

The Award Winning

» HAPPY HANUKKAH!
DECEMBER 10-18!

THE JEWISH JOURNAL

A publication of The Buffalo Jewish Federation

BUFFALO, ISRAEL & THE JEWISH WORLD | WWW.BUFFALOJEWISHFEDERATION.ORG

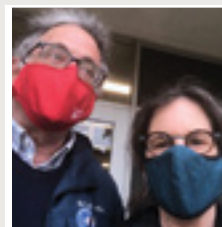
DECEMBER 2020 | KISLEV-TEVET 5781



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December 2020

Editor's Note



Ellen Goldstein, Editor

December in Buffalo usually brings snow. And it also ushers in Hanukkah. The word “Hanukkah” means “dedication,” and it refers to the rededication during the 2nd century BCE of the Second Temple in Jerusalem after being desecrated in battle, and also during the Maccabean revolt against Greek-Syrian oppressors.

December 2020, during this time of the coronavirus, is the perfect time to talk about the dedication that has been taking place in our local and worldwide Jewish Community. This nasty disease/virus/plague has taken a toll in human life and spirit all over the globe, but it has also spurred innovation and created a strong sense of purpose in our community.

I would like to call attention to my colleagues at the Buffalo Jewish Federation, to the community's clergy and synagogue leaders and to agency and civic leaders who have shown that they will not let a little microscopic thing like COVID-19 destroy our beloved community and *Klal Yisrael*. We have experienced Shabbat and the High Holy Days in a different way this year, but continue to pray, learn and gather together, both virtually and in person. And our schools, agencies and organizations keep moving forward.

In particular, kudos to Federation President Leslie Shuman Kramer and the Federation Board of Governors for their absolute dedication to ensuring a caring and more connected Jewish Buffalo! Extra special kudos to Rob Goldberg, Randi Morkisz, Jill Komm and Stacey Block for insisting that “the show must go on” and bringing us the innovative, delightful virtual Campaign Kick-Off in September. Kudos to Miriam Abramovich, Mike Stekloff, Susan Schwartz and Rabbi Ori Bergman for creating meaningful CJEL educational programs- both in-person and virtual- for all age groups. Mazel tov to Mara Koven Gelman and her JCRC Chairs Deborah Goldman and Nina Lukin who immersed themselves in getting out information on ways to vote in the most recent election. Mazel tov to Elizabeth Schram of the HRC who will never let us forget the lessons of the Holocaust. Our Security advisor Susan DeMari has kept us informed and ensured our safety during this unusual time period, and Planning and Overseas Director Mandy Weiss has kept us connected to Jewish communities outside of North America. CFO Debbie Pivarsi, together with Lori Lewkowicz and newest Federation staff member Linda Kulick, has helped steer us through uncharted financial waters, while Joan Kwiatkowski and MaryJo Fragale have been keeping the day to day business of the Federation running.

Please know that the simple day-to-day existence of a smoothly efficient Jewish community is hard work, but our community leaders, boards, staff and professionals have enabled us to continue to live meaningful and safe Jewish lives every day—whether working from home or at our offices. Thank you to all and may your Hanukkah be filled with light and gladness as we recall the heroism of the Maccabees.

Ellen Goldstein - Editor

On The Cover



On a balmy November day in Buffalo, the Lukin-Gabelnick Family was looking forward to Hanukkah and the Federation's “Box of Light” project. Seen here are, from left: Sara, Elliot, Hannah, Nina, Benjamin, Jack and Samuel.

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Finding Light in Buffalo's Dark Winter

As I write this, it is a glorious, 70-degree Sunday in November. Joe Biden is the President-Elect, the Bills game is on TV, and they are in the lead. While there is still much anger, frustration and anxiety in our country, there is also a feeling of hope in the air, of possibility.

At the start of the pandemic, we didn't know what nine months, let alone three days into the future, would look like. Well, now we know. Our "new normal" is here, and we've been told we are in for another challenging (and long) winter. In anticipation of this, I've been thinking about how we might approach this time together, lifting up ourselves and our community.

First: We must continue to engage, both on a personal level and as a community. Beyond our work and family obligations, it will be easy to shut out the world, stream Netflix and burrow under our covers. But we still need each other. Extroverts like me thrive on human interaction, and can suffer in winter under normal circumstances. We need to make the extra effort to talk to one another whether just a call, a text or to engage together on a webinar or virtual class. This goes for introverts too, and those falling in between.

Community is the core of the Jewish people—the core of our tribal living. The whole concept of a *Minyan*, that 10 (traditionally male, now often male and female) Jews must be present, together, to recite certain daily prayers and *Kaddish*, ensures that we are always living among one another. This winter it will be difficult not only to pray together, but to congregate, celebrate, and feel a part of something. Let's push ourselves to make a date, connect with someone outside of our household either remotely, or if possible, in person. Hanukkah will be a great time for making dates with friends and family. We plan to make



Leslie Kramer

dates on each night, lighting the candles together over Facetime or Zoom, celebrating the holiday together during a time meant for gathering, hugs and camaraderie.

And don't forget to get outside, to feel nature even if it means bundling up and wearing good boots to avoid slipping on the ice. I always have to push myself in winter, especially when the sun sets so early. But I am always glad I've ventured out.

Second: Be someone's inspiration, seek out those who inspire you, and practice gratitude.

This does not have to be a heavy lift. In fact, it is often the everyday things that can inspire us. We know not everyone is a leader. Not everyone is a hero. We don't NEED to be. But I believe that each of us, in our own way, is inspiring. The way we act, the way we talk to our family members, a child, a parent, a colleague, a neighbor, impacts the recipients of our actions. If each of us consciously chooses to behave with kindness, honesty and compassion, those around us will surely be inspired to do the same.

In Mussar teachings, the

concept of inspiration is linked to the trait of Enthusiasm, or *Zerizut*. I was surprised to learn that Jewish teachings instruct us to go through life enthusiastically. Mussar teaches us that practicing gratitude cultivates enthusiasm. There are so many sources, from religious texts to yoga teachings to pop culture icons that teach us how important it is to "practice gratitude." As we face the next several months, we can reflect on the Mussar teaching captured by Alan Morinis in *Everyday Holiness* that "(a) grateful heart is a solid platform from which to reach out to take care of others as well as ourselves because this orients us toward the resources we have, not what we lack."

Third: Get a dog. I don't mean this literally. At least, not for everyone. But we all surely have noticed how many people have gotten dogs during this pandemic, including two of my children (one of them is a short-term foster dog situation, which is a great option for some). It is obvious why this is so: taking care of and loving a dog (or other kind of pet) could be a wonderful distraction for kids limited in their interactions with others. It's fun to cuddle with a puppy, and to have a new family member to play with. But the most important part of having a dog is that the new owner must, by definition, take care of that dog. The owner cannot focus solely on her or himself. By taking care of another life, the owner must be diligent, focused and of course, giving and caring. It is hard to dwell only on oneself when we are responsible for another life. The Mussar trait of *generosity* applies to acts of financial philanthropy but also to generosity of actions and spirit. Even when life experience closes us off, such as winter during a pandemic, "cultivat(ing) a sense that what you do for others is actually a great gift to yourself. No one loses."

"Generously bearing the burden of the other is also central to a story said to have been told by the Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Chassidism (also captured by Alan Morinis in Everyday Holiness). He said that in hell, people sit around a great banquet table piled high with food. Each

person is given a fork six feet in length, far too long for them to maneuver into their mouths. They are starving. In heaven, on the other hand, people sit around exactly the same banquet. But in heaven each feeds the person across the table. And in so doing, all are filled."

