

# The Charlotte JEWISH NEWS



## Celebrating Jewish Life

Vol. 44, No. 5

Nisan-Sivan, 5782

May 2022



Jewish Federation  
OF GREATER CHARLOTTE

### SLATE OF OFFICERS & TRUSTEES AS NOMINATED BY THE BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER CHARLOTTE

#### OFFICERS FOR 2022-2023

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| President      | Risa Miller*       |
| Vice-President | Amy Vitner*        |
| Vice-President | Slade Goldstein*   |
| Vice-President | Jill Dinerman*     |
| Treasurer      | Sharyn Handelsman* |
| Secretary      | Julie Sheffer*     |
| Past President | Ron Townsend       |

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- |                   |                |
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| Holly Levinson | Alison Lerner |
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- |   |
|---|
| Foundation of Shalom Park: Barry Bobrow |
| Jewish Family Services: Louis Sinkoe    |
| Levine JCC: Lisa Strause Levinson       |

#### BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

- |  |
|--|
| Alison Lerner, Chair                             |
| Jill Blumenthal, Jonathan Friedman, Raizel Kahn, |
| Liz Naman, Brad Rabinowitz, Amy Udoff            |

\*Nominees

Voting members of the Jewish Federation must contribute at least \$36 to the annual campaign

## Federation's 2022 Annual Meeting To Recognize Outgoing and Incoming Leaders

The annual meeting of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte will take place on Monday, May 16, at 7 p.m. in the Sam Lerner Center for Cultural Arts at Shalom Park. Please join us to honor outgoing president, Ron Townsend, as he shares the successes and challenges of leading in a mostly virtual environment. We will also welcome incoming president, Risa Miller. Risa will discuss the goals for her term as she prepares to build on our most recent successes.

During the annual meeting, the 2022-2023 slate of officers and board of trustees will be presented, and an election will be



Federation outgoing president, Ron Townsend

held. Community members 18 years and older who contribute at least \$36 to the Annual Campaign are considered voting members.



Federation incoming president, Risa Miller

## Levine JCC Bids Farewell to CEO Peter Blair

By LJCC Staff

It is with mixed emotions that the Levine Jewish Community Center (LJCC) Board of Directors announces the resignation of its chief executive officer, Peter Blair. After nearly seven years with the LJCC, Peter has accepted an offer to become the president and CEO of the Lynwood Foundation, a nonprofit organization established in 1996 that has a twofold mission, namely to maintain and preserve The Duke Mansion and to operate

The Lee Institute, which focuses on building community collaborative leadership by strengthening nonprofit organizations. We congratulate Peter and wish him the best of luck in his new endeavors.

Peter came to the LJCC having worked for decades at four JCCs around the country. He brought with him a wealth of knowledge, ambition, and creativity. During Peter's tenure, we have navigated a global pandemic



(Continued on page 2) Peter Blair

### Look Inside ... Celebrating Jewish Youth



The Charlotte Jewish News essay contest winners, pg 8



CJDS Newspaper Club pp. 12-13



Zachary Tanenbaum, young woodworker and entrepreneur, pg. 21

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# From the Editor

## L'dor V'dor — Passing Knowledge Goes Both Ways



Shira Firestone, Editor CJN

There's a phrase found in the Amidah prayer — L'dor v'dor, which literally means from generation to generation. We often think of it in terms of what the older generation passes down to the younger. At a bar or bat mitzvah, this passing is quite literally symbolized as the Torah passes through the hands of a member of each generation until it comes to rest with the child. It refers to the responsibility we have to pass on our wisdom and spiritual knowledge to ensure the continuity of our customs, culture, and collective Jewish memory.

But I've been thinking a lot

lately about the responsibility we, as an older generation, have to learn from the generations coming up behind us. There is much work to be done to make our world a safer place for all, regardless of gender identity, race, or religion. We have reached a tipping point in protecting a planet that has reached the crisis point we've been long warned of. There is still much work to be done. Not only can we not do it alone, but also we need to recognize that we will not be around indefinitely. Whatever progress we make will need to be picked up and built upon by those who follow us. We have a responsibility to partner with them.

They have tools and a perspective we lack to tackle these and other difficult issues. To stay relevant and partner with them, we have a responsibility to understand the tools they use. To stay flexible as the world changes, we have a responsibility to stay open-minded to their perspective.

And to do any of this, we need to listen to them. We need to see them and hear them. In-

stead of scowling when we say, "Kids these days," we should be enthusiastically celebrating when we say, "Kids these days!"

When I first had the idea to create a "Celebrating Jewish Youth" issue in the CJN, focusing on this special segment of our community, I had no idea that it would unfold in the way it has. It began with a visit to Barbara Foxx at Charlotte Jewish Day School to introduce myself to the 5th-grade newspaper club and see firsthand what it was doing. I knew right then I wanted to use the CJN to recognize it and encourage the student writers. What happened next surprised and delighted me. I shared with others the idea of creating an entire issue focused on the younger members of our community, and it was exceptionally well received — the youth and those



### Shabbat Candle Lighting Times

May 6 — 7:55 p.m.  
May 13 — 8:00 p.m.  
May 20 — 8:06 p.m.  
May 27 — 8:11 p.m.

## The Charlotte JEWISH NEWS

### THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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**Our future is in the hands of the young. As it has always been. One generation hands off to the next, and each new generation has its own vision, its own ideals, its own beliefs. That is what it means to be young: you believe.**

**John Lewis**

who work with them were eager to have their voices shared with a wider audience.

Thus CJN's inaugural "Celebrating Jewish Youth" issue was born. If you don't have any direct connection to a young member of our community, you might typically skip the youth and education section of the paper. This month, I encourage you, whether you have children in your life or not, to take some time to look through it.

Many young individuals have contributed to this issue. This special section begins on page 7 with an article by 7th grader, Abby Sherman, about her experience attending a presentation given by Liza Wiemer, who came to speak as part of Federation's Jewish Book Festival. Page 8 highlights two special individuals who are the winners of the Celebrating Jewish Youth es-

say contest. Though articles from Jewish Preschool on Sardis and Charlotte Jewish Preschool are often written about the kids; this month, we hear from the students themselves. And of course, the aforementioned Charlotte Jewish Day School newspaper can be found on pages 12 and 13. You will read about two special youths with unique hobbies and entrepreneurial spirits. You will read about Shalom Park's Green Sprouts, with children as young as 5 years old pledging to protect our planet. And you will read about Michelle Miller and the enduring influence she has had on the community, years after she passed too soon.

I was surprisingly moved as I reviewed the pages of this issue to highlight them here. As I was doing so, I stumbled upon a quote from the JSTAGE article on page 14. Kayla Piscatelli writes, "It was the young people who carried us through the last two years, and it is the young people who continue to push us to be better at every moment as we move forward."

May we never stop trying to be better — for them, with them, and because of them.

*Shira*

*Could it just be*

# WAX?



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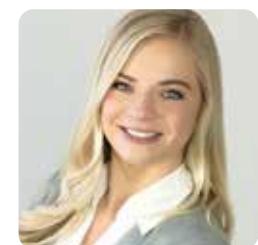
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# Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the ADL, Comes to Charlotte to Kick Off Federation's "Outshine Hate" Initiative



Jonathan Greenblatt speaks to an April 7 audience to help kick off Federation's Outshine Hate initiative.

On April 7, Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte launched its Outshine Hate initiative with guest speaker, Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of Anti-Defamation League (ADL). At the event, which was held at Temple Israel and broadcast virtually, Greenblatt warned that antisemitism is gathering momentum in the United States and offered a powerful perspective on how we, as individuals, as organizations, and as a society, can strike back against hate. "It is not too late to

stem the tide," said Greenblatt, "If we all muster the strength right now to stand up and say, 'never again,' there's a good chance that we can turn the tide. The stakes are too high for anything less."

Our local community was forced to confront this rising tide as the number of antisemitic incidents reported to the Federation office more than tripled in 2021. Nationally, we continue to see proof that antisemitism, which has been called the "oldest

hatred," continues to rear its ugly head and evolve in new ways. According to ADL's Annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents, 2019 and 2020 were, respectively, the highest and third-highest years on record for cases of harassment, vandalism, and assault against Jews in the United States since tracking began in 1979. Even more upsetting, a recent American Jewish Committee report found that four in 10 American Jews have changed their behavior out of fear of antisemitism.

As an organization committed to creating, sustaining, and safeguarding a flourishing and vibrant Jewish community, Federation witnesses firsthand how this uptick in antisemitism and anti-Israel hatred impacts the local Charlotte Jewish community. This is why Federation is launching Outshine Hate.

The Outshine Hate initiative was conceived as a multi-year strategic approach to identify and confront the rise of antisemitism and anti-Israel hatred on a community-wide level. "Federation recognizes that there is an unmet need in the Charlotte Jewish community for support, education, and training", shares



Sam Zimmern asks Jonathan Greenblatt a question during the Q&A.

Tair Giudice, chief impact officer at the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, "and we believe that Federation is uniquely positioned to address these gaps, focusing on key audiences like educators, students, parents, and our community's next gen-

eration."

Together with our partner agencies, Federation will address the challenge by organizing and executing new programming and training in five core focus areas: institutional and communal change, educator training and professional development, community education, security, and Israel travel and exchanges.

To learn more about Outshine Hate or to get involved, please contact Tair Giudice, at [tair.giudice@jewishcharlotte.org](mailto:tair.giudice@jewishcharlotte.org) or visit [www.jewishcharlotte.org](http://www.jewishcharlotte.org).



Jewish Federation  
OF GREATER CHARLOTTE

## Peter Blair

(Continued from front page)

ic, established good governance, strengthened our financial health through two successful capital campaigns that raised nearly \$7.5 million, established eight named endowments, tripled our reserves, and implemented an improved operating model that ensures for annual reinvestment.

Of even greater importance, under Peter's leadership we've invested in our entire family of staff, ensuring that compensation and benefits are just, transparent, and allow every member of our team a livable wage. We've expanded and improved our benefits to not only be robust, but also to be affordable and available to all. A culture of honesty and shared vision now supports this team of staff, enabling its energy and passion to not only sustain our LJCC though times of challenge but also lead us to meet the ever-changing needs of the Charlotte Jewish community in the years ahead.

Peter accomplished a great deal at the LJCC since 2015 and enjoyed his time at the J. In his outgoing message to the staff at the LJCC, Peter says, "Working alongside each and every member of our family of staff and our board of directors has been an honor. I have been

inspired by your passion for our shared work, guided to make decisions that were more measured because of your counsel, and energized by you to achieve our shared vision to be a place of welcome for all each day. While this decision was excruciatingly difficult to make, I was presented with a unique opportunity to strengthen organizations and individuals that share a commitment to building this great community as president and CEO of the Lynnwood Foundation."

Lisa Strause Levinson, president of the LJCC Board of Directors, was only able to work with Peter for a short time since being elected in December. Lisa commented that she is "excited for Peter as he gets ready to embark on a new adventure outside the Jewish communal world. We are grateful for Peter's leadership over the last seven years. While serving as CEO of the LJCC, Peter has worked closely with the staff and board of directors to strengthen the J across all areas, including in the areas of finance and programming, and has elevated our presence in the community. Most importantly, Peter successfully navigated our beloved LJCC and staff through the COVID pandemic. We have emerged on the other side to be

a healthy, vibrant, and thriving community center."

Though we are experiencing change, we also know that there will be no disruption to the programs, services, and events you have come to love and trust. We have an outstanding and passionate staff that is dedicated to our membership. The board of directors is grateful for each staff member, and we encourage you to be sure to thank them for their hard work and dedication to us. The board of directors has begun a search for our next CEO. We are excited to embark on this journey and know we will attract the best possible candidate. Our LJCC is stronger than ever, the Shalom Park campus offers unique opportunities, and our Charlotte community is growing every day.



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## Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte - Center for Jewish Education

# Sue's Bookshelf

Charlotte Author Judy Goldman Releases Memoir

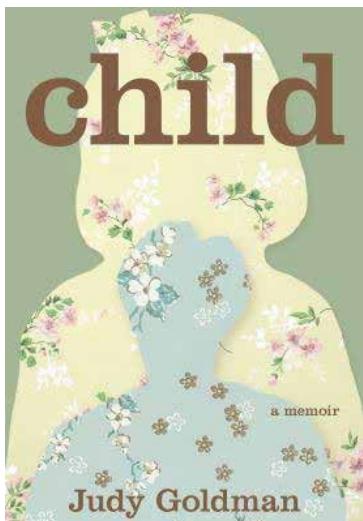


By Sue Littauer

I remember sitting on the beach in Hilton Head in the early fall of 2018 reading an advance copy of "Together: A Memoir of a Marriage and a Medical Mishap" by Charlotte author Judy Goldman. I remember it distinctly because I could not put the book down. Judy Goldman's compelling style brought me intimately into her world as the details of her story unfolded.

On May 5, the author's most recent work, "Child: A Mem-

oire" will be published and, once again, I was fortunate to receive an advance copy — and once again I was swept up in the author's vivid recounting of her story. She was raised by Mattie, her family's African American housekeeper in Rock Hill, South Carolina, during the 1940s. The author's straightforward prose is filled with detailed descriptions and wide-eyed insights into the people around her. It is a fascinating memoir of the love between a child and her Black nanny during the Jim Crow era and a memoir of growing up Jewish during this time. We come to admire the author's parents as she observes them standing up to bigotry and hatred and setting a moral standard for their family and their community. Because Mattie and the author's mother viewed each other as best friends, it was no surprise that long after Judy Goldman's parents had passed away, Judy and her siblings cared for Mattie and



treated her as a beloved family member.

The bond between Judy Goldman and Mattie continued throughout their lives. Writing her memoir raised many questions for her. As the author vividly recalled the events and circumstances of her life, she realized she may not have understood them as they really were. It

is this questioning that ties us to the author as she seeks to uncover the realities of the central relationships in this moving memoir.

Clearly Judy Goldman's new book, "Child," has captivated me, and I am eagerly awaiting the September meeting of the Center for Jewish Education Book Club when Judy Goldman will be our guest speaker. To learn how you can join us, please contact me at sueb.littauer@jewishcharlotte.org.

Judy Goldman is the author of seven books — three memoirs, two novels, and two collections of poetry. Her new book, Child: A Memoir, will be published May 5, 2022. "Child" was named a Must-Read Book in 2022 by Katie Couric Media.

Her memoir, "Together: A Memoir of a Marriage and a Medical Mishap," was named a Best Book of 2019 by Real Simple Magazine and received a starred review from Library Journal.

Her work has appeared in "USA Today," "The Washington Post," "LitHub," "Real Simple," "The Southern Review," "Kenyon Review," "Gettysburg Review," "Ohio Review," "Prairie Schooner," "Shenandoah," and "Crazyhorse." She has received numerous awards, including the Hobson Award for Distinguished Achievement in Arts and Letters and the Fortner Writer and Community Award for "outstanding generosity to other writers and the larger community."

Our next CJE Book Club meets on Wednesday, May 11 at 10:30 a.m., Main Street, Shalom Park. The book is "Eternal" by Lisa Scottoline. For more information, please contact Sue Littauer at sueb.littauer@jewishcharlotte.org.

CJE Jewish Book Festival Encore Event: June 2, 7 p.m. with Lisa Scottoline. For information and to register, visit www.jewishcharlotte.org.



## Miss Debby's Best-Loved Children's Books

### Kindness to Animals

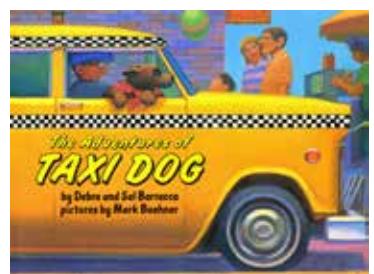


By Debby Block

Did you know that May 2-8 is "Be Kind to Animals" week? I love the concept of this commemorative week, as it not only aligns with my personal philosophy but also fits perfectly with the Jewish value of tz'ar ba'alei

chayim — literally translated as preventing animal suffering. This month's article will feature best-loved children's books about animals and how we should treat them with kindness.

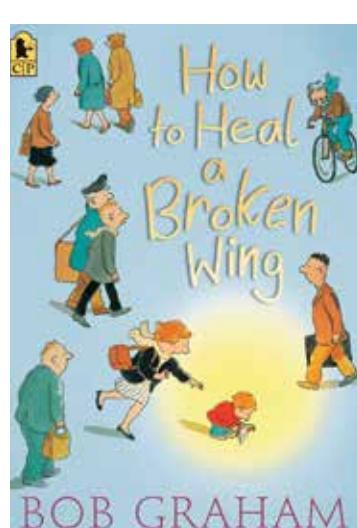
Maxi the dog tells his story in "The Adventures of Taxi Dog" by Debra and Sal Barracca. This rhyming picture book depicts how Maxi is rescued from the streets of New York City by a compassionate cab driver



named Jim. It isn't long before Jim and Maxi become a team, helping people all over the city. Recommended for children ages 3-6 years old.

Of course, all animals deserve kindness, even birds. "How to Heal a Broken Wing," written and illustrated by Bob Graham, is the story of a little boy who finds an injured pigeon and gently wraps the pigeon and brings it home to heal. Though the text is limited, this book tells the story of kindness to animals predominately through its soft yet beautiful illustrations. In many ways, this book is like a graphic novel for the very young. Recommended for children ages 2-5.

Since my favorite birds are ducks, I have to give a nod to "Make Way for Ducklings" by Robert McCloskey. This award-winning classic shows how the kind police officers help and rescue a family of ducks. Recommended for children ages 3-7.



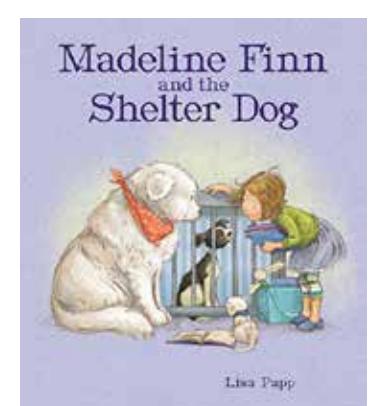
I recently discovered an amazing book called "Madeline Finn and the Shelter Dog" by Lisa Papp. When Madeline goes to the shelter to find a new puppy, she sees lots of other animals that need homes as well, and she decides to do something for the animals in the shelter. Madeline collects towels and blankets and organizes an event for kids to read books to the shelter animals. Without being saccharine or preachy, this book empowers kids to make a difference. Recommended for children ages 4-8.

For children under 2 years old, I recommend "Naamah and the Ark at Night," which is a sweet and calming lullaby by Susan Campbell Bartoletti. Naamah is Noah's wife who sings and comforts all the animals and the people on the ark. The illustrations by Holly Meade are stunning,

and I especially love the use of shadow silhouettes on several pages. It is the perfect bedtime story for all young ones. I also love the PJ Library-curated board book "Baby Be Kind" by Jane Cowen-Fletcher, which includes a page about being gentle to animals.

As you can imagine, many of my favorite books growing up were about animals. For children 8 and older, I recommend heartwarming classics such as "Charlotte's Web," "Mr. Popper's Penguins," and "Rascal" about a pet raccoon.

Please visit the Levine-Sklut Judaic Library today to pick up a copy of one of these wonderful books today. Miss Debby's best-loved books may also be reserved by calling (704) 944-6783 or emailing library@jewishcharlotte.org.



**Jewish BookFESTIVAL 2022**

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# Miss Debby Delights Children Through Story-Telling



Miss Debby with two of her helper puppets

By Shira Firestone

No issue of “The Charlotte Jewish News” focusing on the youth of the Charlotte Jewish community would be complete without spotlighting Debby Block, known to most as “Miss Debby.” Currently the program coordinator for JFGC Center for Jewish Education, Miss Debby oversees and facilitates all the PJ Library programs and brings her well-loved storytelling to more than 200 children each week.

Miss Debby’s experience working with children goes back to the early 1980s, when she began as a storyteller and science teacher in a library in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. After moving to Charlotte, Miss Debby worked as the director of the Charlotte Jewish Preschool for seven years and the director of the Temple Israel religious school for eight.

However, she eventually re-connected with what she calls her “true calling” and has returned to storytelling at preschools, day schools, religious schools, and camps for the past eight years.

