



THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION

Schoke JFS Helps Ukrainian Refugees Learn English

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS)
“The English Café” is a volunteer-run program that helps Ukrainian refugees and other immigrants learn English. Schoke JFS (Jewish Family Service) launched The English Café in July 2022 in response to refugees of the war in Ukraine. Many refugees coming to Fairfield County needed help not only with food, but with integrating into a new life in a foreign country.



Volunteers share in conversation at “The English Café”.

The English Café assists people with very different levels of English, from beginner to advanced, and provides refugees with the opportunity to start practicing English in a comfortable and friendly environment at the Schoke JFS office.

It is important for new English speakers to converse with a native speaker. Schoke JFS volunteers work very hard to “unlock” a client’s English, build new vocabulary, and turn the existing passive vocabulary into an active one.

The English Café is as meaningful for volunteers as it is for refugees. Christine Toback, President of the Board of Women’s Philanthropy for UJA-JCC Greenwich who is

of Ukrainian descent, shares her experience volunteering. “I have enjoyed spending time connecting with people who come from Ukraine. Learning about their families, while also helping them practice speaking conversational English, is meaningful and is a small way of reconnecting to my Ukrainian roots. I have even met a few women who are from my father’s home city in Ukraine! I look forward to joining The English Café every other Wednesday.”

The English Café gatherings provide an opportunity to learn English and also help forge new acquaintances and friendships, share useful information, and help participants get on their feet in a new country.

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UJF Receives LiveSecure Grant

BY SHARON LEWIS, JCRC DIRECTOR

United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien will enhance its current security initiative for the Jewish community, thanks to a LiveSecure grant issued by Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), with matching funds raised by UJF with the generous support of Eleanor and Mort Lowenthal. The Federation was awarded almost \$50,000 over three years, plus 2:1 matching funds to create a fund to distribute emergency response supplies to Jewish organizations in our catchment area.

Mike Shanbrom, UJF’s Secure Community Network (SCN) Regional Security Advisor, has been working in the local community for about 18 months. During this time, he has conducted security reviews of most organizations and identified deficiencies in emergency preparedness supplies throughout our community.

“SCN’s training about what to do in an emergency is crucial, but our organizations need first aid and evacuation supplies to be prepared should a crisis occur,” Shanbrom said. “The LiveSecure grant will enable us to distribute these supplies.”

“LiveSecure is the collective responsibility of every Jewish community,” Eric Fingerhut, President and CEO of Jewish Federations of North America, said. “This campaign is a tremendous investment in our Jewish future because only when we can safely and freely

participate in Jewish communal life can we build flourishing Jewish communities.”

LiveSecure is a \$130 million campaign that was launched by Jewish Federations in 2021 with the goal of securing every Jewish community across North America and to save lives. This campaign represents the largest initiative in history to secure Jewish communities across North America. Guided by the highest standards, funds will go towards implementing professionally led, comprehensive Communal Security Initiatives (CSI) and training in 150 communities in the U.S. and Canada and enhancing them where they already exist.

UJF will work closely with the JFNA and SCN, the organization Jewish Federations established to secure the American Jewish community in the aftermath of 9/11. Violent incidents directed at the Jewish community have increased during the past few years. “From Tree of Life, to Poway, to Colleyville (just one year ago), the Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien Jewish community has witnessed horrific violence from afar and knows it could come here, too. We thank every organization in our catchment area for their diligence and vigilance in working with Mike Shanbrom to improve their security protocols, and we are grateful that this LiveSecure grant can further assist with preparedness,” said UJF President Michael Schlessinger.

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Behrend Institute for Leadership Launches 2023 Cohort

With representation from communal organizations, United Jewish Federation is excited to bring back the Behrend Institute for Leadership, in person, with exceptional participants. Organized and facilitated by Federation, through the generosity of Stephne and Kerrin Behrend, the program aims to train future communal leaders.



(Seated, l-r) Beth Levick, Alisa Weisser, Alexandra Olsson, Sheila Lesensky, Coby Greif. *(Standing, l-r)* Stephne Behrend, Yonnie Rubinfeld, Ron Zussman, UJF Shaliach Yoav Yaron, Jen Bernstein, Elisabeth Goldman, Taly Farber, Michelle Cait, Ari Prescott, Efrat Cohen, Josh Sperber, Erica Kraypohl, Judith Lupatkin Bernstein, Matthew Bernstein, Jeff Cohen, facilitator Jonathan Fass (not pictured: Jason Baron).

Federation Turns 50!

When I first moved to Stamford in 1994, I worked at Federation as the Director of Young Leadership. Between then and now it is hard to believe I have worked for UJF 10 out of its 50 years, not to mention the years I spent as a volunteer on the Board of Directors.

In 50 years, we have experienced a great deal as a community. Locally we have seen the JCC expand its programs and host Macabbi games - twice, bringing our community together. Schoke Jewish Family Service moved from our offices to their own space, changed their name and expanded their services. We have seen Bi-Cultural Day School become Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy as it continues to grow and be a Blue Ribbon School. And over the years new organizations entered our community like Friendship Circle and The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County. Synagogues and religious institutions have met the growing needs and demands of our evolving Jewish landscape. And there is so much more...! Through it all, there was United Jewish Federation - which continues to support these organizations, aiding in the strength of our community.

Globally, Federation has seen many crises and miracles during its 50-year history. Together we have watched the State of Israel grow as those from the Former Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Yemen and more immigrated; all supported by Federation's work and the efforts of our partners. Crises in Ukraine, Venezuela, Argentina, and the increase of antisemitism have impacted us over the years and continue today. And through it all, UJF has always and consistently brought the community together as one. We were here to meet the challenges of yesterday and will be here to meet those of tomorrow.

And on our own shores, UJF has continued to impact the lives of Jews living here in



Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO

Fairfield County. We have continued to support our local agencies and synagogues throughout the years and have even established a mechanism to insure the future of our Jewish community through the LIFE & LEGACY program. With antisemitism on the rise and a continued threat, UJF works with the Secure Community Network and employs a Regional Security Advisor to work throughout our entire community.

But while we are quick to celebrate successes, we understand the need to constantly improve and so we look for opportunities where we can do better in the future.

With that in mind, we spent the last year understanding how our community sees UJF, its importance and future placement in our community. UJF's Strategic Plan, which was completed at the close of 2022, has set us on a course for a bright future with tangible opportunities and actions.

Our survey, with about 1100 respondents, provided us with valuable information for our future path. It showed us that currently in our community 84% feel connected because of Federation. And yet that means 16% are not - what an opportunity for sure! The awareness level for some of our programs, like PJ Library, is high. So, the challenge we face is to raise awareness of all our engagement opportunities and programs. This challenge leaves us with a path forward.

One respondent to our survey shared that the future of Federation is a "thoughtful, respectful and unifying force in a polarized world." We know our work is cut out for us and with your involvement, we can be that and so much more!

So, as Federation turns 50, we look to the future, to a unified community-one that celebrates our shared vision and embraces our differences, one filled with inspiration and passion.

UJF President's Message The Year Ahead

New UJF President Michael Schlessinger gave this address at the Annual Meeting of United Jewish Federation on December 19.

Good evening. Thank you to all our departing Board members and congratulations to our new Board members and tonight's honorees. Federation matters. I'm sure that simple thought is what compels most of you to be here tonight but its truth resonates because of your collective efforts over a long period of time.

A special thanks to our "COVID president" David Gordon. (His term was either 150% or 13.2% of a normal presidency, depending on whether you count by total time served or in-person Board meetings.) I met David for the first time three years ago at the Annual Meeting dinner. I remember thinking "I can be on this guy's Board." And while that profound musing turned out to be true, his tenure of course meant more than that to me. Mostly he exemplified in his day-to-day stewardship a deep concern for the well-being of the Jewish community of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien -- one I hope to emulate.

Monica and I moved to Stamford with our four kids at the end of 2006. Since we thus measure our Stamford roots in years rather than decades or generations, we are still newcomers. Our two daughters were high school age when we arrived and the Kulanu program provided an early taste of how vibrant and interesting this Jewish community is. Rabbi TelRav then made a strong impression on our youngest son in connection with his confirmation, and the local Jewish community has touched our oldest son by, among other things, helping to endow his home at Chapel Haven, a remarkable facility in New Haven for adults with special needs. So we as a family owe a lot to this community. And I personally owe a lot to my family (many of whom are on the live stream) for their support, particularly to my daughters for eventually forgiving me that "moving them in high school" faux pas.

THREE PRIORITIES

On to Federation. You heard David recite some of Federation's recent contributions, and it's an impressive list. I'm superstitious enough that I don't want to try to anticipate the next crisis or sudden super-priority - I certainly hope the next couple of years will be more boring and serene than the last three.

Instead, I want to focus on three broader themes. If we get these right, we will also be well-positioned to contribute when crises or unanticipated needs arise.

Priority #1. "First do no harm." I'm not a doctor but I identify with the humility in that goal. Finances aside, the most obvious pitfalls for this organization involve controversy. We are lucky to live in a diverse and passionate community but with that diversity and passion comes the potential for strife. As a member of David's executive committee, I was involved in responding to several controversies that flared up suddenly and unavoidably. I was impressed in these instances by what might be called the "Federation mindset." Our Board, by design, mirrors the community's diversity across most dimensions so, when these issues arose, you could sense people starting to line up "by team." In each instance, Diane, David or one of the Executive Committee members - often the member most invested in the issue - would say "you know this controversy could cause



Michael Schlessinger, UJF President

us to lose donors or hurt our reputation in the community," immediately shifting our focus to navigating the storm as fairly and diplomatically as possible. The "Federation mindset" involves putting Federation - and by proxy the community as a whole - ahead of any particular heated issue, particularly at the time of greatest heat. And with extremely infrequent exceptions, Federation's lay and professional leadership get that implicitly and act accordingly.

