Tales of Compassion – We’d Love to Hear from You!

It’s been a tough year, and we have noted how blessed we are every day. UJA-JCC Greenwich would love to hear how your family responded to the pandemic and to the quarantine and isolation that accompanied it. Whether your children were picking for the Pantry or helping others at their colleges or in other venues, their acts of compassion will seem that much richer and have greater impact by inspiring others with pictures and words.

Help us strengthen our community’s resilience by highlighting your family’s kindnesses since the beginning of the pandemic. We know that you donated to food pantries, made sandwiches, visited elders, and much more. We’d love to share your story with our whole community. Please send in no more than 200 words along with two photos for our collected tales of compassion during COVID. Please send all submissions to randi@ujajcc.org.

Our role in Greenwich and the world is to bridge resources and needs and to bring people together. Acting with partners and donors like you, we create programs that change people’s lives, both here and around the globe. Your participation vividly demonstrates how the UJA-JCC Greenwich community seizes opportunities to brighten people’s lives even – or especially – in times of crisis.

Pam Ehrenkranz, CEO

For the volunteers of PJ Library Greenwich and UJA-JCC Women’s Philanthropy, PJ PAILS topped their bucket lists this year. That’s because with each Passover bucket that PJ PAILS delivered, families had the opportunity to donate Passover food to local families in need.

From arts and crafts to storytelling to outdoor activities, the interactive fun of PJ PAILS is targeted to 1-4 year olds, as well as to 5-8 year olds. Spanning four Jewish holidays – Chanukah, Passover, Lag B’Omer and Tu B’Av – the PJ PAILS program unites families in the shared goal of giving. Each time a family buys a PAIL for their child, a PAIL gets donated to a child in need. But this year’s Passover food drive added a special twist.

For Passover 2021 families in our community who purchased PAILS were able to provide food to the Schoke Kosher Food Pantry in Stamford. PJ Library President Rebecca Cooper, along with VP’s Meredith Isacoff and Ashley LaTorre, oversaw the PAILS pickup and delivery, while Bonnie Citron from Women’s Philanthropy completed the Greenwich-to-Stamford route.

"PJ PAILS is a wonderful way to connect all the generations through acts of generosity," said Cooper. “We look forward to many more collaborations between PJ Library and Women’s Philanthropy.”

Registration for the Lag B’Omer and Tu B’Av PAILS is available at ujajcc.org. Contact Randi at randi@ujajcc.org for further details.

UJA-JCC Greenwich is proud to announce that Rebecca Cooper, PJ Library President, Women’s Philanthropy and UJA-JCC Board member, has been appointed to the National Young Leadership Cabinet of the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA). Rebecca has actively been involved with UJA-JCC Greenwich for nearly ten years, creating The Golden Ticket Series, JBabies Greenwich and many successful programs for PJ Library Greenwich.

The National Young Leadership Cabinet is the premier leadership and philanthropic program of JFNA and the greater Jewish world. The Cabinet has an almost 60-year tradition of leadership rooted in Jewish values that create transformative, life-long bonds of friendship and community. Cabinet alumni – more than 4,000 leaders strong across the U.S. and Canada – have become important change makers in virtually every Federation and partner organization. We commend Rebecca on this stellar opportunity and for her commitment to the UJA-JCC Greenwich community. Rebecca Cooper joins Rebecca Tipermas in this prestigious group. We are honored to be represented by such outstanding members of our community.

The Scoop on PJ PAILS for Children and Families in Need

Greenwich families who purchased PAILS left out donations of Kosher for Passover food items. UJA-JCC Greenwich Women’s Philanthropy members then delivered them to the food pantry. From there, Schoke Food Pantry distributed the donated goods in bags to grateful families whose children could most benefit from them.
Greenwich Families Enjoy PJ PAILS for Passover

A message to Grandparents of Greenwich PJ Library kids, wherever you live.

(Parents, please pass it along)

PJ Library Greenwich is so much more than the hundreds of books we send each month to young families at no cost. We also provide a Jewish and social connection to our community, which is at the core of the UJA-JCC mission.

As this outstanding program has grown along with our Jewish community, we invite the Grandparents of our PJ kids to help us keep up with its popularity by becoming part of our Grandparents Circle with a contribution to PJ Library as a Patron, Sponsor, or Supporter.

As a thank you for being part of our Grandparents Circle, we invite you to join us for a virtual conversation with Dr. Dona Matthews, on Tuesday, May 11 at 10:30 AM on The Wonder of the Ordinary: Incubating Creativity, Talent and Genius.

Click here to register and support PJ Library

The Wonder of the Ordinary: Incubating Creativity, Talent and Genius

Dr. Dona Matthews
Tuesday, May 11, 10:30 AM

The co-author of Beyond Intelligence and Being Smart About Gifted Education shares ideas and insights about nurturing your grandchildren’s genius and creativity—even during a pandemic.

PJ Library Had Passover Covered This Year... Literally and Figuratively!

On Sunday, March 21, families Zoomed in to meet the author and illustrator of The Passover Guest. Susan Kusel is a synagogue librarian and children’s book buyer for an independent bookstore. She has served as a member of the Caldecott Medal selection committee and the chair of the Sydney Taylor Book Award Committee. The Passover Guest is Kusel’s first picture book. She lives in Arlington, VA.

Sean Rubin has illustrated several books for children. He wrote and illustrated the graphic novel Bolivar, which was nominated for an Eisner award and is being adapted into a feature film with Fox Studios. He also illustrated The Astronaut Who Painted the Moon: The Story of Alan Bean by Dean Robbins. Rubin studied art and archeology at Princeton University. He lives in Charlottesville, VA.
Community Purim Celebration

PJ Library celebrated Purim via Zoom with Jewish Preschool Directors, Maryashie Deren from Chabad, Sarah Gregoire from GRS, and David Cohen from Temple Sholom. More than 30 families heard a story, sang songs and baked Hamantaschen!

Passover Bake-Along with Becca

Bake-Along with Becca Levine was a tasty treat! Families joined Becca Levine and her family on Zoom, Wednesday, March 31 to make Unicorn Bark and chocolate-covered fruit. Participants picked up their pre-purchased bags filled with all the goodies ready to go! Becca is a Greenwich PJ mom who is a pro in the kitchen, having led cooking and baking demos prior to her PJ debut.
As the warm weather returns and we begin to enjoy the outdoors, I know many of us feel tired, Zoomed out, and frustrated by the fact that we are unable to resume our everyday lives. While we want to return to normal as soon as possible, there are many people around us who will never return to their pre-pandemic life. Whether affected by job loss, food insecurity, or loss of a loved one, it's important to take a step back and think of those who have been severely impacted by the pandemic, and who are facing unimaginable struggles. With this in mind, I am extremely confident in the energy and passion of our Women's Philanthropy board, whose mission and core value is to care for those in need. For me, UJA-JCC is the backbone of the Greenwich Jewish community, and together with the incredible leadership of our Women's Philanthropy board, they have been able to provide the much needed support for our community and beyond. I hope that you keep UJA-JCC Greenwich in mind as we continue through the year.

