Teen Changemakers Experience is not yet a household name. But that's about to change. UJA-JCC Greenwich's new teen philanthropy program aims to make a difference, not only in the present lives of its participants and recipients, but also in the future of the Greenwich Jewish community. Participants will be inspired by the Jewish values and traditions taught to continue being engaged community members.

The initiative, intended for 9th to 12th graders, came into existence with a generous gift from Jessica and Adam Hirsch. In New York City the couple was involved in a large and successful philanthropy program for teens started by Adam's great aunt and uncle. The new Greenwich residents have young children, but are already planting the seeds for a decade from now when Teen Changemakers Experience will have matured in scope, ready to embrace a fresh generation of student-philanthropists including their own.

“We are so thrilled,” says JTAC Advisor Cori SaNogueira, who will oversee the new program. “It’s a wonderful gift, which will enable us to create a new generation of donors who have Jewish values imbedded in the very essence of their giving.” Together with the newly hired facilitator, Lead Changemaker Brianna Gitnik, SaNogueira now faces the pleasant task of translating the idea into practice. This means introducing teens to basic concepts of responsible giving.
Greenwich family members got to celebrate Lag B’Omer this spring with camping-themed PJ PAILS. Kids opened their forest animal bags, which were loaded with outdoor activities in mind. The PAILS contained many items needed for a camping excursion, including flashlights, bug collecting kits, compasses, and items for a nature scavenger hunt. PAILS even included harmonicas and bucket hats. The final bucket in the PJ PAILS series for this season will be for Tu B’Av. Watch for your PAILS to be delivered in time for the Holiday of Love, which takes place on July 23. If you are interested in purchasing these highly coveted PAILS, please reach out to randi@ujajcc.org.

On a sunny morning in May, mommies and their JBabies gathered at the Binney Park Gazebo for a Meet and Greet to get to know each other in person. Plans are in the works for summer strolls and other activities as well. JBabies is headed up by PJ Library VP Ashley LaTorre and PJ Planner Eva Kantor. If you are interested in participating in JBabies activities, please contact randi@ujajcc.org.

Our PJ Library Board Is Expanding

Spring has sprung! With close to 80 new families relocating to Greenwich, PJ Library Greenwich has welcomed a new batch of readers. A bigger PJ Library requires a bigger Board. At the PJ Planners Board meeting in April, President Rebecca Cooper announced the appointment of three talented women to new vice-president positions in order to better serve our expanded community. Meredith Isacoff, new VP of Social Media and Outreach, moved to Greenwich from New York with her husband Oren and two sons in September 2020. Meredith juggles being a full-time mom with her two businesses – Frances Curated Monogram & Gift Shop and FrannieB Fine Jewelry. Becky Leader, new VP of Fundraising, moved to mid country with husband Brad and their two children in the fall. Becky is VP of Customer Experience at Rent the Runway. Ashley LaTorre, new JBabies VP, moved to the area with husband Jason in 2016. They settled in Riverside with their daughter in 2019 and expect baby number two in August. Ashley manages the Operations and Middle Office Teams for an investment manager in the Client Services Department. All three – along with the rest of our wonderful planners – hope to bring PJ families even more exciting activities and informative programs in the coming months.

We would like to welcome Jessica Anderson, Liza Kotler and Lauren Yeager to the PJ Planners Board. There is so much in store for our growing PJ Library, and we look forward to working with the new board.

PJ Library Books to Watch Out for This Summer

PJ Library sends free, award-winning books that celebrate Jewish values and culture to families with children from birth through 12 years old. Attention all PJ Library parents and kids: Be on the lookout for these fun books coming your way soon! Want to sign up? Reach out to randi@ujajcc.org.
UJA-JCC Greenwich Welcomes MORE Newcomers!

As the wave of new people moving to Greenwich continues to grow, UJA-JCC Greenwich is here ready to welcome them with “open arms.” Sixteen of our Newcomers joined us for a Welcome Coffee at the home of Christine Toback, Women’s Philanthropy President. It was a crisp yet sunny spring morning, and everyone enjoyed coming together outside to meet and mingle, all while enjoying coffee and delicious breakfast treats. Abby Vorobeychik, Women’s Philanthropy Newcomers Chair and Bonnie Citron, Women’s Philanthropy Board member, were there to welcome the Newcomers.

UJA-JCC Greenwich has a vibrant Newcomers Program that extends a warm and friendly welcome to people who have recently moved to Greenwich, and aims to connect them to local Jewish organizations and members of our UJA-JCC Greenwich community. If you are new or know someone new to Greenwich and would like to meet and connect with other community members, please contact Claudia Brenner at claudia@ujajcc.org.