Storytelling is more than reading books to children. Miss Debby uses flannel board stories, poems, songs, and a vast cast of character puppets to create story times that are interactive — and



Miss Debby reading to preschoolers

often hilarious.

As program coordinator for CJE, Miss Debby is one of many who had to reimagine programming during the pandemic. As part of PJ Library, Miss Debby oversaw the creation of PJ Library at-home kits, packaging everything a family would need to celebrate and learn about Jewish holidays and rituals with kits to be enjoyed in the family’s own home. If there is any silver lining to the pandemic, it’s that Miss Debby’s story times continued virtually, giving us a library of her stories, which can be accessed through the Levine Sklut Judaic Library website at [www.jewishcharlotte.org](http://www.jewishcharlotte.org).

Her commitment and passion have earned her the appreciation and respect of educators and parents alike.

Becca Green, director of education at Charlotte Jewish Preschool says, “I was a student of Miss Debby’s when she was the director of Temple Israel religious school many moons ago, and I taught for her when I returned to Charlotte and she gave me a job teaching 5th grade Hebrew. Now I work alongside her coordinating story times for our students. I feel lucky to have learned from her as both a student and a teacher and honored to work with her now to provide a meaningful Jewish education for our youngest learners at Shalom Park.”

As a parent of twins, Elizabeth Poon expresses the sentiments of many other parents. She says, “Miss Debby was my lifeline as a new mom to premature twins. Miss Debby is an incredibly special person. She knows how to provide support, offer advice, and bring comfort to new and seasoned moms. Being around her brings a sense of peace I have not felt in any other groups or story times. I was thrilled when she started Stroller Daze this

past summer. I have been able to bring our newest baby to see Miss Debby twice a month and cannot wait to see her also build a relationship with Miss Debby, as she is very important and special to our family. She speaks the language of children, and moms — how lucky we are to know her.”

So, when will we read a book written by Miss Debby? She says, “I often write or re-write stories and puppet shows to present to children. I do have a dream to someday write my very own children’s book! I am not sure exactly what it would look like, but I have played around with the idea of taking old Jewish tales and re-writing them for preschoolers of the 21st century.”

Though Miss Debby has been working with children for more

than four decades, her passion is fresh and her face lights up when she describes the pure magic that happens when children are immersed in a story.

She credits her mother with her love of books and reading. She says, “When I think of reading, I think of the warm, fuzzy feeling of sitting on someone’s lap and sharing. This is why I

love children’s books and reading to children. There is a spark and an amazing connection that I feel when I read to children.”

As we celebrate Jewish youth in this issue of “The Charlotte Jewish News,” we are pleased also to celebrate someone who has had such an influence on them.



Miss Debby uses flannel boards to help tell stories

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# Charlotte's Inaugural Jewish Book Festival Brings Community Together

From a fantastical story of a lost shtetl cut off from Poland in the 1800s to a story inspired by real high school students who stood up against an assignment asking them to defend the Holocaust, the inaugural Charlotte Jewish Book Festival brought together more than 175 households. The festival, which ran March 23 through March 27, celebrated Jewish authors and stories.

The festival's schedule highlighted a variety of genres, including fiction, romance, non-fiction, and children's literature. Overall, the theme of the festival centered on kindness and the power we each have to make a real difference in the world.

During the festival's first week, author Liza Wiemer spoke about her novel, "The Assignment," which is based on a real assignment in a New York State high school. Students were tasked with placing themselves in the shoes of people in Nazi Germany arguing in favor of the Nazi plan that led to the genocide of Jewish people. Wiemer's novel tells the story of high school students taking a stand against

a similar assignment. As part of the festival, Liza spoke at four schools to more than 500 students in the Charlotte area as well as our community's Hebrew High students. "What makes The Assignment unique is that it connects the history of World War II and the Holocaust to what's going on in society today. That link is so important," Liza says. "There should not be a disconnect between history and what's going on in society today. It's important for students to understand that link."

Todd Parr, the author and illustrator of more than 40 books for children, shared his signature wit and wisdom with our PJ Library families, emphasizing the importance of acceptance, understanding, and confidence.

Internationally best-selling author, Kristen Harmel, joined the

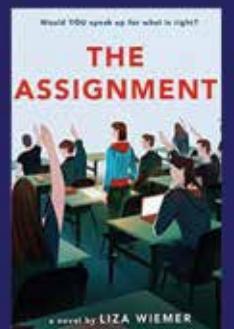
festival virtually to talk about the story behind her latest novel, "The Forest of Vanishing Stars." Harmel shared that during the research for "The Forest of Vanishing Stars," she had the privilege of speaking to Aron Bielski. At 93, he's the youngest (and only surviving) of the famous Bielski brothers, who helped lead more than 1,200 Jewish refugees out of ghettos and into the woods, where nearly all of them survived the war. "Choose kindness, whenever possible," Bielski pleaded, and his extraordinary story of human triumph inspired Harmel's book.

But the festival is not quite over yet! A special encore appearance of author Lisa Scottoline is scheduled for June 2. We look forward to this next chapter. To learn more please visit: [www.jewishcharlotte.org](http://www.jewishcharlotte.org).

We are grateful to our Jewish Book Festival sponsors featured on this page.



is a proud sponsor of the Charlotte Jewish Book Festival, presenting the young adult novel, "The Assignment."



"This story will inspire readers to stick to their principles and fight for what's right."

KIP WILSON,  
AUTHOR OF WHITE ROSE



Liza Wiemer is an award-winning educator and author. *The Assignment* has won a Sydney Taylor Award, YALSA Best Fiction for YA, and many other honors. Ms. Wiemer is a UW-Madison graduate, has two married sons and lives in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with her husband.

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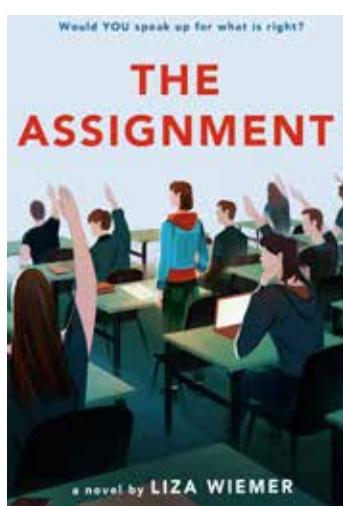
**Celebrating Jewish Youth**

# Jewish Book Festival Guest Speaks to Students About “The Assignment” and Antisemitism



*By Abby Sherman*

All generations, young and old, were gathered in Lerner Hall to hear Liza Wiemer talk about her book titled “The Assignment.” Tair Guidice from the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte introduced the presentation and described how outstanding it is. She had attended it multiple times before and was excited to participate again. Guidice had reasons to be excited because the presentation Liza Wiemer gave was outstanding and one to remember.



The book follows two students and the people in their community as they struggle to decide what to do with an assignment that unintentionally justifies the Nazis’ actions. Because the book was based on a true story, Wiemer described the events that led her to writing the book. She explained that she was on her way to a book talk when she got stuck in the snow of Oswego, New York, and had to stop by a grocery store. While passing

some time, she opened her phone to her Facebook feed and saw an appalling post. A mom had just posted that her child had been given an assignment to write an essay justifying the Nazis’ actions in World War II. Wiemer was shocked that an assignment like this was given. She needed to know more. She kept digging and discovered that the assignment had been given in the town she was visiting. She found out that one of the children protesting the assignment was going to be at the library where she was speaking. She then found the girl and interviewed her.

From then on, a book and a movement were born and have been preventing more assignments like the one given in New York from occurring again. That’s why she talked to our community in Charlotte — to tell us her tale and to urge us to speak out against hate. She told us ways that we can make a difference. We can make noise and speak out against antisemitism; if we never speak out, the anti-Semites win.



Liza Wiemer speaks to students at Davidson K-8

I think that the students in the book made the right decision to speak out against what happened. If people try to justify the Nazi actions, even if it’s done just to see all sides of a debate and make the Nazis’ actions seem even worse, it still promotes antisemitism and hate.

Assignments like the one Wiemer stopped should never be given again. I was definitely impressed by Wiemer’s speech and the way she stood up against injustice. Just like her book cover says, “Would YOU speak up for what is right?” I feel like I certainly would.

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**Celebrating Jewish Youth**

# The Charlotte JEWISH NEWS

Celebrating Jewish Life

For the inaugural “Celebrating Jewish Youth” issue of The Charlotte Jewish News, we wanted to hear what was on the minds of young teens, so we put out a call for essays for youth from 8th through 12th grade. We received essays about family and holiday observances, about the environment and tikkun olam, about friendship and Jewish identity — all of them illustrating the meaningful, all-encompassing ways that their Judaism shows up in their lives. In the words of one contestant, Hadley Lord, “Everyday that I live, I celebrate Jewish life.” Thank you to all of the adults who in one form or another work with and mentor Charlotte Jewish youth. Thank you to Amy Lefkof and former editor of The Charlotte Jewish News, Amy Montoni, for helping judge the entries. And most of all — thank you to the youth who took the time to voluntarily share what’s on their minds! The following essays were the winner and runner-up. Congratulations to Penina Polsky and Rosie Smolowitz.

## Celebrating Jewish Life - Celebrating Jewish Youth Essay Winner



By Penina Polsky

What does it mean to celebrate Jewish life? Judaism means something different for everybody, so there is no true way to define “Jewish life.” To some people it may mean lighting candles every Friday night for Shabbat, and to others it may mean going to temple every night and morning and saying prayers in between. I think that some people would think the answer to this question of what it means to be Jewish would be believing

in G-d. A lot of Jewish people do not even believe there is an all-knowing higher power, and that's okay! For me though, being Jewish means living by many morals of the Torah and showing (in your own way) that you care about fulfilling them.

My first core moral, that I believe is the most important, is emunah, which translates to trustworthiness. Something that I strongly value is having good relationships with my friends and family, and that is something that cannot exist without trust. Not only that, but without having trust in one's life, it can be hard to open up to new people. Being trustworthy connects to being reliable. Doing what you say you'll do is one of the hardest, but also most important, tasks in a person's life. Being a Jew with a lot of emunah is what I consider to be someone who is celebrating Jewish life.

Kehillah means community in Hebrew, and I think this goes

hand-in-hand with trustworthiness. How can you build a strong community if you cannot trust each other? Community is something that has always been very important to the Jewish people. For most Jews, a community is a space for them to keep their culture thriving. Being a part of a bigger “family” (although not blood related) can be helpful for a lot of people to be able to talk about the struggles, hardships, but also successes of being Jewish. If the Jews had not stuck together as a community while they were enslaved in Egypt or under the rule of evil kings, we would have never found a way out of every destitution. In present day, it is crucial for us to stay together as a secure community because of all the antisemitic hate crimes and even the constant micro-aggressions. We are stronger together.

Last, I believe that to celebrate Jewish life is to have empathy and compassion for others —

chesed. As the Jewish people, who have endured so many hardships, it is our job to care and show empathy for others, especially other minorities. If we treat others with disrespect and hatred, it gives them a reason to do the same to us. As a young Jew, I strongly believe in the rule of treating others the way you want to be treated, whether that is other individuals or racial, religious, or gender groups. This is an idea that Jews have been following since the beginning of time, and we learn that by hearing stories passed down through the Torah.

So, to answer the question what does it mean to celebrate Jewish life, there is no clear answer and there probably never will be. Everyone views Judaism differently, and every Jew lives with life differently, as we are supposed to. In my life, I show my Judaism by following the core values that were given to us in the Torah. When I get the

chance and am feeling hopeful, I say a prayer, but who knows if it will be heard. I know for myself, I will feel most complete by following these morals, and that is what I believe it means to celebrate Jewish life, doing what fulfills you the most, as a Jew.

*My name is Penina Polsky and I am an eighth grader and Randolph IB Middle School. I moved to Charlotte when I was six years old, and immediately found that I was always at the JCC. My first experience with a community was becoming a part of the JStage family, where I learned so much about theater, the arts, and most importantly, myself! I have continued to perform at the JCC and am now a part of BBYO and have taken classes at Hebrew High. The Jewish Community Center has been a great space for me to show my Judaism and express it in the way that I most feel comfortable.*

## Wearing My Star — Celebrating Jewish Youth Essay Contest Runner-Up



By Rosie Smolowitz

I can recall standing in the Temple gift store picking out my first-ever Star of David necklace as my bat mitzvah gift. My sister got one when she was 13, and I had wanted one ever since. I had finally begun to understand that there was a deeper meaning to this necklace. It was something I could wear every day, to help keep my Judaism, and my God,

with me. I remember looking at the necklaces, trying to figure out which one would go the best with my clothes since I planned to wear it every day.

For the first few months, I did wear my necklace every single day. I don't know when or why it started, but by the time I got to high school, I was wearing it only to Jewish events. As much as I tried to convince myself of other reasons, I knew deep down, it was because I was not entirely comfortable letting the world know I was Jewish.

We live in a predominantly Christian country, where 75% of Americans are Christian, and only 2.4% are Jewish. That means if you are Jewish, you stand out. I was the only kid in my elementary and middle school who was Jewish. Back then, I used to love it and embraced that uniqueness. Every year, my friend and I would teach the younger grades all about Hanukkah and being Jewish, and it was one of the best parts of the holiday season. When I was in middle school, though, I think

I started to fear what other students would say when they saw us leave class to teach about our religion.

Part of this fear came from hearing about the growing number of antisemitic acts being committed nationally. People are being kidnapped, houses and temples are being defaced and Jews are being discriminated against.

Surveys show that one in four American Jews experienced antisemitism in the last year. Antisemitism doesn't just affect the direct victims of each attack. It affects every Jew globally. Although I have never been a victim of extreme antisemitism, every time I hear about another attack on Jews, it makes me feel as if I have.

In one recent survey, about 59% of Jews said they felt less safe in the U.S. today than they did a decade ago. Half of American Jews said they feared a violent attack at a synagogue — a place where they should be at peace. These attacks and antisemitic behavior are causing us to

fear practicing our own religion. We shouldn't have to be scared to go to temple, or to pray in peace, or to live in our homes. I should be able to put my Jewish star necklace on every day, without fear of what the kids at my high school might say or do.

As I write this, I realize that hiding my Jewish identity is contributing to the problem. The only way to stop the stereotypes, the violence, and the antisemitism is to try to educate, spread awareness, and not let this fear take us over. Although it may be a small step, as I write this, I commit to wearing my necklace more, instead of hiding it. And, when I wear it, instead of feeling fear, I will try to feel unique and proud of my Judaism, just like before.

*Rosie Smolowitz is a 10th grader in the IB program at Myers Park High School. She is a member of Temple Beth El and is involved in Hebrew High and the youth group, LIBERTY. In her free time, she enjoys hanging out with friends and going on adventures.*

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**Celebrating Jewish Youth**

# Jewish Preschool on Sardis: Pesach in Pre-K

Ms. Ericka is one of our teachers for our 4-year-olds, and we'd love to give you a glimpse into her unique classroom. This article was written during our Pesach unit; read and learn how she met her goal of providing the children with open-ended materials to retell the story of Pesach in various ways through their play. Her unit blended beautifully with our school-wide Judaica curriculum, and her students

have an extensive knowledge of the story, the seder, and all there is to know about this special Jewish holiday! Here are some highlights of our classroom during our Pesach unit:

In the block center, we added cardboard and recyclable boxes. The children used these boxes to build cities, just as the Jews did as slaves for Pharaoh in Mitzrayim (Egypt). In dramatic play, babies and baskets were



Ella is poking holes in her matzah dough — we can't let the dough rise!



It's Dori's turn to be the classroom gardener! He carefully watered the parsley once a day.



Aili and Shylie are using the sand table to depict the Jewish people working as slaves in Mitzrayim.

added, along with a Pesach table, complete with a seder plate and four kiddush cups. The children acted out the story of baby Moshe in the basket, which led to the larger conversation about taking care of babies in general. The children have a trip to the infant room scheduled to help take care of our youngest! Our class planted an herb garden, featuring parsley for use at our family Pesach seder. They students planned a school-wide parsley and romaine sale in preparation for the seder. The sand table was transformed into a mini Mitzrayim, with pyramids and peg characters, including a mini Pharaoh and Moshe. Our water table became a baby bathtub, with soapy

water and babies to wash and care for. At our school matzah bakery, we learned how matzah is baked by grinding our own

flour, mixing, rolling, punching holes, and baking, all in under 18 minutes.

## Kids Say the Darndest Things

For The Charlotte Jewish News "Celebrating Jewish Youth" issue, we wanted to hear from the kids themselves! Here are a few quotes sent in by parents of JPS kids.

**Children of modern technology:**

Our family was stuck in a corn maze and mom said "How are we going to find our way out?" Damien: "We'll need to ask Siri."

*Damien Rouchouze, age 4*

**Excuses for bedtime:**

Mom "Bodhi, time to get ready for bed and put on your pajamas."

Bodhi: "But Mommy, I'm still saying the bracha (blessing before/after food/drink)"

*Bodhi, age 6*

**Children of COVID:**

Family enters World Market after not being in stores for quite some time. Seth: "Wow, they sell couches in the same store that sells food?!"*Seth, age 4*

**Nutrition awareness:**

Alex asked his teacher to help him open his Larabar during lunchtime. Teacher responds "Hmm, let's wait until you finish your growing foods".

Alex responds "But it has 40 programs of goodness!"

**Geographical awareness:**

While looking at an illustration of the solar system in a book, Alex pointed to earth and said "I live there!" Taylor replies "I don't. I live in Charlotte"

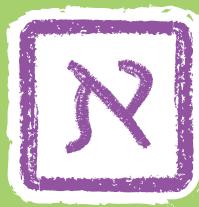
*Alex & Taylor, age 3*

"Is Florida a person or a cat?"

*Sloane, age 3*



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Celebrating Jewish Youth

# Charlotte Jewish Preschool: In Students' Own Words

For The Charlotte Jewish News Celebrating Jewish Youth issue, we wanted to share what's on the students' minds. Below are interviews with three of our students.

## Jacob Lucas



Jacob Lucas from Ms. Macy's Pre-K class

### What do you like about Shabbat?

Being with my friends and eating challah.

### What do you do in your class on Fridays to celebrate Shabbat?

I can't explain it all because it is so long. We have Friday Fun Day on Shabbat.



Charlotte Jewish Preschool  
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## Mille Almon



Julia Wolk and Millie Almon

### What do you do with your family for Shabbat?

We like to eat challah with peanut butter and with butter too.

### What is your favorite part of school?

Playing on the playground and Shabbat

### How are you a good friend?

I let people play with me. I'm nice to friends.

### What does it mean to be a mensch?

To be a mensch you have to always be kind.

The purple puppies on the playground and building with magnet tiles.

### What do you know about Purim?

I learned about Uncle Mordechai and I like to sing his song. Hamantashen are shaped like Hamans hat.

### What makes you a good friend?

I'm kind.

### What does it mean to be a mensch?

You do things that make you kind.

### How do you want to help the world?

I do good things like build things.

### What's a mitzvah that you did this week?

I cleaned up my whole playroom. I like to hide in my nugget from the monsters too.

## Lola MacMeekin



### What is your favorite part about school?

Science

### What will you miss most when you go to a new school for kindergarten?

Playground

### What do you like best about Shabbat?

Drinking the grape juice and eating the challah

### What is your favorite Jewish holiday?

Purim because you get to eat hamantashen

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## Celebrating Jewish Youth

# CJDS Student Newspaper Makes Its Community Debut

By Barbara Foxx

Long ago and far away, I was hired by a community newspaper in my hometown, Toms River, New Jersey, called "The Reporter." "The Reporter" was a weekly newspaper, and though I wish I could tell you I was hired to write feature stories, the truth was I worked in the advertising department while finishing up my coursework for my undergraduate degree in marketing. As a small paper, it hired people who could wear many hats, and I seemed to fit the bill. I was in charge of classifieds, procuring new business, developing creative work plans for display ads, and even had a hand in the design process. Occasionally, I tiptoed out of my office to visit the staff reporters, anxious to hear the latest hubbub circulating in our little town. Would I, too, become a hard-driven print journalist like them or, better yet, a broadcast media star? Oh, the possibilities! It was a fabulous opportunity for a young woman making her start in the business world.

