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

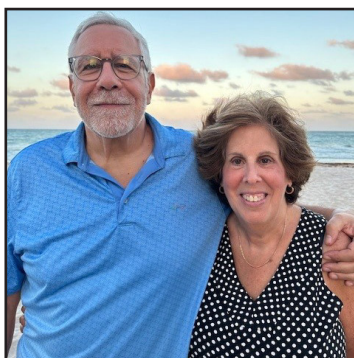
MYRNA AND GEORGE SESSA TESTIMONIAL

I arrived in Stamford (George's hometown) in 1977 from Warren, Ohio. With no Jewish connections in Stamford, I quickly joined Hadassah and Temple Sinai, where I've been a member for almost 48 years.

We later joined the Jewish Community Center, volunteering for both the 2006 and 2016 Maccabi Games.

I currently volunteer with Schoke Jewish Family Service and United Jewish Federation, as a retired HR professional.

At Temple Sinai, we both served as Board



George and Myrna Sessa

Members, I as a VP, and George as Brotherhood Treasurer. I am currently the Temple's HR Advisor.

We feel very close and connected to our Stamford Jewish community, especially Temple Sinai which welcomed us as an interfaith family; we feel our Legacy gift will serve to help support the synagogue for generations to come.

We hope the Stamford community considers us today (and ultimately remembers us) as dedicated volunteers and joins us in making Legacy gifts to the organizations that mean the most to them.

Legacy Impacts The Jewish Future

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation (UJF) and nine other community organizations have begun the first year of Legacy Plus, after completing four years in the Harold Grinspoon Life & Legacy program. This program has been instrumental in securing endowment gifts for the greater Stamford Jewish Community.

Members of Jewish organizations from across North America came together at the annual Life & Legacy Leadership Conference in Springfield, Massachusetts on April 28 to 29, including a strong delegation from UJF. Attendees learned new ways to improve their current legacy programs and how to increase their overall impact among legacy donors. The conference was also a great opportunity for attendees to network and build meaningful connections with peers from across the continent.

"UJF's delegation has grown over the years under the leadership of Lenore Fogel, and it is my hope our collective community continues to grow their endowments and work towards securing the financial stability of our community for future generations," shared Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO.



(back row l-r) UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross, UJF Assistant Marketing Director Aaron Gaberman, Schoke Jewish Family Service (SJFS) Major Gifts Officer Craig Adler, UJF Life & Legacy Coordinator Lenore Fogel, SJFS Legacy Chair Ronnie Sichel, and Rabbi Daniel Cohen of Congregation Agudath Sholom. (front row l-r) Harold Grinspoon Foundation President Winnie Sandler Grinspoon, UJF CEO Diane Sloyer, and Life & Legacy National Director Kathy Sarlson.



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 Butterman
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
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
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Eileen Springer
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Barbara & Ken White
Leigh Wilson
Robyn & Mark Winarksy
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Navah & Naftali Wolfe
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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.*

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.

