A Message from Bryanna Kallman:
My family's commitment to UJA has opened up a world of priceless opportunities. The door swung open in 2005 when I asked Pam Ehrenkranz, CEO of UJA-JCC Greenwich, to help my family plan something small but meaningful in Israel for my oldest son’s Bar Mitzvah. From that first Bar Mitzvah, celebrating 13 Ethiopian young men and their families at the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem, to my next son’s Bar Mitzvah in 2007 at the top of Masada with more than 200 people celebrating 50 Ethiopian boys and girls and their coming of age in the Jewish tradition, to my daughter’s in 2011, where we spent the day with the young people at Yemin Orde Youth Village, Haifa, and met its incredible founder Chaim Peri, we have had doors open for us to participate, learn and understand the humanity of which we are all part. Each one of these experiences came directly through our connections with UJA and touched me, my children, my extended family and so many young Israelis and their families. Our priceless experiences continue with hosting young Israeli eminaries, to Missions to Budapest, Berlin, Cuba, Ethiopia, Morocco, and France, along with opportunities to connect wherever we are with a long list of Jewish Agencies and nonprofits all working to help make the world a better place. My path and interests are personal – and yours should be too – technology, military, arts, education…so many avenues to explore, participate and influence.

What follows is just one example of a recent priceless opportunity. If you were to imagine a typical day spent by two Jewish female friends, one an Israeli host who works for a nonprofit, the other an American lay leader coming for a family simcha, what would you envision? Probably a visit to a heartwarming project for new olim (immigrants) children, maybe a geopolitical briefing by an IDF expert. Possibly also some shopping – to help the Israeli economy, of course. But as the relationship between Israeli and American Jews grows more complex and, at the same time, more critical for the future of our people, it is increasingly important that we experience something well beyond this typical day.

Don’t get me wrong, aliya and assisting olim to build their homes in Israel is of strategic importance and will always be at the core of what Israel is about and the promise it holds for world Jewry. Security briefings and Jacques Friedman, and Rebecca and Jonathan Tipermas anticipate the excitement. Lay leadership role models including Honorary Chair Rita Edelston, whose vision and support sustain numerous programs in the community, and PJ Library chairs Alysia Berman, Penny Goffman, Allison Jackson, Stephanie Norton, Jessica Rickert and Cori SaNogueira will be recognized for their foundational work. Keynote speaker Bradley Sherman will share his personal story of the life-changing impact of UJA on his destiny.

“This Is Us” will take place at Arch Street Teen Center in Greenwich. Ticket pricing is $375 per person. To register and find further details, please visit uajjcc.org or call 203-552-1818.

Continued on page 5
PJ Library Mini-Seder

The annual PJ Library Mini-Seder was a big hit with little Israelites who traveled through Exodus, plagues and Seder traditions again this year. BIG THANKS to event Chairs: Kelly Wines Freishtat, Jessica Rickert, Jennifer Smokler Zigler.

J Babies Spring Excursion

At otter’s pond, hiking trails and furry critters populate the wilds of the Stamford Museum & Nature Center. Mother Nature never fails to impress, and the J Babies outing on Tuesday, May 1st is well worth the trip to enjoy the fruits of her labor. This program is for older siblings as well as infants, providing fresh air, sensory stimulation and outdoor adventure for all.

"J Babies melts the isolation that can often befall new – and experienced – moms, and it provides enrichment as they connect with new and old friends,” said Rebecca Cooper, who chairs the group’s spring excursion.

“We’ve planned a guided walk with a nature center expert to meet and touch the animals and see their newborns in the farm habitat. I think we will all enjoy the spring awakening at this wonderful center. It will be a nice outing for babies and bigger sibs as well as moms who always enjoy the social time together.”

$25 per family. Visit www.ujajcc.org for additional details and registration or contact Tracy Daniels at tracy@ujajcc.org or 203-552-1818.

Party in the Park!

Warm weather is on its way, and with it, PJ Library’s annual Party in the Park. This year’s alfresco adventure, chaired by Jamie Kesmodel, takes place on Wednesday, June 13, 10 – 11:30 am at Bruce Park on Museum Drive. For a bloom of fun, look no further than PiP’s mega playdate with age-appropriate activities for Pre-K children up to 5 years old and featuring Lizzie Swan, children’s rock artist and music educator from the award-winning Swingset Mamas and Hebrew Wizards Family Band. Little BFFs, parents, grandparents and guardians enjoy the welcoming community vibe that makes this a favorite on the Greenwich events calendar. The more the merrier for this park palooza. While there is no charge for families, RSVP’s are appreciated to help in planning. For more information and to RSVP go to www.ujajcc.org or contact Tracy Daniels at tracy@ujajcc.org or 203-552-1818.

PJ Library Story Time at Greenwich Library

PJ Library Story Time at Greenwich Library was a ton of fun for moms and kids! More than 70 children along with parents, grandparents and caregivers played together at the library over five sessions. In addition to familiar faces, a lot of new friends met at the program. Story Time Chairperson, Erika Brunwasser did a great job helping to create and promote this series. Our friends at Greenwich Library were welcoming hosts, and we are especially thankful to Deirdre Sullivan, Children’s Librarian, who helped with program concepts and participated as a guest reader. We are also thankful to guest readers Diane Holsten from Carmel Academy and newcomer Pavla Rosenstein.
The impact of your gift

Healing Trauma with Help from a Furry Friend

Five-year-old Guy has spent his entire young life in Ashkelon, an Israeli city only miles from the Gaza border. He knows what to do when sirens warning of incoming rockets wail – run to the nearest safe room as quickly as possible and hide. Two summers ago, when a rocket nearly destroyed his neighbor’s house, Guy was safe in a shelter. But witnessing the hit greatly shocked him. He became obsessed with a shrapnel fragment from the explosion. He burst into tears at the sound of each siren. Between alarms, he refused to leave the house or sleep in his own bed, clinging instead to his mother. He also became violent, throwing objects and even biting people.

These behaviors are typical of post-traumatic stress, a diagnosis shared by tens of thousands of children and adults in Israel’s South. To confront this epidemic head-on, Jewish Federations’ Stop the Sirens campaign has allocated millions of dollars to support intensive trauma and psychological counseling programs – like the innovative one that is now helping Guy recover.

Guy’s new best friend is Hibuki, a therapeutic puppy doll developed by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), a Federation partner agency. JDC’s therapists told Guy that Hibuki was scared and suffering. As Guy talked to Hibuki about its feelings, program therapists gained valuable insight into Guy’s own fears. “I am amazed to see the change that begins to take place once a child ‘adopts’ a Hibuki doll,” said Dr. Flora Mor, a JDC psychotherapist.

After a few days, Guy became significantly more relaxed, and his violent behavior decreased. He gave up the piece of shrapnel, began participating in activities and no longer clung to his mother. And as he continues healing, Hibuki will be a treasured companion. Hibuki is only one of the many valuable tools Federation partner agencies like JDC, The Jewish Agency for Israel, the Israel Trauma Coalition and others are using to help alleviate the impact of Operation Protective Edge.

Your gift to UJA-JCC Greenwich helps support our partner agency, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and programs such as this one.

Comedy Night

On Thursday, May 31, a duo of comics takes the stage in UJA-JCC Greenwich’s annual Comedy Night. Or make that a trio, if you count the emcee, Shaun Eli, who lined up both acts through “The Ivy League of Comedy” and whose own sharp observational humor has graced top venues including the Emelin Theatre.

Talia Reese and Myq Kaplan are the featured acts in this year’s humor show. No crazy detail of motherhood eludes the barbed wit of standup Reese. The former bankruptcy lawyer may be an unlikely candidate for a career in bar basements and midnight open mics, but that’s where she found her true calling. A regular “comedic” legal contributor to the Anthony Cumia Network, Reese has found her true calling. A regular “comedic” legal contributor to the Anthony Cumia Network, Reese has

Welcome Newcomers!