The next UJA-JCC Greenwich Newcomers event will be held at Tod’s Point Beach on Sunday June 13, at 9:30 AM. Click here to join us!

Flowers for Friendship Brings Color, Sunshine and Smiles to Local Residents

The Women’s Philanthropy division of UJA-JCC Greenwich was all about bringing smiles and happiness this April, with the Flowers for Friendship project. The goal of the initiative, spearheaded by Women’s Philanthropy Board members Rebecca Cooper and Marissa Cohen, was to simply brighten someone’s day with a bunch of colorful tulips. Participants picked up their beautiful flowers outdoors at UJA-JCC Greenwich’s offices and hand delivered the flowers to a special person of their choosing in the community. All proceeds went to support UJA-JCC’s mission of helping vulnerable people, both locally and around the world, while building a vibrant Jewish community here in Greenwich. Thank you to volunteers Christine Toback (Women’s Philanthropy President), Rebecca Cooper and Marissa Cohen for making this such an incredibly special and successful project.
Standing With Israel and Against Anti-Semitism

Many thanks for showing up and lending your support at the rally UJA-JCC Greenwich co-sponsored on May 24. Special thanks to our three Greenwich Selectmen – Fred Camillo, Jill Oberlander and Lauren Rabin – for joining us to show their unwavering support! We were more than 500 strong in our commitment to fight hate and growing anti-Semitism in our country and around the world. You can watch part of the rally on Jewish Greenwich on Facebook at this link!
Standing With Israel and Against Anti-Semitism
THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFT

The Fund for Victims of Terror
Bringing Comfort to Lives in Upheaval

When tragedy strikes and the future looks uncertain, the emotional toll is unimaginable. The Fund for Victims of Terror seeks to lighten that load in the wake of a crisis by offering financial aid to individuals and families in dire circumstances. Within 48 hours of an event, a representative visits victims and provides emergency aid of more than $1,000.

In addition, through grants and ongoing services totaling up to $6,300, this essential fund covers victims’ costs for months to come. We help survivors receive the care they need – psychological counseling, job retraining, and more – to recover from trauma and rebuild their lives. In one recent year, we provided emergency grants to 14 new victims, long-term rehabilitative assistance to 224 victims of previous violence, and respite camping programs to 320 traumatized children.

When thousands of incoming rockets attacked from the terrorist organization, Hamas, just a few weeks ago, this fund helped give immediate assistance to families who needed to relocate, rebuild, or seek psychological and trauma support.

Your gift to UJA-JCC Greenwich helps support the Fund for Victims of Terror in this critical time. Please donate now.

“The Fund for Victims of Terror was the only body that gave funding for the supplementary medical treatments I need. You really saved me in a tough time.”

NIV NEHEMIAH, STABBED BY A TERRORIST
Teen Changemakers Experience –

Continued from front page

Among the first group assignments will be to craft a mission statement, using something called the Honeycomb Curriculum, customized for the Greenwich teens. Next, participants will familiarize themselves with nonprofit organizations to determine which may be worthy of their support with the real funds they have available to allocate. To help survey the charity landscape, guest influencers will be invited to speak about their respective organizations.

As priorities come into focus, the teens will interview agencies of potential interest, putting out requests for proposal (RFPs), homing in on who’s to benefit. These and other grantmaking activities will impart solid analytical and organizational skills, while also empowering the youth across a range of executive functions.

At a big culminating ceremony, the community will gather to hear the teens speak about the factors that influenced their decisions – and which selected beneficiaries will receive their gifts.

While learning how to give with purpose is the main thrust, the social bonding encouraged along the way is also vital. “The kids will learn what it means to be consensus builders, just as they will come to understand why it’s important to give monetarily – and through a Jewish lens,” says SaNogueira. “We can’t wait to engage our first Teen Changemakers Experience cohort, and we look forward to developing the program every year.”

Teen Changemakers Experience will take place at the UJA-JCC building Sunday nights from 5:30-7:30 pm, once a month. Interested participants are invited to apply for the program by contacting Cori at 203-858-6190 or cori@ujajcc.org

Brianna Gitnik, Lead Changemaker, is a passionate educator. She graduated with a BA in English and Dance Education from Muhlenberg College, and an MPS in Education with specialized study in Literacy and Special Education from Manhattanville College. She is currently pursuing a second Masters Degree in Teacher Leadership. Brianna also teaches dance to students of all ages. Brianna is excited to pilot the Changemakers Teen Philanthropy program at UJA-JCC Greenwich in order to empower and inspire teens to effect meaningful change through philanthropy within a Jewish context.