Fourth: Be there for others. Call a friend, pick up groceries for a neighbor, drop off some soup for someone you're thinking about.

Doing for others, and getting involved in something you care about, can help you incorporate these traits into your life. In a recent conversation with my daughter she lamented how stressful life is for her and her peers on her college campus. But this Fall, she and her friends took action: they helped register voters, and worked the polls. They engaged in the process of what has become their normal, and they made a difference. In the end, they were jubilant with the result of their efforts. Inspired by them and so many others, I volunteered with a friend on Election Day to help out in a bipartisan way, ensuring the polling places offered handicap access, were well organized and well run. Participating on that day both lifted my spirits and connected me to the greater community, feeding my soul (see page 13).

As we face the future, let us all, as individuals and as a community, focus outward, toward each other, with compassion, kindness and patience. Let's look at this time as one of opportunity, where together we will create a stronger, better community in our new, or not-so-new, normal.

This month I will be completing my two year term as President of the Buffalo Jewish Federation. I am so grateful for the opportunity and will be speaking about that at our Annual Meeting on December 3. I have learned and grown from the experience and from the community. I look forward to seeing you soon.

BUFFALO JEWISH FEDERATION

Best wishes for a *Joyous Hanukkah Festival*

From the Board of Governors and the Professional Team of the Buffalo Jewish Federation

Watch Federation's Award Ceremony and Annual Meeting December 3

Emerging Leadership Awardees Brenda Feldstein and Alon Kupferman will host the 117th Annual Meeting of the Buffalo Jewish Federation which will be held virtually on Thursday, December 3 from 6:00-6:30 p.m. After the installation of new Governors and Officers, and reflections from both incoming President Shelly Yellen and outgoing President Leslie Kramer, Brenda will be honored with The Dr. Milton and Ruth H. Kahn Emerging Leadership Award, and Alon will receive the Dr. Meyer and Ann S. Riwehun Emerging Leadership Award.

Also, during the program, Miriam Abramovich will be presented with the Judith and Daniel Kantor Professional Service Award, and Dr. Gale Burstein will receive the Ann Holland Cohn Community Impact Award. "The Kantor Award provides a great opportunity to thank Judy and Dan Kantor for their extraordinary service to the community," noted Federation CEO Rob Goldberg. "This year we are overjoyed to honor Miriam Abramovich, an extraordinary professional who leads with the same verve and vigor exemplified by Judy and Danny."

Miriam moved to Buffalo in 2013 with her two children Zeldia and Oz and her husband, Sam Abramovich, Associate Professor at UB's Graduate School of Education. Prior to settling in Buffalo, Miriam built engagement efforts at the JCCs of Greater Pittsburgh and Greater Baltimore. A graduate of Brandeis University's Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program, Miriam was a recipient of a JCC Association

Brenda Feldstein and Alon Kupferman, Dr. Gale Burstein, Miriam Abramovich

Graduate Scholarship and the Eugene J. Ribakoff Leadership Fellowship.

Over the last 7 years of working at the Buffalo Jewish Federation, Miriam has been a lead architect on numerous projects including the inaugural Made in Buffalo event with Seth Godin, Jewish Buffalo's Engagement Conference, the establishment of Nickel City Jews, and the 2018 Buffalo Israel Experience. In

addition, Miriam helped to facilitate the effective merger of the former Bureau of Jewish Education and the Federation's Engagement Department into the Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning.

In her current role as Chief Experience Officer Miriam is responsible for running the Center for Jewish Experience and Learning and for designing and overseeing many other projects. Miriam stewards a professional team, and in partnership with volunteer leadership, leads efforts to build and nurture relationships with individuals and families at all stages of life and to design opportunities for those folks to explore and live Judaism in ways that are relevant and meaningful to them.

This year's Ann Holland Cohn Community Impact Award is presented to Dr. Gale Burstein, Erie County Health Commissioner who has been leading our area's fight and response to COVID-19. "The Impact Award honors past Federation President Ann Holland Cohn (z"l), who led with courage and determination and made a significant impact not only in the Jewish community

but throughout Western New York," noted Leslie Kramer, current Federation President. "Gale is the perfect choice for the award this year given the profound impact she is making in her role as our County Health Commissioner."

Dr. Burstein was appointed Erie County Commissioner of Health in January 2012. Since that time, she has been juggling the job of public health spokesperson for Erie County and has continued teaching students and medical residents at UB's Jacobs School of Medicine & Biomedical Sciences as a Clinical Professor of Pediatrics.

She has received numerous awards, including the Erie County Accomplishment Award, was honored as a Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine Fellow, National Association of County and City Health Officials Promising Practice Award twice, the American Academy of Pediatrics Special Achievement Award, numerous awards from the US Department of Health and Human Services, the Baltimore Mayor's Citation for Community Service and more.

A daughter of Marna and Dr. Irwin Burstein of Buffalo, she attended Kadimah School and graduated from The Nichols School, Union College and UB Medical School (both *magna cum laude*) and holds a Master's of Public Health from John Hopkins University. A pediatrician by training, her research interests involve assessing strategies for improving confidential reproductive health care services for adolescents.

She married Snyder native Peter Bloom, a gastroenterologist and due to their growing careers in medicine, both had great jobs in Atlanta; Gale at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Peter at Emory University and in private practice. They also have two teen/tween sons, Zachary and Joshua. We are fortunate they moved back to Buffalo to further both of their careers.

The Annual meeting takes place December 3 at 6:00 p.m. You can register online bit.ly/BJFMEETING or by calling Federation's office 716-204-2241.



Shelly Yellen Elected New President of Federation

Shelly Yellen has been elected President of the Buffalo Jewish Federation Board of Governors and will be installed at the 117th Annual Meeting and Award Celebration on December 3. Shelly succeeds Leslie Shuman Kramer and will begin his term in January.

Born and raised in Buffalo, Shelly received a BA from University of Maryland and an MBA from American University. He began his career as a Senior Financial Analyst at the Federal National Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae) and returned to Buffalo in the early 1990's to work at Lancaster Steel Service Company, a multi-family Regional Steel Service Center. Shelly ultimately became President of Lancaster Steel and sold the business in 2007 to Ryerson Steel, the largest publicly held Steel Service Center in North America at the time. After about a year with Ryerson, Shelly joined Mr. Fox Tire Company as a partner. Missing the steel industry, Shelly then started Yellen Metals LLC in 2011, and in 2015 moved his steel business into a 40,000 square foot distribution facility in Buffalo. In 2017, he sold the business to Venture Steel, a large privately-held Metals Service Center and today serves as Vice President for Venture Steel U.S., Inc.

Shelly's volunteer career also began in Washington through event participation at the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, MAZON, and AIPAC. In Buffalo, Shelly has been involved in a variety of organizations in Jewish Buffalo including Jewish Federation Apartments, the Bureau of Jewish Education (now CJEL), and Congregation Shir Shalom. For Federation, he has served as Treasurer and chaired the Federation's Annual Campaign. He is also a past recipient of the Ann & Meyer Riwehchun Emerging Leadership Award.

"I'm very blessed and grateful to my parents, Barbara and Jack Yellen, and grandparents, Anne and Fred Lippa, all of whom have set a high bar for volunteer leadership in our community," Shelly told *The Jewish Journal*. "I have been honored to be a part of Federation's leadership for many years," he added,

"and I'm grateful to Rob Goldberg and the entire Federation professional team for their tireless work and partnership. I'm also grateful to the countless volunteer leaders with whom I've worked, and for all those who have come before me; their drive, determination and creativity are an inspiration."