The Women’s Philanthropy Jewish Life and Education committee greeted Greenwich newcomers Pavla Rosenzweig, Emily Brenner Kafka, Gaby Isman, Rita Teichner and Lori Paprin (not pictured) at the home of Women’s Philanthropy President, Silvina Knoll for coffee and kibitz in March. Committee members Bonnie Citron, Jaime Eisenberg, Suzanne Katz, Kim Sands, Madeline Simon and Christine Toback helped extend a hearty welcome! If you are aware of new individuals or families moving to town, please let us know. Call or email UJA-JCC Greenwich: 203-552-1818; Tracy@ujajcc.org.
Chabad of Greenwich Celebrates 21 Years at Its 2018 Gala

Chabad of Greenwich held its 21st annual gala on January 18 at The Field Club of Greenwich. More than 200 attendees enjoyed a night of cocktails, dinner and a live auction. The evening featured a Legacy Tribute to Elie Wiesel by his son Elisha Wiesel, and the annual Teen of the Year Award presentation to Juliette Wilder.

The Chabad of Greenwich Gala had much to celebrate! Over the past 21 years, Chabad burgeoned from a nascent synagogue into a leading educational and social organization serving hundreds of families in the Greenwich area. The strong, reciprocal financial support from the community suggests that Chabad can count on a strong, vibrant future, G-d willing.

“We owe the tremendous growth in Greenwich’s Chabad community to the men and women who have given their time and resources to make things happen,” remarked Rabbi Yossi Deren. “At our Gala, we pay tribute to all those individuals – in the form of an honor bestowed on those few who humbly take the stage each year.”

Elisha Wiesel, son of Marion and Elie, discussed the legacy of his esteemed father and shared many personal stories. Juliette Wilder, a junior at Greenwich High School, began with Chabad at age two when her parents enrolled her at the “Mini-Gan,” and then at Chabad Preschool and Hebrew School. This beautiful circle was closed when she returned to the Mini Gan as a Leader-in-Training and then as Counselor-in-Training. In addition, she assists Rebbetzin Chani Feldman with the weekly Children’s Program at Shabbat Services at the Chabad Community Center. Juliette is the Humanitarian Director of Chabad’s CT een Board and has joined the Friendship Circle of Fairfield County – a program for children with special needs – as a volunteer and as a member of the teen board. At Greenwich High School, Juliette serves as President of the Israel Club.

This year’s Gala Chairs – Romy and Joseph Cohen, Erica and Dennis D’antonio, Andrea and Ari Lefkovits, Desiree and David Miller, Yael and Josh Rosen, Jordan and Doug Sanders, Lisa Small and David Chas, Stacy and Jeff Young, and Jennifer and David Zigler – worked tirelessly not only to make it an exquisite, but also a financially successful event, through the live auction, tribute journal and giving tree, with proceeds benefiting Chabad of Greenwich’s Annual Fund for its community programming.

Chabad Lubavitch of Greenwich, a branch of the worldwide Chabad Lubavitch movement, welcomes people from all ages and backgrounds, and is based at The Chabad Center for Jewish Life at 75 Mason Street in Greenwich. Visit www.chabadgreenwich.org for information about programs and upcoming events.

Chabad Lubavitch of Greenwich Celebrates 21 Y ears at Its 2018 Gala

Hebrew Wizards Field Trip to Greenwich Historical Society to See Exhibit on The JEWS of GREENWICH
We started the morning at the Bedouin village of Kaabiyye, located in the Galilee. There we visited with The Jewish Agency’s Project TEN, also known as the “Jewish Peace Corps.” A flagship project founded in 2012, Project TEN brings together Jewish young adults from all over the world for an empowering Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) experience. Through volunteer work, service learning, and leadership development, Project TEN cultivates a network of Jewish social activists committed to Jewish identity, Jewish values, and action-driven change.

We met with Rajah, the principal of the Bedouin school and his deputy, Jamal; with Walla, the English Director; with Faiz, the founder of the "Gate to Humanity" program; with Naama, the Director of TEN in nearby Harduf; and with the volunteers, who hail from the United States and Germany. Rajah and Jamal shared with us the challenges and difficulties their community experiences on the one hand, and how proud they are of the achievements of the children and the school and the warm relationships they enjoy with Jewish schools in the region on the other.

Especially moving was meeting Walla, the English Director. A young Bedouin woman, she related the concerns that went through her mind as she was considering first accepting Project TEN volunteers several years ago. Would they fit in? Would the community accept them? Would they accept the community? Now, she says, she cannot imagine the school without them. When she sees the Jewish volunteers from abroad with the children, tears come to her eyes and she believes that there truly is hope yet for world peace and peace in Israel. For her, she says, this is real Tikun Olam.

With this deep sense of hope, we left Kaabiyye and drove to Tivon, a nearby Jewish community, where we met with Shelley Kedar, until recently Vice President at Hillel International and responsible for the 80 Jewish Agency Israel Campus Fellows serving Jewish students on American college campuses, and now the newly-appointed director charged with founding The Jewish Agency’s Shlichut Institute. Shelley rapidly described the major challenges faced by American college students and the role of the Israel Fellows on campus, including their positioning aimed at bridging the growing divide between their parents’ and grandparents’ perceptions of Israel and their own perceptions today. Shelley shared the vision for the Shlichut Institute, as formulated by Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky – to offer the highest level of training aimed at developing a community of excellent shlichut practitioners who will contribute to building Jewish communities of practice. The Institute will infuse shlichut with cutting-edge tools, training, and content that will enable these emissaries to attract Jews wherever they may be in order to develop a meaningful relationship with Israel.

While reflecting on this inspiring concept of Jewish communities of practice, we drove back to Jerusalem to meet with Shadi, the Director of Youth Futures in Eastern Jerusalem. Founded by The Jewish Agency in 2006, Youth Futures empowers youth and families in underserved Israeli communities through an innovative model that matches professional mentors with local children and families. The program currently includes 12,000 children, teens, and their families in 36 locations across Israel, serving the country’s Jewish (both secular and Haredi), Bedouin, Muslim, Christian, and Druze communities. Mentors coordinate a variety of services and interventions for children and families, enabling them to make significant personal strides during their three to five years of participation.

The meeting with Shadi was perhaps the most atypical and thought-provoking. Shadi openly shared the complexities of life for a self-proclaimed Palestinian Muslim Arab, who lives with his wife and two children in a small village on the outskirts of eastern Jerusalem, leaving home each day at 4 AM to avoid the long lines of the security checkpoint while going to work for, yes, The Jewish Agency for Israel. He recounted the basic challenges his community faces and the great assistance he feels Youth Futures offers, the very real impact it has on residents’ lives, and how the program also empowers the community and mentors and trains them to be change-makers. He said that the national program staff, all Jewish, always have his back, and that, despite tensions between Israeli and Palestinians, he never experiences discrimination with Youth Futures. All these factors add up to the reasons he chose to work for The Jewish Agency and are why he believes so strongly in what he does.

By the time Bryanna and I left Shadi, the sun had set, and we felt that we had truly spent the day visiting different Israels. We tried to sum up our experiences and consider how we fit into the story. What role can we play together with the shining, hopeful eyes of Walla, the English director at the Bedouin school; the smart and strategic eyes of Shelly, the founding director of the Shlichut Institute; and the wise, weathered eyes of Shadi, the director of Youth Futures? Part of the answer, it seems, is to do what Jewish people have done for millennia: tell the story, share it, and make sure it is heard and known, so that each of us can take our part in it. Because no matter how different and atypical parts of it may be, “this is us!”

The Jewish Agency is funded by Jewish Federations across America, including UJA-JCC Greenwich.
Carmel Academy Awarded Two STEM Grants

Carmel Academy has been awarded two STEM grants, both of which will directly support hands-on, project-based classroom learning. In February, the Toshiba America Foundation awarded Carmel Academy a grant to enhance the Greenwich school's 3D printing technology curriculum. “This grant enhances our ability to teach the design process while offering students additional choices in solving problems using technology,” said Carmel Academy’s Technology Coordinator Andy Greenspan. “The funding enables Carmel to purchase an additional 3D printer for our technology lab, as well as the ability to expand our school’s STEM project-based learning curriculum.”

