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# THE JEWISH JOURNAL

A publication of The Buffalo Jewish Federation

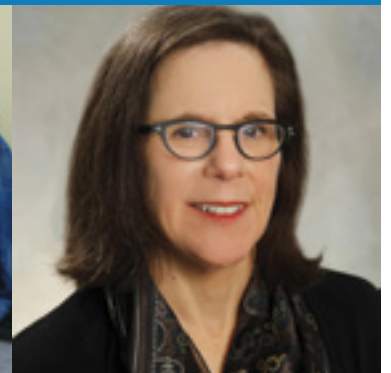
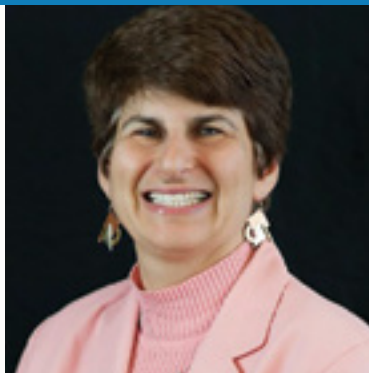
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JULY 2018 | TAMMUZ-AV 5778

JEWISH BUFFALO'S  
WOMEN

*Difference  
Makers*

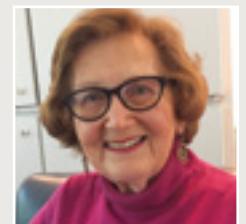
(6-20)



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SAVE THE DATE  
AUGUST 19  
(1, 20)



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JANET DESMON  
HONORED  
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MAXINE SELLER-  
ISRAEL IN 1949  
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The Magazine of Western New York

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BUFFALO JEWISH FEDERATION



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TO THE Jewbilee



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July 2018

Editor's Note



Ellen Goldstein, Editor

The July issue is a first for *The Jewish Journal* - a special issue devoted to women who are Difference Makers here in Western New York. From “B”—Marjorie Godin Bryen to “Z”—Leslie and Kayla Zemsky... and fourteen others in between, this issue features stories on seventeen women who impact the world—each and every day. Maybe one of them is your next door neighbor, your cousin, your teacher, your doctor, your friend. They live their lives quietly, doing *mitzvot* wherever they go.

The issue also highlights three Lions of Judah (LOJ)—Susie Altman, Holly Levy and Ellen Weiss—and their inspiration for making a commitment to philanthropy. Lions of Judah also make a difference in Buffalo. Read about Lions Janet Desmon, the JCC's new Ralph Kushner Award winner (page 35), and Dr. Maxine Seller's trip to Israel in 1949 (page 44).

Please pay attention to page 1 and page 20, where you will find new information about **The Great Buffalo Jewbilee** taking place **Sunday, August 19**, as well as the fun family Jamboree to the Jewbilee Thursday, August 16, which kicks off the festival, and also the Chai 5K walk and run sponsored by The Cantor's Assembly the morning before the grand opening.

Wishing you a month of joyous summer. Buffalo Garden Walk is the weekend of July 28-29 (see 5 Things on page 23). If you are walking the Walk, I'll be in my backyard. Here's to a bountiful summer.

Ellen Goldstein - Editor

On The Cover



Jewish Women Difference Makers are the July stars!  
(Top from left): Marjorie Godin Bryen, Leslie and Kayla Zemsky, Deborah Goldman.  
(Middle row from left): Leslie Shuman Kramer, Cathy Shuman Miller, Marilyn Shuman, Dr. Bianca Weinstock-Guttman, Ellen Steinfeld, Gretchen Gross, Cantor Barbara Ostfeld.  
(Bottom row from left): Brocha Leah Greenberg, Rivky Greenberg, Lea Greenberg, Chani Labkovski, Sophia Veffter, Sheri Rodman.

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Editor, Public Relations Director.....Ellen S. Goldstein



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# A Message from Steven J. Weiss

President, Buffalo Jewish Federation

At the end of *Parashat Beha'alotcha* from a couple of weeks ago, we read "Now this man Moses was exceedingly humble, more so than any person on earth." (Numbers 12:3) The context for this statement was that Miriam and Aaron had criticized their brother Moses for divorcing his wife, Zipporah, allowing Moses to be ready and available at any moment for prophetic communications with G-d and explaining that while Moses did not point it out, he had been privileged to attain a much higher level of prophecy than his siblings. The commentary is helpful in understanding that true humility is not self-deprecation or underestimating one's true worth and it is also not simply a lack of boastfulness where we feel superior to others but just don't tell anyone about it. Rather, the commentary explains that Moses was fully aware of his greatness, but ascribed his greatness to G-d rather than to himself, thereby subordinating his ego.



Steven J. Weiss

In his recent sermon on this Torah portion, Rabbi Ori Bergman of Kehillat Ohr Tzion, spoke about what it means to be a "simple Jew", referencing his grandfather and the Baal Shem Tov, a mystical rabbi considered the founder

of Hasidic Judaism, with the idea that every Jew has value and each contributes to the betterment of society and our community regardless of ability to read Hebrew or understand the theology.

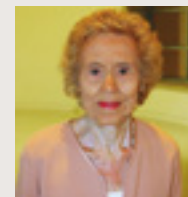
I see these attributes of humility and being a simple Jew as perfectly aligning with each other and with the mission of Buffalo Jewish Federation (BJF). We each need to be humble in order to acknowledge the G-d given gifts and unique qualities in ourselves and in others, and to recognize the value that others bring to the table. Many of us are simple Jews, however we may choose to define that term. The mission of BJF is to be welcoming to all, and to create a vibrant and caring Jewish community. Once again, we have identified unique talents and gifts of members of our diverse community and humbly celebrate in this issue of *The Jewish Journal* several of our community's Difference Makers. Enjoy.

## Upstanders

The *JJWNY* is pleased to highlight three Upstanders, individuals who stand up for what is right, and are not bystanders.



**Dr. Sol Messinger** was honored by Kadimah Academy at its Annual Dinner last month for his generosity to the school, the Jewish Community, and the greater WNY community. Dr. Messinger, who as a child was a passenger on the ill-fated SS St. Louis, continues to stand up for Jewish values, Jewish education and speaking out against injustice.



**Sofia Veffler** is a founder of the Holocaust Resource Center (HRC) and The Anne Frank Project of Buffalo State College. Mrs. Veffler is a Holocaust Survivor from Amsterdam, Holland and a highly sought-after member of the HRC Speakers Bureau. She is dedicated to educating "students about the lessons of the Holocaust and global human rights issues." The HRC recently created the Sophia Veffler Upstander Award, to be given to an individual who passionately provides educational and leadership opportunities to young people based on the mission of



the Holocaust Resource Center.

Dr. Katherine S. Conway-Turner, Ph.D., is the winner of the first Sophia Veffler Upstander Award, and is the ninth president of Buffalo State College. She oversees and manages more than 1,700 faculty, staff and administrators who provide more than 200 academic degree and certificate programs to 8,500 undergraduates and 1,000 graduate students. President Conway-Turner's vision for Buffalo State is to become "Buffalo's College" through engagement, excellence and social responsibility.

★ GUEST SPEAKER ★  
Journalist David Gregory

# SAVE THE DATE

## 10.11.18

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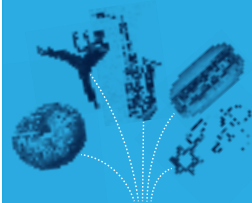
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**Sunday, August 19, 2018**

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BUFFALO JEWISH FEDERATION



## NEW staff roles at the Buffalo Jewish Federation this summer!

Federation CEO Rob Goldberg is pleased to announce that Mandy Weiss will be taking on a new role overseeing community planning and allocations at the Federation this summer. After engaging hundreds of young families through PJ Library and PJ Our Way over the past 3 years, Mandy will be helping to develop a new process for resource allocation to local Jewish organizations as well as a new Overseas Allocation process. "I've loved working with so many families with young children in the area as well as building relationships with community partners and being a part of a network of professionals that leads such innovative initiatives," Mandy told the *Jewish Journal of WNY*. "I'm grateful to everyone with whom I've worked for their ongoing commitment to growing a bright future for young families in Buffalo and WNY! It really does take a village!"

Nicole Bard, Buffalo Jewish Federation's Engagement Associate, who has been with the Federation full-time since January, will be adding PJ Library and PJ Our Way to her Engagement



Mandy Weiss and Nicole Bard

Portfolio. Nicole graduated from UB last December and is the lead professional for Nickel City Jews – the Federation's platform for engaging with individuals and weaving networks of emerging adults (21 through early 40s). In addition, Nicole worked with Miriam Abramovich, Engagement Director at the Buffalo Jewish Federation, to plan and execute Buffalo's first Engagement Conference this past spring and they are also leading the planning for designing this fall's first Buffalo Israel Experience.

## Summer Golf & Wine Celebration is August 6

Temple Beth Zion, Congregation Shir Shalom and Buffalo Jewish Federation will present the Annual Summer Celebration, this year benefitting TBZ and Shir Shalom. The event will take place at Transit Valley Country Club on Monday, August 6 and the entire community is invited to attend.

The event includes the Twentieth Annual Golf Tournament, the only Golf Tournament in WNY that supports the Jewish Community. But for those who are not interested in golfing, you can take a luxury air-conditioned coach to tour wineries in Niagara County.

The Wine Tour and Golf Tournament both begin with a fabulous lunch on the outdoor patio at Transit Valley. After lunch, those on the Wine Tour board the luxury conditioned coach to tour wineries and (new this year) a distillery in Niagara County. Seating is limited, so



don't delay in reserving your spot. The Golf Tournament has a 12:30 shotgun start with 18 holes on the premier TVCC golf course. Golfers love the "best in foursome" format that allows them to play their own ball.

Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres follow the Wine Tour and Golf Tournament. The event is capped off with a delicious dinner and rousing auction in the country club dining room.

**If you are interested in participating, donating auction items and/or being a sponsor for this event, please contact Julie Feldman at (716) 836-6565, Ext. 134.**



# Federation Awarded Grant for Couples of Multiple Faiths

Buffalo's Jewish Federation is one of 10 Federations nationally to receive an inaugural \$5,000 grant for work with individuals who are not Jewish but who are part of Jewish families or otherwise engaged with Jewish life. Facilitated by Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) and funded by the National Center to Encourage Judaism, our Federation has demonstrated—through the grant process and ongoing engagement work—vision, a careful understanding of 21st century engagement structures, creativity, and diligence in program execution.



Each \$5,000 grant will contribute toward innovation in working with couples of multiple faiths by testing a new idea or by expanding an existing idea that was recently developed. In other communities, new peer connectors will be employed to work uniquely with interfaith families, ongoing conversation series will be developed targeted toward interfaith couples with young children, and Introduction to Judaism resources will be newly developed.

In Buffalo, couples of multiple faiths will have the opportunity to explore Jewish wisdom and culture in small group conversations and large-group programs through Mussar for Couples. The curriculum for Mussar for Couples will include living the Jewish calendar through celebrating holidays and festivals in peer-designed gatherings and through experiencing a curriculum of Mussar Middot/character traits, which work fluidly with the Jewish calendar, emphasizing a celebration of Jewish time. As a complement to experiencing holidays and festivals as a cohort, daily personal Mussar practices will be designed to direct participants to explore how the Mussar/Middah they are practicing aligns with the

upcoming or current Jewish holiday or festival.

This grant will be administered through the new Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning and Mussar for Couples will be led by Susan Goldberg Schwartz, the Center's Director of Adult Engagement.

The National Center to Encourage Judaism (NCEJ) is a private foundation that funds efforts to help non-Jews, including those in interfaith marriages, to understand and appreciate what Judaism has to offer. Its ultimate objective is to help Judaism grow by encouraging conversion, helping lapsed Jews rediscover Judaism, and helping those in interfaith marriages see the benefits of raising their children as Jews.

*The Buffalo Jewish Federation is grateful to JFNA and the National Center to Encourage Judaism for this opportunity and look forward to launching great work with their support and to our ongoing partnership. If you have any questions or are interested in learning more about how to become a participant in Mussar for Couples, contact Susan Schwartz at [susan@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:susan@buffalojewishfederation.org).*

## Federation Staff Team Gathered at PJ Library Conference



Federation staff were invited to join communities around the world for the 10th Annual PJ Library Conference in Springfield, MA.

Pictured (from left): Rob Goldberg, Keren Green, Nicole Bard, Mandy Weiss, PJ Library Founder and philanthropist Harold Grinspoon, and Randi Morkisz.



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# Buffalo Lions of Judah...the Story Continues

*The Jewish Journal* began profiling our Lions of Judah (LOJ) this Spring. Women's Philanthropy continues to play a vital role in our Campaign. We are very thankful and appreciative to all of our donors, several of them who are highlighted in this issue, and some who are also Lions. As you read on, you will learn about three more extraordinary Lions who have been and continue to be leaders in our community.



## Susie Altman



Susie Altman is a past Chair of the Women's Philanthropy Cabinet of Buffalo Jewish Federation. She has continued to serve on the cabinet and volunteer for many years. She and her husband, Michael, have been table

captains at the Federation's annual Campaign Kick-Off since the event began in 1998.

"I became a Lion because I want to feel that I am doing my part as long as I am able. I would rather give money to The Campaign for Jewish Buffalo, knowing it helps people everywhere. I have a strong sense of right and wrong, and since I can afford to be a Lion, I will give as long as I can, as well as increase my gift, too. I love the fact that I have met so many outstanding women at Lion of Judah events like the International LOJ Conference. These women came from all over, and because I was a Lion, I was there, too."

"Being a Lion is so important to me, because I feel a strong sense of pride in making my own donation at this level. I have always given... even when I had no

money, I gave. My mother always gave *tzedakah* on her own, and she passed that value on to me. Giving as a woman for the community is so important. Giving apart from my husband gives me so much pride as an individual. My family --all 5 of them--were so proud to see how active I was in the community."

"The key factor which got me so intent on giving on my own was our pivotal 1984 trip to Israel. The Levites and Maisels chaired that trip of more than 30 people, and that mission was so amazing that it produced an entire generation of leaders

for the next 20 years. That journey put a strong desire to give in all of us, and it produced friendships that remain to this day, 30 + years later. Each time I have gone to Israel, the trips have been amazing. All my kids went to Israel, too."

"I feel that since Federation was such a part of our lives—mine and Michael's—that it really was a great influence on our children. Locally, Frank and Jessica chaired Super Sunday, and are chairs of the Community Kick-Off Event again this year. And Jessica is a Ruth & Milton Kahn Young Leadership Award winner. Currently, 7 of our 9 (soon to be 11) grandchildren attend Jewish day schools. It's a joy working with the Jewish community in Buffalo. We may be small in number, but we are certainly mighty. Look at all the Lions—over 60 of us. This is a really incredible number."

## Holly Levy



like the late Ann Holland Cohn, and Ruth Kahn Stovroff, who stayed engaged and involved for decades."

