



# THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

A PUBLICATION OF UNITED JEWISH FEDERATION

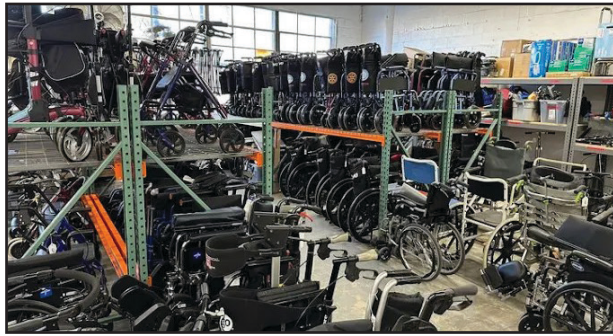
## Partners in Caring

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS)

The need for compassionate, community-centered care is growing as more older adults seek to age with dignity, safety, and connection. That's why Schoke Jewish Family Service (Schoke JFS) is proud to partner with Wheel It Forward, a nonprofit lending library for durable medical equipment founded by local Stamford resident Elliot Sloyer, to enhance support for clients in the Schoke JFS Home Companion Program.

At its core, the Home Companion Program connects families with aides who provide in-home support services that allow seniors and individuals with chronic illnesses or disabilities to continue living independently. Caregivers offer help with daily tasks, transportation, companionship, and light housekeeping, fostering both safety and emotional well-being.

By partnering with Wheel It Forward, Schoke JFS is able to extend that care even further. Clients now have access to high-quality, gently used medical equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs, shower chairs, and more at no cost. This resource reduces



Wheel It Forward's Warehouse in Stamford  
(PHOTO CREDIT: WHEEL IT FORWARD)

financial barriers and ensures that every client has the tools they need to live safely at home.

"We're thrilled to partner with Wheel It Forward," said Isrella Knopf, Director of Senior Services at Schoke JFS. "Our mission is to support independence and dignity, and this collaboration allows us to meet even more of our clients' needs in a holistic way."

Wheel It Forward, based in Stamford, with locations also in Bridgeport, and Newtown, shares that vision. The organization's innovative model not only helps individuals access essential equipment affordably, but also promotes sustainability by encouraging donations and reuse, keeping

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## Celebrating Community

(Courtesy of UJF)

United Jewish Federation (UJF) is thrilled to be spearheading a community-wide initiative—created by the community, for the community. Beginning the week of December 8, there will be a variety of opportunities to celebrate Shabbat, with highlights over Shabbat, December 12–13.

"Shabbat is a unifying concept and day which occurs weekly, and while celebrated in many unique and individual ways, it gives us the opportunity to find a common theme to celebrate our being Jewish," shared Beverly Stein, UJF's President.

Thanks to UJF grants, local organizations will be hosting Shabbat experiences, including cooking workshops, young family programs, scholars-in-residence, musical Shabbat services, and more. For those who prefer to celebrate with family and friends at home, Shabbat-to-go kits will be available for pick-up at the UJF offices (2009 Summer Street, Stamford) on Friday, December 12, with advanced registration.

In these challenging times, coming



Musicians of The Shuk

together as one community, without barriers, matters more than ever. This initiative offers a chance to share Shabbat in many different ways while finding joy, strength, and belonging as part of something bigger.

On Saturday night, December 13, from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm, the whole community will unite for a special post-Shabbat celebration, including Havdalah at Co-Create, a GE Appliances Micro Mfg. Plant and Showroom in Stamford. The evening will feature activities for all ages—creative crafts and fun for children, a welcoming adult space, and an unforgettable live

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## Celebrating the Hostages' Return

(Courtesy of UJF) On October 13, United Jewish Federation organized a joyous gathering at the Stamford Jewish Community Center to celebrate the return of the twenty surviving Israelis who had been held hostage in Gaza for two years. Attendees danced and celebrated while the large screen streamed joyful photos of the newly freed hostages reuniting with their families.





## From UJF's Chief Executive Officer Federation's Vision for the Future

BY DIANE SLOYER

Two years have passed since the world witnessed the horrific events of October 7, 2023—a day that not only changed Jewish history but permanently altered the landscape of Jewish community engagement. The aftermath ignited an unprecedented surge in connection and belonging, with familiar faces returning and many newcomers stepping into Jewish communal life for the first time. This transformation continues to unfold, offering Federations a critical mandate: to shape a resilient, welcoming, and adaptive Jewish future.

Jewish Federations of North America presented data at the first-ever Jewish Belonging Summit, an event done in partnership with SRE Network (a Jewish network rooted in a shared commitment to safety, respect, and equity for all). The study showed that the months following October 7 saw record numbers of people attending community gatherings—large events with prominent speakers, learning series, and solidarity vigils. These were vital touchpoints, providing knowledge and connection when both were urgently needed. Even as the initial surge is beginning to slow from its highest peak, nearly a third of American Jews still report engagement above pre-2023 levels—proof that the deep needs for togetherness and meaningful Jewish experience remain.

As the window of post-crisis engagement narrows, the central role of Federations is clearer than ever: not only answering the call during emergencies but curating the ongoing evolution of communal life.



Diane Sloyer, UJF CEO

Community is not automatic. Relationships with neighbors, allies, and civic leaders must be nurtured; pipelines for learning and leadership kept wide open; and spaces created for every person seeking a place to connect Jewishly.

The current challenge is not simply to gather crowds, but to design engagement that is relevant and inclusive. This requires shifting from crisis response to strategic community-building: amplifying voices from the margins, ensuring accessibility, and doubling down on relationships with civic and interfaith partners. The Federation infrastructure—command of resources, expertise, convening power—uniquely positions it to meet these goals and respond swiftly when new needs emerge.

Large-scale programs and headline speakers cultivate excitement and broaden the tent, but they also cost money and depend on communal support. Every inspired gathering is made possible, not by chance, but by the resources and vision that every Federation brings. It is the enduring mission of the Federations to guarantee that, when someone seeks community, they find open doors and a future full of possibility.

With your generous support of our United Jewish Federation's Annual Campaign, As One, we can move forward with purpose. Federation, rooted in tradition and propelled by innovation, is not only a first responder to crisis, but a builder for all seasons. The strongest Jewish future—caring, united, open to all—requires nothing less.

### Partners in Caring

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valuable resources out of landfills and in the hands of those who need them most.

This partnership is already making an impact. One Home Companion client, recently discharged from the hospital, was able to borrow a walker and raised toilet seat the very next day, making their transition home smoother, safer, and less stressful for both the client and their family.

As the population ages and healthcare costs continue to rise, creative collaborations, like this one, are critical. By working together, Schoke JFS and Wheel It Forward are ensuring that older adults in the community don't have to face these challenges alone.

If you or someone you know could benefit from the Home Companion Program or is in need of medical equipment, visit [www.ctjfs.org](http://www.ctjfs.org) or [www.wheelitforwardusa.org](http://www.wheelitforwardusa.org) to learn more.

*We regret the omission of photography credit for Aviva Maller Photography in the October 2025 Centerfold article "Celebrating Superheroes!"*

### CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

November 7.....	4:25 pm
November 14.....	4:18 pm
November 21.....	4:13 pm
November 28.....	4:09 pm

## UJF President's Message Thanksgiving Reflections: Strength in Unity and Hope

BY BEVERLY STEIN

As we approach Thanksgiving, a holiday rooted in gratitude and reflection, I find myself thinking deeply about the strength of our community and the resilience we've shown in the face of adversity. This year has tested us in ways we never imagined. Our hostages have been in captivity for over two years, antisemitism is on the rise and the Jewish community is divided on the war in Gaza. And yet, through it all, we've remained united — not just as Jews, but as neighbors, citizens, and friends.

Thanksgiving is more than a celebration of abundance. It's a moment to pause and recognize the blessings that persist even in difficult times. It's a time to honor the values that bind us together: compassion, justice, and the unwavering belief that light can emerge from darkness.

In recent months, our community — locally and globally — has faced profound challenges. We've felt the weight of uncertainty, the ache of loss, and the strain of waiting for answers. But we've also witnessed extraordinary acts of courage and kindness. We've seen people rise to meet the moment, speak out for what's right, and extend their hands to those in need.

In Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien, our synagogues, agencies, and volunteers have come together in powerful ways. This unity is not just inspiring — it's essential. It reminds us that we are never alone, and that together, we can face anything.

This Thanksgiving, I give thanks for



Beverly Stein,  
UJF President

the people who make our community strong; for the educators who nurture our children; for the leaders who guide us with wisdom; and for the countless individuals who show up — day after day — to make a difference. I give thanks for our allies and friends beyond the Jewish community who have stood

beside us, offering support and solidarity when it mattered most.

I want to acknowledge those for whom this holiday may feel heavy; families with empty seats at the table, hearts still healing, and questions that remain unanswered. To you, I say: we see you. We stand with you. And we remain committed to building a future rooted in peace, dignity, and hope.

**As One**, we can strengthen Jewish identity, stand with Israel, fight antisemitism, keep our community safe, and build a vibrant, inclusive Jewish life — here and around the world. This year, that mission has taken on new urgency. And thanks to your generosity, your activism, and your spirit, we've been able to respond with compassion and resolve.

As we gather with loved ones this week, let's carry forward the lessons of this season. Let's continue to advocate, to care, and to build bridges. Let's remember that gratitude is not passive — it's a call to action.

From all of us at United Jewish Federation, I wish you a Thanksgiving filled with meaning, peace, and connection. May we continue to stand together, united in hope!