Priority #2. Which brings me to priority #2, something called "unifying the community." This simple and achievable goal is not new - as you heard, it was on David's list 3 years ago and it also polled near the top in our community survey for the strategic plan. Recently, I attended the JFNA General Assembly in Chicago. The plenary session included a panel called "Viewpoint Diversity." There were 1,200 people in the huge ballroom, but you could hear a pin drop. In the moment, you could sense the solidarity in that incredibly diverse room around modest goals like being able to exchange views without animus or agreeing on a common set of objective facts. But the panelists' concrete prescriptions, like the mood in that room, were fleeting.

I don't know how to pursue this priority in our community, but I believe it's important. Politeness dictates that we just avoid areas of potential disagreement, and polite avoidance over time allows us to drift further apart, particularly when we increasingly get our information from wholly non-overlapping sources. Given our first priority, we have to be cautious in pursuing this goal, but we will pursue it on the margins. We'll try little experiments and get community feedback. And we will challenge our incoming Board to be a laboratory as well, hopefully modeling at our meetings the kind of frank but respectful discussion of important issues that can inch us toward being more unified as a community, or at least more understanding of difference.

Priority #3. Finally, priority #3. Financial sustainability. This is obviously critical to any organization, but for a Federation, it is also the best performance metric. If we are adding value in this growing and vibrant Jewish community, we should be growing as well. We've made strides here over the past 3 years, growing our total revenue by an average 14% annually. While the important final days of our campaign remain, we expect 2022 revenue to hit a 10-year high. We have funded an operating reserve, and maintain a healthy cash balance and growing endowment. Our strategic plan identified important investments in technology and staff, which we are implementing. Some of these improvements may be less obvious to the community, simply because our incredibly energetic CEO and dedicated staff and volunteers have been using long days and weekends to create the appearance of a more extensive infrastructure than we actually have. That kind of effort, while deeply appreciated, creates "key person" dependencies and is not sustainable long-term. So the pressure is on to continue to build on our momentum and be the kind of stable, long-term institution in which this community can take pride. That ultimate goal depends on all of us, but I appreciate being given the opportunity to do my small part.

You can reach Michael at Michael@ujf.org.

BCHA to Host Annual Celebration Dinner

BY PAUL SILVERFARB

The celebration is on at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA), as the school will host its annual gala on Sunday, February 5, at 5:30 pm. The celebration coincides with the holiday of Tu B'Shvat, known as "Rosh Hashanah for Trees." The festive event will incorporate a Tu B'Shvat Seder (dinner) for all guests.

This year's event, celebrating "A Tree of Many Roots," will take place at the Italian Center of Stamford and will raise funds for scholarships and celebrate the BCHA's success as a preeminent place of learning in the Greater Fairfield, Westchester, and New Haven counties.

"Each of our honorees this year has served our school with great distinction," said Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, head of school at BCHA. "Their commitment to our school's success and their actions pursuant to that commitment make them very worthy recipients of their respective awards at this year's dinner. We are so pleased they are giving us the opportunity to thank and honor them for all they have and continue to do for Jewish education at BCHA."

Eleanor and Mort Lowenthal will be the celebration dinner's Guests of Honor. In addition to their foundational support of the former Jewish High School of Connecticut, now the BCHA Upper School, Mort and Eleanor have been making Stamford and the surrounding areas a better place to live for more than half a century. They have been involved with many other Jewish organizations, including United Jewish Federation, Jewish Broadcasting Service, Hillel International, American Jewish Committee, Hebrew College of Massachusetts, and Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces Westchester / Connecticut Chapter.

Shira and Marc Nerenberg are being honored with BCHA's Community Service Award for their superlative contributions to BCHA and the greater Stamford Jewish community. Shira serves as this year's PTA co-president and has been involved with BCHA's holiday card fundraisers, auction planning, and dinner committees.

Shira participates in activities all around town, including for United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford,



Eleanor & Mort Lowenthal



Shira & Marc Nerenberg



Shira Gilboa



Laura Miller

New Canaan, and Darien, Schoke Jewish Family Service and various synagogues. She has also volunteered in support of the JCC Maccabee games, hosted a summer *shaliach* and served as the Chair of the Chesed Committee at Congregation Agudath Sholom. Marc volunteers with his team at GenRe - shaving his head to raise money for childhood cancer research, cleaning up Mill River Park, packing bags for Filling in the Blanks, and participating in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) initiatives.

This year's Young Leadership Award will be presented to Shira Gilboa. Since officially joining the BCHA community in the fall of 2020, Shira has become involved with the school in several critical ways. She has helped with countless events, shared valuable feedback about processes, and lent considerable time and skills in implementing the school's website. This school year, Shira joined the Board of Trustees, serving on both the Finance Committee and the Marketing Committee.

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy's Lower and Middle School English and mathematics teacher, Laura Miller, is this year's recipient of the Walter Shuchatowitz Award for Excellence in Education. Laura has been a team leader and mentor teacher to new middle school staff and a student advisor and support specialist. Building positive relationships with students is the cornerstone of Laura's classroom. She believes that every child will work to their fullest potential when they know that you're on their team and cheering them on.

For more information regarding the BCHA gala event, please visit www.bcha-ct.org/celebration.

Congregation Agudath Sholom Hosts Dinner Celebration

(Courtesy of Agudath Sholom) Congregation Agudath Sholom will host its annual dinner on Sunday, March 19. Guided by the theme of *Hakhel** (the *mitzvah* of unifying the Jewish people), the community will gather for a special evening celebrating Guests of Honor Meredith and David Cohen, Community Service Award recipients Sandy and Michael Kamen, and Young Leadership Award recipients Jessica and Eytan Sosnovich. Cocktails and a buffet dinner will commence at 5:00 pm with a program celebrating the honorees and dessert to follow.

Rabbi Daniel Cohen, Senior Rabbi of Agudath Sholom, reflected, "We are blessed with honorees who truly reflect the best of Agudath Sholom and embody the values of our community, one rooted in Judaism and relevant to the modern world. The Cohen, Kamen and Sosnovich families are beloved members of our shul and deeply committed to the growth of our congregation, the Jewish community and our roles as lights unto the world. Our annual dinner celebration is one of the most meaningful events of the year and we look forward to God willing a wonderful and successful evening."

For more information, contact Matt Feinberg at mfeinberg@cas-stamford.org or visit www.cas-stamford.org

*"Assemble [*hakhel*] the people to Me that I may let them hear My words, in order that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live on earth, and may so teach their children." (Devarim 4:10)



Guests of Honor David and Meredith Cohen



Young Leadership Award recipients Jessica and Eytan Sosnovich



Community Service Award recipients Sandy and Michael Kamen

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Fun at the JCC

(Courtesy of JCC) Looking for fun weekend plans for your child? Look no further than The Stamford JCC, located at 1035 Newfield Avenue in Stamford. The Selkowitz Center for Youth & Family at The JCC offers numerous weekday and weekend programming and event options to help you and your child make the most of your days off.

Is your child a budding artist? Join us on Saturday, February 4, from 5:30 to 8:30 pm for "Kids' Night Out Paint and Play!" Each attendee will get canvas and paint supplies to create a masterpiece of their own.

THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

"The New Jewish Voice" (USPS #184) is published by the United Jewish Federation Inc.
2009 Summer Street, Suite 301 Stamford 06905.

www.ujf.org for updates and donations

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CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

February 3 4:55 pm
February 10 5:04 pm
February 17 5:13 pm
February 24 5:21 pm
March 3 5:29 pm
March 10 5:37 pm
March 17 6:45 pm
March 24 6:52 pm
March 31 7:00 pm

Prefer sports? Get excited for the biggest football Sunday of the year at the "Super Bowl Warm Up Party," featuring games and food inspired by the big game! From 1:00 to 4:00 pm on Sunday, February 12, wear your favorite team's gear and prepare for the biggest sporting event of the year. Not too knowledgeable about football but still want to get in on the fun? Join in on games, crafts!

More of a movie buff? Join us for the red-carpet event of the season on Saturday, February 25 from 5:30 to 8:30 pm for "Kids' Night Out - Movie Premiere!" Dress to the nines, prepare your best red-carpet poses, and get ready for the A-list celebrity treatment.

Snacks and refreshments will be provided at each event; however, dinner should be eaten prior to arrival. Member pricing is \$20 for the first child, \$10 per each additional child. Community participants are encouraged to participate for \$30 for the first child, \$15 per each additional child. For questions and more information, contact Reyanne Neal at rneal@stamfordjcc.org. To register, visit www.stamfordjcc.org.

TBE Temple Rock

BY STEVEN LANDER,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"Temple Rock", an annual fund raiser for Temple Beth El, will be held on Saturday, February 4, once again in-person. This year's theme is "What Happens at Temple Rock Stays At Temple Rock" and will feature a "Temple Beth El Casino". The evening will include "Lucky Cocktails," an "All In" all-you-can-eat buffet, desserts, music by James Daniel, and a live and on-line auction.

The annual auction will offer everything from exotic vacations to Shabbat dinners and gift cards for area restaurants, to name just a few of the items.

This event, open to the community, is being chaired by Barbara Rothstein and Dana Horowitz with Dana Weinberg serving as auction chair. Tickets are \$150 per person. Reservations are available online at www.tinyurl.com/tbetr2023. For further information contact Steven Lander, TBE Executive Director at exccdir@tbe.org or 203-322-6901, ext. 304.

UPCOMING DEADLINES

April 2023 - Passover Issue
Deadline: Monday, March 6, 2023

Twist and Sip Challah Braiding

(Courtesy of JCC) The community is invited to a JCC Mom's Night Out featuring Master Challah Baker, Rochie Pinson, author of the international bestselling *RISING: The Book of Challah* and *The KIDS Book of Challah: Challah Adventures for the Whole Family*. This fun and tasty event will take place on March 9, 7:30 pm at the Stamford JCC, 1035 Newfield Avenue.

Weaving her life experiences as an artist, mother, rebbetzin and passionate challah baker into all her teachings and demonstrations, Rochie travels the globe, bringing the practice of challah,

both the making of the bread itself and the mitzvah of the dough separation, to a whole new level of joy, fun and spiritual significance!

Tickets are \$25 for JCC members and \$45 for the community before February 25. Space is limited. All participants will braid two challahs to bake at home for Shabbat, will receive a signed copy of Rochie's book, *The KIDS Book of Challah*, and have the chance to sip wine during this inspirational event.

