

The Charlotte JEWISH news

Vol. 42, No. 4

Nisan-Iyar-Sivan 5780

April-May 2020

The Crisis Is New, the Tradition Is Not

Jews have faced crises throughout history. Whenever faced with emergencies, Jews traditionally respond with prayer, action, and adaptability. Today, we are faced with both a flood of emotions and a flood of requests for assistance

from our local community.

As is the tradition, the Greater Charlotte Jewish community has responded to these needs with understanding, compassion, and financial support. But, as is also a tradition within the Jew-

ish community, people need to participate. The escalation of COVID-19 calls for a coordinated response to meet the demands created by this unprecedented pandemic. And that coordinated response is the JewishCharlotte

Emergency Response Fund.

The JewishCharlotte Emergency Response Fund will be guided by the Federation and fund individuals, families, and Jewish organizations affected by the pandemic. The assistance will allow organizations to preserve their workforces, and deliver critical services. 100% of every dollar raised will go directly to agencies to meet critical needs.

To help with this important effort, Please donate at www.jewishcharlotte.org or mail your check to Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, 5007 Providence Road, Ste. 101, Charlotte, NC 28226.

If you need more information, contact Sam Bernstein, Federation Chief Development and Marketing Officer at 704-944-6758. ☆

JEWISH TOGETHER

JewishCharlotte

Emergency Response Fund

WWW.JEWISHCHARLOTTE.ORG

THANK YOU!

As of April 14, our **JEWISHCOMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND** has raised more than **\$312,000!** Thank you to those who have already donated. The needs will continue. Visit www.jewishcharlotte.org and donate today.

Please join us for our **Virtual Annual Meeting** on **May 21 at 7:00 pm** as we honor Outgoing President, Alison Lerner and welcome Incoming President, Ron Townsend.

Last month, the first round of grants was approved for distribution to meet the most immediate needs. Learn how these dollars will help strengthen and sustain our community, and how Federation is working in partnership with you, our dedicated and generous community members, to stay responsive during COVID-19.

Campaign 2020 Powered by You

As Federation continues to work with our network of beneficiary agencies to meet short-term needs as a result of COVID-19, our 2020 Annual Campaign continues to insure that we are able to sustain the recovery once this crisis is over and beyond. Federation is uniquely positioned to manage overall communal needs by con-

vening its partners to identify and respond to those needs and ultimately working with the largest donor base in the community to help fund those needs. This is what Federation does day in and day out and this is what your Annual Campaign dollars fund year in and year out.

Donors to Federation's Annual

Campaign appreciate the importance of community. Your investment means even more in times of crises so that we continue to support those organizations and programs that make our Charlotte Jewish community a special place to live. If you have not already done so, please make your 2020 Annual Campaign commitment today at www.jewishcharlotte.org or mail your donation to Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, 5007 Providence Road, Ste. 101, Charlotte, NC 28226. ☆



CAMPAIGN 2020: AT A GLANCE

1155 Donors

\$5,000,000

\$ Raised
\$3,207,156
as of April 14, 2020

Songs to Wash Your Hands for 20 Seconds - Jewishly

1. Recite the ritual handwashing blessing two times: "Baruch Atah Adonai Elheinu Melech HaOlam Al N'teelat Yadaim."
2. Sing the first verse of *Mi Chamocha* using the Dan Nichols arrangement.

*Do you have a favorite Jewish tune to wash your hands by?
Tell us what it is on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/charlottejewishnews.*

FOR A MORE CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER WRITTEN BY RABBI JUDY SCHINDLER, PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 25.

Stay safe and healthy, from the staff and board of The Charlotte Jewish News

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~ JEWISH FEDERATION NEWS ~

Our Family in Israel During COVID19

By P2G Staff (written on April 2)

We are currently undergoing a symmetrical crisis. The whole world is facing an epidemic and economic crisis at the door. People are lonely in homes and afraid of the future. We wanted to bring you some of the voices and stories from our partnership region of Hadera-Eiron in Israel.

It seems like all the people in Israel are either working from home, being laid off temporarily, or being sent home on unpaid vacation. Since the children are on forced leave from school, on the one hand, it is convenient and it is better to be home with them. On the other hand, there is a serious concern about the economic price we will all have to pay, as a society and individuals.

Many walk around with a feeling that they have no grip on reality. And in the meantime, there is a kind of balance that is immersed in a lot of Jewish-Israeli humor, about the reality forced upon us to be with the children 24/7, workers not working from home, or how fun it is to not have to host the mother-in-law for a Seder dinner this year.

Cheli Hakimi, an owner of two local businesses who took part

two years ago in a Partnership Leadership Mission describes the situation: "Businesses have closed down however their outgoing cash flow continues as usual (with the exception of a few state provisions to ease their situations). Suppliers are being paid even though there are no revenues coming in. Small businesses will survive this month of March since they were able to operate for half a month, but if April continues to witness a shutdown, many business will collapse financially and, with that, entire families who depend on the income. Unfortunately, this is the same situation for all businesses and people. We're all in the same boat. Until last week, the country was allowing businesses to decide whether to remain open or not. I, like many others, decided to close my businesses a week ago in order to assist in the general effort to stop the spread of the virus and to protect my own employees and customers."

The most difficult thing these days is the feeling of uncertainty. Instructions to the public change from day to day and are sometimes unclear. We don't know how long this situation will con-



Eliyahu Krav with the Mayor of Pardes-Hanna.



Chelmi Halimi's closed store.

tinue and how much more serious it will become. Another serious concern is the generation of older parents in Israel who have seen wars and recovery, economic and political crises.

Efrat Lapid, a math teacher at Katzir School: "My parents aren't alive today but I'm happy they don't have to experience this feeling of isolation that I'm experiencing. This almost complete shutdown and not being able to go to work is forcing me and everyone else into social isolation. I'm used to being around my fellow teachers at school and taking part in folk dancing twice a week. Now I'm limited to giving assignments online to my students at home. On the bright side, I've learned to cook a more varied menu for my teenage kids who remain with me (unless they're glued to their screens playing Minecraft or Fortnite). I 'meet' my friends online including Gery, who hosted me last summer in Richmond and who told me about the situation there, which is virtually the same. Her husband is in the medical profession and works long hours while Gery's routine hasn't changed radically since she works from home while raising her small children."

At present, the unemployment rate reached

22% of the workforce, however some employees are considered essential in emergency situations. One such person is Eliyahu Krav, who took part in our Young Leadership Mission last year. Eliyahu works in the Local Council as director of the Community Security Authority. Only several weeks ago Eliyahu got married in a ceremony that was viewed live online by many "guests" from our SE Communities. He and his wife were on their way to their honeymoon when the coronavirus crises erupted, thus changing their plans entirely. Today, Eliyahu works round the clock and under tremendous pressure with little sleep in order to carry out all of his emergency tasks. He is being swamped with calls amid this hectic situation which is dynamic

and changes from day to day.

All of the children are at home these days. The older ones are studying online, the younger ones are not. The hardest thing for the children is being away from their friends and not being able to go to parks or take part in extracurricular activities. So naturally they're bored. It's even harder for parents who need to keep their children occupied and maintain the family's morale, even though some of them are working from home while others are seeking some sort of income and trying to fathom what's happening in this new "age."

Our P2G team created a number of alternative projects online that will offer encouragement to our communities in the U.S. and Israel. Our overriding guideline, as always, is the relationship between us.

On the bright side, we all have more time to spend with our immediate families and we're learning to appreciate the simple things in life that we took for granted in the past. Despite the feeling of isolation – away from family relatives, parents and friends – as a Partnership staff we are busy trying to continue strengthening our relationship with the Jewish community overseas amid this new reality of virtual meetings and activity.☆



The P2G Partnership connected Temple Beth El's 6th grade class to a Passover cooking lesson with Neta Silberg in Hadera.

Shabbat and Holiday Candle Lighting for May 2020

- Friday, May 1, 7:51 PM
- Friday, May 8, 7:57 PM
- Friday, May 15, 8:02 PM
- Friday, May 22, 8:08 PM
- Thursday, May 28, First Night of Shavuot, 8:12 PM
- Friday, May 29, after 8:13 PM



The Charlotte Jewish News

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Sue's Book Shelf

By Sue Littauer

The Interpreter, scheduled for publication on March 28, is one of the most unusual Holocaust books I've ever read.

This unique story travels back and forth in time and perspective.

It is the story of Kurt Berlin who as a teenager is sent by his parents Berta and Hertz to Brussels, Belgium, on the Kindertransport in 1939. While on board he meets Elsa and they are taken in and lovingly cared for by the wonderful Mandelbaum family. During their stay, Kurt and Elsa fall in love and promise to find each other after the war.

The Interpreter is also the story of Kurt's parents Berta and Hertz Berlin, and recounts their highly suspenseful and dangerous escape to freedom. Hertz and Berta find themselves in unfathomable situations and their subsequent actions of daring and bravery are spellbinding for the reader.

Hoping to find the answers about what happened during the war to his extended family and the woman he loves, US Army

officer Kurt Berlin returns to Europe in 1945 to accept the post of interpreter in the OSS interrogation of a captured Nazi war criminal. This task is emotionally heart wrenching for Kurt as it brings back the extreme Antisemitism he and his family suffered at the hands not only of the Nazis but specifically the particular Nazi who is being questioned. As the interrogation progresses, Kurt is faced with a moral dilemma which if acted upon would have serious repercussions for him and his family. Kurt's struggle and subsequent actions are central to the fast-moving plot.

The Interpreter is a suspenseful first-rate novel of historical fiction that has it all – love, hatred, heartbreak, family loyalty, danger, and courage. It is sure to be an award winner for author A.J. Sidransky who has published three novels since 2013. The National Jewish Book Awards selected his first novel *Forgiving Maximo Rothman* as a finalist in Outstanding Debut Fiction



in 2013. Next Generation Indie Book Awards selected *Stealing a Summer's Afternoon*, his second book, as a finalist for Best Second Novel in 2015. *Forgiving Mariela Camacho* his third work, received the David Award, from Deadly Ink! Writer's Conference for Best Mystery of 2016.

A.J. Sidransky is currently at work on *The Investigator*, the second installment in *The Interpreter* series. He lives in Washington Heights in Upper Manhattan with his wife. He is a dyed-in-the-wool New Yorker, born in the Bronx, and a life-long Yankees fan.

If you are looking for a book you can't put down, read *The Interpreter* – then join me in anticipating A.J. Sidransky's next book in the series. ☆



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Sue Littauer's Virtual Bookshelf

The Library may be closed, but our e-books are always available. Sue recommends the following e-books:

The Grace Kelly Dress

by Brenda Janowitz

Mrs. Everything

by Jennifer Weiner

An Unorthodox Match

by Naomi Ragen

The Two-Family House

by Lynda Cohen Loigman

The Tattooist of Auschwitz

by Heather Morris

The Floating Feldmans

by Elyssa Friedland

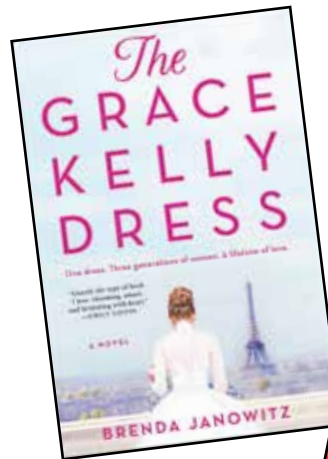
Lady in the Lake

by Laura Lippman

Witness: Lessons from Elie

Wiesel's Classroom

by Ariel Berger



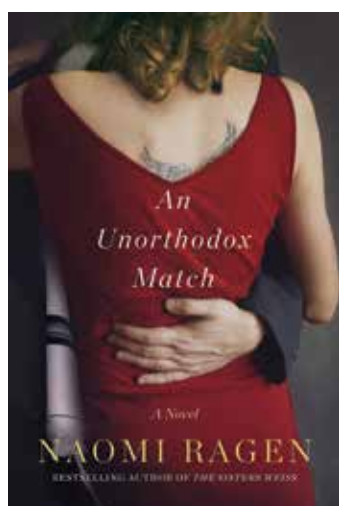
Check out e-books at
www.jewishcharlotte.org/cje.

What's On Sue's Book Shelf ?

* *An Unorthodox Match* by Naomi Ragen
* *Fly Already* by Etgar Keret
* *Cilka's Journey* by Heather Morris

* *On Division* by Goldie Goldbloom
* *This Is Not How It Ends* by Rochelle B. Weinstein
* *I Owe You One* by Sophie Kinsella
* *Flower Toward the Sun* by Marcia R. Rudin
* *The Flight Portfolio* by Julie Orringer
* *Lady in the Lake* by Laura Lippman
* *Drawing Home* by Jamie Brenner
* *The World That We Knew* by Alice Hoffman
* *The Bookshop of Yesterdays* by Amy Meyerson

* *An Available Man* by Hilma Wolitzer
* *The Last Bathing Beauty* by Amy Sue Nathan ☆



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True Connections



At every age we are discovering and connecting with who we are and what we can share with others. We cherish our Jewish values more deeply, including the importance of embracing those of different beliefs and backgrounds. A community that models inclusivity and naturally intertwines the wisdom of age with the energy of youth builds the well-being of all.