Holly and Jordon actually got involved with Federation through Kevin and Rise' Kulick—Kevin is Jordy's first cousin—as well as through the National Young Leadership program. Through their example and that of others, the Levys were surrounded by people who were committed to the present and future of the Jewish community, and they found it very inspiring. "I felt that Federation gave me a purpose," Holly said.

"I think everyone can and should make a difference in this life, whether through a simple act of kindness, through a generous spirit, going all the way to being a real philanthropist. To me, this means more than money. It is about engagement and involvement on a larger scale. Everyone should have that in their life—even if on a small scale—being involved with things that take time, energy, money. Building community is all about **personal** investments, not just financial investment. I always said, the more you invest of yourself and what you have, the more you get back, and I really believe it!"

"Now with the Women's Movement and #metoo movement, women's voices are being heard. But the LOJ program has **always** given Jewish women their voice. The manner in which the Federation movement and Lion program are structured have given women an important voice for decades. When I



## Sunday, August 19, 2018

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## Ellen Weiss



Ellen Romer Weiss was chair of the Women's Philanthropy Campaign for 2013, 2014 and 2015 along with her husband, current Buffalo Jewish Federation President Steve J. Weiss, who was the chair of the General Campaign. In 2008, she became a Lion of Judah in honor of her 40th birthday. When asked by her husband what birthday gift she wanted, she replied, "to become a Lion of Judah."

am with a group of Lions, I always see commitment."

Holly endowed her gift in 1997 and become a LOJE (Lion of Judah Endowment). "My LOJE is my personal legacy to the community. My way of saying what I care about. I am fortunate enough to be a LOJE, but anyone can make a statement about their values for the next generation, by committing resources to organizations they care about and you can start with a small gift—an endowment or a bequest or an insurance policy. Endowment makes a difference for years to come after you are gone. Hopefully, it's an example for your children and your peers."

Holly lives in Miami as well as in Buffalo, and is currently involved with the Miami Jewish Federation's Women's *Amutot* committee, a funding and selecting program that benefits women and girls in Israel. They visit Israel every year to visit their projects and check on progress. She is Co-chair of the Arts and Cultural Committee of the Miami Beach JCC. In Buffalo, she continues to serve on the Federation's Board and Executive Committee and its Overseas Task Force, as well as the Engagement Committee of Planned Parenthood.

"It was important to me to be a Lion of Judah because I was lucky enough to have so many women in our community serve as role models and mentors to me, and I was at a point in my life when I wanted to take on more leadership roles in the community. Becoming a Lion was part of that next step.

"For me, being a Lion is like belonging to a special sisterhood—locally, nationally and internationally. I have had the privilege of attending many national JFNA programs—the General Assembly, the Lion Conference, Heart to Heart Missions to Israel, and Chairs and Director's Missions to Israel and other parts of the Jewish world, as well. Being a Lion has enabled me to network with like-minded women all over the world. We are all working together for a common goal—making our community and the greater Jewish world a better and more vibrant place for Jews to live today and tomorrow. My greatest wish is that one day our daughters will become Lions and Jewish leaders in their communities. I believe in *L'dor V'dor* - from generation to generation."

I also believe that giving as a woman matters, because women all over the world have worked hard to make sure women have equal rights and that our voices are heard. This is one small example when women should be making a statement along with the men in our community. It is important for all of our children to see both men and women giving and assuming leadership roles. Traditionally, it is the women and mothers that initiate Jewish teachings and culture into the home. The more women of all ages that we can engage into the Jewish Community, the stronger the entire Jewish Family will become."

Currently, Ellen's volunteer portfolio includes membership on the Temple Beth Zion Governance and Personnel Committees, and on Federation's Engagement and Education Center Board. She chairs the Federation's Engagement Task Force, and chaired its recent and highly successful Engagement Conference in Buffalo at the end of April. Ellen also co-chairs Federation's Family Philanthropy and Endowment committee and sits on Federation's Executive Committee and Board. She is a member of the National Women's Philanthropy Board through Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) and is her Class chair.

Among the Difference Makers in this month's special issue, Leslie Zemsky, Marilyn Shuman, Leslie Shuman Kramer and Gretchen Gross are Lions of Judah, Janet Desmon who was honored in June by the JCC (p.35) is an Endowed Lion, and Dr. Maxine Seller, author of "Not the Last Word" (p.44) is a Lion as well.



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# JEWISH BUFFALO'S WOMEN *Difference Makers*

By Ellen Goldstein

How many women do you think run manufacturing businesses of any size in Buffalo? If you guessed 2, you would be correct. How many of them are Jewish and commute more than 500 miles weekly to work from home? Just one. Marjorie Godin Bryen.

The Godin/Buffalo story began in 1964 when Marjorie's parents, Bill and Lenore Godin, moved their family from New York to Buffalo for Bill's job in Niagara Falls. Here they raised their three children, Seth, Marjorie and Emily. Bill, initially an engineer, was the CFO at Moog, was an adjunct professor at UB Business School, and then purchased Hard Manufacturing, a manufacturer of pediatric hospital beds and cribs used worldwide.

Marjorie's mother Lenore made her mark on Buffalo through the Albright-Knox Art Gallery initially as a docent and member of the Junior Group and then as change-agent in the way the Gallery

## Marjorie Godin Bryen: Keeping the Family in the Family Business

collection was made accessible to the public through its products. She ran the Gallery Shop for more than 18 years,

Marjorie attended Williamsville East High School and earned a BS in Biomedical Engineering from Duke, and her MBA from the University of Michigan. In the mid 1980's Marjorie married Eric Bryen and together they raised their daughters Madelaine and Elysa in Farmington Hills, Michigan. Ms. Bryen worked at a healthcare information system now owned by IBM- Watson - Truven Health in Ann Arbor, Michigan, a software data base consulting business. During her 25 years at Truven, she played roles in sales, marketing, operations, product, project management, and general



management, starting as a sales support person and leaving as Vice President.

In 2013, Bill, who leading Hard Manufacturing successfully for decades had just lost his wife and was unable to live alone. Bill didn't want to sell the business and needed help running it. Marjorie's youngest daughter had just gone off to college, and there were no other children living at home. Marjorie believed she could commute to Buffalo and help run the business. When she arrived, her father gave her the keys, said "Welcome. You are in charge," and he stepped aside. She began to commute to Buffalo each Monday returning to Detroit for the weekend. Marjorie's Dad passed away in 2015--two years after she took over the reins of the business.

Today, Marjorie leads the business strategy and oversees operations of this \$7-8M family business on Buffalo's East Side. Hard's 42 employees design, manufacture and sell critical care cribs and youth beds for hospitals and home care across the world. Since joining the company in 2013, Ms. Bryen has rebuilt the management team, streamlined the manufacturing process, upgraded the computer system and established a sales management process to support future company growth. She took the company into the future with new electrical systems powered by linear actuators instead of old-style motors, which allows for a quick CPR release button and a battery back-up. In addition, Hard's cribs now come equipped with new mattresses that take into account changes in the foam industry.

Marjorie saved her family's successful business, keeping it in the family and

in Buffalo, modernizing the product line and manufacturing systems and most significantly, providing 42 jobs for Buffalonians. She has also contributed significantly to both the Jewish and overall-Western New York community: She created the "Bill Godin Performance Excellence Employee Quarterly Award given each quarter to one or two employees of Hard.

She is currently a member of the Board of Governors of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, serving her second term, where she chairs the "Made in Buffalo" Speaker program. This new speaker's series is funded by the Lenore & Bill Godin Made in Buffalo Fund, established by Marjorie, her sister Emily Godin Epstein and brother Seth Godin.

The Godin Spaulding Curator position, funded by the Godin Family and in memory of the late Lenore Godin and in honor of Karen Spaulding as she retired, helps to fund the Curator position at the Albright Knox Art Gallery where Marjorie's mother, the late Lenore Godin, worked for many years.

Marjorie Bryen is on the board of the Northland Ave - Belt Line Corridor Redevelopment project, which deals with redevelopment of the factory's neighborhood. The project is the recipient of the NYS. Buffalo Billions money, and is being driven by the Buffalo Urban Development Co.

Under Marjorie's leadership, the Hard Manufacturing company has created the Hard manufacturing WFPICCS Pediatric Critical Care Research Grant, and has funded two cycles. One winner is from India, one from Canada. The grant is intended to fund research that target the improvement of critically ill children with particular focus on improvements in the physical environment for patient care around the world. The company also worked with a the ISSA Foundation which has spent time revamping health care delivery in Jamaica,

Marjorie Godin Bryen exemplifies the "New Buffalo" leader. She grew up here, was educated elsewhere, and learned skills in other cities, but came back home to save her family's company, enable it to continue to employ Western New Yorkers, while contributing to the health of infants and children worldwide, and adding to the depth, creativity and vitality of our Buffalo Jewish Community!

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# Deborah Goldman: *Lo Ta'amod Al Dam Rey'echa* – Do Not Stand Idly By

By Reine Hauser

**When Deborah Goldman moved to Buffalo, it was for her first husband. While he ultimately left, fortunately for us, she stayed....and has been a force for good in the community ever since.**

Goldman was born in Boston, MA, and raised in nearby Newton. She attended the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and when she moved to Western New York, earned an M.B.A. at the University at Buffalo.

Not one to sit on her hands, once out of school Deborah Goldman was quickly recognized for her skills, hard work and intelligence, and promoted to increasingly responsible positions at the Erie County Department of Health, ultimately serving as Interim Mental Health Commissioner for Erie County. As a result, she gained expertise and knowledge in the areas of behavioral healthcare reform initiatives, and services to individuals diagnosed with mental illness, mental retardation, developmental disability, alcoholism, and/or substance abuse.

Some highlights of her professional accomplishments include: initiating the Department of Mental Health's participation in Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) a major health care reform projects; initiating co-location of Mental Health Clinics into Buffalo Public Schools as part of SAY YES; bringing mental health liaison functions into the Erie County Emergency Operations Center during "Snowvember" (remember that?); leading design and implementation of a state-wide data portal for county specific and regional planning; implementing a management information system for the Children's System of Care; and managing overall funding from the New York State Office of Mental Health and HUD totaling more than \$21 million annually.

Over the years, in her professional capacity, Goldman served as Co-Chair of the Erie County Reentry Task Force, the Justice Mental Health Collaboration, the Mental Hygiene Planning Committee. She was Chair of the Mental Hygiene Planning Committee Data Subcommittee and the Leadership and Children's Leadership Committees. Goldman has been a Board Member of the New York Care Coordination Program, a member of the Erie County Commission on Children and Families, the Buffalo Public Schools Health Committee, and the Erie County Network.



Now a very active consultant for mental health agencies for counties across New York State, Goldman spends much time betwixt Buffalo and Albany and the cities in between. Her services and expertise are in high demand due to her broad knowledge of government and non-profit administration, including experience in supporting counties in developing fiscal stability plans for in these areas, as well as behavioral health data analyses,

identification of service gaps, providing planning support for local governments and reviewing grants and grant applications.

As if this isn't enough, Goldman believes in giving back to the community in other ways as well. She has served as President of the Bureau of Jewish Education, a Board member of Temple Beth Zion, on the Board of Governors of the Jewish Federation, and on the Boards of Directors of Friends of the Night People, and of Housing Opportunities Made Equal. Currently, she volunteers with Therapy Dog International at Children's Hospital (along with her cute and friendly dog Ginger, of course) and serves on the Board of the Museum of Disability History, and as Treasurer of the Central Park Homeowners Association.

Perhaps most importantly, right now she is President of the Board of Directors of Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York. In this role, she is very active, serving on several sub-committees (Finance, Community Engagement, etc.) attending national conferences, involved with the creation of a new strategic plan, and guiding and advocating for the reproductive healthcare and education of women, youth and men in eighteen counties, from Niagara Falls to Syracuse.

Deborah Goldman has been recognized for her efforts with awards from the Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo, Temple Beth Zion, New York Care Coordination Program, Friends of Night People Board Recognition, United Way, Cazenovia Recovery Services, Crisis Services, and the Erie County Homeless Commission, and deservedly so.

Goldman lives in North Buffalo (and says that she can hear the elephants from the zoo) with her husband Grant Golden, M.D., their two cats and, of course, Ginger, their dog. They have three children, and two adorable grandchildren.

Her philosophy of life is best explained by *Lo Ta'amod Al Dam Rey'echa* – Do Not Stand Idly By. Goldman is grateful for "all the terrific people" she has met through her career, and through her involvement with community organizations, and feel that they are "a gift." This inspiring attitude has no doubt led to her successful efforts in so many spheres. And we are all the better for it.

**Reine Hauser is Development Director of Planned Parenthood of Central and Western New York.**

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# Cantor Barbara Ostfeld: A Trailblazing Cantor

By Rabbi Sara Rich

It was the 1950s in Elmhurst, Illinois. Eight year old Barbara Ostfeld was singing proudly, and dreaming boldly. Inspired by her teacher and choir leader, Cantor Martin Rosen, she knew she wanted to become a cantor one day too. After holding this dream throughout her childhood, in 1969, she called Cantor Rosen to ask where he went to school to train to be a cantor. She heard laughter on the other end of the line, as he told her that the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion would never take her as a student because she was a woman.

Although Cantor Barbara J. Ostfeld had not set out to become a pioneer, she succeeded in becoming the first invested female cantor. Since her investiture in 1975, she has led a successful cantorate in both congregational life and through leadership roles with the American Conference of Cantors, the Reform Movement's professional cantorial organization. During this period, she has touched countless lives through her music, teaching, officiation of life cycle events, and pastoral presence for generations of families. Today, Cantor Ostfeld is enjoying her retirement in Buffalo.

Cantor Ostfeld served Temple Beth Am from 1990-2002. She remembers those days fondly, calling them the "Camelot

Era" because of the high levels of membership and participation in synagogue life. Music was at the core of prayer services, and community participation was encouraged. Like the cantor who inspired her career path, Cantor Ostfeld directed Temple Beth Am's children's choir. She recalls a highlight of her career, when the children's choir performed *Brundibár*, the children's opera that was written and performed in the Theresienstadt concentration camp during World War II. Part of the experience included having a survivor in the community, who had been in the original cast as a child, come and talk to the children about his experience. "We spent all year preparing, and it was an astonishing feat," Cantor Ostfeld remembers. "It could not have been done without the parents, the leadership of the congregation and the staff – everybody."

When asked about her favorite song, Cantor Ostfeld replied with an answer that is familiar to many: the cantillation used to chant the Torah on the High Holidays, and in particular, the story of the Akeidah, the binding of Isaac. In this story, which has sparked debate in Jewish thought throughout the ages, God commands Abraham to



**"Don't forget the fundamental things that remind you of who you are as your best self."**

sacrifice his son Isaac on the top of Mt. Moriah, and it is only through a last-minute intervention via an angel of God that Isaac's life is spared. Even though she chanted this Torah portion over 30 times in her career, Cantor Ostfeld remarks, "It always knocks my socks off. It's very plaintive...it's an ingenious way to make the text come alive and tell those stories in a melodic spotlight."