Maybe You Should Talk To Someone

Save The Date
Women’s Philanthropy Fall Celebration

Wednesday, October 13
11:30 AM

With New York Times bestselling Author and Psychotherapist Lori Gottlieb.

Event Chairs
Marissa Cohen and Rachel Schneider

The minimum donation to attend this event is $500.
Liran and Tali are happily married, but their lives are missing one thing: a baby. With the biological clock ticking, they embark on an emotional and physical rollercoaster of fertility treatments, medical procedures and regimented lovemaking. Will their love survive? A sincere yet painfully funny look at the pressures of family planning.

Contains nudity and explicit sexual content.

Erez Tadmor / Drama-Comedy / Israel / 91 min.

**Tackling Anti-Semitism & Bigotry**

30 minutes With Zach Banner, offensive tackle, Pittsburgh Steelers

Moderator: Michael Neuman, Founder, Jewish Inspiration Foundation

Monday, June 21 at 7 PM

When football player Zach Banner posted a video on Twitter protesting an anti-Semitic Instagram post by DeSean Jackson, he became one of the first NFL players to speak out on the issue. Banner’s video quickly drew more than 700,000 views and an outpouring of praise. As a former member of Zeta Beta Tau, a historically Jewish fraternity, Banner credits his fraternity brothers with sharing their families’ experiences as part of his learning about the Jewish community. In his work with Black Lives Matter, he advocates that communities of color understand the Jewish experience of discrimination and seek ways to elevate themselves without “stepping on the back of other people.”

**DAVIS FILM FESTIVAL (at Home)**

**The Art of Waiting**

Feature Film Available to Stream

Sunday, June 20th at 5 PM through Tuesday, June 22nd at 10 PM

Register to receive a personalized Vimeo link (please note this can only be viewed on the Vimeo site)

**Even if you missed our talk with the author on June 1, please join us for this special event coming up on July 15.**

Virtual Book Club Discussion:

**Happier No Matter What**

Cultivating Hope, Resilience, and Purpose in Hard Times

by Tal Ben-Shahar

**Thursday, July 15 • 7:30 pm**

Free event • Zoom link provided upon registration

No breakout rooms just one interactive discussion!

Professor Ben-Shahar taught two of Harvard’s most popular courses of all time. Now he is a trailblazing positive psychologist, serial entrepreneur and New York Times bestselling author of Happier No Matter What.

**Nature Therapy Placemaking**

**July 19th | 10 - 11:15 am**

Open to adults 18 and over

At a private location

Address provided upon registration

Free | Limited spots available

Join Maura Smotrich, certified Nature Therapy Guide, as she invites you to awaken your senses through nature—and the lens of Judaism—for relaxation and restoration. There are empirically demonstrated health benefits from nature therapy including reduced blood pressure, reduced cortisol levels, boosted immune function, and increased focus. Awareness of the Judaic connection to nature—awe of and gratitude for the natural world—will be woven into the process.
UJA-JCC GREENWICH PROGRAMS

Teens Pack Challah Kits for Families in Need

Held at a private home perched just on the water’s edge of Long Island Sound, CTEEN’s and JTACs latest co-sponsored event was a gorgeous sight to be seen. In addition to the view, it was beautiful to see eighteen 8th-12th graders together for an incredibly fun and meaningful experience. The pre-Shavuot event started out with pizza, snacks and schmoozing. Chaya Deren-Ceitlin (CTEEN Advisor) led a quick ice breaker linking the project we were about to begin to the ten commandments. Cori SaNogueira, UJA-JCC’s JTAC advisor, set up the packing project, in an assembly line. The teens were to construct boxes, add the non-perishable ingredients needed to bake challah to the boxes, label the boxes and stack them in a car. All fifty kits were completed at record speed, leaving plenty of time for ice cream pops and a few friendly, but intense, games of spike ball. The teens were able to have some much-needed time socializing and to perform a lovely mitzvah at the same time. The kits will be given to the Schoke Jewish Family Services of Fairfield County and distributed to families who are recipients of the Kosher Food Pantry.

Dignity Stroll

Meetup in Cos Cob Park
Friday, June 18 • 10—11 am
(Raindate: June 25)

Period poverty is a real thing. We’re making a difference with Dignity Grows. Learn how you can be a part of the solution!

Dignity Grows provides essential personal hygiene products so Dignity Pack recipients can attend school and work and participate in their daily lives without interruption. Monthly menstrual products are rarely donated to food pantries and never covered by Federal grant programs. Help Dignity Grows fill the gap.