Fast-forward a few hundred years, and I found myself "wear-



Barbara Foxx

ing the hats" once again, not at "The New York Times" or NBC news, but at a wonderful school in Shalom Park: Charlotte Jewish Day School (CJDS). Over the years, I became enamored of the brilliant educational opportunities offered to CJDS students. I learned very quickly this was no ordinary school. The students were immersed in such hands-on and out-of-the-box learning that it would make your head spin! While most elementary schools

are teaching children to play nice and to color inside the lines, this school kicks it up several notches, making lessons come alive through rich programming that enlivens all the senses! I just knew I wanted to be a part of that magic-making, but how? An idea was born.

CJDS head of school, Mariashi Groner, is always ahead of the curve when it comes to educational innovating. When I approached her three years ago about starting a student-driven newspaper, she was all in.

CJDS fifth-graders learn the intricacies of the newspaper writing process and the ins and outs of this print medium. They develop a journalistic vocabulary and broaden their English language terminology and use of words. They study current events from other newspapers, including "The Charlotte Jewish News." They review books and plays; interview subjects; report on school news and sports; and even contribute artwork, comic strips, stories, and poetry. They engage in the arduous process of fact-checking, proofreading,



CJDS 5th-grade newspaper club

and copyediting, and they carry this out with the focused vision of an eagle! They do all this and more while adhering to six basic tenants of the CJDS newsroom, the most important of which is to "respect your fellow journalist."

The "CJDS Times" staff members were thrilled when they were invited by "The Charlotte Jewish News" to contribute to its special "Celebrating Jewish Youth" issue. What follows is the result of the students' hard work, and they are proud to share their articles with the greater Charlotte

Jewish community. It is amazing to see their news pieces come alive on a much bigger stage, and the students are hopeful that they can make a positive difference now and in the future.

The next two pages are a reproduction of our latest issue of the CJDS Times.



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## Celebrating Jewish Youth



## CJDS TIMES

Issue 4

March 2022

A CHARLOTTE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL  
A STUDENT NEWSPAPER**The Charlotte Ballet is Killing It!**  
By Sarah D.

On Thursday, March 7, CJDS saw a performance from the Charlotte Ballet. The showcase was called *Once Upon a Time*, and it was enjoyed by students of all ages. We were especially excited about how it was the first major assembly since before the pandemic started. Here is a little more about the show.

"Once Upon a Time" is composed of three smaller dances: Little Red Riding Hood, The Shoemaker, and Little Eva. Students really enjoyed watching classic fairy tales come alive through dance. Everyone at the Charlotte Ballet provided a truly magical experience!

Of course, you can't forget about the production staff! These are the people who make all of the costumes, music, and props

**Spring is in the air!**

ISSUE 4

Page 3

**Rise, Dine and Shine!** by Zoe A.

Studies show that only 20% of 10,000 children eat breakfast! Why is eating breakfast so important? There are many benefits that come from simply eating breakfast! Here's just a few.

- Strengthens your immune system!
- Improves your skin!
- Gives you more energy!
- Helps your heart!
- Gives essential nutrients!
- Helps you live longer!
- People who eat a healthy breakfast tend to be healthier overall!

The meaning of breakfast is "breaking the fast." The reason why is because once you've had dinner, you go through a whole night of not eating, or "fasting" and breakfast is the first meal you have after the entire night!

Eating breakfast is especially important for students. The reason for this is because eating breakfast helps lengthen your attention span, helps with concentration, and it also helps with processing new information and deeply understanding it. All of these things are a must if you want good grades!

There are many delicious breakfast choices to try, but here are a few ideas.

- Go-Gurts / Yogurt
- Walnut pancakes
- Smoothies
- Protein shakes
- Cereal
- Fruit
- Toast
- Eggs
- Oatmeal

I hope this is enough information to get you to simply eat breakfast! And remember this should be your ideal morning routine: Rise, dine, and go on to shine!

Sources: Allinahealth, The Daily Meal, and Linkhc

**EDITORIAL**

CJDS journalists continue to perfect their skills in all areas of newspaper writing, as you can see from their fine contributions to this month's *CJDS Times*. This month's issue gave them ample opportunity to research and fact check topics, presenting you with relevant and verifiable information. Their vocabularies are taking shape and they are finding their voices as journalistic writers.

I do have a very special announcement! This spring, the *CJDS Times* staff has been invited to partner with the *Charlotte Jewish News (CJN)*, with humble appreciation to *CJN* Editor, Shira Firestone. The greater Charlotte Jewish community will have the opportunity to read and enjoy the fifth graders' works. I cannot wait to see their articles come alive on a bigger stage and hope we make a positive impact. Be sure to pick up a copy of *CJN* later this spring!

Charlotte Jewish Day School Times  
Produced by CJDS 5th-Grade Newspaper Club

Page 2

CJDS TIMES

**The USA is on the Leaderboard!** by Heidi Z.

The Winter Olympics concluded on February 22. Here are the medal counts for the top five nations:

	Gold	Silver	Bronze
1. Norway	16	8	13
2. Russian Olympic Committee	6	12	14
3. Germany	12	10	5
4. Canada	4	8	14
5. USA	8	10	7

These athletes are the US medalists: Source: cbssports.com

Jaelin Kauf: Silver, women's moguls

Julia Marino: Silver, women's snowboarding slopestyle

Evan Bates, Karen Chen, Nathan Chen, Madison Chock, Zachary Donahue, Brandon Frazier, Madison Hubbell, Alexa Knierim, Vincent Zhou: Silver, figure skating team event

Ryan Cochran-Siegle: Silver, men's super-G

Jessie Diggins: Bronze, women's sprint cross country skiing

Lindsey Jacobellis: Gold, women's snowboard cross

Colby Stevenson: Silver, men's big air

Nathan Chen: Gold, men's singles figure skating

Ashley Caldwell, Christopher Lillis, Justin Schoenfeld: Gold, mixed team aerials skiing

Chloe Kim: Gold, women's snowboarding halfpipe

Nick Baumgartner, Lindsey Jacobellis: Gold, mixed team snowboard cross

Erin Jackson: Gold, women's 500m speed skating

Kallie Humphries: Gold, women's monobob bobsled

Elana Meyers Taylor: Silver, women's monobob bobsled

Zachary Donohue, Madison Hubbell: Bronze, ice dance

Megan Nick: Bronze, women's aerials skiing

Ethan Cepurian, Casey Dawson, Emery Lehman, Joey Mantia: Bronze, men's speed skating team pursuit

Alex Hall: Gold, men's slopestyle skiing

Nick Goepper: Silver, men's slopestyle skiing

Team USA women's hockey: Silver, ice hockey

Brittany Bowe: Bronze, women's 1,000m speed skating

David Wise: Silver, men's skiing halfpipe

Sylvia Hoffman, Elana Meyers Taylor: Bronze, two-woman bobsled

Alex Ferreira: Bronze, men's skiing halfpipe



The next Winter Olympics will take place in 2026 in Milan, Italy!

Page 3

CJDS TIMES

**Chinchilla Wonders** by Emily V.

There are so many different animals in this world, but today we are going to talk about the furry animal called the chinchilla. The chinchilla is a very friendly pet but they can be aggressive to one another. If they do bite their human owners, it can be quite painful.



Chinchillas have been around for many, many years and come from South America. There are different types of chinchillas. Their colors vary from white, yellow, grey, black and more! They have a wide range of vocal sounds. They are 9–11 inches long and weigh 1–2 pounds.

The chinchilla is my favorite animal because of their wonderful, soft fur and beauty.

Thanks for chinchilling with me!

**Expert Advice From "Dear Bubby"** by Emma G.

Dear Bubby,

I recently went to my friend's birthday party and when she opened my gift she didn't like it. It really hurt my feelings. Please help me feel better bubbly.

To my Shayna Maidel,

I am so sorry that you are hurt. From my past experience, I have learned that it is no good dwelling on the past but, you also can't hold your feelings in because it makes those feelings even bigger. So first, I want to let you know that the fact that you even gave her a gift was a very kind thing to do. All that matters is that the thought of the gift came from your heart. I also wanted to let you know that some people surprisingly don't really know how to accept gifts and sometimes even compliments, so they will act up and in your case be disrespectful and rude. I really hope that I have helped you and hope that you feel better.

From,  
Bubby

Dear Bubby,

All the cool kids at school wear amazing clothes. My parents don't have much money . How can I feel better about myself?

To my Shayna Maidel,

Now, I know that all those clothes must seem really really cool and I also know that it must be disheartening to not have those cool clothes. But if you just take a minute to think, does it really matter what clothes you wear or does it matter what's inside of you? It does not matter if you have designer clothes or not, it all comes down to whether you are a good person or not . All those kids who are wearing those clothes could be awful. Now I am not saying they are, but if they are, do you think that Hashem would appreciate being a good person or having cool clothes?

From,  
Bubby

## Celebrating Jewish Youth



ISSUE 4

**The Unexpected Reaction by Alexa G.**

For those who don't know, the month of Adar is considered to be the most joyous month of the Jewish calendar where we increase our happiness and at times, silliness.

With this in mind, the fifth graders decided it would be fun to prank third and fourth graders. The plan: call the third and fourth graders down for an early dismissal due to snow. (To add to the comedy, it was about 80 degrees on this day.) When the students arrived to the lobby for the make-believe dismissal, confetti fell from the balcony above and candies were given out, raining silliness upon the students. The third and fourth graders soon

**The Big Game by Aitan M.**

Recently a new football club started up. Can you guess who? Charlotte FC (Football Club)! Thousands of people were getting tickets, but nothing compared to the night of Saturday, March 5th where 73,500 tickets sold at the Bank of America stadium broke a record for the biggest attendance in the MLS (Major League Soccer).



Unfortunately, Charlotte FC lost their game against LA Galaxy 1-0. In the beginning of this heated match, Charlotte FC played thoroughly with their defense strong and rarely giving up the ball. LA Galaxy was playing equally as well, taking a lot of shots on goal in addition to great defense. Towards the second half, LA Galaxy stepped up their intensity but Charlotte FC held and did not crack under the pressure. At the 72nd minute of the game LA Galaxy player, Efrain Alvarez put in an amazing goal that was pure luck, from right outside of the goalpost box. Miguel Angel Ramirez (Charlotte FC's head coach) was not too happy seeing that was the game goal.

In the end this game was pretty evenly matched but LA Galaxy won fair and square.

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discovered there was no early dismissal and that it was all a joke.

It sounded like a fun plan but in reality, the reactions were mixed. For some, there was anger and disappointment that they had been tricked. For the fifth graders, there was a mixture of confusion, embarrassment and sorrow that the joke did not go over so well.

The fifth graders realized why they were upset, and learned a valuable lesson. Some pranks are funny, but sometimes they hurt people's feelings.

**Did you know—Hawaii Edition by Avi S.**

My family and I got to enjoy a trip to Hawaii recently. Here are some incredible facts!

- Hawaii had a king! The royal line had the King Kamehamehas.
- Hawaii has a British flag. It is the only US state flag to include a foreign country's national flag. The United Kingdom's Royal Navy has historical relations with the Hawaiian Kingdom, particularly with King Kamehameha the 1st.
- Hawaii natives are called kānaka maoli, which means 'real people.'
- While you may know Hawaii has lots of islands, did you know that Kauai, Maui, O'ahu, and Lanai have no apparent meaning?
- Yellow hibiscus grows all over Hawaii.
- Surfing was invented in Hawaii!
- Hawaii is the only U.S. state with two official languages.
- People mail painted coconuts like postcards.
- Aloha is known to be hello, but it also means goodbye

ISSUE 4

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**Mia Hamm the G.O.A.T. by Ava M.**

As most of you may know, March is women's history month. For this edition of the *CJDS Times*, I was asked to write something about women's history month. I was not very excited because I thought it wouldn't interest me. But then I was excited when I realized that I could write about someone who is famous for playing soccer, something that I love to do!

Mia Hamm was born on March 17, 1972 in Selma, Alabama. She is currently 49 years old. Why is Mia Hamm so amazing, you may ask? It is because she changed women's soccer forever!! Mia Hamm is one of the greatest athletes of all time! She won 2 Olympic gold medals, 1 silver Olympic medal, 2 FIFA World Cups, and 4 NCAA National Championships.

At fifteen years old, Mia Hamm became the youngest soccer player on the U.S Women's National Soccer Team. She played forward for 17 years, if you don't know the position in soccer she is the one who usually scored the goals.

Mia is also an author and co-wrote a book with Aaron Heifetz, the book was called *A Champion's Guide to Winning in Soccer and Life*. This book came out in 1999. As you can see, Mia Hamm truly is the G.O.A.T.

Source: Britannica and National Soccer Hall of fame.

**Spring Weather Outlook by David W.**

**Northeast:** Mid-spring cooldown! Grab your jackets!

**Midwest:** Drought in some areas but very stormy in other areas with lots of flooding. I don't think I would go outside. Bring your raincoat just in case!

**West Coast:** High temperatures and drought.

**Charlotte spring weather outlook:** Even though we finally saw some snow and ice this winter, we still are going to end up with above-average temperatures and below-average rainfall. Those trends were primarily a result of the La Niña pattern in the Pacific. All signs point to La Niña lasting through the spring before it wanes. What will this mean for our spring weather? It means that we will be having 70s-80s during spring and only 21 days of rain through March-May. As usual, the weather is predictably unpredictable!

Source: WCNC and AccuWeather

Charlotte Jewish Day School Times  
Produced by CJDS 5th-Grade Newspaper Club

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**An Amazing Student Council Fundraiser by Mendel L.**

Recently, CJDS raised \$2500 to benefit the C.A.R.E. organization, which provides specialty veterinary help for pets with life threatening illnesses. I had the chance to interview the CJDS Student Council advisor, Ms. Alicia, and I asked her all about this fundraiser.

Mendel: How did you find out about the C.A.R.E. organization?

Ms. Alicia: My friend works there!

Mendel: Do you enjoy your work with the CJDS Student Council?

Ms. Alicia: I love it! It's great to do good things.

Mendel: What was your reaction when you realized so much money was donated?

Ms. Alicia: Shocked! I had no idea so many people would participate and donate so much!

Mendel: I heard the third grade raised the most money and earned a class party. How was the party?

Ms. Alicia: Amazing! Third grade got to pet my new puppy, eat cookies, and they even had a piñata!

Mendel: What other projects do you have planned this year?

Ms. Alicia: We might do something for Ronald McDonald House.

Thank you CJDS Student Council for hosting this fundraiser and to all who participated. We are looking forward to seeing what is next.

**If you have a ball, then you have to have a game to play! By: Sholom Dovber C.**

There are many playground games like basketball, four-square, knockout, horse, and many other games. I'm going to teach you about a game called larish. The object of larish is to get all the other players "out." If you do, then you win!

To start the game one person kicks a soft, larish ball up in the air. If you throw the ball and it hits someone, but they don't catch it, then they're out! If you throw the ball, and they do catch it, then the thrower is out. If you take more than three steps, then you have to drop the ball where you are, but you don't get out.

There is an optional feature in larish called jailbreak, where before you start the game, everybody chooses one person who is not playing, to be the caller. If the caller calls "jailbreak" then everybody that is "out" is now "in." The other way to get back in, is if the person who got you out gets out.

Larish can be played with 6-20 players.

Now that's a fun game!

CJDS TIMES

A CHARLOTTE JEWISH DAY SCHOOL  
A STUDENT NEWSPAPER**Don't Touch my Purim Words! by Ben O.**

Purim is important. So are words! Without words, the Purim story wouldn't be told, because there are no words! Can you match the Purim word with the definition?

Hamantashen	A toy that makes loud noises, and is customary to shake and spin whenever Haman's name is mentioned.
Persia	A triangular treat with varying food items in the middle, typically fruit or chocolate.
Mishloach Manot	A queen and the second main character of the Purim story. She had a plan to expose Haman as the villain he was. She played a major role in Purim!
Hadassah	A member of the people and cultural community whose traditional religion is Judaism and who trace their origins through the ancient Hebrew people of Israel to Avraham.
Ahashverosh	The book that Esther wrote to record the story of Purim, without this, Purim wouldn't be remembered. We read from this every Purim to remember the miracle of this amazing holiday.
Jew	One of the two protagonists of the Purim story.
Haman	The mitzvah of giving food and/or drinks.
Mordechai	The last month of the Hebrew year, and when the Purim story took place.
Esther	A historic region of southwestern Asia associated with the area that is now Iran.
Adar	The main villain of the Purim story. He wanted to kill every single Jew! Luckily, we had Mordechai and Esther.
Grogger	A proud and amazing jew, he kept all of the Jews strong through the hardest times.
Megillah	Embarrassed Burrito

**Burrito Emojis by Daniella H.**

Color the burritos for fun!

Angry Burrito



Cool Burrito

Shocked Burrito

## Celebrating Jewish Youth

# JSTAGE: What They Are Is Magical

By Kayla Piscatelli

"Everyone's art is beautiful, and everyone's art is perfect." At JSTAGE, a program of the Levine Jewish Community Center (LJCC) Cultural Arts Department, we use this phrase quite often with the tiny — and not as tiny — humans. With a mission to make all who enter our space feel loved and valued simply

for their existence, JSTAGE is a place where young people are not only accepted but also celebrated. Not only are they taught, but also they are the teachers. Not only are they spoken to, but also they do the speaking. Empowering young people to stop looking out for validation and instead turn in and witness the incredible, beautiful, and power-

ful beings they are is at the core of every production, class, and aspect of JSTAGE.

From preschool classes and summer camp to large musical productions, it is the tiny humans who make JSTAGE what it is. They serve as an inspiration for all of us to continue creating, believing, hoping, and persevering. In the last two years, we have seen this in more ways than we ever could have expected. When the world shut down in March of 2020 and we all retreated to our own homes, JSTAGE decided to carry on virtually. We had young preschoolers continue to show up on Zoom for JSteps and JPlay classes. We had elementary school students arrive each week on their computers for JStage Jr. We had more than 40 teenagers who not only showed up but also dedicated themselves to the impossible task of learning an entire full-length musical over Zoom ("Seussical the Musical"). When schools decided not to open in fall of 2020, JSTAGE kids instead came to the LJCC every day to do their virtual learning. As part of the Camp Mindy 365



JSTAGE's Kids musical revue, "Make Some Noise" (March 2022)



Outdoor performance of JSTAGE's teen production of Seussical learned entirely on Zoom (July 2020)

program, about 35 kids spent all day every day for an entire year demonstrating more strength, patience, and determination than we as adults could ever hope to display to them in return. They overcame every difficult obstacle thrown at them while continuing to create beautiful and inspiring art in a variety of mediums. Every day they did incredibly hard things, and they did them with an infinite amount of joy and kindness.

We walked through that difficult year with them focused on simply being good humans — not on fancy productions with lights and costumes, not on honing special skills and techniques, but just on existing as we were at any given moment. The children forced us as adults to come into the present moment, see them and one another, and continue to find our light in the midst of all the darkness.

(Continued on page 15)

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## Celebrating Jewish Youth

# Around the Table: Daria Lapidot-Boaz Brings Gluten-Free Recipes to Her Followers on Instagram



By Charlotte Rouchouze

For this month's Around the Table, I'd like to introduce you to Daria Lapidot-Boaz, a budding young recipe content creator right here in Charlotte! Daria is a 17-year-old junior at Myers Park High School and daughter of Israelis Galia and Tomer Lapidot-Boaz. She also happens to have celiac disease, which requires her to a strict gluten-free diet. In 2020, she began sharing her gorgeous gluten-free recipes along with beautiful photographs on Instagram and now has several hundred followers. I caught up with Daria recently to find out about her love of cooking and how she got started sharing

recipes on her Instagram @a\_girl\_wheatout\_gluten. I had the opportunity to talk with Daria about her passion for this special kind of cooking and baking.

#### When did you find out you had celiac?

I found out I had celiac disease just before my third birthday.