### Celebrating Community

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performance by The Shuk. The Shuk is an internationally renowned Jewish and Israeli music group known for their joyful, high-energy concerts that bring audiences together through music and culture. Their performances have inspired communities around the world, making every event a true celebration of connection and tradition.

Dedicated committees, with members from all synagogues and Jewish agencies throughout the community, are working hard to create a fabulous experience for all. If you are interested in joining the planning team, reach out to Diane Sloyer at [Dianesloyer@ujf.org](mailto:Dianesloyer@ujf.org). Tickets are \$10 per person or \$36 per immediate family, with sponsorship opportunities available. Register online at [www.ujf.org/one](http://www.ujf.org/one).

### UPCOMING DEADLINE

December 2025-January 2026 Edition

Deadline: Monday, November 3, 2025

Email submissions to [sandy@ujf.org](mailto:sandy@ujf.org)

You should receive notification that your submission was received!



## Emergency Fund Raises Over \$13 Million for Israel Aid

(Courtesy of UJF) Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) Israel Emergency Response Committee has announced that the Emergency Fund for Operation Rising Lion has now allocated more than \$13 million to nearly two dozen organizations on the ground in Israel.

These vital funds are supporting a wide range of urgent needs, including strengthening bomb shelters, expanding mental health services, assisting vulnerable populations such as the elderly and disabled, and providing relief for displaced families and evacuees.

For example, funds from Operation Rising Lion are distributed to organizations like the Israel Trauma Coalition (ITC) which offers direct emotional support, resilience kits for children, and training for frontline professionals. It also provides therapeutic workshops and a hotline for mental health workers.

Another example of where the funds go is the Jewish Federations' Emergency Loan Fund. The fund provides critical support to small businesses impacted by the war and lacking access to credit. It has helped over 2,500 businesses and

faces hundreds of new applications, with additional funding needed to meet demand.

Locally, United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF) has played a meaningful role in this national effort. Raising funds for emergency campaigns, securing funds from donors who choose to designate their annual giving to Israel and Overseas, and for pass-through gifts to designated projects, UJF continues to support the ongoing needs in Israel and around the world in a meaningful way.



One Israeli farming family found strength with help from Jewish Federations' Emergency Loan Fund

## UJF Receives Security Grant to Benefit Local Community

(Courtesy of UJF) United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien (UJF) is honored to announce that it is the recipient of a \$66,000 security grant from The Tepper Foundation through Jewish Federations of North America. As threats against the Jewish community grow, this generous grant helps UJF uphold its sacred responsibility to guard the community's children and preserve their future.

Federations receiving 2025 Security Fund grants will allocate these dollars to enhance the security at local programs that serve children between the ages of 0 and 5. These can include but are not limited to camps, preschools, afterschool programming, synagogues, PJ library, and family programming.

As part of the grant requirements, participating Federations must also commit to engaging in a series of bridge-building efforts by leveraging their security expertise to support local faith-based institutions and cultural communities outside the Jewish community. Examples of activities are safety assessments, security training, support accessing federal security grants, and more.

UJF CEO Diane Sloyer noted, "UJF recently conducted a security training seminar specifically for the benefit of non-Jewish clergy and lay leaders. Especially after the horrific attack on children at the Annunciation Catholic Church in Minneapolis, a greater number of our interfaith friends are recognizing that they too are vulnerable to bias motivated attacks. The Tepper Foundation grant has enabled us to support and educate other faith communities at a time when it was needed most."

UJF is among more than 100 Federations across 39 U.S. states and Canada receiving

2025 Security Fund grants. Previously, UJF established comprehensive security plans through the Jewish Federations' LiveSecure program. Founded in 2018, LiveSecure is the largest philanthropic effort to support communal Jewish security in North American history. The Tepper Foundation was also among the first contributors to the LiveSecure program.

The Tepper Foundation's Security Fund has now approved \$23.1 million in grants since 2023 to improve security in Jewish spaces across a range of organizations.

"The Security Fund is continuing to provide a critical service for Jewish spaces across the United States, and the Jewish Federations play a key role in helping more families feel safe," said Randi Tepper, CEO of The Tepper Foundation. "While most Jewish organizations have existing funds dedicated to security, many institutions have had to pull money from other budget lines to meet increased security needs. We want to ensure these organizations cannot only provide security but continue their missions serving local families."

"Jewish Federations are on the front lines of combatting antisemitism and protecting their communities, which is essential for the North American Jewish community to fully participate in Jewish life without fear or barriers to Jewish life flourishing," said Jewish Federations of North America Executive Vice President Shira Hutt. "The partnership between Federations and The Tepper Foundation is a testament to our unwavering commitment to the safety of our Jewish communities and the recognition that combatting antisemitism requires active bridge-building with other communities."

For more information, please feel free to contact Diane Sloyer at [dianesloyer@ujf.org](mailto:dianesloyer@ujf.org).



A therapy session at one of the ITC resilience centers. (PHOTO COURTESY OF ISRAEL TRAUMA COALITION)

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## Coming Together for Camaraderie and Whiskey

(*Courtesy of UJF*) United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien (UJF) has, for some time, been receiving requests for interesting ways to connect Jewishly. For many years, UJF has brought many different groups together that share common interests. These include Women's Philanthropy, NextGen (Jews in their 20's, 30's and 40's), affinity groups relating to legal, business and medical interests, empty nesters, grandparents, and more. Additionally, this has expanded over time to include gatherings in micro-

communities of Shippan and North Stamford.

"We are always looking to create community," shared UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross, "so when approached with the idea to bring all the local synagogues' men's clubs together, it seemed like a great idea." On Thursday evening, November 20, UJF, the CAS Men's Club of Congregation Agudath Sholom, the Men's Club of Temple Beth El, and the Brotherhood of Temple Sinai, will be hosting a Men's Whiskey Tasting (with at least one Israeli whiskey) and a sampling of local kosher chocolates.

Joe Feuerstein, one of the event organizers and a member of all three synagogues involved said, "Given what has happened in Israel over the last two years and the massive rise in antisemitism world-wide, it is imperative for Jews of every religious background and denomination to come together. This will be a celebration of joy and friendship, and a recognition that we are all one people!"

Whether you belong to one of these men's clubs or not, all are welcome to come together to make new friends and have an enjoyable evening. The event will begin at 7:30 pm at Temple Sinai (458 Lakeside Drive, Stamford). Early-bird tickets are \$20 per person through November 1, and then \$25 per person thereafter. Please register in advance at [www.ujf.org/whiskey](http://www.ujf.org/whiskey). For more information, please contact Eric at [eric@ujf.org](mailto:eric@ujf.org).

## Shabbat in Color at the Stamford JCC

(*Courtesy of JCC*) From Thursday, November 6 through Sunday, November 9, the Stamford JCC will host "Shabbat in Color," a vibrant weekend-long celebration of the arts with hands-on workshops and immersive experiences.

"Shabbat in Color isn't about sitting in the audience," said Marshall Kurland, CEO of the Stamford JCC. "It's about being part of the art: tasting it, creating it, sharing it with others. This weekend is about stepping into the experience and celebrating the joy of Shabbat through the arts."

The weekend kicks off Thursday evening with "The Art of Rugelach," where participants will learn the techniques behind this beloved pastry from Jewish food writer, Shannon Sarna, and take home a tray to bake for Shabbat.

Friday evening centers on "Shared Tables," an opportunity to experience Shabbat through home-hosted dinners. Whether preparing a meal or joining a table, participants will share conversation, company and the comfort of a Shabbat meal in intimate, welcoming settings.

Saturday night features a screening of the new comedy, *Bad Shabbos*, followed by a

live Q&A with lead actor Jon Bass. The film brings together humor, family dynamics, and unexpected twists in a modern take on Shabbat.

From Saturday evening into Sunday, the "Smokin' Showdown" invites grill teams into a bold BBQ competition, where smoky flavors and creative rubs go head to head to earn the title of JCC Pit Master.

The weekend concludes on Sunday with a pair of creative arts programs. "The Art of Zentangle" offers a relaxing drawing workshop led by Certified Zentangle Teacher, Nan Gordon, and the JCC's "Student Art Competition Awards & Gallery Opening" showcases the talents of young artists in the community.

Shabbat in Color reflects the Stamford JCC's ongoing commitment to cultural programming that is engaging, accessible, and creatively rich. This programming is made possible in part by grants from the City of Stamford and United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan & Darien. Advance registration is required. For more information, including pricing for each program for JCC members and non-members, visit [www.stamfordjcc.org](http://www.stamfordjcc.org).

### THE NEW JEWISH VOICE

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## Open Houses at Gan Yeladim

(*Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford*) Gan Yeladim Early Childhood Center warmly invites prospective families to two special open houses this school year on Tuesday, October 22 (Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan) and Tuesday, February 18 (Rosh Chodesh Adar), both at 10:00 am. Families will enjoy a guided tour with Gan Yeladim Director Leah Shemtov, who will share Gan's educational philosophy and the values that make Gan such a nurturing and inspiring community.

Prospective families are also invited to

join Gan's lively Rosh Chodesh Sing-Along, a beloved monthly tradition that captures the warmth and joy of Gan life.

A Jewish, Reggio-inspired preschool, Gan Yeladim celebrates each child's individuality through creativity, exploration, and play, fostering confidence, independence, and a deep love for Judaism. "Gan feels like more than just a school, it's a second home," says Leah Shemtov.

To learn more or RSVP, please email Wendy Beder at [wendy@stamfordchabad.org](mailto:wendy@stamfordchabad.org).

## UJF Pen Pal Program Reopens

(*Courtesy of UJF*) Following the success of its Pen Pal Program, United Jewish Federation (UJF) is excited to reopen registration and welcome new families to take part in this cross-cultural experience, facilitated by Eden Refaelovich, UJF's *Shlichah* (Israeli emissary). This unique initiative fostered meaningful connections between families in Israel and families from Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien.