According to the Toshiba America, its foundation funds grants that support projects designed by individual classroom teachers. This “direct-to-teacher” approach brings immediate results as teachers are able to change the way they teach science, technology, engineering, and mathematics since the grant supports equipment for hands-on experiments and inquiry-based approaches to the curriculum.

In addition to the technology grant, Carmel Academy’s engineering teachers were accepted into the Science Coaches program, an educational outreach initiative jointly sponsored by the American Chemical Society and American Association of Chemistry Teachers. As part of acceptance into the program, Carmel was awarded a grant to enhance classroom learning for the school’s eighth grade engineering course. The grant will fund hands-on lab experiments ranging from rocketry to acid rain exploration, as well as support the students as they build Rube Goldberg machines, Engineering Teacher Darren Bahar explained.

Hebrew Wizard Students Awarded Scholarship

Hebrew Wizards proudly completes our 2-Year Grant from Legacy Heritage to promote intergenerational friendships. Wizards Better2B Program begins in the Fall of 2018 to include all community service.

Hebrew Wizards students Spencer Langweil, 14, and Stella Frankel, 12, were awarded scholarship funding for a future trip to Israel as winners of an essay contest on their Better Together experience.

Registration Is Open for Chabad Preschool 2018/2019

Chabad Preschool offers a top quality educational environment where your child’s individuality is valued and nurtured. At Chabad Preschool, your child is offered a comprehensive curriculum that includes reading readiness, STEM, social studies, music and movement, and art experiences. In addition, we expose the children to a rich and meaningful Jewish Program consisting of holidays, traditions and the Hebrew alphabet and language. We teach our curriculum through developmentally appropriate activities and creative play.

New for 2018/2019:
• Two additional new classrooms.
• Full Day/Full Year Option
7:30 am to 5:30 pm.
We have decided to offer this program to our community due to the rising demand for longer coverage among families in town. Chabad is excited to launch this much needed program in our thriving Jewish Community!

Chabad Preschool offers classes to children 14 months through Pre K. If you would like additional information about our wonderful preschool, or if you would like to schedule a tour, please contact Maryashie Deren, Director at 203-629-9059, maryashie@chabadgreenwich.org, admissions@chabadgreenwich.org or ganofgreenwich.org.

Hebrew Wizards proudly completes our 2-Year Grant from Legacy Heritage to promote intergenerational friendships. Wizards Better2B Program begins in the Fall of 2018 to include all community service.
How to Deal with BDS: Divide - Unite - and Conquer

by Rabbi Yozi Deren, Chabad of Greenwich

The anti-Israel movement is a critical challenge that faces the parent of every college-age student and is of obvious concern to all members of the Jewish community. Numerous initiatives have been launched in order to combat this insidious attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the Jewish State. These anti-Israel efforts through Boycott Divestment Sanctions Against Israel (BDS) on college campuses today are an evil assault on the minds, the hearts and the souls of our most vulnerable demographic, our youth. Our enemies have chosen this demographic as their target not only for its vulnerability but also for its importance, because today’s college students are the ones who will play a significant role in shaping the future of the people and the land of Israel.

All initiatives to fight this poison – including Greenwich’s very own “Galvanize” – should be applauded and supported.

To that end, here are my “2 cents” on ways to deal effectively with this critical issue. Actually, “3 cents”:

1) Divide – pinpoint the problem.

Jews have always had enemies who seek to destroy us and by the grace of G-d, we always prevail over them. Those enemies, who are the origin and the instigators of this current anti-Israel BDS storm against the Jewish People, will end up on the ash heap of history if we’re facing today, is how it is in the anti-Israel camp having insidiously co-opted the Jewish values of peace and compassion. Our kids are being told that they should join the anti-Israel movement precisely because of their Jewish identity – and a Jewish identity that is based on a shallow understanding of Judaism cannot withstand such a challenge. This is the tragedy! And so our children are divided between those who give in to this charade and those who cannot bring themselves to do so. But divided they are, all because of the lack of depth in their Jewish identity.

2) Unite – as Jews.

Jewish youth are not only vulnerable because they are youth, but also because they are Jewish. Embedded in the spiritual DNA of a Jew is the desire to foster peace, to express compassion for the needy and to uplift the downtrodden. Yet there is something so deep and profound in the Golden Rule as it is expressed in the Torah, which eludes too many of us Jews. “Ve’ahavta Le’reiacha Kamocha – Love your Fellow as You Love Yourself”.

It’s not enough to love your fellow. There needs to be a broader premise and platform without which your love for your fellow will not thrive, and that is love for yourself. If you don’t know who you are, if you don’t appreciate your own strengths, if you’re not aware of your personal and national history, then it’s difficult to deal with someone else.

How can we ask our children to face down a threat to their identity, when they’re not even familiar with what that identity really is, where it comes from and what it means? When questions and challenges are posed about Israel and Judaism – especially challenges from a fellow Jew – and our children do not have an answer, their very identity as a Jew is threatened. Then one of two things happen: either that child retreats from the confrontation, or they cross the line and step into the waiting arms of the anti-Israel camp.

We don’t help our children by trying to give them specific answers to particular questions about Israel because there is no way to anticipate every challenge that might be posed by the Israel-haters. And more importantly, the real problem is that answers may sometimes not even help. For the true threat that we face in this issue is not in the accusations per se currently being lodged against Israel, as much as it is in the anti-Israel camp having insidiously co-opted the Jewish values of peace and compassion. Our kids are being told that they should join the anti-Israel movement precisely because of their Jewish identity – and a Jewish identity that is based on a shallow understanding of Judaism cannot withstand such a challenge. This is the tragedy! And so our children are divided between those who give in to this charade and those who cannot bring themselves to do so. But divided they are, all because of the lack of depth in their Jewish identity.

We will bring our children back and keep our children together and united only when we start providing them with a serious understanding of what it means to be a Jew. (We have the gift of Torah to share with the world!) And what the land of Israel truly means to the Jewish people. (G-d actually gave it to us!).

3) Conquer – peacefully.

The beauty of arming our children with an identity that is based on real knowledge of our heritage and deep appreciation of our history is that for the most part, the “confrontation” is removed from the picture. Not only will our Jewish and non-Jewish friends grow closer to us, but even our enemies will back off.

“Non-Jews are proud of Jews who are proud of Judaism, and they are embarrassed of Jews who are embarrassed of Judaism,” says Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

Editor’s Note: The rabbis of Greenwich alternate in providing messages for each issue of the Greenwich Jewish News. These comments are those of the Rabbi alone and are not meant to reflect the opinions of UJA-JCC Greenwich.
Co-chairs Meredith and David Cohen and Nicole and Daniel Sobelsohn announced that prominent leaders of the Connecticut Jewish community will be honored for their commitment to Jewish education and their dedication to community service at the Bi-Cultural Day School Celebration Dinner on the evening of May 6 at the Hilton Stamford Hotel. In addition to the evening’s Guests of Honor, Linda and Leonard Russ, the Stamford school will present Larry Rezak with the BCDS Community Service Award, Craig L. Price with its Young Leadership Award, and Dr. Pamela Schaffer with the Alumni Award.

The gala evening will also honor Pia Walker with the Jane Shoztik Memorial Award, presented annually to an outstanding member of staff.

Long after the graduation of their children from Bi-Cultural, dinner Guests of Honor Linda and Leonard Russ have remained highly engaged in the leadership positions at Bi-Cultural, as well as other Jewish community organizations. Currently serving as vice president of the Bi-Cultural Board of Directors, Linda is also a past president of the Jewish Federation of Westport-Weston-Wilton-Norwalk.

Since arriving in Stamford 45 years ago, Larry Rezak, the recipient of the Community Service Award, has been dedicated to building and sustaining Jewish organizations and agencies. In addition to being a generous donor to myriad Jewish organizations and other worthy causes, he continues to take an active, hands-on role in helping to raise funds for Stamford’s communal organizations.

