

The Charlotte JEWISH NEWS

Celebrating Jewish Life

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May 2024

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

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



**Jewish
Federation**
of Greater Charlotte

Federation Welcomes David Hazony to 2024 Annual Meeting

By Jessica Goldfarb, JFGC Communications Specialist

The Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte (JFGC) will hold its annual meeting on Monday, May 20, at 7 p.m. in the Sam Lerner Center for Cultural Arts at Shalom Park. Federation is delighted to welcome David Hazony as the guest speaker for this year's event. Hazony is an esteemed author, editor, and director and Steinhardt Senior Fellow at the Z3 Institute for Jewish Priorities, which fosters dialogue and connection between Israeli and American Jews. With over three decades of experience, he has contributed significantly to essays and books on Judaism, Zionism, and peoplehood.

Hazony's book, "Jewish Priorities: Sixty-Five Proposals for the Future of Our People," compiles more than sixty essays from a diverse array of voices within the Jewish community, ranging from secularists to ultra-Orthodox, and from young influencers to veteran writers. Each essay offers a unique perspective on Jewish life, collectively providing unexpected insights into modern Judaism. Following the meeting, attendees will have the opportunity to purchase David's book and have their copies signed.

This year's gathering will honor outgoing president Risa Miller, whose dedication and tireless efforts have profoundly



David Hazony

impacted both Federation and the greater Charlotte Jewish community. Additionally, we look forward to welcoming incoming president Amy Vitner as she begins her term, bringing fresh perspectives and initiatives to the forefront.

The annual meeting serves as a platform to discuss upcoming

JFGC programming and to elect our 2024-2025 slate of officers and trustees. Community members 18 years and older who contribute at least \$36 to Federation's 2024 Annual Campaign are eligible to vote. We invite you to join us for this special evening.

A Week of Remembrance and Celebration

By Jessica Goldfarb, JFGC Communications Specialist

As the holidays of Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron, and Yom Ha'Atzmaut approach, their significance has taken on a new and profound meaning this year. Against the backdrop of a world that is grappling with a resurgence of antisemitism and challenges from the ongoing Israel-Hamas war, the observance of these holidays serves as a chance to bear witness in solidarity with Israel.

According to the Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) January report, incidents of antisemitism have surged by a stagger-

ing 360% since October 7. In the face of such adversity, Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, assumes an even greater purpose. It serves as a poignant reminder of the horrors of the past and a call to vigilance against the forces of hatred and bigotry facing us today. This year's Yom HaShoah Holocaust Remembrance Day Community Commemoration on May 5 at 4 p.m. at Temple Beth El will include the lighting of six memorial candles to represent the six million Jews who perished, recitation of the Mourner's Kaddish, and a moment to recognize Holocaust survivors living in our

Charlotte community. Carolyn Dorfman Dance will present a powerfully moving performance of excerpts (with narration) from Carolyn Dorfman's Legacy Project, which gives voice to those who were silenced in the Holocaust.

Yom HaZikaron, Israel's Memorial Day, also resonates with deeper meaning this year. Tragically, there are more names to remember and more lives lost in the pursuit of peace for Israel. Yet amidst the sorrow, there is a profound sense of unity and solidarity, as Israelis and Jews

(Continued on page 3)

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Editor's Corner

Embracing Our Roots: Why Jewish Heritage Month Matters Now More Than Ever



Shira Firestone, Editor CJN

I converted to Judaism in 1998. I've been active in the community, serving as the music director and family programming director of my synagogue in Seattle — even serving on its board of directors for many terms. I've been working in some professional capacity with the Jewish nonprofit community for literally decades, and for the past four years I've had the privilege of serving as the editor of The Charlotte Jewish News. And yet — last year was the first year I became aware of Jewish Heritage Month. Why is that?

I've known about Black History Month and Women's History Month since they were established in 1976 and 1987, respectively. These celebrations have become an integral part

of our cultural landscape, with schools, organizations, and media outlets actively promoting and participating in events and discussions throughout the months of February and March.

In contrast, Jewish Heritage Month, despite being established by President George W. Bush in 2006, has garnered far less attention and recognition. This disparity might be attributed to several factors, including the relatively small size of the Jewish American population (approximately 2%), limited media coverage, and inconsistent observance across different regions and communities.

However, the lack of widespread awareness about Jewish Heritage Month does not diminish its significance, especially in the face of rising antisemitism. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reports a more than 300% increase in antisemitic incidents since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on October 7, 2023 over the same period one year prior. As the war continues, it has become increasingly crucial to engage in open dialogue, education, and celebration of Jewish heritage to combat the growing tide of antisemitism and misconceptions about Jews and Israel.

Last year, author Dara Horn visited Charlotte to discuss her book "People Love Dead Jews." She raised a thought-provoking point about the limitations of traditional approaches to understanding Jewish experiences, which often focus heavily on Holocaust education. While learning about the Holocaust is undeniably important, Horn suggested that engaging with the lives and contributions of contemporary Jews could be even more effective in combating antisemitism.

Emphasizing the historical contributions of Jews alongside those of contemporary figures helps to combat the stereotype that Jewish history is primarily defined by tragedy and victimhood, as exemplified by the heavy focus on the Holocaust in many educational contexts. By showcasing the diverse range of Jewish achievements and experiences throughout history, we can promote a more balanced and nuanced understanding of Jewish identity and culture.

Jewish Heritage Month has the potential to serve as a powerful tool to challenge stereotypes and misconceptions that fuel antisemitic sentiments. By actively engaging in this celebration through education, cultural events, and community gatherings, we not only affirm our pride in Jewish identity but also build bridges of understanding

with those outside our community.

While local events celebrating Jewish Heritage Month may be limited, there are still numerous ways to engage, learn, and share the rich history and contributions of the Jewish people. The website www.JewishHeritageMonth.org, powered by the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History, is just one resource. One opportunity they have organized is the Jewish American Heritage Concert livestreaming from the Nation's Capital on May 15, 2024, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. The American Jewish Committee website is another resource for information and education. (www.ajc.org/jewishamericanheritagemonth)

Locally, of course, the celebration of the State of Israel is a very visible way to celebrate Jewish heritage. Our community's Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration on May 15 at Shalom Park is a celebration of Israel's Independence Day and includes music, food, and more. (See www.jewishcharlotte.org for more information.)

In addition to these events, readers can actively engage with Jewish Heritage Month by following the Charlotte Jewish News Facebook page throughout May (www.facebook.com/CharlotteJewishNews) The page will feature daily content cele-

brating Jewish heritage, providing an easy way for readers to learn about and share the incredible contributions and history of the Jewish people with their networks.

Of course, diving into your own, personal, Jewish history is an important part of developing an appreciation for the contributions and history of Jews that might be more near and dear to you. Take a look at page 22 for the article from Charlotte's Hebrew Cemetery, "Embracing Our Roots: Why Jewish Heritage Month Matters Now More Than Ever." And on page 23, I've written and share with you a short article, "Getting Started With Jewish Genealogy." (Though I didn't grow up Jewish, my mother was a genealogist who traced our own family's roots back to the 1600s!)

In a world plagued by rising intolerance and division, it is more crucial than ever to ensure that Jewish Heritage Month receives the recognition and participation it deserves. By embracing this opportunity to learn, share, and celebrate the richness of Jewish life and history, we take a stand against the forces of hatred and bigotry that seek to diminish us. Together, let us actively engage in Jewish Heritage Month, sharing the stories, achievements, and resilience of the Jewish people, within our own community and beyond.

Shabbat Candle Lighting Times

(28226 Zip Code. For other locations, visit www.charlottejewishnews.org.)

May 3 — 7:53 p.m.

May 10 — 7:59 p.m.

May 17 — 8:04 p.m.

May 24 — 8:09 p.m.

May 31 — 8:14 p.m.

The Charlotte JEWISH NEWS
THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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A Week of Remembrance and Celebration

(Continued from front page)

throughout the world come together to honor the fallen and support one another. The community will join together on May 13 at 6 p.m. in the Sam Lerner Center for Cultural Arts at Shalom Park as we unite in heart and spirit for our community-wide Yom HaZikaron commemoration. We will honor the bravery and sacrifice of Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism, keeping their memories alive in solemn reflection and gratitude. This special gathering offers a moment to remember the victims of October 7, connect with our people, and honor the profound sacrifices being made.

The transition from Yom HaZikaron to Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Israel Independence Day, symbolizes a journey from mourning to celebration, from reflection to resilience. This year, however, the celebration takes on a greater significance as it becomes a testament to the unwavering determination of the Israeli people in the face of war and terrorism. Despite the myriad of challenges, Israel has remained steadfast



Carolyn Dorfman Dance: "Cat's Cradle"

as a symbol of hope for Jewish people worldwide. We reflect and celebrate amidst the echoes of October 7, reaffirming our spirit and quest for peace. This day honors the courage of those who safeguard the State of Israel and stands as a symbol of our hope and strength as a Jewish people. Let's embrace Yom Ha'Atzmaut on May 15 at 5 p.m.

at Shalom Park as a symbol of hope and strength as a Jewish people. This event will include music, food, and more.

For Jewish Americans, these three holidays carry a special significance, serving as a bridge that connects us to our heritage and homeland. In light of recent events, our community may be feeling a heightened sense of sol-

idarity with Israel and a deeper appreciation for the values that it embodies. These holidays become a reaffirmation of our shared identity and a source of inspiration as we, as Jewish people, navigate the complexities of our own lives and communities.

As we commemorate Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron, and Yom Ha'Atzmaut this year, let us reflect on the lessons of the past, honor the sacrifices of the fallen, and celebrate the resilience of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. In doing so, we reaffirm our commitment to combating antisemitism, promoting peace, and building a brighter future for generations to come.

Community Remembrance, Commemoration, and Celebration

Yom HaShoah
(Holocaust Remembrance Day):

Community Commemoration
May 5, 4 p.m.- 5:30 p.m. at Temple Beth El

Memory in the Living Room
(Program in Hebrew)
May 5, 6-8 p.m. at Sam Lerner Center for Cultural Arts at Shalom Park

Yom HaZikaron
(Memorial Day):
May 13, 6 p.m.- 8 p.m.
in the Sam Lerner Center for Cultural Arts at Shalom Park

Yom Ha'Atzmaut
(Israel Independence Day):
May 15, 5 p.m.-8 p.m.
at Shalom Park

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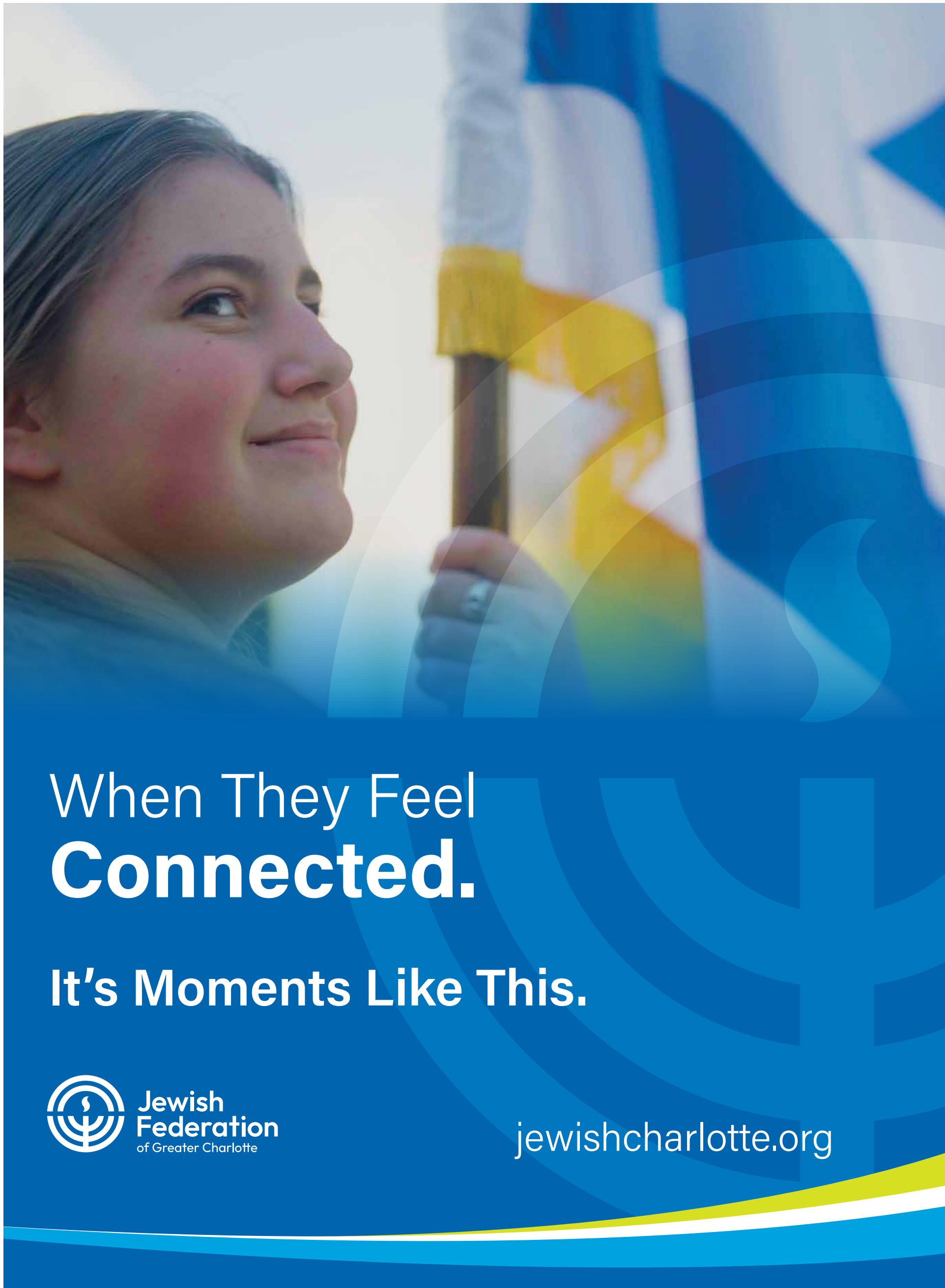
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Antisemitism and the Discourse on College Campuses

By Jessica Goldfarb, JFGC Communications Specialist

The ongoing Israel-Hamas war has heightened tensions worldwide. College campuses across the United States have become focal points for protests and demonstrations, with North and South Carolina colleges and universities being no exception. Many Jewish students and their families have felt uneasy in this heightened discourse. However, amidst the challenges, there have also been surprising effects that underscore the need for inclusive and educational programming and the strength of community bonds. Within this landscape, Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte (JFGC) is a pillar of support, offering vital resources through its Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC).