A family from Stamford shares, "We've really been enjoying the Pen Pal Family Program. Over the summer, we've been communicating with our pen pals on WhatsApp, sharing

photos, videos, and stories about what we've been up to. Our son even sends short video messages directly to their older son, speaking a little Hebrew in them."

"This pen pal experience shows how connection can cross oceans and bring our worlds closer together, a simple but powerful way to create new friendships," shared Cara, also from Stamford. To be part of this program, create meaningful connections across continents, share traditions, and build lifelong friendships - act now and build a bridge that lasts at [www.ujf.org/penpal](http://www.ujf.org/penpal).



#### CALLING NEXT GENERATION PHILANTHROPISTS

Join young Jewish adults in meaningful philanthropy as part of UJF's Ben Gurion Society

Contribute \$1,000 or more to the United Jewish Federation Annual Campaign, and support the local and global Jewish community while enjoying exclusive events, networking opportunities, and meaningful ways to engage.

The Society empowers young adults to shape the future of Jewish life through philanthropy, leadership, and community building.

Save the Date  
December 6th, 7:30pm for UJF's inaugural Ben Gurion Society event!

Please reach out to Jillian Moore at [Jillian@ujf.org](mailto:Jillian@ujf.org) for more information.



## Curtain Rises at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy

(Courtesy of BCHA) Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) Players welcomes *Nick Tickle, Fairytale Detective*, a mystery-noir play, to their stage on Tuesday, November 3, at 3:00 pm, with additional performances on Thursday, November 7, at 7:00 pm, and Sunday, November 9, at 3:00 pm.

The show, originally written by Steph DeFerie, blends equal parts character study and comedy with tropes from fairy tales and film noir. What sets this production apart is its use of the audience. *Nick Tickle* is a show not to be missed because it invites the audience to help shape the performance.

"Not only does the play require the audience to help the action move along, but some audience members will become part of the action on stage," said Janice Chaikelson, the school's theater director. To ensure the students are prepared for whatever might



From last year's stage: the BCHA Players in *Lion King Jr*

happen, Chaikelson has spent extra time with the actors, from grades five through

12, honing their improv skills to take on this new aspect of the show.

As for how BCHA landed on this particular play, much of that decision rested on Chaikelson's shoulders.

"I read a lot of scripts before landing on this one for this year, and it's never easy to choose shows because so many stars have to align. Is it the right number of roles? Will the audience be interested in seeing it? Will the students learn something from

the process?" she said. "*Nick Tickle* checked all the boxes for our school."

Chaikelson is also proud of the off-stage team working behind the scenes.

"As usual, we will have exceptional costumes, sets and props," she said. "We are also hiring professional lighting and sound designers for this production, which will help us feature a bit of new theatrical magic."

Tickets can be purchased at <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/BCHA>

## JCRC NEWS

### JCRC Update

BY GARY JONES,  
UJF JEWISH COMMUNITY  
RELATIONS COUNCIL  
DIRECTOR

Under the leadership of Jewish Community Relations Council Chair David Gordon, our reconstituted JCRC is focusing specifically on increasing our relationships with members of the interfaith/intergroup community and our elected officials. We believe that the growing challenges of antisemitism, including its manifestation in hatred of Israel, require that we increase our efforts to work with and support constituent groups in the broader community so that, in turn, the broader community will understand and support us.

As a result of the alarming spread of antisemitism and the related violent attacks on the Jewish community and its institutions, Jewish Federations across the country have been required to commit substantial resources to protecting our buildings and training our community members in how to respond to a potential attack.

Accordingly, Jewish Federations across the country have hired highly trained professional security directors to protect our synagogues, schools, JCCs and other Jewish organizations. Here at UJF, we are blessed to have Jim Comstock as our Federation Security Director.

Until now, churches and other faith organizations have, for the most part, not felt the need to focus on security in the manner that the Jewish community has been



Gary Jones,  
JCRC Director

required to do so. However, the heinous attack on children at the Annunciation Catholic Church in Minneapolis reminded us all that it is not only the Jewish community that is vulnerable to hateful attacks.

In response to the attack, UJF organized a security seminar specifically for non-Jewish clergy and institutional lay leaders so that they could benefit from Jim's expertise. We were pleased that clergy and lay leaders from about ten churches and other houses of worship attended the program. Those in attendance appreciated learning from Jim. Just as important, the interfaith participants made it clear that they were thankful that UJF and the Jewish community cared enough to offer the program.

Although some of the attendees were long-time friends of the Federation and Jewish community, many had never had the opportunity to be in a Jewish institution or to participate with the Jewish community. While it is sad that the Jewish community has been forced to become so focused on security, we were very pleased to be able to help our friends and neighbors in the faith community. That is part of our mission. However, we also know that thinking of others and taking advantage of opportunities to get to know our neighbors can also be a critical component of our effort to increase the number of people who will stand with -- and stand up for -- the Jewish people when it is most necessary.



## Luxury is Rising IN STAMFORD

Opening in 2027, **Mozaic Concierge Living** is a Life Plan Community meticulously crafted for those who seek luxurious retirement living.

Preview Mozaic Concierge Living with a visit to the Welcome Center and the opportunity to meet the team, see the model kitchen, scale model, floor plans, architectural renderings, and pricing. Construction has begun and residence availability is limited, so act today!

For more information, schedule a personal appointment with one of our Residency Counselors. Contact us at **203-396-1140** or [info@mozaicol.org](mailto:info@mozaicol.org).

[mozaicconciergeliving.org](https://mozaicconciergeliving.org)

**MOZAIC** Concierge Living  
Life with Community

Welcome Center located at 260 Long Ridge Road, Suite C-160, Stamford, CT 06902

Mozaic Concierge Living is a Life Plan Community by Mozaic Senior Life, a trusted senior care provider for over 50 years.





## A Little Squash Bread with Cranberries



BY RONNIE FEIN

Sure, Thanksgiving is all about the turkey. For most people anyway. But when you think about it, there are lots of other iconic ingredients that are part of the American Thanksgiving meal. Cranberries for instance.

Did you know that Americans eat over 8 million pounds of cranberries during the Thanksgiving holiday?

It stands to reason. Cranberries are colorful and make a lovely presentation for a holiday dinner. They are also tart and acidic, so they are a good balance for the turkey, stuffing and other rich foods. And they're healthy (but I don't actually think that's why we eat them).

Most of all, cranberries are delicious and amazingly useful - first and foremost for cranberry sauce. When I was a kid, the cranberry sauce choices were either

the canned jellied kind that trembled or the lumpy kind that clumped together on the plate. The lumpy stuff was way too sophisticated for the kids in our family, so my mom bought the shivery kind. Then she discovered fresh cranberries, baked them, stirred in some brandy and never bought a can of cranberry sauce again.

Besides being incredibly delicious, my mom's cranberry sauce recipe is so easy you could do it in less than 5 minutes prep time. And even though it is lumpy, the fruit has a faintly resilient texture so your tongue can actually tell it's berries you're eating. It's beautiful too.

Fresh cranberries are also perfect in quick breads that go along nicely with Thanksgiving dinner. Put some in the batter for your favorite banana bread. Add some to your favorite muffin recipe. Or try my pareve Squash Bread with Cranberries.

Happy Thanksgiving.

### Baked Cranberries

- 12 ounces fresh cranberries (3 cups)
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 3 tablespoons orange flavored brandy

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Wash and drain the berries and place them in a single layer in a baking dish. Add the sugar and toss to coat all the berries. Cover the dish tightly with a lid or aluminum foil. Bake for

45-50 minutes. Remove the cover and stir thoroughly. Let the berries cool. Stir in the brandy. Chill thoroughly.

Makes 6-8 servings

### Squash Bread with Cranberries

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 6 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup mashed cooked winter squash (such as butternut, acorn, kuri)
- 3/4 cup fresh cranberries
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9"x5"x3" loaf pan. Mix the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger and cloves in a bowl and set it aside. Beat the brown sugar

and vegetable oil with a handheld or electric mixer set at medium speed for 2-3 minutes or until the mixture is well blended. Add the eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Add the squash and cranberries and beat the mixture to blend the ingredients thoroughly. Add the flour mixture, stirring only enough to blend in the dry ingredients. Mix the water and lemon juice and add it to the batter with the vanilla extract. Stir to blend the ingredients. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 50-55 minutes or until a cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean. Cool the bread in the pan for 15 minutes, then invert onto a cake rack to cool completely.

Makes one loaf.

Ronnie Fein is a cookbook author, food writer and cooking teacher in Stamford. She is the author of *Kosher Cooking for Beginners*, *The Modern Kosher Kitchen* and *Hip Kosher*. Visit her food blog, *Kitchen Vignettes*, at [www.ronniefein.com](http://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).



## JCC Friendsgiving Mixer Brings Community Together

(Courtesy of JCC) The Stamford JCC will host a special Friendsgiving Mixer for adults ages 50 and older on Thursday, November 20 at 7:00 pm.

The evening is designed to bring people together in the spirit of the season, welcoming couples, singles, and anyone interested in meeting new friends. Guests

will enjoy a festive atmosphere while celebrating community and gratitude.

Kosher dietary laws will be observed. Admission is free for members and \$25 for community participants.

Please register online at [www.stamfordjcc.org](http://www.stamfordjcc.org) or contact Joy Serata at 203.487.0979 or [jserata@stamfordjcc.org](mailto:jserata@stamfordjcc.org).