It has been heartwarming to watch our dedicated Newcomers committee, led by Abby Vorobeychik, continue to welcome newcomers, with warmth and friendliness. It reassures me that Greenwich has become a special and unique place for Jewish families to want to put down their roots. We are blessed to have newcomers who are already involved and engaged with the community, and I look forward to the time when we can gather with them in person for a formal welcome.

I am also excited to share with you, that we have begun working on a project that aims to ensure that we have representation of a Jewish Voice in the discussion around diversity and inclusion in local schools. Recent Connecticut legislation regarding teaching about the Holocaust, anti-semitism and equality makes this a perfect time to become aware of the curricula and outreach to support the schools in their efforts. The project is in its infancy, and we are looking for volunteers who have relationships with the schools, and who can act as a representative to provide additional support. If you or someone you know would like to get involved in this important work, please contact Claudia Brenner, claudia@ujajcc.org.

The JFNA National Women's Philanthropy Heart to Heart Mission to Israel is being held over three consecutive days - April 24, 27 and May 4. This virtual journey will highlight the Jewish Federations of North America's impact on lives in Israel and throughout the Jewish world. Please click HERE to register for this amazing virtual journey, which is free and open to all female philanthropists.

Wishing you a wonderful and healthy summer.
Christine Toback
President, Women's Philanthropy
Camp Girls: Lessons on Friendship, Courage and Loyalty
Wednesday, April 21 10:30 am
Summer camp. Carefree days. But what are the takeaways beyond the lanyards? How does camp shape who we — and our children — become?
New York Times Bestselling author Iris Krasnow returns to UJA-JCC Greenwich (virtually) to share stories from her inspiring memoir and parental call to action. Hear how camp experiences prepare kids to think critically, collaborate, take risks and build resilience.

Click here to register

Fly With Us Over Israel!
Sunday April 18 at 2:30 PM
Join UJA-JCC’S Afula Gilboa partnership friends for an aerial flight over Israel with retired Israel Air Force pilot Lieutenant Colonel Alon Moller - in honor of Yom HaAtzmaut - Israel's Birthday!

Now a professional tour guide, Alon will show us an amazing bird’s-eye view of the land and share the story of Israel through the lens of his family’s journey.

Click here to register
Many thanks to the Old Oaks Foundation for its generous support of 2020 UJA-JCC programming around anti-semitism. These outstanding presentations included Vegas Tenold in conversation with Stacey Delikat and Yvette Manessis Corporon's discussion of her book “Something Beautiful Happened.”

Virtual Jewish Book Club: The Last Watchman of Old Cairo

Join us for a discussion about The Last Watchman of Old Cairo with Special Guest Speaker Author Michael David Lukas
Thursday, April 15
Discussion with author Michael David Lukas: 7:30 pm
Breakout book discussions: 8 pm

Click here to register

Moms Don't Have Time to Read Books

With author and podcast host Zibby Owens in conversation with Event Chairs Rebecca Anikstein & Rebecca Cooper
Wednesday, May 5, 10:30 am

With Mother’s Day around the bend, find time you don’t have to celebrate Moms Don't Have Time to Read Books, which Oprah Magazine named among “21 of the Best Book Podcasts to Listen to When You're Not Reading.” Its host, a Yale and Harvard grad, über-influencer and mother of four, will share the inside scoop on all the titles you wish you could get to if only life didn't intervene.

Register Here
UJA-JCC GREENWICH PROGRAMS

Building Bridges, Not Boycotts

PARENT PREP
Antisemitism, Boycotts and Delegitimizing Israel:
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOUR KID GOES TO COLLEGE
Tuesday, May 11 at 7:30 PM

As your teens head to college there are some things you should know about campus climate for Jewish Students, and how to access resources once they are there. Hear more about the issues they will face and the tools available to help them on campus.

Stephanie Hausner is currently the Managing Director for the Israel Action Network at the Jewish Federations of North America. Stephanie oversees all of IAN’s campus, community, and legislative work. She is the JFNA lobbyist on Israel and Antisemitism issues, and is the main point of contact for Federations on Israel, BDS, delegitimization, and Antisemitism issues. Stephanie recently completed two terms serving as an elected Councilwoman in Clarkstown, NY. She was named one of Rockland County’s “40 under 40” in 2010 and in 2013 was included in “The NY Jewish Week’s 36 under 36.” Stephanie graduated from Johns Hopkins University with a degree in International Relations.

REGISTER HERE

Tackling Anti-Semitism & Bigotry

30 minutes With Zach Banner
offensive tackle, Pittsburgh Steelers

Tuesday, May 4 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. His B3 Foundation, which supports Black and Brown youth in Tocoma, Los Angeles and Guam, suddenly received more than $60,000 in donations, most in increments of $18 (the numeric value assigned to Hebrew letters that mean “life”). 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.”

REGISTER HERE
Many thanks to Lois and Bruce Zenkel for sponsoring The Many Faces of Anti-Semitism: Confronting the Longest Hatred series.
UJA-JCC Allocation to Emek Medical Center in Afula, Just in Time for Purim

UJA-JCC Greenwich helped make possible the distribution of Mishloach Manot baskets to Covid-19 and respiratory workers at Emek Medical Center in our sister city in Israel. Hospital administration and staff were caught by surprise and were very thankful and appreciative. A lot of advance preparation went into this special gift. The hospital rabbi had to approve each product in advance. The Sandwich Club, another program supported by UJA-JCC Greenwich, quickly stepped in to assemble the baskets, working into the night to complete the task. A giant laundry basket was called into service to distribute the goodies, including cards with greetings in Hebrew, Arabic, and English, indicating that this was a gift from the Southern New England Consortium.

DAVIS FILM FESTIVAL (at Home)

**Winter Journey**

Feature Film Available to Stream
Saturday, April 17th at 8 PM
through Monday, April 19th at 10 PM

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

**Here We Are**

Award-winning Film Available to Stream
Sunday, May 23rd at 4 PM
through Tuesday, May 25th at 10 PM

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

American radio host Martin Goldsmith never knew what happened to his parents before they escaped from Germany in 1941. Over a weekend, he confronts his father, and we are brought back to the complex and confusing 1930s. His parents, talented musicians, are only able to perform as members of the newly created Jüdischer Kulturbund, a propaganda initiative under the Reich Chamber of Culture. Winter Journey is based on Goldsmith’s book The Inextinguishable Symphony. Fusing documentary and dramatic conventions, the film masterfully recreates the conversations Goldsmith had with his father (Bruno Ganz in his final role) as preparation for the book.

Anders Østergaard / Biography, Drama / Denmark, Germany / 90 min.

Aharon has devoted his life to raising his son Uri. They follow a gentle routine, away from the real world. But Uri is autistic—and no longer a child—which is why a specialized home might better serve him. On their way there, Aharon changes course, knowing that Uri isn’t ready for such a separation. Or is it, in fact, his father who isn’t ready?

Winner of four Ophir Awards including Best Director, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor and Best Screenplay.