While Cantor Ostfeld no longer leads High Holiday services, her spirituality remains active. She practices yoga and mindfulness and is still "transported by good worship." Her creative side is engaged as well. She continues to study voice, and her memoir *Cat Bird: The Ballad of Barbi Prim* will be published this summer by Ervah Press. Her book is a series of vignettes from her life, which she wrote over the course of the last decade. Cantor Ostfeld recognizes this phase of her life as one that comes with wisdom and experience that she can share with others. She reflects, "One of the nice things about becoming older is that you can use your experience to help people in ways that you couldn't earlier. I feel like I can say something with my whole self that, as a

much younger cantor, I was so diligent about saying, but I didn't bring as much of me being human as I am able to bring now."

With two grown daughters, one in Buffalo, and the other in Atlanta, Cantor Ostfeld is attuned to the specific challenges that are present today in the lives of young adults who are starting and building their careers. Her advice for members of this age cohort is, "In the business of early career years, and in searching for relationships, don't sidestep the opportunity to feed your soul, whatever that means to you. For some people it's travel, for some people it's being out in nature, for some people it's other people. Sometimes it can be various iterations of worship experiences, but whatever it is that lights you up should not be avoided just because you are trying to cope with day to day life. Don't forget the fundamental things that remind you of who you are as your best self." Cantor Ostfeld's wisdom reminds us to sing our personal spiritual tune.

**Rabbi Sara Rich is the Executive Director of Hillel of Buffalo and a fellow alumna of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.**

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# Leslie & Kayla Zemsky: All in the family: Building community and living their values

By Jana Eisenberg

The Zemsky family has been a prominent part of both the Jewish and the broader Buffalo communities for decades. Parents Howard and Leslie raised their three children, Kayla, David and Harry here; as literal builders and ambassadors, most of them are actively involved in Buffalo's development and resurgence.

Howard is chief executive officer and president of the New York State Urban Development Corporation. Leslie, 59, is vice president at Larkin Development Group, their company dedicated to revitalizing Buffalo's historic Larkin District, known as "Larkinville." Completed projects there include a huge office building, and Larkin Square, a venue for outdoor music and events.

Harry runs two Larkinville restaurants, Hydraulic Hearth and Swan St. Diner. The family is also involved in a third restaurant, the Filling Station. Kayla, 30, moved back about a year ago from New York City, and has joined Larkin Development Group as a project manager. She recently married Michael Myers, a freelance project manager.

Leslie and Kayla recently sat down at the Swan Street Diner in Larkinville to talk with *The Jewish Journal*.

**JJ: What is your connection to Judaism?**

**Leslie Zemsky:** My mother was Episcopalian and my father was from an Irish Quaker family. I'm proud of being Quaker by birth. While it was important to my mother to have religion in our home, it didn't matter that much which one. When Howard and I got engaged, we agreed to raise our children Jewish, but I hadn't decided to convert. The day that I learned I was pregnant with Kayla, I said that I wanted to become a Jew. More impactful than my conversion was preparing for my adult bat mitzvah—that made the prayers familiar. While we don't go to temple, we actively raised our kids with Jewish traditions. They all had bar and bat mitzvahs. I also served on the Temple Beth Zion board.

**Kayla Zemsky:** I've come to feel more of a cultural connection to Judaism. When I meet someone who is Jewish, there's an understanding and connection. My husband wasn't raised Jewish, but in preparation for our future, we took Intro to Judaism. We don't plan to start a family



immediately, but we're thinking about Judaism differently going forward.

**JJ: How does Judaism play out in your everyday life?**

**LZ:** I'm trying to be a good citizen, to practice "tikkun olam." We celebrate the Jewish holidays with family. Converting was one of the best decisions I made; it was nice to have one religion in the household. A couple of years ago, Harry had to be at the Hydraulic Hearth on Passover, so we brought the entire Seder into the restaurant. It was magical. It's great to have two of our three children in Buffalo. Each of our kids is finding their path in their own way.

**KZ:** Before we married, my husband and I spent a weekend in Boston with our family rabbi, Ronne Friedman. Our time with him wasn't heavily focused on Judaism, but on tradition and a structure to discuss what's important in our lives and our relationships. My husband hasn't decided whether to convert; I respect his choice to live it first. My expression of "Jewishness" is more prevalent around significant life moments. I appreciate that Judaism is one of the more open religions to begin with; one of the rabbis who taught our class runs an LGBT center, for example. I like that about our religion and value system.

**JJ: What do you find rewarding about your work?**

**LZ:** I credit Howard with the vision to take a chance on this neighborhood (Larkinville). Everyone's embraced it, and I'm excited to be part of bringing it back. My parents were very active in the community; being involved is just what we do. Howard and I are not looking to retire—Buffalo is our business, our home and our cause. We're focused on building a community where people can

live, work, and play. In the next phase of Larkinville, we're starting to build residential apartments, and develop a park. In a generation, we hope to return this neighborhood to what it once was.

**KZ:** It's unique to be working with family—there's no one you trust more, and no one as invested in the work you're doing. It's exciting to feel like it

will benefit the city overall and future generations of families including our own.

**JJ: Leslie, you're also an artist.**

**LZ:** Art is now a sideline for me, though I love a quote that my husband attributes to his father, Sam Zemsky, who said you can find creativity anywhere, even in business. I designed the wallpapers for our restaurants. I love learning new things; I've learned calligraphy and video animation. Keeping up my creativity fuels me!

**JJ: Kayla, what are you seeing as the benefits of Buffalo since moving back?**

**KZ:** The tangible impact and results you can have in Buffalo are exciting. I didn't realize I would enjoy living in Larkinville so much. I like that I can live in the city proper; it's accessible in a way that New York City isn't. It feels like a different Buffalo; it's been nice seeing friends come back, opening businesses, and adding to the fabric of the city, the value and quality of life. I didn't expect that.

**Jana Eisenberg is a frequent contributor to The Jewish Journal and other publications regionally and nationally.**



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# Marilyn Shuman, Cathy Shuman Miller, Leslie Shuman Kramer: A lifelong commitment to Israel

By Ellen Goldstein

*Editor's note: Marilyn Shuman and two of her daughters, Cathy Miller and Leslie Kramer have held leadership roles in Buffalo's Jewish Community for many years. I recently sat down with them—we are cousins—to talk about their love for and connection to Israel.*

## Marilyn Cohen Shuman

Marilyn Shuman was born in Buffalo to William and Charlotte Cohen in 1936. She was the 3rd in a family of four, and grew up in a warm extended family of Cohens and Carrels, Jews who had immigrated at the turn of the 20th century to Buffalo from Sokolovka, Russia. "Our closeness of family translated into closeness of the community," Marilyn explained. She was only a year old when her mother died, and she and her brother and sisters grew up with old-world grandparents. Fortunately, these four motherless children grew up in a vibrant, close-knit, educated family of Carrels and Cohens, a family whose presence filled a room, Marilyn recalled. She was nine years old when her father remarried, this time to a cousin.

She and her family grew up in Buffalo, and she attended UB, which she quit after three years, (and returned to UB at age 35 to complete her undergraduate degree.) "In 1957, I found a program that paid my way to work and study on a *kibbutz* in Israel on the Gaza Strip. I lived there for 6 months," she said. She returned to Buffalo and became engaged immediately to Irving Shuman, also Buffalo-born to an immigrant family from Sokolovka. They married 3 months later.

"Living in Israel for 6 months under very primitive conditions, but exposed to this new country shaped the rest of my life," Marilyn explained. It had a profound effect on how she raised her four children- Cathy, Diane, Leslie and Jimmy. "After we were married, we soon started a family, then Itzy and I started our constant trips and returns to Israel. We both felt the same passion about our Zionism and Israel, and included the children from an early age on in our thinking and activities."

"Our first trip with all the kids was in 1974," she said. "That was a critical and pivotal year for them, because we were in Israel for 3 weeks. At the end of the trip,



From top clockwise: Leslie Shuman Kramer, Marilyn Shuman and Cathy Shuman Miller

they didn't want to come home. They were exposed to the *kibbutz*, Bedouin life, and traveled throughout the country. While there, we stayed with cousins on a *kibbutz*. The children slept in the bunk rooms for children, and the older kids would look out for them." Jimmy, the youngest Shuman was 7 or 8 at the time. Cathy was 15. Leslie just had her Bat Mitzvah in Buffalo. And Diane now lives in Israel, having made *aliyah* with her family.

"For Itzy and me, the focus of both of our lives was Judaism. It was a strong part of our life in Buffalo. We took on responsible positions in the community. We both chaired the Federation Campaign, Irv was Federation president, we were honored by several organizations over the years, and we were active in our synagogue, Federation, the Jewish Center, The Bureau of Jewish Education, Camp Lakeland, and Kadimah," she said. "Irv was a member of the national American Jewish Committee board, the HIAS board, as well as being involved locally with Russian resettlement in the 1980s.

"We really made a lifelong commitment to Israel," Marilyn explained. "We established a playground in Sderot through Operation Renewal in the 1980s, and we would often travel yearly to Israel. We had family and friends there. Irv traveled there until he died," she said. "We had no fears about going to Israel, and, I think, our community is beneficiary of our love for Israel."

Marilyn left the day after this interview to visit her daughter Diane and family who now live in Jerusalem. They include 4 daughters and husband, Alan, an attorney who now is an Israeli tour guide. Son Jimmy lives in New York, works in finance and continues to make his Federation Campaign gift in Buffalo, where it makes a difference.

## Cathy Shuman Miller

Cathy is the oldest of Marilyn and Irv Shuman's four children. She is an artist and teacher and lives with her husband, David, in Williamsville. They have two grown children—Philip and Hallie.

Art has infused Cathy's life and her life's work, as has Israel. Cathy was on a

WUJS Arad program in Israel in the early 1980s. (WUJS was created in 1968 as a pluralistic program in Israel for recent college graduates and unfortunately no longer exists.) She then went on a 6-month *Ulpan*, and worked in Israel for 6 months. "I was in Israel from 1982-83, and some of my closest friends to date are from that program," she said. "When I lived in Arad for 6 months, I had an adopted family, who I am still close to. I worked for 6 months in an art center in Beer Sheva, where we made paper by hand from a desert plant. Then I taught art workshops in Hebrew, and then went to work at the Jerusalem Print Workshop for 6 months. I studied lithography, and trained myself to learn how to do print editions. I think that my time with WUJS in Israel had a huge effect on my life," she said, "and then getting to know people while I lived in Israel on my own that year was pivotal," she continued. "Those people and relationships continue to play an important role my life."

When Cathy was living in Beer Sheva, she met a sculptor- Hava Mehtan- and became very close to her, corresponded for many years, and Hava visited Buffalo twice. "I would see her each time I went to Israel. She is close to 90 now. Her work is beautiful, and is included in the permanent collection of the Israel Museum as well as other places."

Cathy was a Printmaking major at the University of Michigan, and when she returned from her post-college years in Israel, she attended UB and received an MFA, with noted artist Harvey Breverman as her advisor. She moved to New York after UB, worked for the Heschel School on the Upper West Side and as an apprentice to a *sofer*, a torah scribe. He taught her Hebrew calligraphy and she created some *ketubot* (marriage contracts) with him. She also ran an art program at a synagogue on the Upper East Side of New York, and worked at a program sponsored by the Lincoln Center for the Arts—Art in Public School. She and David Miller married, and moved to Buffalo, where he joined a medical practice as a Psychiatrist.

In Buffalo, Cathy has taught art at Kadimah School, at Hebrew High, created a mural for the old Camp Centerland in Elma, and taught at the Arts in the Public Schools in Buffalo. You might remember the life size blue and white buffalo (painted in the colors of the



Israeli flag) that proudly stood on the lawn at the JCC Holland Building 15+ years ago as a giant *tzedakah* box. A part of the Roswell Park “Herd About Buffalo” project, Cathy created that Buffalo for the Federation and Jewish community. She has taught fashion technology as an adjunct professor in the Fashion Design Department at Villa Maria College, as well as at Buffalo State College.

Cathy’s work now continues to have a deeply spiritual component. Some of the past work such as the painting of vessels hanging in the JCC Benderson lobby have more Jewish-related themes. She is currently represented by Susan Oehme Graphics, and has had work shown in print shows all over the country with Susan’s representation. Cathy’s pieces are currently in the collections of the Cleveland Clinic, Saks Fifth Avenue, Sloan Kettering, the Burchfield-Penney Art Center, Roswell Park Cancer Center and she was commissioned to create a painting for Temple Beth Tzedek

#### Leslie Shuman Kramer

Leslie Kramer is currently Vice President of Buffalo Jewish Federation and a Co-Chair of the upcoming Buffalo Israel Experience community trip to Israel in October, of which she is extremely enthusiastic. “I am so excited to bring Buffalonians to Israel this fall. I really feel fortunate for this opportunity we will have together,” she explained.

Leslie is married to Jim Kramer and they have three grown children—Leah, Joey and Josh. “When we raised our three kids—and Jim is an incredible partner—we agreed that If we lived our lives authentically, our kids would get a wonderful sense of their Jewish identity,” Leslie explained.

Leslie is involved nationally with the Jewish community through Jewish Federation of North America’s (JFNA) National Women’s Philanthropy Board, which she joined in 2014. It is composed of women from across the country. “We really make a difference, and it is so empowering to be with strong, passionate women,” Leslie said.

“The home I grew up in was deeply rooted in Jewish identity, and because my parents were true to themselves I was and am very secure in being Jewish and practicing Judaism the way I do. One of the gifts I got from my parents and from living in Israel is feeling comfortable in any Jewish situation,” she said. “My Jewish identity has completely shaped my life. Having immigrant grandparents in my life—my father’s mother, Chaika

Shuman lived to be 95 years old—I absorbed their immigrant stories of struggle, hardship and survival.”

Leslie and her siblings grew up in the 60s and 70s. She remembers that her parents went to Israel right after the 6-Day War in 1967. “They became so passionate about Israel, and I watched them and wanted to learn more. Then, the family trip in 1974 was truly transformative. I remember talking to my Dad about the importance of living in Israel as a Jew. I lived on a *kibbutz*—Beit Hashita—when I was 14 years old. I would hang out with my cousin, the kids on the *kibbutz* and also with Zionist kids from Mexico City who were visiting that summer. When I came home I was determined to learn to speak Hebrew, so I started going to Hebrew High.”

Leslie went to Cornell University for college, was a Jewish History major and took her junior year abroad in Israel. While there, she became very close with a number of Israelis and thought seriously about *aliyah*. She eventually returned to Cornell, graduated, and went back to Israel for a time. Eventually she returned and attended UB Law School, then moved to Chicago where she practiced law and became involved in the Jewish community there. She returned to Buffalo in 1992 where she practiced law for several years, then left to raise her and Jim’s children. It was then that she began to get more involved with the Buffalo community, including as President of the BJE, being active with Women’s Campaign and eventually becoming Women’s Philanthropy chair then General Campaign Chair.