## Fill the Schoke JFS Food Pantry for Thanksgiving

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) As the Thanksgiving season approaches, Schoke Jewish Family Service (JFS) is reaching out to the community for support in filling the shelves of the Freedberg Family Kosher Food Pantry. This essential resource provides nutritious meals to families in need, and your generosity can make a significant difference. The following items are needed: kosher frozen turkey, canned yams or canned sweet potatoes, canned

pumpkin pie mix, Arnold's stuffing mix, evaporated milk, soup (shelf stable or mix), turkey gravy mix, canned cranberry sauce (whole or jelly), and grocery store gift cards. Donations can be dropped off at the Schoke JFS office, located at 196 Greyrock Place, Stamford, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. With your support, Schoke JFS can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a special holiday meal.



- Daily News Directly From Israel and the JBS News Desk
- *Defending Israel* with David Harris
- *Being Jewish* with Jonah Platt
- *Jewish Insights* with Justin Pines
- *In the Spotlight* with Abigail Pogrebin
- Conferences of major Jewish organizations
- Movies, Music, Authors, Travel, Comedy, Cuisine
- Interviews of Major Jewish Leaders
- Jewish Studies
- Shabbat Services from Central and Hampton Synagogues

JBS can be watched 24/7 on Optimum CH 138, DIRECTV CH 388, ROKU, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV (Amazon Prime) ZipWave TV CH 29 and [www.jbstv.org](http://www.jbstv.org)

## JCC Thanksgiving Luncheon for Senior Adults

(Courtesy of JCC) All senior adults in the community are invited to share in a traditional Thanksgiving meal and entertainment on Friday, November 21 at 11 am at the JCC. The Seniors Thanksgiving Lunch is sponsored by Marsha Kaiser Shendell and family in memory of her parents Dr. Daniel and Edith Kaiser.

Thanks to our generous sponsor, this JCC community luncheon (dietary laws

observed) is open to the community and free to all seniors (suggested \$6 donation). The luncheons are presented in partnership with Catholic Charities. Reservations are due by Friday, November 14.

Attendees can register online at [www.stamfordjcc.org](http://www.stamfordjcc.org) or contact Catherine Cimbalo at 203.487.0979 or [ccimbalo@stamfordjcc.org](mailto:ccimbalo@stamfordjcc.org).



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## A Trip to Ellis Island

(Courtesy of UJF) Temple Sinai's fifth grade religious school class and their teacher Eden Rafaelovich, United Jewish Federation's Community *Shlichah* (Israeli emissary), went on a meaningful trip to Ellis Island. The group learned about Jewish immigration and explored their families' roots - all while enjoying a full day of learning, discovery, and fun.



## Teen Volunteers Kick Off Friendship Circle New Year

(Courtesy of Friendship Circle) On Sunday, September 21, close to 100 teens joined the Friendship Circle Kickoff event at Sky Zone in Norwalk. Teen board members played a large role in brainstorming and planning for the event. They also recruited other teens to attend and helped with registration, set up and snacks. Keren Roitman served as MC, and Blake Cortell shared his experience volunteering.

Volunteers had Sky Zone to themselves and took full advantage of the trampolines. Games included dodgeball, basketball and a Ninja course. During breaks from jumping, teens also enjoyed ice cream, cotton candy and other snacks.

The guest speaker for the evening was

Angela Brewer. Angela is a mom from New Jersey whose son Cy has a rare condition. She spoke about having a child with special needs and the impact that the Friendship Circle and volunteers have had for her and her family. She expressed to the teens what a difference they are capable of making.

Malya Shmotkin, Director of the Friendship Circle, said, "I am so excited that Angela was able to come and speak to our teens. Her story truly exemplifies the impact these amazing young people have in our community. It was a wonderful evening that gave us a small glimpse of the things we hope to accomplish this year!"

To become more involved please reach out to Malya at [malya@friendshipct.com](mailto:malya@friendshipct.com)



(l-r) Sagiv Siegel, Liam Haron, Ben Winarsky, Nate Samelson, Ethan Malkin



(l-r) Isabelle Liebskind, Whitney Levine, Hannah Haron, Madelyn Meth, Victoria Angel, Sadie Palker

## Fall Brings Sweet New Arrivals

(Courtesy of UJF) As the seasons begin to shift, United Jewish Federation (UJF) is delighted to welcome new babies into the Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien community. UJF Director of Programming and Engagement Jillian Moore delivered a "Shalom Baby" bag to the home of Noam and Sarah Skolnick celebrating the birth of their beautiful baby Gabriel.

UJF's "Shalom Baby" program offers a warm welcome to every Jewish baby born in the local community of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien, and "Shalom Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien" bags are given to Jewish families who have recently moved to the area.

If you know someone who has recently welcomed a baby to their home or moved to town, help us welcome them! Contact Jillian Moore at [jillian@UJF.org](mailto:jillian@UJF.org) to share the news.



Sarah Skolnick poses with sleepy baby Gabriel.



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## Community Mosaic Project Unites Temple Sinai

*(Courtesy of Temple Sinai)*

This past spring, a community-wide art project brought together hundreds of Temple Sinai congregants in a collaborative effort to create a large-scale mosaic, now permanently installed in the chapel of Temple Sinai. Led by artist-in-residence Audrey Markoff Dunn, the initiative was made possible by a grant funded by Ronnie and Gary Lilien.

Participants of all ages contributed to the project by designing individual tiles in the shape of leaves, which were later assembled into the form of a tree. More than 400 unique leaves were created, each one distinct, reflecting the diversity and individuality of those who took part. After months of work, the completed mosaic was unveiled in time for the High Holy Days. Its timing, coinciding with a season of reflection and renewal in the Jewish calendar, was particularly meaningful for many in the congregation.

The project also coincided with the introduction of new guiding principles adopted by Temple Sinai: Belonging, Learning, Seeking, and Serving. These values emphasize active participation in community life and were organically reflected in the collaborative nature of the



*(l-r) Audrey Markoff Dunn and Cantor Micah Morgovsky with Temple Sinai's new mosaic.*

mosaic's Creation.

For many participants, the experience of identifying their own contribution within the larger work served as a visual and symbolic reminder of their role in the broader community. The piece, now a permanent fixture in the chapel, stands as a testament to collective effort and shared purpose.

In an era marked by increasing uncertainty and social fragmentation, the mosaic project offered an opportunity for communal expression and connection. By contributing to a larger whole, participants were able to see their efforts represented not only in art, but in the ongoing life of their community.

## Gan Families Gather for Pre-Shabbat Celebration

*(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford)* Gan Yaladim welcomed families to the new school year with a lively pre-Shabbat party, bringing together over 250 attendees for an afternoon of fun, food and celebration.

The Gan Dads Band set the tone with popular tunes that both children and adults enjoyed, creating an energetic and festive atmosphere. Each family received a Shabbat-themed picnic box, complete with food, drinks, and craft activities, giving everyone a chance to enjoy Shabbat together in a hands-on way. The event offered families the opportunity to prepare for Shabbat while connecting with old friends and making new ones, making memories and embracing the joy of being together.



*Netanel Fuchs and his daughters share smiles at Gan Yaladim's pre-Shabbat picnic.*

## BBYO Teens Kickoff the New Year

*(Courtesy of BBG and Leviticus)* On Monday, September 15, Tikvah (Stamford's B'nai B'rith Girl's (BBG) chapter) and Leviticus (Stamford's Aleph Zadik Aleph (AZA) chapter) together launched the year with "Tikvit Kickoff," an action-packed event filled with creativity, camaraderie and lots of laughter. BBG and AZA are high school programs that together make up BBYO (formerly known as B'nai B'rith Youth Organization), a pluralistic Jewish teen movement focused on leadership development and meaningful Jewish experiences.

More than 50 teens gathered to make new friends and reminisce with old ones. While the weather was still warm, a lively evening outdoors was enjoyed by all. The spirited Tikvit Kickoff featured a fun tie-dye station, friendship bracelet-making,

and classic yard games. Members enjoyed pizza, roasted s'mores by the fire and penned heartfelt cards to Israeli soldiers with messages of hope and solidarity.

Tikvit Kickoff captured the spirit of BBYO, and the tone was set for an exciting year of community building, leadership training, and impactful programming, adeptly combining fun and friendship.

Tikvah and Leviticus provide Jewish teenagers with an opportunity to grow, lead, and belong, in a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment. For more information about joining or to learn more, contact the chapter presidents on Instagram: Harrison Tronick (@leviticusllamas), a senior at Westhill High School, and Sylvie Rosenberg (@tikvahbbg1233), a junior at Westhill High School.



*BBG members get together for some fun.*



*Tikvah Leviticus Chapter at BBYO Kickoff.*

## Back to School at BCHA

*(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy)* Families of students, faculty and staff enjoyed an afternoon of community and celebration at the BCHA campus on Sunday, September 28.







# UJF's BIG GIVE

## A Community That Gives Together, Grows Together – As One!

(Courtesy of UJF) Nearly 200 community members, young and old alike, joined As One for The Big Give, UJF's annual day of phone-a-thon fundraising, philanthropic and learning opportunities, fun family activities, and community building.

Volunteers spent the day making fundraising calls to current and past UJF donors, to tell them about this year's exciting \$100,000 matching-gift opportunity, made possible by Melody and Claude Bernstein and Howard and Gayle Rothman, and to

invite them to take part in building and strengthening our Jewish community.

Big Give Co-Chair Robin Fischel stated, "The Big Give was truly a spectacular day. From the family fun and the book discussion with Janice Kaplan, to a vital discussion with our own elected officials, the buzz and excitement at UJF was palpable."