Nir Bergman / Drama / Israel / 92 min.
April 2021 Lunch & Learn Schedule

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<th>April 15</th>
<th>April 22</th>
<th>April 29</th>
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<td>The Key to Jewish Living: Derekh Moshe Edelman</td>
<td>Jews and Medicine: Dr. Jonas Salk and the Search for a Polio Vaccine Michael Feldstein</td>
<td>Yom Yerushalayim Rabbanit Michal Kohane</td>
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<td>In recent years, our globe, our country and our community seem to be “less civilized.” Jews experience this as anti-Semitism. People of color experience exclusion, hatred and violence. Torah’s lessons as developed in the Talmud create a positive, value-filled society. Let’s study some of the sources.</td>
<td>Learn about the fascinating life of Dr. Jonas Salk and his search for a polio vaccine -- along with the many Jewish lessons we can learn from his true epic saga.</td>
<td>Where is Jerusalem in the Torah? Let’s locate the sacred roots of its enduring significance.</td>
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May 2021 Lunch & Learn Schedule

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<th>May 6</th>
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<td>For the Rest of Us Rabbi Greg Wall</td>
<td>From Sefirat HaOmer to Revelation: How the Rabbis Read Biblical Texts Rabbi Rahel Berkovits</td>
<td>Toxic Handlers in the Bible Rabba Dr. Carmella Abraham</td>
<td>Violence Against Women and the Bible’s Deafening Silence Yael Klein Leibowitz</td>
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<td>Sabbatical leave, in common parlance, allows workers to recharge their batteries, develop professionally and avoid burnout. However, the Torah’s concept of Sabbatical extends across every aspect of our lives, including our relationships with people, animals and even the land. Let’s take time out to explore.</td>
<td>The Torah says to count the Omer from the day after shabbat, yet the rabbis begin counting from the day after Pesach. How do they see the process of revelation, and what can we learn from their choices concerning the continuous unfolding of Torah?</td>
<td>HR departments came long after biblical times. Yet the Old Testament offers valuable relationship lessons for today’s workplace.</td>
<td>Come explore Ancient Israel’s revolutionary approach to gender issues and equality through a careful look at some of the Bible’s most scandalous episodes.</td>
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June 2021 Lunch & Learn Schedule

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<th>June 3</th>
<th>June 10</th>
<th>June 17</th>
<th>June 24</th>
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<td>Sacred Space: Theoretical Constructs and Practical Applications Shira Hecht-Koller</td>
<td>From Bruriah to Nechama Leibowitz Yuliya Mazur-Shlomi</td>
<td>Torah from the Years of Wrath Henry Abramson, PhD</td>
<td>TBD Rabbi Eric Hoffman</td>
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<td>The story of the Tabernacle’s construction in the Book of Exodus echoes the creation story in Genesis. We’ll explore sacred text as a blueprint for understanding sacred space, and deconstruct how design informs our practice within.</td>
<td>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?</td>
<td>Spark to the Warsaw Ghetto writings of Rabbi Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira (the Aish Kodesh).</td>
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For Greenwich 7th grader Joshua Katz, selecting a mitzvah project for his Bar Mitzvah was not just about starting a life-long Jewish commitment to Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), but also an opportunity to develop a partnership between Temple Sholom and Filling in the Blanks, an organization that has grown close to his heart.

Filling in the Blanks operates out of Norwalk, CT, and fights childhood hunger by providing children in need with meals on the weekends. More than 117,000 children in Connecticut live in food-insecure households. Since the onset of COVID-19, Connecticut’s food insecurity rate has increased from 13.4% to 22.8%.

Joshua, who is passionate about helping those in need, reached out to family and friends to support his online food drive benefitting Filling in the Blanks’ weekend bags. Said Joshua, “When I learned that there are hungry kids in Greenwich, I realized that these kids are on the soccer fields with me, and they are in our schools. They are here and hungry, and I didn't know it. I need to help these kids, and I will continue to help them.”

Joshua and his mother, Shelby Katz, connected with Scott Kramer, Chair of Temple Sholom's Social Action Committee, to take the project even further. Kramer coordinated a Temple-wide virtual food drive, which culminated with a hands-on meal packing event at the Filling in the Blanks warehouse on March 7. More than 840 weekend meal bags were packaged by 20 volunteers, with more than 40 Temple families contributing to the food collection.

“As a member of Temple Sholom's Board of Trustees and Chair of the Social Action Committee, I am always amazed at the way our community comes together to help those in need,” said Kramer. “This past year has been challenging for everyone, so when we decided to partner with Filling in the Blanks, I wasn’t sure what kind of support we would get. When we began communicating these efforts, the Temple Sholom community stepped up right away. I couldn’t be more proud.”

The Katz family hopes to make the packing event an annual or bi-annual staple in Temple Sholom’s social action programming, as well as to expand their efforts to greater Greenwich.

Temple Sholom will be hosting its annual Mitzvah Project Fair/Social Action Engagement Fair on Sunday, April 25 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm, virtually on Zoom, as a resource for those looking for mitzvah projects or local social action volunteer opportunities. Contact Lori Baden at lori.baden@templesholom.com if you would like to attend.
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!”

Abby Vorobeychik, Chair
UJA-JCC Greenwich Newcomer Committee

Temple Sholom Learning Center

Offerings for the 2021-2022 School Year include:
- A Taste of Religious School (3’s and 4’s)
- Lower School (PreK-2nd Grade)
- Upper School (3rd-7th Grade)
- Post B’nai Mitzvah (8th Grade)
- Social Action Sundays
- Small Group Learning
- 1:1 Instruction
- In-Person & Online Options

Early Bird Discounted Enrollment From May 1-30!

Schedule a virtual tour: 203-869-7191 or david.cohen@templesholom.com.

Temple Sholom Learning Center
300 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, CT www.templesholom.com

Purim Slam and Shavuot with a (Cheese) Twist at Shir Ami

Creative holiday celebrations are an integral part of congregational life at Shir Ami. We strive to bring the holidays to life in memorable ways that build connections between members and community participants by pairing worship with creative activities.

In February, Shir Ami held its second Purim Story Slam via Zoom. Inspired by the plotting of Mordechai and Queen Esther, four members told intriguing stories about how they confronted adversity in life and found a way forward. We were entertained, inspired, and uplifted by their stories.

Shir Ami will put a new twist on the holiday of Shavuot. Instead of our tradition of cooking or baking together, this year, we will “pair” a Shavuot Havdallah Service led by Cantor Abramson with a cheese tasting event. The tasting will be led by Joel Collamer, a member and food aficionado. Participants who register for the event will receive a selection of cheeses delivered to their homes. The virtual service and cheese tasting will take place on Saturday, May 15 via Zoom.

Religious School Update at Greenwich Reform

Under the talented leadership of Cantor-Educator Michelle Rubin, the religious school students of Greenwich Reform will celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut (Israel Independence Day) with festive Israeli dancing and singing, and presentations about the Israeli cities they have researched.

Shavuot will mark the end of the school year, with an awards assembly to applaud the hard work and commitment of both students and teachers in the challenging environment of Covid-19. We’ll rejoice in receiving the Torah and celebrate how much Torah our students have learned in this year of Zoom. Traditional ice cream treats will make the event even sweeter.

In September, Greenwich Reform is planning to return to our beautiful building for in-person, socially distanced, Covid-safe learning, with the opportunity for individual Hebrew instruction and online learning options where appropriate.

Some recent comments on the GRS Religious School:
From a parent: “I’m delighted by how engaged my daughters are – they look forward to going to Hebrew School, even on Zoom!”

From a six-year-old: “I love shul school. Shul school is the best!”