Craig L. Price, recipient of the Young Leadership Award is surrounded by BCDS students, past and present: His wife, Randi Leferman Price is a Bi-Cultural alum, and his children, are currently students at the school. Craig, a partner with the real estate law firm of Belkin Burden Wenig & Goldman, LLP, is a graduate of the Behrend Institute for Leadership. At BCDS, he has served for the past several years as “Director of Dads” for the Parent’s Association Board.

Dr. Pamela Schaffer Singer, recipient of the Alumni Award, is a 1994 graduate of BCDS. She has a degree from Albert Einstein College of Medicine, as well as a Masters in clinical research. Pamela is a pediatric nephrologist practicing at Cohen Children’s Medical Center as well as medical director of its pediatric kidney transplant program.

Pia Walker is the recipient of the Jane Shoztik Memorial Award, presented annually to a member of the BCDS staff in recognition of his or her dedicated service to the school community. Pia, head of the Bi-Cultural office, attended Greenwich High School and the Berkeley Secretarial School. She lives in Greenwich, with her husband, John.

For more information on the Bi-Cultural Celebration Dinner contact Rachel Cohen at rcohen@bcds.org or 203-329-2186.

**JHSC's Ari Lieberman Recipient of Early Engagement Exemplar Award from AIPAC**

The Jewish High School of Connecticut (JHSC) is delighted to announce that Israel Advocacy Club advisor Ari Lieberman received the Early Engagement Exemplar Award at AIPAC’s annual policy conference in March. The award is in recognition of the work that Ari has done with our students in building an Israel advocacy presence at JHSC. Under Ari Lieberman’s watch the group has brought in an amazing group of speakers, such as Congressman Ted Deutch and Dr. David Luchins.

One year after working with a handful of students to create the Israel Advocacy Club at the school, JHSC sent 16 students to the annual AIPAC policy conference, up from the three students the school sent last year.

The students gained a great deal of knowledge at the AIPAC policy conference and had the chance to speak with their congressional delegation about the need for full support of Israel in the highest levels of American government.

It’s efforts like these that are the reason Ari, and his wife Rica, will be honored with the Keter Shem Tov award at this year’s JHSC Spring Gala. The Keter Shem Tov award is in recognition of all the hard work that the honorees perform in support of the greater community. Congratulations to Ari Lieberman on his Early Engagement Exemplar Award from AIPAC.
A Reflection on the Interfaith Mission to Israel

by Lori Baden, Associate Executive Director of Temple Sholom

I recently returned from a 10-day group trip to Israel led by Rabbi Mitchell M. Hurvitz of Temple Sholom and The Rev. Dr. James Lemler, formerly of Christ Church Greenwich. The purpose of the trip was to offer our participants an Interfaith view of Israel, and show how and where the two religions intersect. Our group of 35 participants included kids, teens and adults.

Our journey took us to three main areas of the country; the Upper Galilee including Mt. Bental and the Golan Heights; the bustling modern city of Tel Aviv; and Jerusalem, the center of three world religions. One of the most interesting Interfaith sites was Capernaum where there was a 5th century synagogue side-by-side with a unique octagonal church from the Byzantine era that was used as a place of worship by the first Christians. This was a very visible reminder of how close Christianity's roots are to Judaism.

In Jerusalem, we visited both Jewish and Christian Quarters and learned about life during the 2nd Temple Period. A highlight was a visit to the Kotel on Shabbat where both the Christians and Jews in our group shared prayers of peace.

Together, we floated in the Dead Sea, celebrated a bat mitzvah on Masada and visited the cooperative town of Neve Shalom – a place where Jews and Arabs live together. We listened to an Arab woman talk about her hope being placed in the hands of children, who are growing up among those who are different from them. Two of her children attend a Christian school, and all four of her children attend a Jewish summer camp.

Our trip ended in Tel Aviv where we explored St. Peter's Church in Jaffa and relived the exciting moments of the declaration of the State of Israel at Independence Hall. While I’ve been to Israel before, there is something unique about travelling as part of an Interfaith group. Rabbi Mitch and Rev. Lemler were able to compare and contrast our separate religious traditions and visually show us where our roots come from. On the last night, we went around the room and asked each participant what their favorite part of the trip was. By and large the Interfaith aspect of the trip was the overall highlight.

Spring Speaker Series at Greenwich Reform

Monday, April 23, 7-9 pm: Meeting with Israeli IDF officers

The primary goal of the JCC Tzahal Shalom program is to deepen mutual understanding and strengthen the unity of the Jewish people. You’ll have a chance to meet several officers, learn about their jobs in the army, hear what life is like in the Israel Defense Forces, and ask any questions you may have. During their Connecticut visit, these young officers visit area high schools and colleges, Jewish day schools, synagogues, and senior centers.

Friday May 18, Shabbat dinner at 6 pm, 7 pm: Shabbat service with guest speaker Mark Oppenheimer

Back by popular demand, Mark Oppenheimer, former religion editor for The New York Times, current editor-at-large for Tablet magazine, and host of the popular podcast Unorthodox, will lead a lively discussion of his next book, an argument of thinking of Judaism not as a religion or nation, tribe or ethnicity, but as an extended family. If you missed Mark on his first visit to Greenwich Reform, save the date for his return engagement!

Bi-Cultural Brings Mindfulness to the Classroom

Last year, Emily Tully came up with an idea to help her 5th-grade students at Stamford’s Bi-Cultural Day School improve their classroom focus by reducing their levels of stress and making them less anxious, more confident human beings. For the energetic, upbeat secular studies teacher, the solution was obvious: introduce into the classroom the practice of Mindfulness – a series of techniques that foster a non-judgmental, in-the-moment self-awareness of one’s thoughts, feelings and surrounding environment. The practice of Mindfulness, when applied to children, not only improves focus, lowers anxiety, mitigates the effects of bullying, enhances well-being and social skills.

“Mindfulness is an approach to being a full ‘human,’” explains Ms. Tully, who in addition to being a fifth-grade teacher at Bi-Cultural is also a certified Mindfulness and yoga instructor. “It’s an approach to understanding what is going on inside so that we can react less and respond more. It gives you greater clarity. You understand yourself more, and you understand situations with more of a big-picture view.”

Ms. Tully set out to introduce into the classroom age-appropriate mindfulness practices for students. Among them: guided meditation, mindfulness breathing, a visual four-color chart called a “Mood Meter” that helps children identify, process and manage their own emotions, and a Glitter Globe that illustrates for children how strong emotions left un-checked can cloud your thoughts.

The practice of Mindfulness in Bi-Cultural’s 5th-grade classroom was so successful last year, that this year administrators expanded the Mindfulness curriculum to also include grades 1 through 4, with Ms. Tully leading the program.
ADULT EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

CARL AND DOROTHY BENNETT CENTER FOR JUDAIC STUDIES

Annual Holocaust Remembrance Service
Featured speaker: Esther Glazoh, survivor of Auschwitz & Bergen-Belsen
Thursday, April 12, 4:30 p.m – Egan Chapel of St. Ignatius Loyola

CARMEL ACADEMY

Parsha for Parents
Monday, May 7, 9:30 am – 270 Lake Ave., Greenwich

CHABAD OF GREENWICH

Sunday Morning Torah Study – 9:30-10:30 am
Email RabbiFeldman@ChabadGreenwich.org for information.
Parsha with Classic Commentaries – Thursdays, 9:45-10:45 am
Chassidic Philosophy Class – Shabbat, 8:30-9:30 am

Women’s Torah Study Group:
Gleanings from the Torah on Family and Marriage Relationships
Led by Mrs. Maryashie Deren
Wednesdays: 9:30-10:30 am

Yom Hazikaron
With Moshe Avital
Tuesday, April 17, 6:30 pm – 75 Mason Street, Greenwich

JLI Class
“What is? Rethinking everything you know about the universe”
With Rabbi Feldman
6 Tuesdays, Beginning April 24 – 9:30 am and 7:30 pm

GREENWICH REFORM

Ethical Issues in Judaism
With Rabbi Robert Rothman – Sundays, 10:00 am

Spring Speaker Series:
Meeting with IDF Officers
Monday, April 23, 7:00 pm
Shabbat service with Guest Speaker Mark Oppenheimer
Friday, May 18, 6:00 pm

To register for these free classes, call 203-629-0018 or email info@grs.org

JEYISH FAMILY SERVICES OF GREENWICH

Stand Up for JFS
A Night of Comedy with Dave Siegel
Saturday, April 26, 7:00 pm – Greenwich Reform, 92 Orchard St., Cos Cob

TEMPLE SHOLOM

Shabbat Study with Temple Sholom Clergy – Saturdays, 9:00-10:00 am
Lunch & Learn – Tuesdays, 12:00-1:00 pm
Kosher lunch provided. ”Lunch ’n Learn’ will not meet on May 8.