Big Give Co-Chair Toby Lazarus added, "What was even more important, were the calls being made by our volunteers and the mitzvahs of 'giving' being completed by

our donors. To ensure a flourishing Jewish community, we must ensure a flourishing Jewish Federation."

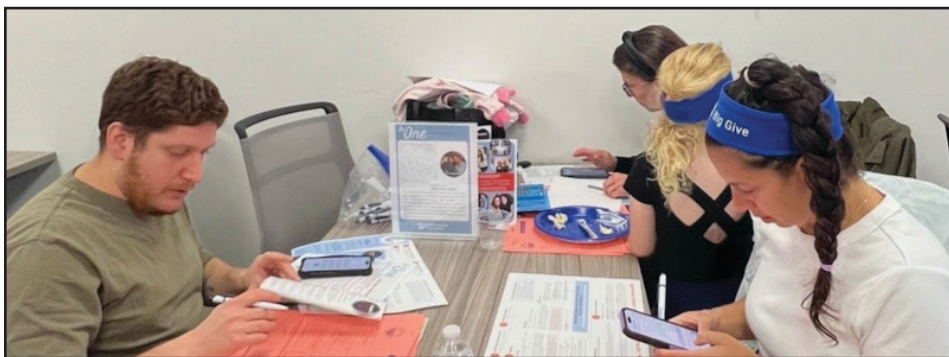
With a master balloon-twister, face painters, arts and crafts activity stations, and a surprise gift for each, over fifty children came out to enjoy the Family Fun portion of the day.

Nearly twenty knowledge-seekers, looking to expand their understanding of how connection between mind and body can be harnessed to create joy and happiness,

came to hear author Janice Kaplan speak about her new book, *What Your Body Knows About Happiness*.

Dozens more attended a very informative Connecticut Capitol Update with State Senator Ryan Fazzio and State Representative Matt Blumenthal, hosted by UJF's Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC).

Over 150 Dignity Grows bags were packed by community volunteers, providing essential grooming and personal hygiene supplies for women and girls in need.





# A BIG SUCCESS



Thank you to our 2025 Big Give Co-Chairs, **Robin Fischel and Toby Lazarus!**

Thank you to our 2025 Big Give Sponsors!

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# October 7 Commemoration

## Never Forgotten, Forever United

(Courtesy of UJF) On October 5, the week before the hostages returned from Gaza, the community joined together for an evening of remembrance, hope, and resilience. The program was presented by United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien, along with partnering organizations, the Stamford Board of Rabbis, UJA/JCC of Greenwich, and AJC of Westchester and Fairfield Counties.

The commemoration included various intentional opportunities for participants to reflect, mourn, and find opportunities of hope. The evening also featured a musical performance by Micha Biton, an ethnic-rock Israeli music, singer, and song writer whose life changed on October 7, 2023. He spent 13 hours in a safe room with his family in Netiv Ha'sara, a Gaza border community. In the heroic evacuation of Micha and his family, he grabbed his beloved guitar. He shared his music while telling a story of light, faith and survival.







(PHOTO CREDIT: Aviva Maller Photography)



## Bits & Pieces



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

### MAZEL TOV TO GROWING FAMILIES:

**Sandy Golove** on the birth of a daughter, Aliza Lani Adelman and to grandmothers, Shery Hertzberg and Susan Adelman.

**Avrielle & Brad Goldstein** on the birth of a son and to grandparents, Judy & Howard Goldstein and Tammy & Ben Movsas.

**Devorah & Ari Hertzberg** on the birth of a son and to grandparents, Shery Hertzberg and Shanie & Bill Ellerton.

**Elizabeth & Alex Japha** on the birth of a son, Isaac Daniel Japha and to grandparents, Meryl & Ron Japha.

**Katie & Jesse Lifshitz** on the birth of a son.

**Rachel & JJ Brenner** on the birth of a daughter and to grandparents Howard Wolfe and Michelle & Jeff Zelin.

**Tali & Jessie Salver** on the birth of a son.

**Tamar & Feivel Segelov** on the birth of a daughter and to grandparents, Diane &

**Rabbi Daniel Cohen.**

**Maddie & Mitchell Shapiro** on the birth of a daughter, Sophie Warren Shapiro and to grandparents, Sue & Carl Shapiro.

**Lielle & Jeff Sugar** on the birth of a daughter.

**To Adina & Steven Adelman** on the birth of a baby girl, Aliza Tamar/Aliza Lani! Mazal Tov to big brothers Eli and Yonah, grandmother Shery Hertzberg, Aunt and Uncle Devorah & Ari Hertzberg and cousins Allie and Shira!

### MAZEL TOV ON MARRIAGES/ENGAGEMENTS:

**Meryl & Larry Meiteles** on the engagement of their son, Kevin Meiteles to Alexa Mitzner, daughter of Meryl & Jeffrey Mitzner.

**Steven Labkoff & Tracy Ryan** on the marriage of their daughter, Nicole Labkoff to Nathan Bick.

### MAZEL TOV TO B'NEI MITZVAH:

**Brielle Bouris**: daughter of Laurie & Eric Bouris.

**Sloane Cooper**: daughter of Kahla & Gordon Cooper.

**Ruby Kaplan**: daughter of Carrie & Barry Kaplan.

**Tyler Kaplan**: son of Carrie & Barry Kaplan.

**Lilah Knopf**: daughter of Adira & Rabbi Michael Knopf.

**Sophia Winters**: daughter of Alisa Landau.

### WE MOURN THE LOSS OF:

**Chuck Albert**: husband of Helen Frank; father of Dayna Patashnik and Lauren Rosen and stepfather of Robert Frank and Steven Frank.

**Bruce Ashkenas**: brother of Ron Ashkenas; husband of Denise Ashkenas; and father of Adam Ashkenas and Sam Ashkenas.

**Robert Bilenker**: husband of Barbara Bilenker and father of Jenny Bilenker and Josh Bilenker.

**Daniel Abraham Dreyfuss**: father of Peri Dreyfuss-Kaufman, Jonathan Dreyfuss and Eliane Dreyfuss.

**Seymour Lapin**: father of Paul Lapin.

**Tom Purr**: father of Donna Trief.

**Daniel Shameer**: son of Marge Shameer and brother of Sherry Cohen.

**Arkady Tuller**: husband of Ludmila Tuller; father of Alexander Tuller and Marat Tuller and brother of Svetlana Tuller.



**Holiday Edition**

**United Jewish Federation**

## From the Shlich's Kitchen

### Lotus Biscoff White Chocolate Cheesecake

★★★★★

**Ingredients:**

**For the crust:**

- 3 cups Biscoff cookies, finely crushed
- (more cookies if you want to sprinkle on top)
- 5 tbsp (2/3 stick) unsalted butter, melted

**For the filling:**

- 3.5 oz (100 g) white chocolate
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 tbsp butter
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 7 oz farmer cheese (about 3/4 cup, packed)
- 2-3 tbsp plain Greek yogurt
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 cups heavy cream (1 pint)
- 1 package instant vanilla pudding mix

**For the topping:**

- 1 jar (14 oz) Biscoff spread

**How to make:**

1. Mix crushed Biscoff cookies with melted butter and press into a springform pan. Freeze while preparing the filling.
2. Microwave white chocolate with milk and butter until melted. Stir and let cool slightly.
3. In a large bowl, mix farmer cheese with Greek yogurt until creamy. Add the cream cheese and instant pudding mix and mix, then add the melted white chocolate and mix until smooth.
4. In a separate bowl, whip the heavy cream with the sugar until stiff peaks form. Gently fold the whipped cream into the cheese mixture in three parts, until fully combined.
5. Take the crust out of the freezer. (Optional: line the pan with an acetate strip for clean edges.)
6. Spread the filling over the crust and smooth the top. Refrigerate overnight.
7. Microwave Biscoff spread until runny. Pour over the cheesecake, tilt to cover evenly, and chill 30 minutes. (Optional: sprinkle crushed Biscoff cookies on top.)

**BON APPÉTIT**

**TIP**  
Add more cookies for a thicker base or more Biscoff spread for a thicker topping

## A Message from UJF's Community Shlich's Discovering Sigd – A Beautiful Ethiopian Jewish Tradition

### BY UJF COMMUNITY SHLICH'S EDEN REFAELOVICH

As an Israeli shlich's (emissary), I often ask myself: what can I share that's meaningful, new, and connects us as a community?

This month, I'd like to introduce you to **Sigd** - a unique Ethiopian Jewish holiday. It's celebrated 50 days after Yom Kippur (this year on November 20) and includes prayer, fasting, and community gatherings. In Ethiopia, Jews would pray on mountaintops for the return to Jerusalem - a tradition that symbolized the Mount Sinai moment, when the Jewish people received the Torah. Today in Israel, Sigd is a national holiday - a celebration of identity, unity, and belonging.

With Sigd upon us, it made me think of a close friend of mine, Vered (Rose in Hebrew), whose parents immigrated to Israel from Ethiopia. While visiting the U.S. last year, we went to a local supermarket. When she inquired about the kosher section, the staff member appeared surprised and questioned her twice, asking if she

truly meant "kosher." That moment reminded me how little many people know about the full diversity of the Jewish people.

Sigd isn't just for Ethiopian Jews. It's for all of us. It's a beautiful reminder that the Jewish story is wide,

diverse, and deeply connected.



Eden Refaelovich



Eden Refaelovich with her friend Vered.



## Rosh Hashanah Ready

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) As the High Holidays approached this year, the women of Chabad of Stamford's Jewish Women Connected (JWC) gathered for a meaningful and delicious "Rosh Hashanah Ready" cooking event, led by Leah Shemtov. Participants came together to prepare festive dishes to share with their families and friends in honor of the holiday.