Please contact Cantor Michelle (CantorRubin@GRS.org) if you’d like to join our spring celebrations, or would like more information about enrolling your children in the GRS Religious School.
The second week in March, 2021 marked one year since the COVID-19 lockdown began. Everyone has stories to tell about how this devastating disease affected their lives during this upside down year. For me, March 10th marked the last time I saw my beloved husband, Harold, in person before his nursing home went into lockdown, the last time I held him and stroked him, the last time I was with Harold alive before his death April 19, 2020.

Harold died just short of his 78th birthday. For ten years he suffered from Frontotemporal Degeneration (FTD) with Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA) and Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP). His speech began to regress in his 60s and he couldn’t speak at all for the last three years of his life. The PSP caused increasing stiffness and weakness until he lost mobility altogether.

I stepped down from my rabbinic responsibilities at Congregation Shir Ami after High Holy Days 2018 to become his full-time caregiver. He had always been “the wind beneath my wings” as I forged my sacred career and raised our four precious sons, and I knew it was my turn to hold him up.

With the need for round-the-clock supervision, sadly I was compelled to place Harold in a nursing home in January, 2020. Tuesday night, March 10th I got the dreaded call that they were going into coronavirus lockdown. My daily visits to feed him lunch and sit with him for a few hours, which had become the rhythm of my life, came to a sudden halt.

I was able to FaceTime with him every day to share stories of our children and grandchildren, and sing to him from our playlist of favorite family, theatre, and synagogue songs – not the same as being with him, but it was the best I could do while watching his steady decline.

In his final week his breathing became more and more labored. Our sons and their families “embraced” him in a FaceTime call from Boston, Ridgefield CT, San Francisco, and NYC. If not for the coronavirus, we would have all been together stroking him, holding him, singing to him. In our absence, the dedicated nurses and staff were our surrogates, using their downtime to sit with him and stroke him. (Singing – not so much!)

On Harold’s last afternoon, we had a group FaceTime with our four sons. They each shared memories, and I sang Debbie Friedman’s Mi Shebeirach. Rather than praying for healing, I changed the words, “Bless those in need of healing with refuah shleimah, the renewal of body, the renewal of spirit” to “May the final journey be peaceful, without pain, the transition of body, the transition of spirit.” I chanted Sh’ma, and an hour later he took his last breath.

Love and loss is a solitary journey; love and loss during COVID-19, all the more so.

Because of the virus, we couldn’t draw strength and comfort from friends and family in person with a traditional funeral and shiva. Instead, we had a Zoom Memorial Service with more than 300 people from all over the world – Israel, England, France, and Australia – and throughout the US. I invited colleagues from all over the country to recite the memorial prayers so that I could be a mourner. Sh’va was also on Zoom with friends and family sharing “Harold stories.”

During the pandemic, modern technology has been a savior in my time of loss and grief. The virtual attendance at the memorial service was astonishing, and shiva was in some ways more comforting than a traditional gathering. Each speaker held everyone’s full attention, and we could all see each other up close on the screen. Since Harold’s death, I have joined three Facebook groups for widows who are an invaluable source of mutual wisdom and understanding. While I miss physical human contact, I feel spiritually and emotionally connected. Nothing can ease the pain of grief, but, even virtually, I feel surrounded by caring and love!

With so many in our community who have lost loved ones this past year, I will facilitate a bereavement group for JFS Greenwich, “Love and Loss in the Time of Covid” on Zoom, of course! Watch for more information.

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Teens Meet with Asylum Seeker Hussein Aboubakr

The Israel Advocacy Club at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Upper School recently partnered with StandWithUs to share with students the story of Hussein Aboubakr, who was raised in a traditional Arab Muslim home in Egypt and was on a path to becoming a jihadist until his study of Jewish culture drastically changed his views. After being imprisoned by the Egyptian military for his writings and activities, he participated in the Egyptian revolution until 2012, when he was forced to seek political asylum in the United States. He now lives in the U.S., where he is an educator and speaker for StandWithUs, as well as a writer focusing on anti-semitism, Islamism, and Israel education.

First the the BCHA Upper School students watched a screening of “Minority of One.” In this documentary Aboubakr discusses growing up in Egypt in a culture steeped in anti-semitic and anti-Israel sentiment, his discovery of information that shifted his own perspective, his subsequent detention and torture at the hands of the Egyptian state, and his goal of spreading the message that, “the answer to bad ideas is good ideas.”

Following the screening, students had the opportunity to meet virtually with Aboudakr to learn more about his story and his message.
Camp Gan of Greenwich
VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

In Depth Program Overview
Virtual Campus Tour

Sunday, April 18 • 9 AM
Zoom Meeting ID: 404 580 2626

OVER 30
Specialty Camps

Weekly Sports Clinics / Red Cross
Swim Lessons / Intensive Tennis /
Circus / Culinary / Theater / Adventure

Check out the
Camp Gan
VIDEO

campgan.com
As individual Jews and as a sacred Jewish community, we possess a Brit, an eternal covenant with God that requires us to embrace four core values:

- **Talmud Torah** (Learning)
- **Ma’asim Tovim** (Living)
- **Kehilat Kedosha** (Embracing)
- **Tikkun Am Yisrael/Tikkun Olam** (Repairing)

*Talmud Torah* literally translates as “the learning of Torah.” But what it really means is a firm commitment to life-long Torah study and continual exploration of how to live a sacred life. There is no Judaism without our holy texts and traditions. We succeed in the mitzvah of Talmud Torah when we enable each member of our Jewish community to have a joyful way to learn about Judaism and Torah through formal study and meaningful learning experiences.

*Ma’asim Tovim* literally means “good deeds.” Each of us is required to embrace sacred living and to perform good deeds. It is not enough to just learn. But rather we have to transform our learning into sacred living. Our continual study of Torah becomes our continual living of Torah.

*Kehilat Kedosha* means being a “holy community.” When each of us individually takes our sacred learning, combines it with our sacred living, and then actively and collectively engages in our community, we transform ourselves into a holy community.

*Tikkun Am Yisrael* and *Tikkun Olam* is the mitzvah that commands us to repair the Jewish people and repair humanity. Whenever we see things that are broken, it is our responsibility to collect the broken fragments and bring healing, repair, and renewed wholeness, a real sense of Shalom.

Our success in fulfilling the obligations of our Brit occurs only when our everyday actions reflect our covenant with God, sacred Torah, sacred living, and with our daily activities, by which we improve the lives of our brothers and sisters.

Pandemic life has been extraordinarily challenging for all of us this past year. But, what gives us strength is when we truly live up to the timeless truths that nurture and sustain us. Together, our success with *Talmud Torah*, *Ma’asim Tovim*, *Kehilat Kedosha*, and *Tikkun Am Yisrael/Tikkun Olam* is how we create the refuge against the challenges and stresses we face in our lives. May God help us be successful in fulfilling our Brit.

*B’Shalom U’vracha,*

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.
A record-breaking 500 guests attended the annual Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Virtual Celebration Dinner on February 28. In reference to the dinner’s theme – “Fortitude” – BCHA Head of School Jackie Herman said, “‘Fortitude’ reminds us of the extraordinary challenge our community faced over the course of this past year, as the pandemic hit. It epitomizes the strength, grace, determination and resilience, which we drew upon to overcome that unprecedented challenge.” At the dinner, Mrs. Herman, who after 10 years will step down as Head of School in June, was presented with the school’s inaugural Walter Shuchatowitz Award for Excellence in Education.