Are American Jews Losing Their Identity?
With Dr. Richard Rubin
Tuesday, May 8, 7:00 pm
RSVP required to Alice Schoen 203-542-7165 or alice.schoen@templesholom.com

Jewish Meditation
Refresh, sing, chant, reflect and meditate during this spiritual experience.
Wednesday, May 9, 7:00-8:00 pm
For more information, contact Rabbi Chaya at rabbichaya@templesholom.com.

Are you considering taking a class or attending a lecture this Spring?
Look no further!
Here is a list of what’s going on right here in the Greater Greenwich Jewish Community.

On a Silver Platter: The Birth of an Iconic Text
Rachel Korazim, PhD..................................................April 19

The Great Debate About Shavuot
Rabbi Levi Mendelow..................................................April 26

And You Thought Kabbalah Was Mysticism! Part I
Ze’ev Aviezer..............................................................May 3

And You Thought Kabbalah Was Mysticism! Part II
Ze’ev Aviezer.............................................................May 10

A Visual Harvest
Artist Avner Moriah..................................................May 17

Golda Meir, the Lioness
Eleanor Ehrenkranz, PhD ........................................May 24

From Servitude to Redemption
Job Jindo, PhD..........................................................May 31

Life Values from the Talmud & Reflected in Contemporary Heroes
Rabbi Eric Hoffman....................................................June 7

The Experience at Sinai: Learners, Teachers & Torah
Jonathan Fass..............................................................June 14

My Role as a Responsible Jew
Rabbi Simha Berger..................................................June 21

Hidden Meanings of the First Week of Creation
Diane M. Sharon, Ph.D..............................................June 28

Sponsored by Rita Edelston

36th Annual Yom HaShoah Commemoration
With Guest Speaker Holocaust Survivor Dr. Manfred Simon
Wednesday, April 11, Film Screening 6:30 pm, Observance 7:00 pm
Greenwich Reform, 92 Orchard Street, Cos Cob

Hot Topics in Breast Cancer
Breakfast and Panel Discussion
Wednesday, April 25, 9:30 am
Old Oaks Country Club, 3100 Purchase St., Purchase, NY

Davis Film Festival – Bow Tie Cinema Greenwich, 7:00 pm, $15 per film
“The Human Resources Manager,” a comedy drama from Israel
Wednesday, May 16
“The Last Suit,” a bittersweet road movie about family, friends and honor
Wednesday, June 13

Check UJA-JCC Greenwich calendar for updated schedule
Education Symposium, February 2018
Embracing Change with Gidi Grinstein, February 2018

Sunday Fundays, February 2018
"How does he do it?" That's the first question people ask when they see Daniel Harel perform. The Israel mentalist regularly pulls off seemingly impossible feats, so it's only fitting that he's the featured act at the upcoming Yom HaAtzmaut salute.

This year's a big one. Presented by UJA-JCC Greenwich, chaired by Brant and Stuart Berni, Lisa Small and David Chass, and Dassi and Noah Yechiely. The event marks 70 years of Israeli statehood. Israel @ 70 will rally the entire Jewish community on Sunday, April 22, 3:30 – 5 pm at Carmel Academy, (270 Lake Avenue).

As in previous Israeli Independence Day celebrations, the 2018 event will include traditional rites. In addition to flag raising, a highlight of the observance for more than three decades, celebrants can expect appearances by local officials, and a performance by The Klezmerband Youth Ensemble from the Yizrael-Gilboa Music School in our sister city in Israel.

Next Harel will engage the crowd. Children age 7 and up and adults alike are invited to participate in his interactive brand of mental magic that has earned him the nickname of a modern Sherlock Holmes. It has also brought him star power as the host of his own television special Deductive Mind Reading and live performances.

As if inspired by Herzl's dictum about the Jewish State – “If you will it, it’s no dream” – Harel, with his pioneer spirit, bridges the gap between reality and fiction. Kids ages 3-6 are invited to their own Mini-Israel Celebration with age-appropriate activities nearby.

Raffle tickets will be available online in advance and at the event. The raffle includes a chance to win a week's stay in Hertzlia Pituach, Israel, a sunset harbor cruise, an Israeli food and wine gift basket, and much more. Winners will be announced at the event.

RSVP required. Additional information about the Yom HaAtzmaut program can be found at ujajcc.org or by contacting 203-552-1818.
Creating a safe haven for at-risk youth has informed the mission of Kfar Silver Youth Village since its founding in 1957. The educational and agricultural center near Ashkelon originally served junior and high school students who had arrived from the Diaspora in the early years of the Jewish State. In the decades that followed, Kfar Silver consistently implemented game-changing programs for children, and Greenwich Women’s Philanthropy has had a hand in supporting its endeavors.

Two years ago, Claudine Cohen, a Women’s Philanthropy board member, visited Israel with her husband David Rabins, and the couple headed to the Negev village. Having successfully nurtured another initiative – funding PJ Library enrollment for 150 children in the care of the Emunah Children’s Center in Afula – they were excited to take on a new project.

They had their work cut out for them. Today 630 students call the 1,500-acre campus home and thrive on its progressive philosophy. But there’s more to the southern eden than meets the eye. Most of Kfar Silver’s young residents come from very low socio-economic backgrounds, and many are orphans, children of broken homes and immigrants who have fled persecution abroad, mainly from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union. Without the school’s crucial intervention, these disadvantaged and at-risk youth would be left behind, widening the gap between the have and the have nots in today’s technology-driven society.

“Education is the backbone of everything,” Cohen tells Greenwich Jewish News. With her more than 20 years of business experience, including as current Principal in CohnReznick’s Transaction Advisory Practice serving public and private companies in the U.S. and around the world, she has made Kfar Silver a recipient of her know-how and philanthropy.

Part of the appeal was to help children in need while also giving our own children the foundations for good values,” says the Greenwich mom of two Solomon Schechter pupils, ages 7 and 9. “Our kids have a lot,” she notes, underscoring the importance of expanding their social awareness through visits to the likes of Emunah Village and Kfar Silver. “It resonated with them,” she reports with a hint of nachas.

Now Cohen is exploring ways for others to become involved. “A lot of kids want to donate part of their Bar-Mitzvah or Bat-Mitzvah gifts,” says Cohen. “We’re hoping that some of our friends whose kids are coming are of age will also want to support Kfar Silver. It’s not just a matter of money: You can go and see it.”

And there’s much to see. Students manage their own zoo, dog rescue shelter, greenhouses, swimming pool, sports stadium and computer lab, among other assets. Kfar Silver is the latest of six youth villages in Israel to benefit from the World ORT Kadima Mada initiative to galvanize science and technology education in Israel.

“David and I are both familiar with ORT from South Africa,” explains Cohen. “He had a scholarship from ORT, and now we have a way to give back.”

For more information, contact Tracy Daniels at 203-552-1818 or tracy@ujajcc.org.

ORT is supported by Jewish Federations across America, including UJA-JCC Greenwich. This is an opportunity to make an additional gift to a project for youth at risk in Israel.
The new home of Greenwich Reform features a large movie screen that drops down from the sanctuary ceiling. Monthly movie nights include evenings for both kids and adults.

Family movie nights start at 5:30 pm with pizza for the kids, and wine and cheese for the adults, followed by Havdalah, led by Rabbi Jordie, and then the movie – typically an animated feature with a Jewish theme. Kids love to come in their pajamas and spread their sleeping bags on the sanctuary floor.