The program blended friendship, the joy of cooking and the depth of Torah insight in a serene outdoor setting. Before diving into the cooking, Leah shared an empowering perspective on the Jewish principles of *Teshuva*, *Tefillah*, and *Tzedakah*, practices especially meaningful when preparing for the High Holidays.

Contrary to the common translation of *Teshuva* as "repentance," Leah explained that the Torah offers no such word. "*Teshuva*," she said, "means 'to return' to our truest selves, to that spark within each of us that *Hashem* created with a unique purpose, strengths, gifts, and life journey." Together, attendees explored how *Teshuva* naturally leads to *Tefillah* (prayer), a deeper connection with God, and from there to *Tzedakah*.

Leah emphasized that *Tzedakah* is more than its common translation of "charity."

*Tzedakah*, she explained, is "righteousness and the opportunity to do the right thing by supporting others, filling their needs, and being present for them. It is not about just being 'charitable,'" she says, "but about embracing the chance *Hashem* gives us to act with integrity and kindness."

After this inspiring discussion, the women rolled up their sleeves to prepare holiday dishes including apple babkas, squash kugels, round centerpiece challahs, and a variety of sauces and sides. The atmosphere was filled with energy, fun and inspiration as participants shared cooking tips and encouragement.

The event left everyone uplifted and recharged, equipped not just with delicious recipes for their holiday tables, but with "spiritual nourishment" to carry into the New Year.

For Leah, "a heartfelt thank you goes to the incredible women who joined, filling the room with strength, joy, and connection. Together, we enter the new year energized, inspired, and ready to return to our true selves."

For more information about JWC events throughout the year, please contact [programs@stamfordchabad.org](mailto:programs@stamfordchabad.org).



Chabad of Stamford's JWC women prepare for a sweet and meaningful Rosh Hashanah.

## Tashlich by the Water

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) On Rosh Hashanah, Chabad of Stamford hosted two *Tashlich* ceremonies by beautiful bodies of water. *Tashlich* comes from the Hebrew word meaning "to cast," referring to the intent to cast away one's sins when reciting special verses next to a body of water.

Families gathered at the Stamford JCC, casting away shortcomings and hearing the

shofar across the lake, praying for a year of blessing and renewal. Another ceremony at the lake at Howard and Deena Graber's home featured *Tashlich*, Torah insights from Chabad of Stamford Co-Director Rabbi Moshe Shemtov, and shared reflections over sushi and wine. Rabbi Shemtov emphasized nature's role in connecting to God and the lesson of constant divine care.



Enjoying *Tashlich*, sushi, and inspiration lakeside at the Grabers with Chabad of Stamford.

## Honey Tasting Brings Neighbors Together

(Courtesy of UJF) The Jewish holidays are a time to gather, and two micro-communities—North Stamford and Shippan—came together to usher in the New Year.

In North Stamford, a pre-Rosh Hashanah honey tasting brought neighbors together to welcome a sweet year ahead. The gathering, hosted by Ariel Bedik, Tova Reich, and Wendy Siegel, featured locally sourced honey from Shira Burstein and Becky Kevelson.

Meanwhile, in Shippan, the community

celebrated at a festive event hosted by Marilyn and Harry Soffer, Monica and Michael Schlessinger, Lauren and Josh Esses, and Elina Furman and Jay Landauer.

Across both neighborhoods, meeting new neighbors and strengthening connections remains a highlight of the Jewish holiday season. These gatherings reflect the important role United Jewish Federation plays in bringing people together to build community, celebrate traditions, and create moments of unity.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



Josh Esses, Kerrin Behrend, Stu Madison, Harry Soffer, Ken Schwartz

## Holocaust Survivors Celebrate Rosh Hashanah

(Courtesy of Schoke JFS) Over 70 Holocaust survivors, aides, and companions gathered with Schoke Jewish Family Service (JFS) to celebrate the Jewish New Year at the Anachnu Rosh Hashanah Tea Party, a meaningful afternoon filled with tradition, music, and connection. Hosted at Young Israel of Stamford, the event featured Rabbi Kohl, who led songs, shared reflections, and blew the shofar. Each attendee received a Rosh Hashanah bag organized by Schoke JFS board member Risa Goldblum, which included cards made by JCC Nursery School children. Jewish calendars, generously donated by Chabad of Stamford and Bris Avrohom of Hillside, New Jersey, added to the joy.

Support future events at: [www.ctjfs.org/anachnu](http://www.ctjfs.org/anachnu).



Rabbi Kohl blows the shofar, filling the room with the powerful sounds of tradition and reflection.



Anachnu participants share smiles and conversation while enjoying the Rosh Hashanah tea party.





## Community Calendar at a Glance

[www.ujf.org/calendar](http://www.ujf.org/calendar)

United Jewish Federation encourages all local organizations to use its online community calendar to schedule events and help prevent conflicts, emphasizing collaborative responsibility for maintaining a vibrant, well-coordinated communal calendar.

### Calendar Participation Encouraged

The UJF website hosts a public calendar intended for all community organizations to add their events. This shared resource aims to facilitate transparency and advance planning, enabling groups to schedule thoughtfully and avoid overlapping programs whenever possible.

### Conflict Management Policy

While UJF will not formally police or resolve scheduling conflicts, it will proactively notify organizations of potential overlaps. The expectation is that organizations will communicate directly to ensure mutual respect and minimize competing events.

### Vibrant Community Spirit

This approach reflects UJF's commitment to a dynamic and active community, placing trust in organizations to collaborate for maximum participation and impact. Everyone's involvement in timely calendar entries and communication is essential to sustaining a thriving communal environment.

## November

**November 2** - Friendship Circle MVP for Bar and Bat Mitzvah Aged Students

**November 4-9** - BCHA Players Fall Show - Nick Tickle Fairy Tale Detective

**November 5-9** - Stamford JCC's - Shabbat in Color

**November 5** - Temple Beth El - Board of Trustees Meeting

**November 6** - American Yiddish Theater - A musical Overview with Zalmen Mlotek

**November 9** - Bi-Cultural Lower School - Open House

**November 9** - Temple Sinai Annual Mitzvah Day

**November 9** - JCC's 5th Annual Fall Social

**November 9** - Chabad Bat Mitzvah Club

**November 11** - Veterans Day

**November 11** - CAS Executive Meeting

**November 12** - Chabad JWC Creates

**November 12** - UJF Board Meeting

**November 15** - Savta Sheli Chabad Event

**November 15** - Temple Sinai: Steve Taubman Mentalist

**November 16** - Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy - Upper School Open House

**November 17** - Temple Sinai Board Meeting

**November 18** - Chabad JScouts Mitzvah Club

**November 18** - CAS Board Meeting

**November 19** - BCHA Board Meeting

**November 20** - Chabad New Canaan Gala

**November 20** - Chabad JWC Rosh Chodesh Learning

**November 25** - Chabad CTeen Thanksgiving - Cook-Off Mitzvah Event

**November 27** - Thanksgiving

## December

**December 2** - Temple Beth El - Board of Trustees Meeting

**December 5** - Chabad Young Jewish Professionals Shabbat Dinner

**December 7** - Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy - Alex Edelman Comedy Event

**December 7** - Chabad Bat Mitzvah Club

**December 9** - Chabad JScouts Mitzvah Club

**December 9** - CAS Executive Meeting

**December 9** - Chabad - Yud Tes Kislev Farbrenger

**December 10** - BCHA Board Meeting

**December 11** - JCC's Board Cocktail Party

**December 12-13** - Community-Wide Event One Shabbat, One Community

**December 14** - Erev Chanukah

**December 14** - BCHA Glow Chanukah Festival

**December 14** - Chabad Chanukah Community Celebration and Giant Menorah Lighting

**December 15** - Chabad JWC Chanukah Package Party

**December 15** - Temple Sinai Board Meeting

**December 17** - Chabad CTeen Chanukah Chopped

**December 17** - UJF Annual Meeting

**December 18** - Chabad Grandfriends' Chanukah Lunch

**December 20** - Chabad Chanukah Menorah Car Parade

**December 21** - Young Israel of Stamford Gelt Drop

**December 25** - Chabad Family Day Brunch and Loaves of Love

If you have any questions regarding the community calendar, contact UJF Director, Office Operations Lara Agatstein at [Lara@ujf.org](mailto:Lara@ujf.org)

## History Begins Today at the JHSFC Archives

(Courtesy of Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County) Forty-one years ago, Larry F. Ginsberg, then vice president of the Stamford Jewish Historical Society, called local Jewish organizations to ask that the Society be added to their mailing lists. That simple step sparked the creation of the archives of what is now the Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County (JHSFC). Another founding member, the late Ron Marcus, became its first archivist.

What is an archive anyway? An archive is a collection of historical documents, records, and artifacts that illuminate the stories of places, institutions, and communities—in this case, the Jews of Fairfield County, Connecticut.

"Our archives began in a single closet at the Stamford JCC," says Dr. Leah Tillman, archives director "Today, at 990 Hope Street (rear) in Stamford, the JHSFC collection has grown to more than 10,000 items. We use these materials for education through our L'Dor V'Dor program, share them with the public via the online CT Collection at UConn, our website (JHSFC-CT.org), and YouTube, and draw on them to create exhibits and programs sponsored by the Society."

Highlights from the collection include:

- Agudath Israel, Newtown (1934): Secretary and Treasurer's report.
- Bridgeport: Judge Mellitz's papers; a 1916 minute book from Congregation Ahavah Achim; and a volume of WWII military records of the Jewish community.
- Norwalk: Mintz family records; an early-20th-century fundraising letter seeking land for the Norwalk JCC.
- JHSFC Exhibit materials: Banners and placards from *A Slice of Jewish American History in Fairfield County, 1654-1986*; *It Happened Here: From Haven to Home to Community*; *Remembering the Family Store*; and *Notable Jewish People of Fairfield County*, among other projects.