Shelly met his wife Heidi when he returned to Buffalo in the 1990s. The Yellens have three children: Kayla, Noah and Ethan. "We are fortunate to have been able to raise our children surrounded by family and great friends," Shelly added. "Heidi and I are proud to contribute to building a strong community that offers a vibrant Jewish life."



Shelly Yellen



Shelly Yellen and family

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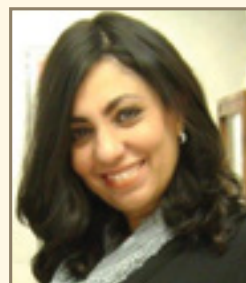
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Box of Light Shines for Hanukkah

BY MIRIAM ABRAMOVICH

Box of Light, a project of the Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning (CJEL), is a free box of gifts and at-home activities, celebrating the festival of Hanukkah and light in all its forms: illuminating the light we bring to our families, to our communities, and to the broader world and celebrating the glow of good food and fun. Three versions of the Box of Light were created, with slightly different materials and content. One box was designed for families with young children, one was designed by and for Nickel City Jews, and one was designed for Jewish residents of local group homes. Each Box of Light contains gifts and activities for the 8 nights of Hanukkah, which will be celebrated December 10-18.

The Box of Light designed for families (with children ages 0-12) is a partnership with Congregation Shir Shalom, Temple Beth Tzedek, and Temple Beth Zion religious schools and includes Do-It-Yourself crafts, explorations of Jewish text and traditions, donut molds, a commemorative pennant, a ticket to a virtual Hanukkah concert, stickers, and more. The Box of Light designed for Jewish residents of group homes in Western NY is a partnership with Temple Beth Tzedek's Outstretched Arms program and CJEL's Belonging Initiative, and includes a felt menorah and dreidel, Hanukkah stories, and gelt to share with friends. The Box of Light created by the Nickel City Jews Leadership Cohort is designed to support and enhance participants' celebration of Hanukkah at home. To accompany the box, four virtual events have been planned so that Nickel City Jews can celebrate the holiday as a community.

CJEL is deeply grateful to our



partners, and to the four local donors who have contributed to support this project. These donors are passionate about helping individuals and families create Jewish rituals, mark Jewish time, and access Jewish text, at home.

If you have questions about Box of Light, or if you would like to know if there are more Boxes available, contact Mike Steklof, Director of Jewish Experience at 585-200-2161 or mike@buffalojewishfederation.org.

Miriam Abramovich is Federation's Chief Experience Director.

Hanukkah Calendar



Congregation Shir Shalom

Light candles virtually every night at 6:45 p.m. on Zoom

Go to www.shirshalombuffalo.org

JCC Website

Dec 11-18- Nightly Hanukkah Stories & Candle Lighting

Hanukkah in a Box

from Kosher Meals on Wheels

Go to www.jewishbuffalo.com or call 639-7600 to request one

Temple Beth Tzedek

Light candles most nights during 6:00 p.m. minyan on Zoom

Go to www.btzbuffalo.org for Zoom info and schedule

Chabad of Buffalo

For candle lighting and events,

call 688-1642 or go to www.chabadofbuffalo.com

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6

JDC offers Kosher Mini Chefs

(ages 3-12) pre-Hanukkah Zoom

class **Go to www.jewishbuffalo.com**

to register and pick up ingredients

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

Hanukkah Cooking Class with
famed Chef Michael Solomonov

7:00 p.m. Sponsored by

The Campaign for Jewish Buffalo

Register:

bit.ly/chanukahcookingdemo

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10

JDC Presents Hanukkah

Drive-In Theatre

5:30-7:00 p.m.

Transit Drive-In,

6655 S. Transit Rd.

Drive-In party, menorah lighting,

movie, boxed dinner, games

Go to www.jewishbuffalo.com

or call 639-7600

**Virtual Community Candle
Lighting**

with CJEL 7:00 p.m.

bit.ly/bufcandlelighting

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

Temple Beth Tzedek "Shabbat is
Here" program 4:00 p.m.

**Go to www.btzbuffalo.org
for Zoom info**

Temple Beth Zion Hanukkah

Shabbat via Zoom

6:00 p.m.

Go to www.tbz.org for Zoom info

Congregation Shir Shalom
Hanukkah Shabbat Service

via live stream 7:00 p.m.

www.shirshalombuffalo.org

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Meet the Federation Team

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

**CSS Hanukkah Special
on YouTube** 7:30 p.m.

Watch on Shir Shalom YouTube channel or go to www.shirshlom.org

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13

Let's Get Real: The December Dilemma - a discussion
11:00 a.m. bit.ly/decilemma

Temple Beth Tzedek - Rabbi Rosenbaum's Installation & Candle Lighting
6:00 p.m. Go to www.btzbuffalo.org for Zoom info

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14

JCC & Congregation Beth Abraham Hanukkah in Santa Monica Humor program
7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Contact Katie Wzontek at kwzontek@jccbuffalo.org to register

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15

Congregation Shir Shalom Candlelighting in the Parking Lot
6:45 p.m.
Drive Thru Latke Lane
7:00 p.m.

Community Donut Making Workshop with Bloom and Rose
7:00 p.m.
bit.ly/donutmaking

Jewish Discovery Center Hanukkah Drive-In Program
5:30 p.m.
(In vehicle Hanukkah program)
In the parking lot - 831 Maple Rd.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17

Virtual Hanukkah Concert with Jewish Buffalo
7:00 p.m.
bit.ly/chanukahconcert

National Virtual Hanukkah Celebration & Candle Lighting with IllumiNation
via TBT. 8:30 p.m.
Go to www.btzbuffalo.org for Zoom info

Marketing guru and Buffalo native Seth Godin writes: *Change is not a threat, it's an opportunity.* The Buffalo Jewish Federation has successfully pivoted the past few months adapting its operation and programming to meet the needs of an ever-changing community during a particularly difficult time. And at the heart of Federation's effectiveness is a team of professionals that are skilled, passionate and thoroughly mission-driven.



Meeting in Rabbi Ori Bergman's Sukkah were, standing from left: Rabbi Ori Bergman, Debbie Pivarsi, Joan Kwiatkowski, Mike Steklof, Rob Goldberg, Stacey Block, Randi Morkisz. Seated, from left: Jill Komm, Ellen Goldstein, Susan Schwartz, Elizabeth Schram, Mandy Weiss and Miriam Abramovich.

Federation is pleased to announce several changes in its staffing alignment and welcomes a number of new professionals to its team. If you have not had the opportunity to meet these dedicated professionals, we urge you to reach out to them directly. Their information is available on Federation's website: buffalojewishfederation.org.

Our Senior Management

Senior management at Federation is led by CEO/Executive Director Rob Goldberg, who has been at the helm since 2015. Joining Rob are Debbie Pivarsi, CFO and Director of Shared Services; Randi Morkisz, Assistant Executive Director;

Miriam Abramovich, Chief Experience Officer, and Jill Komm, Chief Creative Officer. Both Miriam and Jill have new titles to reflect both the dynamics of their roles and the level of responsibility in the organization.

Our Directors

Federation's programming is diverse and now includes the Holocaust Resource Center. Our team of directors includes: Mara Koven-Gelman, Director of Community Relations, Elizabeth Schram, Director of the Holocaust Resource Center, Ellen Goldstein, Editor of *The Jewish Journal of Western New York*, Mike Steklof and Susan Schwartz, Directors of

Jewish Experience, Stacey Block, Director of Donor Experience and Mandy Weiss, Director Planning and Overseas. Mike, Susan, Stacey and Mandy each have new titles to better reflect their pivotal roles in the organization.