The adult movie starts at 6:30 pm and ends around 8:00 pm; afterwards, many folks meet at a local restaurant to discuss the film and relax. An award-winning Israeli film will be screened on Saturday evening, April 21: An Israeli intelligence agent is assigned to befriend the grandchildren of a Nazi war criminal, but the movie is really about life and people, forgiving and forgetting, and accepting people from other countries and differing sexual orientation.

For upcoming dates and movies, contact GRS at 203-629-0018 or info@GRS.org.

**TEMPLE SHOLOM NURSERY SCHOOL TO GROW STEAM PROGRAM**

Things are going to look a lot greener at the Temple Sholom Selma Maisel Nursery School this April when we will be adding a new garden to expand our current STEAM program to outside the classroom.

The new 8’ x 8’ raised garden bed, constructed by nursery school parent volunteers, will serve as another sensory-rich space to promote student inquiry, dialogue and critical thinking.

Throughout the school year, children in the 3’s and Pre-K have had the opportunity to participate in an after-school Gardening Club led by teachers Deidre Flood, Catherine Granelli and Debbie Dee. Topics such as climate, worm composting, propagating plants, and gardening in cold weather have been covered, and the children have documented their observations and experiences in a journal.

“It has been fun watching the children's interest in the garden expand,” said Flood, the school’s incoming Assistant Director effective in September. “The children have even told us about how they have started their own small plants at home using the same techniques we use in the Gardening Club.”

David Cohen, Nursery School Director, added, “They will get to see how food goes from farm to table and will learn to share the fruits of their labor.”

Registration for the 2018-2019 school year is underway. For more information, contact David Cohen at 203-622-8121 or david.cohen@templesholom.com.

**GREENWICH REFORM PRESENTS:**

**SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES!**

The new home of Greenwich Reform features a large movie screen that drops down from the sanctuary ceiling. Monthly movie nights include evenings for both kids and adults.

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**Nancie K. Schwarzman**

Fine Homes Specialist
136 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, CT 06830
Bus 203.869.0500 Direct 203.637.6225
Cell 203.233.7572 Fax 203.869.7055
Email nschwarzman@bhhsone.com

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY | New England Properties

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**Wizards Classes**

**For All Ages**

- **Mini Wizards ages 3-5**
- **Wizards I ages 6-7**
- **Wizards II ages 8-12**
- **Mitzvah Wizards ages 12-13**
- **Teen Wizards ages 13+**

**Better Together Teen Program**
Saturday Monthly 11am-12pm

**Adult Education and Conversion Classes**

**Shir Fun @ Shir Ami**

holidays and events all year
INTERFAITH CONVERSATIONS
Open Discussions about the Joys & Challenges of Interfaith Living
Everybody Welcome!

Join our Conversation about the opportunities and challenges of interfaith living. We gather in private homes once a month to explore the interfaith life experience. We make friends, discuss tricky situations with in-laws, share thoughts and feelings about children and family, learn about the holidays, eat delicious food, and laugh an awful lot. Uncensored, non-judgmental, frank and uplifting.

For more information, contact Lisa-Loraine Smith at 203-622-1881 or llsmith@jfsgreenwich.org.

SPECIAL DONATIONS to JFS

In Memory of:
Rupert Belkin, by Phyllis Shapiro and Marty Flashner
Rita Hoffman, by Sally and Larry Schneider
Rita Hoffman, by Rita Edelston

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 in their honor/memory.

Every Friday at 1:00 pm
At the Greenwich Hospital Chapel

Shabbat Shalom

Jewish Family Services of Greenwich and Greenwich Hospital Spiritual Care Department
Invite you to join us for
Kabbalat Shabbat Services
With
Joan Mann, JFS Spiritual Care Counselor
Barbara Salop, JFS Bikur Cholim Volunteer
Rabbi MJ Newman, Greenwich Hospital Chaplain

Working Moms – Can We Have It All?

Frank discussions about the joys and challenges of being a mother who works, takes care of the children, and manages the household.


Get to know new friends and make lasting connections with women who understand what it’s like to be a working mom. Meeting in private homes or at local restaurants, we explore this unique juggling act. We discuss tricky situations with child care, share thoughts and feelings about children and family, eat delicious food, and laugh!

Check our website for upcoming events. www.jfsgreenwich.org
JEWISH FAMIL Y SERVICES OF GREENWICH

Introducing…
Jewish Forties and Fifties (JFF)

Want to get to know other Jewish singles in their 40’s and 50’s?
We’ve had events at happy hours, bowling alleys, restaurants and community service projects.

Meet, mingle, eat, drink, relax, kibitz, and enjoy the company of other like-minded people.

Be sure not to miss any of our events!

If you would like to be on our mailing list, please contact Lisa Smith, LCSW, ilsmit@jfsgreenwich.org.

Life is constantly changing…
with our support, you are never alone.

PARENTS OF LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER OR QUESTIONING (LGBTQ) CHILDREN

This group is for parents who are dealing with any stage of their family member’s coming out process. Together, in a safe and confidential environment, we explore the tumultuous process of accepting, understanding, and celebrating your children and their LGBTQ identities.

Wednesdays, Noon-1:00 pm
At JFS, One Holly Hill Lane, Greenwich
Facilitated by Lisa-Lorraine Smith, LCSW

To register and for more information, contact Lisa-Lorraine Smith, LCSW at llsmith@jfsgreenwich.org or call 203-622-1881.

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES OF GREENWICH PRESENTS

STAND UP FOR JFS a night of comedy
special guest Dave Siegel

RESERVE YOUR TICKETS NOW! April 26th • 7pm
© THE GREENWICH REFORM SYNAGOGUE
92 Orchard Street • Cos Cob, CT • jfsgreenwich.org/tickets/

Please join us

SUPERMARKETING FOR SENIORS is proud to announce:

• We are developing 3-day emergency supply kits for all of our shopping clients, to help them manage at home in the aftermath of a severe weather event.
• We are obtaining reusable shopping bags for all of our clients in response to the new Greenwich mandate eliminating plastic shopping bags.
• On Sunday, June 10, at grocery stores and other select locations around Greenwich, volunteers will once again educate members of the community about our shopping services, and sign up volunteer shoppers, at the 4th “Supermarketing for Seniors Celebrates Grandparents” Day.

If you or a senior you know needs help managing grocery shopping, or if you would like to become a volunteer shopper, please reach out to Supermarketing for Seniors program director, Elyse Brown, at 203-622-1881, or ebrown@jfsgreenwich.org.

Introducing…
Jewish Forties and Fifties (JFF)
Bi-Cultural Students Bring Hope to Their Peers in Parkland, Florida

Like so many people across the country, the students at Bi-Cultural Day School in Stamford were stunned and saddened by the senseless shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, that left 17 students and teachers dead.

“It is impossible to comprehend the genesis of events so horrific. We simply cannot fathom the unfathomable. Words fail us,” Bi-Cultural Head of School Jacqueline Herman wrote in a letter to Bi-Cultural families. The Stamford students were so moved by their grieving peers that they determined to bring a ray of light to the Parkland students and their families. And so, the day after the shooting, under the guidance of third-grade teacher Beth Fritz and middle school teacher Adriane Robinson, the Bi-Cultural student council contacted Stars of Hope, an organization that empowers children to bring hope to those in need through the power of art and messages of healing. Adopting the Stars of Hope program, the students’ first project was to paint inspirational words and works of art on wooden stars provided by the organization. The Stars of Hope were then sent to the Parkland students. Following this experience, students also decided to become part of the organization’s “Pay it Forward” service, which sends their message of healing and hope around the world.

“The goal is for our entire student body and staff to feel empowered by helping communities around the world in need of hope,” explained Fritz. “The world needs more ‘pay it forward’ acts of kindness, and we’re so proud that our Bi-Cultural students have taken it upon themselves to help lift the spirits of thousands of people in their time of need.”

Bi-Cultural 8th-grader Ruthie Price paints a Star of Hope to send to the students at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.

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Welcome to Greenwich!