#### When did you start cooking?

For my family, food means love. Most of our time together is spent in the kitchen and around the dinner table. When I was younger, I would help my parents cook. I pretended to be a master chef while I helped mash potatoes, add salt to salads and, of course, bake desserts — although I mostly helped eat them. Like most people, quarantine brought out my inner chef. I began to try new recipes and experiment with different flavors. Not long after, I was in the kitchen almost every day trying to perfect my made-up recipes. Once I started making more challenging dishes, my little brother and I decided that we would each plan out and cook a big Shabbat dinner every couple of weeks to enjoy foods we don't typically eat.

#### Why did you decide to start sharing recipes?

Ever since I was younger,

I've been teaching people how to cook — whether it be my make-believe viewers on my make-believe cooking show or teaching my friends how to make scrambled eggs and Israeli salads at our sleepovers. At Friday night dinners, my family was always more than happy to share our gluten-free recipes with astonished guests as they marveled at how we made our gluten-free bread taste so good. However, I didn't start talking about my celiac disease until I met my friend Sydney. We began to share recipes, send funny gluten-free Tik Toks, and try new gluten-free restaurants together. Before, I would hide my gluten-free food, but as I grew more confident, I began to want to share my recipes and how I handle celiac, even in aspects of my life that don't involve eating. So on my 16th birthday, I finally got a recipe box — I opened up an Instagram account and started talking about and sharing my story.

#### What is your favorite part of making a recipe post?

My favorite part of sharing a recipe is when others contact me, telling me they've tested out my recipe. It's an amazing feeling to know that other people with



Daria Lapidot-Boaz



#### Daria's Vegetarian Pâté

- 3 Onions
- 1 tbsp oil of your choice
- 3 Eggs
- 100 grams of Walnuts
- Salt
- Pepper
- Cumin to taste
- Lemon
- 1 tsp Mustard

Boil your eggs and caramelize onions with oil in a frying pan over high heat until they are golden brown and soft. Then use a blender and mix the walnuts, boiled eggs, and onion until creamy. Add salt, pepper, mustard, and cumin to taste. Finally, refrigerate the blend for a minimum of 30 minutes and serve it on matzah or a cracker.

To check out Daria's Instagram account, head to @a\_girl\_wheatout\_gluten!

*Charlotte Rouchouze, PhD is a local French teacher, food blogger, and beaded jewelry designer. Her blog about food traditions from around the world can be found at www.thechildrenstable.com. Contact her at charlotterouchouze@yahoo.com.*

## JStage



JSTAGE kids during summer camp (July 2020)

(Continued from page 14)

JSTAGE does many things, but the last two years have proven that what JSTAGE really does is celebrate humans in all their complicated, messy, and wonderful ways. It was the young people who carried us through the last two years, and it is the young people who continue to push us to be better at every moment as we move forward.

Now the preschoolers are back in person at JSteps and JPlay, the elementary school students are beginning work on a new play in JStage Jr., and many of the same teens who worked so hard on "Seussical" are back

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**Celebrating Jewish Youth**

# A Look Back at Purim With Hebrew High

*By Laurie Sheinhaus and Megan Harkavy*

On Wednesday, March 17, Rabbi Beth Nichols, director of Lifelong Jewish Learning at Temple Beth El, asked our teens, "What does the word Purim mean?" The rabbi told us that the word Purim comes from the word "pur," which means lot, and Purim is the plural. Purim is the Festival of Lots, a joyous holiday when we commemorate the survival of the Jews despite Haman's evil plan to kill the Jews living in the Persian Empire.

For the Hebrew High Purim celebration, our students enjoyed pizza, chocolate, and raspberry hamantaschen. Megan Harkavy, director of Hebrew High, ordered 300 hamantaschen for dessert. The only leftovers were the few that the kids wanted to take for their lunch the next day. Throughout the evening I asked many of the students about their favorite memory of Purim or what they liked most about Purim. As they looked at me in my hamantaschen costume, most of them said, "the food!" When I asked what hamantaschen filling they liked best, the consensus was chocolate (surprise, surprise). One student said, "not apricot." I dare not tell the kids that my favorite flavor is prune. I received multiple answers to my second question about their favorite memory of Purim. One of the students said her favorite

memory was going to the Purim carnival at the Levine Jewish Community Center and buying lots of hamantaschen with her grandmother. Another student said his favorite part is participating in the Purim spiel. Hebrew High was well represented at this year's Purim spiel at Temple Beth El and Temple Israel. In fact, the leads at each temple were played by our students!

After dinner on Wednesday, the students took out their cell phones to play a competitive Kahoot game of Purim trivia. The teachers were very impressed at the knowledge of our students. Did you know that Mordechai could speak 70 languages? The

top three winners received a huge Hershey bar (6.8 oz size!), which they all proceeded to eat in the next 10 minutes.

Once our brains were filled with Purim trivia, the students watched a documentary titled "The Tribe," directed by Tiffany Shlain. The overall message of the documentary is about Jewish identity and what it means to be an American Jew in the 21st century. The website that explains the film says, "What can the most successful doll on the planet show us about being Jewish today? Narrated by Peter Coyote, this award-winning film mixes old-school narration with a new-school style. Weaving



Jordan Sokolowicz, Alexia Yaquan, Cornelius Zielinski, Cameron Hightower and Yael Rosenberg Osovsky pose with Jennifer Sawyer who dressed up as a monkey for Purim

- I have hidden my Jewish identity before (like Queen Esther).

Finally, the teens were divided into smaller discussion groups to talk about their reactions to the film, their own Jewish identity, and how they demonstrate pride in their Judaism. In a time that we are faced with antisemitism, we want to remain focused on the positive and on being proud to be Jewish.

During the film, there were both moments of laughter and silence as the teens were processing their own experience. Following the film, the teens had the chance to learn about other people's experience through a continuum activity in which they had to stand on either side of the room and answer yes or no to some of the following statements, including:

- People know I am Jewish by my name.

- I wear a Jewish star or other Jewish symbol.

- There has been a time I've felt uncomfortable wearing a Jewish symbol and/or taken it off for a specific reason.

- When I meet a new person, I tell them I am Jewish.

And now we have a beautiful Jewish star that will hang in the hallway at Hebrew High.



Megan Harkavy and Laurie Sheinhaus dressed up as a hamantaschen for Purim



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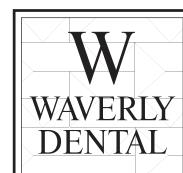
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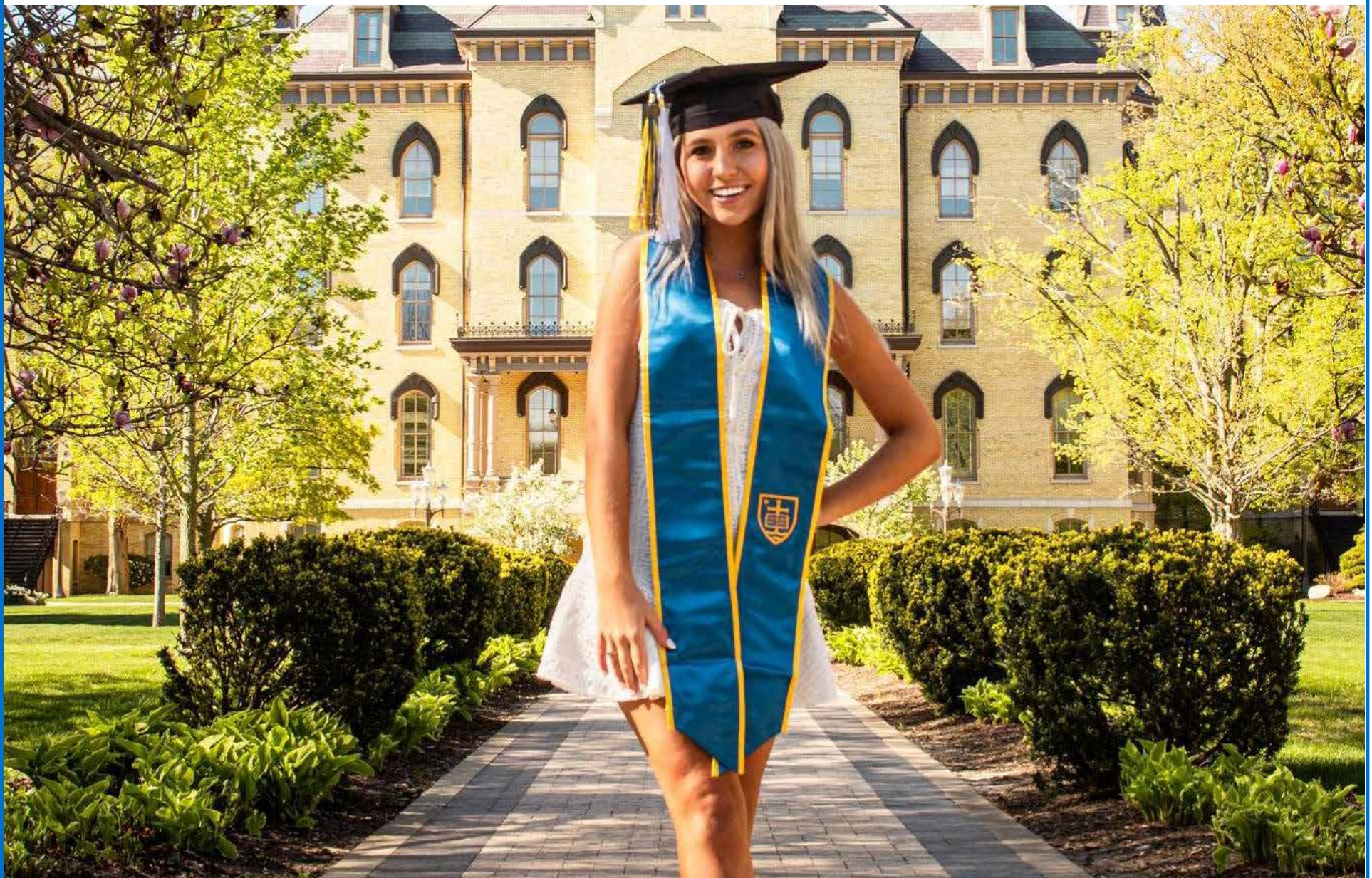
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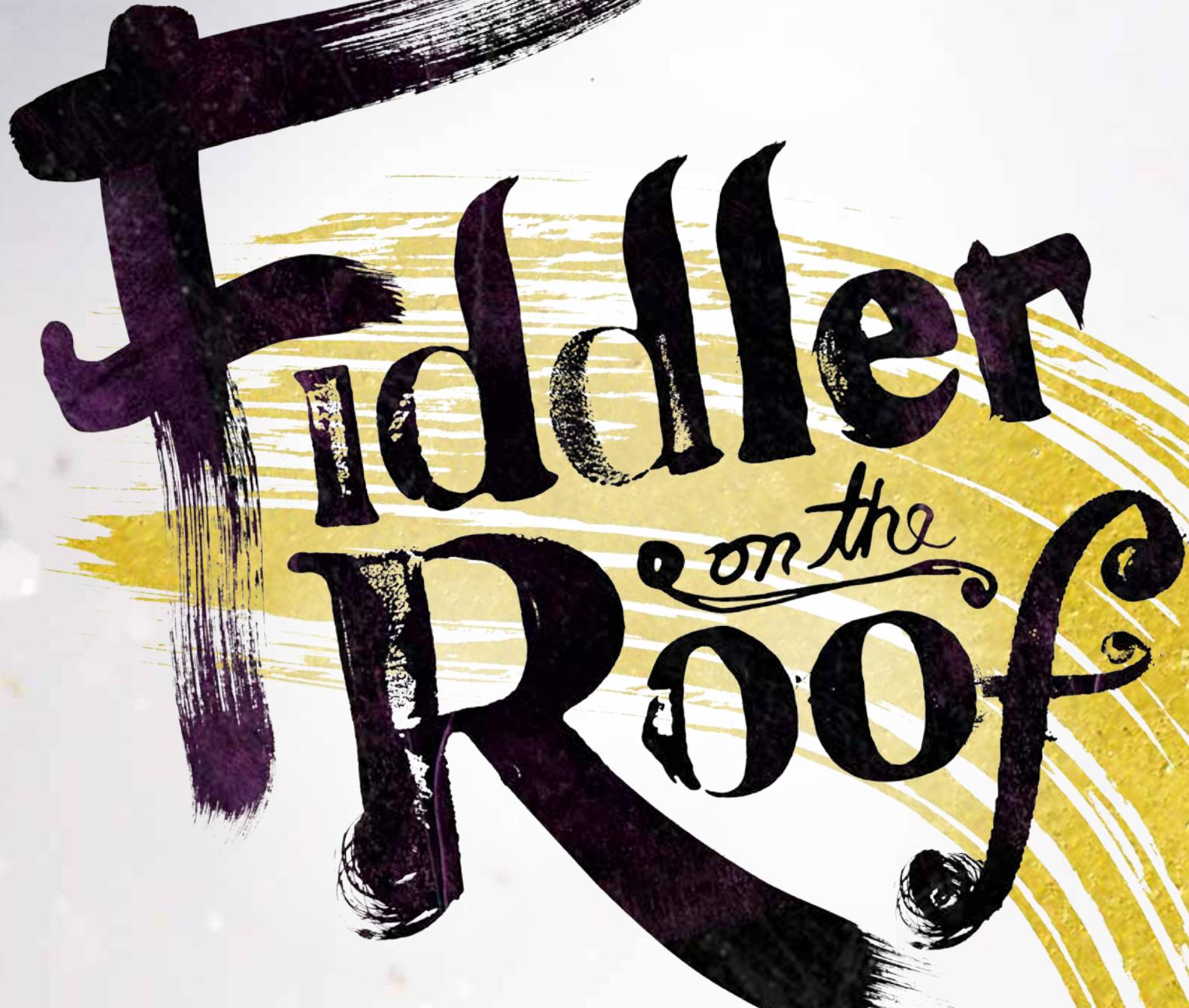
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**Celebrating Jewish Youth**

# Bal Tashchit and Beyond: Green Sprouts Pledge To Protect Our Planet

*By Summer Minchew*

In March, Shalom Green kicked off the first meeting of Green Sprouts, a monthly meet-up for young environmentalists and their siblings. The club was envisioned by fifth graders Nathan and Hannah. As children of environmentalists, caring for the earth is second nature; they don't think twice about recycling, would never litter, and even sometimes turn the lights off after themselves.

But out in the world, they saw examples of others who weren't doing their part. Nathan said, "A lot of people at my school were littering on the playground. So I got a group of people in my class to make no littering signs and help clean up the trash during recess. After that we were thinking, why are only the grown-ups dealing with this stuff? Why can't kids do more to help the environment?" Nathan and Hannah wanted to create Green Sprouts to spread knowledge, share ideas, take action, and just have fun with other kids who care about the environment.

Shalom Green leadership ran with their idea and is thrilled with the results. We had a fantastic group of kids for our first meetup. Our theme was "Be Green." We read a book about ways kids can help the environment, and then participants shared their own ideas. The older kids jotted these ideas down



Green Sprouts pledge to protect our planet

on the "Green Sprouts Pledge To Protect our Planet" poster, and then participants signed the pledge with their names and individual handprints.

The Green Sprouts, ages 5-11, shared their ideas to help protect our planet:

- Recycle right, understand what can and can't be recycled.
- Encourage your parents to purchase an electric vehicle when it is time for a new car. (The parents just loved this one!)
- Ride your bikes.
- Save leftovers and actually eat them so you don't waste food.
- Turn off the lights when you leave a room.
- Organize a community cleanup at a local beach or roadway. If plastic waste gets into the ocean,

it can hurt the fish and turtles.

- Save water! Turn off the tap while you brush your teeth and soap your hands. Take shorter showers and shallower baths.
- Organize an anti-littering campaign at your school or neighborhood.
- Compost. Turn food scraps into soil for new plants.
- Take public transportation. The light rail is cool!
- Don't leave the refrigerator door open.
- Eat organic foods.
- Have a natural lawn, don't spray chemicals.
- Save paper by drawing on both sides.
- Use less plastic. Bring your own reusable straw and say no to plastic tops on cups.
- Be committed to a cause.
- Attend Green Sprouts!

Green Sprouts will meet monthly, March through November, and is free to attend. Space is limited. Registration for each event is unique, so even if you missed the first few, it's not too late to take part. Upcoming themes include: Global Citizens, where Green Sprouts will learn about the UN Global Development Goals and become Climate Action Superheroes; and Local Food Production, where Green Sprouts will meet a small production farmer and learn about the importance of caring for the earth. During the summer months, we will celebrate bees,

butterflies, and worms!

Here are some things the kids have to say about Green Sprouts:

"I think kids are very nice and try their best. They are hard workers and never give up, and they can make a difference." Judah, age 8

"Kids are really good problem solvers with giant imaginations. We have fresh eyes and not as many bad habits as grownups, so we can more easily start good habits ... like biking instead of driving, planting gardens because we already like to play in dirt, upcycling cardboard boxes to make art or toys or something else. We also like to reuse stuff by wearing our siblings' clothes and then sharing with friends when they're too small on us."



Liam, age 5, with eco-ideas notebook project.



Mabel, age 7

"Kids can help heal the environment even though we're not as old and don't have as much experience. We're still able to do lots of small things like turn off the lights when we leave a room and don't use plastic lids at restaurants. A bunch of small things add up to make a big difference." Arlo, age 10

I have been doing environmental work for almost 20 years. I have at times been frustrated, challenged, enlightened, and in this moment, filled with hope. In the hands of these young environmentalists, the future is bright. "I thought the first meeting of Green Sprouts was awesome," said co-founder Hannah. "I had hoped that kids would like it and learn something and then be inspired to do more. I think we accomplished that. I can't wait for the next one."

Jewish tradition teaches the importance of caring for the environment, for we must act as partners in preserving creation. If you are interested in supporting Shalom Green or have ideas for educational programming, please contact us at [info@shalomgreenCLT.org](mailto:info@shalomgreenCLT.org). Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and Instagram @ShalomGreen\_CLT and visit our website at [www.shalomgreenCLT.org](http://www.shalomgreenCLT.org).

## Volunteer This Summer With Shalom Park Freedom School

*By Annie Lord and Margaret Musa*

The Shalom Park Freedom School is excited to host our 12th summer! This summer, 50 children from low-income households will share Shalom Park for a six-week literacy and enrichment program (June 20 through July 28).

Thanks to the generosity of the partner agencies on Shalom Park, including Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, Temple Beth El, Temple Israel, Levine JCC, and the Foundation of Shalom Park, along with many individual donors, the funds were raised to sponsor this program. Now it is time to welcome the scholars to our home on Shalom Park!

Please join the Shalom Park Freedom School in fulfilling the mitzvot of hachnasat orchim (welcoming guests) and tikkun olam (repairing the world) by volunteering with the scholars. Scholars will have 30 minutes



Freedom School volunteer Maddy Gallant reads with a scholar

of individual reading time from 11:20 to 11:50 am each day, and volunteers are needed to serve as reading buddies — especially for grades 1-3 students.

Volunteers can sign up to be a reading buddy through the Shalom Park Freedom School website: [www.spfreedomschool.org/get-involved/](http://www.spfreedomschool.org/get-involved/). Once you open the page, click on the link to access

the volunteer portal and choose the Shalom Park site in the events tab. You may also directly access the volunteer portal through the Freedom School Partners Volunteer Hub. <https://freedomschool-partners.volunteerhub.com/> and select the Shalom Park site in the events tab. Other volunteer opportunities will also be available on the volunteer sign-up portal.

Shalom Park Freedom School Seeking New Members for its Leadership Team

The Shalom Park Freedom School, a summer literacy and enrichment program for economically disadvantaged children, is run by a small group of dedicated individuals who are committed to helping to level the education gap in our community. The program was the first Jewish sponsored Freedom School in the country, and this summer marks the 12th year that the program will be operating on Shalom Park. However, to sustain the program, volunteers are needed to serve on the leadership team!

If you are interested in joining the Freedom School Steering Committee and Leadership Team, please contact Annie Lord at [anniehlord@gmail.com](mailto:anniehlord@gmail.com) or Margaret Musa at [mmusa@carolina.rr.com](mailto:mmusa@carolina.rr.com). We would love to talk to you!