Join us for a stroll or a power walk—whatever’s your speed—kids and strollers welcome! And the playground is right by the covered pavilion where we’re meeting.

Meet old friends and make new ones. Bring your coffee or tea and we’ll provide a delicious challah tasting!

The event is a thank you to all who sponsor a dignity pack.

Free parking is available.

Register Here
Lunch & Learn
Every Thursday at 12:30 PM via Zoom
Registration Required • Sign up for Zoom Link & Password

Click Here to Register for the Series

June 2021 Lunch & Learn Schedule

June 10  Is Humility Still Jewish?  
Rabbi Eric Hoffman
Assuming that it is, or at least should be, we plan to survey some applicable Talmudic guideposts for our path of life.

June 17  Lunch & Learn: From Bruriah to Nechama Leibowitz  
Yuliya Mazur-Shlomi
We’ll examine these two female Torah scholars—apart in time, yet similar in destiny—and assess whether we’re walking in their footsteps today. From antiquity to today, are we our mothers’ daughters?

June 24  Torah from the Years of Wrath  
Henry Abramson, PhD
Spark to the Warsaw Ghetto writings of Rabbi Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira (the Aish Kodesh).

Our gratitude to Rita Edelston for her generous sponsorship of this program.

July 2021 Lunch & Learn Schedule

July 1  Talmud, Astrology and Free Will  
Rabbi Irwin Huberman
The Talmud devotes considerable attention to how heavenly constellations can influence our lives. But what might such stary influence mean for free will? We’ll gaze into astrology — and the Talmud — along with the remarkable story of Rabbi Akiva’s daughter.

July 8  The Chosen Son: The Tragedy of Abel and the Triumph of Joseph  
Shuli Taubes
What does the Book of Genesis say about “chosenness”? Let’s analyze the complex family dynamics and key lessons that emerge from divine election.

July 15  Flavius Josephus: The Jewish Historian Who Helped Shape Roman and Early Medieval Art  
Steven Wander, PhD
Ever seen Rome’s Arch of Titus? Ever imagined how the leading Jewish historian of the 1st century influenced it and other imperial Roman and early medieval art?

July 22  Tu B’Av: The Jewish Day of Romance  
Rabbi David Kalb
Tu B’Av is often called the Jewish Sadie Hawkins Day. But how does the Talmud describe events in Jewish history that occurred on the sacred date of Tu B’Av?

August 2021 Lunch & Learn Schedule

August 5  Re’eh: the philosophical Parsha  
Rabbi Moshe Edelman
Alex Troy
What does Judaism say about the knotty problem of free will? Moses’ opening words in Re’eh seem unambiguous: We have it. But is the Torah saying that? Let’s decide in class…if we can.

August 12  Ask the Rabbi  
Rabbi Richard F. Address
Mind says yes, body, not so much. A look at how our tradition sees both physical and mental health issues.

August 19  Jewish Approaches to Health and Wellness  
Rabbi Moshe Edelman

Start with 24 often-presented questions that “cross a rabbi’s eyes” — customs, ceremonies, laws, rituals... Now share your own queries and concerns that you’ve always wanted to share with a rabbi.
A HUGE Thank You to The King Street Rehab for Hosting GRAMMY® Winner Joanie Leeds on June 6

Thank you to our sponsors Joui Hessel and Jimmy Hexter and the PJ Library committee, Eva Kantor and Joui Hessel.
Israel Consul General to New England Meets with UJA-JCC

Ambassador Meron Reuben met recently with representatives of UJA-JCC Greenwich to discuss antisemitism, Zionism, and current challenges and opportunities in the Israel-America relationship. Ambassador Reuben also donated bottles of hand sanitizer on behalf of the State of Israel for our Dignity Grows packs.

The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County invites the community to our upcoming event

A Forensic Approach to Holocaust Memory and Education

Presented by

Ryan Lilenthal

Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 7:00PM
(via Zoom)

See how you can use forensic analysis techniques to uncover your family history. Join the Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County via Zoom as Ryan Lilenthal tells how he uncovered his family story.

Ryan Lilenthal engages his audience in a blueprint process to harness the vast array of increasingly available Holocaust-related archives to piece together the lives of Holocaust victims. In our digital age, primary source material, including video testimony, letters, photographs, and institutional and government documents are at our fingertips. The presentation shows how we can deploy our own critical analysis skills to reveal our family history by following the links to the history they left behind.