Education as a Path To Understanding:

For college-aged young adults, navigating their Jewish identity during this difficult period poses unique challenges. In addition to protests right outside their classrooms, social media amplifies the intensity and frequency with which they are exposed to anti-Israel and antisemitic rhetoric. Many students find that they lack the knowledge or resources to engage in meaningful dialogue amidst the discourse.

The JCRC provides online resources and in-person educational programming that teaches how to have these difficult discussions. In participating, students form friendships and strengthen their connections with their community, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment, which is perhaps now more important than ever.



UNCC students gather to celebrate a sports-themed Shabbat.

Community Strengthening Amidst Tensions:

These numerous protests have Jewish students, many of whom had little to no prior connection with Jewish organizations, seeking ways to grow and express their Jewish identity. Community gatherings, like the upcoming Yom HaZikaron memorial and Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration, serve as a chance for Jewish individuals to unite, fostering new friendships and a sense of solidarity among peers. Providing a space for Jewish young adults to engage and learn offers a crucial channel for their exploration and self-expression, shielded from judgment.

Hannah Spinrad, executive director of North Carolina Hillel, has observed a noticeable shift in student attitudes over the past two semesters: "Last semester [Fall 2023] was a time for mourning. This semester [Spring 2024] has seen a strong desire for safe spaces to connect with other Jews." This growing need for community and support coincides with an increase in participation in programs and initiatives offered by Jewish organizations. Many now provide these safe spaces for free expression exploration, and education.

Despite the unease felt by many Jewish students and

families, the aftermath of campus protests has unexpectedly strengthened community ties and spurred a quest for deeper understanding. Through connecting with community, students find solace, knowledge, and a sense of belonging. Through seeking out further education, students empower themselves with the tools needed to navigate complex discourse and pave a path forward toward peace.



We Stand With Israel

In response to the recent Iranian attack on Israel on April 13th, we have updated our Israel Resources page to include crucial resources, official statements, and updates from trusted sources. Our aim is to ensure that you have access to timely, accurate information and other educational assets during these challenging times.

Visit Our Resource Page





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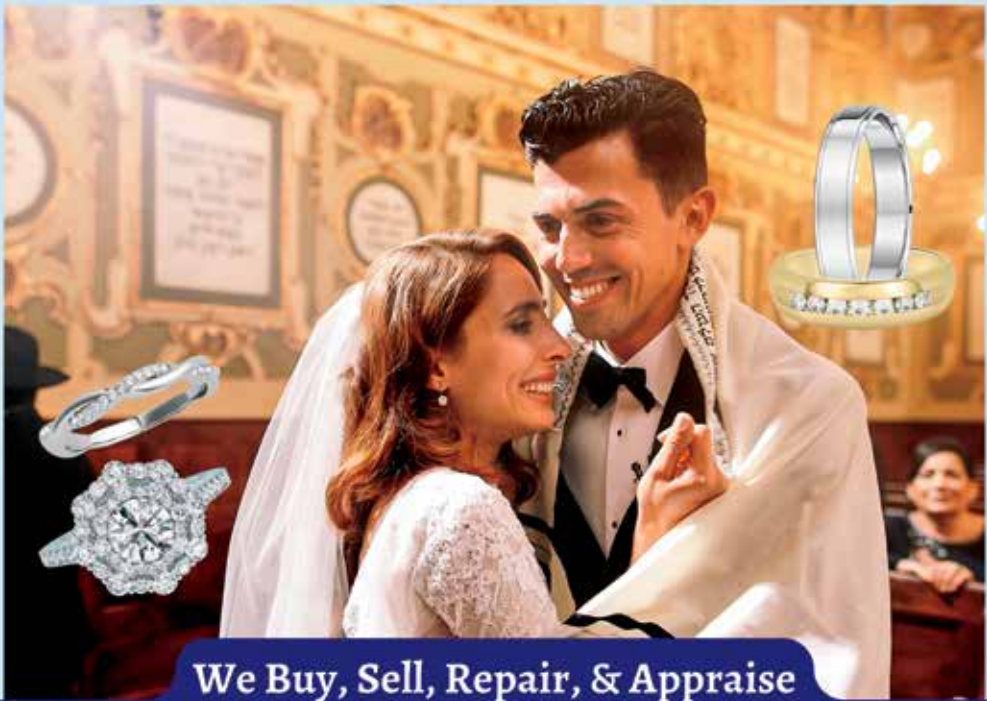
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The storyline interested me because it seemed to parallel my niece Megan's life to a point. Like the book's main character, Elena Berg, Megan grew up in New England, graduated from

"A SPECTACULAR DEBUT."
—Holly Ainslie,
author of *The Unfortunates*

**California
Dreaming**

A NOVEL

NOA SILVER

After two years, Elena leaves TFA to work for an educational technology start-up, which later loses its educational focus to concentrate solely on technology. As she follows this path, she questions her journey as it has

I believe we will be hearing a lot more from Noa Silver and I look forward to reading more of her work. This book will be published on May 21. I hope you will enjoy it as much as I did.

The next CJE Book Club meeting is Wednesday, May 8 when we will be discussing “Signal Fires” by Dani Shapiro. For more information, please contact sueb.littauer@jewishcharlotte.org.

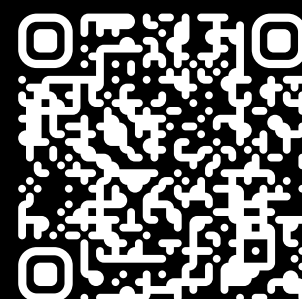
May 8	A Reason to Rise	Rabbi Jeremy Barras
July 10	The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store	James McBride
August 14	The Marriage Box	Corie Adjmi
September 11	Golda Meir: Israel's Matriarch	Deborah Lipstadt
October 9	The Wolf Hunt	Ayelet Gundar-Goshen
November 13	Leaving Eastern Parkway	Matthew Daub
December 11	The Stockwell Letters	Jacqueline Friedland

All meetings are on Wednesdays at 10:30 AM
All community members are welcome to attend.

For more information about the CJE Book Club,
please contact sueb.littauer@jewishcharlotte.org.

Three lit candles of different heights are shown against a dark background. The candles are lit, with bright yellow and orange flames. The central candle is the tallest, flanked by two shorter candles. The lighting is warm and focused on the flames.

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FEDERATION IMPACT: BENEFICIARY AGENCY SPOTLIGHT THE BUTTERFLY PROJECT

As a means of bettering our greater Charlotte Jewish community, the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte allocates donation funds to local Jewish organizations who embody Jewish values and overall better our community. In recognition of their work, we at Federation wish to bring attention to these organizations and the good that they do.

In our greater Charlotte Jewish community, there exists a profound commitment to Jewish values through education and Jewish identity. The Butterfly Project, born out of the need to educate and commemorate the Holocaust, embodies these values through their innovative and sensitive approach to teaching one of the darkest moments in Jewish history. Participants are given a ceramic butterfly to paint, each one representing a child who passed away during the Holocaust. The vivid colors and patterns that adorn the butterfly represent the enduring spirit of each victim and the resilience of the Jewish people as a whole.

Founded in 2006 at the San Diego Jewish Academy, this initiative is not just about paint-



ing ceramic butterflies; it's a transformative journey that fosters empathy and understanding among participants of all ages. Today, The Butterfly Project's impact extends far beyond its origins, inspiring communities like ours to take part in their mission, engage in meaningful dialogue, and act against injustice. The greater Charlotte Jewish community committed to joining The Butterfly Project in 2008, having since created well over 50,000 painted ceramic butterflies in community

workshops, several of which adorn the beautiful memorial sculpture in the Butterfly Garden outside the Levine-Sklut Judaic Library.

The Butterfly Project has become a cornerstone of our community's Holocaust education efforts, providing a tangible and deeply meaningful way to connect with an important piece of our history. As participants come together to paint these delicate symbols, they not only honor the memory of the victims but also reaffirm our collective commitment to combating hatred and bigotry in all its forms. Through the act of creating these butterflies, we strengthen the bonds of empathy and understanding that unite us as a community, ensuring that the lessons of the past continue to resonate with future generations.



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Answer the question, "How do you celebrate your Jewish identity?" through your creative lens in three categories:

Essay, Photography, and Podcast

Eligibility: Open to Jewish teens in grades 8-12. Whether you're reflecting on personal experiences or exploring the broader Jewish experience, we want to hear from you!

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Behind the Scenes: JFS Empowers Holocaust Survivors Through Unique Support

By Julie Loftis, JFS Marketing Specialist

Step behind the curtain and discover how Jewish Family Services (JFS) is taking proactive measures to empower Holocaust survivors in our community. As preparations are made to honor survivors during Yom HaShoah and Holocaust Survivor Day, JFS invites you to take an inside look at the specialized services, programs, and events designed to support and commemorate the resilience and enduring legacy of survivors.

Currently, JFS is deeply engaged in providing essential support to 48 Holocaust survivors in the greater Charlotte area. JFS is building personal relationships with each client and their family, recognizing the importance of addressing needs holistically and beyond the standard approach. Through

in-depth, in-home evaluations and personalized assessments, JFS senior engagement staff delve into the unique situations of each survivor, uncovering underlying needs and ensuring no aspect of their well-being goes unnoticed. Staff members examine the living conditions, food security, socialization, and in-home support requirements of each survivor. JFS has also helped with Claims Conference applications and securing funding for services such as in-home care. By taking this comprehensive approach, they aim to create a tailored support system that addresses the individual needs of every client, so they are able to live with dignity and comfort.

The JFS Senior Engagement team also orchestrates transformative experiences that bring survivors together, fostering a

sense of camaraderie and healing. A private High Tea program, providing time to come together and reflect, will be a prelude to the community Yom HaShoah event on May 5 to honor the legacy of survivors. Additionally, JFS is planning to hold a private luncheon at a local restaurant on June 4 in commemoration of Holocaust Survivor Day, with the theme "Celebrating Survivors." These events provide survivors opportunities to connect, share stories, and forge meaningful bonds within the community.

At recent gatherings, survivors have been introduced to peers with similar backgrounds and experiences, sparking new friendships and associations. These relationships provide companionship and serve as a source of strength and resilience for clients. Given the large numbers of former Soviet Union survivors who have become known to our agency in recent years, it's especially heartwarming to be able to connect these individuals with others from their home country or who share a language, in an effort to decrease their sense of social isolation.

Collaboration lies at the heart of JFS work, as they partner with community organizations and volunteers to expand impact. Together, they ensure

survivors receive the care and recognition they deserve. In addition, JFS constantly seeks feedback from survivors and the community to inform actions and initiatives. By listening to their needs and preferences, JFS adapts and evolves services to better meet client needs.

As we honor Holocaust sur-

vivors and their enduring legacy, join us in taking an inside look at the vital work being done by Jewish Family Services of Greater Charlotte. Together, let's continue to support our survivors, celebrate their resilience, and ensure that their stories are never forgotten.