WE’D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We are delighted to welcome and introduce you to Greenwich. If you know of newcomers in town who would like to learn more about our vibrant and exciting Jewish community, please contact us at 203-552-1818.

We will extend a hearty “Welcome!”

Bonnie Citron, Chair, UJA-JCC Greenwich Newcomer Committee

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Carmel Academy Student Qualifies for State Geography Bee
8th Grader Has Near Perfect Score for Second Year

Which of these countries does not border the Indian Ocean: Tanzania, Indonesia or Uzbekistan? What state straddles the Tropic of Cancer – Hawaii or Alaska? These are the types of challenging questions Carmel Academy students answered as part of the 2018 National Geography Bee, an annual competition organized by the National Geographic Society that is designed to inspire students’ curiosity about the world.

For the second year in a row, Carmel Academy eighth grader Ben Taffet won the school championship, answering 103 of the bee’s 105 questions correctly. His near-perfect score earned him a spot at the State Geography Bee, which is being held at Central Connecticut State University in April. Ben will compete for the state title and the chance to head to Washington D.C., in May, where the winner from each state will vie for a $50,000 scholarship to college and the glory of being the National Geographic Bee Champion.

Ben’s win was closely followed by his brother, Micah, a Carmel sixth-grader who answered 91 questions correctly. The brothers have a shared passion for geography and participate in the school’s Middle School geography elective. “Geography is very interesting, I really like learning about new places, especially cities,” said Micah, adding that learning about geography spans politics, science, history, nature and culture. “The study of geography is important. It is critical to learn about the world so we can feel more connected,” said Ben, who was among the top 100 ranked geography students in Connecticut last year and competed in the state competition.

Darren Bahar, who teaches a middle school geography course and organized the competition at Carmel said he is extremely proud of the more than 50 fifth through eighth graders who participated in this year’s school competition, nearly double from last year when Carmel first offered the geography bee to its Upper School students.
Carmel Academy’s Rabbi-In-Residence Launches Popular Class for Parents

On a recent Monday morning, a diverse group of Carmel Academy parents gathered at the school to delve deeply into Parshat Hashavua, the weekly Torah reading. The group was studying verses about redemption from Egypt, sparking a robust conversation about how the establishment of a modern State of Israel may affect ancient Jewish ritual and practice.

The discussion, the varying points of view and the deep thought were exactly what Carmel Academy’s Rabbi-in-Residence Jordan Soffer had hoped for, he said, when he launched a Torah study group for parents earlier this year.

Rabbi Soffer coined the series “Parsha for Parents.” The hour-long class has become so popular that Rabbi Soffer took his teaching on the road, hosting a “Parsha For Parents” lunch in New York City as a way to enable Manhattan-working parents to be part of the conversation.

“The series explores deep and resonate questions, without demanding any prior knowledge of the text,” said Rabbi Soffer. “My goal is two-fold. On one hand I hope to encourage parents to role models as lifelong learners for their children, and, secondly, to give a platform for parents to explore Jewish issues in a sophisticated, but unassuming space.”

Soffer believes the learning series has gained traction among the school’s adult community because of its unique focus. “It is not your grandma’s parsha class,” he said. “Participants are able to look at text and see the modern relevance. We are choosing one theme and finding a universal question to delve into.”

Carmel parent Cori SaNogueira said the class has given her an opportunity to converse with fellow parents in a new way. SaNogueira said class also gives her a way to model something important for her own children. “Carmel has fostered a sense of curiosity in my children and it’s my responsibility to show them that Jewish learning is a lifelong endeavor. Thankfully Rabbi Soffer has provided a wonderful opportunity to learn from a dynamic educator.”

“The spring session will take place on May 7th at Carmel Academy, 270 Lake Avenue, Greenwich. For more information, please email admin@carmelacademy.com.

Pass along:

INTEGRATIONAL LEGACY LETTER WRITING INSTRUCTION

Legacies are the footprints we leave behind. Legacy letters are a way for individuals to find peace of mind by passing along a piece of their minds to loved ones.

Most of us have received notes and hallmark cards which have been given to us by various people at different points in our lives. Some of us are lucky enough to have also received handwritten letters from friends and family as well. These are letters which we love and cherish forever. I have gone back many times to those handwritten letters to help guide and strengthen me, to remind me of who I am when I question my purpose or values, or to help me reflect on my relationships, my work or my direction in life. As I re read these letters I always experience a deep sense of gratitude for the love, concern, guidance and wisdom that are contained within them. I also experience a very powerful feeling of connection towards the people who took the time to write these letters to me. These letters are all variations of Legacy Letters. However, I have learned that many of them are missing some of the essential components of a true Legacy Letter. These components can be explained and taught in a very short period of time.

My own entry point into Legacy Letter writing came to me as an epiphany 18 years ago when I was pregnant with my firstborn son, Jakob. Starting with him I wrote letters to each of my 3 unborn children in my 8th month of pregnancy. The letters were primarily about my hopes and dreams for our future together and also about my expectations for myself as a new mother. After reading a news article on Ethical Wills and Legacy Letters 3 years ago, I decided to take a class and become a Certified Legacy Letter Facilitator. I was lucky enough to study with one of the forerunners in this field, Rachael Freed, whose book Your Legacy Matters is often used as a seminal guide for writing Legacy Letters and Ethical Wills. A few months ago I finally gave my 15 year old daughter the letter I had written to her before she was born. It was one of those incredibly moving and unforgettable mother/daughter moments which made me also realize that now is the time I should begin teaching this writing concept to others.

For some, the term Legacy Letters or Ethical Wills may incorrectly conjure up the idea of aging or death. Nothing can be further from the truth. I have learned that we shouldn’t wait until we are old or infirm to pass along these types of letters. Legacy letters can be written at any juncture or milestone in one’s life. They can be written at any juncture or milestone in the recipients life. In fact, they can be written whenever the writer is ready to start writing. More importantly, they can be passed down (or up because these letters can all be given to people older than the writer) at any point in time.

It is important to understand that Legacy Letters pass along everything that your legal will does not. Your legal will gives away your money and material possessions. Legacy letters convey your ethics, values, ideas, beliefs and life stories to friends, family and others.

Some typical occasions for writing are: birth, bar/bat mitzvah, graduation, new job, wedding, retirement. Sometimes legacy letters are attached to the back of individuals last will and testaments to explain their will or to convey their thoughts on money or philanthropy.

Legacy letters can also cover topics such as personal struggles, vulnerability, apologies, forgiveness or regrets. Often times in writing these letters both the writer and recipient benefit in unexpected ways. For example, some people say that writing one of these letters has helped them lives their values with greater intention or helped them better understand themselves. Others say it has brought them closer to the person to whom they wrote or that it has healed something which had been broken. Each time I have written or received a letter like this I simply feel a deep sense of connection. These letters often fulfill our deepest unspoken human desires: to belong, to be known, to be remembered, to make a difference, to bless and be blessed and to celebrate life.

I am available to meet with you on an individual basis or I can make a group presentation. I can be reached by cell at 203- 249 -7332 or by emailing Pam Karetsky at Greenwichlegacyletters@gmail.com.
Congregation Shir Ami celebrated Passover with its annual second night Community Seder led by Rabbi Axe on March 31st at Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale NY.

“Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are needy, come and celebrate.” These are the words Jews all over the world recited as they gathered to eat the festive meal and recall the Exodus from Egypt at Passover Seders. “This passage is not in Hebrew like most prayers,” explained Rabbi Vicki L. Axe, spiritual leader of Shir Ami. “It is in Aramaic, the street language of ancient times, designed to be heard and understood by all who needed a place of refuge during the Festival of Passover. Today, it resonates as a mandate to reach out to people in need while inviting family, friends, and neighbors to share in the celebration.”

This call to reach out to the community is why Shir Ami welcomes all in the community to come and share Passover year after year like a family.

“As a ‘congregation without walls’ since 2003, we appeal to a unique population and are able to use our resources for learning and programming instead of the maintenance of a building,” continued Rabbi Axe. “This also gives us the opportunity to forge strong and warm relationships with many local religious institutions like Round Hill Community Church, First Congregational Church, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, and Christ Church, where we have held holiday celebrations and other events in prior years. And now, we enjoy a close partnership for Shabbat Services with First Presbyterian Church in downtown Greenwich.”