This is the opportunity we are bringing you, right here in Charlotte. The region's first and only intergenerational Jewish community intentionally integrates programs and services of some of the area's most respected not-for-profit organizations. The result will be a Jewish community for those 62 and older unlike any other in the country. This boutique community will include 125 elegant, comfortable residenc-

es that are maintenance free, include access to any future healthcare needed, and are centered amid unparalleled lifestyle options on a dynamic, intergenerational campus.

Generations at Shalom Park will offer you the trusted, top-rated care and service of Aldersgate Life Plan Services, along with the exceptional programs, resources and community life of the Shalom Park campus.

Whether you're an artist, a scholar, a community leader or an entrepreneur, pursuing a life passion or learning something new, you'll find **Generations at Shalom Park** brings you a circle of individuals who share your values and traditions. Those who choose this exciting new community will discover true connections—among generations, faiths and backgrounds—that show we never finish growing.

Fitness and wellness membership

Imagine how many more classes, concerts and workouts you'd attend if they were right outside your door.

When you choose a new residence at **Generations at Shalom Park**, your apartment home will include access to the programs and services on the 54-acre Shalom Park campus with unending opportunities to nurture mind, body and spirit. Here are just a few: • Ceramics studio, art studio and music practice rooms • Performance opportunities and a full cultur-



al arts calendar • Established lifelong learning programs in languages, current events and more • Fitness center with top-of-the-line equipment • Numerous classes and professional trainers • Spacious indoor and outdoor pools • Tennis courts

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Israeli dance performers are warming up at the cultural center. Hebrew class is about to begin. People are walking to the Conservative and Reform synagogues to celebrate Shabbat together.

It's a typical afternoon on the Shalom Park campus in Charlotte. Friends and families of all ages are thriving, connecting and sharing their lives and traditions with each other.

It's the perfect place for a community unlike any other—a new community for those 62 and older called **Generations at Shalom Park**.



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PJ OUR WAY Visits CJDS

Charlotte's chapter of PJ Our Way organized a very special experience for the children of Charlotte Jewish Day School's 3rd grade class – a virtual visit from PJ Library's award-winning author Erica Perl. After reading Ms. Perl's book *When Life Gives You O.J.*, the students prepared thoughtful questions. Each child was able to have a turn to ask his/her question and receive answers that were insightful and often funny. As the students left the Center for Jewish Education, they all were wondering when they could have this experience again.

We are so grateful to Erica Perl for providing this wonderful, educational experience.

PJ Our Way Charlotte looks forward to bringing this type of experience to more of our local schools in the future.

What is PJ Our Way?

PJ Our Way is the next chapter of the popular PJ Library program. Kids ages 8-1/2 to 11 receive the gift of exceptional books with Jewish themes – and they get to choose the books themselves. Our Charlotte community has over 260 PJ Our Way subscribers. If you would like to receive free, age-appropriate Jewish books every month, then go to pjourway.org. ☆



PJOW kids visited the Center for Jewish Education for a virtual visit with author Erica Perl.



Erica Perl on the big screen in the Levine-Sklut Library resource room.



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David Thrope from Marvin and Sharon Taubman

In March

IN MEMORY OF

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Baer from Barnet and Harriet Weinstock

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Merideth deLoach to Amy deLoach from Mr. and Mrs. David Thrope

Shirley Mittler to Abbe Greenfield from Craig and Cindy Katzman, Doug and Paula Gentile, Diane Rosenberg, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wallack

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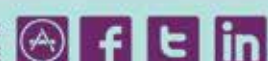
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Jewish Family Services – Caring for the Community

Over the last several weeks, JFS has been on the frontlines, responding to the urgent needs of children, families, and older adults across our community. We wanted to take a moment to update you on just a few ways we're addressing COVID-19:

Our staff is working remotely, connecting with each other and clients to ensure we can continue providing vital services to the hundreds of Charlotteans who depend on us.

COVID-19 Support Page: We've added a support page that identifies programs, services and activities - all of the ways in which JFS and others are supporting the community. Go to www.jfscharlotte.org, under the services tab to access support or learn how you can help.

JFS Food Pantry: Just before the shutdown JFS had no way of knowing what was to come, but we knew, with a sense of great urgency that our food pantry clients would be in need so practically overnight a month's worth of groceries was distributed to each food pantry client. Those clients are still receiving the food they need for themselves and their families.

Mental Health Services: COVID-19 has presented unique challenges that none of us has ever faced. Right now we are experiencing a loss of control, fear, and anxiety about our health and



The trunk of Bill Brightman's car filled with groceries ready to deliver.

that of our loved ones and we've lost the structure and normalcy of our everyday lives. At JFS, we have continued to provide therapy through phone and video sessions.

Older Adults and Caregivers: JFS continues to provide on-going personal contact to 24 Holocaust survivors and approximately 65 other senior adults in



Bobbie Mabe harvested the Shalom Park garden for fresh produce for JFS clients.

the community. Online resources are also being shared so seniors can remain connected and engaged and Caregiver Support Groups are being held virtually.

Financial Support: Many in our community are getting laid off and people of all income levels are feeling the effects of the times, facing financial stressors that never could have been anticipated.

JFS has established a special COVID-19 Emergency Fund to assist those in need. For more information please go to www.jfscharlotte.org.

Volunteering: So many in our community have reached out and offered to help in any way needed. Thank you does not nearly feel adequate. Just a few highlights:

* The Charlotte Jewish community donated hundreds of pounds of food.

* 67 "Taste of the Holidays" Passover Bags were filled and delivered to homebound seniors and to eight different assisted living facilities across Charlotte, delivered by 15 volunteers, in two days.

* Dozens of prepared meals were donated by The Circle of Generous Hearts.

* 75 bags of groceries

were filled and delivered by an army of volunteers.

* Shalom Park Community Garden didn't miss a beat and harvested fresh produce for the pantry clients.

* Shai Fargian and his staff from YAFO Kitchen, donated a bounty of homemade Passover dinners for pantry clients

* Motti Groner and the Young Adult Professionals of Uptown Chabad delivered food and Passover holiday bags.

April was Volunteer Appreciation Month, a time to recognize and thank volunteers who help us deliver services and to make a difference in the lives of our clients. In addition to those who stepped up with recent, most urgent needs, we are grateful for all of our volunteers, year-round, who help us make friendly visits, serve food at our community celebrations, or lead Shabbat Services at senior residential communities. We could not do what we do without their time, talent, and gifts.

Online Programs and Activities JFS - "Coping Conversations"

We are living through unique and challenging times that none of us has ever faced before. We are experiencing a loss of control, perhaps fear and anxiety about our health and that of our loved ones, and a loss of structure and normalcy of our everyday lives. JFS will be hosting several online workshops dedicated to dealing with the nuances of these unique and uncertain times, offering

ways to cope.

Triple P Positive Parenting - Age specific online workshops offering tips and tricks for parenting, addressing:

* For toddlers/pre-schoolers: tantrums, disobedience, and trouble following directions

* For elementary: fears, chores, and homework.

* For teens/tweens: rudeness and disrespect, anxiety, and depression.

Finding Your Shalom: Managing Stress and Anxiety - This workshop is dedicated to helping adults process and manage their daily lives during these most unusual and uncertain times. Learn coping skills and strategies for feeling more grounded. Explore ways to become more resilient while managing your everyday stressors.

For dates and times of workshops email us at info@jfscharlotte.org or call 704-364-6594.

For assistance, volunteering, or more information on any of the above programs and services go to JFScharlotte.org. ☆



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Month of February 2020

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Meal Prep by Circle of Generous Hearts: Sharon Cavanaugh, Gladys Cherny, June Hirschman, Sandy Hoagland, Johnson and Wales, Judy Kaufmann, Penny Krieger, Andy McClearly, Harriet Meetz, Elissa Vining, Robin Zimmerman

Live Laugh Give Comedy Night Volunteers: Sam Batt, Ru-

bina Batt, Jeff Bierer, Suzy Catenazzo, Andrea Cronson, Maggie Fogel, Rachel Friedman, Jessica Garfield, Tara Green, Andrea Hollendar, Kevin Levine, Kim Levy, Adam Levy, Adina Lowenstein, Jodi Michel, Stacy Moskowitz, Cynthia Perrino, Stephanie Rindner, Anne Sinesheimer, Louis Sinkoe, Fred Sphorer, Alan Sussman, Lori Trapani, Amy Udoff, Anna Valdman

Food Pantry Donations: Dan Coblentz, Samantha DeRosa, Megan Harkavy, Carolyn Snyder, Ken and Marcia Stern, Charlotte Jewish Community Center Members, Charlotte Jewish Day School, Charlotte Jewish Preschool Miss Karly's 3s class, Miss Caitlin and Stephanies 1s class, Hebrew High, Temple Israel and Temple Beth El Congregants

Thank you for Tzedakah: Gleibermans Kosher Mart customers, Temple Israel Morning Minyan Group

Month of March 2020

Volunteers: Rick Abrams, Marcia Arnolt, Madeline Aron, Ana Bonheim, Bill Brightman, James Bryan, Suzy Catenazzo, Jonathan Collman, Andrea

Matt Luftglass, Len Marco, Harriet Meetz, Frada Moenter, Harry Rubenstein, Linda Saffir, Fred Shporer, Louis Sinkoe, Mason Sklut, Harry Sparks, Ken Stern, Steve Teich, Amalia Warshenbrot, Jan Weiner, Nancy Wielunski,

Food Pantry Donations: June Hirschman, Carolyn Snyder, Elliot Lowenstein in honor of her birthday, Charlotte Jewish Community Center members, Char-

lotte Jewish Day School, Charlotte Jewish Preschool, Hebrew High, Temple Israel and Temple Beth El Congregants, Women of Wisdom

Thank you for baking/donating hamataschen: Madeline Aron, Wendy Kweskin, Ballantyne Jewish Center, Charlotte Jewish Preschool's Miss Nadine and Miss Terry's 4s, Hebrew High, Peggy Gartner, Beth Thrope, Women of Wisdom ☆



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Women's News

Irving Bienstock Visits Hadassah Hospital

By Dana Kapustin

Lillian Bienstock was actively involved in the Charlotte Chapter of Hadassah between the years of 1975-1992. She was our treasurer for four years. She enjoyed playing Mah Jongg, having lunch, and socializing with the Hadassah ladies. It was Irving's wish to recite the Mourners Kaddish for Lillian while visiting Hadassah Hospital in the Chagall Chapel.

When Irving Bienstock went to Israel in February of 2020, one of the most important places he

ceived a special visit by Dvir, a very special man with an incredible story of survival, hope, and blessings for the future from Hadassah. His life was saved by Hadassah Hospital when he was a teenager as a victim of terror attacks. Now, he shares his passion, pride, and gratitude for Hadassah Hospital daily with patients and visitors. Next we went to visit with the family of the lone soldier who was a victim of the terror attack in Jerusalem the day we arrived in Israel. He was a member of the army unit that was having a ceremony at the Western Wall, when a terrorist drove his car into the group of soldiers. Irving is grateful for the Israel Defense Forces, and he shared these feelings with the Lone Soldier from San Diego, CA. We met incredible people, experienced a VIP tour by Deputy Directory of Hadassah, Barbara Goldstein, and learned about the Chagall windows. No trip to Israel is complete without visiting Hadassah Hospital. For more information on Hadassah, please visit www.hadassah.org

We also had the opportunity to visit the Knesset, where we met with the top level directors to share Irving's story of survival out of Nazi Germany.

See more on Irving's visit to Israel on page 15. ☆



Irving Bienstock greets Dvir at Hadassah Hospital.

wanted to visit was Hadassah Hospital. His dear friends, Susan and Donald Jacobs, Lynne and Morrey Sheffer, and I escorted him to Israel. When Lillian passed away, it was very important for Irving to honor and remember her with a Perpetual Yartzeit. Every year upon her Yartzeit, Lillian's name will be read during the Mourners Kaddish in the Chagall Chapel in Hadassah Hospital, Jerusalem.

While at Hadassah, we re-



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SCHOOL NEWS

CJDS Gives and Gets Back

The Jewish and holiday programming are the highlights of the CJDS school year. That is why once a year CJDS invites all the children from Religious Schools, Hebrew Schools, and Sunday Schools in the Charlotte region to celebrate Judaism. This year they were invited to enjoy and learn about the times when we were liberated from Egypt at a Freedom Fair. The Freedom Fair, like the Jewish Pride Fair and the Israel Fair experienced in previous years, engaged the children through art, music, and experience about the various topics. This year's Fair included a Matzah Bakery where they made their own matzah, a Drum Circle expressing the sounds of slavery to those of liberation and the giving of the Torah, a Ten Commandment Jewpardy game, and tambourine art remembering that the Jewish women of that generation expressed their joy and gratitude to God with tambourine playing. Over 300 children from Temple Beth El, Temple Israel, Temple Emanuel in Gastonia, Congregation Ohr Hatorah, and

the Ballantyne Jewish Center attended the fair. Teachers and administrators have expressed how pleased they are with this annual event. On the flip side, Temple Israel included CJDS in their artist-in residence weekend with renowned artist Mordechai Rosenstein. Rosenstein's work is based in the art of calligraphy but highlights Jewish themes, ideas and teachings. All students in grades K-5 were able to visit with the artist, watch him work and ask questions. They also viewed a display of various works from originals to prints. As a special tie-in to Mr. Rosenstein's visit, our second grade did a project to show him. Using their Hebrew names, they tried their hands at fancy Hebrew lettering and filled in the remaining spaces with lots of bright color. Some of the student's work reflected the Hebrew meaning of their name. We are so grateful that our students had this opportunity, especially since it ties in with their art and Judaica classes.☆



The students peruse Mordechai Rosenstein's artwork.