For more information, please contact Sandi Waldstreicher at (203) 322-6541 or swaldstreicher@stamfordjcc.org.

Senior Lunches at the JCC

(Courtesy of JCC) Seniors are invited to attend a Soiree Luncheon at the Stamford JCC, 1035 Newfield Avenue, Friday, February 3 from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. The Soiree will include live music, lunch, and crafts with the children. There is a suggested donation of \$6.

On Friday March 30, also from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, the JCC will host its annual Passover lunch for seniors. Carrying on

the tradition of the Ferber family, this year's Senior Passover Seder Luncheon is presented for the senior adult community free of charge through the generosity of Stacy Ferber, Caryl Ferber Poser, and Peter Poser, in memory of Beverly and Stanley Ferber, Stacy and Caryl's parents. A \$6 suggested donation is welcomed.

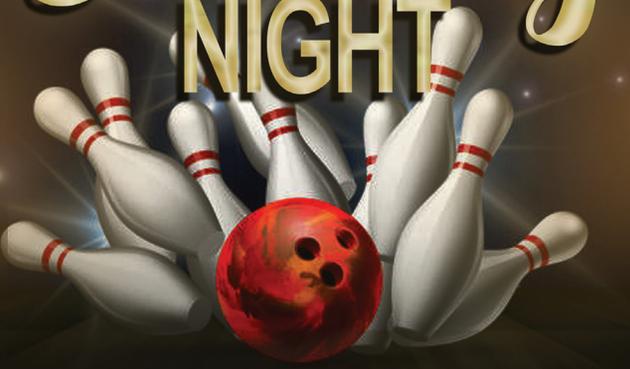
To RSVP, contact Shari Ziegelman at sziegelman@stamfordjcc.org.



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*The NextGen program of UJF seeks to serve as a connector for all young Jews, regardless of affiliation or background. It aims to act as a gateway to build community through social events, fun volunteer programs, educational activities and philanthropy.

Spaces Limited. RSVP by Jan 31st.
www.ujf.org/nextgenbowling

Event chairs:
Jason Lewis, Lorraine Hutzler, Micky Reich, Molly Schrag, Rachel Waldstreicher, Robin Fischel, Stacy Miller

UJF Hosts Gil Hoffman

(Courtesy of UJF) On February 10 and 11, United Jewish Federation looks forward to hosting Gil Hoffman who became executive director of Honest Reporting in June of 2022. In 2022 Hoffman was named one of the top 100 people positively influencing Jewish life.



Gil Hoffman

A major donors Shabbat dinner will be held on Friday evening, February 10. Hoffman will speak following morning services at Congregation Agudath Sholom on February 11 at approximately 10:45 am. His talk will be entitled "Modern Day Lessons from the Leadership of Moses". His talk is open to the community, and services will be followed by kiddush. On the evening of the 11th, Hoffman will meet with the NextGen community in a private home.

Gil Hoffman is the former chief political correspondent and analyst for *The Jerusalem Post*. He worked for the *Jerusalem Post* from 1998 - 2022 and

served as their long-time chief political correspondent where he interviewed prime ministers, generals, government ministers and other prominent politicians and covered 10 Knesset elections. Hoffman has noted in the past that it is important to him to remain objective in

speaking about Israel due to his position as chief political correspondent.

Hoffman hosted the podcast "Inside Israel Today" on The Land of Israel Network from 2017 - 2020, and he hosted a podcast on Voice of Israel from 2014 - 2015.

He makes regular appearances on CNN, TRT World, and Al-Jazeera, along with local Israeli television programs. He is a frequent lecturer on Israel, having spoken in every major English-speaking country in the world and all 50 U.S. states. Hoffman also teaches a course on journalism at the College of Management Academic Studies.

Arts & Culture at the JCC

(Courtesy of JCC) As March approaches, The Stamford JCC's Center for Arts & Culture is pleased to offer two book and author events and an art gallery exhibit.

An Art & Wine reception will be held on Thursday, March 2 at 7:00 pm and will showcase the unveiling of the late Louis Schanker's exhibit. This event is free and open to the community.

On Monday, March 13, from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm, the JCC will offer an in-person discussion with Meg Waite Clayton, author of *The Postmistress of Paris*. The New York Times bestselling author of *The Last Train to London* revisits the dark early days of the German occupation in France in her haunting novel—a love story and a tale of high-stakes danger and incomparable

courage—about a young American heiress who helps artists hunted by the Nazis escape from war-torn Europe.

On Tuesday, March 28, from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm, the JCC will feature Dan Grunfeld, author of *By the Grace of the Game: The Holocaust, a Basketball Legacy, and an Unprecedented American Dream*. A former basketball star at Stanford University, Grunfeld shares the remarkable story of a multi-generational family epic detailing history's only known journey from Auschwitz to the NBA.

JCC members are free and the community is invited and welcome for \$10. Register at www.stamfordjcc.org. For questions, please contact jserrata@stamfordjcc.org.

Babies, Blocks, and Bagels at the J

(Courtesy of JCC) Come and have fun with other families with infants to 3 year olds on Sunday, February 12, from 9:30 am to 11:00 am at the Stamford JCC, 1035 Newfield Avenue. All families are welcome for open play and snacks, including siblings up to

6 years old. This program is free for members and the community is invited at \$10 per family. To register, visit www.stamfordjcc.org. For more information, please contact Danielle Mittleman at 203.487.0976 or dmittleman@stamfordjcc.org.

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Learn more at our informational luncheons in the coming months. To reserve your seat or to become a Priority Club member today, please contact us at **203-365-6441** or aferrarie@jseniors.org.

mozaicconciergeliving.org

Keeping the Community Safe

(Courtesy of UJF) Michael Shanbrom has been the Secure Community Network (SCN) Regional Security Advisor (RSA) for Southern and Western Connecticut since October, 2021. Mike, who has years of experience with the FBI and local law enforcement, was hired by a consortium of four Federations - Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien, UJA-JCC Greenwich, New Haven and Western Connecticut - to assess and improve security protocols and assist in emergency preparedness.



Michael Shanbrom

The threats facing us are very real, and Jewish communities in Southern and Western Connecticut are not immune, but there is much we can do to help protect each other. That's why it is imperative that we continue to work together to identify threats, make our Jewish community facilities harder to target, and prepare for and train to survive a potential active threat," said Mike in a recent interview.

As Regional Security Advisor, Mike has reached out to all synagogues, schools, and agencies, conducted on-site training in "Situational Awareness" and "Countering Active Threat" and conducted formal security assessments. These assessments

are a necessary part of applications for the federal Nonprofit Security Grant (NPSG) Program. During his first year, Mike assisted several local organizations in obtaining hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal funds to enhance security.

"The security assessment is an eye-opening experience. We all are familiar with our synagogues and community buildings from our regular interactions, but until you see the facilities the way an experienced security professional sees them, you might be missing major vulnerabilities," commented Sharon Lewis, Director of UJF's Jewish Community Relations Council.

The Federal NPSG program will continue to be funded this year (and is

something Jewish Federations of North America lobbies for). Mike will be available to assist any organizations which need help with this process.

Mike also serves as a conduit between the local Jewish community organizations, law enforcement, and the SCN's 24-hour National Jewish Security Operations Command Center. He has also been working closely with local law enforcement, as well as federal and state partners, to ensure collaboration and the sharing of threat information. In addition, Mike has built a one-stop online Jewish community security resource website at www.securejewishct.org.

Mike may be reached at mshanbrom@securecommunitynetwork.org.

Shine A Light on Antisemitism

(Courtesy of UJF) For the second year, United Jewish Federation participated in the nationwide Shine A Light on Antisemitism campaign in December. UJF, in collaboration with the federations of Greenwich and New Haven, received a grant from Jewish Federations of North America of almost \$20,000 to sponsor events and signage to

teach about antisemitism and how to fight it. Over the course of two weeks, the three communities hosted a Zoom event with David Baddiel, renowned comedian, and author of *Jews Don't Count* attended by over 100 people; sponsored the showing of the film *The Man In The Basement*, watched by 200 people; hosted an online lecture by Yale



Shine a Light traveling billboard truck.

visiting professor Liram Korenz Stenzler, who spoke about right-wing antisemitism on the internet, and a roving, lighted billboard was hired to travel around Stamford, New Canaan, Darien, and Greenwich during Chanukah. Shine A Light was part of a national campaign during which Federations and other organizations throughout the country hosted events to educate about antisemitism.

United Jewish Federation OF STAMFORD • NEW CANAAN • DARIEN Serving Greater Fairfield County

Yoav needs your assistance

HELP US UNDERSTAND HOW WE CAN BETTER CONNECT OUR COMMUNITY TO ISRAEL

Yoav Yaron, UJF's Community Shaliach

UJF_SHALIACH

Schoke JFS Helps Ukrainian Refugees Learn English

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The English Café at Schoke JFS has evolved to meet the needs of teenagers and children by creating a group for young children to learn English in a playful way. Another group allows teenagers to speak about their feelings and emotions in English, which not only improves their English but also confronts depression. This group introduces conversations through drawing,

examining photos, and talking about war. To sign up to volunteer for The English Café, go to www.ctjfs.org/volunteer-opportunities.

The English Café is supported by a grant from The Jewish Federations of North America and the Center on Holocaust Survivor Care and Institute on Aging and Trauma, both funded by United Jewish Federation and the Federation system throughout North America.

United Jewish Federation OF STAMFORD • NEW CANAAN • DARIEN Serving Greater Fairfield County

GUSH KATIF

MEET YOAV AND HEAR ABOUT HIS CHILDHOOD GROWING UP IN THE GAZA STRIP IN ISRAEL

Sunday February 12
12:30 pm
Temple Beth-El
350 Roxbury Rd.
Stamford, CT.

RSVP today: ujf.org/gaza
For more information contact - Yoav@ujf.org

Jewish Disability Advocacy Day

Raise Your Voice.

February 15, 2023
Noon ET

Come together virtually to fight for and with people with Disabilities. We're calling on you to join us & be heard. Will you be there?