Our Managers and Support Team

Federation runs smoothly as a result of a team of individuals who provide critical operational support in the areas of administration, finance, security, legacy and campaign. We are grateful to Lori Lewkowicz and Linda Kulick in Accounting, Joan Kwiatkowski, Executive Assistant and Mary Jo Fragale our Campaign Assistant, Susan DeMari who provides consultation to keep our community safe and secure and Chana Kotzin who oversees our new Jewish Buffalo History Center.

Our Rabbis

Federation embraces the idea that synagogue rabbis are crucial partners in connecting to Jews throughout the community and that Jewish Buffalo benefits from rabbis who share a devotion to Jewish engagement both within their congregations and the wider community. Today, the Federation team includes Rabbis Ori Bergman, Adam Rosenbaum and Alex Lazarus-Klein. Rabbi Bergman and Rosenbaum are part of the Center for Jewish Engagement Team, and beginning in January, Rabbi Lazarus-Klein will be working in the Community Relations space. We are excited to include these three outstanding rabbis among our corps of educators who are connecting with Jews throughout Jewish Buffalo.

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THIRD DAY: LET'S GET REAL-THE DECEMBER DILEMMA

Sunday, December 13 @ 11 AM
Celebrate Christmas? Celebrate Chanukah? Celebrate both or more? Join other parents in Buffalo for a frank discussion about the December holidays, facilitated by Kirstie Henry
Register here: bit.ly/decdilemma



SIXTH NIGHT: DONUT MAKING WORKSHOP

Tuesday, December 15 @ 7 PM
Join chef Zach Rosenbloom of Bloom and Rose to learn how to make homemade donuts
Join us here: bit.ly/donutmaking



EIGHTH NIGHT: CHANUKAH CONCERT

Thursday, December 17 @ 7 PM
Gather with talented musicians from across Jewish Buffalo as we celebrate the last night of chanukah with music.
Join us here: bit.ly/chanukahconcert

PARTNERS

Box of Light is made possible thanks to the generosity of several local donors, and is a project of the Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning in partnership with the Congregation Shir Shalom, Temple Beth Tzedek, and Temple Beth Zion Religious Schools.

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Voices of Leadership

In October, the Buffalo Jewish Federation hosted the inaugural 2020 Buffalo Jewish Federation's Women's Board Retreat called *KOLOT: Bringing our authentic Voices to Leadership*. Under the stewardship of Federation President Leslie Kramer, KOLOT was visioned and designed in partnership with retreat Co-Chairs Cheryl Stein, Marina Maulucci Finkelstein, and Federation professional, Miriam Abramovich, and featured Nicole Nevarez as Facilitator and Educator. Eighteen women who are members of the Federation's Board of Governors participated in the two-day virtual retreat. Here are reflections on the experience from four of the eighteen retreat participants.



Ann Marie Carosella

Looking over the bio sketches of the KOLOT participants, it was striking how varied our backgrounds and our careers have been. While each of us knew some of the fellow participants, our different orbits meant that most of us entered our Zoom "room" as strangers to many. Yet, our gathering together as one was comfortable from the start because each of us shares a drive to provide the best of ourselves as we work to fulfill the missions of our organizations and to make our community all that it can be.

Have you ever noticed that most successful learning experiences move the learner from specific examples, then on to more general issues, and finally to universal principles? This spiraling out of understanding was one of the real strengths of KOLOT. We began by learning about the specific ways Rachel and Leah showed leadership, as well as the wisdom and courage of the daughters of Zelophehad. Warmed up by our discussions of these specific examples, we then explored how women tend to express leadership and how female leadership styles provide both benefits and challenges.

Our discussion continued to move outward as we studied Rabbi Sacks' Seven Principles of Jewish Leadership. These universal principles remind us that regardless of leadership "style" or gender, all good leaders share an understanding that leadership involves the emotionally demanding tasks of taking responsibility, fostering teamwork, maintaining a future-oriented focus while being mindful of maintaining a pace of change that is neither too rapid or too slow, an enduring commitment to lifelong learning, and leading from influence rather than power.



Iris Danziger

I feel honored to have had the opportunity to participate in this program. The weekend checked all the boxes I had hoped it would. I met amazing women, stretched my understanding of numerous topics, learned from historical women as well as my contemporaries, and left energized and eager to implement the lessons received.

"Kolot" can be defined in Hebrew as "voices." Hearing and developing those voices is what brought together this diverse group for a two-day retreat for the women of the Buffalo Jewish Federation's Board of Governors. As I quickly realized, this was a sampling of women who share a deep connection to Judaism and a commitment to our whole Jewish community. Each one of these women had made life choices that resonated with their personal and professional goals. I heard unique perspectives, recognized challenges and barriers, and could better understand their definition of success. All of this to keep our community on our minds and in our hearts. We were together, to develop our voices as leaders in Jewish Buffalo. In the end I had a better understanding of our community. These are not easy times to create relationships, connections or programmatic momentum but despite today's challenges, KOLOT did just that.

I would like to thank President Leslie Kramer together with the professional leadership of the Jewish Federation of Buffalo for this opportunity to spend time in conversation with this smart and engaged group of women.



Charlotte Gendler

I must admit that I was a bit hesitant about participating in this program for a few reasons: (1) the commitment of about seven hours' time over two days; (2) the obligation for yet another two hours to spend with a Chevruta discussing Torah passages; and (3) finding even more time for additional reading. Then I wondered how well do I know the others in the group? What's in it for *me*?

So, let me tell you: the KOLOT group is extraordinary. When I read the bios of the participants, I was overwhelmed. What an exceptional group of women. All are extremely well educated with all kinds of advanced degrees; professional, entrepreneurial women, amazingly talented, creative souls, mothers, grandmothers; Jewish to the core, challah-baking women, students of Torah and diversely observant women. What an opportunity for me to learn from them --- and that I did! *That* was for me!

My first step into the world of KOLOT was with the talented Deborah Goldman, my *chavruta* (study partner). As we studied the text of Leah and Rachel – we delved into the psyches of these two sisters and their Papa, maybe not such a trustworthy fellow – and where was the Mama in all of this? Does she even have a name? Go take a look! And we found ourselves wandering back into the dysfunctional issues surrounding Abraham and Sarah and Isaac, and on and on. *That* was for me!

We discussed the perception of contemporary Jewish women in today's leadership roles. We read the wonderful essay of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks regarding leadership – a universal piece for everyone to read. *That* was for me!

I think the very best takeaway is knowing that our Federation leadership includes and respects this astounding group of women which makes me believe that the future of our local Jewish community is in good hands. These women are thoughtful, smart, committed, and responsible Board members who will have a role in shaping the vision for our community. *That* is for me!



Meredith Levin

When I was asked to join the KOLOT retreat for the Women of the Buffalo Jewish Federation Board, I was nervous. Having read the bios of all the participants, I felt humbled to be included yet more than a little bit intimidated. Such interesting women, such varied lives, careers and backgrounds! How would I fit into this mix? From the moment the Zoom retreat began, my nervousness faded away and it was replaced with curiosity and excitement. Every woman participating shared stories about themselves and our discussions were thought-provoking and intimate. Our facilitator Nicole Nevarez encouraged us to become "*hineini*" (here I am) and to find our authentic voice.