Students learn how to bake matzah.



A lesson by Temple Israel's artist-in-residence Mordechai Rosenstein.

CJDS Charlotte Jewish Day School



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CJDS Rising the Challenge of “Stay At Home”

By Mariashi Groner, director, CJDS

I don't believe we will ever forget, Friday the 13th, 2020, the day we suspended school to help slow down the spread of COVID-19. On that day, when we realized that we were about to start teaching our students online, Mandy Difilippo, assistant director, Andrea Gamlin, technology teacher, and Quyen Nguyen, IT director, hunkered down and prepared a comprehensive plan for each class and subject area.

The following Monday and Tuesday, all the teachers came to school, collaborated in meetings and prepared their classes for the foreseeable future. They filled their cars with curriculum, supplies, tech tools, chart paper, etc. in case they would not be able to return. They made videos in their classrooms using their tools and teaching aids for future lessons, soon to be uploaded. On Wednesday, our parents lined up, carpool style, so that we would be able to limit exposure, to pick their children's books, supplies, and materials that the teachers prepared for them.

Since then, it's been a roller coaster. Technology does not always work. Children, especially in grades K-5, don't always want to do their work, even when their teacher is right there. Consider the distractions: the cat,

the dog, brothers and sisters, and mom and dad on their own Zoom work calls. And we all know, that mommies and daddies are not supposed to teach. They are also struggling with questions, “Why are we not at school? I want to be able to ‘really’ see my teacher. I want to play with my friends.” On top of that, our parents, while learning to work from home are managing the class schedule for their child or children, each with unique schedules and assignments.

With all those obstacles, our parents, our students, and our teachers are superstars. The interactions between the students themselves (they are even setting up their own Zoom playdates), the individual attention that the teachers are giving the students when needed, and the effort being put into the work that is submitted are all helping us continue to reach our students and families. We have even received emails from our students thanking us for their “new school.”

Shabbat assemblies are still taking place and we get to light the Shabbat candles together (something we did not do before). Our students were on a Pesach Scavenger Hunt through an app where the students were given 20 Pesach missions to complete during our Pesach break.

We have certainly learned

from this exercise that we like to go to work, the children want to go to school, and we need each other, not only through email and Zoom but through real-time connections. We have all had to break ourselves of our normal learning – our students, our staff, our parents. Yet, we have risen to the challenge and have proven that we can do it.

A Chag Sameach video from each of our staff and faculty went out to the school body wishing all of our families an enjoyable spring break and happy Pesach. The tone from the staff was genuine and warm, wishing everyone a happy Pesach and waiting for the time we will once again be in our building learning together.✱



Learning via online classrooms at CJDS.

Freedom School Still Making a Difference

Freedom School is a six-week literacy and character-building summer program designed to help children in our community become self-sufficient by closing literacy achievement gaps. As we all struggle to cope with the current health crisis, our Shalom Park Freedom School program is forced to grapple with how the pandemic will affect our already disadvantaged students. Each summer, Shalom Park scholars, selected from Huntingtowne Farms and Sterling Elementary (the two schools in faith-based partnerships with Temple Israel and Temple Beth El), work to overcome summer reading loss, the foremost contributor to the achievement gap for low-income children. Typically, low-income children lose two to three months in reading level each summer, now however, there will likely be more than just summer learning loss for these kids.

Tutoring programs that supplement regular schoolwork have been put on hold as educators across the county try to figure out how best to reach all of their students and use online tools. Freedom School Partners, which oversees all 16 Freedom School sites in Charlotte, is in close contact with CMS, and they are working on multiple scenarios for the summer, ranging from a typical Freedom School program to a completely virtual program.

In the shadow of that uncertainty, our volunteers continue to work tirelessly as they prepare for our typical summer program on Shalom Park. Our enrichment

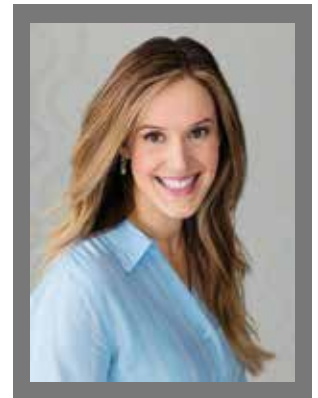
coordinators have almost completely filled our programming schedule, which will include: a meet and greet with the Charlotte Knight's mascot, Homer; a visit by WCNC news, weather, and sports anchors; John Tosco from Tosco Music Group; time with a CMPD officer; Lowe's crafting time; and so much more. It feels particularly good to be doing something meaningful and productive right now.

Each summer, the Shalom Park Freedom School has a Teen

(Continued on page 12)



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Professional Development Day for CJP Teachers

On February 17, the staff at the Charlotte Jewish Preschool participated in our annual school-wide Professional Development



Nancy Siegel of Nancy Siegel Consulting discusses the "Breathing Ball."

Day. Because we run both half and full day programs, we operate on two different calendars, making coming together as one staff very difficult, which is why this one day is so important to us. At the CJP one of our core values is *limud*, or learning. Not only do we find it important for our students to be lifelong learners, but also our teachers and staff. Over the past year, 28 of our teachers

and leadership staff have participated in over 280 hours of professional development and been to Italy, Atlanta, Nashville, Chicago, Durham, Waynesboro, Dallas, and here on Shalom Park to attend various educational and Jewish professional conferences. At the CJP, we find that coming together as a *kehillah* (community) to add to our professional toolbox, as well as to bond and participate in shared experience is a top priority. On this day we had the pleasure of hosting Nancy Siegel, of Nancy Siegel Consulting, to present on mindfulness in the Preschool Classroom as well as to engage in various hands on activities to inspire our teachers as they plan lessons in our brand new MakerSpace.

The Center for Jewish Education invited and organized our visit from Nancy Siegel. Siegel is an expert in mindfulness and has a strong background in Jewish preschool education, making her a perfect fit for our day of learn-



Bo demonstrates using the "breathing ball."

ing. Siegel presented to our staff ways to help students calm down, be problem solvers, think in the moment, and be present. Siegel shared with our teachers different props to help teach children these lifelong skills. You might have heard your child talk about the new "breathing balls," cymbals, glitter jars, and other counting tech-

niques their teachers have already introduced in their classrooms.

Lindsay Romero, full day 2s teacher says, "The breathing balls help us get ready for the day. We start our circle time with each child taking a turn leading us in breathing exercises. The ball helps the kids to visualize a big breath in and a big breath out. I can literally see the kids physically calming down after free play so they are ready for what's coming

next." When the kids aren't using the breathing ball you might catch them "smelling and blowing" on their (imaginary) hot chocolate. Siegel stressed to our teachers the importance of breathing and the necessity to teach our kids this skill, as it is not inherent.

Bo Boyd, 2s student, leads his friends in a breathing exercise. Bo told his friends to "take a big breath in and blow it out" in a calm quiet tone.

For the second part of our day we discussed our newly opened MakerSpace. Thanks to our



Becca Green leads her group in Expression of Judaism using Natural Resources



Stephanie Zubrinsky, 1s teacher, teaches us how to make paint with items from nature.



Talya Tateo, 2s teacher, hosts a "Loose Parts Pop-up."

Annual Fund dollars, we have a brand new art room. For the remainder of this school year, teachers are invited to go in once a week with their classes to express themselves creatively. Six of our teachers volunteered to create a MakerSpace Committee – a group of teachers dedicated to creating classroom schedules, inspiring teachers with ideas, stocking the shelves with materials, and supporting the school with all things MakerSpace related. These six teachers supported our staff on the 17th with a presentation on different MakerSpaces around the world, as well as with six hands-on learning activities that could be used in the MakerSpace with our students. Our teachers and staff walked away from work that day full of inspiration, motivation, and energy to make the second half of our school year the best it can be. ✨

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Emojis of JPS

It's hard to describe a day in the life of a JPS kid with words alone. In this article, which was written in February, we used emojis to help us out.



The art easel is a favorite for many of us at school. We enjoy experimenting with different colors and paints. There are no mistakes in art and we are given the opportunity to create and invent.



We celebrated the wedding of Yitzhak & Rivka, and everyone got to dress up as a different member of the wedding party. Dress-up and roleplaying helps us understand and experience the stories we learn.



Every day brings new discoveries and adventures.



JPS kids are expert handwashers. We wash them often and we wash them well, keeping germs at bay.



Reading helps develop our language and listening skills. We love to read books on our own and together as a group.



Working on our gross motor skills helps us gain strength and confidence in our bodies.



Jewish birthday celebrations at JPS are special and fun - we especially love the cupcakes.



Celebrating family is such an important part of JPS. We love inviting moms, dads, and grandparents to join us for programs at school throughout the year.



We take pride in our work and our teachers display our creations around our classroom for all to see.



Snow in Charlotte? What a treat. We bundled up and went out to play.



Sensory play encourages imagination and creativity; add some bubbles to the water table and we're in for some fun.

From the JPS Director, Regarding "Stay At Home"

By Devorah Gorkin

As schools in North Carolina and across the country are closed, we are offering Zoom classes daily to our toddlers and up. The classes include circle, Judaica, story time, music, yoga, science, art, and gym. As we prepared our students for Passover, the 2s and up experienced a virtual Model Seder as well as a Matzah Bakery.

Here are some parents' responses after we asked what they most enjoy about zooming:

- "Staying connected with friends and teachers."
- "The teachers engaging with each child and giving them attention. And the schedule. Makes it seem like a real day."

• "Seeing the teachers, kids seeing their peers, feeling connected during these isolated times."

• "We thank you with great appreciation the extent to which JPS and the teachers have gone to continue and provide the high quality learning experience for our son, who, through this virtual means, is still able to connect with his teachers and learn alongside his classmates. It means a lot for us, and for our son to be able to take part in this. Thank you."

While we don't know what the future brings, we know one thing; the students and teachers at JPS are a family and will continue to stay connected no matter what. ☆



Jewish Preschool on Sardis virtual model Seder.

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Community News

The Ruach Creates a Watershed Shabbat Experience

By Jeffrey Gitomer

(Editor's Note: The following article was scheduled to appear in last month's Charlotte Jewish News.)

Last year, after a 40-year hiatus, I was reunited with my Judaism. A friend told me about a post-denominational Friday night service here in Charlotte known as The Shabbat Experience led by The Ruach and Rabbi Rachel Smookler. Upon hearing that the service used all modern Jewish music that was played by an amazing rock band and was held in a comfortable setting with inspirational words delivered by an incredible rabbi, I knew that I had to check it out.

Keep in mind that growing up I was extremely observant. With my family we attended Shabbat and holiday services all the time, albeit reluctantly as a child.

I remember very distinctly often asking the question, "Do we have to go to services?" And we went pretty much always. I can't say that I was always inspired, but I always felt very Jewish as a result of it. I guess if I were being completely honest, the Oneg Shabbat was really the draw.

Fast forward about 40 years (maybe more), and I find myself sitting with my wife about to receive what would be, for me, the religious experience of a lifetime. The music that The Ruach played was not only inspirational it brought back family memories

that made us feel both emotional and spiritual. (70% of the music that The Ruach plays is original. One of their songs, "Romemu," is played on the international streaming music service, Jewish Rock Radio.)

"Ruach" is defined in Hebrew as spirit and boy do these folks have and evoke it.

Their Facebook page modestly defines themselves as: "Spreading the joy of Judaism through modern Jewish music. We provide a Jewish spiritual and cultural experience." A total understatement.

In a world that has seemingly departed from traditional religion, The Ruach has somehow found a way to reunite people and instill great feelings through their innovation and melody.

The Ruach rocks Shabbat and their "Experience" is one that touches heart, soul, and mind. For me, it was a reunion of my growing-up life and my life today.

A Watershed Event: On the fourth Friday night in February, we took our family, Jennifer (wife), Gabrielle (daughter 10), and a couple of friends to The Shabbat Experience in its new home at the Watershed in the Plaza-Midwood area of Charlotte where we joined more than 150 others to experience and celebrate the joy of Shabbat. The Watershed is exactly the kind of place that the band and The Ruach Community have been look-



ing and hoping for.

The Shabbat Experience was electric. The music rose to the heavens. Rabbi Smookler's words as she consecrated of the ark for the new venue were inspirational and heartfelt. She's a wonderful storyteller and somehow related each story back to me.

The Ruach adds a new dimension to traditional Jewish services. They deliver spirituality, excitement, familiar prayers, melodies you will sing between services, and for me personally, a deeply moving remembrance of past to celebrate the presence.

The Ruach is also making an impact the Jewish community of Charlotte with world-class experiences. Superstar Joe Buchanan joined the band for Shabbat at Temple Kol Ami in Fort Mill in March and The High Holy Day Experience will be held at Queens University in the newly renovated Sandra Levine Theatre where 1,000 people are expected to celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Kol Nidre this year.

If you are looking to rekindle the Jewish spirit within you, please join me at The Shabbat Experience. You won't be alone. You will feel the spirit and breath of God in the room.