Freedom School volunteers serve dinner in Gorelick Hall at Freedom School Family Night



**Celebrating Jewish Youth**

# BYYO in Review

*By Ellen Goldstein*

Charlotte BBYO has had a fantastic year. We began last August with a kickoff event at Carowinds with more than 100 teens attending. Many of those teens were prospective members who have now joined a chapter and are active members of Charlotte BBYO. Most Tuesday nights from 7 to 8:30 p.m., you can find more than 100 Alephs and BBGs participating in their chapter activities, which include programming centered on Judaism, sisterhood/brotherhood and siblinghood, sports, and more. Jewish teens in BBYO come together to learn, build relationships, and have fun. Each chapter, led by a board of teen officers, plans and implements its own programs. The Charlotte BBYO teens are part of Eastern Region BBYO, which includes teens from Southern Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Southern Georgia. Even in the midst of COVID, Eastern Region managed to hold two successful weekend conventions, one in August and one in October. The first convention was a



Charlotte presidents: Emma Sherrill, Chai Chaverim BBG N'siah, Jack Luther Mickey Barak Aberman AZA Godol, Ryan Wolkofsky, Hank Greenberg AZA Godol, and Joey Effren, Ohavim BBG N'siah

leadership weekend for all chapter board members across Eastern Region, and the October convention focused on all our new members in Eastern Region.

In December, we celebrated BBYO Global Shabbat with our guest speaker Jeff Jackson. More than 200 parents and teens attended Global Shabbat. Mr. Jackson shared his passion for leadership and his hopes for shaping the future of North Carolina. In February, 55 members of Charlotte BBYO headed to Baltimore, Maryland, to participate in the BBYO International Convention (IC). With 2,800 teens in attendance from around the world, the teens heard from many speakers, including Eve Barlow, Rabbi Angela Buchdahl, Simu Liu, and Jurnee Smollett. The power of BBYO is strongest when teens come together to celebrate their Judaism, learn from each other, and are a part of something bigger than themselves.

Post IC, BBYO has turned its



focus to Ukraine. Many Jewish teens who live in Ukraine are part of Global BBYO through our partnership with the JDC. Eastern Region has a special connection to Zaporizhia, Ukraine. Eastern teens have traveled there twice in the past eight years, and teens from Zaporizhia have come to the United States, attended an Eastern Region convention, and spent time with our BBYO families in Richmond. Over the past month, the Charlotte BBYO chapters have raised more than \$1,000 and donated the money to the JDC efforts in Ukraine. In addition, at our J-Serve (Jewish teen day of community service) project at our Spring Convention, the teens collected supplies for

the "Coalition of Good," an organization made up of corporations, individuals, and organizations that provide essential items for those in need. These items will go directly to Ukrainian children and their families who have left their homes in search of safety and refuge in Poland.

In May, Charlotte BBYO will end its programming year with our annual Sweetheart Dance. We will celebrate our graduating seniors and dance the night away at our Masquerade Ball. One hundred Eastern Region BBYO teens (35 from Charlotte) will be heading off to a BBYO summer program. There are many offerings, including Israel trips, leadership programs (CLTC/ILTC), Judaism-focused activities (Kallah), and Camp BBYO especially designed for 8th and 9th graders. It is not too late to register for a BBYO summer program [www.bbyo.org/summer](http://www.bbyo.org/summer).

Many thanks to our chapter presidents Joey Effren, Ohavim BBG, Emma Sherrill, Chai Chaverim BBG, Ryan Wolkofsky, Hank Greenberg AZA and Jack Luther, Mickey Barak Aberman AZA and their boards for their leadership and hard work this year. We also want to thank our volunteer chapter advisors for their help and support. Information will be coming soon about our fall kickoff. We will be welcoming all Jewish teens in 8th-12th grades. For more information about Charlotte BBYO, please email [charlotte@bbyo.org](mailto:charlotte@bbyo.org) or call (704) 944-6834.



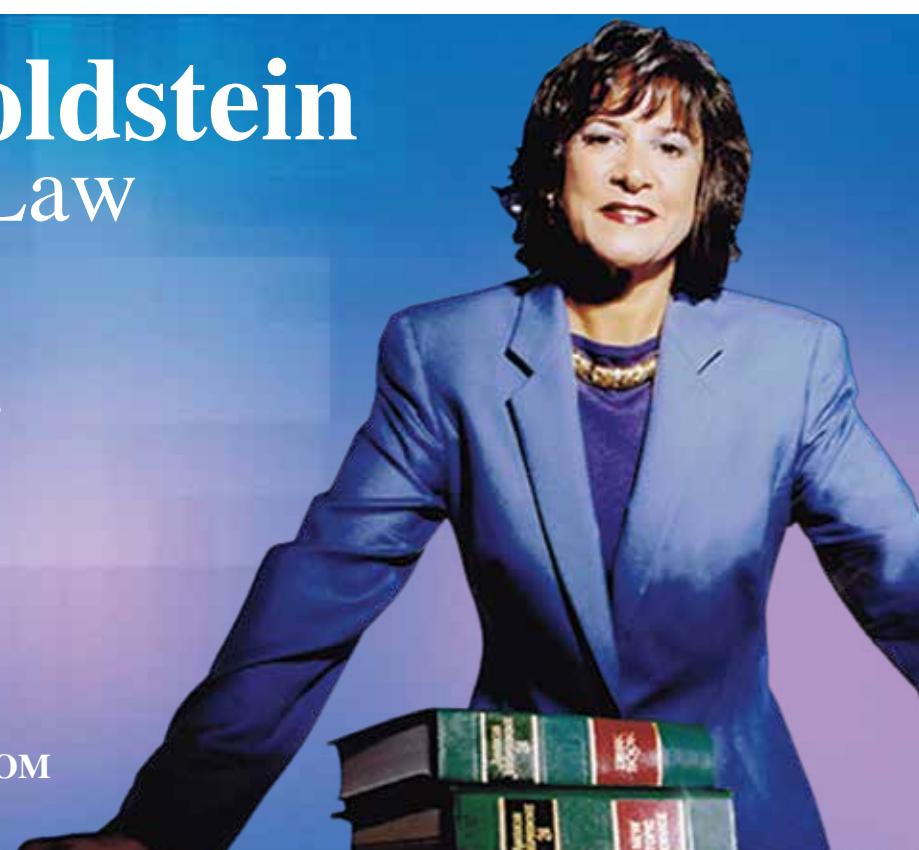
Eastern Region teens smile for a group photo at Spring Convention

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**Celebrating Jewish Youth**

# Zachary Tanenbaum: Local Youth Woodworker Shares His Talents

*By Alyson Traw*

It all started with a drill and a toddler crayon. Local Jewish teenager, Zachary Tanenbaum, has been building and creating for as long as he can remember. His passion and craft have transformed from drills and crayons to woodworking and miter saws, with an entrepreneurial spirit driving his evolution.

Zachary, a native Charlottean, can make everything from challah boards to commercial letter holders with 50 slots, and he has his sights set on owning a cabinet shop one day, creating custom-made furniture pieces for customers. Zachary's mother provides marketing support, sharing his wares in Jewish moms' groups on social media while his father helps with tools. Even his younger sister assists with oiling the cutting boards he sells. Zachary is in the 8th grade at Davidson Green School, where the focus is on sustainability, science, and engineering — a perfect fit for him. His teachers and classmates support his endeavors, and he gives back to the school by creating and designing



items for its annual fundraiser.

Nobody in Zachary's immediate family shares his craft, and Zachary says he learned most of the skills he employs by watching YouTube videos and through trial and error. He dreams of using the proceeds from his sales to purchase a 3HP Sawstop table saw, which he described in detail as "very safe and very nice, all cast iron, weighs like 600 pounds." His preferred brand of tools is Festool, which is only

for serious woodworkers and makes for a Hanukkah wish list item considerably more expensive than the new iPhone. On weekends, Zachary can be found either working in his shop (he shares the space with his father, but he owns most of the power tools) or shopping at West Penn Hardwoods in Conover, North Carolina, where he finds wood scraps in the bins out front. The scraps provide Zachary with



quality wood products at little to no cost so that he can maximize his profit margin.

Zachary's favorite wood to work with is black walnut, which he describes as "luxury wood with the perfect density, not too hard or soft, sands well, and smells nice." He used black walnut, along with acacia wood, to create his most elaborate piece to date — a portable ark used to hold the Torah for Temple Beth El. Zachary's portable ark became especially useful during COVID, when b'nai mitzvah were held in homes and other non-traditional locations. He was able to weave his love of woodworking and Judaism into this especially meaningful bar mitzvah project that will benefit the Jewish community for years to come. It was beshert that his Torah portion mentioned wood.

His Judaica creations also include challah boards, yads, menorahs, and apple and honey dishes. Zachary's coaster sets, cutting boards, and charcuterie boards make great gifts. Zachary says that repetition gets boring, and he is always eager to fulfill



Zachary's black walnut hand-crafted portable ark

custom orders for customers. You can find a few examples of his work in his Etsy store, but his capabilities extend far beyond what you will find there. If you can dream it, Zachary would love to work with you to create it. If you are interested in supporting a talented, young Jewish entrepreneur, contact Zachary at [woodworkdesignsbyz@gmail.com](mailto:woodworkdesignsbyz@gmail.com).

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**Celebrating Jewish Youth**

# 20th Anniversary of Michelle Miller Award

Temple Beth El joins Fred and Joy Miller in remembering their daughter, Michelle, whose 20th yahrzeit was marked in April. We are honored that the Millers have chosen to honor Michelle's memory through the Michelle Miller Award for Jewish Commitment, which is presented to one or two Temple Beth El confirmation students every year. We invite you to join us for confirmation, including the presentation of the Michelle Miller Award, on Friday, May 13 at 7:30 p.m. The following piece, sharing memories of Michelle and the history of the award, was written by her parents.

*By Fred & Joy Miller*

Michelle Miller was a student of the Temple Beth El confirmation class of 2002. However, she never made it to confirmation because she was tragically killed in an automobile accident in April 2002. She was not driving. She had been very close with the other students of the confirmation class. That year, her fellow students dedicated the confirmation service to her.

Michelle was very mature, pragmatic, sensible, introspective, and very funny. She made us laugh all the time. She had a diverse circle of friends from her confirmation class, her BBYO chapter, her dance studio troupe, and her secular high school class. Michelle was very dedicated to Judaism and her Jewish friends at Temple Beth El and at BBYO, both in which she was active. She often educated her non-Jewish friends regarding misconceptions they held about Judaism. We called her "our little Jewish ambassador." She always included her non-Jewish friends



Michelle's 16th birthday

in our home worship of the Jewish holidays. Michelle's favorite quote was from "Dreams" by Langston Hughes: "Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly."

Part of the confirmation class curriculum included a section on comparative religion; this included learning about other faiths and visiting other houses of worship. One of the houses of worship the class visited was a mosque, which the family of one of her good high school friends attended. Her friend told her that he rarely attended services. She asked him why, and he said, "Michelle, they all take off their shoes, and it stinks." Michelle had been very moved by the service at the mosque, and she told him she did not notice any unpleasant odor and therefore reprimanded him and told him he should attend the services at his mosque.

Michelle and her class were planning to visit New York City for their confirmation trip, but

this trip followed the events of 9/11, and people were apprehensive about visiting New York City. Therefore, the students decided instead to visit Charleston, South Carolina, and visit the Jewish historical sites there.

In her obituary, we requested that in lieu of flowers, people send donations to Temple Beth El in memory of Michelle. The Temple Beth El community responded generously, contributing so many donations in memory of Michelle that a fund was created. We and Rabbi Bennet (Temple Beth El's senior rabbi at the time) discussed what we should do with the donations, and decided to make a scholarship cash award in Michelle's memory to an outstanding confirmation student or students from each confirmation class. And so the Michelle Miller Award for Jewish Commitment was created. We later made the fund an endowment to better help the fund achieve its goal of granting a scholarship award every year.

Since 2003, one or two scholarship awards have been presented each year. Our family honors Michelle's memory each year



Michelle with her confirmation class

through our annual participation in the confirmation service and the presentation of the award. It always is inspiring and comforting to present the award to bright young people who are as committed to the Jewish community as was Michelle. Over the years, students have used the money to attend summer Jewish leadership camps, to help pay for trips to Israel, and to further their Jewish education. One student even used the money to attend a cantorial preparation program. Another student donated half of his award back into the endowment. None of the students have used their awards frivolously.



## A Bar Mitzvah Project Inspires Inclusive Football Game at Friendship Circle

*By Sue Schreiber*

Warm weather, lots of sunshine, and spring in the air provided the perfect backdrop for Friendship Circle to host its first-ever inclusive flag football game.

Inspired by the bar mitzvah project of Jonah Zaidman and under the guidance of seasoned coach, and even better human being, Dan Vizzini, we joined for fun, friendship, and football.

Who were the players in our inclusive game? Friendship Circle teen friends, Friendship Circle special friends, and Jonah and his friends all worked together on the field to make the event happen. Afterward Jonah said, "Planning the game was so much fun. I loved getting to spend time with the kids from Friendship Circle playing a game I love!" Chase, a friend from Friendship Circle, added, "It was the coolest day ever. It made me feel so happy because I enjoyed playing the game with my friends."

Who were the fans? Parents, family, friends, and just about everyone there cheered both teams on to victory. Jonah's mom said that, "Jeff and I were both so grateful for the opportunity to support an organization we re-



Jilian and Erin warming up for inclusive football game

spect. Getting to include Coach Dan was the icing on the cake."

The first-ever inclusive flag football game proved to be an incredible experience. One of our Friendship Circle moms summed it up by saying, "What an amazing day! It brought tears to my eyes, not only because I saw the smiles from all the kids, teens, adults, parents, and staff, but also because it was nice to see the circle of friends come together. The game wasn't about winning or scoring; it was about opportunity, teamwork, and laughter.

This football game was a huge success, and I couldn't be more grateful and blessed that we were part of it."

*Friendship Circle is a beneficiary of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte. To learn more visit [FriendshipCircleNC.org](http://FriendshipCircleNC.org).*



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# Foundation of Shalom Park Leads Security Trainings

By Terri Beattie

On January 15, 2022, a gunman held four hostages in a standoff that lasted more than 11 hours at Colleyville's Congregation Beth Israel, a synagogue northeast of Fort Worth, Texas. All four hostages escaped before FBI agents shot and killed the suspect. A rabbi who was among the hostages said that undergoing training scenarios for how to deal with active threats prepared him for that day. Having preparedness training for critical emergency situations is increasingly significant for the Jewish community.

Hate crimes committed against people because of their religion made up 20% of all hate crimes reported in the United States to the FBI from 2015 to 2020. In 2020, the percentage was lower than average at 15%. However, the FBI's reporting of hate crimes is thought to be a vast undercount because, according to a 2019 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, it relies on local police to voluntarily submit data. In addition, attacks and hate crimes against Jews are on the rise. According to the Anti-Defamation League, an anti-hate organization, over the past five

years, antisemitic incidents have increased by 60%.

The Foundation of Shalom Park hosts many security training events each year. In March a new training was added titled Surviving a Hostage Event. The course was offered three times in March, and more than 200 participants from agencies on and off Shalom Park attended. The course, led by Dominick Pagano, a senior principal consultant at Threat Suppression, Inc., is newly adapted from a training course for law enforcement to one for houses of worship.

The course was developed by hostage negotiators and SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) specialists to provide the fundamentals of surviving a hostage event. Participants learned the history and statistical data related to hostage and crisis events, the psychology of the hostage-taker, pre-attack prevention, disruption and deterrence measures, hostage survival techniques, and crisis event actions to assist law enforcement. Attendees also learned the difference between a hostage event and a crisis event. Crisis events require a significant change in strategy by the hostage victim. The four-hour class also includ-

ed post-event recovery strategies.

Mr. Pagano taught some of the most important things to do to survive a hostage event. First, you start by taking deep breaths during the first few minutes of a crisis event to help you stay calm and keep your thinking clear. Speak normally — do not complain and avoid being belligerent. Comply with all the hostage taker's instructions; this will avoid agitating the hostage taker or escalating their behavior. Show empathy to the hostage taker with the goal of keeping them calm and providing a sense that a successful outcome is possible.

"The training was informative and empowering. It is abundantly clear that training is an important tool for all who work in vulnerable institutions as well as an understanding of our Shalom Park security team, as we are all partners in keeping the safety of our students and our community," said Gale Osborne, director of Charlotte Jewish Day School.

On April 4, Shalom Park staff also attended a four-hour course on verbal de-escalation. The ability to decrease the emotional, physical, and mental stress levels of any crisis situ-

ation using verbal and non-verbal de-escalation techniques is the key to successful outcomes. This course provided state-of-the-art techniques for preventing a potentially dangerous situation from escalating into a physical confrontation, injury, or even death. This course integrated seamlessly with Surviving a Hostage Event since effective communication helps save lives in a crisis event.

The Foundation of Shalom Park plans to expand its 2022 security training program with SCN's (Secure Community Network) Be Aware (situational awareness training), Countering Active Threat Training (active shooter training), and Stop the Bleed (training to control serious bleeding.) If you wish to be notified about these training courses, please email your contact information to [tbeattie@shalomcharlotte.org](mailto:tbeattie@shalomcharlotte.org).

There are about 10,000 hostage events every year in the United States. Such events have occurred in nearly every type of venue, including houses of worship, schools, businesses, government buildings, hospitals, and homes. It can happen anywhere. At Shalom Park, the staff, leadership, and community

members are training to greatly increase the odds of successfully surviving a hostage or crisis event for everyone. Remember, security is everyone's job.

The Foundation of Shalom Park is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit agency that owns and manages the properties and facilities for most of the organizations that are located on the central campus of Shalom Park, which include: Temple Israel, Temple Beth El, the Levine Jewish Community Center, Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, Jewish Family Services, Temple Israel Religious School, Temple Beth El Religious School, Consolidated High School of Jewish Studies, Charlotte Jewish Preschool, Charlotte Jewish Day School, Center for Jewish Education, Hebrew Cemetery Association, B'nai Brith Youth Organization, NC Hillel, and the Charlotte Jewish News.



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# Jewish Family Services Supports Our Local Holocaust Community

By Sheryl Gerrard, JFS Senior Engagement Manager

As the social service arm of the Greater Charlotte Jewish community, Jewish Family Services (JFS) has always engaged with our local senior adults, providing support services and programs to enable them to stay connected to their Jewish culture and tradition. By extension, this outreach has included our local Holocaust survivor community. Over the past several years, this engagement has become even more purposeful and encompassing.

Since March of 2017, through a grant from the Jewish Federations of North America, JFS was able to develop a more intentional and meaningful connection with our local survivors and their family members. The goals

of the grant were threefold: to provide social opportunities for Holocaust survivors who were often living in isolation and without interactions with peers; to capture the testimonies of our local survivors in writing and on video; and to engage with the second and third generation of survivors living locally, who were often not connected with each other or with our agency. During the grant period, multiple social gatherings were arranged, including several Sunday brunches, a viewing of a Charlotte Jewish Film Festival movie with complementary meal, and a trip uptown to see "The Band's Visit." Through these get-togethers, and through the process of individually recording survivor testimonies, our staff developed close relationships with many of

the members of our local survivor community. We even offered a program in which our survivors and several second- and third-generation family members worked together on a creative project that expresses our connections with each other and our Charlotte community. This piece of art was lovingly framed and is on display across from the Levine-Sklut Judaic Library.

Although the funding from the grant ended, our engagement with our survivor community did not. Because we had developed such strong personal connections with so many of our local survivors, we were attuned to their needs and strived to devise options to support them as they aged with dignity. Our staff collaborated with other agencies dedicated to providing Holocaust survivor assistance, such as KAVOD, the Claims Conference, and Blue Card. These partnerships enable us to arrange paid in-home care for qualified survivors and to pay for items like eyeglasses, dental work, and hearing aids, which are often not covered under Medicare. With the recent addition of a Russian-speaking senior engagement case manager, JFS has been able to identify and engage many survivors from the former Soviet Union. After

a case management assessment, these survivors are able to receive much-needed resources. In addition, we have continued to offer opportunities for our survivor community to come together for food, conversation, and entertainment. During the height of the pandemic, we offered musical programs via Zoom, had meals delivered to survivors' homes, and enjoyed camaraderie as we broke bread together in a virtual room. A Russian-speaking chat room was offered virtually, and we're looking forward to in-person opportunities soon. Our survivors also receive holiday and birthday gift bags delivered to them by our enthusiastic volunteers, letting them know we're thinking about them on these special occasions.