Special Projects Coordinator Debra Emery notes that researchers from within and beyond the community regularly contact the Archives to explore family histories connected to Fairfield County.

Other treasures, interesting documents and notable items include:

- First artifact: Donated by founding member Shirley Diamant—her mother's "Benjamin Franklin" eyeglasses and case from Community Opticians, c. 1908.
- Oldest documents: Bound, original issues of *Ha-Zefira* (The Dawn), a Hebrew-language newspaper from Warsaw (1862-63).
- Community records: Yiddish donor list for the Adath Israel Hebrew School, December 7, 1890, acknowledged by Secretary B. Shapiro.
- Fine art & liturgy: Copies of the Arthur Szyk Haggadah (an original Szyk Haggadah is secured offsite).
- Textiles & lifecycle: c. 1905 hand-embroidered challah cover crafted by Sadie Schine; the marriage *ketubah* of Louis Schine and Sadie Saknovich (Germania Hall, Bridgeport, December 12, 1909).
- WWII holdings: A Nazi SS helmet and an extensive collection of Nazi and concentration-camp artifacts.
- Military honor: Purple Heart awarded to the family of Captain Khalman Perlman, KIA June 15, 1944, during the Northern Burma campaign.
- Medical history: Doctor's bag attributed to Dr. Jacob Nemoiten, who delivered many immigrant children in Stamford.
- Press and propaganda: Bound *New York Times*, Sunday, July 18, 1937, including coverage of Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels attacking Jewish art critics.
- Cultural history: A German-language illustrated erotic history of 19th-century Europe compiled by Eduard Fuchs (first edition, Munich, 1912) with 563 plates and illustrations.

To visit, tour, or conduct research at the Archives, please contact Debra Emery at (203) 359-2196 or [archives@JHSFC-CT.org](mailto:archives@JHSFC-CT.org). The Historical Society looks forward to helping you discover—and preserve—our shared history.



**DON'T FORGET TO USE THE  
COMMUNITY CALENDAR.**

THE CALENDAR CONTINUES TO BE IMPORTANT  
TO AVOID CONFLICTS

[www.ujf.org/calendar](http://www.ujf.org/calendar)

Questions? Email Lara at [lara@ujf.org](mailto:lara@ujf.org)



## CTeen Participants Grow, Lead, and Shine

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Chabad of Stamford kicked off its CTeen year with a launch event that drew teens in grades nine through 12 from across Stamford's public and private schools. The afternoon featured pickleball, basketball, smoothies, and socializing under the sunshine. Led by Mussie and Shternie Shemtov, the event inspired teens to connect, show Jewish pride, and take on leadership roles within

the program.

CTeen, a global Jewish teen network, empowers youth through social, educational, and volunteer events. Upcoming highlights include a Thanksgiving Cook-Off, a Chanukah "Chopped" Latke Edition, and the CTeen International Shabbaton in New York City, where thousands of teens will gather for an "unforgettable" weekend.



Chabad of Stamford's CTeen enjoys being together at the recent kickoff.

## BCHA Seniors Named Merit Scholar Semi-Finalists

(Courtesy of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy) Earning the recognition of a National Merit Scholar is, in the life of a student, a unique achievement. It signifies drive, determination and confidence.

This year, the Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy (BCHA) of Connecticut is proud to announce that two seniors, Adam Daniel and Yoav Hochman, have been named National Merit Scholar semifinalists.

The National Merit Scholarship Program is a nationwide academic competition that recognizes top-performing students. Semifinalists are chosen based on high scores on the PSAT/NMSQT. Those who maintain strong grades and perform well on subsequent tests may advance to finalist status and earn scholarships for undergraduate study.

The program names about 16,000 semifinalists each year, according to the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. While that number may seem large, it represents less than 1% of the nation's graduating seniors.

Although finalists have not yet been selected, Adam and Yoav are proud of the work they have put in so far.

"Earning this recognition tells me that, with hard work and determination, I can achieve anything," Adam said. "It's proof that my future has unlimited potential."

Over the past year, both students have



(l-r) BCHA Seniors Yoav Hochman and Adam Daniel.

shown exceptional dedication to their studies. Each plans to pursue a different field of engineering after high school, with Adam currently enrolled in a multivariable calculus course at the University of Connecticut and Yoav spending his summer as an electrical engineering intern. Both also devoted extra hours this summer to strengthening their SAT and ACT.

Adam and Yoav expressed gratitude for their teachers, families and friends for helping them reach this milestone.

"I'm incredibly thankful to have teachers who are invested in my success and family and friends who pushed me to achieve this goal," Yoav said. "Without them having my back at every turn, I don't think I would have accomplished this."

Winners of this year's National Merit Scholarships will be announced in early 2026.

## JScouts Mitzvah Club Empowers Kids



Chabad of Stamford's JScouts Mitzvah Club members come together at the first meeting of the year.

(Courtesy of Chabad of Stamford) Chabad of Stamford's JScouts Mitzvah Club is giving local Jewish children a new way to grow, connect, and give back. Designed for grades 3 through 7, the immersive program combines hands-on service projects, team-building activities, and leadership development to help kids make a positive impact in their community.

Now entering its second season, JScouts Mitzvah Club is led by youth directors Mussie and Shternie Shemtov. They are confident that the program will continue to be a cornerstone for Jewish children in the Stamford community, combining fun, friendship, and meaning.

Throughout the year, JScouts members participate in a wide variety of activities from acts of kindness to field trips and group challenges, all while progressing through different JScouts "ranks" and earning rewards along the way. For youth leader Shternie Shemtov, the program "not only strengthens Jewish identity but also instills responsibility, teamwork, and pride in making the world a better place."

The club meets monthly, with its first gathering of the season held before the High Holidays including an interactive Shofar

Factory workshop. With more than 65 in attendance, children learned about a variety of animal horns, discovering which horns are kosher for use as a shofar and why. Each participant then crafted their own shofar, drilling, sanding, and shellacking before proudly bringing it home to use for Rosh Hashanah.

For the children, the program was both educational and inspiring, offering them the chance to connect with Jewish traditions in a hands-on, memorable way.

"Our goal is to give kids a space where they can experience the joy of Judaism while also realizing the power they have to make a difference," said Mussie Shemtov. "When they see that their actions, big or small, can bring light to others, it shapes the way they view themselves and the world around them."

Upcoming programs include caring for the sick, elderly, and homeless; a first responder appreciation event; an Israel-themed gathering; and a group trip to New York City.

For more information about JScouts or other youth programs at Chabad of Stamford, please email [youth@stamfordchabad.org](mailto:youth@stamfordchabad.org).

## Honey Tasting Brings Neighbors Together

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15



Shira Burstein, Melanie Vorm, Tova Reich, Wendy Siegel, and Becky Kevelson



Lauren Esses, Jen Tolman, Diane Sloyer, Monica Smyth, Marge Lilienthal



Ariel Poser Bedek and her daughter



Marilyn and Harry Soffer, Shelley Kahan, Lori and Victor Bushell



## Year One of Life & Legacy Plus

(Courtesy of UJF) For the past five years, United Jewish Federation (UJF) has enabled the entire community to participate in the Life & Legacy program. Supported by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (HGF), Life & Legacy assists communities in fostering a culture of philanthropy. It supports after-life giving to build endowments that will provide financial stability to local Jewish communal agencies, synagogues, and schools.

Here in Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien, nearly every Jewish organization and synagogue has been actively engaged in the effort to secure a bright Jewish future for the community. Each year, UJF and HGF offer incentive grants to each participating local organization, to motivate sustained focus on securing after-life gifts, stewarding donors, and integrating legacy giving into the fabric of the community.

During the first four years of the Life & Legacy program, UJF generously supported local participating organizations with over \$250,000 in grants to be used as they wished. In 2024-2025, as part of Life & Legacy Plus, each participating organization was able to receive a maximum grant of \$3,000, if all metrics were met.

The 2025 grants awards are:

- Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy: \$2,100

- Chabad of Stamford: \$2,900
- Congregation Agudath Sholom: \$1,850
- Friendship Circle: \$2,750
- Schoke Jewish Family Service: \$2,350
- Stamford JCC: \$3,000
- Temple Beth El: \$3,000
- Temple Sinai: \$2,600
- United Jewish Federation: \$3,000
- Young Israel of Stamford: \$1,500

Nationally, through the Life & Legacy program, nearly 1,000 Jewish organizations spread throughout 75 communities around the country, have secured over \$1.8 billion in commitments for the future. Over 5 years, the Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien community has secured 629 Letters of Intent of which 418 commitments (66%) have been formalized, meaning the donor has designated an organization for their after life plans. Together, this represents approximately \$16.6 million in promised legacy gifts, with \$1.1 million already realized.

If you would like to make a legacy gift or learn more about the Life & Legacy program, please contact UJF Deputy Director Eric Ross at [eric@ujf.org](mailto:eric@ujf.org).

## Life & Legacy Testimonial

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

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

### TOBY AND JAMIE RING TESTIMONIAL

When we moved to Stamford seven years ago, we were immediately drawn in by the warmth of the community, and no organization reflected that more than Young Israel. We loved that everyone knew each other, that it was small enough for us to feel we could volunteer and help make an impact, and of course, that it came with a good dairy kiddush. Becoming members was a priority, but as a young family with mounting financial obligations, even that felt like a stretch.

