

# UJA-JCC greenwich | JEWISH NEWS

Volume XXXV, Number 2

November 2025 | Kislev 5786

## Arab-Jewish Bridge Builder to Speak at Lion of Judah Event

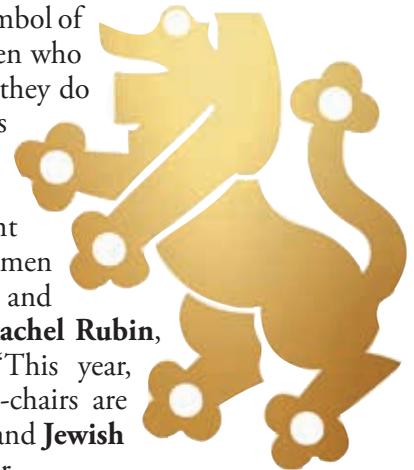
Have you met an Arab Zionist who builds bridges between Arabs and Israelis? Not yet? Then consider joining the Lions of Judah at Richards on February 18 — because guest speaker Rawan Osman's story is unique. Born in Damascus, the Syrian-Lebanese writer and activist was weaned on antisemitism. She encountered Jews for the first time after moving to France and rethought the prejudice she'd been taught. Osman went on to found *Arabs Ask*, a project that uses stories and conversations to break down stereotypes about Judaism and Israel. After the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack, she spoke out forcefully against the attack; and the following March, she gave a speech at the UN Human Rights Council calling out several Middle Eastern governments for not doing enough to help people in Gaza or to stand up to groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. Now, at the Lion of Judah event, she will discuss her experiences and share her vision for Arab-Israeli relations.

The Lion of Judah society is an international sisterhood of almost 18,000 members, who set exemplary standards of leadership and giving. The Lion of Judah is a symbol of today's Jewish woman's strength, a symbol of her caring

about the organized Jewish world and a symbol of her financial commitment. Locally, women who are Lions gather annually to celebrate all they do to build flourishing Jewish communities around the world through high impact gifts to UJA-JCC Greenwich.

"Our annual Lion of Judah event brings together philanthropic Jewish women dedicated to empowering each other and creating positive, lasting change," said **Rachel Rubin**, president of Women's Philanthropy. "This year, we're especially united in purpose." Co-chairs are **Marissa Cohen** and **Rebecca Tipermas**, and **Jewish Alumni Strong** is a philanthropic sponsor.

*The event is open to Lions of Judah who gift \$5,000 or more to the UJA-JCC Greenwich's 2026 annual campaign. For more information or to join the pride, contact [pam@ujajcc.org](mailto:pam@ujajcc.org) or 203-552-1818.*



## Chief of Greenwich Police and Regional Security Advisor Visit Israel

On September 4, 2025, the Community Security Initiative in partnership with Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs organized a delegation of 13 senior law enforcement officials from across the New York and Connecticut metropolitan area to travel to Israel for a weeklong training mission focused on counterterrorism, antisemitism, and community protection. We are so proud that **Jim Comstock**, the Greenwich Regional Security Advisor and Greenwich Police Chief, **Jim Heavey**, participated in this delegation.



The visit offered U.S. police executives, and security leaders an inside look at Israel's advanced security and counterterrorism practices. The itinerary included meetings with Israeli law enforcement counterparts, and visits to sites impacted by the October 7th, 2023, terror attacks, including Kibbutz Kfar Aza and the Nova Festival site. The group also toured Mabat 2000, the Jerusalem Police's real-time surveillance network. Participants also took part in a 9/11 memorial ceremony in Jerusalem, joined by October 7th hostage survivor Dafna Elyakim, who was kidnapped by Hamas at age 15 and held for 51 days. The group also had the opportunity to meet with the U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Mike Huckabee.

This visit is part of CSI Executive Director Mitch Silber's broader initiative to educate and sensitize U.S. law enforcement agencies to

the unique security needs of Jewish communities. For Comstock, the experience reinforced the deep connection between local Jewish community security efforts and Israel's global fight against terrorism. "Israel faces daily threats yet continues to innovate, adapt, and protect its people," he stated. "Seeing that resilience firsthand strengthens my own resolve to keep the Greenwich and Stamford Jewish communities secure." Chief Heavey and Jim Comstock told the UJA-JCC board of directors that the trip was transformative.

On September 8th, the delegation witnessed first-hand how Israeli police respond to evolving threats in real time, including a shooting at a Jerusalem bus stop that occurred as the group traveled to meet with the city's police command center. The trip also included a visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, where the group reflected on the



historical roots of antisemitism and the enduring importance of vigilance. They visited the Western Wall and toured the Old City of Jerusalem, visited the Dead Sea, and climbed Masada in the Judean Desert.

The mission underscores a central truth: the safety of Jewish communities depends not only on preparedness and training, but also on empathy and understanding.

*The Board and Staff of UJA-JCC Greenwich  
Wish You A Happy Chanukah*



SAVE THE DATE

# MOMS' NIGHT OUT

**Tuesday, February 24**  
**7:00PM**

**UJA-JCC Greenwich**

Event Chair: Rachel Barnwell

Questions? Email [cara@ujajcc.org](mailto:cara@ujajcc.org)

## November 9 Family Fun Day

PJ kids and their parents enjoyed a fun-filled afternoon including games, snacks, and sports, at the new Cohen Eastern Greenwich Civic Center.



More photos p. 23

SAVE THE DATE

# PJ LIBRARY FAMILY FUN

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1**

**Whitby School**  
**3:30PM - 5:00PM**

Event Chairs: Elise Abbruzzese & Esty Zolotnitsky

Questions?  
Email [cara@ujajcc.org](mailto:cara@ujajcc.org)

# MOMS' NIGHT OUT

*Sip, play & connect!*

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9**  
7:00 PM | UJA JCC GREENWICH

**\$55 PER PERSON**

Join us for a relaxed evening featuring a wine tasting, plus tables full of classic card and board games.