My passion rests on community,” Leslie said. “So it has been an incredible gift to become so active in this great community with fantastic people with whom I share these passions. We have such an amazing quality of life here. I feel blessed for the opportunities I have had to be a part of making Buffalo and the Jewish community a stronger place for our people. This is really a gift to me.”

Thank you, Marilyn Shuman, Cathy Shuman Miller and Leslie Shuman Kramer, for sharing your family’s love of Israel in your own unique ways with all of us in the Buffalo Jewish Community.

**Ellen Goldstein is the Managing Editor of The Jewish Journal of WNY. Her family, the Morris Carrels—related to the Shuman women—also came from Sokolovka, Russia.**

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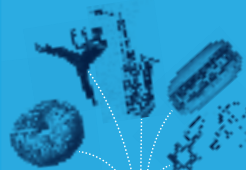
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# Bianca Weinstock-Guttman: Searching for Answers

By K.L. Zakalik

Dr. Bianca Weinstock-Guttman is an internationally recognized expert on the diagnosis and treatment of Multiple Sclerosis (MS), one of the most common diseases of the nervous system. Her *curriculum vitae* lists hundreds of publications, scientific presentations and abstracts, as well as scores of invited presentations and honors. They demonstrate her intense curiosity and tireless efforts to understand the mechanism of this disease, as well as her desire to help the thousands of patients and their family members impacted by this chronic and often debilitating disease.

MS affects people of all ages but often presents in young people, women, and people living north of the equator. The condition is caused by a specific sub-group of immune cells that normally defends the body against infection, but in Multiple Sclerosis, they become abnormal and attack the myelin covering/surrounding nerve cells. Damage to the myelin can occur in areas of the brain, cervical spine, thoracic spine and optic nerve. The scarring (i.e. sclerosis) from an attack or attacks causes damage to the cells that provide "nerve messages" to various parts of the body. The damage may be perceived as loss of eyesight, blurry vision, difficulty walking and/or use of upper limbs, controlling bodily functions and other physical functions. While today there is

a great deal of progress in understanding the disease process and many therapeutic options available, the cause of the disease and the differing degrees of severity of injury that affects the individual patient is not known and has been the focus of Dr. Bianca Weinstock-Guttman's research for over thirty years.

Bianca Guttman was born and raised in Romania. Her parents, survivors of the Holocaust, stressed academic achievement and excellence to their fraternal twin daughters. When asked why she chose medicine, she recalled "from a very early age I remember performing surgeries on my dolls." Wanting to help people became an integral part of her psyche when she was a young teenager and her father suffered a stroke at the age of



38. From this difficult and challenging experience, she set her sights on attending medical school. Dr. Weinstock-Guttman also explained that she selected medicine because it is academically challenging and the rigors of medical training appealed to her. Her scholastic achievements and high test scores earned her a place at the Institute of Medicine and Pharmacy at the University of Bucharest. In 1983 she graduated with a medical degree. Shortly after she made *Aliyah* to Israel and after a one-year internship she was accepted to a neurology residency program in Israel.

The move to Israel was due in part to the political turmoil in Romania at that time. There was real concern, especially for Jewish professionals, that leaving the country would become difficult if not impossible in the near future. While leaving her parents and sister in Romania was a difficult choice, her transition was made easier knowing she was joining her father's sister and children who were already living there.

After completing her residency in neurology as the Sapir Medical Center of Meir General Hospital and passing her medical and neurology boards with distinction, she worked for two years as the attending neurologist of Meir Hospital in Kfar-Saba. In 1993 she was accepted to a Neuro-Immunology Fellowship at the Mellen Center for MS Treatment and Research at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation. By this time, she was married and had two children. The family plan was to move to the US for her fellowship and

return to Israel when it was completed.

It was during the fellowship that the first drug that would eventually be approved for the treatment of MS here in the US was in development, and both The Cleveland Clinic and the Jacobs Neurological Institute in Buffalo, headed by the late Dr. Lawrence Jacobs, were involved in the trial. When an opportunity presented itself that would allow both doctors (her husband Dr. Arie L. Weinstock is a pediatric neurologist with specialized training in epilepsy) to relocate together, they moved to Buffalo, NY in 1998.

Dr. Weinstock-Guttman's clinical practice is devoted to the comprehensive care of adults and children living with Multiple Sclerosis and other demyelinating disorders. She is a Professor of Neurology, Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Science, University at Buffalo; a neurologist in the UB Department of Neurology; the director of the Jacobs MS Center for Treatment and Research; and the director of Pediatric MS Center of Excellence. She is also the executive director of the New York State Multiple Sclerosis Consortium (NYSMSC), a robust 20+ year old MS patient registry started by Dr. Jacobs in 1996. Dr. Weinstock-Guttman regularly speaks to patient and family groups about MS, the role of diet and exercise in managing the disease, as well as new therapies and information being gleaned from her research.

Looking back on her early years here in the US she recounted how challenging it was to diagnose and treat people who presented with the multiple symptoms of a demyelinating disorder because imaging technology was just becoming available and drug treatments were just in the IND (investigative new drug) development stages. Twenty years later, she and her colleagues at the Jacobs MS Center for Treatment and Research have access to enhanced MRI imaging technology that can detect lesions in the brain, cervical and thoracic spine at very early stages of the disease. Today there are 16 FDA approved MS drug treatments (aka DMTs - disease modifying therapies) available for patients. Initially MS medications were exclusively administered by self-injection. Today there are 9 injectable, 3 oral and 4 infused medications. The endgame is to find a cure. ]

**For more information about MS please go to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society webpage at [www.nmss.org](http://www.nmss.org) and look for your local chapter.**



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# Sheri Rodman: Leading with Passion and Commitment

by Susan Goldberg Schwartz

After a delicious vegan lunch at a crowded café in Amherst, one of Jewish Buffalo's outstanding emerging leaders Sheri Rodman began to share her Jewish journey and why she returned to her hometown. As I listened, I was struck by how quickly Sheri seized leadership opportunities once she resettled here, both in the Jewish and greater Buffalo community. Something was driving this passion, and I wanted to find out what was moving her!

When asked what was one of the most impactful experiences on her Jewish identity, Sheri paused, and then said it was being at Camp Lakeland and participating with BBYO, where she was immersed in Jewish culture in a fun environment. "I loved going to camp and learning from the older kids. I wanted to be like them!" Camp and BBYO also provided leadership learning opportunities and Sheri took them.

Sheri attended the University of Michigan where she was an active participant in Jewish programs through Hillel and Aish. She majored in Judaic Studies and studied Hebrew to fulfill her foreign language requirement, but it was her first trip to Israel on Birthright in 2003 which had the greatest impact on her personal Jewish growth. Sheri was the first person in her family to experience Israel and that first trip led to a 2<sup>nd</sup> trip and then a semester of study abroad.

After graduating from Michigan, Sheri moved to our nation's capital where she lived for 4 years and taught high school math. During that time, she continued to travel to Israel on a regular basis, going on a volunteer program and then leading four Israel Birthright trips. I asked Sheri if she had ever thought about living in Israel. I was so surprised when she said that not only had she thought about it, but she made *aliyah* and moved to Tel Aviv!

Having the similar experience of *aliyah* and returning to Buffalo after a number of years in Israel, we talked about how different it was being Jewish in Israel compared to living in the States. Sheri said that at one point she stopped her 'Jewish' practice because she didn't need to do anything special. She was living Jewishly simply by being in Israel. "Being Jewish was something I felt on a daily basis."

I asked Sheri why she left Israel. She described the fall of 2013 as a difficult



time to be in Israel with an increase in threats and attacks on Israel, and the stress took a toll on her family back in Buffalo, especially her grandmother. And, like many who made *aliyah*, Sheri began to miss her own family.

Sheri moved back to DC where she met her husband, Daniel. Together they moved

to Buffalo, got married, found great jobs, and here is where Sheri's Buffalo Jewish story unfolds. The daughter of Sue and Mark Wallach, Sheri has two sisters, Elyse and Randi. They all have a very special relationship with their grandmother, Millie Daniels, who at 91, still lives independently. "I love my family and have great memories of my Dad's parents, William and Dorothy Wallach, both of whom had been very active in the Jewish community. Although I was just a child at the time, as an adult when I look back at their commitment and leadership in Jewish Buffalo and the greater community, I'm inspired."

Her deep family ties and impactful experience of living in Israel led Sheri to become actively involved in Jewish Buffalo today. Sheri found her way to Nickel City Jews, where she recently served as President and is now involved with the development of the Nickel City Minyan. Sheri is currently on the Federation Board of Governors and will continue as a volunteer leader with the new Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning. Sheri was recognized two years ago for her enthusiastic involvement in the community and was awarded the Emerging

Leadership Award at the Federation's Annual Meeting. Sheri admitted to me that she has a difficult time saying no!

Professionally, Sheri serves as the Director of Data and Operations, Fellowship for Teachers and Principals for a national educational non-profit, America Achieves, an organization "...dedicated to ensuring that all America's youth – regardless of background – are ready to lead and succeed in a changing world". Using her educational knowledge and experience, Sheri also serves as chair of the Founding Board of the Buffalo Commons Charter School, planning to open in 2020. And in her spare time, she practices yoga and loves to bake – her husband Daniel says she makes the best hamentashen!

Camp Lakeland, BBYO, living in Israel and her strong families ties, have all had a major impact on Sheri Rodman's passion and commitment to the Jewish life and community. All of these experiences continue to push her to recreate that sense of Jewish life. How fortunate for us that Sheri and her husband have chosen to recreate that here in Buffalo!

**Susan Goldberg Schwartz is Director of Adult Engagement**



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# Ellen Steinfeld: Crafting Art that Enriches Lives

By Jordana Halpern

Buffalo sculptor and painter Ellen Steinfeld, whose work is well known throughout North America, has created a beautiful sculpture for the reopening of the recently renovated JCC Holland Family Building, on Delaware Avenue. "Ellen was selected as the commissioned artist based upon her previous works, which were familiar to a small task force of artists and JCC supporters," said Richard Zakalik, JCC Executive Director. "Ellen's works created for Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and other private collections provided us with the assurance that our wall relief would withstand the tests of time and evolving culture at the JCC."

The sculpture is a reflection of the JCC's mission to be inclusive and diverse. While the central theme of the work incorporates a Menorah and Doves of Peace, the pathways also connect to a home, neighborhood and community center.

Dedicated by Richard and Karen Zakalik, in honor of the commitment, generosity and leadership of the family of community leader Nathan Benderson, it is hoped that these Jewish values will inspire all who enter the facility, which is intended to be a center of communities.

In acquiring the piece, the JCC joins a prestigious list of art collections including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, the New York State Museum, the Castellani Museum, the Burchfield-Penney Museum, Washington State Art in Public Places Collection, the State of Florida Art in Public Buildings Collection and many others. Steinfeld has received numerous large-scale public and private commissions including the monumental steel sculpture for the atrium of Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and an exterior stainless-steel sculpture for the new Upstate Cancer Center in Syracuse, NY and a large exterior stainless sculpture commemorating the Ride for Roswell. Steinfeld's artwork has been exhibited in museums and galleries in more than 30 solo exhibitions, and included in more than 90 group exhibitions in the US and Canada. She was selected to represent New York State for the Absolut Statehood Campaign, which helped raise millions of dollars for AIDS research. She is a recipient of fellowships from the New York State Council on the Arts, and also a visiting artist, lecturer and teacher at several universities. Ellen Steinfeld is also the subject of two documentary films.

To learn more about the JCC sculpture, we asked Ellen to take a break from her work and talk with us about her recently completed commissioned sculpture which will be installed for the reopening



The JCC piece on a crane

of the Holland Family Building, Jewish Community Center at 787 Delaware Avenue.

**How have you evolved as an artist during your career?**

After getting undergraduate and graduate art degrees, I taught and lectured at universities, exhibited widely throughout North America, and worked on major public commissions in various media. My work is in the permanent collections of many private collectors and museums.

**What is the concept or ideas that you are expressing with this sculpture?**

The sculpture's imagery and symbols are designed to be welcoming, inclusive and unifying for everyone entering the Jewish Community Center. The central image, a house, symbolizes the Center with various paths leading to it, and is a form everyone can relate to. Other recognizable images in the sculpture include the Doves of Peace, a Menorah, the sun, flowering branches and trees.

**How do you work? Can you describe the sculpture and talk about the process of building it? What materials are you using, do you start with sketches, and what is the process that you use?**

I always start a concept by making many drawings. I never run out of ideas



Ellen Steinfeld, working on a sculpture



Ellen working at the JCC site

and usually deconstruct and reconstruct the original composition many times. Creating is a process of constantly making decisions. When transferring a two-dimensional drawing into three dimensions, I also make many changes which often redirect the entire composition. After finalizing a drawing for this sculpture, I made a small model that I submitted to the art committee for approval. Then I started working with a CAD (computer assisted design) programmer to convert all the sculptures' shapes into a digital file which is necessary to cut exact steel shapes. Several iterations were required to refine the pieces to make sure they would fit together. We do this by using a laser cutter to cut cardboard shapes out at a small scale which I then

assemble. When I am satisfied that the shapes are correct, I ordered a four by eight-foot sheet of stainless steel. This was sent to a company that has a dedicated stainless-steel waterjet cutter. Stainless was selected for the sculpture for ease of maintenance and longevity. I send them the digital file and they use that to drive their cutter. The cut steel shapes were then transported to a fabricator. Using the last small model as a positioning guide, we assembled and welded the sculpture. Six threaded 8" long threaded stainless rods were attached to the back of the sculpture, which will be inserted into predrilled holes located on the exterior façade of the building's entry.

**Can you describe a typical day while you are working?**

Most professional artists are very devoted to their work. Unless I am at the fabricator's shop, I work almost every day in my studio while also using all the surfaces and spaces of my home. My whole house is really a sweat shop! My husband, Ed, is an architect, and he designed renovations when we first moved in to make the house into a studio and gallery. I also have a large wood shop and paper making studio. I have hosted many studio visits organized by museums, arts groups, and community organizations.

When I am working under a deadline, I work seven days a week. Living in my workplace makes it possible to for me to work whenever I want. My husband says that the house is so cluttered with steel he can't move around safely. My family and friends are very patient hearing construction details about each project.

**What are three words or phrases that you'd use to describe specifically this piece?**

Welcoming, Inclusive, Unifying

**How do you think people will react to the art?**

Hopefully it will be art that enriches their lives.

*Jordana Halpern is the Jewish Community Center's Director of Development. To learn more about Ellen Steinfeld's art and upcoming projects, visit [www.ellensteinfeld.com](http://www.ellensteinfeld.com).*



# Sophia Veffter: A “Special” Educator

By Dr. Eileen M. Angelini, Ph.D.