Jewish Family Services Volunteers & Donors March 2024

Volunteers: Jessica Alfandary, Marcia Arnholt, Mike Arnholt, Daniel Benjamin, Andrew Bernstein, Dan Coblenz, Jonathan Collman, Andrea Cronson, Julie Dermack, Joni Deutsch, Sheryl Effren, Rachel Friedman, Robert Friedman, Meredith Gartner, Richard Goldsmith, Jennifer Golynsky, Gail Halverson, June Hirschmann, Rebecca Hockfield, Oren Hubara, Tara Hubara, Dawn Hubbs, Bob Jacobson, Rikki Kinitsky, Etti Krausse, Jennifer Koss, Elliot and Stephanie Kreitman, Marcia Lampert, Eric Lerner, Kim Levy, Adina Loewensteiner, Matt Luftglass, Gabby Maltz Frada Mozenter, Wendy Petricoff, Barbara Rein, Nina Rose, Marilyn Schuster, Stuart Singer, Harry Sparks, Lorin Steifel, Steve Teich, Gail Vogel, Nancy Wielunski, Amanda Zaidman

Alex and David Steifel, Amalia Warshenbrot, Jeff Zaleon, Arlo and Mabel Zeibert, Charlotte Jewish Preschool, Charlotte Jewish Day School 1st Grade, Israeli Folk Dance Charlotte

Special Thanks: Women of Temple Israel, Yafo Kitchen

Hadassah Meal Preppies: Tess Berger, Gina Bonfiglio, Jenny Boxer, Leslie Goldfarb, June Hirschmann, Paul Hirschmann, Yvette Jacobson, Judy Kaufmann, Penny Krieger, Andrea McCleary, Jered Mond, Johnson and Wales, Judy Nascimento, Betsy Olinger, Mary Jane Rosenthal, Elisa Ross, Andrea Schewitz, Debbie Siltan, Elissa Vining

Shalom Green: Thank to all Shalom Green volunteers for providing fresh produce to our pantry clients.

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

Jewish Family Services Tributes March 2024

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David Abrams
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In Honor of
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"Baby and Me" - Debby Block

In Memory of
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Howard Olshansky
Milton and Karen Silver

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Gigi Deimen
Owen Heath
Stefan Pienkny





Jewish Family SERVICES

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Jewish Family Services Leads the Way in Supporting Youth Mental Health

By Howard Olshansky, JFS Executive Director

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and this year's theme is Mental Health in a Changing World. In a post-Covid environment this theme is truly relevant to how we are navigating mental health today. To address the significant impact the pandemic and current societal challenges have had on our youth and young adults, leading to increased anxiety, depression, and suicide rates, The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) and The Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies (NJHSA) launched the BeWell Initiative in 2022. This nationwide effort aims to support the mental health needs of Jewish youth and young adults.

As part of this initiative, communities formed Resiliency Roundtables to address mental health concerns. In Charlotte, a Resiliency Roundtable was established in 2023, bringing together representatives from many Jewish institutions and community members interested in youth mental health. JFS received a grant from JFNA to create and distribute a needs assessment survey with input from the members of our Resiliency Roundtable. This assessment focused on ages 12-26 and included a youth survey, a parent/guardian survey, and a focus group of professionals working with Jewish youth.

The most significant outcomes of the needs assessment survey

of the Charlotte Jewish community which concluded at the end of November 2023 were:

- Both youth and parents indicated that mental health was no longer a "stigma." In general, youth were comfortable talking about their mental health.

- Accessing or reaching out for mental health care was not a barrier. Both youth and parents felt knowledgeable and comfortable pursuing mental health support.

- A barrier to accessing mental health treatment was finding the "right" therapist.

- Parents/guardians were struggling with how to respond to the mental health needs of their children.

- Youth and young adults were not interested in participating in traditional mental health "education" type programs.

- Most significantly, while comfortable with speaking about and accessing mental health support, youth, and young adults continue to struggle with mental health symptoms such as anxiety and depression.

Utilizing the outcomes of the needs assessment, the Resiliency Roundtable is working on the development of a mental health plan that focuses on:

- How to best connect with youth to provide the support they need to address their mental health, i.e., using existing structures where they are already a captive audience

- The types of non-traditional mental health best practices for

youth, such as utilizing technology to provide mental health resources and support

- How to best provide resources and support to parents/guardians to assist in responding to the mental health needs of their children

Most significant is that while still an issue for some, the stigma surrounding mental health and accessing treatment has certainly decreased. It is highly recognized that the pandemic was a traumatic experience, and we are still feeling the repercussions in high levels of stress and anxiety. Add in the anxiety around the wars in Israel and Ukraine, the economy, and top it off with an election year in which our country is polarized, and it feels as if we are all walking on a mental health tightrope.

To fully understand how the world around us affects mental health, it is important to know what factors are at play — some of which an individual can change, such as screen time, and others that may be outside of their control, like access to basic resources or current events.

Social drivers of health include economic status, education, neighborhood, social inclusion, and access to resources like nutritious food, health care, green space, and transportation. All of these factors can have a far-reaching impact on not just your physical health, but also your mental health. Loneliness, current events, technology, and

social drivers are having an impact on the mental well-being of Americans, but there are protective measures that can prevent mental health conditions from developing or keep symptoms from becoming worse or more severe. Navigating uncertainty and fear about what is happening in the world and what the future holds can feel overwhelming but there are actions you can take if the world is weighing on you:

- Find Your Support System-Having people around you to support your mental and emotional health can make all the difference. Finding those who lift you up, provide a listening ear, and help you through stressful times can make all the difference for your mental health. There are many places to seek support, including friends and family, online support groups, or community spaces. Therapy and counseling can also provide an extra layer of support. Seeking out groups where you have similar interests, such as a book club, running group, crafting class, or spiritual community, can offer comfort and connection. Ultimately, you want a support system that suits your needs and provides a safe space for healing.

- Manage Your Tech Connections-You can create space for a healthier relationship with technology by setting boundaries. Some things to try are blocking social media use between certain hours, putting time limits on apps, checking your phone set-

tings, or downloading a website/app blocker. Decide your reason for logging on before you do, and sign off when you've finished doing what you need to do.

- Change What You Can-With the state of the world, life can feel overwhelming, as if nothing you do will make a difference. The good news is there are some things you can do. Taking action and advocating for causes important to you can be therapeutic in its own way. Advocacy and action as a form of healing can be powerful. Knowing you are doing what you can to make a difference can give you hope for the future. Try getting involved in causes near you, join advocacy groups, get out and vote, do your part in helping the planet, or stay informed and speak up on topics that need support.

As we look to the future, it is critical that we recognize how world and societal issues have expanded the numerous factors that impact our day-to-day emotional health. And, as such, we must also expand our thinking as it relates to the scope and inventory of tools we access to provide emotional support to our community.

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Women's News

Hadassah Celebrates Our Jewish American Heritage and Provides Mental Health Services in Israel

By Aileen Greenberg-Kriner

May is both Jewish American Heritage Month and Mental Health Awareness Month. For Jews, since October 7 there is more than the usual amount of overlap of the two observances. The antisemitism seen around the country in the media, in public places, and on college campuses has been traumatic for many American Jews.

During Jewish American Heritage Month, we think about the contributions Jews have made to this country. Since Hadassah was founded in 1912 by Henrietta Szold in New York City, Hadassah women have played a prominent and critical role in American Jewish history. Here are a few notable examples:

In February 1942, Hadassah women strongly supported the American war effort during World War II, establishing blood banks and raising more than \$2 million in war bonds, making the organization the fifth largest contributor to war activities that year.

Hadassah organized members to influence and lobby their local politicians to vote for the Civil

Rights Act of 1963.

Hadassah chapters around the country lobbied and built support for the 2008 Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, which prohibits discrimination against individuals in employment and health insurance based on their genetic information.

Hadassah continues to take a stand on issues important to American Jewry such as antisemitism and Holocaust education, women's health issues and reproductive rights, and the U.S. relationship with Israel.

Another one of Hadassah's major responsibilities is to raise funds to support the Hadassah Medical Organization in Israel. Since October 7, a large portion of those funds have been allocated to mental health treatments and facilities.

The Hadassah Medical Organization treats patients at its two hospitals in Jerusalem – Ein Kerem and Mt. Scopus. They provide comprehensive psychosocial care to patients and their families with teams of psychologists, psychiatrists, mental health officers from the army, and other specialists. Professor Yoram

Weiss, director general of the Hadassah Medical Organization, explained in a recent interview that medical professionals are dealing with civilians and military personnel experiencing "not only the visible wounds of war, but also the invisible wounds of post-traumatic stress disorder." Many patients, including children who survived the October 7 attacks, displaced civilians, and medical staff treating war injuries are receiving psychological services to help them deal with the mental health effects of the war. Most of the social workers, doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals have family members and friends who have died, been injured, or are serving in the army, so they are dealing with the personal aspect of the trauma as well as the professional.

The October 7 attack and resulting war have created new and unique situations for both American Jews and Israelis. Through good times and challenging ones, Hadassah women continue to work together to celebrate our Jewish American heritage, fight antisemitism, and raise aware-

ness of mental health needs in our communities.

May Events

Take some time to talk with friends and relax at Hadassah Wine & Schmooze on Tuesday, May 7 at 7 p.m. at Vintner Wine Market in the Arboretum. New and prospective members are welcome.

Short Story Discussion Group meets on the second Friday of the month and continues to read stories from the collection *Frankly Feminist: Short Stories* by Jewish Women. The next meeting is 11:45 a.m. on Friday, May 10, to discuss *Unveiling* by Racelle Rosett on page 54.

Hadassah CLT Metro Board meeting is Monday, May 20 at 7 p.m.

Hadassah BookTalk meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Join us on Zoom on May 28 at 7 p.m. to discuss "Don't Forget to Write" by Sara Goodman Confino.

Save the Date for...

Save the TaTas Painting Days, Monday and Tuesday, Aug. 19 and 20.

Save the TaTas Reveal Gala Event, Saturday evening, Nov. 16.

Also, a new *Hadassah Charlotte Metro Area Jewish Community Directory* is coming in 2025. Watch for info about how to be included and advertise with us.

Helpful Info

To learn about membership, contact Laurie Sheinhaus at the phone number or email below, or come to one of our events. We would love to meet you!

Our website, www.hadassah-clt.org, has details and registration links for our events. If you have questions or need additional information, email HadassahCLT@gmail.com or call our general phone number, (980) 553-1880. Follow us on Facebook (Hadassah CLT Metro) and Instagram (Hadassah Charlotte Metro).

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The Sam Strause LJCC Invitational
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Monday, August 12, 2024

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annedouglas.miller@charlottejcc.org

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Foundation for the Charlotte Jewish Community thanks the individuals and families who have created 979 unique Jewish legacies to ensure the future of our Jewish community. These generous donors have collectively committed to more than \$44 million through bequests, individual retirement and life

insurance plans, without affecting current disposable income or lifestyles. Already, local Jewish organizations have received over \$2.7 million in realized legacy gifts. If you are interested in learning how to create your own Jewish legacy, please contact your favorite Jewish agency, Phil Warshauer or Abby Kleber.

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Religious Life

Uptown Chabad: Building Community and Celebrating Milestones

By Rabbi Motti Groner

The Uptown Chabad community is buzzing with excitement and gratitude for the incredible milestones we've achieved together so far this year. From heartwarming Shabbat dinners to engaging learning events, we've had the privilege of hosting a record number of attendees and connecting with a diverse range of young Jewish professionals in Charlotte.

One of the highlights of this past quarter was our unforgettable western-themed Purim party at Fairwood 226, where we welcomed 107 young adults for an evening of celebration and inspiration. The atmosphere was electric as the attendees dressed up in their finest Western attire, enjoyed drinks, delicious food, and the timeless tradition of hearing the Megillah, read by Rabbi Shimon Gorkin. It was a joyous occasion that brought our community together in a spirit of unity and joy.

Reflecting on the entire quarter, we are thrilled to announce that we've had a record-breaking 723 total attendees across all our



Rabbi Shimon Gorkin reads the Megillah

events, reaching a total of 227 unique young adults. This significant milestone underscores the growing impact and relevance of Uptown Chabad in the lives of young Jewish professionals in Charlotte.

Throughout these past months, our calendar has been filled with engaging events designed to cater to the varied interests of our community. From our week-

ly Shabbat dinners to creative initiatives like the Hamantasch Bake and DIY Resin Mezuzah Event, Wine and Cheese Social Learning focused on the Torah's perspective on the situation in Israel, there has been something for everyone to enjoy and participate in.

We are excited about the upcoming events and initiatives planned for the rest of the year.

As we continue to build upon the momentum of this successful first quarter, we invite all young Jewish professionals in Charlotte to join us in creating more memorable experiences and meaningful connections within our vibrant community.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who has been a part of our journey so far — our dedicated volunteers, generous supporters, and of course, the incredible individuals who make up the Uptown Chabad family. Together, we are shaping a bright

and promising future for Jewish life in Charlotte, one event at a time.