“This year Passover fell on Easter weekend, and we wanted to honor and respect our Christian neighbors as their churches were busily engaged with one of the most sacred times of year. We looked for an alternate location for our Seder.”

Shir Ami children, parents, and grandparents, and friends, gathered at Westchester Reform Temple to share traditional Passover customs and rituals with a sumptuous pot luck festive meal. The family-friendly celebration was rich with music, dancing, and fun for all.

In keeping with the Shir Ami deep commitment to tikkun olam, everyone brought new underwear for men, women and children to the Seder for the Undies Project, founded on the belief that “no one should be deprived of the simple, daily necessity of clean underwear that many of us take for granted.” The Undies Project donates all items for distribution to Kids in Crisis, Kids Kloset, Neighbor to Neighbor, Pacific House, Person to Person, Project Return, YWCA, and Greenwich Domestic Abuse Services.

“This is a meaningful project for Passover,” noted Rabbi Axe. “At the Seder we hold up a piece of matza and recite, ‘This is the bread of affliction. Let all who are hungry come and eat.’ “There are all kinds of hunger,” she continued. “The Undies Project gave us the opportunity to help people who are hungry for simple daily hygiene and physical comfort, hungry for self-esteem and dignity.”

To learn more about Congregation Shir Ami educational programs, cultural events, and holiday celebrations, call 203-274-5376 or visit www.congregationshirami.org.

Chabad of Greenwich Hebrew School Historical Society Visit

Twenty fifth and sixth graders at Chabad Hebrew School took a trip to explore Greenwich Historical Society’s “An American Odyssey: The Jewish Experience in Greenwich.”

The children were engaged in the tour through the museum which gave a graphic exploration of how Jewish life developed over the years in Greenwich and how it has become a thriving Jewish community in its current form.

The students were especially fascinated to see the location of their school and synagogue (the Chabad center) featured prominently in the Early Family Exhibit. They also loved seeing the Torah crown and covering in full display in the Modern Greenwich Exhibit case.
SAVE THE DATES

Sunday, April 22
UJA-JCC Greenwich
Israel’s 70th – Community-Wide Celebration
With Israeli mentalist Daniel Harel
Carmel Academy, 270 Lake Avenue, 3:30-5:00 pm

Sunday, May 6
Bi-Cultural Day School
Celebration Dinner
Stamford Hilton, 5:30 pm

Sunday, May 6
Temple Sholom
Israel at 70 Concert:
“Göns Great Israeli American Songbook”
300 East Putnam Ave., Greenwich, 4:00 pm
A donation of $10 per person is suggested. RSVP to Alice Schoen at alice.schoen@templesholom.com or 203-542-7165.

Thursday, May 10
UJA-JCC Greenwich
This Is Us – An Event Celebrating UJA-JCC Greenwich
Arch Street Teen Center, Greenwich, 7:00 pm

Thursday, May 31
UJA-JCC Greenwich
Comedy Night
Carmel Academy, 270 Lake Avenue, 7:00 pm

Saturday, June 2
Greenwich Reform
First Anniversary Party
92 Orchard Street, Cos Cob, 2:00-5:30 pm

Thursday, June 7
UJA-JCC Greenwich
When Life Gives You Lululemons
With Author Lauren Weisberger
J House Greenwich, 114 E. Putnam Ave., Riverside, 10:00 am

Teen Tech Week Comes to BCDS
Jessica Golove Bradley, a middle school student at Bi-Cultural Day School, watched with great interest as a contraption called a “record player” spun tunes in her classroom. It was all part of the American Library Association’s Teen Tech Week, held March 4-10 to encourage teens to take advantage of all the digital tools offered through the library to become content creators, and to leverage library resources and prepare students for college and careers in the 21st century.

WANNA BE A WIZARD?
Interviewing high school teens to work at Wizards.
Rabbi Deb
203 249-4036

Guided by Text and Teachers, Carmel Academy Students Lend Their Thoughts and Voice to the Issue of Gun Violence

On March 14th, as students across the nation grappled with their desire to be heard in the wake of the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Carmel Academy’s Middle School students honored the victims and joined the national conversation. Carmel Academy’s students took the opportunity to find empowerment through study, discussion and remembrance. Together, students and faculty studied Jewish text, which sparked deep discussions about issues surrounding life choices and responsibility toward fellow humans. They also read and discussed a summary of research on gun policies and their effects, engaged in discussions that focused on how to address this issue. As a culminating activity, each student wrote his or her own thoughts on what they can do personally or as a community can do to address gun violence in America.

Carmel Academy’s Rabbi-in-Residence Rabbi Jordan Soffer began the program by telling the students: “The Torah demands action, our conscience demands action, I need to take action. Today we will start with what may seem like a small action, but can truly have a major impact.”

He continued, “The Gemara asks, ‘What is more important, study or action?’ We learn that study is, like a small action, but can truly lead us to action.”

The students spent the 17 minutes following the study session, from 10:00 to 10:17 am, paying tribute to the 17 victims of the Florida school shooting. They recited a memorial prayer, listened to Rabbi Soffer recite the Mourner’s Kaddish, and watched a moving video that honored the victims.

“We wanted our students to feel empowered and while there is a certain power to a walkout I think it’s equally important and potentially more powerful to learn, to contemplate and to consider modes of action,” said Rabbi Soffer.

Eighth grader Isaac Malkin said he felt appreciative for the chance to gather with his peers and to have deeper conversations about an issue that weighs heavily on the minds of teenagers. “It was even better that it wasn’t a protest, but a way to come together and to recognize that we need to make change happen,” Isaac said.

ARE American Jews LOSING THEIR JEWISH IDENTITY?

Tuesday, May 8 at 7:00 pm at Temple Sholom

Dr. Richard Rubin, author of Jewish in America, will present his well-researched view on the current state of Jewish identity in America and what it portends for the American Jewish future.

Free and open to the community.
RSVP required to Alice Schoen at 203-542-7165 or alice.schoen@templesholom.com.
The ICU and ER departments at Stamford Hospital, along with the nurses and staff, have a critical role to play in the health of our community. They work long hours under very trying circumstances. The hospital’s Pastoral Care Department runs a Tea and Cookies Program to provide a tiny bit of relief to these diligent healthcare workers. Recently UJA-JCC Teen Action Committee members baked cookies, all of which were donated to hospital staff as part of this program. Rev. Rebecca Sala, M. Div., BCC, Manager of Pastoral Care, thanked JTAC members for the cookies and shared with them the many ways that the Pastoral Care Program has been key to the spiritual care and well being of those taking care of the Hospital’s most critically ill patients.

JTAC thanks
Costco
Dunkin Donuts
Fairway Market
Garelick and Herbs
Dr. Paul Geller
Kings Food Market
Dr. Jonathan Nelson
Stop & Shop

And all the members of the community who donated warm clothing and blankets to our Midnight Run on March 24.

With your help we served many grateful homeless men and women in NYC.

Thank you for your generous support!

UJA-JCC Greenwich Invited El Al Ambassadors to Speak to More Than 150 GHS Students as Part of Diversity Week
We celebrate Jewish life and work together to keep it strong

OUR PLEDGE

UJA-JCC Greenwich is committed to building vibrant Jewish communities, to strengthening Jewish life, and to connecting people of all ages to Jewish experiences and to each other.

HOW WE HELP

UJA-JCC Greenwich is woven into the fabric of Jewish life. We fund Birthright Israel trips and many other philanthropies that connect our community with Jewish people locally, in Israel, and around the world. And we offer arts, cultural, and educational programming that add richness to Jewish life.

OUR IMPACT

UJA-JCC Greenwich brings Jewish storytelling to toddlers through PJ Library books and programs. We help kids and teens form lifetime memories and friendships at Sunday Fundays and community service events. Through UJA-JCC Greenwich, we care for and strengthen families in need in 58 countries and build unbreakable bonds with our global community.