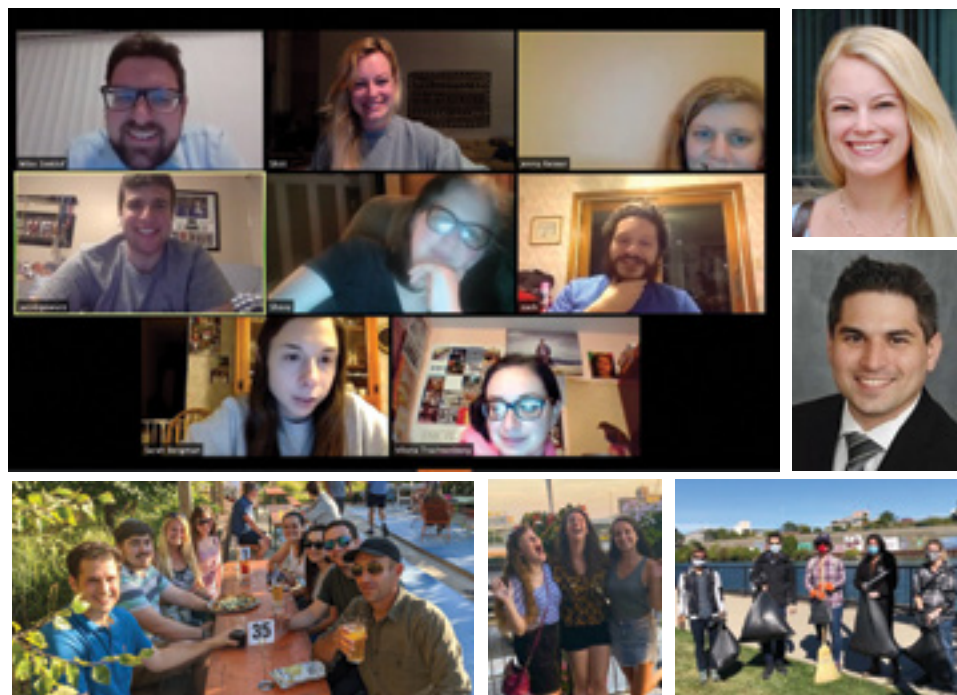
I can personally share that however open and friendly a person is, digging deep within oneself is much harder than you would think. Who am I? How do I want the world to perceive me? Am I too "this"? Do I come across as too "that"? Women historically have had to temper their drive or ambition to lead with making sure they don't push the boundaries of what is expected of them in society. I was especially intrigued when the topic of Feminism came up in our discussion. We all identify as women yet not all of us regarded the word "Feminism" the same way. Our age, our upbringing and our experiences are all factors in how we interpret the topic. From discussing the way women are viewed in biblical text to today's current events, we found that while we didn't all agree on the word "Feminism" itself, we all agreed that women need and deserve a seat at the table. To quote the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, "Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception."

As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks states in his Seven Principles of Jewish Leadership, "Leadership begins with taking responsibility" and "No one can lead alone". In the simplest definition, "*Kolot*" means "voices" and I am honored that mine was welcomed into the mix. I am thrilled to have a seat at the table with this amazing group of female leaders. *Hineini*. Here I am.

Leading NICKEL CITY JEWS in 2021

BY MIKE STEKLOF AND MIRIAM ABRAMOVICH

For the last six years, Nickel City Jews (NCJ) has been Jewish Buffalo's signature platform for engaging young Jewish adults through friendship, Jewish learning, and leadership. Over these years, NCJ has been stewarded by incredible professional and volunteer leaders. These individuals have collectively shaped and pushed forward the scope of work and refreshed NCJ's purpose, keeping it relevant and meaningful to those who choose to engage either once or in a more on-going capacity. As we enter 2021, two individuals will be at the helm of these efforts, Shiri Kester as NCJ Chair and Mark Faber as NCJ Vice Chair.



Clockwise: NCJ Zoom session, Shira Kester, Mark Faber, NCJ cleaning up the waterfront, and NCJ kicking back and having fun.

In January, Shiri Kester will begin her second year as Chair of NCJ. In her first year, she oversaw our organizational evolution during COVID; designing and hosting a multitude of virtual and in-person events, spending dozens of hours speaking with young adults from across Jewish Buffalo, and working to insure individuals feel connected in ways that are comfortable and meaningful. Shiri also served as a coach for the Jewish Federations of North America's (JFNA) Changemaker Fellowship program, spending four weeks of her summer mentoring young adults from across North America. Shiri is an English Teacher at Williamsville North High School.

Mark Faber formally joins the leadership of NCJ in January in the role of Vice Chair. Mark's passion for building community shined when he hosted a virtual Passover Seder for NCJ, providing a meaningful Jewish experience for those who couldn't be together with family. In addition, Mark has spent countless hours over the last four months welcoming new young adults who have recently relocated to Buffalo. Mark is a Hematology/Oncology Fellow at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer

Center.

Shiri and Mark do their work with a group of equally talented and committed young leaders who gathered this past September, as part of the new Nickel City Jews Leadership Cohort. Cassandra Dunner, Eric Niles, Josh Debel, Jake Katz, Erica Colligan, Shiri Kester and Mark Faber met weekly in September, with CJEL Director of Jewish Experience Mike Steklof to explore leadership through the lens of Judaism, Buffalo, and the year 2020. This group immersed themselves in Jewish Engagement methodology and what it means to be an ambassador for NCJ. They participated in scenario planning exercises and learned why it is important to give of both their time and treasure to the organization. The following values were brought forth as the guiding principles of our work going forward in 2020 and 2021: *Kehillah* (community), *Chaverim* (friendship), and *Nedivut* (generosity).

In addition to leadership efforts, NCJ has remained focused on providing opportunities for connection and Jewish living and learning. Since the pandemic began, the work of NCJ has evolved but our fundamental commitment to building and nurturing relationships remains intact.

What's Been Happening with NCJ since March

Virtual Events: Since the beginning of the Pandemic, NCJ has hosted 10 virtual events including Happy Hours, Game Nights, and Cooking Demonstrations.

In Person Events: Since June, NCJ has hosted 8 in person events. These events, which have taken place in parks, restaurants and outside people's homes follow CJEL's COVID Gathering Guidelines.

New to Buffalo: Since March, we have welcomed 17 new young adults to Jewish Buffalo. These young adults have relocated to Buffalo for school, new jobs and to be closer to family.

Mussar: A new cohort of Nickel City Jews Mussar began in October with 5 emerging leaders who have committed to participating in a 3-month Mussar journey.

Want to connect? We would love to get to know you, please reach out to meet over Zoom, for coffee, lunch or a drink – we will come to you! Contact Mike Steklof, Director of Jewish Experience at 585-200-2161 or mike@buffalojewishfederation.org.

Miriam Abramovich is Federation's Chief Experience Director, and Mike Steklof is Director of Jewish Experience.

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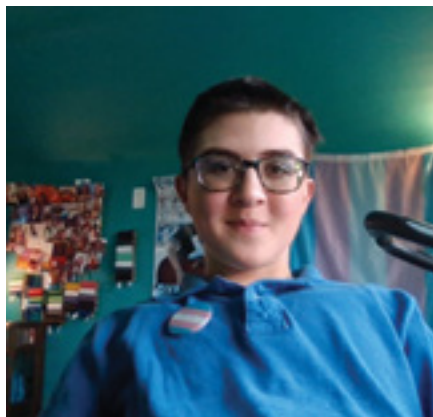
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Teen Engagement: Being Jewish in 2020

BY RIVER BRAVERMAN

I must admit, when my mom asked me to attend a weekly group for Jewish youth called “Being Jewish in 2020” (a program of the Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning), I was skeptical. But I decided to go and I have not regretted it. Each meeting delves deep into one key issue of our time—some notable examples are considering different people’s perspectives, donating to worthy Israeli causes, and, most recently, discussing the election of 2020.