Click here to register and a confirmation email with link will be sent to you. Admission is FREE.
Questions? Contact info@jhsfc-ct.org
Co-Sponsors:

The Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County
990 Hope Street (Rear), Stamford, CT 06905
P: (203) 321-1373 x150 M: info@jhsfc-ct.org
www.jhsfc-ct.org

UJA-JCC Virtual Book Club

The UJA-JCC Virtual Book Club in April featured author Michael David Lukas for a lively meet the author event. Lukas read from his new novel, The Last Watchman of Old Cairo, winner of the National Jewish Book Award. Lukas shared with attendees what led him to write this compelling tale. Following an author q and a, participants broke up into breakout groups to continue the conversation.

UJA-JCC Greenwich Volunteers Pack Dignity Grows Bags for Neighbor to Neighbor!

Thank you to the amazing volunteers, Yael Rosen (left), Maryje Black (middle), and Morgan Druce (right), for packing Dignity Grows bags at UJA-JCC Greenwich on May 5.
In Parshat Chukat, the Israelites are famously “kvetching” about leaving Egypt, the lack of fresh fruit and water, and Moses’ leadership in the desert. Moses, exasperated and in a fit of rage, hits the rock to draw water, and God punishes him by decreeing that he won’t be allowed to enter the Promised Land. It is a devastating denouement — after so much effort on Moses’ part — and the Rabbis struggled tremendously with this divine punishment, and its justice and fairness.

But even before the rock was struck, we have to ask: what do the Israelites have to complain about anyway? They’ve been freed from slavery in a succession of miracles that boggle the mind, the sea split for them, they’ve been promised their own country … and, they still find what to complain about.

But what if it’s not that the Jewish people are simply ungrateful? Rather, what if the anxiety that led them to build the golden calf, to critique Moses and Miriam, and to rage at so much they should have been grateful for, was actually their fear of change? Slavery was a known quantity, after all, and so was Egypt. But freedom? Freedom to resume their own lives, have their own country and temporal power, and live without limits? That was terrifying.

So too this is true for so many of us at this moment. Even though we may, in many ways, be grateful and excited to return to a post-Covid world, the fear of returning to normalcy after a year of quarantine is also real, even when we don’t articulate it, or we aren’t even aware of it. We have become conditioned to brace ourselves, fear strangers, and keep our distance. To return safely and comfortably to the world, we’ll have to wrestle with the cognitive dissonance of knowing we are safe even when our brains don’t yet fully believe it. This applied to our ancestors, who even though they were no longer slaves, didn’t and couldn’t fully trust freedom and relax into it. Their complaints were a cover for their PTSD and anxiety; our discomfort is ours.

At GRS, to manage this transition, we’ll be easing back into togetherness gently and carefully, by spending the summer gathering outside: for Shabbat, Havdalah, tot shabbats, and a whole range of social and cultural events. We’ll keep studying Torah and holding other adult education classes over Zoom (conveniently, particularly if you’re traveling this summer) And we look forward to the high holidays when we hope to gather in hybrid form – inside, outside and on Zoom, so that whatever your comfort level, you can join us.

If you’re new to Greenwich and haven’t visited us yet – we’d love to have you! Our preschool is opening full time in September, and we’re excited to hit the ground running with a full slate of social, cultural and religious events come fall. We are, after more than a year apart, ready to enter the Promised Land together. Please join us.

Editor’s Note: The spiritual leaders of Greenwich alternate in providing messages for each issue of the Greenwich Jewish News. These comments are those of the authors alone and are not meant to reflect the opinions of UJA-JCC Greenwich.
OUTDOOR CAMP

"My children have grown tremendously in their confidence as people and their pride of being Jewish..." - L.F.

"Sending my child to Camp Gan was the best thing I ever did for my child, she loved everything about it!" - D.S.

GREENWICH STARS
SPORTS CAMP @ CAMP GAN

- BASKETBALL
- FLAG FOOTBALL
- SOCCER
- BASEBALL

A unique opportunity for young athletes to maximize their skills while still gaining the full Camp Gan experience.

For more information about the Greenwich Stars, please contact John Raybin (President and General Manager) 203.561.4444 or john.raybin@greenwichstars.com

"I love the counselors you have! Thank you so much for taking such wonderful care of my child each summer." - A.S.

ACA Accreditation
Only ACA accredited camp in Greenwich or Stamford. ACA standards exceed state licensing requirements. Safety is our #1 priority.