Stay tuned for updates on our upcoming events and activities, and let's continue to celebrate our heritage, strengthen our bonds, and inspire each other to reach new heights of growth and fulfillment.



L-R Maya Blumenfeld, Nina Cohen, Sabina Skolnick, and Jeff Tomes



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Religious Life

Remembering the Past and Educating the Future

By Judy Coco

"It is important to continue to tell the story so that it never happens again." Fred Valfer

Fred Valfer, a member of Temple Beth El, is doing his part so that we do not forget the horrors of the Holocaust. On both sides of Fred's family are Holocaust survivors. Fred's great-grandmother died in Terezin (Czechoslovakia), while his grandparents and parents survived Terezin. On, Sept. 1, 1939, when WWII broke out, Fred's father was boarding a ship bound for Palestine. That ship was not allowed to leave the harbor, so he and other kids from the Youth Aliyah program were sent back to their agricultural training program. Several months later they were sent to Denmark to work for room and board on local farms out of harm's way. He worked on a farm for four years before Denmark was placed under martial law by the German army. He was one of almost 500 Jews arrested and sent by cattle car to Terezin. Luckily, Fred's father survived and was liberated by the Swedes in April 1945. He returned to Denmark and came to the United States in 1948 when Fred's grandparents were able to sponsor him.

Approximately 33,000 people died in Terezin due to appalling conditions, 88,000 were deported to Auschwitz, and 17,000 were liberated at the end of the war.

Fred's great aunt and great uncle are featured in the book, "The Unwanted: America, Auschwitz, and a Village Caught in Between." Written by Michael Dobbs, the book was published in 2020 in association with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, to tell the story of Jewish families seeking to escape Nazi Germany. Fred's aunt and uncle did not survive, but fortunately, their children did.

Fred is a member of the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust which is organized under the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), guided by the "Gizella Abramson Holocaust Education Act" (Holocaust Act) in honor of a founding member of the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust. The Holocaust Act was passed in November 2021. This North Carolina law is based on the intent articulated in the federal Never Again Education Act, passed by the U.S. Congress in 2020. Ms. Abramson was a Holocaust survivor and tireless speaker and educator who addressed thousands of teachers and students in North Carolina over her lifetime. The Holocaust Act requires Holocaust and genocide education for public school children in grades



Mooresville Middle School students with Holocaust education books purchased by the North Carolina Holocaust Foundation with funds raised by Temple Beth El's Brotherhood.

6-12 as part of the required state curriculum to provide students with the fundamental understanding of geography, history, and political systems necessary to make informed choices on issues that affect individuals, communities, states, and nations. In carrying out this responsibility, NCDPI has collaborated with the NC Council on the Holocaust, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT), local universities, and other Holocaust education experts to curate and develop curriculum resources for both social studies and English Language Arts (ELA) that support the teaching of the Holocaust and other genocides. (www.dpi.nc.gov).

Fred feels strongly that it is important to continue to tell the story so that it never happens again. To that end, Fred is a member of the Council's Speaker

Bureau to continue to tell the story. In addition, as the TBE Brotherhood president, one of Fred's goals is to raise money to buy books for North Carolina students in the Charlotte metropolitan area to enable instruction and provide resources. To date, over \$2,000 has been raised which has been used to purchase 250 books, including bilingual books, for the students.

Fred's continuing dedication to telling the story is clear in his actions. Last year, he told his story 17 times to six school districts, a Rotary club, and a University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) fraternity. Thank you, Fred, for your leadership and for making a difference in our community.



Havurat Tikvah to Hold Zoom Kabbalat Shabbat Services

On May 10 Havurat Tikvah will hold Zoom Kabbalat Shabbat Services beginning at 7 p.m. Afterwards, participants will join together for Kiddush and hamotzie at their respective locations. For those who wish to participate in the service, email info@havurattikvah.org by May 8 at noon to RSVP and receive the link.

Havurat Tikvah is a warm, supportive, and nurturing Jewish Reconstructionist congregation with Shabbat services and a full spectrum of holiday observances, as well as religious educational options for both families and single adults. We are a diverse group of families, singles, and Jewish and interfaith couples who participate in projects that promote social justice.

We value and depend upon member participation and leadership for our religious services, spiritual growth, and governance.

Havurat Tikvah is an affiliate of Reconstructing Judaism.

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Religious Life

Temple Solel Feeds Hungry Neighbors in Need

By Dale Rivers, Vice President

One aspect I greatly appreciate about Temple Solel is the straightforward opportunity it offers members to help feed our hungry neighbors. From our inception, we have annually gathered hundreds of pounds of food during the High Holiday services, which we then deliver to the Fort Mill Care Center. However, approximately two years ago, our congregation resolved to deepen our involvement in addressing local hunger issues. We aimed to move beyond mere donations, choosing instead to actively participate in feeding the hungry through direct action.

We started rather modestly. We joined forces with a team from Grace Presbyterian, who was already dedicating their

time once a month at the Fort Mill Community Café, preparing and serving lunch to anyone who entered. As we looked for volunteers, we encountered a remarkable response; nearly everyone we approached agreed to help. The overwhelming willingness to volunteer led us to organize shifts to accommodate the high level of participation. This experience highlighted a common sentiment: many people are open to the idea of helping but often lack the means to act on this impulse. The Community Café provided a straightforward way to contribute — with no need for anything except our time and effort. Just showing up on Friday morning and following instructions was all it took. Not only did we witness the gratitude of those we



Temple Solel members feed their neighbors

served, but we also experienced a profound sense of fulfillment and enjoyment. This venture deepened our understanding of Temple Solel's potential for community outreach. We even designed Temple shirts bearing the motto: "Temple Solel, Repairing Our World One Mitzvah at a Time!"

We began to look for other opportunities. Our search quickly led us to the Bethel Shelter in

Rock Hill, a sanctuary offering men facing homelessness a secure place to rest, a warm meal, and avenues to regain independence throughout the year. Our partners at Grace Presbyterian were already committed to preparing a monthly supper for the shelter, and we eagerly began to augment their efforts. It wasn't long before our volunteers outnumbered theirs, signaling it was time for us to independent-

ly undertake a monthly meal service. Once again, rallying volunteers proved easy.

Volunteering at the Bethel Shelter involves a more comprehensive array of tasks. We start by designing a unique menu and coordinating who will cook or bring various items. All volunteers and contributions arrive at the Bethel United Methodist Church by 5 p.m. This timing allows us an hour to arrange the tables and prepare for service, including the main course, sides, beverages, and desserts we've prepared in advance. We then organize ourselves on one side of the serving table to offer meals in a cafeteria style, catering to anywhere from 40 to over a hundred men, with numbers fluctuating based on the season and weather. The service window lasts about an hour, after which we clean up and everyone leaves. A midway smoke break presents an opportunity, time permitting, to sit and engage in conversation with some of the men, enriching the experience for us. The spiritual uplift we receive from each meal service is undeniable. Moreover, the involvement of Temple Solel's younger members, who accompany their volunteering parents, proves equally impactful. These teenagers not only contribute significantly but also absorb invaluable life lessons.

Most recently, we had the opportunity to serve the meal on Easter night, allowing volunteers from Christian congregations to enjoy their holiday. We were more than happy to step in; it felt like a double mitzvah!

If we sound like a Jewish temple you might find attractive, come by and meet us. We welcome the presence, enthusiasm, talents, and involvement of all members and guests. We grow with friendship, learning, doing good, and having fun. We are a Reform Jewish congregation that has eliminated the barrier of annual membership dues in favor of gratefully accepted donations determined by each individual family. Active participation is an important part of our makeup. We meet at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Friday of every month at the Grace Presbyterian Church at 2955 W. Highway 160 in Fort Mill. For more information about our services and other events, please visit <https://templesolelsc.org> or call (803) 610-1707. We would love to meet you.



Temple Solel kids help prepare meals for Bethel Shelter



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TEMPLE SOLEL

Religious Life

Temple Kol Ami: From Tradition to Outreach

By Bonnie Shaw

Spring has been a busy time at Temple Kol Ami. In collaboration with Winthrop University, we've presented a well-attended Holocaust lecture, an event reflecting our dedication to education and remembrance. Our annual second night seder, a cornerstone of communal observance, brought together congregants in a meaningful celebration of Passover. We celebrated Purim with a carnival and Purim spiel. Our Sisterhood had its rugelach baking day. And we welcomed our dear friend, Rabbi Bruce Aft, back to the pulpit.

In the spirit of giving back, Temple Kol Ami extended its warmth by donating hamantaschen to the Jewish residents of The Blake at Baxter Village Assisted Living. The delight of the residents underscored the impact of our small gestures of kindness. Our youngest congregants assembled over 80 mishloach manot bags for the Clover Area Assistance Center, continuing a tradition of our religious school that emphasizes our commitment to touching lives across York County and beyond.



Cantor Mary Rebecca Thomas

As we transition into the summer months, Temple Kol Ami is poised for a busy May. We eagerly anticipate the return of Cantor Mary Rebecca Thomas to lead our services on May 3, followed by Rabbi Ana Bonnheim's guidance on May 17. All services, set for 7 p.m. will take place at the Philadelphia United Methodist Church in Fort Mill, reflecting our adaptability and the strength of our partnerships. Our congregation is blessed with the leadership of such esteemed



Rabbi Ana Bonnheim

clergy, a marker of our growth and vibrant community spirit.

With growth comes new needs, and Temple Kol Ami is currently seeking a part-time administrator to support our expanding congregation. This role is critical as we continue to build our community and extend our reach. Interested individuals are encouraged to



contact us at yorksynagogue@gmail.com for more information about this opportunity to contribute to our dynamic community. Temple Kol Ami will observe

a summer break during June and July. We look forward to returning at the end of August as we prepare for the High Holidays.

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Religious Life

HALting Boredom: Active Living in the Senior Community at Temple Kol Tikvah

By Sylvia Gabrieli, Rhoda Miller, Marcia Lebold and Nancy Zetley.

Temple Kol Tikvah's Healthy Active Living (HAL), generously supported by the Carolina Foundation for Jewish Seniors, is delighted to share the significant impact its activities have had in shaping the lives of Lake Norman seniors. From weekly Mah Jongg games to monthly Jewish genealogy programs, from intellectually stimulating discussions to exciting excursions, HAL provides an enriched environment for our community members.

At the heart of HAL's weekly engagements is the Mah Jongg group, which transcends mere gameplay to become a cornerstone for community bonding, mental agility, and the sharing of stories among friends, many of whom have relocated to be closer to family in this area. The strong bonds formed at these gatherings underscore the initiative's role in creating a sense of belonging and mutual support within the Jewish community. Participants often express how

these gatherings are a cherished opportunity to connect with fellow Jewish women, highlighting the personal importance of these interactions.

This year saw the introduction of the Jewish Genealogy Club, spearheaded by a dedicated congregant, expanding HAL's offerings to include not just those in the Lake Norman and greater Charlotte areas, but also those with an interest in tracing their Jewish lineage. This initiative has been met with enthusiasm, with participants keenly engaging in sessions that unravel their personal histories, thereby fostering a deeper connection with their Jewish heritage.

HAL's collaboration with the Madrichim of Temple Kol Tikvah, enabled by a Better Together grant, brings an intergenerational dimension to our programming. Through activities ranging from culinary sessions to game nights and sports events, this partnership bridges generations, encourages mutual learning, and strengthens communal ties.

Recognizing the importance



Every Wednesday, TKT's Mah Jongg group gathers to play and socialize.

of informed decision-making in healthcare, HAL has also hosted informative sessions on critical topics such as Medicare, end-of-life planning, and healthcare navigation, empowering our community members with knowledge and confidence.

Our explorations have extended beyond the confines of our immediate surroundings, with excursions like the Jewish Heritage Tour of Charlotte, the movie screening of "Bella" at Shalom

Park, the "Seeing Auschwitz" exhibit at the Stan Greenspon Holocaust and Social Justice Education Center, and a visit to the local botanical garden. These activities complement our mission by combining educational enrichment with social engagement.

HAL is committed to promoting a sense of community, intellectual growth, and overall well-being through the diverse opportunities offered by the

Healthy Active Living program. As we continue to build on this foundation, we look forward to welcoming more members to our activities and further enriching the lives of our senior community.



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Israeli Soccer Is on the Map, Around the World and Here in Charlotte

By Steve Goldberg

In 1977, Tal Brody, an American-Israeli, exclaimed, after his Maccabi Tel Aviv basketball team defeated an overwhelmingly favored Soviet Red Army team CSKA Moscow in the FIBA European Championships, "We are on the map! And we are staying on the map — not only in sports, but in everything."

While not bearing the gravitas of where Israel, the Soviet Union, and global politics were at the time, a similar sport-induced benchmark of pride came last year when Israel defeated perennial soccer power Brazil in the FIFA Men's U-20 World Cup, eventually winning the bronze medal.