Sophia Veffter is a difference maker in every sense of the word. Born in Amsterdam, Holland, she and her parents survived, both physical and emotionally, the May 10, 1940 German invasion and subsequent occupation of Holland during World War II. In the summer of 1942, Sophia's family was sent to Hollandse Schouwburg (Dutch Theater), Amsterdam's holding center. Her father was luckily able to buy their way out of this center and to temporary freedom. To continue surviving, Sophia then went into hiding, separated from her family and shuttled from one family to another because if she stayed too long in one location, the risk of being discovered by the Germans and/or their collaborators increased significantly. In 1944, she was eventually betrayed and was brought to the Gestapo Headquarters in Amsterdam. From there, Sophia was sent to Westerbork, a transit camp on the German border.

In January 1945, at fourteen, she was transported to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. After Bergen-Belsen was liberated by the British forces in April 1945, Sophia returned to her hometown in Holland and was reunited with her parents. Of her large extended family, Sophia and her parents were the only ones to survive.

Sophia immigrated to the United States in 1954. After living in New York City and Savannah, GA, she settled in Buffalo, raising three sons who all became lawyers. Incredibly proud of the new life she created



and the world learned what happened.” She further elucidated about the meaning of her work: “When the War was over, we really thought we would never experience a Holocaust or a genocide again. However, we are still having genocides, seeing refugees fleeing their own countries and people getting murdered for their religious beliefs, race, or gender. When I first started talking, most of us were not global citizens and we felt safe in America. Our neighbors lived around the block, not in other countries. There was no social media. After 9/11, we became global citizens and what happened in one part of the world affected us directly everywhere else.”

Sophia now dedicates her time and energy to teaching the lessons of the Holocaust and other genocides to the students of Western New York. To say that Sophia takes the HRC mission statement (“Teach the Lessons. Remember the Survivors and Victims. Promote Social Justice, Civic Responsibility and Human Rights.”) to heart is a major understatement, and does not give proper justice to all her hard work. Sophia maintains that “for most young people, like teenagers, the Holocaust may as well have happened in the Middle Ages. They cannot relate to it, because it happened so long ago. So, I just tell part of my story. I connect it to what is happening right now in the world and how nothing has changed. Today as during the Holocaust, we still have victims, we still have perpetrators, and we still have bystanders. We have to educate people to become upstanders and get involved.” Being an upstander is of utmost importance to Sophia. For her, it is a question of moral duty to tell her story so

that genocides like the Holocaust do not continue to take place.

In addition to being a past president of the HRC as well as serving on its Board of Directors, its Executive Board, and its Education Committee, Sophia has lectured on the lessons of the Holocaust and human rights issues in high schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, and churches for the past twenty-seven years. She has worked with countless non-profit organizations, not least among them the Anne Frank Project, which she and Prof. Drew Kahn started at Buffalo State College in 2009.

Sophia has also mentored theater casts who present Holocaust-themed performances, most recently that of the Lancaster Opera House's *The Diary of Anne Frank*. She has been a proud member of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, for the last fifty years. Being active in the Western New York theater community has given Sophia tremendous joy and satisfaction. Previously, she was President of the Women of Studio Arena and a trustee on the Board of Trustees of Studio Arena. Currently, she is a committee member of the Jewish Repertory Theater. In January 2006, Sophia received the National Conference for Community and Justice Brother/Sisterhood Award for outstanding leadership in promoting goodwill and understanding in the community.

On Monday, June 11, 2018, the HRC hosted its inaugural Upstander Breakfast when the newly established Sophia Veffter Award was given to Dr. Katherine S. Conway Turner, ninth president of Buffalo State College. To honor Sophia Veffter for her longstanding commitment to the teaching of the lessons of the Holocaust, the award named in her honor is given to an individual who passionately provides educational

and leadership opportunities to young people based on the HRC mission. Sophia was particularly delighted that the first recipient of the award was Dr. Conway Turner because of the tremendous support that Dr. Conway Turner has provided to the Anne Frank Project.

*Dr. Eileen Angelini is a Fulbright Scholar and Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques, and the Education Outreach Coordinator, Holocaust Resource Center of Buffalo.*

“I just tell part of my story. I connect it to what is happening right now in the world and how nothing has changed.”

in Buffalo (she received her B.A. in Social Studies from SUNY-Buffalo and her M.A. in Special Education at Buffalo State College and taught for twenty-five years as a Special Education teacher in the Niagara-Wheatfield Central School District), she is even prouder of her work in teaching the lessons of the Holocaust and Human Rights issues. She did not start talking about the Holocaust until the 1980s. She explained that after World War II, in Holland no one talked about the Holocaust, neither Jews nor gentiles. “People were not proud of what happened. Everybody, Jews and non-Jews alike, suffered during the War and we closed that chapter and did not even talk about it among ourselves. Everyone considered themselves a war victim. It was not until the early sixties, when Eichmann was in court in Israel when, for the first time, survivors gave testimonies

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# Lea Greenberg, Chani Labkovski, Brocha Leah Greenberg, Rivky Greenberg: Women of Valor

“A woman of valor, who can find? For her price is far above rubies...”

- Proverbs, Chapter 31

By Ellen Goldstein

When I think of this timeless passage from *The Book of Proverbs*, it seems natural to think of the women who help to power the Jewish Discovery Center (JDC)—Lea Greenberg—the founding mother, and Chani Labkovski, Brocha Leah Greenberg and Rivky Greenberg. I was able to spend part of a Friday afternoon in June with all of them talking about how they arrived in Buffalo, their work with the JDC and their dreams for Buffalo's future. This will give you a glimpse into the beauty of the souls of these four mighty women of valor!

For those who are not familiar with the Jewish Discovery Center, it's an organization following the Chabad-Lubavitch philosophy, dedicated to strengthening the Buffalo Jewish community by providing every Jew—regardless of background, affiliation or level of commitment— an open door environment to experience the beauty of Judaism. The JDC promotes Jewish awareness, pride, study and celebration—in a non-judgmental and accepting way.

Mrs. Lea Greenberg is the co-founder of the JDC, together with her husband Rabbi Heschel Greenberg. Among her many roles, she has been hosting Shabbat and holiday meals for nearly 50 years, and those traveling through the area—stay over, often for days or weeks at a time and often people they've never before met. She bakes challah for many each week, including the elderly and home-bound, leads women through the ritual of Mikvah, and volunteers with the Jewish Burial Society, preparing the body to be buried according to Jewish Law, and she gives classes in Judaism.

“All of us follow the same direction of the Rebbe, (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson),” Mrs. Lea Greenberg said. “It is a very unique approach to what he called ‘in-reach’—not ‘out-reach.’ Bring the people to the Torah, not the Torah to the people. The Rebbe promoted the idea that Judaism is not an all-or-nothing religion. Doing one *mitzvah* is valuable, and every little thing brings us closer to the coming of *Moshiach* (Messiah).”

Born in Paris, Mrs. Greenberg grew up in France, came to the States when she was 21, and she had been teaching high school and seminary in French and Hebrew. She married Rabbi Greenberg

the following year. “We arrived in Buffalo on Columbus Day of 1972. We came here because my husband was recruited by Rabbi Nosson Gurary to work on to be on the UB campus. As Chabad adherents, we wanted to do in-reach with the students. Before we left New York, we had a private audience with the Rebbe and he told us to go with joy,” she said.

Mrs. Chani Labkovski is Co-Director of JDC's programs, Director of the Chai Early Childhood center and the Chai Hebrew School at the JDC. She also runs the yearly Mega Challah bake, Kosher Mini Chefs program for children, holiday programs for many senior living facilities, weekly and monthly classes, as well as inviting people to her home for Shabbat and holidays for nearly 25 years. She now devotes her time to the JDC, but also taught Judaic Studies for years at Kadimah, Ohr Temimim and Hebrew High. She came to Buffalo with her husband, Rabbi Laizer Labkovski, in the spring of 1995. She was born in Tel Aviv, and grew up in Kfar Chabad. She graduated from seminary as a high school math teacher, taught math, was sent to Ukraine to teach Hebrew and Judaism, where she was inspired to become a *shlucha*—an ‘emissary’ for the Rebbe.

After she and Rabbi Laizer married, she taught for a short time in NYC, and then moved to Buffalo. Expecting their first child Mendy, Chani didn't speak much English yet, but the couple prayed for a “sign” from the Rebbe about moving to Buffalo. “He gave us a sign that we should go to Buffalo, and we knew Buffalo was our place,” she said.

She tells her children, “You are on a mission to spread the light of Torah



from left: Brocha Leah Greenberg, Rivky Greenberg, Chani Labkovski, and (seated) Lea Greenberg

to those around you. You ought to be role models. We want to see the Jewish community in Buffalo flourish,” she added.

“*Shlichus* (being an emissary of the Rebbe) is our life. Bringing *Yiddishkeit* to Buffalo is what the Rebbe wants of us. Our goal is to bring peace to the world and prepare for the coming of *Moshiach* through studying Torah and performing *Mitzvot*. Our emphasis not on the evils of anti-Semitism, but rather on the beauty of Judaism.”

Brocha Leah Greenberg teaches women's classes and assists her husband, Rabbi Yehoshua Greenberg, with the “Institute for Jewish Studies” classes in adult education. She is a Judaic teacher at Ohr Temimim Day School. She grew up in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, home of the Rebbe. “The Rebbe was a real part of my life growing up. I was brought up with the passion to spread the spark of Judaism. My family was not *schlichut*, but they were ‘connectors.’ We were very exposed to having non-family around us.

In 1995, she went to study at a teaching seminary in Melbourne, Australia and met Sonia Gellman there, who introduced her to Yehoshua Greenberg,

now her husband. They married in 1997.

Rabbi Heschel Greenberg, father of Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Levi Greenberg, wanted to open up the Institute of Jewish Studies and have more adult education classes in 1998.

“Rabbi Greenberg had a vision of an education program that was an official yearly curriculum, and Yehoshua and I were looking for a place to live. I was excited to bring the light of Judaism to Jews, and also to live near family, so we moved to Buffalo in the summer of 1998.”

“*Mitzvah* is compared to light,” Brocha Leah said. “Nothing travels faster than light. Whenever you do the right thing, you connect to G-d. We want to be like a lamplighter. We have the match, and give strength to others to light, too. You don't lose any of your own light by giving light to others. ‘Be strong and we will be strengthened.’ We say this after we complete the Torah.”

Rivky Greenberg was born and raised in Antwerp, Belgium, where she lived until she completed high school in 1995. After that, she attended a Jewish teaching college in Montreal, Canada and taught elementary school and preschool for a couple of years. She was introduced to



# Gretchen Gross: Giving Back with Enthusiasm

By Maria Scrivani

**Are difference-makers born or made? A little of both, perhaps, and in the case of women who make a difference, subtract much of an ego and add in an extra layer of altruistic motivation. That capsulizes the Gretchen Gross story.**

The retired founder of a well-regarded early childhood program and volunteer extraordinaire remembers wanting to “save the world”—a vow taken when she was five years old. “I clearly remember having that thought,” says the Buffalo native, who parlayed good fortune and industriousness into a series of global adventures in her 20s that led to a successful business career back in her hometown. Her nearly 40-year marriage to retired attorney and philanthropist Gordon Gross makes her one-half of a Western New York power couple, but Gretchen Gross has her own deep resume.

Gross, one of two children in the Shaw family, grew up in Buffalo on Lancaster Avenue, where, though fifth-generation members of Temple Beth Zion, she led a sheltered life. It was the post-polio era, and parents, still fearing exposure to a dreaded disease, were keeping their children close to home and away from crowds. After Lafayette, she entered UB for a while, a place that seemed way too big and scary. Gross ended up getting a degree from a Quaker school, Friends World College.

Her first job as a nanny took her around the world, including travel to Asia and India, where she made valuable contacts and lifelong friendships. “I gained a lot of confidence,” she says. “And I learned to do a bunch of stuff. It was kind of like work-study. I’d also gotten married at that time, a union that didn’t last. But going through a divorce, and moving on in life—well, I really came into my own.”

She also came back home to Buffalo, and went to work in the early childhood field, first as a teaching assistant in The Park School pre-school, and then moving on to other programs. Asked to manage a facility, she took on the job, in Gross style, with relish. “I had no knowledge of how to manage anything at the time, but I soon learned how to do it.” Soon enough she got the notion that she could do this better. In 1974, she and a friend started the Audubon Child Development Center, which was eventually nationally



**“I believed in surrounding myself with people who were knowledgeable in many different fields to strengthen our program.”**

accredited and grew into Audubon @College Park. For 38 years, she ran that renowned program, selling the business five years ago.

Gross is modest about her success, crediting her fortuitous multicultural exposure (many of the families enrolled in her school came from abroad) and, of course, activating a key women’s default switch: collaboration. “I believed in surrounding myself with people who were knowledgeable in many different fields to strengthen our program,” she says. “We were one of the first inclusion programs in the area, when we began working with a group serving students with special needs. We really looked at each child as an individual.”

Soon after her return to Buffalo in the early 1970s, she met the formidable Gordon Gross, who was also divorced, 14 years her senior, and the father of two daughters. “I gained an instant family,” says Gretchen, recalling their marriage after two years of dating. Not only did she acquire children, but also a new interest in community service.

“I was never really involved in the Jewish community until I met Gordy,” she says. “He was so involved, I thought I should be, too. So I jumped in with both feet.”

What was she good at? She knew a lot about early childhood education. She ran a successful business. She was charming and enthusiastic—very useful tools in the fundraiser’s arsenal. She was, quite simply, in love, with her new husband and family, her hometown, and her Jewish heritage.

“I started doing a lot of volunteer work, pretty much staying in the Jewish community, because there aren’t a whole lot of us, and who is going to

do it if we don’t?” Youth programs that once attracted older kids have atrophied, she notes. “We tend to lose our Jewish kids when they become teenagers. It’s easy for them to get involved with the general community now. While it is good that Jews are welcome in the wider community, we do need to remember who we are.”

In recent years the Grosses have made a major commitment to the Jewish Center’s Camp Centerland in Amherst, a day camp open to all children, from kindergarten through grade 10. A new building for arts and crafts on that campus was her husband’s gift for her 70th birthday a few years ago: The Gretchen S. Gross Omanut [Hebrew for arts & crafts] Center. “I was so overwhelmed,” she recalls. “It made a real statement to the community. And it whetted my appetite for the camp; I chair the JCC camp committee now, working to raise funds for its support.”

She’s also involved with the Buffalo Jewish Federation, recently co-chairing the Education Task Force with Leslie Kramer, and, last year, she was honored with the Nathan Benderson Award for community leadership. “If they ask me to do something, I do it. It gives me pleasure. It feels good to give back; to be able to do that.” And whether or not she sees herself as a real difference-maker—not easy for a woman prone to modesty—she’s clearly happy to keep trying.