Event Co-Chairs:  
*Rachel Fryd & Becca Walters*

Register here!

## Students Explore What's Jewish about Jokes in New Melton Course



On October 22, our newest Melton course, “From Sinai to Seinfeld – Jews and their Jokes,” began here at UJA-JCC Greenwich! Led by Rabbi Pam Ehrenkranz, this class explores Jewish jokes and humor from the past and present. Over ten sessions, students will laugh and learn together as they take a deep dive into Jewish humor across different time periods.



### COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

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Lower School (203) 329-2186  
High School (203) 357-0850
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- Jewish Riverside Old Greenwich  
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- Mozaic Senior Services  
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- Temple Sholom  
(203) 869-7191
- Temple Sholom  
Selma Maisel Nursery School  
(203) 622-8121

## ReGrow Israel – a Recipient of UJA-JCC Greenwich Support



Daniele Abraham, Executive Director for ReGrow Israel, briefed a group of women at the home of **Christine Toback** on November 10. She shared with us the ongoing transitioning efforts that are transpiring from the south of Israel after 10/7 to the agricultural areas in the north. We learned of the utter destruction caused by Hezbollah rockets. While entire families were forced to evacuate, farmers remained behind to protect their land. Nonetheless, there was significant destruction to both agriculture and infrastructure. ReGrow Israel is now focusing on the use of innovative technologies specifically for fruit orchards and vineyards. UJA-JCC Greenwich previously had donated a tractor to this agency from our Israel Emergency Funds for use in the south. At the event we announced a new allocation of \$25K for use in the north of Israel.



### SHABBAT & HOLIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

- Fri., Nov. 28..... 4:10 pm
- Fri., Dec. 5..... 4:08 pm
- Fri., Dec. 12..... 4:08 pm
- First Night Chanukah  
Sun., Dec. 14  
Light after 4:50 pm
- Fri., Dec. 19..... 4:10 pm
- Fri., Dec. 26..... 4:14 pm
- Fri., Jan. 2..... 4:20 pm
- Fri., Jan. 9..... 4:26 pm
- Fri., Jan. 16..... 4:34 pm
- Fri., Jan. 23..... 4:42 pm
- Fri., Jan. 30..... 4:51 pm
- Fri., Feb. 6..... 5:00 pm
- Fri., Feb. 13..... 5:09 pm

#### Greenwich Jewish News

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



**Jewish Spirituality of  
Illness and Healing**  
with Rabbi David

**Alternating Tuesdays  
November 11 - January 20  
7:00-8:30pm via zoom**

*Free for members, \$120 for guests.  
Register at [www.congregationshirami.org](http://www.congregationshirami.org)*

CHABAD OF GREENWICH

# TORAH CLASSES

2025 - 2026



<p><b>KABBALAH OF MEANING</b> 6 Wednesday evenings - 7:30 - 8:30pm Beginning, November 5 or 6 Sunday mornings- 9:30 - 10:30 am Beginning November 2</p>	<p><b>CHASSIDIC PHILOSOPHY</b> with Rabbi Menachem Feldman Friday Mornings, 10:00 - 11:00 am</p>
<p><b>LUNCH &amp; LEARN</b> with Rabbi Menachem Feldman First Monday of every month 12:00 - 1:00 pm</p>	<p><b>GET TO KNOW THE TANYA</b> with Rabbi Menachem Feldman Shabbat 12:30 - 1:10 pm</p>
<p><b>SUNDAY MORNING TORAH</b> Studies in the Book of Exodus with Rabbi Menachem Feldman 9:30 - 10:30 am</p>	<p><b>KABBALAH &amp; CHALLAH</b> with Maryashie Deren Discover how to infuse Jewish values and traditions into your daily life, and take home challah dough to braid and bake a delightful Shabbat treat for your family. Thursdays, 9:15 am</p>
<p><b>LIFE LESSONS FROM BIBLE STORIES</b> with Rabbi Menachem Feldman Tuesdays, 12:00 - 1:00 pm</p>	<p><b>MOTHER DAUGHTER CLASS</b> with Maryashie Deren &amp; Ruby Cohen Shabbat, 10:00 - 10:30 am Beginning September 6</p>

CHABADGREENWICH.ORG

## NOAH FRANKEL



**NOAH FRANKEL  
LEAD TEEN WIZARD & GRADUATING SENIOR**

Noah Frankel is in his 14th year at Hebrew Wizards and serves as our TEEN LEADER. Starting Wizards at just 4 years old, Noah grew up in the Hebrew Wizards community. He has gone from a stellar student to teaching the younger students Hebrew and guiding them through their Torah portions and prayers. Noah chanted from the Torah for High Holidays, and delivered his heartfelt speech on his experiences at Hebrew Wizards. He is active in all of our community service activities and puts his Jewish values into action by giving back to those in need. Noah also runs track, plays guitar, and enjoys bringing the same energy and creativity from his personal passions into his leadership at Hebrew Wizards.

Temple Sholom

*Special Chanukah-themed*

# TOGETHER SHABBAT



FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

*Geared for Children 5 Years Old and Younger*

Together Shabbat is an opportunity to welcome Shabbat as a family through interactive songs, stories and prayer. Come build your child's connection to Shabbat, Judaism, and our Kehillah (community).

Join us for this Chanukah-themed Together Shabbat, followed by sufganiyot (donuts) and socializing.

**Friday, December 12**

**5:30 pm - 6:15 pm**

**at Temple Sholom**

Advance registration is required to Gina Cristino at [gina.cristino@templesholom.com](mailto:gina.cristino@templesholom.com).