Learn more at: JewishTogether.org/JDAD-2023



A Cheesy Hat for Haman

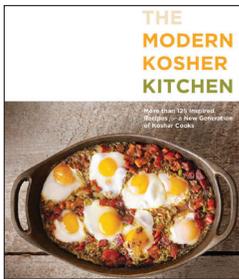
BY RONNIE FEIN

My mother used to say that certain words and expressions were perfect in Yiddish or Hebrew but that the translation into English just didn't cut it.

Take the word "balagan" for example. In English it means "chaos" or "mess." But if you want to really understand what the more expressive Hebrew/Yiddish *balagan* really means, go to a Purim celebration. You *schlep* your kids to synagogue, all dressed up as Queen Esther or Mordechai and (unlike at home or school) tell them to make a lot of noise and run around, then, every time they hear the name "Haman" to shout, stomp their feet and crank their graggers.

There's a good reason for the *balagan*. Purim celebrates the salvation of the Jews of ancient Persia, who were to be annihilated by order of Haman, the Prime Minister at the time. Esther, who was married to the Persian King (Ahasuerus), begged her husband to save her people. Mordechai, Esther's cousin, led the Jews in revolt. In the end, Haman was hanged, Mordechai was appointed the new Prime Minister and all turned out well.

On Purim we are supposed to celebrate, to eat, drink and make merry – and so the costumes, the parties and the graggers, which are designed to blot out the name of the evil Haman. This year it all begins at sundown on March 6. There's food of course -- mostly hamantaschen, those fabulous triangular shaped cookies that



are intended to resemble Haman's hat. But any triangular shaped food will do. Like these Romanian Cheese Turnovers (*Placinta cu Branza*), based on a recipe from my grandma. They are wonderful hors d'oeuvres and if you make them larger, can be a nice lunch. (Serve with a salad).

ROMANIAN CHEESE TURNS (PLACINTA CU BRANZA)

- 1-1/4 cups crumbled feta cheese
- 1 7.5 ounce package farmer cheese (about one cup)(or use dry curd cottage cheese)
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1 large egg
- 2 medium scallions, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
- 2 sheets frozen puff pastry

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the feta cheese, farmer cheese, sour cream, egg, scallion and dill in a mixing bowl and mix together until the mixture is uniform and the ingredients evenly distributed. Roll one sheet of the puff pastry into a 12"x 12" or 13"x13"square. Cut out 9 or 16 squares. Place equal amounts of cheese filling in the center of each. Wet two sides of each square lightly with some water. Fold the dry sides of the dough in half over the filling to meet the wet sides and to form triangles. Press the ends to seal the dough tightly. Press the edges with the tines of a fork to seal the sides completely. Place the pieces on the baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining dough and filling. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until golden brown.

Makes 18 or 32

Ronnie Fein is a cookbook author, food writer and cooking teacher in Stamford. She is the author of *The Modern Kosher Kitchen* and *Hip Kosher*. Visit her food blog, *Kitchen Vignettes*, at www.ronniefein.com, friend on Facebook at [RonnieVailFein](https://www.facebook.com/RonnieVailFein), Twitter at [@RonnieVFein](https://twitter.com/RonnieVFein), Instagram at [@RonnieVFein](https://www.instagram.com/RonnieVFein).



Romanian Cheese Turnovers

Purim Lunch for Seniors at the JCC

(Courtesy of JCC) As Purim approaches, the Stamford JCC is excited to be hosting a Purim luncheon, provided through the generosity of Betsey and Arthur Selkowitz. The lunch will be held on Friday, March 3 from 11:00 am to

1:00 pm. at the JCC, 1035 Newfield Avenue, Stamford. There is a \$6 suggested donation, and the lunch will be kosher.

To RSVP or for more information, contact Shari Ziegelman at sziegelman@stamfordjcc.org

Purim Carnival at The J

(Courtesy of JCC) The Stamford JCC's annual Purim carnival will be held on Sunday, March 5 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the JCC, 1035 Newfield Avenue. This year's theme is "The Circus of a Lifetime" and guests

are encouraged to come in costume. Enjoy carnival games and activities, hamantaschen, and snacks. The carnival is free for all JCC Members. Community pricing available at www.stamfordjcc.org.

80s Purim Party at Agudath Sholom

(Courtesy of CAS) Congregation Agudath Sholom brings back the 1980s with a "totally tubular" Purim party on Saturday night, February 25, with live music, great food, 80s-themed mixed drinks and Master Mentalist, David Rosenfeld. Get dressed in your favorite

80s-themed costume for a chance at winning a best-dressed prize and bragging rights. The celebration is open to the entire community.

For more info, visit the CAS Website at www.cas-stamford.org or contact Yonnie Rubinfeld at jason.rubinfeld23@gmail.com.

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Dec. '22 Month's Supply of Inventory*	1.5 Month's 1.9 mo's supply in Prior Month 1.4 months in Prior Year	1.3 Months 1.4 mo's supply in Prior Month 1.8 months in Prior Year

*Healthy market is 6 month's supply of inventory
Data taken from December SmartMLS deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.

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Israeli Cafe:
Beyond The Headlines

Thursday, February 9th | 7:30-8:30 pm

Coffee, Cake, and Conversation

Join Sharon Lewis & Yoav Yaron to discuss contemporary Israeli topics.

Find your seat today: ujf.org/cafe
For more information: 203-321-1373, ext. 1003



Purim with Chabad of Stamford

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) From Megillah readings to *shalach manot* (gift) packages, to their Purim bashes and *seudot* (festive meals), Chabad of Stamford has all Purim needs covered.

On Sunday, February 26, Chabad will hold its annual “Family Hamentashen Bake Fest” from 10:00 to 11:00 am. Get into the holiday spirit by preparing hamentashen with delicious fillings and toppings.

On Monday, March 6, at 6:00 pm, they will host their annual Purim bash. Megillah readings will be held throughout the evening followed by festivities for the entire family with music and entertainment, food, and a kid’s Megillah reading with interactive activities. Back by popular demand will be “Georgie the Mixologist” creating Purim-themed cocktails and mocktails for all.

Megillah readings will run throughout the next day on Tuesday, March 7, starting at 9:00 am. Those who are homebound and would like to arrange a reading may contact Chabad of Stamford.

On Tuesday, March 7, Chabad will host a Purim *seudah* (festive meal) where the community is invited to join Chabad for a *l’chaim* (toast), starting at 5:00 pm. After the runaway

success of last year’s Texan style BBQ, Chabad has invited The Wandering Que to cater the event once again.

One of the four mitzvot celebrated on Purim is to send gifts of food to friends in celebration of the spirit of Jewish unity and joy. *Mishloach manot*, or *shalach manot*, are gifts that contain two different ready-to-eat foods and are sent to a friend or community member on the day of Purim. Every year, Chabad of Stamford sends almost 1,000 *shalach manot* to Jewish families all over Stamford and Fairfield County. This year, Chabad will once again be sending these packages. Greeting letters can be included in the gift packages to friends, family and community members for as little as \$18 a listing. Purim cards and individual baskets for friends and family are also available for purchase.

Throughout the day on Wednesday, February 22, Chabad invites volunteers to help pack these packages at the annual “Shalach Manot Packing Party”. Teens will hold their own packing party on February 28 from 7:00-9:00 pm.

For more information about Chabad of Stamford’s Shalach Manot Project, the Purim party, *seudah* or Megillah readings, go to www.StamfordChabad.org or contact programs@stamfordchabad.org.

Temple Beth El Purim Bonanza

(Courtesy of TBE) Purim services, geared toward families and led by Rabbi Joshua Hammerman and Cantor Katie Kaplan, will be held at Temple Beth El (TBE) on Monday, March 6, beginning at 6:00 pm and will be followed by the “Bubble Trouble Show.” Festivities will begin with a costume parade and a raffle ticket for all those in costume. Grand Prize: To be put in a bubble with their family or friends as part of the Bubble Trouble Show.

Jeff Boyer, master bubble wrangler, takes bubbles to the max with big bubble flair. See bubble rainbows with people inside, audience members making volcano bubbles, and gigantic bubbles that blow their own bubbles!

Jeff Boyer is an internationally acclaimed pioneer of highly interactive community-based bubble performance. A variety artist with over 25 years of entertainment experience, specializing in inclusion and diversity performance, he seamlessly engages audiences beyond language, culture, age, and ability barriers. His dynamic



Jeff Boyer

style galvanizes communities. Jeff began creating bubble shows in 2005. His experience with school groups led him to raise audience participation to a new level. The evolution of this unique inclusiveness and interactive art separates Bubble Trouble from other bubble shows, thrills audiences and builds lasting community among performing arts center patrons.

An additional adult Megillah reading will be held at 7:30 pm.

Admission is free, and the entire community is welcome to attend. Contact Steven Lander, Executive Director at Temple Beth El for more information at execdir@tbe.org.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Afula Crisis Center Reopens

BY NANCY SCHULMAN

United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF) supports community service programs in Israel as a member of Partnership 2Gether (P2G), part of the Jewish Agency for Israel’s partnership platform. These programs impact the lives of the less fortunate in the Afula-Gilboa region of Israel. One example is a rape crisis center in Afula, which provides emotional and professional support to victims of sexual assault. In 2022, UJF made a significant gift to re-open the center as it had closed during the COVID epidemic.

The rape crisis center supports victims and those surrounding them. It accomplishes this through assistance meetings and accompaniment to legal proceedings, as well as offering outreach activities, professional training and an expanding education department.

In 2022, the center received 750 new and recurring non-anonymous inquiries, including 51 inquiries on the WhatsApp Helpline. Support activities also included 30 escorts in criminal procedures, 10 escorts to hospitals in the valley and 38 assistance meetings including 10 meetings in the criminal procedure. Representatives were involved in meetings with the area’s crime victim officer and provided a resilience program for female police investigators of Afula, Migdal HaEmek, and Beit Shean. The center also offers a support group for victims of sexual assault through self-defense, and individual treatments for victims by interns, who receive training from the center throughout the year.