Register at campgan.com

Camp Gan Israel of Greenwich will be closely monitoring and responding to the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in the months and weeks before the start of camp. We are committed to the health and safety of our campers and staff and will be complying with all guidance and regulations provided by the CDC and ACA at the time that we hold our camp program.
Multiple generations enjoyed Lag B’Omer with an outdoor barbecue and entertainment, Donuts for Dads with donuts and music on a Friday morning, and a Sunday morning family challah baking for Shabbat, all on the beautiful former Carmel campus.
After a year of pandemic isolation, GRS invites you to join us for a summer of services and socializing, schmoozing and studying, and best of all – doing it together!

We’ll welcome Shabbat on Friday nights at 6 pm, safely and comfortably seated outside on the grounds of our home at 92 Orchard Street in Cos Cob.

On Saturdays at 7:30 pm on June 19 and July 16, we’ll meet at the homes of member families for Havdalah, catching up with old friends and welcoming new ones.

Summer is the perfect time to relax in study and contemplation. So we’ve scheduled several Sunday mornings for Torah study and evenings for book discussions. Please join us for Torah studies with Rabbi Gerson or Talmud studies with guest teacher Rabbi Greenfield. The GRS book club meets on Zoom at 7:30 on June 9 to discuss Caste: The Origins of Our Discontent by Isabel Wilkerson.

Preschoolers aged 2-4 are invited to join the JCC-GRS Preschool from July 5 to August 20, with enriching indoor and outdoor activities, including water play, sensory fun, art, music, and lots of movement! The flexible schedule offers a choice of 1 to 7 weeks of attendance.

For complete details on times and dates, please contact HadasElias@GRS.org, or call 203-629-0018. If you’re not already on our mailing list, please visit GRS.org and click the link in the upper right-hand corner to sign up!

SAVE THE DATE
Come home to Greenwich Reform, Sunday, August 8, 3-4:30 PM
Join us for Ben & Jerry’s ice cream, craft activities and music, and the chance to learn more about our preschool, religious school, adult education, movie nights and so much more! All are welcome at this free event; call 203-629-0018 for details.

Please patronize the merchants and businesses that advertise in our paper and tell them you saw their ads in the Greenwich Jewish News.

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Please find a better approach to Jewish education at the Temple Sholom Learning Center.

New to Greenwich? Schedule a Virtual Tour!
Contact David Cohen, Director of Schools, at david.cohen@templesholom.com.

REGISTERING NOW FOR:
• A Taste of Religious School (3’s & 4’s)
• Lower School (PreK-2nd Grade)
• Upper School (3rd-7th Grade)
• Post B’nai Mitzvah (8th Grade)
• Social Action Sundays (7th-8th Grade)
• Small Group Learning
• 1:1 Instruction

300 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, CT www.templesholom.com
Wizards Turns 16!
And Much More...

Hebrew Wizards celebrated our sweet 16 with a wonderful Family Mitzvah Day. A vegetable garden; a rock garden, beautiful annuals and perennials adorned the Wizards property. And our community service Program, Better Together/Better2B culminated with personalized collage notebooks with a beautifully written essay by each student for their senior. Congratulations to Stella Frankel for winning third place in the National Contest. As a surprise, we had a handful of our seniors come to receive their special gifts in person. It was a fabulous sunny day with more than 75 students and parents joining together on this unique occasion.

Other Activities:
Our Wiz Kidz Day Camp allows kids of all ages to have a memorable camp experience. Hebrew Wizards has been meeting in person throughout the whole year and has enjoyed educating our students in Hebrew, Religious Education, Music, Art and special electives. Our teen-run program enables all 12 teens to be role models, educators and leaders. As part of our community service program, the teens met monthly in person to bond and make a difference. And our Zoom monthly Shabbats provided an interactive Sabbath experience for our entire community. Our first in-person Shabbat is scheduled for June 4th – a pool, pizza, salad Sabbath potluck. Yay to Hebrew Wizards for enjoying her sweet 16 all year through!

Shir Ami is a warm and welcoming Reform Jewish Congregation with Torah at the center; we embrace our heritage while creating new ways to bring us closer to each other and to God through acts of worship, caring, learning, giving, singing and celebration.

It’s not too soon to think about the High Holidays at Shir Ami:
- Beautiful music
- Intimate sense of community
- Robust congregational participation in services

We make it easy to participate:
Families, singles, interfaith, boomers, seniors, and lgbtq--all are welcome. Visit our website (below) to register. COVID safety measures observed!