Traditionally, the Charlotte area has commemorated Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom HaShoah, with a community-wide program alternatively hosted at either Temple Beth El or Temple Israel, with support from the various Jewish agencies both on and off Shalom Park. During the pandemic, the program was offered virtually. This year, for the first time, our collaborative program was planned as a special event at Queens University in the newly opened Sandra



Levine Theater, featuring a string orchestra composed of students from Queens, UNC Charlotte, and Central Piedmont Community College. Through ritual, testimony, and music, the program honors those who perished in the Holocaust and those whose lives were changed forever.

To provide an opportunity for fellowship and socialization, as of this writing, JFS is partnering with Queens University to offer a Holocaust survivor spring celebration. An intergenerational brunch will bring together survivors, family members, and Hillel students for a delicious and enlightening program. Musicians from the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra plan to present "Music and the Holocaust," a themed, narrated program, performing music of significance during this period in history that evoked survival and healing. The program celebrates the resilience of our local survivors and their families and allows multiple generations to interact with and learn from each other.

If you are a Holocaust survivor or know someone who could benefit or would be interested in participating in our programs and services, please contact JFS at (704) 364-6594.

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**Hadassah Meal Preppies:** Ellen Altman, Sharon Cavanaugh, Sara Friedman, Karen Futtersak, June Hirschmann, Yvette Jacobson, Johnson and Wales, Penny Krieger, Andy McCleary, Gina Robbins, Helene Schillian, Marcia Stern, Elissa Vining

## JFS March 2022 Tributes

**For a speedy recovery for Lisa Levinson**  
**In Memory of Laureen Abadi**  
**Paul and Lynn Edelstein**  
**In Memory of Dr. Stanford Benjamin**  
**Paul and Lynn Edelstein**  
**In Memory of Barbara Sklut**  
**Eric Ridenour and Colony Family Offices, LLC**  
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**Shel and Ellen Goldstein**  
**Keith Greenspon**  
**Mark and Teri Moffett**  
**Cookie and Jerry Parnell**  
**Morey and Lynne Sheffer**  
**In Memory of Dr. Robert Gentile**  
**Rose Atkinson**  
**Ben and Margi Liebson**

**Food Drives:** Tristan Osborn and Boy Scout Group 256, CJDS Chessed Club, CJDS Student Council, Temple Beth El SPICE group

**Shalom Green:** Thank you to your volunteers for harvesting fresh produce for the JFS pantry

**Food Pantry Donations:** To our generous community: Thank you for continuing to donate to the food pantry. We continue to collect donations every other Wednesday at the portico entrance to the Blumenthal Center for Jewish Education Building on Shalom Park.

**Diane Rosenberg**  
**In Memory of Todd Sherrill**  
**Sandra Weinstein**  
**In Memory of Norman Steinberger**  
**Lee and Wendy Pake**  
**In Memory of Jack Poznansky**  
**Francine Poznansky**  
**In Memory of Fred Winton**  
**Nadine Fox**  
**Mazel Tov to Howard and Karen Olshansky in honor of Sabrina and Chris' Wedding**  
**Andrea Cronson**  
**Mazel Tov Rachel and Jonathan Friedman on the birth of Aviva**  
**Morey and Lynne Sheffer**

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# Back to Basics: Creating Awareness Around Mental Health

By Howard Olshansky, JFS Executive Director

Since 1949, Mental Health America has been spearheading Mental Health Awareness Month during the month of May. This year's theme is Back to Basics. According to Mental Health America, one in five people suffer from a mental health issue, and 46% of Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition sometime in their lives. Over the past two years, as a result of the pandemic, social unrest, the economy, among other factors, mental health issues such as depression, stress, and anxiety have escalated.

The Back to Basics campaign recognizes that over the past two years, everyone has been so focused on surviving day-to-day, that we lost the momentum that had been created around education, awareness, and destigmatization of mental health issues. To truly rebound and respond to the mental health crisis resulting from the last two years, it is critical we reintroduce some basic tools and connect individuals to resources.

Maintaining good mental health, knowing the factors that can lead to mental health conditions, and recognizing the warning signs are all important for creating a society in which everyone can receive the care needed to thrive.

## Maintain Good Mental Health

Mental health plays an important role in overall well-being, including physical health. Being mentally healthy enables you to manage stress, sustain healthy relationships, and feel good about yourself. The following areas will contribute to overall well-being:

- Quality food and nutrition: Your "gut" sends messages to your brain, and the healthier your food intake, the better your brain is protected. Nutrients affect brain functions, including mood and critical thinking. Omega-3 fatty acids, B-group vitamins, and vitamin D all support good mental health.

- Exercise: Physical activity prevents acceleration of mental health symptoms. Participate in 15-20 minutes a day of activities you enjoy, like walking the dog or dancing to your favorite

music.

- Sleep: Rest and quality sleep affect mood, ability to learn, immune system, memory, appetite, and so on. Aim for sleeping 85% of the time you're in bed, falling asleep in less than 30 minutes, and waking up no more than once per night for no longer than 20 minutes.

- Coping Skills: Everyone copes differently with stress and challenging feelings. Test and identify strategies that work for you, such as moving to a quiet place, calling a friend, or listening to music.

- Support System: Where do you connect to feel supported? Whom can you trust or confide in? Your support system may be a relationship or a group or activity that makes you feel connected. Make sure this is a quality connection and not just a diversion.

## Know Contributing Factors To Developing a Mental Health Condition

Most mental health conditions result from multiple causes, known as risk factors. The more risk factors there are, the more likely you are to experience a

mental health condition. Some common risk factors include:

- Trauma: Any experience that was highly stressful, shocking, or dangerous can be traumatic. A car accident, death or separation from a loved one, a natural disaster, or a history of abuse can all cause trauma.

- Social determinants of health: Social determinants are living conditions that affect quality of life and include financial stability, access to quality education, access to quality health care, living environment/neighborhood, and social and community life.

- Genetics: Genes can contribute to higher risk, as they affect the way your brain develops.

- Substance use: Use of drugs or alcohol and, in particular, the overuse of narcotics and alcohol often significantly increase the risk of developing a mental health condition.

## Know the Signs When You or a Loved One Needs Help

We all have bad days. Just like you may have a headache or do not feel great one day, you may feel down or extra stressed occasionally. However, if your symp-



toms interfere with day-to-day functioning, reach out for help. Common signs for mental health treatment include:

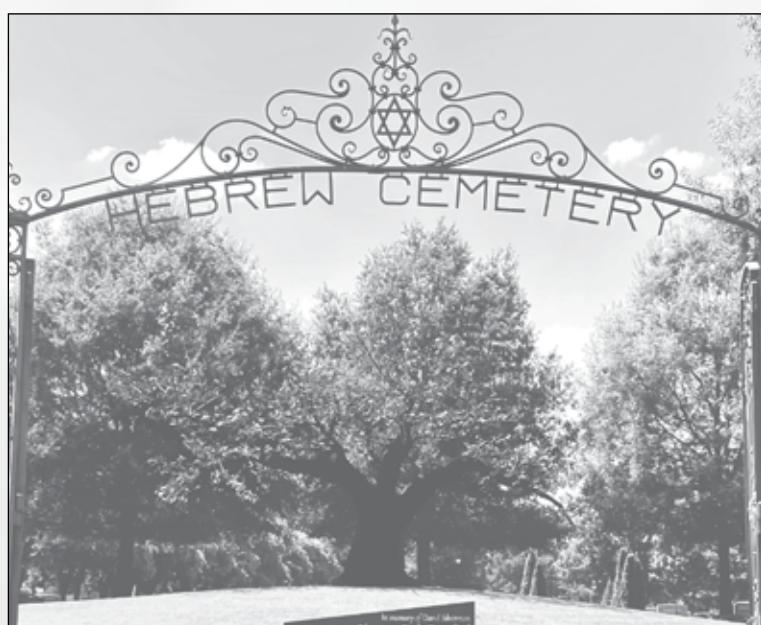
- Withdrawing and becoming more isolated.

- Lack of interest in typical activities that give you enjoyment.

- Trouble focusing.
- Becoming short tempered.
- Loss of appetite.
- Difficulty sleeping.

In addition to recognizing the signs when a loved one needs help, it's important to seek help for your own mental health issues. You know yourself. If you are feeling especially moody, irritable, experience lack of energy, or are just not feeling yourself, reach out for support. The average person waits 11 years from the onset of early symptoms before seeking treatment. Would you wait that long to see your doctor for a physical issue?

In May, as we go Back to Basics, Jewish Family Services is here to help. If you recognize these signs in yourself or a loved one, contact JFS for assistance at (704) 364-6594 or [www.jfscharlotte.org](http://www.jfscharlotte.org).



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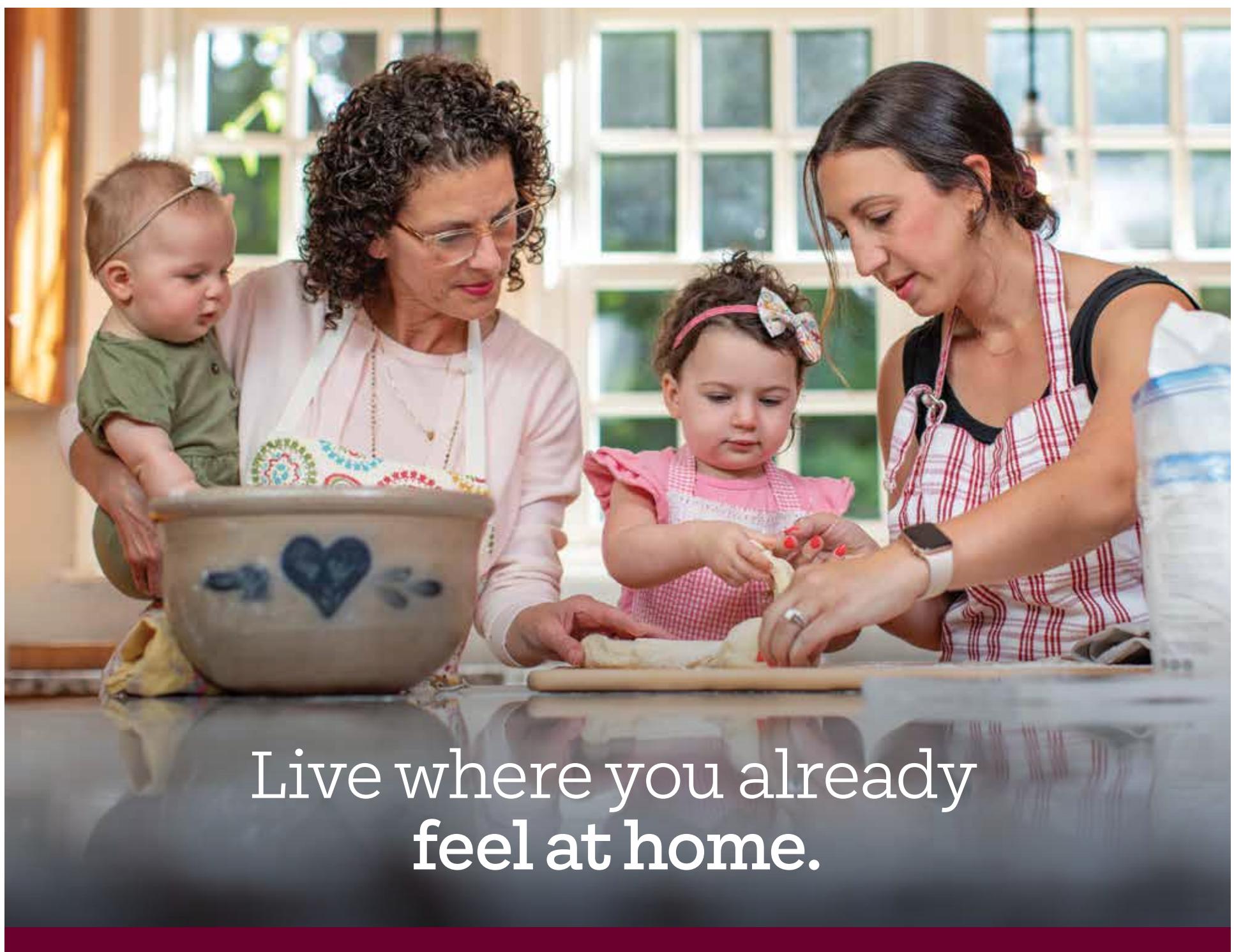
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## Religious Life

# Jewish Learning Institute Introduces New Spring Course: "Beyond Right"



An exciting Jewish exploration into the inner core of Jewish values – how they affect our civil discourse and practice.

By Rabbi Yossi Groner

Many Jews are quick to say that Jewish values are important to them and are an integral part of what being Jewish means to them, but many are hard-pressed to define what Jewish values actually are, what is uniquely Jewish about them, and what they mean on a practical level.

It is not surprising to find the Jewish bookshelf stocked with tomes on the laws of synagogue attendance or Jewish holiday observance. But many are astonished to discover the attention Jewish law devotees to disputes between neighbors and ethical dilemmas in the workplace along with a vast corpus of civil legislation.

Each legal system reflects the values to which its formulators adhere. This is profoundly true of Jewish law, which views its mandate, beyond protecting individual rights and maintaining social order, as shaping a righteous society.

Jewish civil law is not simply a system historically developed by Jews but also an inherently Jewish institution that reflects and promotes a set of values that is uniquely Jewish — and historically remarkable and revolutionary.

Study of Jewish civil law clarifies the meaning of core Jewish values, for it is the station at which

ideals convert into concrete practice in the form of instruction and guidance for daily life and its myriad of experiences.

To this end, the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) is pleased to present "Beyond Right," a groundbreaking course that pursues six primary Jewish values from their conception in Hebrew scripture from their development in the teachings of our ancient sages through subsequent generations of classic works of Jewish philosophy and mysticism. Following an in-depth slice of Talmudic study, these values come alive in the practical application of Jewish civil legislation, translating abstract principles into detailed guidance on common real-life scenarios.

We are confident that this study will clarify the uniqueness of several of Judaism's values and generate an appreciation for Jewish law as a uniquely Jewish system that Jews should approach for guidance and clarity when faced with professional or personal dilemmas.

Good news for attorneys: this JLI course is CLE accredited.

"Beyond Right" will begin on Tuesday May 3 at 7:30 p.m. for the evening class. The course will run for six consecutive Tuesdays. Morning class will be held begin on Wednesday, May 4 at 11 a.m.

and will run for six consecutive Wednesdays. Registration fee is \$99 per person or \$180 per couple. Colorful detailed textbooks will be provided to all attendees. Please visit myjli.com to register, or you can call our office at (704) 366-3984.

#### Lesson Topics

*Session One: Beyond Good Neighbors*  
What is the purpose of law?

*Session Two: Beyond Restitution*  
What does true repentance entail?  
*Session Three: Beyond Taking Offense*

We all feel some degree of responsibility toward others, but how far does this responsibility extend?

*Session Four: Beyond Personal Freedom*  
What does it really mean to be free? Is a life of religious observance compatible with personal freedom?

*Session Five: Beyond Lawful Ownership*  
Is ownership a legal status, or an ontological reality?

*Session Six: Beyond Presumption of Innocence*

Are there any human biases we should actively cultivate? Is human nature essentially good or negative?

## Chabad Lag B'omer celebration on May 19

Lag B'omer is a joyous day on the Jewish calendar, a time when families join together and enjoy the outdoors, usually with a cookout and music. In Israel, many communities gather around a bonfire and dance the night away.

Why all this joy and celebration? This goes back to Mishnaic times, when the leading sage, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, a star disciple of the famed Rabbi Akiva, brought the light of the inner mystical part of Torah to the people of Israel. It was on this day, the 18th of Iyar, the 33rd day of the counting of the Omer, that his pure soul ascended to the heavenly heights.

The book of Zohar, one of the foundational works on Kabbalah, describes Rabbi Shimon's passing. A flame of fire descended and danced around Rabbi Shimon. As it ascended, it took his soul along with it. Before his passing, Rabbi Shimon asked his students to rejoice on this day and to celebrate the revelation of the deep mystical secrets of the Torah.

Since his passing in the second century, Jewish communities have been marking this day with celebrations and outdoor adventures.

Chabad of Charlotte will be hosting an outdoor barbecue pic-

nic on Thursday, May 19 in the evening with special activities for children.

Please visit our website [www.chabadnc.org](http://www.chabadnc.org) for detailed information.

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## Religious Life

# Tikkun Olam at Temple Kol Ami

By Shari Baum

After the 9/11 attacks, Mr. Rogers famously said, "When something scary happens, look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." At Temple Kol Ami, we understand the importance of tikkun olam, healing the world. Every mitzvah, no matter how big or small, can make a big difference. The Maj Mavens of TKA, our weekly mah jongg group, decided to be helpers in response to the current war in Ukraine.

Helene Schillian had the idea: Why not donate the group winnings for the month of March to a worthy charity that is directly dealing with this humanitarian crisis? The entire group enthusiastically agreed! The next step was to decide whom to donate to? So many wonderful organizations are working hard to aid

the Ukrainians. After we did some research, we decided to contribute to HIAS, formerly known as the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, an organization originally founded to support Jews fleeing persecution in Europe but that now helps refugees from different faiths, ethnicities, and backgrounds. HIAS is in Poland and Ukraine assessing ways it can assist Ukrainians — both Jews and non-Jews — as they cross into Poland and other neighboring countries. The Temple Kol Ami Maj Mavens are proud to have done their small part in helping with this emergency response.

The religious school of Temple Kol Ami has also been busy with gemilut hasadim, acts of loving kindness. For Purim, the students and staff made mishloach manot bags to gift to the Clover Area Assistance Center

in Lake Wylie, South Carolina. The religious school families donated snack items. The kids then decorated bags and stuffed them full of treats. Yasher koach to our kiddos and teachers for helping to make the world a better place!

*If you live in York County or the Ballantyne area, Temple Kol Ami might be the place for you! We are a warm and inclusive Reform congregation comprising Jews from diverse backgrounds. We are currently having in-person Shabbat services on the first and third Friday nights of each month at Philadelphia United Methodist Church, 1691 SC-160, Fort Mill (please check our calendar at [www.templekolamisc.org](http://www.templekolamisc.org) for any updates). We hope you will join us soon and find your Jewish home in our giving community.*



Temple Kol Ami Maj Mavens

# The Ruach: A Community of Action

By Peter Levinson

We are all catching our breath as we emerge from the uncertainty and unwelcome change we have collectively experienced in the past two years. Because of this lash of unpredictability, there's been a tendency to put our lives on hold. Jewish tradition has nothing against waiting. The very first Mishnah in the Pirkei Avot cautions us to be patient in judgment — to wait rather than rush headfirst into making an impetuous decision. Yet it's when we mistake waiting for postponement that we betray our tradition.

Rather than postpone, The Ruach has continued to press forward, recognizing the present and the future as windows of opportunity. The Ruach has

used both in-person services and innovative technology to offer spiritual experiences that remain relevant and a source of hope, healing, and connection for our Jewish community. Though many faith organizations are challenged or fatigued with the hybrid model of conducting services, The Ruach continues to invest in innovative ways to expand the Jewish community and provide even greater opportunities to connect and support each other.

Our investment of time and resources in digital technology that complements our in-person services has allowed us to experience steady growth. Pre-recording and livestreaming The Shabbat Experiences and The

High Holy Day Experiences has proven to be a great alternative for those who choose not to or are unable to attend in-person services. The recorded Experiences also provide a first step for people to attend services who have not been connected to a synagogue or Jewish spiritual community — a kind of "test run" before they attend in person.

In addition to providing alternative Shabbat and High Holy Days services, The Ruach shares the joy of Judaism with those outside the Charlotte Jewish community. In December, The Ruach was once again invited to be a part of the Tosco Musical Festival. Tosco Music is a nonprofit organization that breaks down the barriers between performers and audiences to celebrate the incredible power of music and bring people together. Occasions such as this provide an opportunity to build bridges that can bring us together to find a shared commitment to the greater good.