300 East Putnam Avenue • Greenwich, CT • 203-869-7191 • [www.templesholom.com](http://www.templesholom.com)

## Commemorating October 7

### *For the sake of Zion: We refuse to be silent or invisible*

Two years ago on October 7, we were shocked, scared, and shattered. And then it got worse. Today, we are still recovering and rebuilding – hopeful and resilient – and basking in the joy of the videos of released hostages reuniting with their loved ones. We try not to think of what they endured and focus on the healing. We wait for the return of all the deceased hostages. Despite the fragile ceasefire, the world still feels overwhelming in terms of antisemitism and anti Zionism. We still hear the call to more violence against Jews every day on social media, in universities and at unrelated protests. We learned that antisemitism cannot be eradicated, only confronted. So what are we to do?

At the October 7 commemoration, I asked those who attended three questions, and in the answers, I believe, are our next steps:

**Have you gone to Israel since October 7?** If not, I urge you to go. The people in Israel are deeply moved when they see you – their family – coming to visit, and it's one of the best ways to show your solidarity. You can go down south or up north, to see and experience the reality with your own eyes, not through the lens of CNN or social media, with no slant, no filter. Just the shocking truth. It will stay with you in a way that you cannot yet imagine.

**Have you added one new Jewish thing to your life?** Meaning – have you gone out of your way

to buy a book from a Jewish author, celebrated a holiday more meaningfully, added a Jewish site to your travels, or intentionally pursued Jewish community? Have you thanked a non-Jewish ally for their support? There is no more effective response to antisemitism than to do more Jewish and to express gratitude to our friends. Judaism is not based in thought or feelings, it is rooted in actions.

**Are you more visibly Jewish today than you were on October 6, 2023?** Are you wearing a Jewish star, a yellow ribbon, an Israel necklace, a kippah, a lapel pin with the flag of Israel? What we need is more Jewish visibility – not less. We need not be scared into hiding or submission – we need to walk proudly in the world, as Jews, as Zionists. There is an often-quoted line from Isaiah, “For the sake of Zion I will not be silent.” We shouldn't be invisible either.

Even if you could only answer yes to one of these questions, you are helping to stand strong with the Jewish people and send a very clear message that we will not retreat, we will not hide and we will not succumb to an algorithm. We will do what Jews have done for millennia – live as Jews and brighten the world as a result.

–By Pam Ehrenkranz, CEO UJA-JCC Greenwich

### *Concert at Temple Beth El on October 5*



Micha Biton, Israeli ethnic rock musician, performed in front of an enthralled audience. Biton's life was changed on October 7, 2023, when he spent 13 hours in a safe room with his family before being evacuated. Along with his dazzling music, he shared his story of light, faith, and survival.



SAVE THE DATE

# CASINO

## Royale

01.31.26

Temple Sholom  
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# WIZARDS MAKING MITZVAH MOMENTS



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# An EGG-cellent Social Action Project

Schoke Jewish Family Services, which runs the Kosher Food Pantry in Stamford, is asking for help collecting food due to increasing food insecurity and decreasing contributions. They have asked all congregations in our area to contribute regularly for a specific food item. Congregation Shir Ami has agreed to contribute \$250 monthly for a year to purchase FRESH EGGS, which are rarely available at the Food Pantry. Prior to the start of each Shir Ami service or event, there will be an EGG BOX for those who choose to donate to place their contribution.

So far Shir Ami congregants are responding to this request



with enthusiasm. It feels very good to know that we are helping to provide families with such a nutritious food item. Of course, anyone can make a contribution anytime to help us provide fresh eggs to those in need, by donating at our Congregation Shir Ami website's Donations page and indicating in the checkout message box that your donation is for "eggs!"



# TEMPLE SHOLOM'S Mitzvah Day

Sunday, January 11, 2026  
3:00-4:30 pm at Temple Sholom

Save the date for an afternoon of hands-on social action projects for participants of all ages.

Mitzvah Day is a beloved Temple Sholom tradition - one that unites our whole community through tikkun olam (repairing the world).

Sign-up details to come at [www.templesholom.com](http://www.templesholom.com).

Organized by the Temple Sholom Norma Perlstein z'l Social Action Committee.



Temple Sholom 300 East Putnam Avenue • Greenwich, CT 06830



November 21 - 22  
**DR. DALE ATKINS**

The Turquoise Butterfly- Intergenerational Relationships A Mental Health Conversation



January 16 - 17  
**RABBI MANIS FRIEDMAN**

You Tube's Most Popular Rabbi



April 24 - 25  
**RABBI SHAIS TAUB**

Anxiety in Relationships and the workplace

BH

# CHABAD OF GREENWICH Shabbat Weekend

SCHOLARS IN RESIDENCE

May 22

**RABBI SIMON JACOBSON**

Toward a Meaningful Life

June 19 - 20

**RABBI YECHIEL KRISCH**

Faith meets Facts



Clergy's Corner

☆ **Genesis: The Soap Opera of the Torah** ☆

by Rabbi Jordie Gerson, Greenwich Reform Synagogue

When I meet with *b'nei mitzvah* kids whose bar or bat mitzvah is in the fall, I often tell them that Bereshit/Genesis, the book of the Torah we're now in, is like "The Days of Our Lives" of the Torah. For most of the kids, that's an outdated reference, so I have to quickly edit myself, adding, "the soap opera of the Torah" or "the Outer Banks of the Torah," trying to communicate that Genesis, unlike the legally oriented Leviticus or made-for-the-motion-pictures Exodus, largely concerns itself with relationships – relationships between siblings, spouses and families. And that all manner and model of family unit is on display in the first book of the Torah: blended families (a nice way of referring to polygamy), multiple generations in the same tent, siblings who cannot stop squabbling. And that, if they look closely, enough, they may even be able to find themselves there, with their own relationships, their own families.