Don't miss a thing. To be on

the distribution list and get the latest updates on The Ruach and The Shabbat Experience, email the. ruach.band@gmail.com. The Ruach is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to spread the joy of Judaism through new Jewish musical experiences that are meant to create and maintain personal connections and inspire and engage people to embrace the religion and all that it

has to offer.✧

Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of The Sales Bible, The Little Red Book of Selling, The Little Gold Book of YES! Attitude, and 14 other best-selling books on sales, business, and personal development. Founder of Charlotte-based Buy Gitomer, Jeffrey gives seminars all over the world. In 2008, Jeffrey was elected to the Speakers Hall of Fame. His Podcast, "Sell or Die," with wife Jen Gitomer, has more than 2,000,000 downloads.

Freedom School

(Continued from page 9)

Board made up of dedicated high school students who are selected to volunteer as Freedom School classroom assistants for at least two weeks during the summer. Our applicant pool this year was fabulous. We will have forty-five teens volunteering over the course of the six-week program. Twenty-one of these teens are returning to the Teen Board, and one is returning for her fourth and final summer before she heads off to college. Our Teen Board chairs are currently working through a virtual platform to train our volunteers for the summer. Please keep your eye out for the Teen Board's Autobell Fundraiser, which will be taking place May 1-30.

Out of respect for appropriate social distancing, we have postponed our 10th anniversary spring

fundraiser. We hope to be able to celebrate in person at a later date and will follow up with details as events unfold. Thank you for being patient as we remain flexible in these uncertain times. In the meantime, if you are able, please consider donating to Shalom Park Freedom School at: www.sp-freeschool.org/donate-now/. Your help is especially invaluable now, given that it is not clear at this point when, or even if, we will be able to hold our in-person fundraiser. We need all the help we can get to continue our Shalom Park site.

Our volunteers remain passionately engaged and virtually connected as we hope for the best, and plan for whatever may come. Thank you for your continued support of our vital program.✧

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Jewish Responsibility Explored During International Development Study Trip to Rwanda

Moishe House's David Cygielman Visits Jewish and Israeli Service and Development Projects

The inaugural InterACT Global study trip for high-level Jewish influencers from the United States, Britain, and Israel returned from five days in Rwanda.

The group explored the impact of Jewish and Israeli international development and service projects and studied the idea of Jewish responsibility to non-Jewish vulnerable populations.

Participants in the immersive study trip included CEOs and chairpersons of major Jewish organizations, Jewish lay leaders, journalists, and opinion-shapers representing diverse communities and perspectives.

The InterACT Global delegation visited Jewish and Israeli organizations and individuals engaged in innovative efforts to meet global challenges. They saw non-profit and for-profit initiatives and groups who volunteer, fund local partners, and offer training. The itinerary included the Kigali Genocide Memorial, Rweru Reconciliation Village, Agahozo Shalom Youth Village, Energiya Global solar fields, and MASHAV Horticulture Center of Excellence. The delegation met with Israel's first ambassador to



InterACT Global participants meet with Israeli Ambassador to Rwanda Ron Adam as well as Rwandan leaders and opinion shapers.

Rwanda, Ron Adam, and influential Rwandans who shared local and personal perspectives about Rwandan challenges and solutions.

"InterACT Global was an opportunity for Jewish leaders to study the impact of a foundational Jewish value in action: caring about the world and working to make it better," said OLAM Executive Director Dyonna Ginsburg. "Our hope is that these change-makers will be inspired to launch conversations about global responsibility when they

get home and galvanize broader segments of the global Jewish community to support vulnerable populations."

While in Rwanda, the group considered the global Jewish community's responsibility and opportunity to use its established institutions and networks to make an impact for others.

"Having the opportunity to be on the ground in Rwanda to see the work of Jewish and Israeli NGO's in solar, agriculture and humanitarian aid was quite special. It's exciting to see the impact

the Jewish community can have around the globe," said Dave Cygielman of Charlotte, founder and CEO of Moish House International.

InterACT Global is spearheaded by OLAM, a platform of Jewish and Israeli international development organizations founded in 2015. The trip is organized in partnership with The Gesher Leadership Institute, The Society for International Development—SID Israel, and Shalom Corps. It is funded by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation and the Pears Foundation. ☆



Seven NC Natives Who Serve in the IDF Were Not Home with Their Families for Passover Due to COVID-19

Some seven North Carolina natives are currently serving as Lone Soldiers, those who join the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) with no immediate family in Israel. Among them is Charlotte's Yossi Berendt.

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, thousands of IDF soldiers have been ordered to remain on base for an indefinite period of time to minimize their exposure to the virus. The current crisis means that many IDF soldiers, among them some 1,000 Lone Soldiers from the US, including the seven from North Carolina, will not be home with their families for the Passover holiday.

The IDF is taking these necessary measures to remain vigilant against COVID-19 and maintain operational preparedness. The IDF undertakes the responsibility of not only fighting against foreign armies but also assisting with national civilian missions. While quarantined on their bases, IDF soldiers are helping the Israeli national effort through blood drives and by managing two—and soon to be four—hotels that have been converted into quarantine and rehabilitation centers for the civilian population.

Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF) has implemented programs to address the emergency needs of soldiers quarantined on bases and at home. FIDF staff in Israel is distributing tens of thousands of hygiene kits; gym supplies, which consist of various weights and equipment; yoga mats; snack and sweet packages;



Lone Soldiers with their Passover packages. Photo courtesy of FIDF.

Sony PlayStations; and more to the IDF soldiers.

FIDF continues to work closely with the IDF to support the soldiers' increasing well-being needs as the situation progresses. In addition, FIDF has established a dedicated information center for Lone Soldiers and their loved ones, as well as a special quarantine facility in the Givat Olga recreation center to provide the best care and attention for their needs.

There is still an urgent need for more hygiene kits to be sent to the soldiers, and this is one of FIDF's top priorities at this time. On top of this aid being provided to soldiers across Israel, FIDF is also prioritizing the FIDF DIGNITY Program, which helps ease the burden on soldiers and their families, who struggle to cover their daily expenses. Soldiers and

their families with financial difficulties are challenged even more because of the coronavirus pandemic and are in immediate need

(Continued on page 25)



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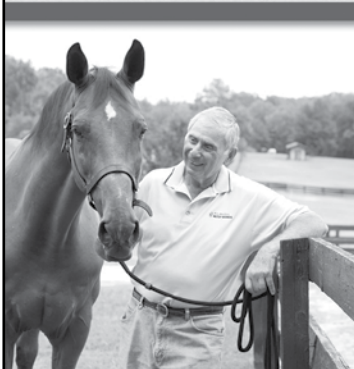
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A Good Time to Ask “R U OK, Shalom Park?”

As you may recall in a recent CJN article, we introduced you to the R U OK, Shalom Park? Community Awareness Initiative. It's all about the importance of reaching out to people you know who might be showing signs of needing some emotional support. It encourages each of us to step out of our comfort zone and take that brave step to have that perhaps uncomfortable conversation where you check in with someone who you think might be struggling with a mental health

issue or be in some type of emotion turmoil. We want everyone to feel confident they know the signs someone might need support by listening to what they're saying, seeing what they're doing, or knowing what's going on in their life. Whenever you notice a change, no matter how small, we want you to trust your gut and start an R U OK? conversation.

As May is Mental Health awareness month, this message could not be more relevant, and most appropriate. For as of this

writing, you are likely hunkered down at home practicing social distancing. And the world we are living in is no longer the same nor sane. The rules have changed and we are adapting to new ways of operating. The cornerstones of mental health, having a sense of control and having structure in your daily lives, are temporarily gone. So where once the recommendation would be to have this conversation, in person or face to face, with our current situation that is not a reality.

The conversation, however, is now not only important but critical. The Coronavirus pandemic has significantly increased stress, anxiety, and depression. Feelings of isolation have seeped in and it can heighten feelings of sadness and depression. Conflicts with family members, spouses, and significant others are not uncommon and can lead to increased anger and violent behavior. Excessive stays at home will no doubt cause children to act out. We are facing unique times and challenges. Many of these challenges were lying dormant but have now been exacerbated by these uncertain, unpredictable times. If any of this behavior sounds or looks familiar

to someone you know and care about, we urge you to have the conversation. Make a phone call, skype, face time, or use whatever platform you can to check in and connect with those struggling.

By starting a conversation and commenting on the changes you've noticed, you could help that family member, friend, or co-worker open up. If they say they are not ok, you can help them find resources and strategies to better manage the load. If they are ok, that person will know you're someone who cares enough to ask.

And then, ask yourself, R U OK? Because the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic is that many of us who typically manage our stress without it interfering in our everyday lives are also feeling the effects of the change in our world. You might have heightened concerns about your financial situation or feeling the lack of social connections or grappling with the tension of strained family relationships from being confined to your home. You are probably having a normal reaction to the current situation but if you are feeling stress and anxiety, reach out for help. Identify someone



you feel you can talk to or just connect with a friend.

Also, remember it is OK to acknowledge what is happening and the impact it is having on your emotional state. At home, talk to your family members. Be open and honest and acknowledge the stress that everyone is experiencing, recognize the challenge of being at home together all the time. Then talk about ways that will help each of you to manage the challenge.

And, if you need additional assistance, reach out to JFS. They can connect you with a friendly caller volunteer or with a therapist, if needed, to help you navigate through these unusual times. Email info@jfscharlotte.org for more information.☆



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Bal Tashchit and Beyond: Plant A Garden, No Matter How Small

During this time when nothing seems “normal,” we can experience joy in the unfolding of spring on its usual schedule – the transitions from daffodils to tulips and the flowering of dogwoods to the trees leafing out. The fresh (and pollen-filled) spring air and rain showers will soon give way to the heat and humidity of a Charlotte summer. We can get outdoors, take a walk with our family while observing social distancing requirements, or work in our yards.

Jewish tradition teaches us to care for our Earth - to preserve that which God has created. The rabbis developed the principle of *bal tashchit* (do not destroy), which forbids needless destruction. Rather, we are encouraged *l'vadah ul'shamrah*, to till and to tend, to become the Earth's stewards.

Many of us have time on our hands, children to educate from home, or simply have a desire to get outside. Perhaps now is the time to put in a vegetable or pollinator garden or to create a container garden.

If you are new to gardening, start small and simple. Either a small raised bed or a collection of containers.

* Vegetables: tomatoes, big or cherry, peppers, cucumbers (all need sun)

* Herbs: basil, mint, parsley, thyme (all need sun)

* Native plants for pollinators and hummingbirds: purple coneflower, bee balm, salvia, lantana, butterfly milkweed

* Shade garden: hostas, heuchera, coleus, ferns

* Sunflowers: easy and fun to grow from seeds

Learn about the Square Foot Gardening Method created by Mel Bartholomew via his book or website. This is an excellent



resource for growing your own produce in less space. For environmental reasons, choose organic seeds from sellers such as Sow True Seeds. For a quicker start, buy starter plants. To keep your carbon footprint to a minimum, consider buying from local nurseries. Google to see which have online ordering, curb-side pickup, and delivery options.

For gardening advice specific to our area, visit the websites of Mecklenburg County Master Gardeners or the NC Extension Service.

For the health and safety of our community the Shalom Park campus is closed and all Shalom Green in person-volunteer opportunities are cancelled until further notice. However, the Shalom Green Garden Coordinator continues to plant, harvest and maintain the community garden during this time. Produce is being donated to the Jewish Family Service's Food Pantry and other local charities.

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, please contact us at info@shalomgreenCLT.org. Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and Instagram and visit our website www.shalomgreen-CLT.org.☆



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Ninety-Three Year Old Charlotte Holocaust Survivor Fulfills His Dream of Visiting Israeli Soldiers With Help From FIDF

A 93-year-old Charlotte resident and Holocaust survivor, Irving Bienstock, fulfilled his dream of visiting an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on February 11, when he got a tour of the Yarden Camp in the Golan Heights. His visit came to fruition with the help of Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF) and members of his local community, headed by Dana Kapustin.

Irving Bienstock and his family escaped Germany in January 1939 and arrived in the United States in April 1940. Five years later, in April 1945, he returned to the war — this time as an American soldier on the USS Wakefield. Since the founding of the State of Israel, Bienstock's wish as a Holocaust survivor and veteran American soldier had been to visit active members of the Israeli military on an IDF base. "I grew up as a Jewish boy in Nazi Germany and when I saw a policeman or soldier, I would turn

and run the other way," Bienstock said. "I was proud to spend two years in the U.S. Army during the war, but I was still a Jew in a foreign army. This is my last chance to see my army. Today, to see a Jew in uniform serving the Jewish state is a victory, and it feels we have come such a long way."

During the visit to the base,

Bienstock and the other participants, including several of his friends and members of the local Charlotte Jewish community, had an introductory meeting with Yarden Camp's Eagle Battalion of the Combat Intelligence Collection Corps, which serves as Israel's eyes on Syria. Bienstock presented a short movie about his

life to the Battalion and spoke to the soldiers about his story and concerns over rising Antisemitism in today's world.

Bienstock even had the opportunity to speak in German to one of the soldiers, Cpl. Shawn, who is originally from Germany and currently serves in the Eagle Battalion as a Lone Soldier — one who enlists in the IDF without any immediate family in Israel.