By making the semifinals of the 2023 UEFA European Under-21 Championship, the nation of less than ten million people has also qualified for the men's 2024 Paris Olympic soccer competition, returning for the first time since Montreal 1976.

Israeli soccer is experiencing a renaissance and part of that now extends to Charlotte where Liel Abada has joined Major League Soccer Club Charlotte FC.

While the results of the junior national teams have put them on the map, whether or not they stay there will be determined as the senior squad looks to succeed in UEFA (European) and global FIFA competitions, and as players from Israel establish themselves in top leagues around the world.

Abada believes there is a bright future ahead. "You can see in the Israeli national team, there are a lot of young players in the first team and a lot of talent. So yeah, it's improved a lot in the in the last five, six years."

From Israel to Scotland to America

Born in Petah Tikva, Abada started in the youth programs of Hapoel Petah Tikvah before moving over to Maccabi Petah Tikvah where he made 61 appearances for the senior team, scoring 20 goals before heading to the Scottish Premier League when he was still 19-years-old and the famous Glasgow Celtic club.

A dynamic player who can play on either wing and is comfortable in the middle as well, Abada excelled there with 29 goals and 22 assists in 112 matches. In his first season, Abada was honored with the PFA Scotland Young Player of the Year award. In 2023, he helped Celtic secure a treble of trophies, winning the Scottish Premier League, Scottish Cup, and Scottish League Cup.

But even an important game



Credit on the photos should be Steve Goldberg/SCS Media)

in European competition in Spain could not overrule his Jewish roots. In September 2021, Abada, a Mizrahi Jew, did not play for Celtic in a match in Seville as it was Yom Kippur. Nor did his Israeli teammate, Nir Bitton.

His then-coach, Ange Postecoglou, understood. "It's a fairly significant day," said Postecoglou who is now at Tottenham Hotspur. "It's his religion and rightly so. He's not able to participate."

"It's not the first time it's happened in my career, where a player's religious beliefs have meant that football doesn't take the priority we all think it should maybe sometimes in life. That's the case for Liel and for Nir tomorrow night and we're very respectful of that."

It would be a lack of understanding from a segment of Celtic supporters that would lead to Abada's leaving Glasgow.

Abada was sidelined with a thigh injury last October 7 when Hamas attacked settlements near the border with Gaza, killing more than a thousand and taking more than 250 hostage. The stress of returning to the lineup was complicated by a Celtic supporters group, the Green Brigade, using his presence on the team to support the terrorist incursion with banners reading, "Free Palestine" and "Victory to the resistance" on the day after the attacks.

"I had an amazing time at Celtic, but after the war started it was a really, really hard time for me. I got so much support from (coach) Brendan Rodgers, from the club, from the players, and it really helped me."

But the stress was still there and growing. So he met with Rodgers and the Celtic leadership to sort out what would work

best for both sides. The solution, at this time, was to leave Celtic.

Avi Luzon, Abada's former manager at Maccabi Petah Tikvah told the Jerusalem Post, "On a personal level, Liel Abada felt very bad with everything that was happening, including the indignation of the fans on the street towards him — more than once. Liel felt unwelcome where he was."

In a letter to Celtic fans upon his departure, Abada wrote, "Where do I even begin? Leaving Celtic wasn't in my plans, yet life's unpredictable turns remind us that we're not always in control."

"The past six months have been a personal challenge, yet the overwhelming support from the gaffer, coaches and board has been my rock. Their unwavering faith during these times won't be forgotten but cherished forever."

"It is now time to begin a new chapter on my journey in a new place and with new targets. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for everything."

The new chapter

Abada is looking forward to his time in the Queen City. "I know a lot about the commu-

nity in Charlotte and I'm really excited to meet everyone. You know, it's really important for me."

I'm really happy to be here, and really excited to start my journey here. Hopefully, I can help the team to achieve our (objectives).

His integration to the team has been quick and welcoming, according to Charlotte FC coach Dean Smith.

"I think he's done well. Because of the dressing room that we've got, and the players that we've got, I think it's a lot easier to come in and mix straightaway. They're really good people, the players that we've got here, and I think they helped the integration procedure really quickly."

We're very supportive and we're pleased to have Liel here. He's been welcomed with open arms by all of our fan base, all of our staff, all of our supporters. We're grateful to have him here."

The 22-year-old has also been very humble when speaking to the media in focusing on what he can do to help achieve team goals and objectives for the season.

Abada came on as a substitute in his debut at home to a rousing ovation and immediately demonstrated the attacking attributes that attracted the team to him. He started the following match on the road and should be a fixture in the first eleven for the rest of the season.

Mensch League Soccer

Abada is now one of just two Israeli-born players in MLS, joining Tai Baribo, who was signed by the Philadelphia Union last year. The 26-year-old center forward also played for Maccabi Petah Tikva.

Josh Cohen, 31, who joined Atlanta United's goalkeeping corps this year after four successful seasons with Maccabi Haifa, has been a dual-citizen since 2021. Born and raised in Mountain View, California, Cohen played 161 games for Haifa, including six in the UEFA Champions League.

Israelis who previously played in the league include Omed Damari (New York Red Bulls), David Ben Dayan (Colorado Rapids), Gadi Kinda (Sporting Kansas City), and Guy Melamed (Colorado).

Current Jewish American players in MLS include New York Red Bulls' Daniel Edelman, Daniel Lovitz with Nashville SC, Real Salt Lake's Zach MacMath, Daniel Steres of the Houston Dynamo, and FC Cincinnati's DeAndre Yedlin.

Former Jewish American players include Jeff Agoos (DC United, San Jose Earthquakes, MetroStars), Kyle Beckerman (Miami Fusion, Colorado Rapids, Real Salt Lake), Steve Birnbaum (DC United), Jonathan Bornstein (Chivas USA, Chicago Fire), Benny Feilhaber (New England Revolution, Sporting KC, LAFC, Colorado Rapids), Aaron Schoenfeld (Columbus Crew, Minnesota United), and Jonathan Spector (Orlando City). Schoenfeld also had dual citizenship from playing in Israel and it's reported as well for Bornstein.

Agoos and Bornstein both played for the U.S. in the World Maccabiah Games. Birnbaum represented the Americans at the Pan Am Maccabiah.

U.S. National team goalkeeper Matt Turner, previously with the New England Revolution (now with Nottingham Forest in the EPL), has Jewish heritage on his father's side.

And then there's David Beckham, formerly of the LA Galaxy and now an owner of Inter Miami, whose maternal grandfather was Jewish. In his autobiography, Beckham wrote, "'I've probably had more contact with Judaism than with any other religion."



(Credit: Taylor Banner/Charlotte FC)

Charlotte Black/Jewish Alliance Grows and Expands

By Mary Eshet

The Charlotte Black/Jewish Alliance (BJA) is embarking on an expansion plan designed to broaden its membership and position it for increased impact. The BJA is co-sponsored by Johnson C. Smith University and the Stan Greenspon Holocaust and Social Justice Education Center at Queens University of Charlotte. The first cohort of five Black and five Jewish young leaders came together in 2021, against the backdrop of George Floyd's murder and a rapid rise in antisemitism. The vision is to immerse participants in each other's differences and create a safe space for conversation.

Each cohort begins its year-long experience with a Charlotte tour exploring Black and Jewish history in Charlotte. They continue with monthly educational meetings. A high point of the program is traveling to Atlanta, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma to learn about Black and Jewish history in the South, and to continue building relationships.

The third cohort completed their Deep South journey in March. As with previous cohorts, it was a crescendo moment in the program when participants explored each other's legacies, engaged in deep conversations, and bonded as they shared intense experiences and traveled together by bus for four days.

The program is staffed by three faculty: Melvin Herring and Cindy Kistenberg, both professors at JCSU, and Rabbi Judy Schindler, director of the Greenspon Center. All three joined the trip south. "One highlight of the trip that accelerated the cohesion of the group was the racial healing circle on the first night," said Herring. "It is a facilitated, secure, authentic discussion, starting in groups of two. The focus is not on changing, but on receiving."

Andy Harkavy, a member of the newest cohort, said the racial healing circle was poignant. "We learned that the shortest distance between two people is a story. We have such different stories, but we have so much more in common. We can't forget how to talk, listen, and learn from each other."

T'heleh Ben-Dan, another member of the third cohort, said "The Legacy Museum and the Lynching Memorial in Birmingham were deeply impactful, both serving as urgent reminders of the need to dismantle white supremacy, which we know is the root of both racism and antisemitism."



The third cohort of the Charlotte Black/Jewish Alliance traveled south to learn about and share legacies in March and are pictured here at the Civil Rights Memorial Center in Montgomery.

Both Harkavy and Ben-Dan envision the program will have an impact beyond their group and the twelve-month term. "I envision us turning our discussions into action, taking tangible steps to combat antisemitism and racism, but also to celebrate and support Jewish and Black community members and initiatives here in Charlotte," said Ben-Dan.

The BJA is working to increase its effect by opening membership to a larger group. The cohorts, comprised of young Black and Jewish leaders aged 25–40, will now be labeled as "leadership cohorts," and the overall Charlotte Black/Jewish Alliance will be open to all who want to join. "We have had people outside that age range ask how they can get involved," said Schindler. "While we plan to

continue the monthly programming and Deep South Pilgrimage for the leadership track, we are very excited about welcoming others to the group and expanding relevant programming for the broader community."

One program the BJA has helped expand is Soul Food Shabbat. For years, Queens students have sponsored a Soul Food Shabbat bringing together the Queens Black Student Union and Queens Hillel for a celebration of Shabbat and an exploration of commonalities and past and present struggles. Dinner is served with traditional Jewish and African American foods such as challah, collard greens, cornbread, fried chicken, kugel, and rugelach.

Prior to the 2024 Soul Food Shabbat, the BJA, Greenspon Center, and JCSU hosted a

screening of "Shared Legacies: The African American-Jewish Civil Rights Alliance." The film shares the often-forgotten story of the coalition and friendship between the Jewish and African-American communities during the Civil Rights Movement. The program was followed by conversations with BJA leaders, and discussions continued at Soul Food Shabbat.

"Soul Food Shabbat is such a wonderful experience for me, our campus community, and Charlotte," said Darryl White, Queens assistant dean of Diversity, Inclusion, & Community Engagement. "The chance for us to come together over our cultural foods to break down

barriers while celebrating our differences and our commonalities is a great model for our society to embrace. Every year that we have the Soul Food Shabbat, I learn so much more about Black and Jewish relations."

Plans for broader membership are being led by Terrell Hamlet, Rachael Coe, and Tyran Green who have all participated in leadership cohorts. "We are talking about community events, volunteer efforts, and opportunities for connection. It's a new branch on our family tree," said Coe.

"We are looking for people who want to make a difference and bring new perspectives as we seek to put aside -isms and schisms for a united front," said Hamlet.

Kistenberg, who has been with the BJA since its inception, is enthusiastic about the next chapter. "I love that we are opening up to people outside the ages of the cohorts," she said. "If we can bring communities together in a variety of ways, the better chance we have of creating change. People are so polarized, and we need to open dialogues. We have to have space for conversations, and not run from tough issues."

If you are interested in participating in the Charlotte Black/Jewish Alliance, contact Judy Schindler at schindlerj@queens.edu.

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The Vital Role of Genealogy in Jewish Tradition and Community

By Sandra Goldman, Executive Director

At the heart of Jewish tradition lies the value of l'dor v'dor, a fundamental principle that emphasizes the importance of passing down knowledge, values, history, and heritage from one generation to the next. This process ensures that our ancestors' legacies enrich the fabric of future generations, creating a shared heritage that is as personal as it is collectively cherished.

In Charlotte, the Hebrew Cemetery is not merely a final resting place but a vibrant chronicle of our community's lineage. Each marker tells a story, contributing to our collective narrative and underscoring our place in the ongoing story of Jewish life.

Brian Yesowitch, the cemetery's historical chair explains: "Newcomers to Charlotte may not think they have anything in common with the generations of Charlotte Jews whose families have chosen to bury them at our Hebrew Cemetery, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Our first two major migrations to Charlotte prior to

the 1840s gold rush were from the Jewish communities in England and Germany. Perhaps your ancestors are from those Western European countries. In the 1840s and '50s, the gold rush brought more immigrants from Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Italy, Switzerland, and France. The Jewish people migrated with their non-Jewish neighbors to the promise of prosperity in the American South. In our cemetery, our pre-1900 tombstones have been carefully preserved by our staff and volunteers."

The quest for genealogical understanding, supported by the resources of the Hebrew Cemetery, deepens our connection to a shared history. This endeavor goes beyond individual discovery; it is an act of preservation for the cemetery and a celebration of our communal legacy.

Genealogy stands at the heart of this tradition, offering a tangible connection to our past. It's a journey that begins in the comfort of our homes, with the stories and memories that have shaped our families. The process starts with gathering sto-

ries, documents, and memories closest to home. Engaging with family members, exploring old photographs, and reviewing any accessible records can unveil connections and narratives previously untold.