While these are conversa-

tions I most often have with 13 year-olds, they're also true of us. Because the book of Genesis tells us that being born into a web of relationships is both rewarding and comforting, as well as challenging and demanding. As much as we have always needed each other, as Jews and as human beings, relationships – especially those we are born into and don't get to choose – can be difficult at best.

In this sense, the Torah tells us we are not alone. That sibling estrangement (Jacob and Esau), rivalry (Joseph and his brothers), favoritism (Jacob and Esau) is often part of what it means to be in a family. That strained parent-child relationships (Abraham and Isaac) are par for the course, and that it has always been so, since people first put pen to paper, and long before that even. The blessing and curse of being born into a network of people who love and resent us, adore us and sometimes find us insufferable, is as old as Judaism. And this, in and of itself,

may account for why the Torah is the bestselling book of all time (and also the most frequently stolen, bizarrely!)

But here's the beautiful part: Genesis also shows us that in every complicated and tense family system, there is always the possibility of repair and reconciliation. We see this in Joseph's revelation to and reunion with his brothers in the Egyptian court, in Jacob and Esau's embrace by the banks of the River Yabbok, and in Hagar's return home after being cast into the wilderness. In this way, Genesis teaches us that with enough maturity, humility and introspection, very few relationships are beyond repair (though some are –after the aqeda, the binding of Isaac, we never see Isaac and Abraham speak to each other again...). And though this, the idea of *teshuvah*, or return, is the central message of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, the fact that the mending of so many relationships extends well into Genesis tells us that the gates are never truly closed.

In fact there is always time to apologize and embrace, to mend broken fences, to pick up the phone, and heal those relationships that we might have believed, at one point, were utterly fractured. After all, if Joseph could forgive his brothers after they left him for dead, and reestablish a relationship, so too can we.

Because as a Rabbi who regularly sits by deathbeds and performs funeral intakes, the list of regrets I hear has one common refrain: I wish I'd loved more. I wish I hadn't held a grudge. I wish I'd called my sibling/parent and apologized. I wish I hadn't been so angry. Genesis tells us that these desires, and

their accompanying pain, are perennial, and that ever since there have been families with complicated relationships. And at the same time, there has always been the hope of repair.

This year, may we work to ensure that, at the end of our days, we don't have regrets. Let's ensure that we have done the mending, apologizing and forgiving that will heal us, those whom we love, and those we struggle to love.

Amen.

*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.*

**Lunch 'n Learn with Cantor Rubin at Greenwich Reform Synagogue**

Join us for a musical "lunch 'n learn" with Cantor Rubin, from 12 noon to 1:15 pm. We meet at Greenwich Reform Synagogue twice a month, including November 20, December 4 and 18. Contact Admin@GRS.org if you have any questions.



CONGREGATION Shir Ami

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## Friendship Circle of Fairfield County Mitzvah Volunteer Program Off to a Strong Start

On Sunday evening October 26, close to 20 sixth and seventh graders from the Fairfield County area joined the Friendship Circle MVP Program. The program is designed for Bar and Bat Mitzvah-aged youth to receive training in how to work with children with special needs and to allow them to take part in Friendship Circle activities as junior volunteers. Through activities and discussion, young teens learn about accepting differences, as well as the importance of

giving to others.

During the first session, our young volunteers spent time getting to know each other while noshing on cupcakes and other treats. Participants played games to demonstrate the importance of not placing labels on people, but seeing them as individuals. Other fun activities included a mystery auction and much more.

Volunteer Coordinator Leah Greenberg said: "I was so impressed by the boys and girls who joined us Sunday night. Their thoughtfulness and input are what make for incredible future volunteers! What a special group."

Please register for upcoming sessions at [Friendshipct.com/MVP](http://Friendshipct.com/MVP) or contact Director *Malya Shmotkin* at [malya@friendshipct.com](mailto:malya@friendshipct.com).

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BH  
CHABAD OF GREENWICH

# MENORAH LIGHTING & CONCERT

ON THE AVENUE

FEATURING **JOEY NEWGOMB** | 1st candle: Sunday, December 14 • 4:30 PM  
Greenwich Ave & Arch St

## Just Published: Notable Books by Two Greenwich Authors

With names like Maurice Sendak, Rich Cohen, Howard Fast, and Erica Jong, Fairfield County has long been home to notable Jewish writers. Psychologist **Dr. Dale Atkins** and music educator, researcher and musician **Dr. Meryl Sole** are the latest Greenwich authors to come out with new books.

Dr. Dale Atkins is well known both at home and abroad. Author of seven books and many chapters, articles and journals for popular and professional audiences, she also appears as a frequent commentator on NBC's "Today Show" and on CNN. Her new work is a children's book entitled *The Turquoise Butterfly*. This heartfelt tale explores themes of enduring love and personal growth. Each summer, young Victoria visits her Grandma Sylvia's home, where new experiences await. While Grandma displays the courage and grace of a butterfly in flight, Victoria often grapples with anxiety that leaves her feeling uncertain and frightened. Across multiple summer visits, Victoria learns to coast along with life's challenges, sustained by her grandmother's constant devotion and their deep, lasting bond.



Dr. Dale Atkins

"It is a tender story, inspired by and dedicated to my mom, Sylvia Atkins, who was a phenomenal human (and a lifelong Lion of Judah member)," Dr. Atkins told GJN. "With everything else she did, UJA and the Federation (as it was called in the past) was very important to her and to our family." *The Turquoise Butterfly* can be pre-ordered from the publisher (Mascot Kids) or online at Amazon and Barnes & Noble ahead of its release on January 6, 2026.