The evening’s other honorees included Guests of Honor Stephanie and Josh Bilenker; Young Leadership Award recipients Nicole and Jonathan Makovsky; and eight BCHA graduates currently serving in the IDF, all of whom received the school’s Alumni Award.

The Morton G. Scheraga President’s Award was presented to Doris Zelinsky by David Pitkoff – who was also honored for the completion of his five-year tenure as president of the BCHA Board of Trustees.
Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Unveils New Administrative Team

Rabbi Tzvi Bernstein, who currently serves as Dean of Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy of Connecticut (BCHA), has been appointed BCHA Interim Head of School, and Rachel Haron, currently the school’s Lower School Principal, has been named Interim Associate Head of School, as announced by David Pitkoff, President of the BCHA Board of Trustees.

Along with these appointments to the Stamford school’s top administrative team, Rabbi Josh Rosenfeld, who serves as Middle School Principal of Manhattan Day School and assistant rabbi at Manhattan’s Lincoln Square Synagogue, has been appointed Bi-Cultural’s new Head of Judaic Studies for pre-K through grade 12.

The new team will take over leadership of the school on August 1, when long-time Head of School Jackie Herman steps down from her post. During the transition period, Mrs. Herman will serve as an advisor to both Rabbi Bernstein and Mrs. Haron, as well as to the Board.

Initially the search committee was looking outside the school. “Yes, there were other candidates available, but as we started to consider our options, we quickly focused on the stars in our own school – our own highly qualified and experienced academic leadership team, who have already displayed an unparalleled commitment to excellence and the success of every one of our children,” wrote Mr. Pitkoff in a letter to the community.

The in-house administrative team – which also includes Upper School Principal Rabbi Shimmy Trencher and Middle School Principal David Giver – will be immeasurably enhanced by the addition of Rabbi Rosenfeld, said Mr. Pitkoff.

“Rabbi Rosenfeld brings a wealth of knowledge, talent, enthusiasm, and ruach to his new position,” said Mr. Pitkoff, adding that as an educator, Rabbi Rosenfeld “was known for the energy and excitement he brought to his classroom and the impact he had on teaching his students.”

Noting that Rachel Haron will be the first Bi-Cultural alumni to serve as Associate Head of School, Mr. Pitkoff said, “As someone who has worked closely with both Tzvi and Rachel these past five years, I can attest to their commitment to academic excellence in both general and Judaic studies, the strong academic and leadership experience they bring to the task, and their commitment to filling the halls of our school and the hearts of our children with a love of learning.”

Greenwich Reform: Join Us Outdoors for Family Shabbat Services!

With longer days and warmer temperatures, Greenwich Reform is delighted to invite everyone to celebrate Shabbat outside on Friday, May 7, at 6 pm – all ages welcome! We’ll be masked and socially distanced, but delighted to be celebrating Shabbat together again! For details, please contact GRS at 203-629-0018 or email HadassElias@GRS.org

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45 Field Point Rd Greenwich, CT 06830
Temple Sholom Schools Weave Environmentalism into Curricula

During the winter break, families at the Temple Sholom Selma Maisel Nursery School were asked to put aside cardboard boxes, paper towel rolls, empty plastic bottles, yogurt containers, and other recyclable materials for a large project in the making. Little did they know these materials were going to provide the foundation for the launch of a green-friendly makerspace — a dedicated classroom to complement the school’s STEAM Lab — as a way to foster upcycling, ingenuity, imagination and creativity. The initiative got underway just before Tu B’Shevat, the Jewish holiday that celebrates the “New Year of the trees” and is closely associated with the environmental movement. The new space has already seen a wide variety of activities, ranging from the hands-on sorting of recyclables by the children, to the assembly of a rocket ship from start to finish to enhance a unit on outer space.

“We drew inspiration to create the room from our teachers who have been using recycled materials in their classrooms for years,” said Director of Schools David Cohen. “Teachers who embrace emergent curricula understand that the use of open-ended materials, such as recycled items, promotes deeper investigations and group learning.” “When a child is offered an art experience where a specific outcome is expected, the child simply creates a craft,” said Deidre Flood, Nursery School Assistant Director. “When offered an array of items that are open-ended, the child will wonder ‘What can this become?’ or ‘What can we create with these things?’ They are not only building their imaginations, but also gaining confidence and developing a deep love for learning.”

In 2018, members of the school’s Parent Association constructed an 8’ x 8’ raised vegetable and herb garden to offer another sensory-rich space to promote student inquiry, dialogue and critical thinking. Nursery school children have the opportunity to maintain the garden, which serves as starting point for topics such as climate, worm composting, propagating plants, and gardening in cold weather. In addition to the recycling efforts of the Selma Maisel Nursery School, the 7th grade religious school students at the Temple Sholom Learning Center are in the initial phases of developing a green initiative for the Temple Sholom community as part of their Social Action Sundays program. Their plans include an assessment of Temple Sholom’s current practices and ways to become more eco-friendly.

Fun at Chabad’s Purim Carnival

What a grand time we had celebrating Purim together at Chabad’s Drive-In Carnival! We got to listen to Bobby Doowah’s music, and to Rabbi Deren reading the megillah. We even got to watch a world-renowned ventriloquist performance inspired by the Purim spirit. There is nothing like celebrating a special holiday with our beautiful Greenwich Jewish community.
The past year was shocking. “Lockdown” and “quarantine” became common codas. People were isolated and lost their jobs, homes and healthcare. Families, friends and colleagues were separated, got sick and died. Large and local businesses shuttered their storefronts. Schools and colleges switched to remote learning and religious services Zoomed.

Was there anything good in such a bad year?

The Torah teaches us that there was.

In Parashat Behar-Bechukotai (Leviticus 25:1-27:34) instructs Jews to bless the good as well as the bad. Baruch hatzor v'hameitiv means “Blessed be that is good and grants good.” Baruch dayan emet means “Blessed be the true judge.” In a May 2020 JWeekly.com column, Maharat Victoria Sutton of Berkeley’s Congregation Beth Israel interprets this anomaly from Mishnah 9:2 in tractate Berachot by noting “we are obligated…to acknowledge the good, and we do not ignore the bad in doing so.”

Cantor Jill Abramson, Congregation Shir Ami’s Spiritual Leader, agrees, expressing what faith leaders all over the world were seeing not only in synagogue but also in daily life. “I have experienced moments of holiness throughout the pandemic in the acts of bravery and dedication by those who have cared for the sick and sought to preserve life.” And Ritual Committee Chair Fran Pribish observed that like congregations all over the world, Shir Ami experienced increased participation in all virtual services and activities.

With this holiness came the urge to think differently. “This past year was an opportunity to change our lives,” recalled Shir Ami Program Chair Joan Green. “Being limited in many ways has offered the time, space and desire to reach out to friends and relatives, to people we infrequently contact or whom we haven’t seen in years. It’s been a chance to live in a simpler time with an emphasis on special efforts to connect, nurture and enjoy…walk in quiet space, watch and listen, take stock of what we need and what we really don’t.”