Cantor Jill Abramson leads Shir Ami with her joyful spirit and commitment to meaningful worship. We’ve remained vibrant during the pandemic with online classes, worship and celebrations, and we will continue to be flexible and creative as we meet the safety needs of this time. As a congregation we’ve pledged to pursue justice for all. Shir Ami’s Membership Drive begins July 1st. Join us for a full year of meaningful and joyful congregational moments.

shirami.info@gmail.com

www.congregationshirami.org  1273 E. Putnam Ave, Box 312 Riverside, CT 06878
(203) 900-7976

Wizards Turns 16!
And Much More…
CEO’s Corner

The vaccine is working. We are connecting physically, emotionally, spiritually - and in person! Simple activities feel brand new. While some of our old routines have come back to us “like riding a bike,” much still feels foreign. There is joy, and a little awkwardness too.

Our recent family life programs have focused on overcoming fears, managing conflict, and finding ways to live a healthier lifestyle. Most recently our clinical team participated in a valuable learning opportunity on Somatic Experiencing with Sandra Eagle, LCSW. The experience was immersive, with much delight and camaraderie in our ability to work in person as a cohesive team. This opportunity was made possible by a generous matching grant from UJA-JCC of Greenwich and JFNA. We will apply what we learned to offer our Jewish community healing from the traumas that many of us have experienced in response to COVID-19 and beyond.

I wish you a summer filled with experiences new and old, with feelings of safety, comfort, and the joys of connection.

–Rachel Kornfeld, LCSW, SBL
Chief Executive Officer
Jewish Family Services of Greenwich

JFS of Greenwich Continues to Serve Local Families in Need, Assisted by Generous Volunteers

By Michael Garcia, Director of Case Management

The timely assistance of our FACTS program has been key to alleviating the stress of food insecurity for dozens of Greenwich families. COVID-19 brought waves of crisis over an extended period of time, taking a toll on emotional and physical health. Helping our client families manage crisis by providing real-time assistance has changed the trajectory of their lives.

An example of the hardships our families face was featured in the Greenwich Time in an article chronicling a single mother’s journey through the pandemic, while trying to care for two special needs children. The recurring cycle of issues and setbacks illustrates the real challenges faced by those with limited means. The FACTS program is able to relieve individual burdens to allow our families to move forward. Simple support, such as paying an overdue utilities bill provides concrete relief.

With your support JFS of Greenwich continues to meet the needs of those struggling with the effects of COVID-19. Please check the Giving Corner in our weekly Constant Contact email to learn what our families need. Not on our distribution list? We can add you! If you would like to offer your resources or skills to people in need in our community, JFS will welcome you! Please contact mgarcia@jfsgreenwich.org or 203-622-1881 x104.

Tribute Contributions to Jewish Family Services of Greenwich

Phyllis Shapiro and Marty Flashner in memory of Genevieve Weingrad
Rite Edelston in memory of Suzanne Gross
Toby Goldstein in memory of Arthur Wichman
Ellen Jane Moss in honor of Jack Herzog
Alana Butler in honor of Dale Atkins

If you would like to honor or memorialize someone special in your life or community, you may do so by making a donation to Jewish Family Services and we will send a note of acknowledgment to the person or family involved, informing them of your generosity.

Timea Zadori cares for her two children, Noah, left, 9, and Noel, 10, at her apartment in Greenwich. Zadori quit her job during the pandemic to tend to her two nonverbal sons on the autism spectrum who require constant attention and assistance.

Photo by Tyler Sizemore / Hearst Connecticut Media.
Jewish Educational Leaders Headline JFS Events

Larry Stoogenke, Director of Community Engagement for Family Life Programs

JFS has offered a rich variety of programs in recent months, featuring noted educators who bring Jewish insights and values to their subject matter. The thread woven through all our programs supports our mission “to improve the lives of families and individuals, while embracing Jewish wisdom, tradition, and compassion.” These programs aim to bring relevant Jewish learning to help with today’s challenges.

Dr. Betsy Stone, adjunct lecturer at HUC-JIR, gave JFS participants permission to acknowledge all we have lost by “missing the informality of human contact.” She encouraged us to recognize our exhaustion and anxiety with the changes we faced, and helped us imagine how we could “Reenter a Changed World”, with rachamim – graceful compassion – for those we re-encounter, as well as for ourselves.

Rachel Kornfeld and Dr. Holly Schiff tackled family issues compounded by the pandemic with Kavod – respect – as the guiding principal. Chesed – lovingkindness – permeated our hour in May with Dr. Dale Atkins, who taught us that “Kindness is Key to Well-being.” Dr. Atkins, co-author of The Kindness Advantage, engaged participants in the multiple ways kindness and compassion positively affect our well-being, both individually and collectively in our community.