The training offered in 2022 involved training female volunteers from the region, rehabilitation and integration services employees, nurses, protective teams in local

kibbutzim, municipal staff at Ma’ale Gilboa, and work with the welfare department. In addition, designated seminars for supervisors were held to address sexual harassment in the workplace.

Some 5,000 students and staff members in formal and informal education, among them at-risk youth, have so far taken part in the educational activities conducted by the center. This is done through the facilitators of the Education Department in Afula and the valleys, which conducts workshops for middle school and high school students. Training sessions were also held for parents.

UJF is proud to have been an integral part of giving this valuable resource back to the Afula-Gilboa community, and it will continue to support this and other community programs in the region. To learn more about Partnership 2Gether and how UJF donations support Israel’s social service needs, contact Diane Sloyer at dianesloyer@ujf.org.



The recently remodeled Moadon (lounge) provides a safe and comfortable place to relax.

Farbrengen with Chabad of Stamford



Chabad of Stamford’s farbrengen draws joy and inspiration.

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Throughout the year, Chabad of Stamford holds several farbrengens. A “farbrengen” is a (joyous) gathering where people spend time together, often with the goal of inspiring people to grow in spirituality. This fall they held a special one on the Hebrew birthday of Rabbi Moshe Shemtov, Director of Chabad of Stamford. These events may consist of explanations of general Torah subjects, with an emphasis on Hasidic philosophy, relating of Hasidic stories, and lively melodies, with refreshments being served.

Chabad invites all men and women in the community to join them at their next farbrengen on April 1. For more information, please email programs@stamfordchabad.org.

Big Win at Robotics Competition

BY PAUL SILVERFARB

The Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) Upper School had plenty of reasons to celebrate in mid-December, as its Science Department picked up two awards during the Center for Initiatives in Jewish Education (CIJE): VEX Robotics Competition.

Against 26 teams from around the tri-state area, BCHA took home the gold with their Engineering 1 team. BCHA's Engineering 2 team also finished in the top five at the competition, placing fourth overall.

"The two BCHA teams finished first and fourth in the recent CIJE: VEX Robotics Competition, which is a testament to the ingenuity of our students and the rigor of the BCHA engineering program," said the team's coach and BCHA Upper School science teacher Dr. Paul Castle. "Mazel tov to our wonderful engineers."

As a part of the school's Engineering Team 1, students Benny Grunblatt, Joseph Bildner, Lilah Gordon, and Dvir Frish took home the top prize.

"The CIJE Robotics Competition was an amazing experience," said Grunblatt. "I'm so happy to have had

the opportunity to work with my team on this incredible competition, during which I learned so many engineering skills and had a wonderful time. The feeling of bringing home the trophy for BCHA can't be compared to anything else."

In addition, the Engineering 2 team, comprised of Erez Fass, Ben Steiner, Jake Brenner, Max Ferits, and Harry Cohen, was the only team to finish the round-robin portion of the robotics competition with a perfect record (6-0).



Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy's Engineering Team 1, Benny Grunblatt, Joseph Bildner, Lilah Gordon, and Dvir Frish, along with teachers Dr. Paul Castle and William Berson.

Anachnu Program Turns Five

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) The Schoke Jewish Family Service (JFS) Holocaust survivor program, Anachnu, turns five this year. *Anachnu*, the Hebrew word for us, represents Schoke JFS's commitment to ensuring that Holocaust survivors never feel alone or abandoned. For five years, the agency has connected to and supported this precious population of survivors, changing lives every day.

Since 2018, grant funding from Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA and the parent organization of UJF) Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care has enabled Schoke JFS to provide services to Holocaust survivors in Fairfield County, in particular supporting Anachnu's socialization programming. Through additional partnerships with the United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien, The Blue Card Fund, Claims Conference, KAVOD Shef Initiative and the Network of Human Service Agencies, Schoke JFS has expanded services to include food deliveries, case management, advocacy and emergency financial assistance.

With the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic, Anachnu programs continued online or transitioned to

virtual. Through a private donation, Holocaust survivors who had access to the internet but did not have a computer, received tablets from Schoke JFS to continue participating virtually. In 2021, Schoke JFS partnered with Uniper, an online interactive platform broadcasting directly to a TV; this connected survivors without the internet to the agency's robust offering of online sessions.

On February 28, Anachnu will host its first post-pandemic in-person event. This Purim party, featuring live music and a catered meal, will take place at Temple Sinai in Stamford.

For many Holocaust survivors, Anachnu programs are the highlight of their day; they look forward to, prepare for, and actively participate in them. It reduces survivors' isolation, helping them stay intellectually and socially active. Many participants make presentations for the entire Anachnu group themselves, which keeps them busy and brings great satisfaction.

For more information on the Anachnu program, contact Marina Sapir, msapir@ctjfs.org or 203-921-4161.

Sixteen Sweet Years of Friendship Circle Winter Camp

(Courtesy of Friendship Circle) Friendship Circle Winter camp was in session once again this year, for children up to the age of 21 with special needs from all over Fairfield County. This year's camp took place from Monday, December 26, through Thursday, December 29, at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA). Camp lasted three hours every day and included trips for the participants. One Friendship Circle camper's mom said, "It means so much to know and see she is having a great time and is well looked after. It brings me A LOT of peace of mind."



Gabby Pines and Chana Goldstein

reunion for many volunteers who are at college during the year and were able to participate in camp over their vacations. Counselors were able to spend time together with their special friends with whom they had volunteered throughout high school.

Upcoming events at the Friendship Circle include a Super Bowl party for adults with special needs on Sunday, February 12, as well as an Adult Circle Cooking Club at Chabad of Greenwich on Thursday, March 16. These are just a sample of the activities that Friendship Circle of Fairfield County facilitates. Other activities involve the



Erica Mandel, Page Fiorito and Ruthie Price

Campers, along with volunteers and therapists, took daily trips to Chelsea Piers, Nutmeg Bowl, Maritime Aquarium, and Sky Zone. Along with these activities, participants also enjoyed circle time and lunch at BCHA. This winter camp was also a

parents of children with special needs, as well as teen volunteers and younger teens who are preparing for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah. For more information on how to become involved, please reach out to Malya Shmotkin at malya@friendshipct.com.

New Around Town

Dayna Patashnik, Temple Beth El Engagement Coordinator

(Courtesy of Temple Beth El) Temple Beth El (TBE) is proud to welcome Dayna Patashnik in her new role as Engagement Coordinator. Dayna has a strong connection to TBE, both personally and professionally. A member of TBE for over 17 years, she has been a teacher in the K'tanim program since 2009. In 2021, she launched the TBE middle school social action/community service program "Mitzvah Makers," which develops innovative programming and builds community partnerships through volunteer activities, thanks to a grant from UJE.



Dayna Patashnik

In this role, Dayna will embrace new and prospective members to TBE as well as engage with current members to ensure

everyone has a deep level of connection to the Temple community and their Jewish identity. Dayna welcomes the opportunity to work with TBE in a new capacity, and she is very excited about her new position. "I look forward to working closely with clergy, staff, board members and volunteers to serve the TBE congregation and the greater Stamford community," Dayna stated.

"We are pleased to welcome Dayna into her expanded role at TBE. Her passion for TBE and the Jewish community makes her the perfect fit for this important position," said Temple Beth El President, Scott Krowitz.

Dayna is a resident of Stamford and is married to David Patashnik. They are the proud parents of Aaron and Andrew.

Throughout 2022, our community continued to feel the effects of COVID, tremendous inflation and a war in Ukraine. The challenges left us all working harder and digging deeper, and with your continued generosity United Jewish Federation raised over two million dollars through its Annual Campaign, Program and Event Sponsors, Tribute gifts and more. UJF is tremendously grateful to all of you for allowing us to make a meaningful and impactful contribution in our community and beyond.

Todah Rabah-Thank You!

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Bits & Pieces



BY SANDY GOLOVE

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

Sandy Golove

MAZEL TOV TO GROWING FAMILIES:

Elana & Chaim Barer on the birth of a daughter, Eliane Golda Barer.

Kristin & Alex Bass on the birth of a daughter, Olivia Evelyn Bass; and to the grandparents, **Andrea & Eric Bass**.

Emilie & Harry Block on the birth of a daughter; and to the grandfather, **Stephen Block**.

Tova & Josh Goldberg on the birth of a daughter.

Dina Green & Greg Celniker on the birth of a daughter; and to the grandparents, **Lisa France & Steve Celniker and Jill & Arthur Green**.

Liat & Matt Greif on the birth of a daughter; and to the grandmother, **Rhonda Greif**.

Rachel & Jay Jubas on the birth of a grandson.

Stacy Lessen & Gregg Arenson on the birth of a son, Ben Paxton Arenson; and to the grandparents, **Lois Stark & Gary Lessen**.

Shira Marder & Jason Saibel on the birth of a son.

Lauren & Barry Marks on the birth of a granddaughter Sydney Morgan Marks; and to the grandparents, **Lisa & Michael Rome**.

Avielle Movsas & Bradley Goldstein on the birth of a son; and to the grandparents, **Judy & Howard Goldstein**.

Claire & Matt Perper on the birth of a son, Brayden James Perper.

Yana & David Ratner on the birth of a grandson, Andrew Taylor Ratner; and to the grandparents, **Lori & Stuart Ratner**.

Kaili & Daniel Scherban on the birth of a daughter.

Hannah & Jordan Sokol on the birth of a son; and to the grandparents, **Shira & Mitchell Zucker**.

Frances & Jay Starr on the birth of a son; and to the grandparents, **Helene & Harvey Kaminski**.

Michal & Yishai Zwiren on the birth of a daughter; and to the grandparents, **Diane & Rabbi Daniel Cohen**.

Talia Zarbiv & Jeff Kilstein on the birth of a daughter.

MAZEL TOV TO ENGAGEMENT/WEDDING:

Lynn Villency Cohen & Stephen Cohen on the engagement of their daughter **Rachel Cohen to Daniel Grey**, and to the grandfather, **Judge Stanley Novack**.

Rivki Elman & Dori Siderson on their marriage.

Sharon & Mark Feller on the engagement of their son, **Zev Feller to Adar Tziporah Curriel**; daughter of **Nechama & Meir Curriel**; and to the grandmother **Lila Feller**.