The Combat Intelligence Collection Corps was adopted by the FIDF Southeast Region as part of the FIDF Adopt-A-Brigade Program. FIDF's unique Adopt-A-Brigade Program allows support-

ers to go beyond their donations and get more involved by providing financial assistance to soldiers in need, caring for Lone Soldiers with no immediate family in Israel, and funding rest and recuperation breaks for combat brigades.

Program supporters can visit the soldiers in their adopted units on IDF bases and communicate with unit commanders. In 2019, FIDF supporters formed unbreakable bonds with the soldiers of 10 brigades and 75 battalions, squadrons, and flotillas.✧

Story courtesy of thejewishlink.com.



Irving Bienstock salutes the soldiers of the IDF (photo courtesy Irving Bienstock).

Legacy Story

Jeff and Lee Bierer



By Lee Bierer

Jeff and I grew up in environments where being Jewish was very commonplace. I was raised in Newton, MA where the town's motto "the Garden City" became - "the Garden City, where there's a Rose 'in' Bloom (Rosenbloom) on every corner." Surrounded by active Jewish communities, neither of us felt much need to affiliate. However, when we moved to Charlotte in 1995, we immediately visited Shalom Park, signing David and Lucy up for JCC basketball and religious school. We left family and friends up north and we were delighted to be welcomed warmly here. We both smile remembering the "Shalom Y'All" welcome package we received.

In 1995-1996, there was a big influx of families moving in, many who had stories similar to ours and many who jumped in and got involved in the Jewish community. Jeff was invited to join the Board of the JCC quickly and co-lead the strategic planning process resulting in the expansion of the JCC. We were also invited to join the inaugural class of The Bernstein Leadership Group back in 1998. Participating in that group with engaged and motivated peers inspired us to get more involved.

I was involved in initiating and organizing the Jewish Community Cultural Arts Festival and I've

worked for the Foundation of Shalom Park, Jewish Family Services, served as President of TBE Sisterhood, and been a 3rd grade teacher at TBE for the last 15 years. Since Jeff's early work at the JCC, he has served on Boards at Temple Beth El, TBE Brotherhood and the Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community (FCJC) where he helped develop and launch the Create Your Jewish Legacy while Board Chair.

Shalom Park has been our North Star and been the origination of many of our long-lasting relationships. We have contemplated moving as David is married and living in Minneapolis and Lucy is in Washington, DC. But we're keenly aware that we won't be able to duplicate what we have right now; the small moments of walking into the JCC to work out or play tennis and knowing everyone behind the front desk and seeing old friends as we walk through the hallways. We recognize what we have here is special. We have created a Bierer Family Fund, from which the four of us issue grants each year to charities we prioritize as most deserving. Our hope is to inspire a culture of philanthropy that our children carry on after we're gone.

We want our community to thrive and warmly welcome the next generation.✧



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Youth Visions

Preparing Young Zionists for College and Beyond

One High Schooler's Perspective

By Talia Levine

Last month, I attended the National Club Z Conference in San Francisco. To say it encouraged me to become more involved with Israel is an understatement. Throughout this experience, I became more educated about Israel's rich history and developed a deeper understanding about the conflicts in Israel today. For me, Club Z's National Conference was a celebration of our Jewish homeland, Israel.

Club Z is an organization committed to educating the next generation of Jewish Zionist leaders. They have chapters in Los Angeles, Bay Area, Brooklyn, and more recently, Charlotte. The Charlotte chapter started at the beginning of the 2019 school year and has attracted 24 active members. We meet once a month to discuss topics ranging from the roots of Antisemitism to media bias involving Israel. To help educate us, Club Z brings in both Jewish and non-Jewish leaders who specialize in these issues. Our Charlotte *shlichah*, Lia Abgarova, runs the majority of our discussions and gives us background information on the topic before we hear from a speaker. Our meetings also give me an opportunity to reconnect with my Jewish friends.

Club Z's National Conference

was one of the most inspiring events of my life. From the motivating speakers to the incredible sense of community, I truly felt at home among the Zionist leaders. I got to meet Colonel Kemp, who is a retired British officer who spent most of his life as a commander in the British Army. After the military, he turned his attention toward combating terrorism and now is an author and motivational speaker. At Club Z, we had the opportunity to hear his story and ask questions. After his Q and A session, my friends from Charlotte and I approached him to receive advice and discuss current Israeli politics with him.

We also met Olga Washington who is a Christian Zionist born in apartheid South Africa who has her own insight about the Jewish homeland. She became an inspiring role model for me with her thoughtful presentation and unique perspective of Israel. Her experience as a Christian advocating for a Jewish homeland left me with a different concept of Zionism than I previously had. Zionism is not an exclusively Jewish love for Israel, but rather a belief that Israel is the Jewish homeland.

Apart from the speakers, we got to participate in breakout sessions led by different leaders. During this time we got to dive

deeper into subjects such as BDS, legalities of Jewish protection, and if settlements are obstacles to peace. My favorite session was led by college students Phillip Yuchenko and John Rice-Cameron, son of former National Security Advisor, Susan Rice. Here, we learned how to safely voice our opinion and educate others about Zionism in a respectful way. I hope to use these tools in the future and become a Jewish leader as I continue into college.

Not only did I learn about Zionism and how to support Israel, but I made meaningful friendships that I hope will last for years to come. I am so lucky to surround myself with these inspiring students. Our dance parties, midnight ice cream social, and Starbucks runs helped me become closer to everyone from Charlotte. I also made new friends all across the nation. In the future, I hope these will turn into lifelong friendships and we will grow as Jewish leaders together.

I would like to thank Club Z founder Masha Merkulova for putting together an incredible Conference with inspiring and memorable speakers that I will never forget. Next, I would like to thank Ellen Engelhardt and Lena Kosinovsky for volunteering to travel with us and supervise our trip. I would also like to thank our



Top: Grigori Podosik, Polly Lumelsky, Jonah Rubin, Josh Quigley, Evan Biller; bottom: Daria Lapidot-Boaz, Talia Levine, Aliya Martin, Georgia Engelhardt.

Charlotte *shlichah*, Lia Abgarova, and Education Director, Naya Lecht, who both deserve an award for engaging 24 teens each month and working tirelessly to ensure a quality program every time. Lastly, a shout out to all of my Charlotte Chapter friends for making this the best weekend ever.

For more information about Club Z, please visit the website at www.clubz.org/locations or email at Charlotte@clubz.org. You can also call Chantal Rubin at 704-451-3230.✧



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A Glimpse into the Tracks at Hebrew High

#Quarantine2020 didn't stop our students from gathering to hang out and learn. Like most educational programs, we turned to Zoom to hold class and stay connected as one community.

Our 8th and 9th graders logged on at 7 PM, socialized for a about 15 minutes and then with a quick click of a button, they were separated into five different classes. During these final few weeks of Hebrew High, students had the option of choosing a class during the track entitled Yisraeli Sheli: My Israel. These are the class options that they had to select from: **The Many Faces of Israel**

This class will take a hands-on approach to exploring the many subcultures that are woven into the fabric of Israel, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Through hands on activities such as henna tattoos, we will examine the lives and customs of the many people who call Israel home.

Discovering Israel: Land, People, Innovation

Travel the land of Israel from the heights of Haifa to the lively streets of Tel Aviv to vast deserts and the Dead Sea. Bring it back home by planting seeds for your own Jewish future. Then learn about diversity within Israel and the people who call it home through discussing the LGBTQIA+ community, the multitude of religions, their refugees, their military, and more. You will explore Israel through the lens of your own identity. Then be-

come a part of Israeli culture by learning about the mind-blowing inventions that were created in this start-up nation, including humanitarian, medical, security, and food innovation that are changing the world through crafting your own invention shark-tank style.

What You May Not Have Known About Israel: The Good, the Bad, and the Edible

Some things you may not know about Israel: the top TV shows and songs; the best restaurants and favorite foods; military history; how the government is formed, and more.

Israel: From Mandate to Country

Learn about the origins of the modern state of Israel from the British Mandate to the present. This course will cover internal and regional politics, our connection to Israel, dispelling myths about Israel, and learning how to stand up to movements such as BDS (Boycott, Divest, and Sanction) using facts. In addition, we will cover the land of Israel in modern Jewish thought.

A Taste of Israel

Come explore Israel by cooking and eating our way through our beautiful country. We will learn how to make authentic Israeli dishes which could include hummus, shakshuka, falafel, or Israeli salad. You will have the opportunity to learn more about where some of these foods come from and why they are unique to Israeli culture. It is sure to be a

delectable class.

In addition to our 8th and 9th graders, the Hebrew for Credit, Temple Beth El and Temple Israel Confirmation, and Post Confirmation students have not missed a beat as classes continue over Zoom. Hebrew for Credit is "zooming" through their curriculum while 10th grade students prepare for their Confirmation service. Finally, Post-Confirmation students held their last class online and Rabbi Judy spoke about "Confronting Corona Through a Jewish Lens - Our Own Questions and Those Being Asked Across the Globe."

Despite not being able to be together in person, our students loved seeing their teachers and each other. We can't thank our teachers enough for reformatting their classes to meet online and dedicating their time and energy to our teens. ☆

Some photos from the "Taste of Israel" class.



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Charlotte BBYO Teen Elected to BBYO International Board at BBYO International Convention (IC) 2020

Thousands of teens gathered in Dallas to affirm their roles as societal change makers at IC 2020, the largest celebration of teen culture and leadership in the world.

One hundred and thirteen Eastern Region BBYO teens (52 from Charlotte) joined more than 5,500 teens, educators, thought and business leaders, celebrities, political figures, and philanthropists from around the world, making it one of the largest Jewish leadership events in North America

and the largest gathering of Jewish teen leaders worldwide. Taking place over Presidents' Day weekend, February 13-17, BBYO International Convention 2020 offered countless opportunities for Jewish teens to connect with their peers, grow as leaders, and commit themselves to new causes, social challenges, and bold initiatives.

For the Charlotte community, Sunday's elections of the 2020-2021 AZA and BBG International

Boards were a highlight. Daniel Pearlman, 17, of Myers Park high school and proud member of Hank Greenberg AZA was elected as Grand Aleph Shaliach (Vice President of Jewish Enrichment). Daniel is the son of Audrey and Guy Pearlman. In this role, Daniel will be a part of a twelve-member international teen board that will help organize BBYO's vision for the coming year and provide leadership and support to teen leaders in local communities throughout the BBYO system.

Daniel said, "I am so honored to be given the opportunity to serve on the 96th Grand Board of the Aleph Zadik Aleph this upcoming year. I am thrilled to work with such a lively movement of Shlichim (Vice Presidents of Jewish Enrichment) and Jewish teens from around the globe. Engaging Jewish teens in meaningful experiences is something very important to me and I could not ask for a better platform to capitalize this experience. I am so grateful to my family, friends, and staff who have been guides and mentors to me and I cannot wait to work with so many inspirational people, alongside my board."

"We are so incredibly proud of Daniel and all that he has achieved in his election as Grand Aleph Shaliach. Daniel has a



Daniel Pearlman

great gift in being able to create Jewish experiences for his peers and aiding them in their exploration of their Jewish identity. We are excited that Daniel now has the opportunity to share that gift with the entire order and help others create Jewish moments in their regions," said Ryan Woloshin, Eastern Region Director.

Among the many speakers to address the crowd at IC 2020 were: David Dobrik, YouTube Creative; MK Stav Shaffir, Member of Knesset, State of Israel; Craig Kessler, Chief Operating Officer, Topgolf; Sophia Bush, Actress, Activist, Director, and Producer; Chris Ulmer, Founder, Special Books by Special Kids;

Bari Weiss, Editor, *The New York Times*; Cornell Brooks, Director, Social Justice Collaborative, Harvard and Former CEO, NAACP; and youth activists, Claire Sarnowski and Naomi Wadler.

In addition to the hundreds of speakers and guests throughout the weekend, IC delegates had access to a wide range of programming focused on empowering them to bring new ideas to fruition, including:

☆ Over 50 hands-on service opportunities at sites across the Dallas metropolitan area

☆ The launch of Voice Your Vote, a year-long national voter registration drive and civics campaign

☆ An immersive, international onsite cafe to explore cultures, try languages, and embrace traditions from peers across BBYO's 50+ countries

☆ A special moment honoring two of the last surviving WWII U.S. military personnel who liberated Europe's concentration camps and in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust

☆ ...and much more.

If you have a teen in 8th-12th grade and are interested in finding out more information about BBYO, please call 704-944-6734 or email charlotte@bbyo.org. ☆

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BBYO On Demand

BBYO has introduced a brand-new, first-of-its-kind virtual experience for Jewish youth, similar to an interactive "Jewish Netflix" for teens to access unique online experiences and programs. As "social distancing" becomes the norm for young people around the world, BBYO is offering its global audience an opportunity to connect, learn, have fun, and be inspired in a new digital space. The recently launched BBYO On Demand will serve as a teen curated global engagement platform featuring activities, speakers, and hangouts that are limited only by the imagination of teens themselves.

"When it seemed like society was shutting down all around me, BBYO was the first one to step up and help teens feel less isolated in their homes," said BBYO member Yael Schuller from North Texas Oklahoma Region. "More than anything, teens need so-

cial connections to thrive — and BBYO On Demand provides that for us." Joseph Rasamat from BBYO New England Region added, "Before my school was even able to set up online classes, BBYO already had programs up and running to keep me engaged. As always, BBYO is at the forefront of bringing people together and making teens feel like they're a part of something bigger."