Dr. Meryl Sole  
Photo credit is Inga Skuratovsky

Dr. Meryl Sole, who currently serves as the president of Temple Sholom, marks her second co-authored book with *Seeking the Mystical Child: Nurturing Young Children's Identity, Faith, and Belief*. Based on qualitative research, this work introduces readers to young children from diverse cultures, contextualizing their seen and unseen spiritual experiences through the lens of ancient and contemporary Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The book's exploration of wonder, awe, and purity of heart offers meaningful insights for anyone interested in nurturing children's spiritual development.

"The idea for this book was born through documenting a young child's experiences on a trip to Israel, where she delved into music, dance and art to express her connections to God and the sacred sites she visited," Dr. Sole recounted. "I'm delighted to share the interfaith message of this book locally in our community through workshops and lectures."

*Seeking the Mystical Child* hit bookshelves this past August and is available from from the publisher (Routledge) and on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

**UJA-JCC Greenwich ANNUAL CELEBRATION**

**GALAS**

Dinner, Weitzman Youth Awards and inspiring words from Adela Cojab! Celebrate our accomplished Teen Changemakers for all their hard work on this special evening.

**AT THE BRUCE MUSEUM**  
December 3, 2025

**Co-chairs**  
Juliana & Patrick Cooper  
Jessica & David Cosloy  
Laura & Keith Rosenbloom

Register!

**Save these Dates!**

*Dignity Grows Pack*

**Thursday, February 5 - Adult Event**  
**Sunday, May 3 - Family Event**  
**At UJA-JCC Greenwich**

**EVENT CHAIR: NATASHA LUBOSKI**

Questions? Email [cara@ujajcc.org](mailto:cara@ujajcc.org)

UJA\*JCC greenwich | dignitygrows

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# Lunch & Learn

Thursdays, 12:30–1:30 pm, in person & on Zoom. Register at [ujajcc.org](http://ujajcc.org) for Zoom access. To attend in person with lunch, register online or call 203.552.1818 no later than the day before the program.



*December 4*

## **PUBLICIZING THE CHANUKAH MIRACLE: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIFE BALANCE CHALLENGES**

*Rabbi Gisel Baler*

The spiritual goal of the Chanukah ritual is to publicize the miracle of the oil. We will examine the Jewish perspective on how to forge a balance between creating distance that fosters privacy and providing a model of accessibility.

*December 11*

## **CHANUKAH FLAME LETTERS**

*Sofer Neil Yerman*

The 22 Hebrew consonants are seen as fundamental energy structures behind creation. Each written letter reflects a denser expression of a more subtle, original form made of light or fire. With the Festival of Light approaching, let's explore the sacredness of these letters.

*December 18*

## **WHO LEFT THE LIGHTS ON?**

*Rabbi Greg Wall*

Chanukah, our Festival of Light, was the last holiday added to the Jewish calendar by the sages, and only gets a short mention in the Talmud. Yet our always illuminating mystical tradition teaches us that these days were set aside from the start. Whose bright idea was that?

*December 25*

*No Class - Christmas*

*January 8*

## **DIGGING IN THE DIRT: THE SYMBOLIC NATURE OF CAIN & ABEL**

*Rabbi Joshua Strom*

Cain and Abel are the first human-born children in the Torah, and within eight verses of their birth in Genesis, Cain kills his brother. Why did he do it? Did Cain feel remorse afterwards?

*January 15*

## **DO YOU HAVE TO KEEP CHOOSING US? THE ORIGINS OF JEWISH HUMOR**

*Avinoam Patt, PhD*

Arguably, Jewish humor is born out of the chasm between the "chosen people's" destined glory and their desperate straits. Did it stem from ancient texts or develop as a modern coping strategy for ancient tsures? We'll trace Jewish humor through the Torah, the Talmud and Tevye.

*January 22*

## **THE DREAD CHAPTER 38 - TAMAR AND YEHUDA VS. THE BOOK OF RUTH**

*Rabbi Robert Abrams*

We'll compare the two stories and observe how they connect. Does the first serve as the foundation for the second? And what do the names of the places and people tell us?

*January 29*

## **TU B'SHVAT SEDER**

*Tamar Aronowitz*

Join us in ringing in the "New Year for the Trees" as we savor symbolic foods and plant seeds of meaning, community and intention for the four seasons ahead.

*February 5*

## **MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF**

*Robert Lichtman*

Does a name recall history or does it determine destiny? How do the names we ascribe to God define our relationship? What is a "Jewish" name?

**THE LUNCH AND LEARN PROGRAM IS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY RITA EDELSTON.**

# Fall Brunch, October 28 at the Milbrook Club



**Co-chairs: Claudine Cohen, Jessica Hirsch, Anna Pratolongo, Karen Ross**



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Christine Toback, Jane Weitzman,  
Bonnie Wreschner,  
Lindsay Zaken and  
Mugs Zales.



## Many Generations, One Mission: Feeding Those in Need

On September 14, UJA-JCC Greenwich brought together the Jewish Greenwich community in an inspiring show of empathy and teamwork. More than 90 volunteers – children, teens, and adults alike – joined forces to pack more than 13,000 meals for local individuals and families who face food insecurity. The event was filled with energy, laughter, and a shared sense of purpose as everyone worked side by side, turning a Sunday

afternoon into a true *mitzvah*. It was a beautiful reminder of what can happen when our community collaborates in the spirit of *tikkun olam* – repairing the world through small but powerful acts of giving. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, thousands of our neighbors in need will have nutritious meals to enjoy, and our community is a little stronger and more connected because of it.