Shara & Rabbi David Israel on the engagement of their son, **Ari Israel to Gavi Krinsky**, daughter of **Julie & Cary Krinsky**; and to the grandparents, **Phillip Israel and Sandra Pulver**.

David Jelen & Judith Jelen, z"l, on the engagement of their son, **Matt Jelen to Yael Saiger**, daughter of **Lisa Gordis & Aaron Saiger**.

Shani & Gil Orbach on the marriage of their daughter, **Adira Orbach to Izzy Muller**.

Peshy Raitport & Mendy Tiefenbrun on their engagement.

Esti & Yitzie Shapiro on the marriage of their daughter, **Leora Shapiro to Yisrael Yudkowsky**; and to the grandparents, **Lillian & Sandy Shapiro**.

Audrey & Mark Wagshul on the marriage of their daughter, **Yona Wagshul to Tzvi Eli Scholnick**.

MAZEL TOV TO OTHER:

Roni Lang named 2022 Connecticut Social Worker of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter.

MAZEL TOV B'NAI MITZVAH:

Avigayil Chavkin: daughter of **Anat & Marc Chavkin** and to the grandparents, **Joyce & Barry Chavkin**.

Ben Daniel: son of **Julie Daniel**.

Sarah Gilbert: daughter of **Lori & Raph Gilbert**.

Hannah Haron: daughter of **Rachel & Dan Haron** and to the grandparents, **Kamal Haron and Linda Rezak & Larry Rezak, z"l**.

Eli Kalt: son of **Carin & Greg Kalt**.

Boaz Moreen: son of **Tzivia & Gabriel Moreen**.

Nadav Neumeier: son of **Becky & Omer Neumeier**.

Jordan Scherban: son of **Rachel & David Scherban**.

Jonah Shapiro: son of **Danielle & Lael Shapiro**.

Connor Wood: son of **Rebecca Nurick Wood**.

WE MOURN THE LOSS OF:

Eleanore Agatstein: mother of **Richard Agatstein**.

Alvin Ashley: husband of **Muriel Ashley** and father of **Sharon Lewis and Mitchel Ashley**.

Iris M. Bell: mother of **Marc Weissman, Ken Weissman and Laura Roman**; and sister of **Bea Rosenbloom**.

Helen Gertrude Dampf: mother of **Steven, Richard, Gayle, Sharon and Michele Dampf**.

William Davidson: father of **Stephen Davidson**.

Rose Dayan: mother of **Nimrod Dayan**.

Jeanne Dutton-Sinrich: wife of **Norman Sinrich, z"l**.

Emilla Fischer: mother of **Robert Fischer and Ronald Fischer**.

Phyllis Freed: mother of **Marian Freed**.

Ellen Hersh: mother of **Naomi Hersh and Elizabeth Seiden**.

Lorraine Hillman: mother of **Lawrence Hillman and Richard Hillman**.

Enid L. Kadish: mother of **Michael Kadish**.

Ruth Katz: mother of **Robert Bogen, Bara Naurer and Arnold Raelyn**; and stepmother of **Richard Katz and Judy Minsky**.

Debra Krasner: sister of **Sherrie Krasner**.

Herman Kroshinsky: father of **Miriam Schechter**.

Evelyn Kugelman: mother of **Juli Harris**.

Joseph Samuel Levine: father of **Jane Levine**.

Aaron Levy: father of **Stella Cohen and Elli Levy**.

Alvaro Lopez: brother of **Henry Lopez and Marina Lopez**.

Elizabeth "Betsy" Lopez: mother of **Gwen Lopez**.

Milton Marder: husband of **Eleanor Marder** and father of **Rabbi Chaim Marder**.

Marcia Moyer: mother of **Lisa Rome**.

Ester Plotner: mother of **Judah Plotner**.

Larry Rezak: husband of **Linda Rezak**; father of **Rachel Haron, Josh Rezak, Jessica Rezak Schwab and Emily Mudge**.

Herbert Schwartz: father of **Bennett Schwartz and Janet Mantel**.

Anton Selkowitz: brother of **Arty Selkowitz and Robert Selkowitz**.

Eliezer Silverman: husband of **Miriam Silverman**.

Vivien Simon: mother of **Gail Raven & grandmother of Rabbi Jay TelRav**.

Mollie Smith: mother of **Barbara Smith and Edward Smith**.

Martin Steinmetz: father of **Mollie Steinmetz and Rachel Steinmetz**.

Fannie Stevens: mother of **Joel Stevens and Yoni Neiman**.

Donald Todrin: brother of **David Todrin**.

A Message From UJF's Shaliach

Where Am I From?

BY YOAV YARON

That's the one constant question I get from people that I meet and is an essential part of my personal journey from Israel to Stamford. Recently, I spoke with the 5th graders at Temple Sinai Religious School about belonging and our connection to a place. Their responses were very interesting. Some said that their home is where their family is. Some said it's where their pets are. Others felt it's wherever you live. I then asked



Yoav Yaron and Marilyn Dale

them, "Am I American if I live here?" There was a spark in their eyes showing they understood the question and allowed me to share my own story about belonging. It is complicated to define.

Where am I from?

When I moved to our community last August,

I kept saying I'm from Jerusalem because I have lived there for the past seven years. I belonged to a community, I worked and

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The Hebrew Corner

A Monthly Primer by Robert Abrams, UJF Education Committee Chair

Boker Tov! Good Morning! Yes, that's right, BoKeR means morning. What about the phrase "BiKuR Cholim?" - Visiting the sick? Furthermore, what about the phrase in Psalm 27, at the end of sentence 4, which is typically translated as to remain, to contemplate, or even to

inquire. It really means to visit - as noted above as in visiting the sick. How are the word for "morning" and the word for "visiting" related?

The root of each word are the Hebrew



Robert Abrams

letters Bet, Kuhf, and Raysh. And remember that Hebrew is a very, very old language. In the days of the Torah, approximately 3,000 years ago, there were no planes, trains, or automobiles. Our guess is that when people went to "visit" one another, they stayed overnight and saw one another the following "morning." Thus, the word "morning" came to mean spending the night when one person or family would "visit" one another. So much for just stopping by!

UConn Hillel's Discovery Trip to Israel

(Courtesy, UCONN Hillel) UConn Hillel returned in January from its first ever Israel Discovery Tour which brought 20 student leaders, both Jewish and non-Jewish, on an intensive and experiential 10-day trip. Funded by a grant from the Maccabee Task Force (MTF), the trip provided students the opportunity to explore the region's complex history, grapple with nuanced political and religious realities, and explore the conflict from various perspectives.

Unlike many other trips to Israel, this tour took students into the heart of the conflict. Students heard from a broad range of voices including David Benjamin, former chief legal advisor for the Israel Defense Force; Mohammad El Masri, Secretary General of the Fatah Movement; Khaled Abu Tomeh, an Arab Israeli journalist who covers Palestinian affairs for the Jerusalem Post; and Lt. Colonel Eyal Hagbi, former commander of the IDF's Gaza Brigade. Participants visited the Palestinian Authority, Israeli settlements in Judea and Samaria, the AIDA Refugee Camp, Ramallah and major Israeli cities to get a first-hand look at multiple perspectives of the current situation. This exposure will help students better



understand the complexities inherent to the region and diffuse previously uninformed anti-Israel sentiment.

Students stayed on a kibbutz by the Sea of Galilee, visited Yad Vashem and the Golan Heights, and went to the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Temple Mount. At the Peres Center for Innovation and Peace, they had an interactive tour where they learned about the meaningful programs focused on promoting peace between Israel and its neighbors as well as the multitude of Israeli innovations in science, technology, and medicine. They also had the opportunity to hear from leaders within Israel's various ethnic minority communities, including

those from the Druze and Ethiopian communities.

The five Jewish and 15 non-Jewish students on the trip were chosen through a selective application and interview process and are all influential leaders on campus. Students included the President of the UConn College Republicans, senators for the Undergraduate Student Government (USG), a journalist for the *Daily Campus* student newspaper, leaders in the Puerto Rican/Latin American and African American Cultural Centers, various Greek organization leaders, and campus tour guides. They were all selected for their potential to build wide coalitions with students who are not necessarily natural Israel supporters and become active influencers with the pro-Israel community on campus.

Will Herens, '24, USG Senator and member of the Law Society, summed up his experience, "When we think of Israel, more often than not we think 'contested,'

'conflicted' or 'chaotic'. Now, when I think of Israel, I feel empathy and wonder. In a land that has long been involved in conflict, there is a constant feeling of peace."

Edina Oestreicher, UConn Hillel Executive Director, who staffed the trip along with Israel Fellow Sapir Frieman, said, "This trip comes at an opportune time when anti-Israel sentiments are rising across campuses. By preparing our student leaders to factually tackle these challenges, we look forward to creating opportunities for coalition building and meaningful dialogue."

By connecting some of UConn's most promising student leaders to each other in order to engage in meaningful conversation and learn from one another, this trip is part of a much broader strategic plan. Working with UConn Hillel, other faith organizations, and cultural centers as well as university leadership, the students will participate in follow-up events that celebrate positive aspects of Israel and engage in outreach that will leverage the impact of the trip.

Where Am I From?

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

lived there, and I still see myself as part of the city's "mosaic." But the more complicated answer is that I have multiple places I am from and belong to.

I was born in Neve Dekalim, a community in the Gush Katif (the Jewish communities in the Gaza Strip). That is where I grew up, played in sand dunes, spent time on the beach, and had many friends and family living only a few minutes away from each other. We had an interesting life there. You can imagine that living as neighbors to Arab cities and villages can be somewhat complicated, but it was part of the life I knew growing up. Initially, we were the best neighbors, and then sadly some conflicts occurred, and security tensions drifted us apart. In the summer of 2005, when I was 14 years old, we were uprooted from our homes, from the Jewish communities, and forced out following the government decision that heavily impacted my life.