BY NICKY BLACKBURN

1. Israel has the highest number of altruistic kidney donations per capita in the world: 1,775 in the past 15 years, and counting.
2. The oldest tree in Israel is an 11-meter jujube tree in Ein Hatzeva on the road to Eilat, thought to be between 1,500 and 2,000 years old. For most of its life, the tree was watered by the spring at Ein Hatzeva. Today the spring has dried up, and the Jewish National Fund keeps it irrigated.
3. Israeli scientists managed to grow fresh dates from sixth century seeds found at Masada and Qumran.
4. Eating the Israeli peanut snack, Bamba, at an early age has been proven to reduce peanut allergies in children by 75 percent, according to a five-year study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.
5. The Israel Postal Service has a special Letters to God department, for all the letters arriving in Jerusalem from around the world addressed to God. They are opened and placed into the cracks of the Western Wall in Jerusalem. For those who want to save on postage, the Western Wall Heritage Foundation offers a digital alternative to this service.
6. About 1 million notes are left in the Western Wall every year by people of many religions. The earliest known account of this practice came in 1743. Many famous people have left notes in the wall including Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, Barack Obama, Hilary Clinton, and yes, Donald Trump. Twice a year, ahead of Rosh Hashana and Passover, the notes are cleared from the wall and buried in the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.
7. The Mount of Olives is the oldest continuously used cemetery in the world. It's been in use for over 3,000 years.
8. The glue on Israel's postage stamps is kosher.
9. At the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, an old wooden ladder has been propped up against a window since the 18th century. No one can move it because the building is managed by six different churches and none of them agree on who owns the ladder, which has been named, rather appropriately, the "immovable ladder."
10. Israel is the only country to have revived a dead language and made it the national language. Hebrew had remained the language of sacred literature, but it was revived in the 19th century as a spoken language.
11. The hottest temperature ever recorded in Israel was 54.4 degrees Celsius (129.9 Fahrenheit) in June 1942 at Kibbutz Tirat Zvi in the northern Jordan Valley. (The highest temperature ever recorded worldwide is 56.7 °C/134.1 F in Death Valley in July 1913.)
12. While Jerusalem has snowstorms every few years, and even the Negev Desert gets occasional snow, Tel Aviv has only had one snowstorm in its history. In 1950, 12-18 centimeters of the white stuff thrilled locals, many of whom had never seen snow before.
13. More than half the landmass of Israel is desert, yet it has an Olympic bobsled and skeleton team.
14. An Israeli startup, Tevel Aerobotics Technologies, developed agricultural drones that can pick ripe fruit from a tree and gently lower it for collection, helping solve one of the main issues facing farmers today – a shortage of labor.
15. Israeli agritech company BlueWhite developed a technology that can turn any conventional tractor into a self-driving robot. The robotic system is already helping farmers across the United States deal with a dwindling workforce.
16. Israel recycles nearly 90% of the wastewater it creates, using innovation to beat its water crisis. This makes it the leading nation in the world for water recycling. By comparison, Spain, the next largest water recycler, recycles only 20% of its water, while in the United States, only 1% of wastewater is recycled.
17. Sheba Medical Center in Israel has been listed as the world's eighth best hospital by US magazine "Newsweek" this year. Last year the hospital was ranked ninth, and the year before 10th.
18. Israel is a global leader in medical clowning. It was the first country in the world to send medical clowns into Covid-19 wards, and regularly sends medical clowns on aid missions around the world.
19. In 2007, Israeli businesswoman Shari Arison initiated an annual Good Deeds Day on April 6 to encourage people to help each other. That year, 7,000 people took part in Israel. In 2024, 4.5 million people participated in some 115 countries.
20. Members of a voluntary organization called Trail Angels open their homes to hikers on the 1,025-km (637-mile) Israel Trail, offering free beds, showers and other amenities. This year, the Israel Trail celebrates its 30th anniversary.
21. Israel is smaller than Hawaii and roughly half the size of Lake Michigan. For Brits, it's around the size of Wales.
22. Israel is bordered by snowy peaks at one end and a desert beach on the other.
23. Israel has 137 beaches – all of them beautiful.
24. Israel has its very own Stonehenge, an ancient stone circle called Galgal Refa'im (wheel of ghosts) with massive rock walls that jut 8 feet into the sky. The stone structure is around 5,000 years old and is made up of some 42,000 tons of basalt stone. It was discovered only in the 1960s and to this day remains one of Israel's greatest mysteries.
25. Israeli company SolCold developed a paint coating that uses sunlight to activate a cooling mechanism on cars, buildings, planes and even clothing, providing air conditioning without electricity. The hotter it is, the more the coating cools.
26. Israel's volunteer emergency response organization, United Hatzalah, collaborated with Israel Defense Forces signal intelligence unit 8200 to create an AI system that can predict where and when medical emergencies are about to take place in Israel, enabling responders to mobilize in advance and respond faster.
27. One of Israel's most popular snacks is only sold between October and February because otherwise, supposedly, it will melt. According to Hebrew-language Wikipedia, there are seven different ways to eat the chocolate cream snack, Krembo, but when we went out onto the streets to check, people had many more suggestions than that. In the microwave, anyone?

MORE TO FOLLOW IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE NEW JEWISH VOICE!

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



United Jewish Federation
The New Jewish Voice
2009 Summer St., Suite 302
Stamford, CT 06905

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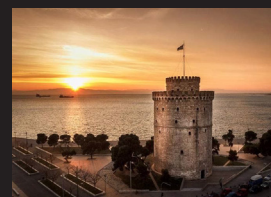
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HIGHLIGHTS

- Learn about Athens' Jewish history at the Jewish Museum.
- Explore the Acropolis, Greece's iconic ancient citadel above the city.
- Visit Beit Shalom and Etz Haim Synagogues.
- Discover Chalkida, one of Europe's oldest Jewish settlements.
- Marvel at Meteora's dramatic rock formations and historic monasteries.
- Tour Thessaloniki's key landmarks, including the White Tower and Rotunda.
- Reflect at the old railway station, a site of Holocaust deportations.
- Engage with a Ladino specialist on Sephardic language and culture.
- Celebrate Shabbat at Yad Lezikaron Synagogue with the local community.
- Gain insights on modern Greece from a local journalist.
- Visit Mount Olympus, legendary home of the Greek gods.
- Explore Ioannina's Jewish quarter and Romaniote heritage.
- Wander through the historic streets of Delphi, ancient center of prophecy.
- And much more...



DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS AMAZING OPPORTUNITY!

For more information, contact Diane Sloyer at dianesloyer@ujf.org

For full itinerary and registration visit:

j2adventures.com/join/united-jewish-federation-of-stamford-greece-october-2025/