We are pleased to announce

# Forbes 2025 Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-In-State



**Beth Cutler**  
Founder, President

2025 Forbes Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State: Awarded February 2025; Data compiled by SHOOK Research LLC based on the time period from 9/30/23 - 9/30/24 (Source: Forbes.com) The Forbes Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State rating algorithm is based on the previous year's industry experience, interviews, compliance records, assets under management, revenue and other criteria by SHOOK Research, LLC. Investment performance is not a criterion. Self-completed survey was used for rating. This rating is not related to the quality of the investment advice and based solely on the disclosed criteria. Investment products and services are offered through Wells Fargo Advisors Financial Network, LLC (WFAFN), Member SIPC. Merritt Point Wealth Advisors is a separate entity of WFAFN.

## Generation Gives' Fall Session Inspires Young Participants with Tales from a Live Hero

UJA-JCC Greenwich's middle school community service program, which meets six times a year, held an awesome first session in early fall. Generation Gives kicked things off with some goofy ice breakers so that the group could get to know one another.

Next we moved inside for a very special zoom from Daniel Ben all the way from Gilboa, Israel. Daniel was first connected to the Federation world when he was a teen emissary in West Hartford more than 20 years ago. Since then, he has kept in touch with UJA-JCC Greenwich through his work at a variety of organizations where we allocate funds.

He shared with the group the story of the Sandwich Club, which was started when a hungry teen was saving his food to take home instead of eating at the community center where he was in an after-school activity. Why? This big brother said that he couldn't fathom eating when he knew he was going home to his siblings who would not get any dinner. Thus, the Sandwich Club was born.

Now dozens of teens learn skills, eat and make food that serves many thousands of children who face food insecurity each day through local schools.

If this wasn't enough to really captivate the middle schoolers, Daniel let them know that he had actually arrived home just twenty minutes earlier from reserve duty in Gaza!

The kids got to learn about and meet some heroes all in an afternoon. Then they put their learning into action and turned around to help feed our local community by making 120 packed lunch bags for homeless people at Lifting Up Westchester.



### GRS Celebrates Chanukah



Celebrate Chanukah with Greenwich Reform, beginning the night of Sunday, December 14 and ending Monday, December 22. The Religious School will celebrate starting Sunday morning, December 14, and candles will be lit on the giant GRS hand-crafted Chanukiah through the week. Join us for Chanukah Shabbat on Friday, December 19, with Tot Services at 5:15, dinner at 5:45, and family services and Chanukah lighting at 6:30 pm. *Please RSVP for dinner by calling GRS at 203-629-0018 or emailing Admin@GRS.org.*

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## UJA-JCC Professional Staff Lead and Learn

Rabbi Pam Ehrenkranz was recently appointed to the Melton Rabbinic Council. Members of the Melton Rabbinic Council serve in an advisory capacity guiding Melton as it pursues new directions and special initiatives.



Recently, **Cara Levine**, Program Associate at the UJA-JCC Greenwich, participated in two enriching professional development opportunities: PJ Library’s New York Partnership Day and the Honeycomb Facilitator Training.

At PJ Library’s Partnership Day, Cara joined fellow professionals in exploring innovative ways to strengthen PJ Library programming through collaboration with local organizations and institutions. The event offered valuable insights into incorporating Jewish values and traditions into PJ Library experiences and engaging families in meaningful ways.

The Honeycomb Facilitator Training brought together educators and program leaders from across the United States – and even one from Israel – to focus on Jewish youth philanthropy. For UJA-JCC Greenwich, this training was especially impactful, with the aim of equipping Cara with new tools, strategies, and inspiration to further develop the Teen Changemakers program. The experience emphasized



the importance of empowering teens to lead with purpose and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

These opportunities reflect Cara’s ongoing commitment to enhancing Jewish life and learning at UJA-JCC Greenwich and beyond.

**Cori SaNogueira** attended JFNA’s Annual Campaign Bootcamp. Cori spent the day learning from and with colleagues from across the tri-state area about best practices in donor engagement. It was a jam-packed day with inspiring speakers. Cori is seen below with the delegation from UJF of Stamford, New Canaan and Darien.



# JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES OF GREENWICH



## CEO's Corner

### Finding Light in a Challenging World

The world feels heavy right now. The lingering effects of Covid, the divisions in our country, and the constant stream of troubling headlines can leave even the most hopeful among us disheartened. Conversations often circle around the same frustrations. Like many, I find myself in a near-constant state of awareness—always tuned in, always ready to respond when needed.

That vigilance can be exhausting, but it also comes with a gift: the ability to notice the good with equal intensity. This fall, the foliage has seemed brighter, the air crisper, and the beauty of Connecticut more vivid than ever. I am profoundly grateful to live and work in a state led by elected officials who care deeply about all people, and to be part of a community that values compassion, justice, and human dignity.



At JFS of Greenwich, our work reflects the complexity of the world around us. We serve a beautifully diverse community, yet our connection to Jewish values remains our guiding light. This year, we've expanded our partnerships—interfacing with the State of Connecticut Hate Crimes Initiative, Common Circles (a nonprofit that creates interactive experiences to foster empathy, reduce bias, and build inclusive communities), and launching *Coping with Antisemitism*, a new JFS support group for families seeking strength and understanding during these difficult times.

Recently, I celebrated the remarkable growth of JFS of Greenwich with our former board members—the very people who built this agency more than 40 years ago. We gathered for our Legacy and Leadership Breakfast, a meaningful opportunity to honor the visionaries who laid the foundation for our work today. Every one of our programs is rooted in the vision they established—from Supermarketing for Seniors to our immigration services, which trace their origins to resettling Russian Jewish families after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Their stories of resilience and pride reminded me that even in turbulent times, goodness persists. The world can be confusing and stressful—but if we remain aware, we can channel that same energy toward recognizing the extraordinary good that surrounds us every day.

May we all find ways to let that light shine through.