My family was able to eventually build our home together again in Nitzan (a community near Ashdod) with most of our friends from Gush Katif. I don't think I saw myself belonging to Nitzan, though. Yes, my parents and siblings still live there today, but my heart is split into two locations: Gush Katif and Jerusalem. And now a third, as Greater Stamford has become my new home over these past six months.

On Sunday, February 12 at Temple Beth-El, I will be sharing more of my story. The evening is yet another opportunity to answer the question, "Where are you from?"

It's a topic that I was happy to discuss on a

recent surprise phone call I received from Marilyn Dale, whom I had the pleasure of meeting during one of UJF's grandparents' programs we held at the Waterstone. Marilyn extended an invitation for me to be one of the special guests at the Waterstone and to light the menorah for the third night of Chanukah. I was equally excited and flattered, and the kind gesture made me feel right at home.

It was a special night. I lit the candles, recited the blessings, and sang (poorly I might add) Maoz Tzur with Marilyn and other guests. I also spoke about the Federation's ongoing work in the community and my position as Shaliach. In Israel, we refer to those older in age as the "Third age" (שילשה ליגה). It means the next part of your life is to continue learning, exploring, and growing. The energy, passion, and kindness that was in the room and all around Waterstone filled my heart with joy. Every time I'm working or meeting with seniors I'm thinking about my own grandpa Joe (Joseph), who passed away 12 years ago, and how he would appreciate the conversations as such. I know he is proud of what I do and continue doing for our community.

One of the residents at the Waterstone asked me why would I leave Israel and move all around the world to a new place? For me, that is simple: I love working with world Jewry and seeing the Jewish Agency for Israel's mission to keep all our people connected to each other come to life. That's part of my Jewish identity and my own story.

JHS Turns 40

BY LESLIE HEYISON

The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County (JHSFC) is preparing 40th anniversary events and programs for all ages that will commence in the next few months.

"The idea for a Jewish Historical Society in Stamford was born on a group trip to the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1983, when Irwin Miller told us about his research into the earliest Jews and Jewish organizations in Stamford," recalls Larry Ginsberg, original founder and past general counsel to the Society. A small group of Stamford residents was formed which led to the creation of the original Stamford Jewish Historical Society that would "collect, preserve, research, record, exhibit, and publish the settlement of the Jews in the Stamford area from colonial days through the 20th century." Now, in the 21st century, the Society has expanded to serve all of Fairfield County and has acquired historical records, letters, diaries, photos, artifacts, and oral histories from the former Bridgeport and Norwalk organizations.

"The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County is the most extensive resource in the county and is here to preserve and ensure that future generations can understand their

rich heritage," says Peter Lilienthal, President of JHSFC when asked about the importance of the Society. "We are proud to be one of three Jewish Historical Societies in Connecticut along with Greater Hartford and New Haven."

Over the past year, under the leadership of Peter Lilienthal and the Board, JHSFC has been hosting ever more interesting and relevant events such as the *Remembering the Family Store* film, shown at the Avon Theatre to over 1,000 people; *LDor V'Dor*, the intergenerational educational program where 6-8th grade students learn about their family history; and *It Happened Here*, showcasing stories of those who have had a positive impact on the Jewish community since 1700. These add to the regular Norma and Milton Mann Lecture and book club offerings. You can read more about these in the first-ever Stewardship Report, which can be found on their website (jhsfc-ct.org).

To learn more, become a member or volunteer to work on the 40th anniversary celebration, please email info@jhsfc-ct.org or call 203-359-2196.

Chazak Chazak v'nitchazeik, May you go from strength to strength! That is what we all wish for JHSFC as it celebrates its 40th year.



Kerrin Behrend, Ronit Cohen Kot, UJF Shaliach Yoav Yaron, guest speaker Sigal Kanotopsky, and Stephne Behrend



3SQUARE and Dignity Grows volunteers recognized: Susan Furth, Jill Kaplan, Robin Madan, Terry Newman, Monica Smyth, Betsy Stone, Tara Shapiro, and Nancy Mimoun.



Louise & Ami Soifer



Morah Leah & Rabbi Moshe Shemtov



Jessie Brand, Ellen Weber, Robin Fischel

Celebrating Community

(Courtesy of UJF) Coinciding with the second night of Chanukah, United Jewish Federation held its Annual Meeting at Temple Beth El. The evening was chaired by Stephne and Kerrin Behrend and kicked off with candle-lighting by Cantor Katie Kaplan of Temple Beth El.

The community gathered in person and virtually to thank and pay tribute to David Gordon, outgoing UJF President. David served for three years and led the community through the COVID-19 crisis raising over \$250K to benefit the community at large. And most recently, David led the community in raising over \$400K to benefit the efforts in the war in Ukraine.

Nominating Committee Chair Linda Hurwitz installed the 2023 board with Michael Schlessinger as President, and Rabbi Jay TelRav of Temple Sinai offered a benediction to the leadership. *(Michael's remarks can be found beginning on page 2 of this issue.)*

The evening keynote speaker, Sigal Kanotopsky, has spent her life in two countries — her native Ethiopia, and Israel, to which she immigrated with her family as a child. Now she has resettled with her husband and three of her four children in a Philadelphia suburb, where she has taken the post of director of the Jewish Agency for Israel in the Northeast U.S. — the first



Michael Schlessinger & Monica Smyth, Avi & Rhoda Freedberg, Ed Smith & Edith Samers, Mort Lowenthal



Fran Ginsburg & Rabbi Gerry Ginsburg, Cantor Katie Kaplan, Elliot Sloyer, Linda Spilka, Elissa & Philip Klapper



Rabbi Jay TelRav, Michael Schlessinger, Terry Newman, Tommy Haendler



Four generations of Waldstreichers: Sandi, Greg, Jackson, Rachel, and Audrey

Ethiopian immigrant to ever hold a regional role.

Kanotopsky, 45, was born in a village in Ethiopia's rural, rocky northwest. Her father was a merchant and a farmer. She lived there with her family — one of tens of thousands of such Ethiopian followers of Jewish tradition who nursed long-held dreams of coming to Israel — until the early 1980s when her parents got wind of a rumor: If they walked to Sudan, they might be able to get from there to Jerusalem. It was a mere rumor, she emphasized, but it was enough for her parents.

“Sigal’s is a story of rescue, resettlement and the struggle to return home to Israel, all of which is at the core of Federation’s mission,” shared UJF CEO, Diane Sloyer.

Federation board member Greg Waldstreicher received the Harvey Peltz Leadership Award, and

four generations of Waldstreichers were on hand to help honor Greg for his achievements. Greg was recognized for his service on the UJF board, spearheading branding and marketing efforts, and his service throughout the community.

Volunteers are at the core of UJF’s work, and the annual meeting provided an opportunity to acknowledge 3 SQUARE and Dignity Grows volunteers, two programs that provide meaningful impact on the community at large.

The evening was also an opportunity to recognize Sharon Franklin for her more than nine years of work on behalf of the UJF community. Sharon has decided to move on to a new professional role at a Jewish nonprofit in Greenwich, and the meeting provided a chance for the community to publicly thank Sharon for her many years of service and commitment.



David Gordon



Sharon Franklin



Lauren Appelbaum, Josh Esses, Stephe & Kerrin Behrend, David Gordon, Ruth Rothseid, Linda Hurwitz, Susan Kostin, Meryl Gordon, Daniel Gordon



Alix Field Eben, Ashley Shapiro, Tara Shapiro



Audrey Waldstreicher, Sandi Waldstreicher, Dinah Miller-Marlowe & Seth Marlowe, Rhonda Schaffer Maron, Ellen & Richard Weber, Robin Fischel, Jessie Brand, and Greg Waldstreicher



Diane Sloyer with Mort Lowenthal

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.

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

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
Devra Jaffe- Berkowitz & Parry Berkowitz
Berkun Family
Daron & Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein
Jen & Andy Bernstein
Melody & Claude Bernstein
Bruce Blasnik
Judith Block
Ilana Springer Borkenstein & Daniel Borkenstein
Jodi & Richard Boxer
Amy & Henry Bubel
Blake & Daniel Bueckman
Judy & Jeff Cahn
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Connie & Alan Freeman
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Carole Gladstone
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Leah & Rabbi Moshe Shemtov
Marsha Kaiser Shendell
Stephanie & Bob Sherman
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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.



SAVE A TREE?

With printing and postage costs on the rise, please let us know if you would prefer to receive the New Jewish Voice electronically versus by mail.

Contact Taly Farber at taly@ujf.org

LIFE & LEGACY Testimonials

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

LIEBA AND STEVEN LANDER TESTIMONIAL

As a couple for over 50 years, we have always volunteered and worked to assure the survival of the Jewish Community in Norwalk where we live and Stamford where we volunteer and work. It is our pleasure and privilege to support Temple Beth El (TBE) and Chabad as part of our Legacy Giving through the Grinspoon LIFE & LEGACY program.

Steven stated: Temple Beth El has not only been my place of employment for the last



Steve and Lieba Lander

16 years but also my spiritual home. As a member of the professional team, I see how important each gift is to create a well-funded endowment that will provide the financial security needed to sustain a thriving Jewish Community for decades to come.

Today, TBE and our beautiful building on Roxbury Road stand as a testament to our founders' vision as we strive to build lives of beauty and meaning for each member. Together, we pray and rejoice; work and play; welcome and mourn. At Temple Beth El, our congregants are committed

to each other, to the remarkable history of our synagogue, and to the power of living Jewishly in a world that demands much of us.

Although TBE's finances today are stable, there will be growing building expenses and economic downturns, making our financial stability vulnerable. A proper endowment fund will help Temple Beth El continue to provide for a level of excellence in our lifecycle events and celebrations, Shabbat and holiday observances, Jewish education and life-long learning, and social justice programming.

Now is the time to build upon our strengths and provide TBE with the financial security it needs to remain a visionary and thriving congregation for

generations to come.

Lieba stated: For over 28 years I have watched the children of Chabad Gan Yeladim, as young as 3 months old, experience the joy and connection to Judaism. And now I see them return with their children to continue their legacy. As a teacher of these children, I feel it is my responsibility and privilege to ensure that their children's children have the same opportunities!