Life & Legacy gave us the opportunity at a time when we couldn't give financially, to show our young family's support to the shul where our kids would grow up and our family would find our spiritual home. But our gift will not go towards our children's generation, it will support those who follow in their footsteps. It is not about supporting our needs now, it is about ensuring that



Jamie and Toby Ring and their children

the community we know and love will be sustained long after us.

Supporting community organizations doesn't just benefit the recipient, it enriches the giver and deepens the warmth and interconnectedness that makes Stamford so special. Many young families can't give in traditional ways, but Life & Legacy empowers families of all backgrounds, regardless of wealth, age, or status to demonstrate their commitment to the institutions that strengthen us all.

Now, as a member of the Young Israel board, Toby sees firsthand how vital long-term financial planning is. The support from Life & Legacy, both through recruitment milestones and the realization of donors' gifts, helps Young Israel plan responsibly for the future and continue to thrive. We are indebted to those who came before us and built the institutions we cherish. Our hope is to do the same for the next generation, ensuring the continued success of the Stamford Jewish community.

ALL  
ARE  
WELCOME!

## WHISKEY TASTING

Co-sponsored by:

CAS Men's Club of Congregation Agudath Sholom  
The Men's Club of Temple Beth El  
The Brotherhood of Temple Sinai  
United Jewish Federation



Come join us for an evening of camaraderie, conversation, and the chance to sample fine whiskeys (including one Israeli whiskey) and local kosher chocolates.

Early registration appreciated at:  
<http://www.ujf.org/whiskey>

**\$20 per person**  
**Early bird pricing**  
**\$25 after Nov 1st.**

Temple Sinai Stamford  
458 Lakeside Drive

**NOV 20 7:30 PM**



## SHALOM/ WELCOME!



United Jewish Federation is here to celebrate life's exciting new beginnings through our "Shalom Baby" and "Shalom Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien" programs.

UJF delivers gifts to Jewish families who have welcomed new babies and new Jewish arrivals, helping them feel the warmth and connection that makes the local Jewish community so special.

If you know someone who has recently welcomed a baby or moved to town, please reach out to Jillian Moore at [Jillian@UJF.org](mailto:Jillian@UJF.org).





# Israeli-Developed Blood Test Promises to Take Guesswork Out of Treating Depression

*Founded by two neuroscientists, NeuroKaire says its novel, AI-assisted tech uses stem cells to create a brain proxy against which drugs can be tested to find the best one.*

BY SHARON WROBEL/  
TIMESOFISRAEL.COM

In mid September, two Israeli neuroscientists rolled out a blood test in the US and Israel that they say can measure the responsiveness of a patient with major depressive disorder to common antidepressants.

Depression is one of the most common forms of mental disorder, affecting more than 330 million people worldwide. Treatment methods rely primarily on a taxing trial-and-error process to find the right prescription drug, which can take years.

In Israel, the psychological toll of 23 months of war and counting has made the need for effective mental health treatment felt more than ever.

The blood test, created by Dr. Talia Cohen Solal and Dr. Daphna Laifenfeld of Israeli health tech startup NeuroKaire, promises to create a platform for personalized treatment of mental disorders. Guided by the test results, clinicians and psychiatrists can determine which treatment is most suited to a particular patient's condition.

"For far too long, patients with clinical depression have endured a grueling trial-and-error process before finding an effective treatment," Cohen Solal told The Times of Israel. "Around one-third of the time, a patient improves or recovers from depression when seeking treatment, and around two-thirds of the time, physicians will need to change their medication or dosage multiple times."

"Typically, the guessing game of identifying the right drug for a patient with clinical depression can take between 12 to 18 months. We are bringing that down to two months," she claimed.

The blood test began being offered in Israel and the US this week, though the new technology still needs more research and trial data to determine its effectiveness, according to Prof. Mark Weiser, who heads the Psychiatry Department at Sheba Medical

Center, which was involved in testing the process.

"NeuroKaire's unique combination of stem-cell technology, genomics, and AI represents an evolutionary step forward from traditional pharmacogenetics and is promising, but it is still early days, and more research needs to be done in large clinical trials with hundreds of patients, comparing the outcomes with those that haven't taken the test, and further improve results for patients," Weiser said.

NeuroKaire's blood-based screening tool, BrightKaire, was recently granted laboratory-developed test regulatory approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services in the US, making it the first clinically deployed test based on neurons derived from blood, the startup said.

Following the regulatory approval, the blood test has been made available to physicians and patients in Israel and in the US for \$1,000. The test is reimbursed under several premium and private insurance plans in the US and Israel, including Medicare Part B, Cohen Solal said.

"We have around 100 active prescribing psychiatrists at present," said Cohen Solal.

Cohen Solal and Laifenfeld have decades of academic expertise in brain research and personalized medicine between them. Cohen Solal spent a decade studying psychiatric disorders at Oxford University, University College London and Columbia University. Laifenfeld has worked in brain research at the Israel-based Technion and Harvard University in the United States, and has over 20 years of experience in personalized medicine, including serving as head of precision medicine at Teva Pharmaceuticals Industries.

The two neuroscientists met when Cohen Solal immigrated from the US to Israel in 2017, and they decided to join forces to found NeuroKaire in 2018. The two shared a vision to develop a more precise personalized test

that clinicians could use in order to pick the optimal drug therapy for patients with clinical depression.

Starting their journey at BioGiv, a lab compound for young startups in the Givat Ram campus of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Cohen Solal and Lifshitz-Leipnfeld developed a test based on the "brain in a dish" model, where stem cells

are crafted in the lab from a patient's own blood sample using stem cell technology.

NeuroKaire's R&D team then turns the stem cells into frontal brain neurons — the brain region most implicated in mental illness and depression — and tests them against 70 different antidepressants, helping to pinpoint the most effective drug or combination therapy for each patient.

Using a proprietary AI platform to analyze personalized data, including a patient's genetic data, medical history, and microscopic neuronal imaging, the test produces a report detailing the patient's response to different medications, including the likelihood of side effects.

"Depression is reduced connectivity in the brain, often expressed in a lack of motivation," Cohen Solal explained. "With our brain in a dish platform, we have a window into the brain and can analyze how well those neurons are connecting or communicating after exposure to antidepressants, and we turn that into a quantitative readout for how strongly a drug has affected connectivity in those samples."

"Our brain in a dish technology tells you not just if the drug gets past the liver to the brain, but what it does in the brain and whether it works," Cohen Solal noted.

Cohen Solal said that the startup has validated the technology in clinical trials of the blood-based diagnostic in Israel in collaboration with Sheba Medical Center in Ramat Gan and Geha Mental Health Center in Petah Tikva. In the US, trials were conducted at Jefferson Hospital in Philadelphia and in collaboration with the National Institute of Mental Health. In addition, NeuroKaire has formed partnerships with Israeli biotech companies Clexio and Neurosense.

"In the past two decades, our knowledge of human genetics and brain biology has advanced at an unprecedented pace, but it is still limited," said Weiser. "The underlying problem is that when a patient comes for treatment, there is no test based on biology as to whether I should prescribe Prozac or a different antidepressant, but it is based on consultation and clinical impressions."

Weiser said other companies that have developed blood tests based on genes to determine the best drug treatment for depression, were not well-validated.

In 2023, NeuroKaire expanded to the US and opened a commercial lab, while its R&D center, employing 25 people, is based in Tel Aviv. To date, the startup has raised \$25 million from venture capital investors, including GreyBird Ventures, Meron Capital,



Dr. Talia Cohen Solal (right) and Dr. Daphna Laifenfeld, co-founders of Israeli health tech startup NeuroKaire.

Jumpspeed Venture Partners and Sapir Ventures.

"Israel has fantastic life sciences and neuroscience PhDs, which is wonderful for hiring great R&D scientists," Cohen Solal said. "It's a mission of ours because of Israel and because of the war to launch this test here as well, and we are very happy to be able to help in this time of need."

A report published by the State Comptroller's Office earlier this year found that approximately 3 million Israeli adults may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, or anxiety as a direct consequence of the events of the October 7, 2023, Hamas-led massacre in southern Israel and subsequent war in Gaza.

"Many of the drugs overlap for depression and PTSD," said Cohen Solal. "Physicians can use our technology to help them choose between PTSD medications as well."

"But in the future, we will specifically be recruiting cohorts of PTSD patients so we can validate it as well in the PTSD setting," she added.

Cohen Solal said that depression is the first indication, but going forward, tests for other neurological conditions are being planned using the same method.

"NeuroKaire's mission is to bring precision medicine to the brain," said Cohen Solal. "Next year, we will be starting our studies in ADHD. That's going to be our next indication."



A scientist working at NeuroKaire's R&D lab in Tel Aviv.



United Jewish Federation  
The New Jewish Voice  
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Congregation Agudath Sholom, Friendship Circle, Schoke JFS, Temple Beth El,  
Temple Sinai, Stamford JCC, United Jewish Federation, and Young Israel of Stamford

### Invite You To:



Each organization will be hosting a shabbat related program. On Saturday night, the commUNITY will come together for Havdalah and to celebrate being together, As One!

**Live Music by The Shuk**  
**Activities for Adults, Kids + Families...**  
**Something for Everyone!**

GE COCREATE SPACE  
47 JOHN STREET  
STAMFORD

★ SATURDAY  
★ DECEMBER 13  
★ 6:30 - 9:30 PM

TICKETS:  
★ \$10 PER PERSON  
★ \$36 PER FAMILY

TO LEARN MORE AND TO REGISTER VISIT [WWW.UJF.ORG/ONESHABBAT](http://WWW.UJF.ORG/ONESHABBAT)