Teens are invited to build, submit, and host their own episodes, mini-series, classes, tournaments, hangouts, or special events on BBYO On Demand. The platform will also enable local BBYO groups to keep meeting regularly, program together, and continue to share all the power and meaning of BBYO while "socially distanced" from one another. Over the coming days and weeks, BBYO On Demand will continue to evolve and expand with exciting new program offerings

on a schedule that accommodates global time differences.

"We're navigating a very different reality than we anticipated just a few weeks ago," said Jill Hulnick, Chief Impact Officer of BBYO. "As we ride out the local and global developments impacting school schedules, extracurricular activities, and regular routines, we're committed to our mission of helping Jewish teens and young adults around the world stay connected to one another by sharing ideas, learning together, making the world a better place, and having a fun time while doing it."

For more information about BBYO, BBYO on Demand or summer experiences, please contact Lauren Revenson at lrevenson@bbyo.org. You can check out BBYO on Demand at bbyo.org/ondemand. ☆

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—Proverbs 24:3-4

Three Thousand Jewish Teens Unite in NYC

Cteen Event Took Place February 27-March 1

Three thousand Jewish teens from 562 Cteen Chapters from around the world joined together for a weekend of Jewish Pride February 27-March 1. The unity, joy and energy that was overflowing throughout the whole weekend was tangible.

From France to Maryland and from England to Charlotte, teens gathered for this four day annual retreat to strengthen their Jewish pride and nurture their souls. A common thread that existed throughout all activities and workshops is that the teenage years are powerful and if channeled in the right way, teens have the ability create things and lead our society down an amazing path. In addition, each teen has a unique mission to fulfill that only he/she is able to accomplish.

The highlight of the weekend was when Cteen took over Duffel Square in Times Square. There was a Havdalah ceremony and concert where the teens were able to express their joy and pride. The teens experienced an environment that was a no judgement zone along with an opportunity to just be real and themselves. The inspiration and joy was felt throughout the whole weekend.

We were so lucky to take two teens from Charlotte this year as we experienced this incredible weekend. From the words of Daria Lapidot-Boaz, "Going on the CTeen Shabbaton blew my mind. The three day eye-opening trip was full of excitement, and happiness. In those short couple of days, I was able to make connections with teens from around the world. Even though we weren't from the same place, didn't speak the same language, or have anything in common, what brought us together was our Jewish pride. Instantly we connected and I formed such close bonds with them. I never expected to feel so overwhelmed seeing 3,000 Jewish teens from all over the world gather in Times Square to bring in the start of the week together during Havdallah. I'm beyond thankful I was able to experience the CTeen Shabbaton. I'm excited to come back to my Jewish community and apply all the things I learned to better my community and the communities around us."

Hannah Ross shared her excitement with the following, "The Cteen Shabbaton was the best experience ever. It was so amazing to see all these Jewish teens come together and celebrate their Jewish pride. I'm so thankful that I was able to take part in such an awesome program with amazing speakers, people, and of course a really fun time in Times Square. Everyone should take the opportunity to go to New York for this Shabbaton because it was the best time ever."

For more information about CTeen and to sign-up for next year's Shabbaton weekend contact Rochel Wolvovsky at rochel@jewishballantyne.com or Bentzion Groner bgroner@friendshipcircle.com. ☆



Above: Friday touring, Charlotte teens chose from 15+ tracks to go check out the new Vessel in the Hudson Yard



Right: Joining groups from Brazil and Illinois for a photo before catching the train to Times Square for Havdallah and concert



Right: Fun on Friday with teens from Charlotte, Daria Lapidot-Boaz and Hannah Ross



3,000 Jewish teens take over Times Square on Saturday night for Havdallah and concert.

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Through the **Charlotte Create Your Jewish Legacy Program** at the **Sandra and Leon Levine Jewish Community Center**, you can ensure that generations of Jewish families continue to have a strong and vibrant community to call their own. Please join the Barer family, and many who have already committed to leave a Legacy Gift and make a difference in our community for years to come.

LJCC Legacy Donors Shellie & Harvey Barer, with Shellie's son Josh, grandson TJ, daughter-in-law Louise, and daughter Susan.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

MAY 2020



At the Levine JCC we take tremendous pride in the emergency support we are providing for the most vulnerable in our community.

Starting Wednesday, March 18th, Oasis Senior Enrichment Program participants received a delivery of emergency food support prepared by *Izzy's Catering*. The first delivery included items like baked ziti, lentil soup, fruit, snacks, and games. This enabled seniors to stay out of harm's way in the public, and ensured they have what they needed to survive. On Wednesday, April 1st, a second delivery of two weeks' worth of food was made in partnership with *Frank Scibelli Food Group* (Mama Ricotta's, YAFO Kitchen, Midwood Smokehouse, etc.)

This is but one example of many over these last few weeks that exemplifies who we are and have always been as an agency. We are an agency with a heart, a righteous agency, one who understands and values the individual, regardless of their skin color, what religion they practice, what occupation they hold in our community, or their age. For us, it has been and will always be about the content of our character and the values upon which we live that drive us forward.

The Oasis seniors who live alone were overwhelmed by our food delivery and its selections. They were excited to also see a yoga routine (compliments of Cindy Capwell), word puzzles, and hand sanitizer included in their bags. The recipients were in awe of the Levine JCC's quick response during this time of uncertainty, and they were appreciative of and grateful for our efforts.



"I was moved to tears by the thoughtfulness of the JCC Oasis Program. This program means a lot to me as I count on the members of Oasis, and the excellent staff, all inclusive, to assist me in keeping my nearly 80-year-old self in good health, both physically and mentally. Which is exactly what the Oasis program does for me. Again, thank you and Sharri and your marvelous staff for the food, for your care and concern and I look forward to a speedy return to the Oasis program. I wish for you what you wish for me: a safe and healthy time away and a return to normalcy soon." **IRIS SCHNIPPER** OASIS MEMBER



"I just want to tell you how overwhelmed I am by the packages that I received from the JCC Oasis. They are wonderful and I can't tell you how much I appreciate that." **NANCY KORNHAUSER** OASIS MEMBER

"I for one am very appreciative of all that the Oasis is trying to do for us during this very unusual time. Did not realize how much I miss going there, especially the exercise classes which has really helped me. Hope we will be back soon." **LUCIA MITCHELL** OASIS MEMBER

"Many thanks to Gloria and Bob for their 'checking on you' calls. Grateful for the concern. I'm also especially happy to get the chair yoga video and senior exercise video. Love that I can do these at home. I think you were reading my mind. You are all so kind to keep tabs on us. Be well, stay safe, and look forward to seeing you hopefully soon!" **JOYCE ROTH** OASIS MEMBER

"Thank you to everybody that contributed. Please give them my thanks. You know that I am not very religious, but that thoughtful Shabbat video really touched my heart. Just hearing your voices and seeing your faces means a lot to me. Thank you." **CATHY BOGUS** OASIS MEMBER

"Hey guys, just a note to tell you that the penne with vodka was sensational! Thanks a million for caring. Stay well and healthy!" **JOAN SPECTOR** OASIS MEMBER





TORAH TOTS



TORAH TOTS SHABBAT STORY TIME & SONGS

Saturdays, May 9 & 23, 9:30 a.m. (Virtual)

Join Rabbi Helene Kornsgold and your Torah Tots friends the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month a fun story time and song session! To join in, visit: <https://zoom.us/j/411531042>

LIFELONG LEARNING

LUNCH N' LEARN WITH RABBI HOWARD SIEGEL

Thursday, March 12, 12 p.m. (Virtual)

Power up your lunch hour with an appetizing array of food for thought, and join Rabbi Howard Siegel via Zoom for an engaging discussion on one of Harold Kushner's thought-provoking books. So, grab your lunch and join us at <https://zoom.us/j/5382883626>



EVENTS

HAVDALLAH LIVE

Each Saturday Evening (Virtual) on Temple Israel's Facebook Page

Join Temple Israel clergy each Saturday evening on Facebook Live as they lead a virtual Havdallah, marking the end of Shabbat. Sing, connect, and share a few reflections as we begin a new week together.

COUNTING OF THE OMER

Every evening @ 8 p.m. (Virtual) on Temple Israel's Facebook Page

Join Rabbi Helene Kornsgold each night on Temple Israel's Facebook page (except for holidays and Shabbat) as she counts the Omer (from the 2nd night of Pesach) until Shavuot, and shares with you something to reflect upon and think about during this time of social distancing.

TEMPLE ISRAEL ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, May 31, 10:30 a.m.

All are welcome to join us (via Zoom) to celebrate a year in the life of our Temple and our community's accomplishments over the past year.

PLEASE JOIN US ONLINE FOR SHAVUOT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS – FOR ALL AGES!

EREV SHAVUOT: THURSDAY, MAY 28

7:30 p.m. - Erev Shavuot Service

8:12 p.m. – Candle Lighting

8:30 p.m. - Tikkun Leil Shavuot/Study Session

Join Rabbi Siegel and Rabbi Kornsgold for thought provoking study and stimulating discussions. We gather together to study as we prepare ourselves for the receiving of the Torah on Shavuot.

SHAVUOT – DAY 1: FRIDAY, MAY 29

(TI Offices Closed)

9:30 a.m. - Yom Tov Morning Service

9:30 a.m. - Preschool Shavuot Program

6:15 p.m. - Yom Tov/Shabbat Evening Service

SHAVUOT – DAY 2: SATURDAY, MAY 30

9:30 a.m. - Yom Tov/Shabbat Morning Service, including Yizkor

7:30 p.m. - Evening Minyan

A Message from the Clergy



The technological advances in virtual reality allowed Temple Israel to seamlessly transition to a regular program of virtual prayer and worship during the COVID-19 pandemic. Temple Israel offers religious services, via Livestream and Zoom, 7-days a week! All one need's to do is visit our website (templeisraelinc.org), follow the simple instructions, and voila!, you are immersed in world of traditional Jewish worship.

There is no substitute for the actual human touch, but as Jews have done for thousands of years in difficult situations, we make do! We do so with an eye to the future knowing Ha-kol Ya'avov- this, too, shall pass!

Rabbi Howard Siegel

A Message from the President



Mission Uninterrupted. Temple Israel pivoted to a remote work environment the week of March 16th, 2020, quite seamlessly given an intentional, proactive roadmap approach to a holistic technology platform, hardware, software and bandwidth throughput. This optimizes Temple Israel's ability to be nimble and flexible, furthering our vision and mission and stewarding our congregational family.

Our team has reframed our perspective and continues to experiment with various virtual platforms, livestreaming and Zoom, as we remain steadfast offering a robust menu of services, Minyanim and educational opportunities, from our Temple Israel Religious School students to our adult education offerings.

We are open and welcome you to tune in with the continuance of synagogue life during these challenging times!

In 2 Samuel 10:12, Joab says,

“...וְנִתְחַזַּקְתִּי וְנִתְחַזַּקְתֶּם”

“Hazak, hazak, venithazzek”, which might be translated as, “Be strong, be strong, and we will take strength from you.”

Go from strength to strength! Stay healthy, be safe and be strong!

President, Board of Trustees

JOIN US



Are you interested in becoming part of a really amazing community? We invite you to experience Temple Israel. For singles and couples, young and old, students and families, for those seeking religious knowledge, for those seeking kindred spirits, for fun and a true celebration of all that it means to be Jewish, there is something here for you. Temple Israel's 2020-2021 Annual Commitment campaign has commenced!

NEW MEMBER REFERRAL PROGRAM: If you refer a friend or family member to Temple Israel, you and your referral will get a one-time \$250 credit off of Standard commitment rates* to be deducted from your balance at the end of your payment cycle.

NEW THIS YEAR: Register or Renew online at templeisraelinc.org

To learn more about Temple Israel and membership opportunities, please contact Erin Goldstein at 704-362-2796 or egoldstein@templeisraelinc.org.

*If you are contributing less than a Standard commitment level, you will receive a 15% credit off your total commitment balance - up to a maximum of \$250.

UMatter Week Launched at Charlotte Latin

What is U_Matter?

UMatter is an initiative developed by Friendship Circle, an organization that provides support to those who experience social isolation, with a focus on individuals with special needs. U_Matter helps teenagers take a step back from daily stresses and refocus on life's positivity. Our goal is to build a support network and eliminate the stigma surrounding mental health in our community. We believe that everyone is created with a Godly purpose and has something to contribute to the world. It's up to each of us to know, and show, that You Matter.

What is U_Matter Week?

UMatter Week is a week-long series of events held at a school that focuses on positivity and promotes self-worth. After a local high school experienced two suicides in one school year, we knew it was time to step in and change the conversation. We wanted to share what we've learned from our friends at Friendship Circle: we're each unique, have something wonderful to contribute to the world, and we can bring out the best in someone else just by being our true selves. With the opportunity for this week to have impacted even one life, we consider it a tremendous success. As it says in the Jerusalem Talmud: "... Whoever saves one life, it's as if he has saved an entire world."