“Because of my age, I am mentoring more now, supporting younger leadership, which is so important. Of course older folks can be included, and should be used. I can help through my experience, and I think I am considered a role model by some, which makes me laugh...It’s a good balance in my life right now, and who knows what the future holds? When I had my business, that was my identity, and I was worried about losing that sense of myself when I sold the business. Gordon said, ‘You have a whole bunch of adventures ahead of you!’ and he was right. I still want to make the world better, one small piece of it, anyway.”

**Longtime Buffalo Spree contributor Maria Scrivani writes about local history and people who make a difference.**

Levi Greenberg, who was a friend of her brother, Moshe, and they married in 1999.

“On our first date, Levi talked about ‘his’ Buffalo community with such great enthusiasm that I knew that if I ever married him, there was a good chance I’d end up here,” she laughed. They started their life together in Brooklyn, NY, and moved to Buffalo in October 1999, where Rivky joined Levi in the person-to-person “in-reach,” sharing their home with the community and bringing Judaism to people in their own homes and offices.

“The idea of *shlichut* and self-sacrifice—moving to a place, often far away from family for the sake of sharing the beauty of Judaism with the community—was something that was ingrained in me right from the start,” Rivky explained about her role as part of JDC. “My paternal grandfather, Rabbi Sadya Liberow OB”M, was one of the original ‘pioneer *Shluchim*’ or ‘emissaries’ of the Rebbe sent to Morocco and later to Belgium. Following in his footsteps, I always knew I wanted to try to do the same.”

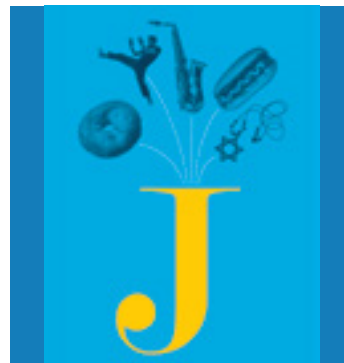
When asked about her daily work, she pointed to music. “A big part of my focus is using music to teach adults and children and inspire them in a Jewish way,” she said. Rivky began the Mommy & Me “Music with Rivky” classes 13 years ago, and also runs an informal women’s study program called “Torah & Tea.” In addition, she teaches in various Jewish day schools and pre-schools, teaches challah baking to adults, takes women on the journey of family purity and Mikvah, helps students prepare for their Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, and teaches Hebrew and Judaics to adults and children. “My oldest Hebrew student is 70, and my youngest is 4,” she explained.

“The Rebbe’s view was always ‘if you know *Alef* (A) [don’t wait until you learn *Bet* (B)], go out and teach *Alef*,” Rivky said. You don’t have to know it all before going out to teach,” she said. Let’s light up our Jewish Buffalo with thousands of candles. It will be a richer place, in turn preparing the world for the ultimate goal of creation—the coming of *Moshiach*.”

**If you want to learn more about the Jewish Discovery Center or study with any of these Women of Valor, go to [www.jewishdiscovery.org](http://www.jewishdiscovery.org) and [www.jewishtomorrow.com](http://www.jewishtomorrow.com).**

# JEWBILEE! Festival Highlight of Summer

**The Great Buffalo Jewbilee!** Jewish Cultural Festival is only a month and a half away! This first festival of its kind for Western New York will be held on **Sunday, August 19th from 11:30 AM until 6:00 PM**. Thousands of Buffalonians of all faiths will gather to celebrate the vibrancy of Jewish Buffalo at this indoor and outdoor festival at **Temple Beth Zion and the JCC Holland Family building** on historic Delaware Avenue.



With more than 30 different food items- everything from babka, chopped liver, corn on the cob, falafel, hot dogs, borekas and much more—available to enjoy all day, each food item

will cost **no more than \$5**. A beer tent featuring **Shmaltz Brewery** and wine from **Tzafona Winery** will also be featured. All food will be under the supervision of the BVK.

Musical entertainment will include a **PJ Library** sponsored concert by St. Louis based artist **Rick Recht**, Buffalo's **West of Odessa** Klezmer band, performances by local Jewish artists and choirs, and a Kumsitz organized by TBZ Cantor Penny Myers and featuring many of Buffalo's talented clergy.

Not to be missed, please join past, present, and future JCC members and leaders for the **Grand Re-Opening** of the Jewish Community Center's Holland Family Building. Ribbon cutting and ceremonies will begin at 3:00 PM.

And, with additional areas to shop Israeli products and purchase one-of-a-kind gifts from local artists; opportunities to watch and participate in Krav Maga demonstrations sponsored by **The Training Edge**; join Israeli folk dancing; and play in an entire children's wing crafted by the Jewish Discovery Center and the JCC; make sure to plan at least a few hours to enjoy this jam packed festival.

We thank **Wegmans** and **Amherst Memorial** for being our Sweet Honey Cake/ Gold Level Partners. For more information, contact Keren Green at [keren@buffalojewishfederation.org](mailto:keren@buffalojewishfederation.org) or call 716-204-2250.

## JAMBOREE to the JEWBILEE

The *Jewbilee* weekend will kick off on **Thursday, August 16** with the **JAMBOREE to the JEWBILEE!** at Larkin Square. Co-hosted by Temple Beth Zion and the JCC and chaired by **Laurie and Mark Criden**, the *Jamboree* is an evening family celebration of food and entertainment highlighted by **The Good Guys Band**, **Shmaltz Beer** and three food trucks: **Lloyd's**, **Amy's** and **Chilly Billy's**. This family event begins at 5:30 PM with plenty of entertainment for kids featuring **Mr. NO the Balloon Guy**, face painting and a bounce house. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for kids between 6-12 and kids 5 and under are free.

## CANTORS CHAI 5K

Attention all runners: Don't miss the Cantors Chai 5K: Promoting a healthy mind, body, and spirit preceding the *Jewbilee*. Registration will begin at TBZ at 8:00 AM with the fun run/walk starting at 9:00 AM. Sponsored by the **Cantors Assembly** and chaired by **Cantor Penny Myers**, the Cantors Chai 5K leaves from Temple Beth Zion at 805 Delaware Avenue. For more information and to register, go to [www.cantors.org/chai5k](http://www.cantors.org/chai5k).

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- 2» Be a Culture Vulture! Attend Shakespeare in Delaware Park, presenting *King Lear* through July 15 and *Much Ado About Nothing* July 26-August 19.** The production begins at 7:30pm each night in Delaware Park. Bring a picnic and your own chairs or cushions to sit on. [shakespeareindelawarepark.org](http://shakespeareindelawarepark.org).
- 3» Spend the 4th of July at the JCC!** Splash at a Pool party from 9:30 am to after the UB fireworks at night! Bounce house, crafts, family fun all day. **Go to [www.jccbuffalo.org](http://www.jccbuffalo.org) or call 688-4033.**
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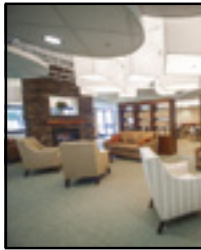
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## Attention Snowbirds!

Due to postal regulations, the *Jewish Journal of Western New York* will no longer be forwarded to "temporary change" addresses.

If you plan to be away from your permanent address and will have your first class mail forwarded to your temporary address and would like to continue to receive the *Jewish Journal* over the winter or the summer, please call Joan Kwiatkowski at 716-204-2242 to give us your "temporary" address. Thank you!

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## Kehillat Ohr Tzion Update

In April, Kehillat Ohr Tzion held a very successful weekend with Scholar in Residence Rabbi Yehoshua Grunstein. Rabbi Grunstein, Director of Training and Placement at the Straus-Amiel and Beren-Amiel Institute of Ohr Torah Stone in Israel, spoke with synagogue members and guests about timely issues in Judaism. He encouraged and received questions and participation from those in attendance. There was plenty of food following each of his talks, which allowed for lots of informal conversations to continue.

On Shavuot, members of KOT offered many interesting talks during the evening of learning. One of the presentations dealt with the relationship between Parsha Kedoshim and Jewish community involvement. This talk was spurred by the attendance of some members at the recent Jewish Council for Public Affairs Conference held in New York City and the establishment of the Buffalo Federation's Jewish Community Relations Council. Another presentation related to the ideas presented at the recent Engagement Conference held on the UB campus.

With spring almost in the air, KOT celebrated Lag Ba'Omer with a festive barbecue in Rabbi and Nora Bergman's backyard. Many community members were welcomed at this delicious event. More outdoor events are being planned for the coming months including a Havdallah service and a Shabbat gathering in the park.

KOT was thrilled to be the recipient of a grant from Amiel Bakehila and Israel's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, which will bring different Israeli representatives to teach, interact, and entertain members of the entire Buffalo Jewish community



Eitan Morrell, Rabbi Reuven Spolter, Rabbi Ori Bergman and Yitzchok Meir Malek

throughout this coming year. The first group came to Buffalo in early June and stayed at the homes of KOT members and presented programs for several other organizations including Kadimah and all the Jewish youth groups. The featured Israeli Delegation members for this first of seven such delegations were tour guide Eitan Morrell, Jewish educator Rabbi Reuven Spolter and musician Yitzchok Meir Malek, whose presentations on June 4 at KOT were appreciated by all the community members in attendance. The Buffalo Jewish Federation is helping to coordinate all the programs arranged through Amiel Bakehila.

*For more information about services, learning opportunities or social events contact Rabbi Bergman at [oribergman@gmail.com](mailto:oribergman@gmail.com)*

## TBZ Volunteer Opportunity

Temple Beth Zion will coordinate volunteers to serve at **Friends of Night People** on the second Tuesday of each month. We won't need to cook the meal, only serve it. Ten volunteers are needed from 4 to 7:15 PM. (Minimum age is 14 - minors must be accompanied by parents.)

Due to limited availability of parking, carpooling is necessary. Call Leslie at 839-0079 or email Ann Marie at [annmarie@tbz.org](mailto:annmarie@tbz.org) for more details and/or to put your name on the list of volunteers. You can volunteer once or on multiple Tuesdays. We welcome new and returning volunteers.

## TBZ PALS-Kadimah Registration

**Broder Center for Jewish Education  
700 Sweet Home Road, Amherst**

PALS-Kadimah is a warm, welcoming Jewish community pre-school with an enriched Judaic, Hebrew and values-based curriculum. Through creative play and experiential learning, our children thrive and discover the world around them. A few spots are open. *For more information and/or a tour, contact Melissa Milch: [pals@tbz.org](mailto:pals@tbz.org) or (716) 836-6565, Ext. 139.*

## Space Week at PALS-Kadimah

Students in the four year-old class of PALS- Kadimah enjoyed Space Week. Activities included building their own space ship, discovering the planets, and learning about the phases of the moon. Reading time included selections about space and space travel. The highlight of the week was a visit from retired Aeronautical Research Engineer, Norman Weingarten. "Mr. Norm" talked about his work at Calspan, including working on making the Space Shuttle safe for the astronauts.





## Beth Tzedek celebrates 10th Birthday

The Temple Beth Tzedek community celebrated its 10th birthday with a traditional birthday party with ice cream and cake, but also turned the parking lot into Tikun Olam in Action. The Erie County Sheriff's office set up a station to collect unused drugs and sharps for safe disposal, so that all those pill bottles will not find their way into the wrong hands or into our environment. Shred-It sent a truck for onsite shredding of personal documents. Buffalo Computer Recycling came, too, and took away used electronics for safe disposal. As the truck was filled, we were saving the environment.

Lisa Benson made three trips, bringing not only things from her own home, but things for neighbors as well. We also accepted donations for ongoing projects: bottles and cans so the deposit refunds can be used to help fund youth activities; bras and sanitary products were collected by TBT's Women's Network for Haven House.

All the stations had steady traffic. Some people drove in and out, but some stayed to listen to the music provided by TBT member Josh Ribakove on sax, Austin



Dunn on guitar Matt Pagano on guitar and Lianna Bochiechio, flutist.

Linda Boxer and Beth Kassier,

membership committee co-chairs, organized the event and proclaimed the event a success, especially for a first time

event. It was the perfect example of having fun and doing good at the same time!

## Judy Henn Joins Beth Zion Team

Judy Henn has joined the Temple Beth Zion staff as Clergy Associate and Pastoral Counselor, working with Rabbi Jonathan Freirich and Cantor Penny Myers as part of the clergy team. Judy, a longtime member of the Buffalo Jewish community, brings a wealth of experience in caring for the community, leading the community in worship, and learning. Most recently she has been providing pastoral and spiritual care to our community's senior members as Chaplain at Weinberg Campus, Beechwood Continuing Care and Blocher Homes.

She previously taught Judaic and Hebrew studies, tutored B'nai Mitzvah students and has led worship services throughout the Buffalo Jewish Community. Judy has shared in many



community events, including the Women's Seder and Meditative Services. Judy will be working with the TBZ clergy to offer comfort in difficult times of loss and share in the joy of simchas.

## 39th Annual Merrill Molien Haven House Scholarship Luncheon

Tuesday, July 17, Noon  
TBZ Broder Center 700 Sweet Home Road

Join the Temple Beth Zion Sisterhood for a delicious lunch, interesting speaker and our fabulous basket auction. All proceeds to benefit an educational scholarship at Haven House for victims of domestic violence. **For more information, call (716) 836-6565.**

**Tisha B'av 5778**  
July 21-22, 2018

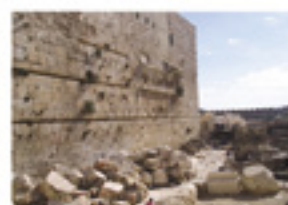


**Saturday, July 21, 2018**

Chanting of Megillat Eicha by candlelight  
Readings about Tisha B'av and D'var Torah  
Mincha for Shabbat 8:15 pm  
Seudah Shlisheet for Shabbat 8:45 pm  
Ma'ariv and Megillah reading 9:30 pm

**Sunday, July 22, 2018**

Shaharit, including Kinot and Torah Service 8:30 am  
Mincha, including Torah Service 2:00 pm



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# Walk Off Hunger Enters Second Decade

By Bruce Corris

It started as a small fundraiser on the grounds of a Western New York synagogue. It's grown bigger and bigger, and as it enters its second decade, it's one of the most important fundraisers of the year for the Food Bank of WNY. The eleventh annual Walk Off Hunger, once again co-hosted by Congregation Shir Shalom, will be held Saturday, July 28th in Williamsville.

Last year's Walk was the biggest ever, raising \$93,000, enough to provide 558,000 meals for Western New Yorkers in need. In its 10 years, Walk Off Hunger has raised enough money to provide an incredible 3.4 million meals!

"We are so grateful to our friends at Congregation Shir Shalom for their support of Walk Off Hunger and everything they do for the Food Bank", says Tara Ellis, Food Bank President & CEO. "The Temple is an important partner in our effort to help those who need assistance."