The facilitators (Ben Wolfson and Rabbi Ori Bergman) are helpful, but do not force participation, which I appreciate after a long day of school. The youth participating provide interesting viewpoints, with a variety of backgrounds and cultures. And I always leave the meetings with a sense of togetherness—even though members may disagree



on certain topics, I know we are all part of the Jewish community, and we support each other through everything. So thank you to all the participants and organizers of Being Jewish—you have definitely helped me find my footing in these trying times!

River is an 8th grader at City Honors School.

Save the Date: January 31, 2021 for **SUPER SUNDAY REIMAGINED**

Chairs Merredith and Ken Levin are busy planning a new and Virtual Super Sunday, which will feature virtual community gatherings.

To volunteer, contact Stacey Block at stacey@buffalojewishfederation.org.

TBT to Celebrate the Installation of Rabbi Rosenbaum



The Officers and Board of Trustees of Temple Beth Tzedek are honored to invite the community for the Installation of its new spiritual leader, Rabbi Adam J. Rosenbaum. Join via the TBT website, www.btzbuffalo.org for this momentous occasion during Hanukkah on Sunday, December 13 at 6:00 p.m. This is an important milestone for Temple Beth Tzedek as it continues to foster a strong and engaged Jewish community in Buffalo.



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Buffalo JCRC: A Year of Engagement, Social Justice and Caring

BY MARA KOVEN-GELMAN

It is challenging to reflect upon the past month, let alone the past year. The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) entered its second year in fall 2019. Here is a look back on how JCRC identified priorities and worked with partners towards “creating a more civil and caring community in WNY.” Founding co-chairs Ted Steinberg and Nina Lukin led efforts in three major areas: Social Justice, Combatting Hate, Antisemitism, and Building Relationships with other faith, ethnic, and cultural and legislative groups. Here is a taste:

December 2019

JCRC was featured at Buffalo Jewish Federation’s (BJF) Annual Meeting held at the Northland Workforce Training Center. Lana Benatovich and Rabbi Alex Lazarus-Klein received leadership awards. Special guest Marnie Fienberg, founder of “2 for Seder” passionately spoke about taking action at hate/antisemitism by building bridges across faiths and diverse backgrounds.

January 2020

JCRC welcomed experienced volunteer and community leader Deborah Goldman as co-chair. JCRC convened Buffalo Jewish community leadership to strategize about how to protect our region after the painful antisemitic attacks in Monsey, NY and Jersey City, NJ. The meeting outcome was a closer working relationship with the Holocaust Resource Center (HRC) and Federation’s security manager Susan DeMari. A webpage to offer information and contacts after experiencing antisemitic and hateful acts was created: <https://buffalojewishfederation.org/antisemitism-and-hate/>. NOTE: all criminal hate activity should be reported to law enforcement.

February-March 2020

An Interfaith learning series with Rabbi Moshe Silberschein attracted over 60 students. Building on the BJF’s successful 2017 Interfaith Clergy Trip to Israel, JCRC scheduled a February 2021 Civic Leader Trip to Israel. NYS Majority Leader Assemblyperson Crystal Peoples-Stokes, who had just returned from Israel with the NYC JCRC, was to host a meeting with potential participants. Sadly, both



Clockwise: Interfaith Education class taught by Rabbi Moshe Silberschein; Giving away masks for COVID-19 protection with the WNY Chinese Club; Planning an Interfaith Civic Leader trip to Israel.

the meeting and trip were postponed, and hopefully will be rescheduled at a future date.

We all pivoted in March. First responders were grappling with the lack of personal protection equipment. BJF and Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies took a leadership role in helping our community with PPP loans and *tzedakah*; JCRC’s relationships were also working behind the scenes.

April 2020

Our friends in the WNY Chinese Club had access to thousands of KN95 masks and wanted to help first responders and those in at-risk due to health disparities. JCRC organized and was part of several mask giveaways. The Compassion Fund also bought more and offered masks for giveaways.

May 2020

JCRC organized a Passover of Hope with interfaith clergy friends from the 2017 trip to Israel. It was a memorable hour where beautiful prayers, poetry and song of hope were shared with over 600 viewers on YouTube.

June-August 2020

Engage in Racial Justice

After the killing of George Floyd and ensuing international civil protests, JCRC joined many Jewish communities in providing resources for white communities to better understand and immerse themselves in the lived experience of communities of color. This process



highlighted that 12-15% of the Jewish community are Jews of Color. The Racial Justice Working Group began in August with Deborah Goldman as chair and a diverse membership throughout Jewish Buffalo. Look for the outcome of their work in early 2021.

Voter Engagement, Census Completion

JCRC prioritized non-partisan activities in advance of the June 23 New York State primary and November 3 General Election. JCRC’s intern Hannah Gabelnick created a detailed “Erie County Safe Voting 2020” webpage, palms cards and worked with many community partners on Getting out the Vote. JCRC also uplifted the work of many dedicated volunteers who encouraged voter registration and worked at election polls. JCRC takes pride in all its non-partisan engagement activities with its partners. This work contributed

to Erie County’s highest turnout in five presidential elections. More than 70% of registered voters cast a ballot. Additionally, JCRC was part of Erie County Complete Count Coalition, which is proud of a 70% completion rate in Erie County.

JCRC Survey

JCRC intern Hannah Slabodkin worked with JCRC leaders to create and implement JCRC’s first survey. Over 200 people took the survey. The findings concluded that most Jewish community members were familiar with and approved of JCRC’s activities and statements. Combatting antisemitism and hate was an extremely important priority. Among the other social justice priorities, racial justice, poverty and health disparities ranked highest.

Combatting Antisemitism

Several times this year, JCRC and HRC have worked with security manager, Susan DeMari to investigate and address several antisemitic incidences. These incidents were resolved with the help of our law enforcement partners, but these situations are always an opportunity to educate and sensitize.

September-November

JCRC continued to work with partners to Get out the Vote (GOTV) and encourage election protection and election poll workers. JCRC encouraged BJF and FJP to close their offices Election Day, enabling staff to safely vote or to participate in voting related volunteer activities.

Todah Rabah to Nina Lukin

Thank you co-chair Nina Lukin for her unrelenting energy in leading JCRC for its first years. Nina is a strategic thinker, chaired the Binyan (foundation) working group which identified and built relationships with community groups, constantly thinking one-step ahead. Nina will remain a valued member of the JCRC executive committee. She has joined the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee of the League of Women Voters of WNY, is a member of the Federation Board of Directors and took a leadership role with the Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning’s (CJEL) Hanukkah Box of Light project.

Nina recently reflected on her time as JCRC co-chair:

“The recent passing of the top Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat, reminded me of my entrance into

Jewish community relations. In December 2016, I travelled with Jewish Council for Public Affairs to Israel on a fellowship, “*Darchei Shalom* or Paths of Peace.” In Ramallah, we met with this western-educated, long-time advisor to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. Despite politically opposing the negotiator, I was able to engage in civil dialogue on vital yet challenging issues.

Given the recent election, leaving the JCRC co-chair role is poignant for me. One of the first roles I took was co-sponsoring with the Buffalo Urban League the “Let NY Vote” Campaign to advocate for legislative changes to allow for early voting, automatic voter registration, and more in New York State. Early voting was critical in affording all registered New Yorkers the ability to ‘spread out’ in-person voting across nine additional days during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Mara Koven-Gelman is the Federation’s JCRC Director.