Meet Olivia Halperin, a U_Matter ambassador at Charlotte Latin who launched a U_Matter week

for her entire Upper School. Each day incorporated another activity including an interactive "1 Thing I Wish You Knew" Wall, yoga de-stress meets, Teacher "TED-Talks" about a personal challenge they faced and overcame, and a U_Matter laptop sticker giveaway.

UMatter is a project of Friendship Circle and an initiative powered by the Jewish Federation's Impact and Innovation Fund.✡



UMatter Week at Charlotte Latin.

Friends Without Borders Friendship Circle Takes Its Friendships Online

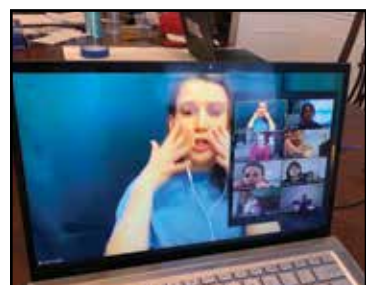
Friendship isn't something that stops with social distancing. In fact at Friendship Circle we said: Physical distancing but not social distancing.

On March 16, the day CMS closed, Friendship Circle went into high gear. We moved all Friendship Circle programs online, including Friends@Home visits, and have held activities twice a day. A huge thanks to our Family and Program Coordinator,

Ms. Sue Schreiber, and all our program instructors.

While we don't know how long this will continue, it's wonderful to have a chance to see our friends each day and make sure they're not lonely or bored and are staying positive.

Friendship Circle is a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte. To learn more visit www.FriendshipCircleNC.org.✡



Learning sign language with Julia.



Rochel leading an online upcycling class.



Sing-along with Johnny.



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SYNAGOGUES & CONGREGATIONS

Temple Kol Tikvah Welcomes New Rabbi

Temple Kol Tikvah joyfully welcomed its new religious leader, installing Rabbi David Lipper in an evening of community and connection.

The congregation and community leaders gathered in the Davidson synagogue on February 21 to mark the transition and to welcome Rabbi Lipper and his wife, Dora.

The service included messag-

es from Davidson Mayor Rusty Knox, Davidson College President Dr. Carol Quillen, Davidson College Chaplain Rob Spach, and Temple Kol Tikvah President Daniel Tobias.

The Kol Tikvah community celebrated with a unique Havdallah service the next night – a dueling pianos event in Cornelius. ☆

Over 300 Passover Seder2Go Kits Delivered Across Greater Charlotte Area

The last time Rabbi Yossi and Mariashi Groner didn't lead a Passover Seder for Chabad of Charlotte was in 1979.

For the first time in almost 10 years, Friendship Circle was unable to offer a Passover Seder Experience for families of children with special needs.

After five years of hosting a community Seder at Chabad of Ballantyne, this year could be no different.

For Chabad in Uptown Charlotte, the Passover Seder has been a staple in its programming for young Jewish professionals new to Charlotte and new to experiencing Passover away from their families.

A similar story rings true for the Chabad Center in Lake Norman.

Resolving to minimize the stress of preparing for Passover, this year the first time for many, Chabad of Charlotte, Ballantyne, Uptown, Lake Norman, and Friendship Circle banded together to deliver hundreds of Passover "Seder-2-Go" kits with the essentials and helpful materials. Kits included Seder guides, Seder plates and maror, charoset, and shankbones, and several conversation starters to make this year's D-I-Y Seder a little more mean-

ingful.

Thanks to the following individuals for helping make the Seder2Go kits possible: Ed and Leslie Rusgo ~ Friendship Circle of Charlotte; Benjamin Schwartz, Leroy and Cheryl Rosenberg, Joseph and Ruth Brown ~ Ballantyne Jewish Center. ☆



Rabbi David Lipper



Above: Bentzion Groner delivering the Seder-2-Go Kits.



Putting together the Seder-2-Go Kits.



Informational materials for the Seder-2-Go Kits.

The Ruach™

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Rabbi Rachel Smookler

This too shall pass גם זה יעבר

Rabbi Smookler and The Ruach send prayers and positive energy to all to stay safe and be well during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Email us at the.ruach.band@gmail.com to request to be on The Ruach's information and update list



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The Ruach is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to spread the joy of Judaism through new Jewish musical experiences that are meant to create and maintain personal connections and, inspire and engage people to embrace the religion and all that it has to offer.



New Jewish Learning Institute Course This Coming May

Online JLI of Charlotte Will Explore Biblical Secrets

Beginning on May 5, JLI of Charlotte will be offering a new six-session course from the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), titled *Secrets of the Bible: Iconic Stories, Mystical Meanings, and Their Lessons for Life*.

"People tend to read biblical stories as they do primitive mythology," Rabbi Yossi Groner said. "Our course invites participants to look deeper and discover the underlying themes and relevant life lessons that these stories were designed to convey."

The course presents a whole new way of reading the stories of Adam and Eve and the Tree of Knowledge, Noah and the great flood, the lifelong feud between Jacob and Esau, Joseph's multi-

colored coat, the golden calf, and Korach's rebellion. For each of these stories, it seeks to answer the questions: What is the deeper meaning behind the story? How does it shape the Jewish worldview? And what wisdom does it hold for us today?

Throughout its six sessions, *Secrets of the Bible* explores major life themes, including human subjectivity and bias, the underpinnings of relationships, negotiating spiritual growth with practical impact, why inspiration is fleeting and how to make it last, understanding equality and privilege, and navigating parallel spiritual and material life paths.

"Secrets of the Bible presents wonderful ancient biblical stories

in fresh and modern ways that deal with universal human dilemmas," explained Dr. Erica Brown, director of the Mayberg Center for Jewish Education and Leadership at George Washington University. "The wisdom it shares should not remain a secret."

"Secrets of the Bible brings to an intelligent lay readership texts so formative to so many cultures worldwide that they cannot be ignored even by cultures looking on from without," commented Dr. Joel Rosenberg, a professor of biblical literature at Tufts University. "By embracing post-biblical Jewish tradition, the course recognizes an interpretative process that begins with the Bible itself (interpreting its own past)

and goes on to awaken the interpretive impulse in later readers exploring the experience of their own era."

The evening course will run for six consecutive Tuesdays at 7:30 PM, and the morning class, which begins on Wednesday, May 6, at 11 AM, will run for six consecutive Wednesdays.

Like all JLI programs, this course is designed to appeal to people at all levels of knowledge, including those without any prior experience or background in Jewish learning. All JLI courses are open to the public, and attendees need not be affiliated with a particular synagogue, temple, or other house of worship.

Due to the current situation,



this course will be offered via video conferencing. When students register, they will receive a text book delivered to their home, as well as, information on where and how to log on to this course. The online class will allow for live interaction with students as well as Q&A.

Fee for the course is \$99 per person and \$180 per couple.

Interested students may write to brenda@chabadnc.org or visit www.myJLI.com for registration and for other course-related information.✡

Chabad of Charlotte Goes Virtual to Bring Live Judaism to the Community

Chabad of Charlotte has been using advanced technology to bring life and meaning to the Charlotte Jewish community during the challenging days of "Stay at Home."

Daily live talks and learning sessions include: Points of light, Talmud study, and even pre-Shabbat cooking classes. The highly rated C-Kids program went online as well as interactive mitzvah practices.

We are commanded to make our home into a sanctuary for God and not just depend on the synagogue as a place to engage with our Judaism. We pray to God to end this pandemic and help our medical professionals fight it, and that scientists will discover a vaccine to protect our population. At the same token, we utilize

the time spent at home, whether alone or with family, to sanctify it with Godly divine study and the observance of mitzvot.

To see recordings of these classes or to watch live, please visit our website at chabadnc.org and our Facebook page which appears on our webpage.✡



Temple Beth El: Discover Meaning by Making Meaning

By Rabbi Asher Knight

We are not the first generation of Jews to live through periods of great uncertainty. If any group can face tough challenges, it's us. The Jewish people have flourished by adapting to new circumstances and boldly choosing to walk towards the horizons of possibility and hope with each other and with God. At Temple Beth El, we have chosen to light our darkened world with love by supporting each other. We have chosen to create meaning from ambiguity and to see the blessings and Godliness that abound.

All of us who have been in physical isolation these many weeks know a thing or two about counting. We count the number of days and weeks we've been in our homes. We count the number of loads of laundry and dishes we have to clean. We count up minutes until the kids go to sleep – so we can get some R&R, too. We count the number of people on our Zooms or the amount of time that we will spend in front of our computers.

During the seasons and cycles of the Jewish year, there are rituals that help us to create meaning. The counting of the omer, S'firat HaOmer, is one such ritual. Spanning 49 days, seven weeks, between the second day of Passover and the holiday of Shavuot on May 28-29, the S'firat HaOmer is considered to be the number of days between our people's liberation from Egypt to the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai. At

Passover we celebrate the physical freedom from slavery and oppression and then, we begin counting: 1, 2, 3, 4 ... all the way to 49. At Shavuot, we celebrate the spiritual freedom that the Torah and the teachings of our tradition give us. These days, all of us are looking towards the promise of physical and spiritual freedom.

So, at this season of counting, I invite you open your hand and "count up" on your fingers. Count up the ways that a loving community can help you feel a sense of belonging and becoming. Count up the ways that Jewish learning can enrich your life. Count up the ways a personal prayer – or song sung in our community – can touch your heart and heal your soul. Count up the ways that the new adventures can open up your mind and spirit. Count up all the ways that you can connect – to those that you love. Count up the ways that your hands can extend kindness and hope. Count up the blessings in your life – big and small. Count up the people that you appreciate and are grateful for.

The coronavirus is a generational history making event. There has been much pain and sadness and suffering. Redemption and liberation and Mount Sinai moments of the past gave our people a sense of resilience, urgency, and courage. We are all traversing new territory, in the wilderness of newness. Our lives have been shaped by the unfolding drama – we have all experi-

enced sorrows and happiness, highs and lows. Our lives have been shaped by the journey that we have shared alone, together. Many have asked me, "Rabbi, how will we find meaning in all of this?" My answer is simple: We will find meaning when we make meaning. The answer is in the story of our people. Our story is still being written. It is precisely at times like this when we realize the power and importance of community and in writing the story, together.

Here at Temple Beth El, we believe that synagogues are about people. We all need genuine love and embrace. We help each other count the ordinary and small miracles within which we can find lessons of joy, flexibility, and gratitude. We guide and support each other towards fulfilling our dreams and connecting with the sacred in the everyday. We comfort one another and hold each other up. Belong. Become. Journey and grow. Extend your hand with kindness. Through doing so, we will certainly discover meaning by the ways in which we make meaning.✡



TEMPLE
BETH EL

Lone Soldiers in the IDF

(Continued from page 13)

of financial relief.

"The IDF has always been the protector of the State of Israel, and today more than ever, as we battle the Coronavirus around the world. The IDF can never take a break – not for an hour, not for a minute, not for a second," said FIDF National Director and CEO Maj. Gen. (Res.) Meir Klifi-Amir. "The IDF's supreme duty is to keep Israel's borders secure and its civilians safe. To that end, the IDF needs to remain in full readiness, and be prepared for any challenge. The IDF cannot take any risk that its soldiers or entire military units will be incapacitated. For this reason, the military made tough decisions, including the separation of civilians from soldiers so that soldiers must stay on bases for at least a month."

According to Klifi-Amir, this creates considerable challenges – for all soldiers, including Lone Soldiers. "FIDF is in daily communication with the IDF to follow their directives and understand the soldiers' on-going needs, in order to adjust our support and activities, and guarantee

that, even during these difficult times, we continue to fulfill the needs of our sons and daughters in uniform," he added.

Anyone wishing to contribute to FIDF can do so by visiting www.fidf.org, or contacting your local FIDF chapter.

About Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF):

FIDF was established in 1981 by a group of Holocaust survivors as a 501(C)(3) not-for-profit organization with the mission of offering educational, cultural, recreational, and social programs and facilities that provide hope, purpose, and life-changing support for the soldiers who protect Israel and Jews worldwide. Today, FIDF has more than 150,000 loyal supporters, and 24 chapters throughout the United States and Panama. FIDF proudly supports IDF soldiers, families of fallen soldiers, and wounded veterans through a variety of innovative programs that reinforce the vital bond between the communities in the United States, the soldiers of the IDF, and the state of Israel. For more information, please visit: www.fidf.org.✡

A twenty second prayer
for washing our hands

*We wash our hands for protection,
in preparation, in prayer...
for ourselves and our health,
for our families and those we love,
for the wellness of those providing
healthcare services and other essential
needs, for our world and its wellbeing.
God, source of life, grant a complete healing
(רפואה שלימה - a refuah shleimah) to all.*

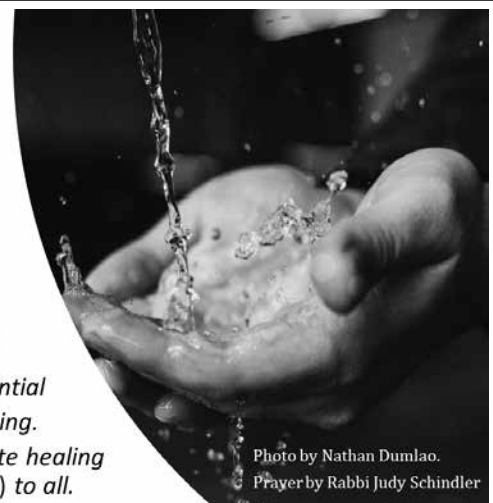


Photo by Nathan Dumlao.
Prayer by Rabbi Judy Schindler

Temple Solel Loves Our Neighbors

Recently we remembered historical examples where we escaped from death during Purim and slavery during Passover. The caveat we are encountering now is the biggest present plague of our current lifetime. However, COVID-19 is more than illness and natural death – and no small thing when families, friends, lives, jobs, businesses, and even relationships are stressed.