We hope you will consider joining us in making a legacy gift to the Grinspoon LIFE & LEGACY to ensure financial security to all of the very important institutions in our community so that their impact will continue for generations to come.

CHANUKAH

Family Fun and Concert



Family Fun Day and Schlock Rock Concert at Chabad of Stamford.

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) The last day of Chanukah coincided with Chabad of Stamford's Family Fun Day. Over 250 people, young and old, joined together for a Chanukah family day and concert with Lenny Solomon and his fabulous Shlock Rock band.

The family day started with a "Chanukah Wonderland" which featured baked goods from Ricotta Pizza and Bakery, Chanukah cookie decorating, fun oil experiments for the kids, and games such as searching for candles, spinning dreidels, a moon bounce, Chanukah crafts and dressing up as Maccabees.

Participants at the event

also helped put together the Chanukah community menorah which was created with the help of the Stamford Jewish community. The menorah consisted of 120 panels which were individually decorated by students from Gan Yeladim, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy and the JCC Sara Walker preschool, as well as members of the JCC, Schoke JFS and UJF of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien. The pieces of the Unity Menorah came together this Chanukah to symbolize unity in the community. The fun continued as Stamford "rocked the house" with Shlock Rock, dancing, singing and feeling the spirit and energy of Chanukah.

Chanukah Celebrated Throughout UJF's Partnership Region

(Courtesy of UJF) Afula and the Gilboa region, in the North of Israel, have been partnered with United Jewish Federation of Greater Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF), and surrounding New England Federations, for decades. Although the landscape and population are changing, the region has been home to immigrant populations and those living below the poverty line. Through UJF's financial support, the many nonprofits serving the region continue to provide invaluable support.



Beit Singer residents enjoy Chanukah festivities.



Beit Alpha, an Ethiopian absorption center in the Gilboa Region, helps these new immigrants enjoy their first Chanukah in Israel.



Afula IGY, a youth group for LGBTQ+ youth, celebrates Chanukah.

NextGen Lights-Up the Nature Center

BY MELANIE VORM,
DIRECTOR, UJF'S NEXTGEN

It was a night of pure Chanukah-joy for the NextGen community in December, with over 110 young Jewish leaders coming together to celebrate the festival of lights.

Held at The Farmhouse at The Stamford Museum and Nature Center, NextGen community members from all over Stamford, New Canaan, Darien, and Greenwich enjoyed an evening of latkes, *sufganiyot* (donuts), and drinks, all to the beat of some Chanukah tunes. Two of the NextGen Executive Committee members, Robin Fischel and Micky Reich, also took to the mic to share a few words (or rap them, in Reich's case!) about what NextGen/ UJF means for them. To add to the holiday spirit, ugly sweaters and Chanukah apparel were encouraged and many joined in the fun by obliging. It was a night of light, vibrancy, friendship - both new and old- and lots of joy.

"It was such a beautiful night at an absolutely stunning location. I've been to a few of the NextGen events now and

I've come to recognize a few people. But this one brought so many new faces, many of whom I probably wouldn't get to meet if I didn't come to these events," said Meghan Vladimirov, an attendee of the evening who lives in Greenwich.

"The night was a wonderful expression of a truly joyous festival shared by so many of us, regardless of our background," she added.

While the Chanukah party is the last event of 2022 for NextGen, the initiative promises to be back even bigger and better next year. New regular programs such as "Wok Wednesdays" (meaningful discussions and delicious food) and Friday night dinners with a speaker, will be introduced, as well as the social events that everyone has already come to know and



Jason Kaplowitz, Lauren Appelbaum, Joshua Esses



Becky Kevelson, Tova Weinstock, Jennie Small



Jai Retter and Ari Prescott



Micky Reich, Hillel Wolin, Naomi Wolin, Yitzzy Wexler, Ro Wexler



Yael Shmilovitch, Theresa Herman, Elie Herman, Joshua Small



New friends and old enjoy UJF's NextGen event.

love, such as bowling night and a Yom Ha'atzmaut party and more.

The mission of the NextGen initiative is to serve as a connector for all young Jews, regardless of background or affiliation. It also seeks to build community through social events, fun and meaningful volunteer programs, educational activities, and philanthropy. To learn more and to get involved, contact Melanie Vorm at melanie@ujf.org.



Meghan Vladimirov, Laurie Vorm, Gene Vladimirov, Melanie Vorm, Rachel Kaimowitz, Robin Fischel, Gavin Kaimowitz, Rabbi Kohl, Naomi Kohl

Lighting Up Latham Park

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Park with Mayor Caroline Simmons, Rabbi Josh Rosenfeld assists Rabbi Moshe Shemtov at Chabad of Stamford's Community Menorah Lighting at Latham Park with 300 people celebrating the first night of Chanukah.



Chabad of Stamford's Community Celebration and Giant Menorah Lighting at Latham Park. (CREDIT: STEVE LABKOFF PHOTOGRAPHY)

Intergenerational Chanukah Lunch



Gan Yeladim hosts an intergenerational Chanukah luncheon for seniors.

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) This past Chanukah, the Gan Yeladim preschool hosted a lunch for Chabad's Betsy's Buddies senior program. Betsy's Buddies is a companionship program that facilitates one-on-one visits between volunteers and homebound or elderly members of the community. It was truly an intergenerational event.

The Gan children sang Chanukah songs, chatted, and played games with the guests, and food was prepared by Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy students. The light and warmth of Chanukah was experienced by all who attended. To get involved in Chabad's Betsy's Buddies program or to find out more, please email programs@stamfordchabad.org.

Chanukah Brings People Together

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) Schoke JFS hosted two fun-filled Chanukah parties at The Conservative Synagogue in Westport. The first event was for Sunday Social, a social group for widows and widowers. The next event was for Jewish Twenties and Thirties (JTT), a program that connects local Jews in their 20s and 30s through social, educational, cultural and volunteer events. Both groups had fun crafting menorahs, playing dreidel, listening to holiday songs, and eating delicious kosher treats with their hosts, Schoke JFS staff members Hannah Pollack and Mark Katz.



Bi-Cultural Celebrates Chanukah

(Courtesy of BCHA) The entire Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) Middle School came together to celebrate the first day of Chanukah. As Rabbi Josh Rosenfeld reached *Hallel* (prayers of thanksgiving and joy), BCHA welcomed in its Pre-K through fourth-grade students to join in with music from a live band and singing followed by a *ruach*-filled (spirited) Chanukah *chagiga* (celebration). It was a beautiful expression of joy and a lovely start to a week filled with Chanukah events in and out of the building.



Rabbi Joshua Rosenfeld gives a high five to students during the musical *Hallel* prayers at BCHA.



Middle school students at BCHA partake in morning tefillah during Chanukah.



The celebration was on at BCHA, as the middle school tefillah came together to celebrate Chanukah.

Shining Bright in Darien

(Courtesy of UJF) For the second year, the Grove Street Plaza in Darien was host to a giant menorah that was lit each night of Chanukah by local families and communal organizations including United Jewish Federation. UJF sponsored the third night with UJF President Michael Schlessinger, Monica Smyth, and Darien resident and UJF board member Susan Kostin on hand to

light the menorah. The fourth night was the communal celebration which included UJF CEO Diane Sloyer addressing the crowd and a UJF/PJ Library table with Chanukah gift bags, cookies, and free books.

Organized by Dan Guller, UJF was grateful to participate, as UJF expands its outreach to the growing Jewish population in Darien.



(Front row, l-r) P. Quamily, Erica Quamily, Dan Guller, Susan Kostin, Diane Sloyer, Caryn Halbrecht, Michael Schlessinger. (Back row, l-r) Elliot Sloyer, Yoav Yaron, and Wendell Maxey.

Friendship Circle Chanukah

(Courtesy of Friendship Circle) In an annual tradition, 25 families along with 25 volunteers gathered to celebrate Chanukah at Stepping Stones Museum for Children. This year's party took place on the second night of the holiday. Once again, participants had the whole museum to themselves to explore and enjoy.

Guests kicked off the evening with dinner that included the classic holiday foods of donuts and *latkes* (potato pancakes). Once everyone arrived, Rabbi Levi Feller lit the Chanukah menorah and told everyone the story of the Maccabees. There was then more time to spend at the museum's interactive exhibits. Chaya Hanoka, Program Coordinator for the Friendship Circle said, "It is so wonderful to once again celebrate Chanukah all together! The lights of the Chanukah candles were reflected in the glow of our special friend's eyes."

At the end of the evening, the Friendship Circle participants received a Chanukah present prepared by Bi-Cultural Hebrew



Danny Freeman and Howie Schwartz at Stepping Stones Museum.

Academy (BCHA) fifth graders or from Chabad of Westport who packed gifts that were donated by the National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education. BCHA students had a special pre-Chanukah program where they learned about the Friendship Circle, wrapped the presents and wrote letters to the friends who would be receiving the gifts.

In order to learn more about the Friendship Circle, please contact Malya Shmotkin at malya@friendshipct.com.

Chanukah with the IDF

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Chabad of Stamford was honored to once again sponsor a Chanukah celebration on an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) army base in Israel. Every year, many soldiers in the IDF must stay on active duty at their bases, while their family and friends celebrate holidays without them. This is especially difficult for the lone soldiers who have left their friends and families overseas to volunteer to serve in Israel.

In honor of the brave women and men from the Stamford community who have chosen this path, Rabbi Moshe and Leah Shemtov decided to help raise funds to dedicate a special party for these soldiers. With the help of the Yeshiva students from Eth Yeshiva in Tzfat, Israel, Chabad of Stamford was able to bring a little *Yiddishkeit* (Jewishness) and



Chabad of Stamford helps spread the joy of Chanukah on an army base in the north of Israel in honor of Stamford's lone soldiers.

Chanukah fun to the men and women on a base on behalf of the Stamford Jewish community. These parties help lift morale on army bases so that the soldiers see that they are not forgotten, and that their brothers and sisters elsewhere remember them. For Chabad of Stamford, it is a way to express gratitude to the soldiers and give them a true taste of Chanukah.

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Would you like to be on the Israel@75 Committee?

Contact Yoav Yaron, UJF's Community Shaliach at, yoav@ujf.org.