Democracy Participation: Reflections of JCRC Election Inspectors and Election Protection Volunteers

BY MARA KOVEN-GELMAN

Many members of the Jewish community were heavily involved in ensuring a safe and functional democracy during the 2020 Elections. The JCRC offers them sincere gratitude. Here are some of their roles and reflections.

Election Inspectors

Several individuals participated in the Erie County Board of Elections training and acted as election inspectors on November 3. Thank you to Nina Lukin, Elliot Gabelnick, Rabbi Sara Rich, and Mike Steklof. More than 4,000 people were election inspectors through Erie County (note: County Board of Elections manages the election under state law.) The day was long – starting before 6:00 a.m. and ending well after 9:00 p.m.

Rabbi Sara Rich, executive director of Hillel of Buffalo, was an elections inspector for the Amherst 053 district at the Clearfield Community Center. “It was fascinating to learn more about how elections operate, and I was struck by the resolutely bi-partisan nature of the process.” She shared the purpose of being an elections inspector is to ensure that all procedures are followed, and within those parameters, to ensure that each registered voter has the opportunity to vote. The focus is on finding a way for each voter to vote, and to assist as needed.

Rabbi Rich said, “One gentleman stepped up to the table and proudly presented his Board of Elections postcard. He was beaming as he announced that he had previously immigrated to America, and this was his first election. It was an honor to be a part of this significant milestone in his life. Many families came together to vote,” she added. “Because I love college students, I always got very excited when a young adult was coming to vote in their first presidential election. At least twice the parents proudly told us that it was their son or daughter’s first time, and we would all celebrate together and make sure they got their ‘I Voted’ sticker. Despite the long day, ‘I encourage others to consider doing this for future elections. It is an excellent way to meet new people in the community and to support our democracy.’”

Mike Steklof, director of Jewish Experience at the Buffalo Jewish Federation worked as an election inspector and was voted by his election peers to be chair of District 68 Tonawanda’s polling site. He



Clockwise from left: The Rich Family; Dr. Grant Golden and Deborah Goldman; Mara Koven-Gelman, Leslie Kramer and their new friend, Willie; Nina Lukin & Elliot Gabelnick.

shared that over 1,000 people voted during the day at that site, coming in a steady stream and representing more than 50% of those registered.

His long day started at 5:15 a.m. and ended at 9:20 p.m. After the doors shut, paper poll books and the USB drive from the poll machine were hand-delivered to the Board of Elections. Mike was “master” of the key to the poll machine all day.

“I really enjoyed participating and learning the machinery of democracy,” he said. He noted there was a great enthusiasm in the voters, many voting for the first time. He heard several people commenting, “This is the election I need to vote in.” He noticed that a couple of people voted and returned later in the day bringing friends and family to cast their vote. “I come from a political family,” Mike said, “and I am normally ‘very partisan.’ It was good to participate in non-partisan way this election, to help our democracy.”

Nina Lukin and Elliot Gabelnick were election inspectors in Cheektowaga at 180 George Urban Blvd; covering five districts. Nina was also the chairperson of her polling site. “I chose to support voting efforts in as non-partisan a way as possible by giving every registered

Erie County voter the opportunity to cast a vote in confidence,” she said. “When a gentleman aggressively questioned me in an attempt to spread disinformation to other voters, I was well-situated to respond calmly and factually. I was well-trained to contend with this situation and to support ALL registered individuals to vote, without interference, intimidation, or coercion.”

Nina worked with several veteran poll workers. One woman had worked for 28 years, another mother-daughter team for the past 40+ years. She noted that while there were many former poll workers, the “majority of us were brand new.” Elliot Gabelnick said, “I learned a lot about the process, and I was glad to participate to ensure a fair election. I would gladly do it again.”

Election Protection

Federation President Leslie Shuman Kramer and I were election protection volunteers with more than 600 other volunteers throughout New York State on Election Day. Election Protection is a 20-year-old coalition of over 100 local, state, and federal organizations dedicated to protect, advance and defend the right to vote. Common Cause NYS ran virtual trainings on

how to monitor voting sites for safety, and accessibility, be available to answer voter questions and report issues to organizers.

Leslie and I covered five different polling sites on Buffalo’s East Side during the day. We found all polling sites well organized, wheelchair accessible and followed COVID-19 mask and social distancing guidelines. Most sites said they opened their doors at the required 6:00 a.m. with lines of eager voters waiting around the block. During our shift, from 9:00 a.m. - noon, we did not witness waits longer than three minutes.

Voters were genuinely proud and happy to vote in person. One mother dropped off her son and waited in her van while he voted. Another newcomer immigrant couple shared proudly that this was their second and third U.S. voting experience. Through the texting platform Group Me – it was clear that some voting concerns were taking place throughout New York State like intimidating parades or people coming into the polling sites to take unauthorized photos, inaccessible locations or lack of visible signage, but not in Erie County.

Sara Schultz also volunteered to be a roving poll monitor. “It seemed like a COVID-safe way to help this election year.” Sara worked 3-hour shifts over the course of the Early Voting week that covered several areas of Western New York from W. Eagle St. in downtown Buffalo to the outlying town of Akron. *Kol hakavod* (aka, hats off) to the well-trained and tireless poll workers at each site.

“Most gratifying to me was helping the most fragile voters get to the front of the line and assuring voters with absentee ballots they could avoid the wait and drop off ballots right away,” Sara said. “How proud I felt that our WNY voters were so respectful of each other and willing to stand in the rain, at times, to have their voices heard. While I am glad this election is over, I would gladly participate in the process again!”

Did you work during early voting or on Election Day? If so, please contact Mara@buffalojewishfederation.org.

Mara Gelman is Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC).

CORRECTION

Last month in the November *Jewish Journal* on page 30, the name of the author of one of the Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg remembrances was listed incorrectly. Native Buffalonian and author Nancy Davidoff Kelton was the author of the remembrance printed on page 30, and first printed in *The Forward* October 1. Many thanks to Nancy Davidoff Kelton for permission to print this moving piece.

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OUR VISION

A robust, caring and connected Jewish Buffalo where every Jew and their loved ones can access a welcoming and thriving network of communities, engage in meaningful collective Jewish experiences, and explore their own personal Jewish journey.

MAKING AN IMPACT

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A CIVIL AND
JUST SOCIETY

CONNECTION
TO ISRAEL
AND GLOBAL
JEWRY

PRESERVING
OUR LEGACY

SUSTAINING &
SECURING OUR
COMMUNITY

YOUR GENEROSITY

Allows the Buffalo Jewish Federation to make our vision a reality. This month we are highlighting another one of our impact areas to illustrate some of the exciting things happening because of your support in our community.

DECEMBER 2020 SPOTLIGHT

SUSTAINING & SECURING OUR COMMUNITY

Create and strengthen the structure necessary to support a strong and vibrant Jewish Buffalo. Invest in security measures and coordinate with all levels of law enforcement to enhance the safety and well-being of Jewish Buffalo at places of worship and community gatherings.

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- * **24/7** Reciprocal information sharing with local, county, state and federal law enforcement
- * A local community **emergency alert system** to connect our community should the need arise
- * Risk/threat assessments for **12 Jewish facilities** to begin improvements for security measures
- * Since COVID, **6 webinars** have been provided to community partners regarding safety and high holy day preparation
- * **19** Places of worship (from Chautauqua to Batavia) receive coordinated security measures from local law enforcement
- * Assistance with incidents related to **anti-Semitism**
- * **And more!**



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Descendants of Holocaust Survivors Gather

BY ELIZABETH SCHRAM

On October 21, Holocaust Resource Center (HRC) leaders Vilona Trachtenberg, Wendy Weisbrot, Jeff Blum and I facilitated the first gathering of DESCENDANTS OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS. Nearly 50 people participated - from different generations, countries and walks of life. Vilona explained that the purpose of our local group is to meet and connect with each other and continue the legacies of our family members who survived the Holocaust. We had a breakout session where everyone briefly shared who they are and what happened to their parents and/or grandparents.