The same bad-with-the-good element applied to family. Despite the heartbreak of family separations, there was also the joy of families reunited. In March 2020 both the Brand and Meisel families welcomed their adult children back into their homes. Karen Brand described how “the pandemic brought our family so much closer,” as daughter Jackie, and sons Robby and Brian (after a delay recovering from COVID), and their families, partners and pets moved in. For Mitch Brand, “the silver lining was being all together, eating dinner every night together – without TV.” “We had been empty nesters for the past three years,” said Karen and Gary Meisel, “and absolutely enjoyed that phase of our lives. And suddenly, we saw ourselves with six young adults in our home, relieved to have them with us but also wondering how we will manage such a huge household again.” “Who would have guessed that our kids are so easy to live with,” Gary mused. Like the Brands, the Meisels quickly adapted and re-learned the joys of “dinner together at the end of the day like one big family.”

And in the sheer miracle of L’hdor v’hdor (“from generation to generation”), it wasn’t just adult children who rejoined their families. A lot of babies got in on the fun! In addition to the Brands’ grandsons Owen and Cole, the Salop and Sturman families welcomed new grandchildren during the pandemic, but for them, it was from across the country. “This required creativity on Baba’s and Gramps parts, and we bonded with Kiernan, our ‘digital native’ from Seattle, with joy,” said Barbara. “Our daughter Jen and Brandon in San Diego have been so generous with pictures and FaceTime calls with baby Indigo and her sister Eloise, 22 months her senior, so we see our girls almost every day,” shared Peggy Bier Sturman. Jerry Sturman celebrated their completed vaccinations by booking the first flight west!

So, was there anything good in such a bad year?

Yes, just as our Sages taught, said Cantor Abramson, conﬁds, quoting from the Book of Numbers’ prophetic words: “May we go from strength to strength. May it be so.”

*This is a condensed version of a longer article on why the Torah teaches blessings for the good and the bad. For full version, visit https://www.congregationshirami.org/articles.html
On February 2, Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Upper School launched the “Social Impact Initiative,” an inspirational online program that teaches Jewish teens about the power of giving. The BCHA program kicked off with a Zoom talk by social entrepreneur Orly Wahba, founder of Life Vest Inside, an organization that brings together people from 50 countries to spread kindness. Through the Social Impact Initiative, students learn the skills and habits needed to develop their leadership abilities and enhance their capacity to effect positive change in the world.

“A goal of ours in the Upper School is to help our students become confident and competent contributors to the world. When I first heard about the Social Impact Initiative, which gives students tools and habits of mind to do just that, I knew that I wanted to connect our students with this opportunity,” says BCHA Upper School principal Rabbi Shimmy Trencher.

Wahba, whose video “The Kindness Boomerang” has received more than 100 million views online and whose TED Talk has been listened to by more than 300,000 people, is part of a team of Impact Initiative mentors who coach Jewish teens about business and social entrepreneurship. “When she came to speak with us, Ms. Wahba discussed her background and how it influenced her decision to start the Social Impact Initiative,” says BCHA Upper School senior Jedidiah (“Jed”) Devillers. “The path she took through high school and college influenced her view of the world, and I think my peers and I were deeply struck by that as it came from a place of both passion and hurt.”

Jed was selected by Rabbi Trencher to serve as student advisor and student leader of the BCHA Social Impact Initiative. “For now, the program will start with a [free] six-week course generously provided by Ms. Wahba’s organization’s benefactors,” says Jed. “From there, we hope to have more students take an active role in giving back to the local community through all sorts of Chesed and volunteer opportunities and initiatives. I look forward to helping every one of them along the way, giving as much advice as I can. I’ve already talked to one student about her plans for a Chesed opportunity and am looking forward to overseeing her project.”
Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Upper School Raises Mental Health Awareness

Life can be tough for a teenager. After all, dealing with the emotional challenges of transitioning between childhood and adulthood can be difficult, even in the best of times. Add to that the stresses created by the pandemic, and the level of anxiety among teens is amped up even further. Well aware that many teens were struggling with mental health issues that they did not feel comfortable sharing with others, BCHA Upper School principal Rabbi Shimmy Trencher, school counselor Angela Wilson, and special programs coordinator Ilana Bauman came up with an idea to give a voice to these students. With their guidance, in January BCHA Upper School hosted an all-day school-wide Mental Health Day program, designed and coordinated by a group of Upper School students.

"Ms. Bauman, Rabbi Trencher and myself wanted to create a seminar-type event that allowed students to have fun and engage in meaningful activities," explained Wilson who is also a licensed psychiatric nurse practitioner. "We had four outside speakers, a presentation by our principal and an activity led by our school counselor. The student committee consisted of five students who took the lead on different activities."

The day began with a keynote presentation by Jewish educator Marc Fein, who shared his own experience living with depression and presented an insightful perspective on what it means to live with a mental illness. "Marc Fein was honest and open with us. He set the tone for the day and inspired people to share their own experiences," said junior Shira Haron.

Other speakers included Rabbi Trencher, who is also a licensed clinical social worker; Eli Weinstein, LCSW, who created ELIvation, a program to help inspire those struggling with mental health issues; Temimah Zucker, LCSW, who works with those suffering from eating disorders and body image dissatisfaction; Rabbi Chajig Rubin; and two BCHA students who spoke about their own experiences with mental health.

"It was difficult talking about personal experiences, but we did a great job creating a safe space for the discussions and to support each other," said senior Danielle Hedge, who led a panel discussion on anxiety and was a member of the Mental Health Day Committee, along with Izzy Kanefsky, Jaime Zaritsky, Josh Schuman, and Menucha Goldberg, a sophomore who also led a panel discussion on body dysmorphia.

For Bauman, the day met its goal – and then some. "I am incredibly grateful and in awe of our school for creating a space that fosters student authenticity, love, and growth, and I am even prouder of our students for diving into that environment head on. Attending panels in which students spoke about their own experiences with mental health and watching students lead discussions with grace, strength, and bravery, was one of my proudest moments as an educator," she said. "As the student panelists spoke about their own life experiences, other students started raising their hands to share their own experiences as well. One student’s vulnerability encouraged other students to be vulnerable. One student’s courage empowered others to be courageous. It was beautiful to witness."

Unbinding Isaac – A Discussion Group for Men

On a Sunday morning in February, more than a dozen men from Congregation Shir Ami gathered on Zoom to study excerpts from Aaron Koller’s dynamic new book Unbinding Isaac: The Significance of the Akedah for Jewish Thought.

While Shir Ami has had a women’s Rosh Chodesh group for the past two years, this marked the beginning of a new study group for men. “We knew we needed something that would help build community among men in our congregation and also be grounded in learning,” explained Cantor Jill Abramson, who leads Congregation Shir Ami.

Rabbi Jonathan Malamy (who is married to Cantor Abramson) joined the discussion to lend his expertise to the topic, which includes his training as a marital and family therapist. Malamy pointed out that we each bring assumptions to the text and that those (unintentional) assumptions may obscure or skew our understanding. By challenging those assumptions, we can find broader ways, he taught, to understand and therefore find meaning in this disturbing text.

The next session of the men’s study group is scheduled for April 25. The group is open to the community, and all are welcome. Please contact shirami@gmail.com for more information.