Peter Levinson, co-founder of The Ruach, talks new Jewish music to the Temple Kol Ami religious school

The Shabbat Experience not only allows time to share prayers for healing, but also offers a charitable call to action to give back to our community. Last year this was a call to feed the hungry through The Ruach's Grab 'n' Go Lunch Program. This year, The Ruach has collected donations to purchase pillows that will be donated to Roof Above. This organization provides comprehensive homeless services for 1,200 people per day through a spectrum of services ranging from street outreach, day services, emergency shelter, and permanent supportive housing.

Over the years, The Ruach has collaborated with several area synagogues. This past November, members of the band visited Temple Kol Ami in Fort Mill, South Carolina, to teach its religious school students about how technology is changing the Jewish Experience.

As we move forward in 2022, the Jewish community will continue to create an embracing light in dark times. The Ruach is committed to illuminating the way by weaving our community's collective strengths together through modern Jewish music. We hope you will join us this year and become a part of our meaningful spiritual and cultural Experiences!



Peter Levinson doing a little curbside shuffle with Joe Buchanan, who visited Temple Kol Ami in March

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**Religious Life**

# Temple Beth El Hires Its First-Ever COO

Jonathan Friedman has been named Temple Beth El's first-ever chief operating officer (COO). He began work on April 25.

"We were lucky to find Jonathan at this stage in his career when he was ready for a new challenge," said TBE's board president, Benjamin Benson. "He wants to apply his passion, business skills, and know-how to the betterment of Jewish life in Charlotte. In uncertain times, he is the right leader to help our congregation build for a promising future."

Previously, Friedman was general counsel for Lighthouse Lab Services and Diagnostics, a successful healthcare start-up, and a litigator for Skadden, Arps, a prestigious New York law firm. He attended UNC Chapel Hill and Columbia Law School.

Friedman and his spouse, Rachel, are TBE congregants, graduates of the Bernstein Leadership Class XI, and together co-chaired the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte's "Super



Jonathan Friedman named as Temple Beth El's first-ever chief operating officer

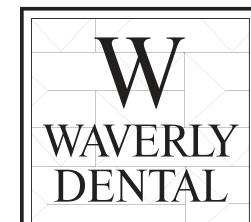
Sunday" fundraising event last year. Friedman also served on the boards of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte and the Charlotte Jewish Preschool.

Friedman was among more than two dozen candidates considered by the COO Search Committee, which began its

work in December. He was recommended based on his business acumen, keen intellect, thoughtfulness, and attention to detail.

Benson thanked the COO search committee, chaired by past presidents Moira Quinn Klein and Adam Bernstein, for their success in recruiting Friedman. Members were Benson, Rabbi Asher Knight, Eliza Carney, David Crane, Alan Krounvet, Joe Machicote, Derek Raghavan, Renee Sutker, Bobbie Ulanet, and Emily Zimmern.

"The search committee was extremely dedicated, and we could not have asked for a better outcome," Benson said.



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# The Path of Resilience

By Shelley Pawlyk

I like to write quotes, and one that came to me recently is "Resilience is the switch to set us on the railroad tracks that might have been right next to the other ones all along."

The Oxford English Dictionary describes resilience as "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness," and "the ability of substance or



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an object to spring back into shape; elasticity." The definitions imply our goal might be to get back to where we started. However, is it possible resilience can lead to a new start, taking us to a greater place in life or even an actual physical location than we had in our own original plan? Could faith be guiding us into a destiny we may not have discovered if we didn't choose the path of resilience in the face of adversity?

Recently, during Passover, we remembered the time we overcame slavery and left Egypt. There are parallels to not-so-distant times of injustice when our African American brothers and sisters endured the brutality of slavery, inequity, and hardship. Our families died in the Holocaust. Before that, there were inquisitions and pogroms. Many of us are descendants of Eastern European Jewry in Galicia and The Pale of Settlement within the western region of the Russian empire.

It is not just Jewish people

but also many people from many other nationalities who demonstrate resiliency. We are currently witnessing the displacement of Ukrainian women and children becoming a diaspora of war, worried about their brothers, sons, and husbands who continue to fight to maintain freedom.

As horrible as these events are, they are not new. Even pandemics are not new. Throughout history, people have shown resilience, passion, and conviction to live.

It was an honor and a privilege for members of Temple Solel to recently attend a dialogue facilitated by Gold Hill Middle School in Fort Mill with special guest, the creator and producer of the documentary called "Complicit," Richard Krakow. He tells the powerful story of the German liner St. Louis that sailed from Hamburg, Germany, in May 1939 to Havana, Cuba, carrying 937 passengers, almost all Jewish refugees. The ship was not allowed to land in Cuba,

Resilience is the switch to set us on the railroad tracks that might have been right next to the other ones all along.

the United States, or Canada. By not accepting those Jews, the film notes, the United States and other countries indirectly sanctioned Hitler's later actions. "Many, many thousands of lives could have been saved," Krakow said, had President Roosevelt offered the refugees a safe harbor.

We are currently witnessing volunteerism, teamwork, and compassionate generosity. Entire countries are opening their borders to take in refugees, including the United States. We see compassionate generosity. Let's always remember our neighbors, near and far, our family, friends, and the stranger.

As many times as is required to have confidence in the an-

swers, let us keep asking one another whether we are OK. I've learned over time we don't always tell the truth about our condition and pain because sometimes it is easier to help others and put the focus on them. We also must take care of ourselves to be a blessing to others.

*Temple Solel holds regular Shabbat services at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Fridays of each month and recently began meeting in person again at Belair UMC Family Life Center, 8095 Shelley Mullis Rd., Fort Mill, SC 29707. For more information about the High Holy Days, or guest speakers, see [templesolelSC.org](http://templesolelSC.org), write us at [info@templesolelSC.org](mailto:info@templesolelSC.org) or call (803) 610-1707.*



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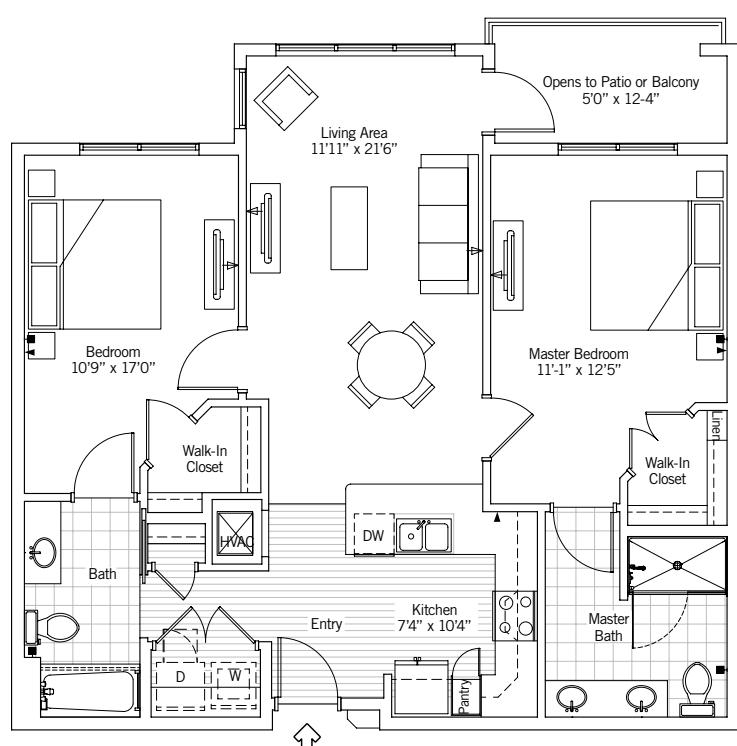
  
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# Sunflower Pins and Advocacy Postcards Show Support for Ukrainian Refugees

By Amy Lefkof

At Temple Israel's Yom Gemilut Hasadim on March 27, the Jewish Community Refugee Initiative (JCRI) staffed a table draped with a Ukrainian flag, flanked by a large map of the world. The Russian invasion of Ukraine that began in February has triggered Europe's fastest-growing refugee crisis since World War II. Just a month into the invasion, more than 3.6 million people had fled war-torn Ukraine for neighboring countries. In addition, more than 6.5 million people are thought to be internally displaced inside Ukraine, which has an estimated population of 40 million. Worldwide, there are more than 26 million refugees.



Temple Israel members Melissa Duller and her son Isaac filling out Statue of Liberty postcards in support of Ukrainian refugees

JCRI spotlighted several organizations that are aiding refugees and those internally displaced by the crisis in Ukraine, such as Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, the JDC – American Joint Distribution Committee, Inc., The Jewish Agency for Israel, and World Central Kitchen. (See box for links)

In addition to making donations to these and other organizations that aid war-displaced refugees, JCRI also offered ways for members of the Jewish

community to advocate for refugee resettlement and assist local refugees. At the table, Refugee Support Services (RSS), a local post-resettlement organization that helps newly arrived refugees make Charlotte their home, sold crocheted sunflower pins crafted by local refugee women who form its Knit Together Group (KTG). KTG coordinator, Annie Koch, explained that the group "has been working on making sunflower pins and clips as an advocacy and awareness project in



Crocheted sunflower pins crafted by local refugee women who form RSS's Knit Together Group (KTG)

support of those impacted by the current conflict in Ukraine and to promote peace and the upholding of global humanitarian rights."

Many who stopped by the table availed themselves of Statue of Liberty postcards pre-addressed to President Biden, North Carolina's Senators Tom Tillis and Richard Burr, and Representative Alma Adams, urging these leaders not only to provide significant humanitarian assistance to Ukrainians but also to rebuild a robust refugee program that can effectively process refugees from a variety of regions across the globe, including Ukraine.

JCRI member Leon Golynsky, himself a former refugee from the Soviet Union, summed up the task at hand, stating, "As Jews, we have a sacred obligation to shelter not just our fellow Jews, but all refugees fleeing persecution."



Leon Golynsky, JCRI member, a former refugee from the Soviet Union

## A sampling of organizations aiding Ukrainian refugees:

- Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte <https://www.jewishcharlotte.org>
- JDC-American Joint Distribution Committee Inc. <https://jdc.org/disasters/ukraine-response/>
- The Jewish Agency for Israel <https://www.jewishagency.org/>
- World Central Kitchen <https://wck.org/>

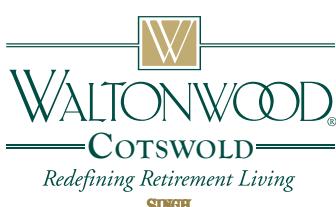


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## Women's News

# Celebrating Special Women of Hadassah

By Aileen Greenberg-Kriner

The wildly successful Mother's Day Lox Box returns on Sunday, May 8. Order yours by May 1 at [www.hadassahcltvents.org](http://www.hadassahcltvents.org). Treat your mom or a special person in your life to a delicious lox box brunch. Each box sells for \$20 and will be delivered to your home. Buy a box for your family members and make it a Mother's Day party. Brunch includes bagel, nova lox,

cream cheese, onions, capers, tomatoes, kugel, rugalach, fruit, coffee, and tea.

The COVID-delayed in-person Hadassah Charlotte Metro Board Installation is finally happening on Sunday, May 15 at 11a.m. Join us for brunch as we honor our incoming chapter leaders. Check our website for details.

Hadassah is very proud of board member Beverly Maurice,

who was recently appointed to the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust (The Council). The Council works with the North Carolina state government and is the only state-mandated organization in North Carolina with the mission of educating public school teachers and students about the Holocaust. The Council provides Holocaust resources, including survivor narratives and workshops for

teachers. It supplies historical information about the Holocaust and antisemitism to students and teachers along with lesson plans and teaching strategies. The Council also shares names of Holocaust survivors, second-generation survivors (children of survivors), and Holocaust experts who present talks to classes. Such important work. Mazal tov, Beverly!

Hadassah leadership will be sending a membership survey via email, asking the women in our chapter about events and activities they would like us to provide. There will be a link to the survey in the email. The survey will also be available on the Hadassah website. Please respond no later than May 30.

#### Monthly Happenings

Enjoy a night out with Hadassah women with Wine & Schmooze at Vintner Wine Market in the Arboretum Shopping Center. Join us on May 3 and the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m., for good wine and great conversation. Whether you are a longtime member, a new member, or interested in knowing what Hadassah is about, come on over for a fun, casual evening.

Join us for BookTalk on Tuesday, May 24 at 7 p.m. and chat about this month's book, "All Who Go Do Not Return" by Shulem Deen. The book, which won the 2015 National Jewish Book Award, is a moving and revealing exploration of Hasidic life and one man's struggles with faith, family, and community. Our June 28 book is "Henna House" by Nomi Eve.

Beverly's Book Nook in Lake Norman will meet on Friday, May 13 at 1:30 p.m. The book is

"Our Country Friends" by Gary Shteyngart. The Levin-Senderovskys; Sasha, Masha, and little Natasha; wait out the virus at their country estate with four close friends and one movie star.

On June 10, Beverly's Book Nook is having a very special event and fundraiser. A chance meeting at a bookstore in up-state New York propelled author Liza Wiemer to write the multi-award-winning book "The Assignment," which explores how two brave teens found the courage to speak up against antisemitism, discrimination, and hatred. Join us for a powerful book club presentation and discussion about the real-life assignment, behind-the-scenes details, and the journey to publication. Q&A with the author will follow the discussion. RSVP to both Book Nook events at [www.jewishcouncilofflakenorman.org/book-club](http://www.jewishcouncilofflakenorman.org/book-club).

The Short Stories Discussion Group reads stories by American authors and stories translated from Yiddish or Hebrew. The next meeting is Friday, May 20, with future meetings on June 17 and July 15, all via Zoom. The schedule for the summer and decisions about in-person versus Zoom will be decided by the group in July. Meetings are held on the third Friday of the month at 11:45 a.m.

#### In Other News...

Interested in joining Hadassah or learning more? Contact Anik Harrison at the phone or email below and come to one of our events.

The next Hadassah Charlotte Metro board meeting is Monday, May 16 at 7 p.m. Our first summer meeting is on June 20. Check the website for location.

Our website, [www.hadassahcltvents.org](http://www.hadassahcltvents.org), has details about most of our events. If you have questions or need a Zoom link, please email [HadassahCLT@gmail.com](mailto:HadassahCLT@gmail.com) or call our general phone number, (980) 553-1880. Your message will be forwarded to the correct person.

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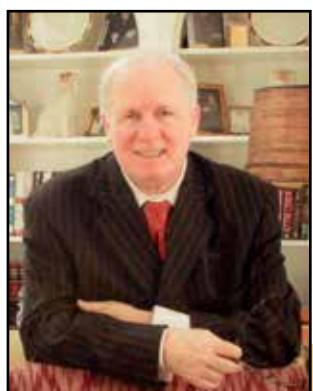
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**HADASSAH**



**Women's News**

# W.O.W. for Spring

*By Andrea Gamlin*

We have W.O.W.ed our families with some wonderful holiday decorating tips the past couple of months — making cork items for our kitchens and homes to decorating our tables for spring and Passover, we've had great fun! In March, about a dozen women gathered to create various items from wine corks. Some made trivets and coasters, and others made wall hangings and various home decorations. Many women brought their own corks that had special meaning, although we had plenty of corks thanks to a generous donation from a local oenophile. Fran Dordick brought some pieces she'd made to get our creative juices flowing, and everyone went home with cork décor thanks to Fran's knowledge and inspiration.

In April we made easy, lovely table decorations with June Hirschmann. With consideration to color, layers and design, simple Passover table decorations take the holiday to the next level. June shared her expertise of

design, making many Passover tables around Charlotte shine! A big thank-you to Fran and June for leading and teaching us and to Sara and Bonnie for lending your homes for our gatherings!

Now it's time to turn our attention to some people in our family. This is The Charlotte Jewish News month for celebrating Jewish youth, and celebrate we will! College Yoda Betsy Olinger will share advice and guidance to parents and high school students. Do you have questions about colleges and universities, admissions, and high school course work? You'll find answers and possibly more questions to ask your teen at this event. Check out our website for more information on date and location.

For our next book club, we will discuss "Chasing Freedom" by Ella Miriam. The book describes the struggles Ms. Miriam and her family endured while creating a brighter future for their loved ones. Not content with the life she was "sentenced" to in the Soviet Union,

this story shows how strong she needed to be to change that life. This book is about the author's courage and difficult decisions she had to make to rip free from the status quo. Our website lists all the information you need for the event, and we look forward to your joining us!

*For more information about W.O.W., please see our website at [www.CharlotteWomenOfWisdom.com](http://www.CharlotteWomenOfWisdom.com) and follow W.O.W. Inspiring, Empowering and Connecting Jewish Women on Facebook. We are a non-denominational group for Jewish women to engage, learn, and connect. No synagogue affiliation is necessary, just an interest to learn more about our beautiful heritage!*



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# The Chair a Texas Rabbi Threw at His Captor Is Headed to the American Jewish Museum

By Andrew Lapin, April 4, 2022  
(JTA)

When the rabbi at the center of January's synagogue hostage standoff first encountered the stranger who would soon hold him at gunpoint, he served him a cup of tea. Eleven hours later, as part of a daring escape, the rabbi threw a chair at him.

The teacup and the chair, items that together depict the terrifying arc of the synagogue hostage crisis at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, are now becoming literal artifacts of the American Jewish experience.

Congregation Beth Israel has donated the items to the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia for a new exhibit on modern-day antisemitism in America, which will open to the public this spring. The exhibit will be accompanied by a video

interview with Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker and the three congregants who were held hostage inside his synagogue by a British-Pakistani national.

"The Cup and The Chair" are not only artifacts that document a historic event but are symbolic of fundamental Jewish values: 'Welcoming strangers' and 'Redeeming captives,'" Misha Galperin, the Weitzman museum's president and CEO, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency via email.

"They also represent the basic American ideals of embracing newcomers and bravery in the face of danger. This is what Jewish Americans aspire to be and what the Weitzman Museum aspires to represent."

The items will be placed on the museum's ground floor, with high visibility to the public. The Weitzman's chief curator and director of exhibitions

and interpretation, Josh Perelman, said the intent is "to serve as a reminder of our collective responsibility for protecting and expanding the ideals enshrined at Independence Hall."

The synagogue had not revealed the names of two of the hostages, congregants Lawrence Schwartz and Shane Woodward, prior to the announcement of the museum exhibit, though Woodward had previously been identified as a hostage by a Jewish gun-rights YouTube channel.

The events in Colleyville in-

vigorated a national conversation on antisemitism in America, with Jews and non-Jews alike seeing fresh evidence of its unsettling prevalence. In its aftermath, Cytron-Walker testified before Congress and became a national advocate for increased synagogue security funding. He is leaving Congregation Beth Israel in July to lead a synagogue in North Carolina.

"We look forward to a time when future generations will not endure this anti-Semitic hatred," Congregation Beth

Israel's board of directors said in a statement. "The Weitzman Museum will play a large part in allowing the public to visit and learn as well as protect religious freedoms for Jews in America and worldwide."

The Philadelphia museum opened with great fanfare in 2010 and entered bankruptcy in last year, exiting after a gift from the fashion designer Stuart Weitzman allowed it to purchase its building and establish an endowment.

## Local Artist, Tara Spil, Creates Passover Egg for Charlotte's SHOUT Festival



The chair and the teacup from the Colleyville, Texas, synagogue hostage crisis will be entering the American Jewish history museum in Philadelphia. (Images courtesy of Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History and Emil Lippe/Getty Images. Photo illustration by Mollie Suss)



Charlotte Artist Tara Spil's "Passover Egg" at Charlotte SHOUT

By Shira Firestone

Tara Spil, a local Jewish artist featured in the September 2021, Charlotte Jewish News, brought her talents to the Greater Charlotte area in a big way (literally — the piece is four feet tall) in April with her "Passover Egg" at the SHOUT Festival. When she saw the call to artists from SHOUT organizers for Easter eggs to adorn Romare Bearden Park during the festival, she knew Jewish culture and Passover needed to be represented.

The event happened during Passover and the egg is such an important item on the Seder plate. She also felt the themes of freedom and resilience that are front and center at Passover are especially important now, in light of current events in Ukraine and around the world. The cyclical nature of the egg and the reassurance that brighter days will come is essential for all to remember and hope for.