One reason Walk Off Hunger is such an important fundraiser is donations



to the Food Bank traditionally drop in the summer, but that's when the need often increases, because children who would normally receive meals through school programs are home from school on vacation. In any month, the Food Bank of WNY helps as many as 135,000 people in Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua Counties, including 55,000 children and

infants. In addition to co-hosting Walk Off Hunger, Congregation Shir Shalom has provided the largest team in the walk every year.

This year's walk will be held Saturday July 28th at Island Park in Williamsville. Registration begins at 10:00 and the walk is at 11:00. The two-mile walk is a very family-friendly event, followed by

Summerfest, featuring food, children's games, and entertainment....all included in the cost of registration, which is \$25 for adults. Children under 16 are free.

***If you'd like to register for Walk Off Hunger, make a donation to someone who's walking, or learn more about the event, please go to [www.foodbankwny.org/walkoffhunger/](http://www.foodbankwny.org/walkoffhunger/).***

## Jewish Culture Bus Trip to Rochester



Congregation Shir Shalom is hosting a bus trip to see "What's Happening with our Jewish Neighbors in Rochester?" July 18th. The trip includes a performance of Jewish themed music, a visit to a Reform synagogue with 100 menorahs on display, a Kosher lunch at the JCC and shopping in a Jewish neighborhood.

***The bus departs at 9:15am from Shir Shalom at 4660 Sheridan Drive. Cost is \$43.00 and payment is due by July 2nd. For information call 716.633.8877.***



## Kick-off Summer BBQ at Shir Shalom

Are you ready for a cookout? Congregation Shir Shalom members are! Join the Congregation for its Kick-Off Summer BBQ Friday, July 6, at 7:00 PM immediately following our first outdoor Erev Shabbat Service of the season at 6:00 PM.

We provide hot dogs, hamburgers and veggie burgers. Please bring a parve salad or side dish or any type of dessert.

***RSVP to the Temple Office at 716.633.8877 by July 3rd. Everyone is welcome!!!***

## Shir Shalom President's Awards Go To 59 Special People

By Peter Simon

Breaking with a yearly tradition in which one person receives a "President's Award" for outstanding volunteer service at its Temple Annual Meeting, Congregation Shir Shalom instead presented individual plaques to 59 members who help run the bingo program. "It takes a special person—one who really cares about this temple—to show up for bingo week in and week out," said Todd Sugarman, Temple President, who came up with idea of multiple awards. In addition, the volunteers were treated to a champagne toast at Shir Shalom's Annual Congregational Meeting in May.

Helping with bingo is not a glamorous job. It might involve selling cards or refreshments, handling the proceeds or cleaning up. Volunteers are hard to find, but Shir Shalom has put together a

crew that enjoys working together, presenting the congregation in a friendly and welcoming light, and raising funds to help balance the Temple's budget.

In the last six years, bingo has raised a total of more than \$290,000, and in 2013-14 accounted for more than nine percent of the Temple's revenue. Prior to that, the bingo program was disbanded due to intense competition from other organizations, difficulty finding volunteers and a bingo smoking ban that temporarily cut attendance. Sugarman convinced congregant David Safir to work with him to rejuvenate bingo and—with the help of 58 friends—they succeeded handsomely.

Also taking place at the Annual Meeting were elections. Elected to three-year Board of Trustee terms at the congregational meeting were Jeff Balsom, Gary Bluestein, Shira Klaiman, Thomas Lansing, Rob Lederman, Shari Jo Reich and Diane Safir.





# Congregation Havurah Plants Gardens @ JCC

Congregation Havurah and the Wellness Committee of the JCC held a joint ceremony and planting of the Community Garden at the JCC in June. To commemorate Havurah's 45th Anniversary, the Congregation donated "seed money" to the JCC to construct the planters last year--and, tended by the JCC and Havurah, vegetables were donated to the Weinberg Food Bank. A plaque commemorating Havurah's 45th Anniversary will be placed in the Garden for everyone to see.

*Photos by Gretchen Gross*



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July 15

August 12



**Movie Night**

At the Grossman Family Outdoor Pool Complex

Begin at 7:30<sup>pm</sup>

August 4

At the Rein Family Amphitheater, Camp Centerland

Begin at 7:30<sup>pm</sup>

July 14 & July 28



**Holiday Parties**

July 4

9:30<sup>am</sup>- After UB Fireworks

Labor Day September 2

12:00-4:00<sup>pm</sup>



**Performances**

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Israeli Scouts	Suzuki Violinists
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Mon-Thurs	5:30 <sup>am</sup> - 9:30 <sup>pm</sup>
Friday	5:30 <sup>am</sup> - 7:00 <sup>pm</sup>
Sat	8:00 <sup>am</sup> - 6:00 <sup>pm</sup>



# Janet Desmon honored at JCC Annual Meeting

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo held its annual meeting in late June, and reported on achievements, upcoming plans for facility and program enhancements, and featured guest presentations from JCC members. The meeting also featured the presentation of the Ralph Kushner Volunteer Service Award to Janet Desmon in honor of her exceptional volunteer contributions to the Jewish Community Center.

“Janet is one of the JCC’s most valuable volunteers,” said Richard Zakalik, JCC Executive Director. “Her willingness to take on challenging tasks to create successful fundraising for JCC programs is unparalleled. She has been an exemplary board member, employing



Janet Desmon

her own creative brand of wit and wisdom to design engaging programs that inspire others to

get involved and participate,” he added.

Included in the Annual Meeting was a financial report. “The fiscal year ending March 31, 2018 was a year of tremendous progress for the JCC of Greater Buffalo on many fronts,” said Zakalik. “Enhancements at Camp Centerland on the Irving M. Shuman Campgrounds, strengthening of the JCC Board of Trustees, extensive renovations at the Holland Family Building on Delaware Avenue and the fulfillment of major Strategic Plan objectives have contributed to a more sustainable and thriving JCC this year. We look forward to the next twelve months, which will include completion of renovations at Holland and an exciting reinvigoration of the Grossman Family Outdoor Pool Complex.”

## HADASSAH IS HAPPENING!

Buffalo Hadassah has many activities planned for the month of August and beyond.

The first program in August is the annual card party which is being coordinated by Mickey Savit and will be held **August 17** at Amberleigh.

Next, Dr. Benjamin Bensadon, Assistant Professor of Integrated Medical Science at Florida Atlantic University, will speak about Aging at the home of Dr. Maxine Seller, **August 2**. Dr. Bensadon has published and lectured nationally and internationally and is the son of Hadassah Life Member Judy Cohen.

**August 28** features an event co-hosted by Buffalo Hadassah and Beth Tzedek’s Sisterhood. Sisterhood President Linda Steinhorn has arranged for author and scholar Dr. Sharon Hart-Green to speak at their opening meeting about her debut novel *Come Back for Me*. Hadassah’s Book Club, facilitated by Phyllis Steinberg, recently read and discussed the book. The dinner event will be held at Temple Beth Tzedek.

A panel discussion is being planned for mid-November at the Benderson JCC on Israel and the American Jewish Community, co-sponsored with Buffalo Jewish Federation.

During the summer Hadassah Board Member Frima Ackerhalt will again be coordinating the annual fund drive for the Hadassah Medical Organization (HMO), which is involved in cutting edge research in Cell Therapy, Immunology, Infectious Diseases, Pediatrics and Regenerative Medicine.

**For membership information email nangrnb@gmail.com**

## SUMMER ADULT PROGRAMS AT THE JCC BENDERSON BUILDING

### Outdoor Painting Class with Deb Meier

June 25 – August 27

Mondays 1:30 – 3:30 PM

We will gather outdoors, find a scenic area and paint or sketch the landscape using any media. In case of inclement weather we move indoors.

### Animal Adventure Trip

Wednesday, August 8

Join your friends on an animal adventure to Hidden Valley in Varysburg, New York. We will travel by bus, enjoying a delicious lunch followed by a one-hour trolley ride and guided tour through the 60 acre animal park. We can feed the animals and take pictures.

### LABOR DAY WEEKEND

We will travel by bus to Toronto for the fabulous Ashkenaz Festival. Call Karla Wiseman 204-2257 for details of this trip or other classes.

**Current Events** on *Tuesdays* and **Yiddish Club** every other *Wednesday* will continue all summer.

### Annual Adult Student Art Show & Reception

Wednesday, July 11

7:00 – 9:00 PM at the JCC Benderson Bldg.

Art work from students of Sonia Gellman Young: Susan Gellman, Rebecca Camhi, Elaine Brody, Regis O’Connor, Janet Frankel, Terri Daley, Deborah Boehm, Shirley Wilinsky and Gail Pitterman.

**Call Karla Wiseman at 204-2257 details or information.**



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# The Case for Day School: Community Retention, Investment, and Inclusion

By Dr. Sophia Balderman, Kadimah class of 1996

Jewish day school isn't for everyone. Priorities differ, interests vary and desires change from one person to another. But like a Jewish Community Center, a synagogue, a mikvah, a cemetery, a senior home, a charity fund, and a youth group, a day school is part of the fabric of every Jewish community. Since opening its doors in 1959, Kadimah Academy of Buffalo has offered an excellent Jewish community day school education for students and families from across the

## spectrum of Jewish Buffalo.

As a Kadimah alumna, I have looked forward to the day when I would impart the gift of a Kadimah education to my own child. It saddens me that she, along with other Jewish children in Buffalo, may not have the same special opportunity that I did. Kadimah is certainly not alone in this crisis. One need only look across Upstate New York, and across the country, to see this is a nationwide problem for small Jewish communities. But it is also a challenge that is incumbent upon us all to solve, for our own collective good, if not our individual need.

The future of Kadimah Academy is truly important for the Buffalo Jewish community at large. There are those for whom the availability of Jewish

parochial schooling for their children is essential; they will not move to or stay in a community without a day school. Hence the availability of Kadimah is important for retention. Graduates of Jewish day schools have a high likelihood of leading Jewishly committed lives, being involved in their Jewish communities, donating to Jewish charities and serving as leaders of Jewish organizations. Therefore, we should consider Kadimah as an investment into our communal future.

Additionally, we are often guided today by the principle of inclusivity in our lives and



Dr. Sophia Balderman, her husband Laurent Haccoun, and their daughter Claire



Balderman siblings Gabby '03, Sophia '96 (with daughter Claire), and Lisa '98, all Kadimah alumnae, and all eager for their children to get a community day school education in Buffalo

activities. As a Jewish community, we should strive to ensure that all our members are having their needs met, including through the existence of a community day school. I hope that at this critical period, Jewish Buffalo finds it in its collective heart to sustain

this jewel of a community day school, both financially and by working with its leadership to find other solutions to today's challenges. How the Jewish community of Buffalo acts now will affect generations to come.

**To learn more or find out how to help, call the school at 836-6903.**

## YAD B'YAD ARTISTS RECEPTION

Five Yad B'Yad artists greeted friends, family, and community members May 24 at an evening reception at the JCC where they shared their stunning artwork that was on display at the Benderson Building. Musicians Gunilla Kester and Max Goldhirsch delighted everyone with beautiful classical guitar music. Guests enjoyed a relaxed evening of art, music, and friendship!



Musicians: Gunilla Kester and Max Goldhirsch



The artists – back row – left to right – Jeremy Pratt, Richard Gear; front row – left to right – Liz Skerker, Sarah Doueck, Daniel Rodgers

## BOY SCOUTS & JEWISH WAR VETERANS

Boy Scout Troop 156, chartered to the Jewish Community Center, served as the Color Guard for the Jewish War Veterans Buffalo Frontier Post 25 annual Memorial Day ceremony at Beth-El Pine Ridge cemetery.

**For more information about Troop 156 contact Bruce Levine, Scoutmaster, at 310-4832.**



**J THE GREAT BUFFALO JEWBILEE Sunday, August 19**



# Intergenerational Perspectives on Aging Well, with Grace

As part of the Millennial Generation, Nicole Balsom and Peter Silverman tend not to spend a lot of time thinking about growing old. Each, however, says their parents are role models for knowing just what to do to prepare for aging well. Silverman, a 32-year-old finance professional at HSBC who joined the board of Jewish Family Service of Buffalo & Erie County (JFS) in 2017, says his parents have taught him the importance of saving early for a comfortable retirement. “My mom and dad are role models in terms of how to prepare for retirement,” he says, adding that he began contributing to his 401K account right after college.

“Who knows if Social Security benefits will still be around when it’s time for me to retire? Saving early is extremely important for my generation, more so than for generations before us.”

To prepare his mind and physical self for later life wellness, Silverman says he goes to the gym nearly every day and takes time to walk in Delaware Park for mental well-being. “I also try to keep a



Nicole Joseph Balsom's mother, Beth Joseph with Nicole's new son; Ellen Sterman's daughter, Allison Chertack, with Ellen's father, Joe Sterman; Peter Silverman.



very active social life, but take the time to just enjoy the life that I’ve made for myself and not think too far ahead,” he says.

Balsom is an attorney and the proud mother of eight-month-old son Murray who believes that to age gracefully is to become wise. Her parents Beth and Gary Joseph, she says, have been role models for both aging gracefully and gaining wisdom. “Life has taught my parents, and they have taught me, to live each day with a purpose. To focus on the good, appreciate every moment and not to dwell on trivial disappointments.”

HuffPost OWN ([www.huffingtonpost.com/section/own](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/section/own)) lists “Follow the Example of Your Elders” among its 22 tips for aging well. Other good advice includes “Pass on What You’ve Learned,” “Learn to Adapt,” “Breathe” and “Stay in Touch.” Practical advice on graceful aging from the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center ([www.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/](http://www.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/)) includes eating healthy foods, getting enough sleep, reducing stress and taking charge of your health. Most sources of counsel for aging well also cite loneliness as a key challenge to senior wellness.

Jewish Family Service (JFS) can be a big support for taking charge of your health, among other age-related wellness challenges, JFS president and CEO Marlene Schillinger says. “Our terrific care coordination team helps elders coordinate medical and healthcare appointments with multiple providers, arrange for transportation when needed, apply for Medicaid benefits, connect to sources of socialization and access any additional support services we may not offer,” Schillinger reports.

“We also provide comprehensive mental and behavioral health counseling and treatment services to help seniors manage a diagnosed or undiagnosed

mental health challenge, and navigate through the general stress and sense of loss that often accompanies growing older. JFS provides grief counseling and problem gambling treatment as well.”

JFS board member Ellen Sterman, a Baby Boomer, thinks that at 90 years young, her dad Joseph Sterman is a great role model for aging with grace. “He has a great attitude about life. He never stops learning. At this point, he is still going to continuing education for pharmacists on a regular basis,” says the physician, wife and mother who joined the JFS board in 2017. She adds that he does cardio and weight exercises five days a week at the Jewish Community Center, and still plays golf. “Having a great sense of humor and always trying to see the best in people really helps him stay happy and young. I think his advice is ‘keep active and stimulated.’ It doesn’t hurt that he has an active older sister and brother. Now that’s good genes!”