With immense gratitude,

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

### Tribute Contributions to JFS of Greenwich

- Erica and Matt Buchsbaum in honor of Debbie Rosmarin
- Esther and Michael Bushell in honor of Barbara Epstein
- Robert Butler in memory of Phyllis and James McDonald
- Doris and Allen Chodock in memory of Phyllis and James McDonald
- Jessica Fenton in memory of Phyllis McDonald
- Phyllis Shapiro and Marty Flashner in memory of Steven Diamond
- Phyllis Shapiro and Marty Flashner in memory of Ira Bernstein
- Phyllis Shapiro and Marty Flashner in memory of Henry Gunders
- Phyllis Shapiro and Marty Flashner in memory of Sally Heller
- Randy Greenberg in memory of Phyllis McDonald
- Peter Hart in memory of Phyllis and James McDonald
- Roger Lob and Nancy Heller in memory of Rita Lynch
- Beth Jabick in honor of the JFS Team
- Mickey Robinson and Catherine Ladnier in memory of Phyllis and James McDonald
- Pauline Maerov in memory of Phyllis and James McDonald
- Beverly Magida in memory of Phyllis and James McDonald
- David McDonald in memory of Phyllis McDonald
- Carolyn and Jim McArdle in memory of Phyllis and James McDonald
- Larry Phillips in honor of Sandy and Steve Soule
- Richard Schwartz in memory of Steven and Betsy Corman
- Trudy Selib in memory of Phyllis McDonald
- Sandy and Steve Soule in memory of Phyllis McDonald
- Anne Wichman in memory of Arthur Wichman

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.

### JFS of Greenwich Honors Former Board Members

On Thursday, October 23, Jewish Family Services of Greenwich welcomed former board members to its Legacy and Leadership Breakfast, a heartfelt gathering to honor their lasting contributions and reconnect over the agency's continued growth.

The event brought together past and present leaders, staff, and supporters for a morning of reflection and celebration. Guests heard inspiring remarks from CEO Rachel Kornfeld, who shared updates on the agency's evolving services and the impact of its work in the community.

"This was our way of saying thank you," said Kornfeld. "Our former board members helped lay the foundation for the agency we are today. Their leadership and dedication continue to shape our mission and inspire our work."

Attendees toured the JFS office space, now home to a broader range of services including mental health care, case management, and workforce development. The informal breakfast offered a chance to reconnect, share stories, and celebrate the legacy of those who helped build the JFS foundation.

With a welcoming atmosphere, the event underscored the power of community and the enduring value of compassionate leadership.



## Greenwich Reform Synagogue Choir Creates Beautiful Shabbat Music

Under the leadership of Cantor Michelle Rubin, members of the Greenwich Reform Synagogue choir enjoy making beautiful music for our congregation. Join us for Shabbat services on December 5, led by Rabbi Jordie Gerson and Cantor Rubin. Come for hor d'oeuvres, wine and seltzer, plus good conversation at 6 pm, followed by Shabbat services at 6:30 pm.

For more information, call 203-629-0018 or email Admin@GRS.org.



## Saturday Learning with Shir Ami

Rabbi David of Congregation Shir Ami is co-teaching a class with Rabbi Rachel Barenblat from Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires in order to provide a year-long spiritual journey including uplifting feminine and feminist voices too long sidelined from Jewish life. This weekly Torah series will build upon Shir Ami's core commitment to weekly learning based on openness, questioning and deep meaning that is modern and relevant.

Soul Spa is free for members and non-members alike, and no prior experience is necessary. Drop in as frequently or infrequently as you like. Our learning community is deep, real, safe, vibrant and refreshing. You will find the link to join the class on our website: [www.congregationshirami.org](http://www.congregationshirami.org).

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## Temple Sholom Teens Participate in Meaningful Tikkun Olam on Yom Kippur

Temple Sholom’s teen community kicked off the Jewish New Year with a meaningful and symbolic volunteer opportunity on Yom Kippur. More than 40 8th-12th graders – many of them observing the fast for the holiday – headed to the temple’s Youth Lounge where they were greeted by Youth/Teen Advisor Jessica Baden for the task of sorting the synagogue’s High Holiday food collection for Neighbor to Neighbor.

“Before unpacking the food donations, we took the time to reflect on how the Yom Kippur fast connects to food insecurity and the Jewish value of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world)” said Baden. “We also talked about Neighbor to Neighbor and how this organization strengthens the Greenwich community by providing access to nutritious food in an atmosphere based on kindness and respect.”

After the teens removed the non-perishable items from the donation bags, they worked together in small groups to organize the food by category – making the transition to the food pantry’s shelves easier for their staff and volunteers.

Temple Sholom would like to thank this dedicated group of teens for continuing an important social action initiative, and express its gratitude for all of the food donations the temple received heading into the High Holidays.

*To learn more about upcoming Social Action projects at Temple Sholom, visit [www.templesholom.com](http://www.templesholom.com).*



BH

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## DONATE A VEHICLE

Did you know that you can donate a used vehicle (car, truck, van, SUV, or boat) in ANY condition to UJA-JCC Greenwich?

We are accepting vehicles in CT at this time. All you have to do is head to [ujajcc.org](http://ujajcc.org) and fill out our donation form! Proceeds from the sale of your vehicle help care for those in need here in Greenwich, in Israel and around the world.








## WIZARDS WACKY SUNDAY- COLORS WE LOVE



**THEME: NOAH AND THE RAINBOW OF COLORS.**

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## WIZARDS SUKKAH CELEBRATION



THE WIZARDS HAD A BLAST DECORATING AND CELEBRATING IN THE SUKKAH WITH ICE CREAM SANDWICHES AND FUN ON THE BEACH.

WE HAD A PUMPKIN DECORATION CONTEST AND ENJOYED SINGING SONGS IN THE SUKKAH AND LEARNING ALL ABOUT OUR HARVEST HOLIDAY.