As we dig deeper, the Hebrew Cemetery in Charlotte emerges not just as a sacred resting place but as a rich repository of our community's history. Each headstone, each name, carries a story, a piece of the larger narrative of our people. For members of the Charlotte Jewish community and beyond, the pursuit of genealogy reinforced by the Hebrew Cemetery's resources can strengthen bonds to our shared past. This engagement encourages a commitment not only to preserving individual family legacies but also to maintaining the cemetery itself as a vibrant space of memory and legacy. In aligning the practice of genealogy with the values of l'dor v'dor, we invite every individual to become an active participant in the act of remembrance.

This commitment to uncovering and preserving our history

As we dig deeper, the Hebrew Cemetery in Charlotte emerges not just as a sacred resting place but as a rich repository of our community's history. Each headstone, each name, carries a story, a piece of the larger narrative of our people.

can be a powerful tool that can be expressed and elevated in a Hebrew Cemetery membership. In truth, it is way more than just a cemetery membership that gives one a 20 percent discount on the burial costs. It is a membership that connects us with our community and honors where we have come from, who we are today, and the generations yet to come. Through this lens, membership in the Hebrew Cemetery

becomes more than a practical consideration; it is a profound act of faith in the continuity of our people and an investment in the ongoing story of the Jewish community in Charlotte and beyond.

The cemetery's annual membership of \$108 or the one-time lifetime membership of \$2,400 supports the preservation efforts, land improvements, and general landscaping. And Yesowitch adds: "By joining or visiting our cemetery you can get a living history AND genealogy lesson at the same time."

For more information on membership, pre-planning, or legacy giving contact Sandra Goldman at 704.576.1859 or email her at director@hebrewcemetery.org

The Hebrew Cemetery joins with the community in remembering the names of those who have been buried in the cemetery in the month of March.



Gail Friedman	6-10-1946	2-28-2024
Martin Bier	1-10-1935	3-16-2024

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Getting Started With Jewish Genealogy

By Shira Firestone

The pursuit of genealogy is a deeply meaningful endeavor within Jewish tradition. By exploring our family histories, we not only uncover personal stories and connections but also contribute to the preservation of our collective heritage. Engaging in genealogical research allows us to honor the principle of *l'dor v'dor*, passing down knowledge and values from one generation to the next. If you're interested in embarking on your own Jewish genealogical journey, this beginner's guide will provide you with the tools and resources to get started.

The first step in your genealogical journey is to gather information from your immediate family members. Start by collecting stories, photographs, and documents that relate to your family history. Engage in conversations with parents, grandparents, and other relatives to capture their memories and knowledge. Consider recording videos of family members discussing their roots, as these can be incredibly impactful and preserve their stories for future generations. Ask about family names, dates, and places of birth, marriage, and death. Inquire about immigration stories and places of origin. You can ask for religious documents, such as

ketubot (marriage contracts) and bar/bat mitzvah records.

As you gather this information, it's essential to organize your findings. Create a family tree using online tools like Ancestry.com or software such as Family Tree Maker. Digitize and store documents and photographs in a safe and accessible manner, using a consistent naming system for easy retrieval. This organization will provide a solid foundation for your ongoing research. Remember to take steps to preserve original photos and documents, as they may fade or deteriorate over time.

In the digital age, numerous online resources are available to support your genealogical journey. Popular websites with extensive databases and search tools include:

- Ancestry.com: A popular genealogy website offering extensive databases, search tools, and DNA testing services.
- FamilySearch.org: A free genealogy website maintained by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, providing access to a vast collection of records.
- MyHeritage.com: A genealogy platform that offers DNA testing, family tree building tools, and access to historical records.
- FindAGrave.com: An online

database of cemetery records, burial information, and memorials from around the world.

- Data.Census.Gov (United States Census Bureau): The official website of the U.S. Census Bureau, providing access to census data and demographic information.

For Jewish-specific resources, explore:

- JewishGen.org: A comprehensive website dedicated to Jewish genealogy, including classes for those with skills from basic to advanced.

- American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) Archives: Documents and records related to Jewish communities worldwide

- Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, which offers a database of Holocaust victims and survivors

- Find a Grave: A database of cemetery records and memorials

- Avotaynu: A publisher of Jewish genealogical resources

- Routes to Roots Foundation: An organization focused on Jewish genealogical research in Eastern Europe

- Ellis Island Foundation: A database of passenger arrivals in New York from 1892 to 1954

- International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies: A global network of Jewish genea-

logical societies.

In addition to online resources, local institutions can provide valuable information and support. Visit libraries, historical societies, and genealogical societies in your area to access local records and expertise. Contact synagogues and Jewish community centers, as they may maintain archives or have knowledge of community members' histories. In Charlotte, the Hebrew Cemetery is a rich repository of our community's legacy, offering a tangible connection to our ancestors' stories.

Connecting with others who share your passion for Jewish genealogy can greatly enhance your research experience. Join genealogy societies, attend workshops and conferences, and participate in online forums and discussion groups. Collaborating with distant relatives and researchers allows you to exchange information, share resources, and build a network of support.

As you uncover new information and stories, it's important to document and share your findings. Create a family history book or website to preserve your discoveries and make them accessible to others. Consider contributing your research to online databases and genealogy

projects, such as the JewishGen Family Tree of the Jewish People, to help others in their own quests. Investigating the origins and meanings of Jewish surnames can also add depth and interest to your research.

Remember that genealogical research is an ongoing journey of discovery. Be patient and persistent in your efforts, as some information may be challenging to uncover. Embrace the process and celebrate the connections and stories you uncover along the way. By engaging in Jewish genealogy, you are not only enriching your own understanding of your family history but also contributing to the preservation of our collective heritage.

Getting started with Jewish genealogy is an exciting and rewarding endeavor. By gathering family information, utilizing online and local resources, connecting with others, and documenting your findings, you can embark on a journey of discovery that strengthens your ties to your ancestors and the Jewish community as a whole. As you uncover the stories and legacies of those who came before you, you contribute to the timeless tradition of *l'dor v'dor*, ensuring that our heritage continues to inspire and guide future generations.

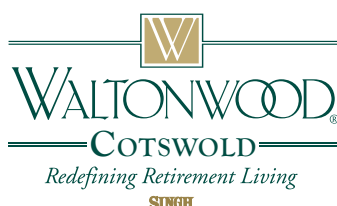


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Around the Table: The Sweetness of Bar Mitzvah Season



By Charlotte Rouchouze

Spring of 2024, is a very special time in my life. The reason is because my older son and his closest friends, who were together at the Jewish Preschool on Sardis, are turning 13. For years I joked with their moms about every silly picture that “this one will go in the bar mitzvah slide show!” It’s hard to believe that this moment is upon us! Judaism has a way of recognizing and honoring key changes in life, and the bar mitzvah is no exception. 13 marks the end of young childhood and the beginning of adolescence, and with this comes the start of a greater sense of responsibility for one’s own actions. It is a beautiful opportunity to reflect on how far one has come,

and on the attitudes and mindset with which we will embark on the next phase. As I plan our bar mitzvah and join in the joy of our friends’ celebrations, I offer you a simple cupcake recipe, which is “semi-homemade” as they say. To me, nothing says party like cake with frosting, whether it be a birthday, graduation, or mitzvah. I am usually pleased with box cake mix but I always struggle with the frosting. I don’t like the taste or ingredients in ready-made frosting, but home-made always seems like a hassle. Here is my quick frosting recipe that requires no beaters. It may not be quite as picture perfect as whipped frosting, but it tastes wonderful. You can make these any flavor you like, really. I have chosen lemon vanilla, which I find to be a woefully underused combination. Thanks to my Cricut machine, I was also able to decorate them just how I wanted for the bar mitzvah.

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

Semi-Homemade Lemon Vanilla Cupcakes (makes about 16 cupcakes)

Equipment: muffin tins and paper liners

For the muffins:

- 1 box cake mix, lemon
- 1 stick butter, melted (I use butter instead of the oil but you can do either)
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup milk or water
- 1 tsp grated lemon peel
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

For the frosting:

- 1 ½ cups whipping cream
- 1 box instant pudding mix (I use vanilla)
- 1 stick salted butter, well softened but not melted
- ¼ tsp grated lemon rind
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

For topping:
Sprinkles of your choice



Preheat the oven to 325°. Mix the muffin ingredients together until smooth. Line muffin tins with paper liners and distribute batter into papers. Bake for about 20 minutes until golden. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine the frosting ingredients and beat vigorously with a fork (or with electric beaters) until smooth. If the frosting is too stiff, add a couple tablespoons of milk to achieve a creamier texture. If you prefer a sweeter frosting, you can add sugar to taste and mix. Generously frost the cupcakes and finish with sprinkles (or jimmies as we called them in Pittsburgh). Refrigerate until ready to serve.



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Donations to Israel Since Oct. 7 Top \$1.4 Billion, Israeli Government Report Concludes

By Asaf Elia-Shalev

(JTA) April 9, 2024 — Organizations and individuals around the world have donated at least \$1.4 billion toward Israel's recovery from the attack of Oct. 7, according to a new report published by Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs.

The donations, coupled with widespread pro-Israel activism in the Diaspora and the arrival in Israel of tens of thousands of volunteers, represent "an unprecedented effort by Jewish communities around the world to support Israel," the ministry said in the report. (When accounting for inflation, the total donated is more than what American Jews gave to Israel in response to the Six-Day War in 1967 but less than they gave six years later in the Yom Kippur War.)

The report represents the most complete published tally of wartime donations so far and includes fundraising by Jewish federations, crowdsourced campaigns, and "Friends Of" charities benefiting the Israel Defense Forces and Magen David Adom,

the national emergency service. A previous tally, published by a university in December, put the total at \$1 billion.

About half of the sum was raised by the Jewish Federations of North America and its 146 member organization. The committee distributing the money is so flush with donations that it has not had to turn down requests from Israeli charities as long as they meet certain criteria.

At least 350 Israeli nonprofits along with several government agencies have received donations from abroad to help with medical and emergency services, mental health support, aid for victims of terrorism, economic needs, and other areas.

An estimated 58,000 volunteers flew to Israel to volunteer for military service, agricultural work and with organizations supporting Oct. 7 victims and evacuees from the communities surrounding the Gaza Strip.

Separately from the donations, the Israeli government has managed to borrow \$1.7 billion through the sale of Israel bonds.

About \$300 million of the sum came from American state and local governments, especially in Florida. The bonds sold faster than in a typical period, with many investors publicly citing their desire to support Israel. The report said investors were opting for Israel bonds even though returns on the bonds are relatively modest compared to other investments currently available on the market.

The total raised on crowd-

sourcing platforms reached at least \$91.5 million with more than half raised for United Hatzalah, Israel's volunteer emergency medical corps.

The rate of donations has slowed down significantly over the six months since the Oct. 7 attack, but the money available for Israeli charities has not run out — far from it. About a third, or more, of the \$1.4 billion raised, has not yet been allocated as donor organizations set aside

funding for long-term needs, according to the report.

All information in the report comes from public sources. Commissioned by the ministry to carry out research for the report, DNAidea, an Israeli consulting company, examined some 800 online sources. The research could not account for additional donations delivered on a private, grassroots basis.

Most Americans and Nearly All American Jews Say Antisemitism Has Risen since Oct. 7, Survey Finds

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) April 3, 2024 — Most Americans, and nearly 90% of American Jews, say they have seen a rise in antisemitism since Oct. 7, according to a new study.

But the survey also found that one in 10 respondents says Americans should be allowed to call for violence against Jews or Muslims. By contrast, 73% say such calls should be prohibited.

The survey, published Tuesday by the Pew Research Center, comes following widespread reports of rising antisemitism in the United States since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7. It found that increasing shares of Americans, and American Jews, believe there is a high level of antisemitism and Islamophobia in the United States.