Social Action Reboot at Greenwich Reform

For many years GRS supported Inspirica – from Homeless to Home – with monthly dinners provided and served by congregational families, holiday gifts for children, and more, but when COVID-19 made that difficult, it was time for a reboot.

Chairperson Lisa Lipschutz and the Social Action Committee are charting a plan for GRS to build understanding of local needs. As the pandemic cases, the emphasis will shift to hands-on support, including the involvement of GRS kids and teens, focusing on food insecurity, educational enhancements, and the needs of immigrant families.

To increase awareness, Anka Badurina, Executive Director of Building One Community – The Center for Immigrant Opportunity, recently addressed the GRS community via Zoom, explaining the work of #B1C during the pandemic, and offering insights into the impact of COVID-19 in one of the most vulnerable communities, low-income immigrant neighbors, many of whom are essential workers. She explained the critical role partnerships have played during these efforts, as well as how the community at large can help.

For more information, please contact Lisa Lipschutz at llipschutz@gmail.com.

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CEO’s Corner

Spring is here! The sunshine brings such a change in body and mind. Now fully vaccinated, I’m looking forward to safely enjoying the company of others. I hope many of you feel the same, and are relinquishing some of the fear that has plagued us over the past year. One year ago I expected to close our office doors for two weeks and hunker down with my immediate family to weather the impending pandemic. None of us could have imagined the length or strength of that “storm.” Although at times it was overwhelming, as with any life challenge – one day, one problem at a time – we came through. As for JFS of Greenwich – we thrived.

During a time of such chaos and concern, JFS of Greenwich tripled its services. From food deliveries to addressing emergent mental health needs, we went from the “little engine that could” – to the Acela! Through the generosity of our grantors and private donors, we were able to take steps in real time to help people who are struggling. Our FACTS program relieves the burden felt by many of our neighbors on a daily basis. We work to identify ways to help others improve their quality of life and regain their independence with dignity and respect. Our family farm stand powered by Mike’s Organic provides nutritious organic produce to eighteen families. JFS fundraisers have increased the weekly bounty to include dairy products and staples for our food-insecure families. Thanks to an incredible matching grant from JFNA, UJA-JCC of Greenwich provided a sizable donation for our clinicians to receive evidence-based trauma training. Our goal is to continue meeting the physical, social and emotional needs of our community, recognizing the toll the pandemic has taken on so many.

We continue to offer an array of Family Life Programs, including Shabbat and Healing services, to provide opportunities for learning and connection. At JFS of Greenwich we have something for everyone. Please keep an eye out for programming that appeals to you. Don’t see something? Give me a call – I love suggestions! This has been a unique year, but you will not hear me say any of it was “lost” time. JFS has been moving at an ever-increasing speed to identify needs within the community and to meet them with professionalism and compassion.

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

The JFS FACTS program continues to support local families in numerous ways. Our goal is to lessen the burden of those suffering physically, emotionally and financially. Generous support from the Greenwich community helps us meet the needs of our clients with creativity, sensibility and flexibility. As a community agency we rely on your participation to help us accomplish our goals.

This year our outreach to the community for personal hygiene and household items yielded dozens of personal deliveries. In fact, a local dentist answered the call with a surprise donation of monthly oral hygiene supplies for our clients.

JFS continues its partnership with Mike’s Organic to provide organic produce and dairy to 18 families per week at our Family Farm Market. A portion of the proceeds from our Passover fundraiser (The JFS Seder Survival Kit), was dedicated to keeping the market well-stocked. The families look forward to experimenting with the wide array of items, which have included golden beets, artichokes, leeks, and more. Food insecurity is an ever-present strain on our FACTS families, so they are very grateful for these healthy additions to family meals.

Other services provided to FACTS families are less tangible than food or supplies, but equally important. JFS recently reached out for volunteers to support our clients in resume development and employment guidance. The community has come through, and thanks to technology, mentoring relationships – albeit socially distanced – have begun.

If you would like to offer your resources or skills to people in need in our community, please contact mgarcia@jfsgreenwich.org. JFS will welcome you!

JFS of Greenwich Serves Local Families in Need, Assisted by Generous Volunteers

by Michael Garcia, FACTS Senior Case Manager

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JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES OF GREENWICH

Supermarketing for Seniors Has Enhanced Its Role During Covid-19

by Elyse Brown, Director of Supermarketing for Seniors

Supermarketing for Seniors (SFS) has always been more than – well, supermarketing. While supplying groceries is an indispensable part of the program, perhaps equally important is the relationship our volunteer shoppers forge with their clients, or “shoppees.” During these Covid times, when seniors have experienced even greater loneliness and isolation, the program has become an even more important lifeline for those we serve, and JFS volunteers have willingly stepped in.

Shoppers have helped clients sign up for Covid-19 vaccines, brought home-cooked meals when snow prevented shopping, and delivered home-made hamantashen, cookies, and birthday cake. One of our shoppers, while caring for his own grandfather in Florida, called to check on his shoppee, and to see if he could help with anything from afar. The client later said, “I want to adopt him!”

JFS has partnered with the Greenwich Department of Human Services and private case managers on behalf of those who need enhanced services. Shoppers serve as the eyes and ears for case managers or family members who cannot be on scene, and report issues of concern, such as an unreachable client; one seeming pale and weak; another with a possible tumor; someone living in unsanitary conditions, and so on. Case managers are then able to reach out to a family member, check in with clients, and arrange for necessary services. Most recently, a shopper called to report an emergency – her shoppee was in distress and clearly needed help. After calling the client to assess the situation, we notified her GDHS case manager and called the police. The client was then taken to the hospital for observation.

Grateful clients tell us how important this service is, and shoppers report how gratifying their role is. Will you join us as a shopper? Do you need grocery shopping assistance? Please reach out to benefit from this free service. Contact Elyse Brown: 203-622-1881 x102; or email ebrown@jfsgreenwich.org – We look forward to hearing from you.

JFS Health and Healing Finds New Ways to Offer Spiritual Care

By Barbara Salop

Spiritual care is an essential service, especially in these pandemic times. JFS of Greenwich’s Health and Healing programs offer many opportunities to be renewed and refreshed through Jewish spirituality.

JFS offers several Jewish services partnering with Rabbi MJ Newman, and Greenwich Hospital’s Spiritual Care Department. Shabbat services resumed in March in the hospital chapel, and are streamed via AV into patient rooms. This mid-Friday Shabbat service, a joyful blend of song and prayer, is also Zoomed to the community. A pre-service Torah session offering deeper exploration of the weekly Torah portion is being developed “to share the joy of Torah study more broadly,” according to Rabbi MJ.

Our monthly Healing Service is also offered virtually, drawing on ancient traditions of Bikur Cholim, (the mitzvah of visiting the sick), bringing wholeness to body, mind and spirit.

Holiday celebrations have now transferred from chapel to home screen. Building on our Rosh Hashanah experience, the annual Passover Seder moved to Zoom, joining community members and hospital staff in retelling the story of our epic journey to freedom. These services are available to anyone in our community. “Our services bring joy and consolation – we form a spiritual community, supporting each other, connecting to fight isolation,” says Joan Mann, prayer leader. Consider it a form of self-care to join us and experience a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Please join us!