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## Reflecting on Temple Sholom's Fall Speakers: Eylon Levy and Abigail Pogrebin

Two distinguished speakers presented at Temple Sholom this fall as part of the synagogue's dynamic programming line-up. "We were thrilled to be able to offer not one, but two prominent speakers to empower, engage and inspire the congregation before and after the High Holidays," said Executive Director Lori Baden.

Eylon Levy, a globally recognized voice for Israel in the October 7 War, traveled to the temple on September 8 for a program generously sponsored by Alexandra and David Hochman. The former Spokesman for the State of Israel captivated the crowd of 150 people (including many students) with a timely discussion on "How to Speak about Israel with Confidence."

Journalist and author Abigail Pogrebin spoke at the synagogue on October 29, sharing insights

into the arc of her career, including the experience of interviewing 62 famous American Jews – from Ruth Bader Ginsburg to Steven Spielberg – about their religious identity. The former President of Central Synagogue delved deeper into her book, *My Jewish Year: 18 Holidays: One Wondering Jew*, as well as her time as an Emmy-winning producer at CBS News' 60 Minutes and at PBS. This evening was generously sponsored by an anonymous donor.

Temple Sholom would like to thank Congregant Gavriel Rosenfeld, President of the Center for Jewish History in New York City and Professor of History at Fairfield University, for moderating both discussions.

To learn more about Temple Sholom's programming, please visit our website: [www.templesholom.com](http://www.templesholom.com).



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# Changemakers Begin Year with Learning and Fun. They Nailed It!

Serious learning paired with amusing antics has been the theme to the start of the fifth cohort of Teen Changemakers. Between silly “get to know you” games and meaningful community service, the first session of group bonding made the record-breaking group size feel a bit smaller. Teens also made lasagnas with no bake pasta sheets, which were then donated to JFS of Greenwich’s mobile pantry clients. Other meetups have emphasized Jewish values, discussion of social justice areas to focus on for the year and creating a mission statement. Israel of course is a topic that comes up every session, as we discuss as a group the importance of *Kol yisrael arevim zeh bazeh*. Since our discussion topics can be a bit heavy these days, we also include moments of Jewish joy. So off we went with an intense “Nailed It!” Competition. The cake to decorate? The map of Israel!



## Tamim Academy of Greenwich: Nurturing Minds, Hearts, and Jewish Identity

Tamim Academy of Greenwich is proud to offer Bridge K, Kindergarten, and 1st Grade programs in a warm, individualized, and values-driven environment. As part of the national Tamim Academy network, we are committed to excellence in both general and Judaic studies, ensuring every child grows academically, emotionally, and spiritually.

At Tamim, we believe that every child deserves a joyful and meaningful foundation. Our educators meet each student where they are – nurturing curiosity, fostering confidence, and cultivating a lifelong love of learning. With small class sizes, hands-on experiences, and thoughtful, individualized instruction, children are supported in reaching their fullest potential.

Now more than ever, a Jewish education is not only enriching – it is essential. At Tamim Academy, students are surrounded by warmth, values, and community, empowering them to build a strong identity and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

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We invite parents to schedule a personal tour and experience Tamim firsthand.



## The Gift of Life: Why Is Donating Blood a Mitzvah?

by Sandy Soule

Have you taken it for granted that if you ever need blood transfusions, a donation will be there for you, safely and securely, matching your own blood type? On the other hand, despite innumerable Red Cross requests to donate blood, you haven't responded because you were too busy or felt squeamish? Blood donations seemed an abstraction to me too until someone close to me was ill, needing many weekly transfusions. Without a safe and reliable blood supply, he would be dead.

Greenwich Reform Synagogue hosts a Red Cross blood drive six times a year, making it easy for the surrounding community to fulfill the *mitzvah* of donating blood. You can easily sign up online, donate blood, enjoy the free snacks and friendly conversation, and be on your way in an hour or so. If you need a little more encouragement, consider these reasons:

In Judaism, donating blood is a *mitzvah*. Here's why:

**Pikuach Nefesh** (Saving a Life): Over-riding almost every other Jewish law, blood donations are life-saving. The Talmud (Sanhedrin 37a) teaches: "Whoever saves one life, it is as if they saved the entire world."

**Chesed** (Kindness): Donating blood is a selfless act of kindness, because donors are not compensated. Helping strangers in need follows the Torah's commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18).

**Lo Ta'arod Al Dam Re'echa** (Do Not Stand Idly by the Blood of Your Neighbor): We can't ignore when someone's life is in danger (Leviticus 19:16); donating blood is essential when lives depend on a safe blood supply.

Donating blood save lives, shows compassion, and fulfills moral and religious obligations. It exemplifies the highest ideals of Jewish ethics – preserving life, acting with kindness, and caring for others. Not eligible to donate? Just find a friend or family member who can donate on your behalf!

Make your New Year's resolution for 2026 to donate blood as often as you are eligible, and if you can't, convince someone else to do so in your place!



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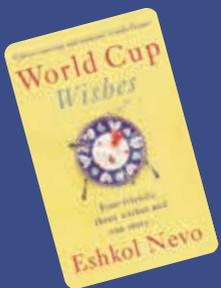
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## PJ Library Family Fun Day on November 9



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### From Antisemitism to Arab Zionism

WITH RAWAN OSMAN

**Rawan Osman** is a Syrian-born, German activist, content creator and writer who advocates normalization with Israel. Raised in Lebanon and educated in Germany, she is a self-described Arab Zionist.

FEBRUARY 18, 2026  
6:30 PM

Co-chairs:  
Marissa Cohen and Rebecca Tipermas

Event Sponsor: Jewish Alumni Strong



## Our Candles Still Shine Brightly

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