But along with the minority of respondents who say calls for antisemitic or anti-Muslim violence should be allowed, the survey showed that most Americans say advocacy for the end of a Jewish state or the prevention of a Palestinian one should also be permitted. Adults under 50 were slightly more likely than older Americans to say that calls for violence against either religious group should be allowed. "Many Americans particu-

larly sense that discrimination against Muslims and Jews has risen since the start of the Israel-Hamas war," reads an introduction to the survey on Pew's

(Continued on page 26)

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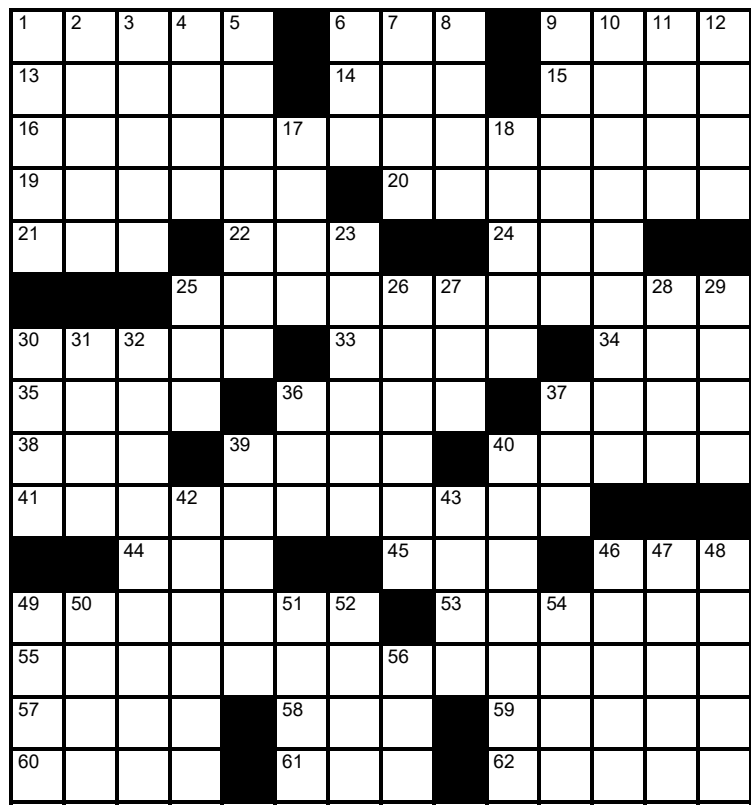
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“Chefs”



- Across**

 - 1. Wife of Yosef
 - 6. Inc., in London
 - 9. There's one of Man
 - 13. Architecture plans
 - 14. Debt letters
 - 15. Hershey bar with tof-fee
 - 16. Notable work by Susie Fishbein
 - 19. Famous Hun
 - 20. Shows respect to a commanding officer
- Down**

 - 1. Liam in “Schindler’s List”
 - 2. Sees
- 14-Across**

 - 37. Esau, for one
 - 38. Medicine regulators: Abbr.
 - 39. Taste, in a Hebrew-speaking kitchen
 - 40. Cut’s common follower
 - 41. Notable work by Michael Solomonov
 - 44. Plants need it
 - 45. 1948 and 1967, for short
 - 46. Friday letters that precede “F”
 - 49. Arab Disney hero voiced by Scott Weinger
 - 53. Prime Minister Ariel
 - 55. Notable work by Leah Koenig, with “The”
 - 57. Surgeon’s subj.
 - 58. Minor league level
 - 59. Take advantage of, as privileges
 - 60. Baseball’s best team in 2023, so far
 - 61. ___ Yomi
 - 62. Had enough
- 3.** Bird houses

4. Bro, to Yigal

5. Poet whose work inspired “Cats”

6. Ad ___

7. Woody and Buzz, e.g.

8. Former Met Lucas, who might be sick of “Camptown Races”

9. This paper has them

10. “SNL” and “The Carol Burnett Show”

11. Field-level alternative

12. Coastal diving birds

17. Somewhat off-color

18. Tennis-injury spot

23. Rabbi Shimon bar ___

25. Dance in Dublin

26. Cheaply made

27. Kit or Krazy

28. Rework, as a story

29. Descartes or Russo

30. Stadium where the Rams play

31. They’re often seen with “ifs”

32. Erodes

36. Ripken of note

37. Some say it these days instead of “mashiv haruach...”

39. Guards, as a hockey goal

40. Tzeddakah boxes

42. Financial reviews

43. “... ___ I’ve been told”

46. Brown or rainbow

47. Kosher bird

48. Signed

49. A bit open

50. Actress Headey or Horne

51. “If ___ a Hammer”

52. Scholastic sports org.

54. Inspiration for “Mamma Mia!”

56. Klutz

(Answers on page 37)

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Local Artist Mike Wirth Unveils Digital Jewish Futurism Artwork at Jerusalem Biennale

Charlotte artist, Mike Wirth recently traveled to Israel to unveil his innovative digital artwork at the prestigious Jerusalem Biennale. His unique digital artwork, part of the group exhibition "Jewish on Paper," explores Jewish Futurism and has been showcased alongside global talents in Jerusalem.

Mike Wirth is known for his groundbreaking contributions to digital Jewish Futurism. By integrating technology, culture, and spirituality, his art challenges traditional perspectives on Jewish identity and art. Wirth's work is a testament to the dynamic possibilities of modern Jewish expression, making him a standout figure in both local and international art circles.

"Jewish on Paper" is not just an exhibition but a vibrant declaration of Jewish heritage and culture through art. Curated by Hillel Smith at the Jerusalem Biennale, this innovative show features Jewish artists from diverse backgrounds. It aims to challenge conventional notions of poster design and illustration, often marginalized due to their

commercial intent and perceived ephemeral nature.

The exhibition breathes new life into the art of posters, dating back nearly six centuries in the West, by celebrating Jewish texts, holidays, and rituals through various artistic mediums. Typography, digital printing, and traditional production methods like silkscreen and etching play significant roles, showcasing the rich diversity and emotional breadth of Jewish art.

The Jerusalem Biennale's "Jewish on Paper" exhibition stands as a bridge between past and present, highlighting the relevance of incorporating Jewish content into contemporary aesthetics. From minimalistic interpretations to digital innovations, each artist, including Wirth, brings a unique perspective to this collective exploration of identity.

Artworks intended for commercial reproduction underscore the role of commerce in promoting and preserving cultural identity. This approach not only celebrates artistic creativity but also ensures the wider dissemination of Jewish cultural expressions.



Mike Wirth unveils Jewish Futurism at Jerusalem Biennale

Wirth traveled to Israel to attend the exhibition's opening on March 16th, joining hands with Jewish artists from around the globe. His participation not only underscores the universal

desire to connect with heritage through creative expression but also highlights Charlotte's contribution to the global Jewish art scene.

Wirth said of his experience: "With the war unfolding, I was very apprehensive about travel-

ing to Israel for the very first time while also attending one of the most important art exhibits of my career. I felt that way right up until I visited the Kotel on Shabbat. It was at the moment that I touched the stone of the wall that I felt like this was exactly where I needed to be. I felt like I had come home."

Visitors to the Jerusalem Biennale had the opportunity to engage directly with the artworks through QR codes, linking to the artists' websites. This digital engagement underscores the exhibition's commitment to connecting audiences with Jewish art in the digital age.

For More Information:

To experience the exhibition firsthand or learn more about the Jerusalem Biennale and its role in fostering contemporary Jewish art, visit jerusalembiennale.org. Follow Mike Wirth and his creative journey through his website, www.mikewirthart.com and on Instagram @mikewirth.



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Education and Youth

Jewish Preschool on Sardis 2s Class Celebrates Their Jewish Education

Did you know that when a child turns three, they formally begin their Jewish education? Of course, learning begins at birth and a child should always be surrounded by Jewish songs, toys and books. But the age of three marks a new chapter in a child's educational journey; at this age, a child can properly say a blessing and recite basic prayers, so at this time parents become responsible to educate their children in the ways of Torah and mitzvot. We celebrated our 2's class turning three with a grand Birthday Bash, complete with a bounce house, face paint, cupcakes, activities, kippah and candlestick decorating, and an Aleph Bet ceremony to mark the beginning of their lifelong journey as proud Jews. Traditionally, a child begins to learn the letters of the Aleph Bet, and licks honey to symbolize the sweetness of Torah. This is also the age that boys begin to wear a kippah and tzitzit, and girls begin lighting



Lockhart is excited to have her very own tzedakah box.

Shabbat candles. As a birthday gift, each child received a Tzedakah box personalized with their name. We enjoyed sharing these traditions with our students and their parents! May they continue to give their parents and teachers much nachat!



3's Birthday Bash!



Josie decorates and enjoys a delicious cupcake



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Although Purim fell on a Sunday this year, when we were not in school, Charlotte Jewish Day School (CJDS) students were able to celebrate multiple ways.

Bridging the themes of Purim with the enlightening world of science, the Charlotte Jewish Day School (CJDS) offered its students a unique celebration that illuminated the festival's underlying mysteries. Just as the story of Purim is woven with hidden identities and transformative revelations — from Esther's concealed Jewish identity to Mordechai's unexpected honor and Haman's downfall — CJDS students delved into scientific experiments under the guidance of Essy Sefchovich, also known as Dr. Mashugana, to uncover hidden aspects of the world around us. Through hands-on activities, such as manipulating light to change perceptions of color or observing the direction of an arrow through different mediums, the students experienced firsthand how things are not always as they appear.



first instructed to separate them by color. Next, with the light off, and given flashlights, they were instructed to sort them again, using different colored filters. Suddenly the pieces previously yellow in color, now appeared red or blue depending on the filter used. In fact, most of the pieces took on a different color and the sorting was surprisingly different from the initial sort.

Science shows us that a material absorbs all wavelengths of light except for the specific wavelength corresponding to the color we perceive. The filter only allowed certain color wavelengths to reach the eye, thereby creating the illusion that the pieces were different colors than they actually were!

Another experiment showed how light slows down as it pass-

es through different mediums. The light will bend as it travels from water to air or air to water. Students used an arrow to follow how different mediums can change what is “readily apparent” to their line of sight. The arrow that was pointing in one direction, suddenly appeared to point in the opposite way when going through air. The class also experimented with different clear liquids and how they react differently to the introduction of color, based on their acidity. Not all clear liquids are the same.

The students also visited the Museum of Illusions for a complete immersion into a mind-bending experience, creating interactive participation in creating incredible illusions appearing to others be much different than they actually were.

The students hide their identity during Purim, with costumes, creating the illusion they are someone else.

On Sunday, CJDS participated in the Purim Carnival by running a Mishloach Manot booth. This booth provided every attendee,



Fifth grader Taliya Waizman is ready to deliver mishloach manot at the Purim carnival.

both adults and children, with the opportunity to observe two of the four Purim mitzvot on the actual day of Purim. Participants received bags, stickers, crayons, and Purim cards for decoration. They had a wide variety of can-

(Continued on page 32)



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Education and Youth

Hebrew High Students: Moving Toward Wholeness

By Rachel Glazer

When was the last time you gave yourself the gift of stillness? There are not many times throughout our day that we make space for the blessing of silence, to just be with ourselves, to let our emotions flow freely, and to give attention to our bodies and our breath. For many people, it seems like an impossible task — you want me to stop moving? In this economy?!

Mindfulness and meditation are not new concepts. After all, what is prayer but mindful, intentional meditation, whether communally or privately? A piece that we may be less comfortable with, however, is transitioning that intention out of our heads and into our bodies. Ironically, sometimes this means that we find spiritual stillness in the physical movement and sensations of our bodies.

For the past four years, I have been learning and teaching with the Embodied Jewish Wisdom Network, an international community whose mission is “to elevate the wisdom of the body as a resource for balance and well-being in Jewish life.” Under the guidance of seasoned leaders, I have explored what it means to make myself a sanctuary for the Divine. Before, I had not realized how disconnected I was from my

physical self — I spent all my time in my head and hardly any being present with my spirit and in my body.

This is precisely the skill that my class of twelve teenage students practice each week in my Hebrew High Course, Moving Toward Wholeness. Even as 8th, 9th, and 10th graders, there is so much pressure on them to keep working, keep thinking, and keep doing, but there is less motivation to pause and consider what their bodies may be trying to tell them. We are working to attune ourselves to the wisdom of our bodies and to understand how Jewish community, ritual, and learning can provide a bridge between our mental and physical realms.

We open each class with a contemporary niggun as we stretch and begin to reconnect our body, mind, and spirit. Then, we practice deep breathing as we do a body scan, checking in with every part of our physical form and noting sensations without judgment. Each week focuses on a different way to access our bodies’ wisdom. In one class, we lost ourselves to the rhythms of Zumba; the next, we meticulously explored a simple orange with all five senses and then went on a nature walk. We created messy, ugly, wonder-filled art.



Every class begins with a stretch and a few yoga-like poses while listening to contemporary niggun.

We drummed and hummed and probably looked ridiculous to outsiders, but it’s not about how we look; it’s about how we feel.

We found insights in Jewish texts and rituals that we could incorporate into simple daily practices and mantras. We embraced the messiness of not knowing how to do something “right,” and just trying it and being present in the moment. One of my mottos as an educator is, “Trust the process.” In her article “Creativity as Spiritual Practice,” Rabbi Adina Allen, co-founder and creative director of the Jewish Studio Project, explains the line from Exodus 3:14, in which God tells Moses, “Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh — I shall be that which I shall be,” saying, “God self-iden-

ties not as a person or a place, but as a process.” In trusting the process, we are trusting in God, and, as humankind was made in God’s image, we are also trusting ourselves. In our intentional movements, our artistic endeavors, and our deep breaths, we can access this innate wisdom that cannot always be expressed with words.