Reflections on an Unprecedented Year

by Larry Stoogenke, Director of Community Engagement

On March 11th, 2020, I was looking forward to spending my first day as JFS Director of Community Engagement meeting local clergy and executive directors of Greenwich senior facilities. Instead, I arrived at the office only to learn that all facilities had been shut down. Overnight, everything had changed. I was handed a list of clients enrolled in our Supermarketing for Seniors program (SFS) and told to call and inform them that they would not be receiving their weekly marketing. Instead I told them to prepare a list for two weeks’ worth of food, which would be delivered only as far as their door. Shoppers would no longer be allowed to enter their homes for a weekly chat or to help put away the groceries. While making these “cold” (in more ways than one) calls on my first day, I wondered how I was going to manage this job and, more broadly, how the world was going to navigate an unknown and unpredictable pandemic.

During the year, I listened to and learned from the community. Looking back, I am proud that we have not only been able to sustain Shabbat services every Friday as well as a monthly healing service, but have also added programs in direct response to the crisis created by the pandemic. We have a great lineup of programs for April and May of 2021: Re-Entering a Changed World, Pilates, Living Your Life Through Self-Kindness, and Parenting Post-Pandemic. We are also excited to be considering resumption of in-person visits in our Bikur Cholim program.

One year later I can state unequivocally that being Director of Community Engagement at JFS of Greenwich has been a bright light during a dark and unprecedented period. My involvement in the Greenwich community has enriched my life as I have developed relationships and witnessed boundless generosity, kindness, decency, and steadfast commitment to our community. I look forward to continuing the work of JFS of Greenwich as we all move toward better times ahead.
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES OF GREENWICH

LOVE AND LOSS IN THE TIME OF COVID

Did you lose a loved one in the past year during coronavirus lockdown? We can draw strength and comfort from others who, like you, feel the isolation of grieving without the nearness of friends and family. We will share mutual wisdom and understanding while exploring coping strategies to navigate the journey of grief in the time of COVID.

Led by Rabbi Dr. Vicki L. Axe
Doctor of Ministry in Pastoral Counseling

Please contact Melissa Knee, mknee@jfsgreenwich.org or call 203-622-1881
There is NO COST for this group, day and time TBD

Tribute Contributions to Jewish Family Services of Greenwich

Susan and Jerry Davis in memory of Simon Shlternberg
Phyllis Shapiro and Marty Flashner in memory of Ronna Sussman
Phyllis Shapiro and Marty Flashner in memory of Arnold Levine
Karen Ross and David Rosenzweig in memory of Marilyn Kornfeld
Leslie Brandeis in memory of Marilyn Kornfeld
Barbara and Evan Salep in memory of Marilyn Kornfeld
Melissa and Jonathan Knee in memory of Marilyn Kornfeld
Rita Edelston in memory of Marilyn Kornfeld
Ellie Silber in memory of Marilyn Kornfeld

Sisterhood of Temple Sholom in honor of Joan Mann
Sisterhood of Temple Sholom in honor of Cantor Sandy Bernstein
Sisterhood of Temple Sholom in honor of Ezra Konigsberg

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.

A Wizards Purim Play

A Passover Piece From Hebrew Wizards – Miriam & the Women Cross the Red Sea to Freedom

Click to watch the video

Click to watch the video

Temple Sholom

MITZVAH PROJECT / SOCIAL ACTION ENGAGEMENT FAIR

Sunday, April 25, 2021
1:00 – 3:00 pm

Join us for this free virtual fair featuring breakout rooms staffed by community organizations looking for volunteers. They will share about their not-for-profit and how you can get involved.

Perfect for volunteers of all ages, including pre-b’nai mitzvah students looking for their Mitzvah Projects. To register and receive the Zoom link, contact Lori Baden at 203-869-7191 or lori.baden@templesholom.com.
Morals and Mammon: Jewish Ethics and Business

Join GRS on Sunday, April 11, at 10:30 am (via Zoom) as Rabbi Noah Greenfield leads us in a discussion of “Morals and Mammon: Jewish Ethics and Business.”

Did you know that of the 613 mitzvot, about 100 specifically deal with business practices? Learn what Judaism has to teach us about business ethics. We’ll look at the Talmud, and study rabbinic conversations about how to bring Jewish moral values into the workplace.

An extraordinary teacher, Rabbi Noah Greenfield has a unique background in law, rabbinic studies, and business. He is a consultant at McKinsey & Co., a graduate of Yale Law School, a doctoral candidate in Near Eastern Studies at UC Berkeley, and he received his ordination from Yeshiva University. He is the proud husband of Dr. Nava Greenfield and father of their four boys. The Greenfields have lived in Brooklyn since 2014.

For more details and to register for this free class, contact GRS at info@GRS.org or 203-629-0018.

Town of Greenwich Brings Education and Morality to the Forefront in Public Discourse

First Selectman Fred Camillo proclaimed March 24, 2021 to be “Education and Sharing Day,” in Greenwich, after a year in which the pandemic took a tremendous toll on education, with in-person schooling widely curtailed for months.

Education and Sharing Day brought to the forefront the importance of morality in education, a cause championed by the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory. For more than 40 years, presidents, houses of congress, and local governments have recognized the date corresponding to the Rebbe’s birthday on the Jewish calendar, honoring an individual who brought education to the forefront of public discourse.

First Selectman Camillo called upon government officials, educators, volunteers, and citizens to “reach out to those within your communities,” as the proclamation reads, “and work to create a better, brighter, and more helpful future for all.” This is in keeping with the Rebbe’s lifetime goals and teachings. Local, state, and federal governments also issued proclamations recognizing the need to teach moral and ethical values to our youth.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory is considered the most influential rabbi in modern history. For more information on the life and teachings of the Rebbe, visit: www.TheRebbe.org

Clearing The Air Through Conversation

Have you ever asked yourself, “Just what am I supposed to repair when practicing Tikkum Olam?” Or maybe you’ve wondered just what is it that Jews believe about the afterlife…how about heaven and hell…what do we believe about Jesus? And what about the Messiah and God? Did you ever wonder if it was meant for these questions to be debatable? That Jews are supposed to struggle with profound questions about meaning and values? That we are supposed to have lifelong conversations about them?

Still scratching your head?

Come up for air, as we have at Congregation Shir Ami. In our monthly “Essential Jewish Conversations,” Cantor Jill Abramson leads discussions that address these questions. “Jewish life has long been centered around a vibrant exchange of ideas and viewpoints – a sacred conversation meant to bring meaning to our lives,” says Cantor Abramson, explaining the inspiration for “Essential Jewish Conversations.”

The conversations focus on Jewish beliefs about God, heaven and hell, the afterlife, organ donation, and more. Other classes affirm Jewish values and commitment to combating racism as well as practicing social justice. The course draws on classical Jewish texts to examine and understand these core topics.

Upcoming classes are on Mondays at 7:30 pm on April 26, May 17 and June 14. If you’d like to clear the air on a range of Jewish beliefs and values, you can register here: https://www.congregationshirami.org/programs.html. Zoom links will be sent upon registration.

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Joint Yom Ha’atzmaut event
Stamford JCC - UJA JCC Greenwich - UJF Stamford

Thursday, April 15 at 5:30 PM

Register Here

Brought to our community through the generous sponsorship of Eleanor and Mort Lowenthal and Beverly and David Stein.

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