Tara says of the design, "I thought about the meaning of Passover — order — and created the Star of David pattern via repetition and order using painter's tape and a lot of patience."

The handpainted egg took more than 100 hours over the course of two weeks to create.

See upcoming TBE SPICE Events at [www.templebethel.org/calendar](http://www.templebethel.org/calendar)

## May Events

Z = Zoom IP = At Temple Beth El

**MAY 04** Songs of Hope with Cantor Thomas (Z)

**MAY 18** Cancel Culture, Billy Graham, and the Jews: Weighing Nearly Forty-Five Years of a Historical Record with Rabbi Schindler (Z)

**JUNE 01** Reflections and Lessons from Six Years at Temple Beth El with Rabbi Klass (IP)

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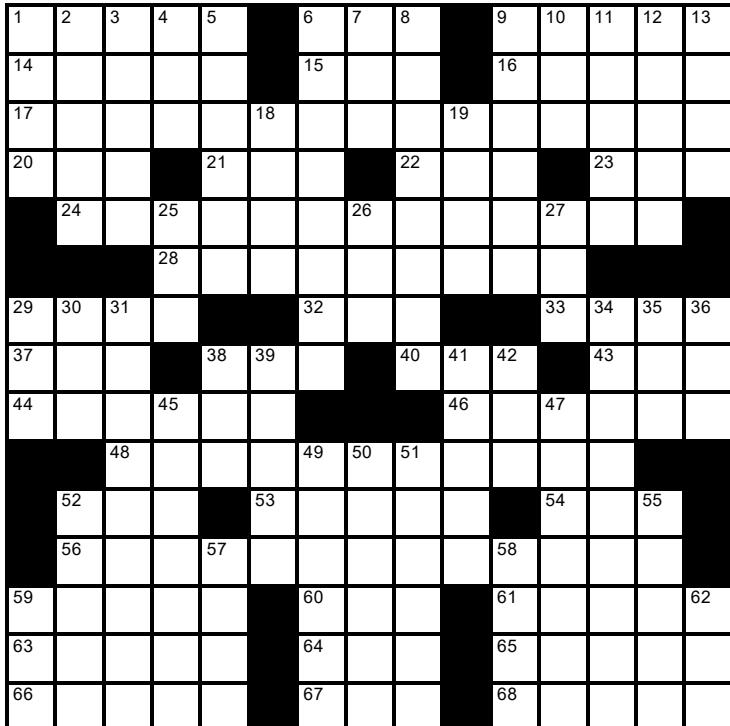
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# May Crossword Sponsored by Perry's Jewelry

*Thank you!*



(Solution on page 38)

## Across

- 1. It's the Jewish truth
- 6. Kid
- 9. Kafka's Gregor
- 14. "Beautiful" Hebrew name
- 15. Big bird
- 16. What the Maccabees excel at
- 17. The Black Panther's Shabbat specialty?
- 20. Lead-in to Na Na
- 21. Jordan flight connection?
- 22. Silent "Dark Knight" character?
- 23. Knotted attire
- 24. Sukkot item of a major Avenger's villain?
- 28. How a distrustful person behaves
- 29. Baseball player that stole home 54 times (!)
- 32. Nada

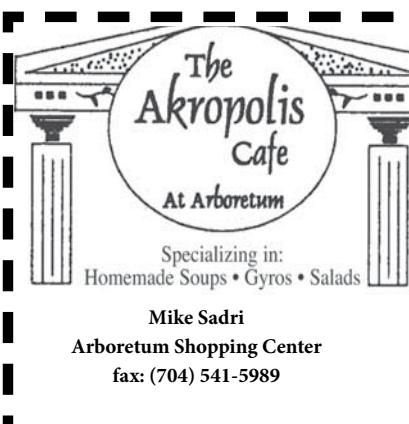
- 33. Just got by
- 37. Hashem, in Italy
- 38. Piece in Othello
- 40. Letters with serious long term affects
- 43. It goes before the "carte"
- 44. Like most businesses in Jerusalem on Saturday
- 46. Moishe of "Rechov Sumsum"
- 48. Buffet arranged by Thor's sidekick?
- 52. Hazardous, as winter roads
- 53. Celery by another name
- 54. "...said unto him, \_\_\_ the L-rd" (Exod.6:2)
- 56. Talmud belonging to one of the Guardians of the Galaxy?
- 59. Polite refusal
- 60. Pump option: Abbr.
- 61. Cancel (a mission)

- 63. Tel Dan or Merneptah (important artifacts in Jewish history)
- 64. Before, to Shelley
- 65. Casino openings
- 66. Wine containers
- 67. Carl to Rob (Reiner)
- 68. Actress Thompson in Marvel movies

- tolerant
- 47. It actually means "crumbly", and not relating to food that can be cooked in boiling oil
- 49. Was lenient with
- 50. Yael killed him
- 51. Gave a big hello to, perhaps
- 52. "Have \_\_\_ deal for you!"

- 55. Bazaars
- 57. Mineralogists study them
- 58. Mayflower pole
- 59. Defense advisory group to the POTUS
- 62. Traveler's checks, for short?

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Thursday 9 AM-5 PM in the home of Lynn Edelstein, 3802 Columbine Dr. (704) 366-6765

# Looking Back

Newspaper archives are a treasure trove of collective memories, providing a snapshot of our history. The following is from August, 1998. To read the whole issue or other issues of CJN, visit the archives at <https://www.digitalnc.org/newspapers/charlotte-jewish-news-charlotte-nc/>.

## Maccabi Mania Sweeps Queen City

Athletes From 28 Cities Arrive for Games

On August 9 athletes from around the U.S. will arrive in Charlotte for the Maccabi Games. Our entire community has joined together with the common goal of making these games a great success.

In order to make these games special for everyone involved, the Steering Committee of the 1998 JCC Maccabi Games invites our friends, neighbors, and community members to join us for the commencement of the 1998 JCC Maccabi Games at the Opening Ceremonies Celebration, Sunday, August 9, 7:00 PM (please arrive on time — the show will begin promptly), Hornets Training Center — Fort Mill, SC.

The evening promises to be a spectacular event with lots of fun, excitement, and touching moments. There will be a tribute by former Maccabiah athletes to the eleven athletes slain in the Munich Olympic Games, a ceremonial lighting of the

torch, a tribute to Israel's 50th birthday, and the highlight of the evening...the parade of athletes, featuring over 800 athletes and coaches from 28 cities across the U.S. and around the world, and, of course, our amazing TEAM CHARLOTTE!

To get to the Hornets Training Center from the JCC, take Providence Road North to the first light. Turn left onto Fairview. After about 3 miles, Fairview becomes Tyvola Road. Go approximately 5 miles to I-77 and go south to Exit 88 (approx. 8-10 miles). At the light, turn left. Go approximately 1/4 mile, past a gas station and get into the right lane. Go right onto Deerfield Drive. Bear right, follow the curve. The Training Center is right next to the Knights Baseball Stadium. (From the highway, you will be able to see the "giant baseball in the sky." It's a huge landmark — you can't miss it!)

### Support the games

Other ways the community can help catch and sustain Maccabi Mania is to participate in the fundraising efforts for the games. There is an exclusive limited raffle being held with First Prize of two USAir tickets, round-trip to anywhere in the continental U.S. Second prize is a fox-trimmed leather coat provided by Montaldo Furs, plus lots of additional Maccabi souvenir prizes. Tickets are \$18.00 each; three tickets for \$50; six tickets for \$98. Tickets can be purchased at the JCC front desk and all proceeds will benefit the Maccabi Games and Team Charlotte. The drawing will be held at the closing ceremonies, Thursday, August 13; you need not be present to win.

### Volunteer Opportunities

There are nine committees that still need your help as a volunteer. Opportunities are available in regis-

tration, opening ceremonies, hospitality, at the athletic venues, transportation, food, carnival/pool party/dance; closing celebration; and office assistance. This will be an incredible chance to be a part of the largest

Jewish community-building event ever sponsored in this area. Exact times and shifts vary by committee. Please contact the Maccabi office to sign up for one or more shift.

## Jewish Day School Expands to Middle School

The new school year will see the opening of a sixth grade at the Jewish Day School of Charlotte. Parents of the graduating class at the school launched the initiative for the new middle school. Nine students have already enrolled.

Mariashi Groner, director of the Jewish Day School has been working fervently to create the new curriculum and set up the classroom with the necessary supplies for the success of the program. Parents have been

actively involved in the creation of the school and have shared the burden of responsibility with Mariashi.

Confidence in the success of the middle school was high, based on the performance record of the Day school. One of the major challenges facing the school is adequate space for its many students. The enrollment of the school is close to ninety students. The Jewish preschool on Sardis has an enrollment of one hundred twenty children.

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\*as of April 14, 2022.

# The Most Pressing Issue Facing Jews Today: Social Media and Misinformation, a Student Essay



By Natalie Ben-Yohanan

As a Jewish teen, I have experienced the horrors of antisemitism on social media platforms. In modern society, social media has a huge prevalence in most of our lives, creating yet another platform for antisemitic posts, comments, and messages to be shared. Social media allows millions of users to view and share

posts, as well as stories. We have all been taught at a young age that not everything we see on social media is true. Much of the information found regarding Jews and Israel on social media is either false or taken out of context, harming Jews all over the world.

I believe that the most pressing issue facing Judaism today is the spreading and sharing of misinformation across various social media platforms. Misinformation, although it isn't credible, shapes the opinions of millions of social media users. As an example, we can take a look at May 2021, a time period where tensions between Israel and Hamas increased and received global media attention. As the conflict gained more at-

tention, many people, including those that hadn't done previous research on the topic, began reposting infographics filled with misinformation and accusations regarding Israel and Judaism. Even here in Charlotte, I engaged in discussions about the topic and found that people I knew had developed biases based on what they saw on social media. Along with anti-Israel arguments, these posts were filled with antisemitism. When people blindly follow others in reposting and sharing content without any prior research, they are harming the overall image and safety of the Jewish people.

To those that have not done prior research, what they see on social media stays ingrained in their minds and forms bias-

es. Due to this, I see the spread of misinformation as the most pressing issue facing Judaism today. Anti-Zionist ideas, antisemitism, and blatant hatred are spread on social media, harming Jews all over the world. To combat this, we must use our voices to educate those around us. Starting small, we can engage in conversations with our classmates and friends about Judaism and why antisemitism online is such a large threat. As part of ClubZ, an organization dedicated to helping Jewish teens advocate and educate others, I have learned about Jewish history and am able to use this information to educate others, both online and in person, and encourage others to speak up as well. Social media isn't going anywhere, and

we will still be presented with the problem of misinformation, but even in our small numbers, Jews can work together to educate others and advocate for our community.

Natalie Ben-Yohanan is a 10th grade student at Hough High School. She is involved in organizations including ClubZ, NFTY, and was part of the First Jewish Youth Assembly, sponsored by the World Jewish Congress.

**Editor's Note:** We hope you enjoy this essay in addition to those of the winner and runner-up on page 8. Natalie's essay did not have the opportunity to be judged for the contest, but we believe her message is one that should be heard.



Watch: "Spring Is a New Beginning" with Miss Debby (Debby Block), storyteller and Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte's Center for Jewish Education's program coordinator. More of Miss Debby's storytimes can be found at <https://jewishcharlotte.org/cje/storytime>.



Watch: "Shavuot Storytime" with Miss Debby (Debby Block), storyteller and Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte's Center for Jewish Education's program coordinator. More of Miss Debby's storytimes can be found at <https://jewishcharlotte.org/cje/storytime>.



## AJC Poll: American Jewish Millennials Care About Israel and Are Largely Unworried About How It Is Perceived

Ron Kampeas, April 26, 2022 (JTA)

American Jewish millennials have positive feelings about Israel, even when they answer questions that are infused with anxiety about its status.

That's according to a poll released Monday by the American Jewish Committee that found that most Jews aged 25-40 think Israel is necessary to the survival of the Jewish people (69.6%), and that it's important for American Jews to maintain close ties with Israel (72.8%). A majority, 64.7%, said they took pride in Israel's accomplishments. They said they believe that 90% of American Jews cared about Israeli Jews.

And as much as the respondents felt affection for Israel, they were not overly worried about how the country is perceived, even when the AJC's questions suggested that there is an anti-Israel climate on campus or elsewhere, or that Jewish and Israeli survival are at risk.

Asked whether the "actions of the state of Israel have made my life as an American Jew more difficult," 58% said the

phrase did not describe their experience.

Asked whether "The anti-Israel climate, on campus or elsewhere, has forced me to hide my Jewish identity," 62.2% said this did not describe their experience, and 10.9% said they didn't think there is an anti-Israel climate. The poll elicited similar results when it asked respondents whether "the Anti-Israel climate, on campuses or elsewhere, has damaged my relationships with friends."

The results were not all sunny. A third of respondents said Israeli actions have in fact made their lives more difficult, and one in five said anti-Israel sentiment had corroded their friendships or caused them to hide their Jewishness.

The two AJC officials who shaped the poll said they baked implicit assumptions about how Israel is perceived and discussed into the questions because they wanted to sharpen the answers respondents gave. Such assumptions are typically avoided in surveys because they can influence how people answer.

(Continued on next page)

# Idina Menzel, Ilana Glazer, Rachel Bloom and Several Other Jewish Celebs Discuss Antisemitism on YouTube Show

By Evelyn Frick, April 14, 2022  
 (JTA)

It's fun and exciting when our favorite celebrities regale us with the minutiae of their lives. What color were the balloon arches at Jenny Slate's bat mitzvah? How does Morgan Spector react to being the object of the internet's thirst?

But when our favorite celebrities speak out on issues that matter, that's a special kind of heartening.

In "Recipe for Change: Standing Up to Antisemitism," a YouTube special released in April produced by The Spring-Hill Company, a whole cohort of Jewish celebrities are doing just that.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dj-pWmsOIyQ>

Featuring (seriously, prepare yourself for this star-studded list) Idina Menzel, Ilana Glazer, Rachel Bloom, Skylar Astin, Michael Twitty, Hannah Einbinder, Alex Edelman, Tommy Dorfman, Josh Peck, Hari Nef, Michael Zegen and more, "Recipe for Change" brings together this group to discuss the current global rise of antisemitism.

In the special, the celebs are divided into three Shabbat dinners and are each given a scroll. As they dine on delicious looking Black and Middle East-



A large group of Jewish celebrities participate in "Recipe for Change: Standing Up to Antisemitism." (Courtesy of Spring-Hill Company)

ern-inspired Jewish food, they open their scrolls to discuss the tough questions they pose like, "Have you ever experienced antisemitism?" and "Could the Holocaust happen again?"

For "Mrs. Maisel" actor Michael Zegen, the latter question prompted memories of intergenerational trauma. "My grandparents on my mother's side were Holocaust survivors," he remembered. "My grandfather essentially lost his whole family. His father was shot on the way to the trains because he had a club foot and couldn't keep up. So they shot him."

But the dinner conversations aren't about only antisemitism. Rather, some of the scrolls focus on Jewish joy, asking, "What makes you proud to be Jewish?" and, "Tell me you're Jewish without telling me you're Jewish." Other scrolls prompt discussions about Jewish identity, like whether Jews of European descent are white.

In a moment of perfectly blended humor and a confession of Jewish assimilation, Idina Menzel revealed, "I have to come clean, so my real spelling of my name is

M-E-N-T-Z-E-L. Which everyone would say 'Ment-zel' and I had a lot of self-hatred about that for some reason. And then [I] wanted this cool sounding [name], so I took the 't' out, which didn't help anybody say it right."

Ultimately, "Recipe for Change" couldn't be coming at a better time. Debuting right before Passover, and when many Jewish families will be gathering at their own tables, this special will easily prompt important discussions for many Jews, as well as allies to the Jewish community.

"Recipe for Change" also succeeds in its radical inclusivity. Instead of just focusing on what Jewishness and antisemitism mean to cisgender,

straight, Ashkenazi Jewish men, the special very purposefully makes room for the voices of Black Jews, Mizrahi Jews, LGBTQ+ Jews and Jewish women.

What results are conversations that are as thoughtful and poignant as they are full of laughter and Jewish pride.

This article first appeared on Hey Alma. The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.

## AJC Poll

(Continued from previous page)

"Part of the reason that we ask the question in the way that we did was because we have to have a clear question that won't be misinterpreted and that can also give us data that can be quantified easily," Laura Shaw Frank, the director of AJC's contemporary Jewish life department. Shaw Frank spoke in a joint interview with Dana Steiner, the director of AJC ACCESS Global, which targets younger Jews.

The poll assessed the views of American millennial Jews on Israel in conjunction with another poll of Israeli Jewish millennials assessing their attitudes toward the American Jewish community.

"Asking about the notion of survival does cut to the core of how each of these groups feels about one another," Shaw Frank said.

Steiner, who is a millennial, said she had registered among Jews her age concerns about Jewish and Israeli survival, and she wanted to see if it was validated more broadly.

"I had been anecdotally hearing real concern from young people saying, 'You know, I'm worried that my generation is just not going to care anymore or that they won't support Israel in a way that could potentially risk its existential standing,'" she said. "And I think one of the reasons we wanted to get this question out there was to understand, is this true? Is there really an existential crisis at play? And I think what our data suggests is: No, there isn't."

That was good news, she said. "Seeing this was very affirming and very helpful for us," she said.

The AJC highlighted the high scores for mutual caring in both populations in its press release. "Significant majorities of American (72%) and Israeli (89%) Jewish millennials say it is important that the American Jewish community and Israel maintain close ties, with 48% of Americans and 46% of Israelis saying it is very important," the release said.

The survey nonetheless uncovered sharp differences over the degree to which Diaspora Jews should be involved in shaping Israeli policies. The AJC release noted that "55% of American Jews, and 22% of Israelis say it is appropriate for American Jews to try to influence Israeli policy, while 36% of Americans and 69% of Israelis say it is not appropriate."

The survey of 800 American Jews, ages 25-40, was conducted by YouGov between Feb. 9 and March 30 and had a margin of error of 4.69 percentage points. The survey of 1001 Israeli Jews was conducted by Geocartography from Feb. 14-22 and had a margin of error of 4 percentage points.

Two polls last year also found that the majority of American Jews feel connected to Israel, even as a significant number of them, especially younger ones, agree with critical statements about Israeli policy.



"You Will Be Found" is a virtual performance done by the staff and children of the Performing Arts Unit of Camp Mindy 365. The kids came to the Levine JCC every day from September 2020–May 2021 to do their virtual learning, and in the afternoons, they did a variety of arts-related activities. The staff and students collaborated on this final piece in May of 2021 as a way to share a positive message of hope and perseverance — two things that sustained all of us through that school year. Ranging from kindergarten–8th grade, the kids all learned and recorded the song, learned choreography, participated in photo and video shoots, and wrote pieces that were then all edited together into this virtual piece.

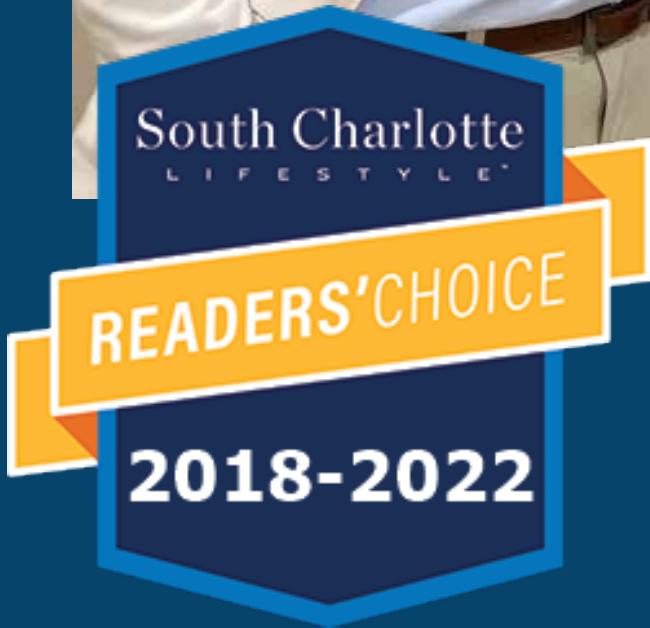




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