For teens, resisting the urge to judge themselves is a huge challenge. Perfectionism breeds anxiety and self-doubt. By practicing mindfulness, they can become more self-assured, confident, and patient. Research has shown that meditation can increase gray matter in the area of the brain responsible for self-awareness and compassion. Teens who are

skilled at tuning into their bodies’ intuition may be better able to trust their gut when something doesn’t feel right, either physically or socially. Perhaps most importantly, mindfulness gives them the space and skills to get to know themselves, reflect, re-center, and get a sense of who they are, beyond the chatter of an anxious brain or the influence of friends and family.

It is an honor to hold this space for our Hebrew High teens when the world feels so broken. One deep breath at a time, they are finding their way toward wholeness. I hope that with what they learn from this course and discover about themselves, they will work to heal what is broken in our community and the world. Ken yehi ratzon—may it be God’s will.



Club Z Charlotte: Empowering Teens Through Israel Education

By Marcy Braverman Goldstein, Ph.D.

Ten years ago, a mentor’s words resonated with me: “Never say anything publicly pro-Israel if you want to keep your career in academia.” As a non-tenured university professor at the time, I had already noticed this predicament, but hearing it from a respected colleague made it all too real. For years, I observed the rise of anti-Zionism in academia, with viewpoint conformists delegitimizing the only Jewish state and their echo chamber reinforcing anti-Zionism.

In 2018, I discovered Club Z, a program whose mission is to cultivate the next generation of proud, Jewish Zionist leaders. I immediately thought, “We need that in Charlotte!” While helping establish the local Institute and watching it grow under the leadership of Olga Washington, former chief operating officer and educator, I never expected to teach the teens myself. However, after one session in fall 2023, I discovered the joy of educating our youth to become confident, knowledgeable advocates for Israel and themselves.



As the newly appointed Charlotte Institute educator for Club Z and director of academic affairs at the Jewish Institute for Liberal Values (JILV), I am thrilled to have the opportunity to empower teens through Israel education. With a Ph.D. in Religious Studies and extensive teaching experience in world religions, Indian traditions, and Judaism, I bring a unique perspective to my role.

Club Z’s mission is to create a network of educated and articulate activists committed to

Zionism who advocate for themselves, Israel, and the Jewish people. Our vision is to foster a network of leaders who embrace their Jewish identity, are proud of their heritage, and address issues of bigotry and antisemitism head-on. We encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and model productive debate and disagreement.

The Club Z curriculum for 8th-12th graders focuses on Israeli history, current events, debate, speech writing, research, and activism. Through multi-

media presentations and discussions, we ground modern-day headlines in centuries-old history. Institute meets throughout the school calendar, with both once and twice per month educational tracks, at the Teen Lounge, Ohr HaTorah on Sardis Road. The fall retreat in the mountains kicks off the year with classes and adventure, while the annual National Conference allows teens to hear from expert speakers and participate in interactive workshops navigating the history and current dynamics in the Middle East.

As an educator, my goal is to spread truth, inspire teens to seek knowledge, and foster a love for our incredible people who have persisted despite adversity for millennia. I look forward to seeing teens grow in their knowledge, confidence, and verbal communication skills, and to hearing from graduates who organize pro-Israel rallies at their colleges and take leadership roles to empower other Jewish teens.

In our post 10/7 era, the need for Israel education has never been more critical. I aim to provide students with the tools to

engage knowledgeably and confidently about the Jewish right to self-determination in our indigenous homeland, countering the anti-Zionist narrative prevalent in academia and beyond.

Visit clubz.org to learn more, watch a National Conference recap video, shop at the swag store, and/or make a donation. Registration for the 2024-2025 school year opens soon. Contact me at marcy@clubz.org or Charlotte Co-Directors Lena Kosinovsky and Rabbi Ya’akov Walker at charlotte@clubz.org with questions. Follow Club Z on Instagram @ZionismForTeens for excellent content about history, current affairs, and Jewish pride.



Education and Youth

Splatter Painting to Small Business: ZABS Place Shows that Joy Can Be a Job

By Madison Harr

Meet Noah, a young man with Down Syndrome, who joined our Talent-In-Training program because his Mom felt he needed extra support to prepare him for adult life. When we met him, his speech was limited and he struggled to focus, but his goofy joy was contagious.

At school he wasn't learning job-readiness skills and his mother wanted him to learn how to be more serious.

As with all our trainees, Noah was paired with a job coach and he started job sampling. His coach, Kristen, introduced him to tasks such as hanging clothes, sorting small cars and action figures, counting puzzle pieces, dusting, and lots of other tasks. But nothing seemed to spark his interest.

He preferred to pick up handfuls of small toys and drop them into their buckets instead of sorting and separating them. Rather than putting clothes on the hanger, he enjoyed watching them fall off! The more he tried the more it was clear that he wasn't really interested in the structure of most job tasks.

Noah joined ZABS Place as a Talent-in-Training in late 2021 and he's been growing and learning ever since.

Through the months of training, it was clear that because of



Noah showing off one of his paintings

his limited speech Noah didn't have an easy way to express his interests to others. But there was no doubt that what he enjoyed the most was being silly and having fun! So Ms. Kristen looked for opportunities to harness his personality to his advantage. After lots of brainstorming, Kristen had an unconventional idea and with a box full of supplies, she headed outside to try it. Step by step, she taught Noah how to express himself through splatter

painting.

Finally, he had a productive way to express his personality and he loved it. Instead of having him complete tasks in the store, Noah joined our ZABSpreneur Micro-Business Incubator and "Noah's HeART" began. As a ZABSpreneur, Noah had support to create his own line of art and stationery pieces to be sold at ZABS Place.

Now, he doesn't just have a job that he is excited about, he owns his own business!



Noah's paintings displayed at ZABS Place



My Friendship Circle Story: A Teen Friend Shares the Personal Impact of Friendship Circle

By Isabelle Levine, Friendship Circle Teen Friend

A few months ago, I joined Friendship Circle thinking I'd be doing a good deed.

But it turns out, I gain way more than I give. I get to meet Kieran every week — she's the funniest, kindest person! We do crafts, tell stories, and just hang out. It's become the highlight of my week.

Friendship Circle connected me not just with Kieran, but with a whole community of teens and special friends. It's a place where I can totally unwind from school stress and just have a blast with a friend.

What surprises me most is

how much we learn from each other. Kieran's patience and communication skills are amazing. We might spend ages deciding on an activity, or wait for each other to finish drawings. It's taught me so much about friendship.

Friendship Circle is a truly special and fulfilling experience. I'm so grateful to be a part of it!



Isabelle and Kieran hard at work in Friendship Circle's Art and Creativity Hub

CJDS

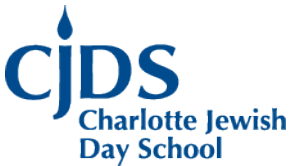
(Continued from page 30)

dies and delicious snacks to fill their bags with. Once filled, these bags were handed over to the CJDS delivery team, who then found recipients for these food gifts. On Purim, it is a tradition to give at least one gift containing two different foods to another person. No one left hungry — a Purim riddle explaining the four mitzvot of Purim was provided in order to earn a candy or snack.

A second mitzvah of Purim, Matanot La'evayonim (gifts for the poor) was also made possible for all carnival participants. Two mosaic tzedakah boxes were available for all to give charity as we are told to give to two different people or institutions on

Purim.

This year, CJDS successfully merged the celebration of Purim with scientific exploration, giving students a unique learning experience. Through engaging experiments in the classroom and fulfilling Purim's mitzvot at the Purim carnival, they discovered the holiday's deeper meanings and its relevance today. It was a Purim that combined tradition with inquiry, making the spirit of the festival both tangible and instructive.



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Reach
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(Puzzle on page 31)

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THANKS TO THE WORK OF VOLUNTEERS
16,500 blankets have been donated to the Levine Children's Hospital, Hemby Children's Hospital and the Shriners Hospital (Greenville, SC) and 10,000 chemo hats have been donated to facilities for cancer patients around Charlotte.

Join Us!

Wednesdays 8-11 AM at the Levine Jewish Community Center
Thursday 9 AM-5 PM in the home of Lynn Edelstein, 3802 Columbine Dr.
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THERE ARE STILL 134 HOSTAGES



**WE WON'T STOP
UNTIL THEY'RE ALL BACK**

#BringThemHomeNow

HOSTAGES AND MISSING FAMILIES FORUM

Newspaper archives are a treasure trove of collective memories, providing a snapshot of our history. The following is an excerpt from the article in The Charlotte Jewish News, April, 201. To read the rest of the article and other issues of The CJN, visit the archives at <https://www.digitalnc.org/newspapers/charlotte-jewish-news-charlotte-nc/>.

Looking Back: Year 2012

Violins of Hope and Related Events

Violins of Hope is a multi-faceted project that has at its center the premiere of 18 violins recovered from the Holocaust and restored by Israeli violinmaker Amnon Weinstein. Never before exhibited or played together in North or South America, the violins arrive in Charlotte in early April. The exhibition at the new UNC Charlotte Center City Gallery opens to group tours on April 9 and to the general public on April 16. A series of five concerts begins April 12.

A related program at Levine Museum of the New South with the accompanying exhibitions Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina and All That Remains, an exhibit about local Holocaust survivors, is Courage and Compassion. This program documents the efforts of the Eielski brothers, Jewish resistance fighters who saved more than 1,200 Jews in the forests of Byelorussia. Their story has a particular connection to the Violins of Hope because Assaela Weinstein, the wife of violinmaker Amnon Weinstein, is the daughter of partisan Assael Bielski. Ms. Weinstein and her cousin Ruth, daughter of Tuvia Bielski, will lead a panel discussion about their family's extraordinary history at Levine Museum of the New South on April 18.

The Violins of Hope is presented in partnership with nearly 20 cultural and academic partners and with the financial support of Wells Fargo Private Bank (exclusive corporate sponsor), the Sandra and Leon Levine Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Blumenthal Foundation, the Arts & Sciences Council, Foundation for the Carolinas, The Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, U.S. Air, and Lufthansa, as well as individual and community support. WFAE 90.7 FM is the project media sponsor. For a full list of partners, visit www.violinsofhopecharlotte.com.

Other related programs around the area in April and beyond include:

Down Home: Jewish Life in North Carolina, through September 9 at the Levine Museum of the New South

A special exhibit sponsored by the Jewish Heritage Foundation of North Carolina and exhibited by Levine Museum of the New South, Down Home explores the ways in which the Jewish community has shaped the culture and history of North Carolina for the past 400 years, and how North Carolina, in turn, has affected Jewish lives.

All That Remains, through September 9 at the Levine Museum of the New South

This new panel exhibit was inspired by an article that originally appeared in Charlotte magazine. Writer Ken Garfield interviewed ten people living in the Charlotte area who survived the Holocaust and understood the importance of telling stories before it's too late. Photographer Chris Edwards took beautiful, stirring portraits of each. Together, these stories are a voice from the past, a gift from ten Charlotteans determined to have the last word.

BESA: A Code of Honor through May 16 at the Levine-Sklut Judaic Library and Resource Center

This photographic exhibition of Muslim Albanians who rescued Jews during the Holocaust presents a beautiful, interfaith message regarding the power of humanity in the face of oppression.

Spots of Light: To Be a Woman in the Holocaust throughout April 26 at Storrs Gallery, UNC Charlotte

The first international exhibition to focus exclusively on women in the Holocaust, Spots on Light is a vide-art installation that tells the stories of 45 women through the thematic lenses of Love, Motherhood, Caring for Others, Womanhood, Partisans and Underground, Everyday Life, Friendship Faith, Food, and the Arts.

Hope in Resistance: Music and Stories Inspired by the Resistance Movement, April 12 at 8 PM at Myers Park Baptist Church

The Violins of Hope concert series opens with a musical performance honoring the people who led and supported the resistance movements of World War II. Featuring the extraordinary soprano Christina Pier and violinists David Russell and Julia Hwang, the concert begins with the screening of "Weapons of the Spirit," an award-winning documentary about the brave residents of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France, who saved an estimated 5,000 Jews from deportation and death during the war.

Restoring Hope: Amnon Weinstein and the Violins of Hope, April 15 at 7:30 PM at Knight Theater.

Violinmaker Amnon Weinstein introduces his remarkable Violins of Hope in this concert featuring violinists Shlomo Mintz, Chad Hoopes, and Steven Greenman. Chamber music, traditional klezmer music, and Vivaldi's Concerto for Four Violins, with Charlotte Symphony Associate Conductor Jacomo Bairos directing, underscore the message of hope for the future.



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Yom Ha'Atzmaut

Israeli Independence

May 15
5 - 8 PM
at Shalom Park

On Yom Ha'Atzmaut, we reflect and celebrate amidst the echoes of October 7, reaffirming our resilience and quest for peace. This day honors the courage of those who safeguard the State of Israel. Let's embrace Yom Ha'Atzmaut as a symbol of our hope and strength as a Jewish people.

Register at jewishcharlotte.org