Irina Degtyur, Health Coach and Integrative Nutritionist, spoke to us about “Everyday Wellness Made Easy.” Judaism embraces the idea that body and soul are integrated, and that we use our complete selves to serve the good. Irina taught us how to make a wellness lifestyle a habit.

Our programming is designed to provide fresh perspectives and actionable measures to improve the welfare of our community. At JFS, we believe in a holistic approach to well-being: mind, body and soul, guided by the Jewish practice of helping people to help themselves.

If you would like to discuss programming ideas, we encourage you to reach out to our Director of Spiritual Health, Larry Stoogenke at Lstoogenke@jfsgreenwich.org

Supermarket for Seniors Recruiting Summer Volunteers

Have you thought about becoming a Supermarketing for Seniors shopper but hesitate to make a year-round commitment? Consider becoming an “on call” substitute during the summer, to fill in for a vacationing shopper. You will get a taste for the program without a lengthy obligation, and our clients will have uninterrupted access to groceries. Training is provided. Whether you decide to stay on year-round or just step in on occasion, it might just change your life!

Fill out the application in the link below, or call Elyse Brown, Director of Supermarketing for Seniors for more information, at 203-622-1881 x102.
https://jfsgreenwich.org/supermarketing-for-seniors/

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Family Life Programs,
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Supermarket for Seniors Services, and More!
For years, it was an open secret that Jewish day schools were simply not set up to accommodate the educational needs of students with special learning styles. Then something happened. Educators began to observe a marked increase in families interested in enrolling their children in schools with comprehensive support services for those with academic challenges.

Today, the Stamford pre-K through grade 12 school is among a growing number of Jewish academic institutions all across the country – and the only Jewish day school in Fairfield County – that is investing in professional development, additional staff and revised curricula to better serve students across the learning spectrum.

“As a Jewish community and as a Jewish educational institution we are committed to ensuring that our children – all our children – have an opportunity to benefit from the kind of high quality Jewish education we offer,” explains Jackie Herman, BCHA head of school. For that reason, she says, “today, Bi-Cultural offers a wide array of special services and programs for students with special learning styles that help them become independent, resourceful learners.”

In keeping with Bi-Cultural’s educational philosophy that focuses on personalized instruction designed to meet each student’s social, emotional, and academic needs, students who require additional support services are given individualized “Action Plans.” The goal is to provide guidance and support to children with special learning issues to progress towards independence by scaffolding instruction and gradually releasing the supplemental services as appropriate.

With the help of a strong educational team – including a school psychologist, speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist and social worker who provide support services in reading, writing, math, Hebrew, and Judaic studies – students with learning challenges are mainstreamed in the classroom where they participate in the general curriculum.

“The goal of our program is to ensure that all of our students grow into competent and confident learners,” says Heidi Bernstein, M.S., CCC-SLP, who heads up Bi-Cultural support services program. “We focus on teaching our students strategies to access the curriculum, enhance their skills, and foster a love of learning. We also look ahead to the future and therefore tailor our program to find a balance between providing the proper individualized support services while simultaneously fostering independence.”

Of course, success is not measured by academics alone. Besides its commitment to ensuring that each student meets his or her academic potential, Bi-Cultural also recognizes the importance of helping every student develop healthy life skills by instituting a comprehensive social-emotional learning (SEL) program.

“Social-emotional learning is the process by which children acquire certain key life skill sets that they will need to navigate their world – how to build and maintain strong friendships, how to problem solve, how to resolve conflict, how to self-advocate, and how to regulate big emotions,” explains Dr. Kate Cik, Bi-Cultural’s school psychologist and head of its SEL program.

“Take, for example, Bi-Cultural’s “Positive Discipline” program. Created by Dr. Jane Nelson, Positive Discipline is used in the school’s early childhood program to help children build inclusive, highly communicative and problem-solving class communities in which each child feels a sense of significance and belonging.

“It is important to focus on these skills because they are critical to a child’s success,” points out Dr. Cik. “All of these skills are a prerequisite for being ready and available to learn in the classroom. If a child is struggling to control her or his emotions or to problem solve in a difficult situation, then they will not be ready or able to focus on the teacher, to follow directions and to complete increasingly difficult schoolwork.”

For more information on Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy’s support services, contact Director of Admissions Miriam Sperber at (203) 329-2186 x1310.
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With one gift to UJA-JCC Greenwich, you can touch more Jewish lives across the planet than with any other organization. Your donation supports, strengthens and secures our Jewish community — at home and in Israel.

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VOLUNTEER

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