Temple Solel has faced losing two of our members with families unable to have a proper funeral service. The losses are so great, but even our traditions are being challenged by this plague. How do you make and bring food to people? Sit Shiva?

In life, we choose to support, love, adjust, and provide other means to keep our congregants connected. We had our first ever Zoom Shabbat service online. Even though it was awkward, there was a familiarity that brought us great comfort. We also divided up our list of members between our small board to make sure we reach out and see how people are doing. We have wonderful members who have reached out offering to buy groceries. There were ways we learned that we can still provide meals to people experiencing a difficult loss or illness in need of help.

One of the guiding commandments of Judaism is “Love your neighbor as yourself,” but how often do we read it in context. In Leviticus 19:17, it reads, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt surely rebuke

thy neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. 18 Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord. 19 Ye shall keep My statutes.” (JPS Tanakh 1917)

Many of us don’t even know our neighbor’s names. People have mentioned the isolation led them to reach out to people either by phone or standing a six foot distance apart (please). Thankfully, this time of year holds beautiful blooms, and Carolina blue skies. Being outside is a gift during this time of isolation. It was a safe option many of our members chose to see each other whether on a patio, driving by in a golf cart, or meeting to take a walk.

We are responsible for both the evil and the good in this world in every choice we make. Let’s choose hope so we have the ability to believe for something we cannot see right now, but might be able to experience in the future. Part of changing the future is making sure we help others. It is a wonderful benefit of such a horrible pandemic.

Before the outbreak, our President, Shelley Pawlyk, who is also a Senior Ordained Chaplain with the International Fellowship of Chaplains, was asked to be on a panel at Winthrop University entitled, “Does God Care About My Mental Health?” There were over a hundred students in attendance. Staff Counselor and Outreach Coordinator, Jess Hudgens, MA, LPCA, NCC, was the organizer.

She included leadership representation from the Christian community, Bahia, and Jewish faiths to answer questions submitted by students and based on trends they have seen in the counseling office. Example questions addressed by the panel were:

1) Does struggling with my mental health mean that God is punishing me or testing me?” (no) 2) “Does continuing to struggle with my mental health mean I haven’t prayed or listened to God enough?” (no) 3) “Does seeking help for my mental health struggles through counseling or medication mean I don’t trust God?” (no)

The common thread between the faiths represented is that God loves and does care about our mental health. The panel mentioned multiple times to consider how quickly we might consider taking medicine for a headache or high blood pressure, or accept treatment for diabetes, but are so reluctant to seek professional care for mental health. It was a very heartfelt event which elicited a positive response. Now more than ever during these challenging times, if you need help or feel isolated, please reach out and ask for help. There are other people who are feeling the same way as you are. Share in these burdens until we come to our new normal.

Temple Solel holds regular Shabbat services at 7 PM on the second and fourth Fridays of each month via Zoom during the pandemic and hopes to resume services when appropriate at Belair UMC Family Life Center, 8095

Shelley Mullis Rd., Fort Mill, SC 29707. For more information see templesolelSC.org, write us at info@templesolelSC.org or call 803-610-1707.☆



Shelley Pawlyk, second from right, with the Winthrop Faith Panel.



Temple Solel’s virtual services.

Act Together. Care for Each Other.

Sunday, May 17

9:30am: Opening Ceremony

10:00am: Mitzvah at Home



#TBEMitzvahDay #MitzvahAtHome #TBEActs #TBECares



In Response to Corona – Jewish Studies at Queens Does Not Miss a Beat

Judaism has always been adaptive. In ancient times, we moved from having a travelling Tabernacle in the desert to building the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. When our holiest Jerusalem sanctuary was destroyed and we were exiled from our holy land, we created Judaism anew with synagogues, with houses of study, and with Torah at the center. As a Jewish people, we have learned how to carry community with us and creatively reinvent ourselves wherever we have lived.

Confronting COVID-19 required that same level of Jewish creativity locally and globally. We are proud of the way that all

of our Charlotte Jewish institutions mobilized to create virtual community and we were thankful to be part of that landscape. More than 100 people joined our first night Queens Jewish Studies Virtual Social Justice Seder. Segments of the Seder were led by Queens alum (Noah Goldman calling in from Israel), current Queens students and their families, and fellow professors from other institutions. Queens parent Patty Torcellini led us on guitar. Queens parent Rabbi Harvey Winokur shared Mussar insights. Queens Chaplain Reverend Joey Haynes spoke of poverty in Charlotte and Reverend Willie Keaton, our Justice Organizer, reflected

on liberation and racial justice. Talli Dippold wrote an original piece reflecting on lessons surrounding liberation that our Holocaust survivors have taught us.

Our Jewish Studies courses and our workshops with CMS teachers and public students continue to thrive online.

During this time of social distancing and even as we slowly return to a new normal, Queens University Jewish Studies and the Greenspon Center for Peace and Social Justice will be here to meet your Jewish and Holocaust and human rights educational needs. We invite you to participate in our online programming:

* Peaceful Pause Programs -

On each Sunday at 5 PM, we offer a weekly peaceful pause when you can enjoy short reflections on topics of hope and resilience. Sessions are recorded and are made available afterwards on our website.

* Midrash Mondays Wine and Wisdom Program - Join Rabbi Judy each Monday from 5-6 PM for a weekly happy hour that will be lifted by an encounter with our sacred texts.

* Hope in the Midst of the Holocaust Series – Stay tuned for 30

minute online sessions that will include art, music, poetry, and literature.

We aim to share the beauty of Jewish studies and Holocaust and human rights education, and the passion of Social Justice Advocacy with the community. To get connected with our course offerings and volunteer opportunities, please visit our website www.stangreesponcenter.org or contact Talli Dippold at dippoldt@queens.edu.✧

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No, Your Quarantine Is Not Comparable to Anne Frank's

By Sophie Levitt

This story originally appeared on Alma.

There are quite a few things I've been seeing all over my social media feeds ever since the spread of COVID-19 forced everyone to social distance. There are the jokes about no longer wearing a bra, comments about being confused over what day it is, and comparisons to Anne Frank hiding in an attic.

One of these things is not like the other.

The U.S. government recommending individuals to practice social distancing in order to prevent the spread of a deadly virus is not at all similar to being forced into hiding to avoid the impending threat of a state-sponsored genocide. In fact, to make the comparison is egregiously offensive. So why do I keep seeing people doing just that?

On Twitter, if you search "Anne Frank" now, you will find

an abundance of users tweeting about how they now know exactly how Anne Frank felt after a week in quarantine. Some of these even go as far as to say that Anne Frank had it much better than us right now. And I feel like I am losing my mind.

There are so many things wrong with this; let me count the ways.

First, timing. Anne Frank's family was in hiding for a total of 25 months before they were discovered by the Gestapo in August 1944. Most of us are still in our first weeks or month of social distancing. Twenty-eight days versus 761 days. Not exactly the same.

Another variable are the spaces in which people are stuck. In the case of the Franks, eight people were stuck inside a small annex that had approximately 450 square feet of floor space. Anne herself wrote that it was relatively luxurious compared to where

many other Jewish people were forced to hide. The eight people in this annex could not leave, and the only way for them to get food was through a few trusted non-Jews who could sneak in items. They also needed to keep the secret annex dark because light would attract attention, and it was silent because noise would do the same.

Americans in quarantine can still go grocery shopping and do other essential tasks. We can go for walks in non-crowded spaces. We can get some sun, listen to music. And social distancing does not mean that people cannot stay in contact with their friends and family. We have social media, FaceTime, and Zoom calls to help.

Meanwhile, families like Anne Frank's were forced to practically disappear from the world to avoid being caught and taken to a concentration camp. It pains me to have to say this, but these con-

ditions are not remotely similar to each other.

Of course, it is also important to emphasize the incredibly differing circumstances of each event. The only similarity I can draw is that both situations are spreading a deadly illness. One is a literal sickness and the other is a figurative one: Nazism. However, that's not the comparison I have seen people making — they are attempting to compare the isolation aspect. In the first scenario, people across the globe are isolating to avoid spreading COVID-19. In the second, the people were hiding to avoid Nazis who wanted to eliminate their entire race.

If I wanted to give people today the benefit of the doubt, I could say that some of the tweets I have seen were made out of ignorance. But many are so clearly offensive, there is no questioning that they are intentionally Antisemitic.

Some of these tweets even imply that Anne Frank was lying. One can claim it's just a "joke," but with Holocaust denial rising steadily, tweets like these just encourage it.

Tweets like these are damaging to the Jewish and Romani communities, and are mocking the Holocaust and the current pandemic.

The murder of over 6 million Jews and 500,000 Romani people is continually minimized with every tweet. With every retweet and like, their genocide continues to be diminished.

It is already hard enough to deal with the tragedy and consequences of this pandemic. We need to stop worsening it by degrading the memory of Anne Frank to simply the girl in quarantine and stop minimizing the memory of the Holocaust by comparing it to what is going on now.✧

Jewish NFL Star Mitch Schwartz Embraces His Inner Chef During Coronavirus Quarantine

By Emily Burack

(JTA) — Fresh off his Super Bowl win in February, Kansas City Chiefs lineman Mitchell Schwartz took a vacation with his wife, Brooke, to St. Lucia. Little did they know that when they returned, they would be spending the next few months holed up at home because of the coronavirus pandemic.

So Schwartz, 30, has turned to what he loves maybe more than football: cooking.

Posting to his 79,000 Instagram followers using the hashtag #ChefSchwartz, the Jewish athlete has shared photos of many of his favorite recipes — from waffles with homemade whipped cream to bone-in ribeye to chicken nachos.

He has essentially pivoted from one of the best offensive linemen in the NFL, a Pro Bowler, to a full-on food blogger. https://www.instagram.com/p/B-AcU8GI_4a/

Schwartz is not a total stranger to being a food influencer, however.

In 2016, along with his brother Geoff, also a former NFL lineman, he wrote the cookbook *Eat My Schwartz: Our Story of NFL Football, Food, Family, and Faith*. They tell stories about their upbringing, being the first Jewish brothers in the NFL since 1923 and their favorite Jewish traditions.

Schwartz shares that the Seder is one of his favorites, and how he wishes it would "occur during the [football] season" so he could host a Passover meal for his teammates.

But the bulk of "Eat My Schwartz" is food content with recipes by the brothers.

Cooking has always been a passion for Schwartz, starting when he was a teen. He explained in 2018 that he "transitioned from watching cartoons and sports — I still watch sports — into watching a lot of Food Network and Cooking Channel, and finding a way to feed myself."

Outside of his social media, Schwartz has a food blog — called Mitch in the Kitch, obviously —

where he posts his recipes and instructions. He responds to fans who comment and is genuinely enthusiastic about his subject. Here's his brisket pot roast from last week:

He started Mitch in the Kitch as a way to express his passion for cooking, but also to connect with fans.

"They obviously have an interest in how you play, but they're also interested in what you're doing in your personal life, and they want to get to know you better," Schwartz told The Athletic. "Typically, in most households, someone is cooking a meal, whether it's once a week or every night. Everyone has a vested interest in good food, so it's just a fun way to interact with people and to reach out. The response has been great."

In typical offseasons, Schwartz hosts his teammates for a meal that he cooks — there are never any leftovers.

"It gets a little toasty, but that's the fun of cooking. Whether it's my wife and making her a good



Mitchell Schwartz is having some fun, with food, off the gridiron. (Thearon W. Henderson/Getty Images; Mitchell Schwartz/Instagram)

meal or cooking for friends and family, you're doing something where you can make other people happy. It's definitely a good feeling," Schwartz said.

On Twitter, he also answers questions from fans about food and offers words of encouragement for others that are trying his recipes:

<https://twitter.com/MitchSchwartz71/status/1241763981204901888?s=20>

His advice for those trying

to cook for the first time during quarantine?

"Just try it. Just have fun with it," Schwartz told his local news station. "You're going to mess up, you're going to overcook something, you're going to undercook something. It's all trial and error. It's all fun."

"I mean, no one's going to be too disappointed. You can always order a pizza if you need to at the end of the day."

Amen to that.✧



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The previous June, when Mia and Pearl had moved into the little rental house on Winslow Road, neither Mrs. Richardson (who technically owned the house) nor Mr. Richardson (who handed over the keys) had given them much thought. They knew there was no Mr. Warren, and that Mia was thirty-six, according to the Michigan driver's license she had provided. They noticed that she wore no ring on her left hand, though she wore plenty of other rings: a big amethyst on her first finger, one made from a silver spoon handle on her pinkie, and one on her thumb that to Mrs. Richardson looked suspiciously like a mood ring. But she seemed nice enough, and so did her daughter, Pearl, a quiet fifteen-year-old with a long dark braid. Mia paid the first and last months' rent, and the deposit, in a stack of twenty-dollar bills, and the tan VW Rabbit—already battered, even then—puttered away down Parkland

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