To learn more about JFS programs and support for aging well, visit [www.jfsbuffalo.org](http://www.jfsbuffalo.org) or call 716-883-1914. Join us on Instagram and Facebook @jfsbuffalo.



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## CAMP CENTERLAND TICKET TO ADVENTURE

**By Michael Garcia**  
Camp Director

Camp Centerland started on June 25th and we kicked off our "TICKET TO ADVENTURE." Throughout the summer, campers and staff will experience fun and engaging activities like no other. Being outdoors is one of the most basic parts of camp. Children are indoors 10 months of the year (especially in Buffalo), and now are at the time of year that the kids get to explore nature around them.

This year at camp, traditional sports will have a twist. Kickball with a twist... kickball may not be a new sport to any of us but adding a TWIST to the rules allows campers to feel like it is new. By changing the basic rules of kickball to challenge our campers, we may try...maybe...having the campers run the bases backwards. Running to third, second, first then home gets the campers out of the patterns they are accustomed too. Or double ball



kickball...two kickers run the bases in opposite directions.

Camper-led activities allow them to think of new ways to engage with each other. Let the campers define rules for old games. Have them take time to take a game they love and add (or subtract) rules they want. For safety, staff always has the right to stop anything that is unsafe or leads to negative behavior. But, I find campers will rise to the occasion if you let them. Just thinking of new ways to help campers reach those aspirational arches this summer at Camp Centerland.

## "INTRO TO JUDAISM" EXPLORES THE MIKVAH

"Introduction to Judaism" students visited the local Mikvah Sunday, June 3. Rebetzin Lea Greenberg gave an interesting tour and answered the students' questions with anecdotes and stories. The students were fascinated learning about the important Mitzvah of Mikvah.



"Intro to Judaism," a 14-week course taught by a different clergy person each week, is open to anyone interested in learning more about Judaism. In collaboration with the Buffalo Board of Rabbis and Cantors, this exceptional course is designed for couples considering intermarriage, individuals interested in conversion, and Jews who wish to learn more about their religion and history. This year's students included current conversion students, non-Jews who had discovered they had Jewish ancestry, Jewish students wanting to revisit the learning they had had as children, interfaith couples and non-Jewish staff people working for a Jewish organization.

Recent student testimonials included:

*"The visit to the Mikvah was wonderful and the class was amazing!"*

*"I wanted to take a minute to thank you for the opportunity to take the intro class...I would consider taking the intro class again, too. So much to learn!"*

*"I learned that being a Jew is more than a religion, it is a culture, a people, and a covenant. The class helped solidify my decision to convert to Judaism."*

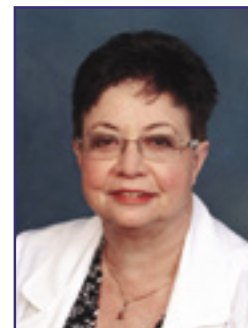
A new session of "Intro to Judaism" will begin at the end of September. The Jewish calendar, the Covenant, Jewish life cycles, worship and beliefs are all explored. In addition, the Bible, Rabbinic literature, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, Zionism and the State of Israel are discussed. The course includes an optional field trip to the Buffalo Mikvah. Registration information for those interested will be published in August.

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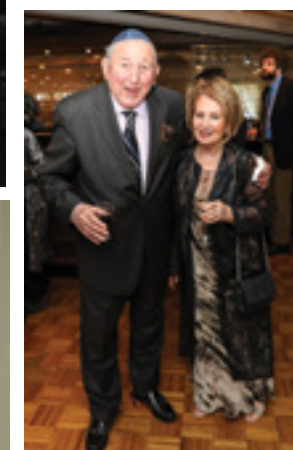
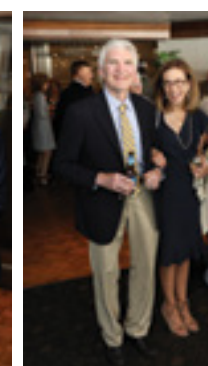
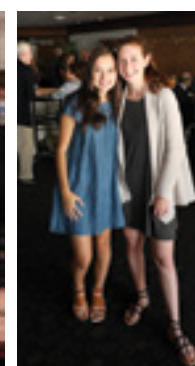
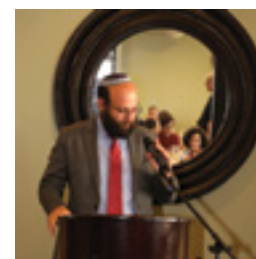
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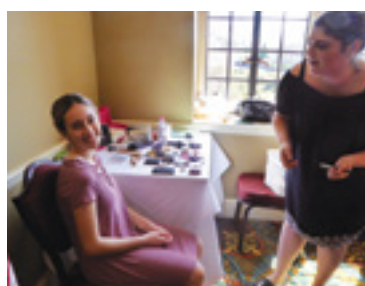
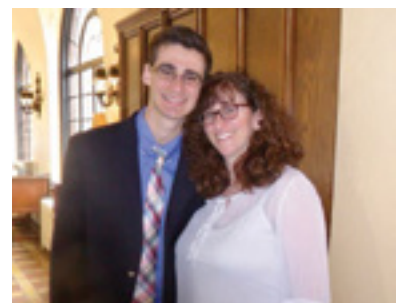
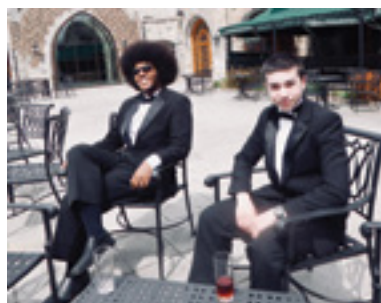
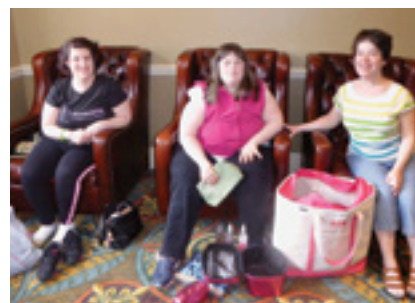
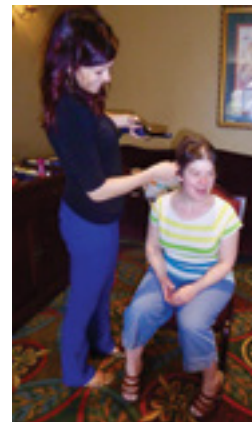
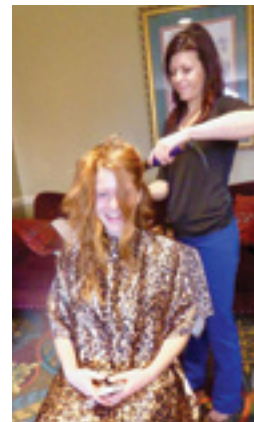
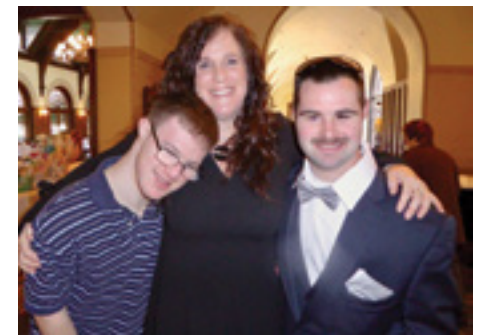
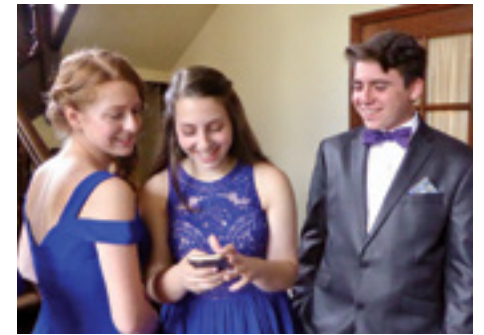


# Kadimah Academy Annual Dinner: June 11





# Yad B'Yad Fashion Show: May 6





## Holocaust Resource Center Annl Meeting: June 7; Upstander Breakfast: June 11



### Birthday Celebration at Weinberg

Rabbi Levi and Rivky Greenberg from the Jewish Discovery Center celebrated their son, Nochum Sadya's 1st birthday at Weinberg Campus. Rabbi Levi shared some words of inspiration with the residents, Rivky sang and played Jewish music and their children each handed out cupcakes and interacted with the elderly, who truly enjoyed this very special and youthful celebration. A special thank you to Leslie Gordon for helping coordinating this event.



### BBC Band @ TBZ





# Pride March: June 3



## Amiel BaKehila

In June, three representatives from *Amiel BaKehila* were in Buffalo to meet members of the community. *Amiel BaKehila* is a project of the Israeli Government's Ministry of Diaspora Affairs, whose mission is to bridge the gap between Israel and the Diaspora, and to strengthen Jewish communities around the world. Buffalo is part of 24 communities around the world who are participating in the program. The representatives, Rabbi Reuven Spolter, Yitzchok Meir Malek and Eitan Morell visited Buffalo for several days and met with many communities members. We can expect 6 more visits throughout the year from the project, with Rabbi Spolter joining us each time.





# (NOT) THE LAST WORD

## 1949, Israel, and Me

By Dr. Maxine Seller

My family didn't dance in the streets when the State of Israel was declared in May, 1948—one didn't do that in our small Bible-Belt town in North Carolina. But we followed the news of the War for Independence. Unlike most of the pundits, my mother was sure the new Jewish State would survive the war that followed and, of course, she was right. An early Zionist, my mother had learned Modern Hebrew in Cleveland in the coeducational Talmud Torah system her mother had helped to establish. She made the four of us—I had an older brother—into a Zionist family. Is there such a thing now?

It was the spring of 1949. Having worked for the establishment of the State of Israel, my parents wanted to see it as soon as possible. Besides, my father had relatives, Holocaust survivors, there. So as soon as the smoke cleared in the Middle East, the school year ended, and the US State Department gave its OK, we packed our bags for Israel. Friends and relatives thought we were insane. War could break out again at any moment (there was no peace treaties with the Arab invaders, only truces), and reports on conditions in Israel were not

encouraging. My father was hesitant—he felt responsible. My mother was adamant. Half in jest and half seriously, we made a will—just in case—and off we went.

My first impressions were not favorable. It was summer—hot, dusty, little or no air-conditioning, and many flies. A spoiled American teenager, I didn't like the food, mainly yogurt, white cheese, and chopped vegetables. I wanted a hamburger, but meat was nowhere to be found. Relatives who had been in the country since 1938 managed to find a chicken—my father said



Dr. Maxine Seller

they must have mortgaged the house for it—and invited us for dinner. I didn't like it. "You eat every bit of that chicken," my father hissed. I ate it.

Soon the food seemed less important because there was so much else going on. To someone like me, from a small Southern town, it was a revelation just to see so many Jews doing so many different things. A Jewish policeman, a Jewish janitor, a Jewish plumber—unbelievable! All the Jews in my home town had stores or shops. I knew that people in Israel spoke Hebrew, but after struggling with prayer book Hebrew in our synagogue school, it was amazing to hear children shouting and arguing in Hebrew on the street.

We rented a car with a driver to find the relatives. I remember the scenery along the road—broken cars, burned-out trucks, rusted barbed wire, ruined buildings pockmarked with bullet holes. The reality of the bloody War of Independence began to sink in. We passed huge tent camps where, our driver told us, thousands of Moroccan Jewish immigrants were living, with more arriving every day. Now the food shortage began to make sense. Our relatives, also recent immigrants, were not in tents. One was in a very Spartan kibbutz. The others were living in dark rooms in half-destroyed Arab houses. My parents spoke with them in Yiddish and translated for us later. Everyone had a story, and all the stories were powerful. A cousin who had survived a slave labor camp looked older than my grandmother. I learned later that she was younger than my mother. My parents expected the relatives to ask for things, or to want to come to the United States. They were wrong. Our relatives didn't take from us. They gave—apples, eggs, flowers, advice—whatever they could. They didn't ask to come to the United States. They were tired of moving, tired of being homeless, glad to be in Israel.

One morning, we went to see the border between Israeli-controlled West Jerusalem and Jordanian-controlled East Jerusalem. (The War for Independence had left the city

divided.) I remember rows and rows of ugly barbed wire with armed guards patrolling both sides. I don't remember if there were dogs, but when I saw the Berlin Wall many years later, I thought of Jerusalem in 1949. As we stood at the border, my father took out his camera to get a picture. Suddenly, warning shots buzzed over our heads. Shaken, we retreated to the hotel.

The only really dangerous thing that happened on our trip was that my brother got dysentery. He lost 20 pounds. We were in a small hotel in Sefad (Tsfat) almost ready to go home when my brother became too sick to travel, so we stayed for several weeks more. Sefad was a small village then, ancient and beautiful, but after the first few days not very exciting for a fourteen year old. I remember my parents hovering over my brother (I didn't realize how sick he was) and trying desperately to locate a Western-trained, English-speaking doctor. Many people, strangers as well as family, helped them find one. Meanwhile, I discovered a stash of Agatha Christie mystery books on a dusty shelf and read them all—twice. But the highlight of my stay was when the owner showed me a secret compartment under the bathroom floor. He told me that the Haganah had hidden guns there during the British Mandate. Everyone had a story!

My brother got well in time, and we said goodbye to the relatives, and we went home. I remember wondering if I would ever get back to Israel. Of course, I did return—many times—and every time I am still amazed. The Third World country I visited in 1949 has become a First World technological giant. I love the food. Sadly, the relatives are gone. I see new faces now—Ethiopian, Russian, Asian. Many things have changed, but the people I meet now are very much like the people I met in 1949—caring, generous, and hopeful for the future.

*Maxine Seller is a retired professor from the University at Buffalo where she specialized in American Social and Educational History. She and her late husband, Bob, traveled to Israel many times, (often with one or more of their children or grandchildren,) and twice she was a Visiting Professor at the University of Haifa. An enthusiastic volunteer, she has participated in a variety of volunteer activities in Israel, including teaching English to Ethiopian immigrant boys and working with the "Save A Child's Heart" program. In Buffalo, she is active in Hadassah (recently co-president), and on the Jewish Repertory Theatre committee. A Buffalo booster, she enjoys exploring the many things the city has to offer. She can often be seen walking her dog in Delaware Park.*



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- **Vanessa Williams with the BPO at Artpark**  
Thu Jul 19, 8pm  
Tickets: [artpark.net](http://artpark.net)
- **BPO at the Erie County Fair**  
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We're excited to introduce Jonathan Adler, a celebrity-loved designer and furniture maker whose self-described style is 'Modern Glamour.' **Come experience his glamorous pieces for yourself.** Plus, explore our expanded MacKenzie-Childs Collection.



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Choose from the Peanut Butter Chocolate Split, the San Francisco, or the Cherry Berry Banana. Show this ad to receive your free smoothie. LIMIT ONE PER PERSON. OFFER EXPIRES 08/31/18.

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