One of the most powerful parts of this meeting was when everyone showed a meaningful object or photo that pertained to their family's Holocaust story. Some brought Judaica that had been passed down from generation to generation, others brought memorial stones, and two individuals brought Schindler's list with the names of their parents highlighted.

The group also discussed potential plans for the future including presentations about their family's story, small group discussions about experiences growing up, inviting guest speakers, and watching Holocaust films together. After our initial meeting, Vilona reflected, "I absolutely loved connecting with so many community members and hearing everyone's stories, which were all different, but one thing remains similar - resilience. I'm grateful for these experiences, and can't wait to keep this going."

In addition to being part of this local Buffalo group, everyone will have the opportunity to be part of an international group through the Partnership2Gether (P2G) program. P2G is a program of The Jewish Agency that promotes people-to-people relationships between Israel and Diaspora communities through cultural, social, medical, educational, and economic programs. Buffalo is part of The Western Galilee Partnership which connects 16 U.S. communities, Israel's Western Galilee and Budapest, Hungary. P2G recently started a project called *Sliding Doors: Voices of the Second Generation* for descendants of Holocaust Survivors. We are proud to have the



largest group of descendants from the Partnership and look forward to building connection with our local and international communities.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining our Descendants

of Holocaust Survivors group, please reach out to me, Elizabeth Schram at elizabeth@hrcbuffalo.org.

Elizabeth Schram is Director of the Holocaust Resource Center.

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The Leadership of Lana D. Benatovich: Talking the talk and walking the walk

BY EZRA N. RICH

It was a hug in Temple Beth Zion's historic building on Delaware. One White high school student hugged his Black peer and they really meant it. This connection, through NFJC Youth Seminar, sparked a newfound appreciation for the lived experience and historical perspective on their culture, and led to an embrace fondly etched in her memory years later.

Looking back on nearly 30 years of leadership at the National Federation for Just Communities of WNY, Inc. (NFJC) and prior to that at the Buffalo Jewish Federation and City Hall, Lana D. Benatovich points to connections like that hug between two student participants in the seminar she organized.

"Those are the things you remember and what inspires you to stay with an organization," Lana said as she reflected on her recent retirement as President of the NFJC. In total, Lana has been a leading voice for justice, equity and inclusion in Western New York for over 40 years, a woman who has strived to make the Queen City live up to its reputation as the City of Good Neighbors.

A Buffalo Benatovich

Lana discovered friendship and love while attending Tufts University in Boston. One of her best friends there was her classmate Sheldon B. Benatovich, z"l, and she ultimately fell in love with his older brother, Dr. Howard B. Benatovich. After graduating Tufts, Lana earned her Master's in Educational Psychology from Teacher's College at Columbia University and taught kindergarten and second grade in her mother's school in Queens and later in Arlington, Virginia, while Howard was at Georgetown University's School of Dentistry.

As a proud Buffalonian, Howard was eager to settle down back in Western New York where they raised their daughters, Amy and Marnie. Lana began working at City Hall in the Division for Youth.

Building Bridges

In 1980, the Benatovichs traveled to Israel on a Buffalo Jewish Federation Young Leadership Mission. It was their first trip to the Jewish State and one that was deeply moving. Inspired by the experience, she approached then Federation head Morris Rombro and noted that the Federation lacked a Community Relations Director and she wanted him to hire her for the role.

Lana brought her City Hall capabilities with her, including recruiting Mary Jo Fragale to join her at Federation, beginning a fruitful period she recalled fondly, especially working with Ellen Goldstein, Charlotte Gendler, Judy Kantor, and Mary Jo on the professional side and her lay leaders Harold Axelrod, Rabbi Steven S. Mason, and Janet Wisbaum.

Leading the Community Relations Committee, she advanced dialogue between Jews and Poles within Buffalo, especially as a growing reckoning on the roles of Polish people during and after the Holocaust, as well as Jewish-Black dialogue, which would ultimately expand in her subsequent role at the National Conference of Christians and Jews, which became the NFJC.

"When issues came up, it was gratifying and inspiring to work with Lana as she guided the community on critical matters, bridging the gap between various views within the Jewish community, working with the Diocese and beyond," said Rabbi Mason, who led Temple Beth Am, the Reform predecessor of Cong. Shir Shalom in Williamsville. "Lana was the lynchpin in so many critical programs in Buffalo. She really influenced my career, seeing from her how one leads, how one works with others. She is a positive role model who talks the talk and walks the walk."

Supporting Global Jewry

While at Federation, Lana played a key role in two major freedom movements: the cause for Soviet Jewry and the Ethiopian Jewish community seeking to immigrate to Israel. Looking back on her career, she is enormously proud of Jewish Buffalo's work on behalf of the Refuseniks, the Jews of the USSR who sought to immigrate to Israel and America. It was Lana who led Buffalo's large delegation to Freedom Sunday for Soviet Jews in 1987, a rally attended by an estimated 250,000 people on the National Mall.

"It was so meaningful working with [Rep.] Jack Kemp on that. I was proud it was a Buffalonian leading the charge,"



Lana Dubin Benatovich

she notes.

The following year, the Benatovichs traveled with Joel Lippman, Carol Schwartz and Shelley and Jeff Hirschberg to Moscow and Leningrad, and met there with Natan Sharansky, among others. They brought with them *siddurim* (prayer books) for the Jewish community. One amazing moment was when she visited her daughter Marnie's Russian pen pal. "She was with her mother in their small living room in Russia, and then she went into her bedroom and came out with all the letters Marnie had sent her. It was so meaningful," she fondly recalls. "Those letters made a difference."

"I really appreciate those experiences in Russia and Israel," she said. "My identity is as a proud Jew. I know my own history; my family left Russia for America before World War II. If they had not left, I would be one of those Jews behind the Iron Curtain."

Lana also championed the cause for the Ethiopian Jewish community seeking to make Aliyah- to immigrate to Israel. "The Conference of Soviet Jewry's Abe Bayer offered me the chance to help them leave Ethiopia, but my kids were young and I wasn't able to go. Later I got to see some Ethiopians arrive in Israel," she said.

Another meaningful trip was Yachad Buffalo, a CRC journey with 70 Buffalonians to Israel, which was co-chaired by Larry, z"l, and Sharon Levite.

Building a Better Buffalo

Lana moved from the Federation to the NCCJ in 1991. One of her early efforts was coordinating the Western New York response to heinous acts against Black churches in the South. "We

brought together the local religious leaders to declare that racism is a sin and a problem of the heart. Working with the Bishop of Buffalo and others, Buffalo's houses of worship signed a declaration recognizing racism and working to solve it both individually and as a community, through an annual sermon on racism and other actions," she recalled.

Empowering Youth

Lana's work at the NFJC did not just involve dialogue among leaders and adults in the community. Harnessing her core as an educator, youth programming became a key focus. The NFJC's youth conferences brought together students and teachers from different school districts, spanning urban, suburban and rural areas. Pastor Craig D. Pridgen of True Bethel Baptist Church vividly remembers his first impression of Lana when he was a high school student. "The first time I met Lana was as a high schooler receiving a Youth Community Service Award from the NCCJ at the Convention Center. She was wearing a brown turtleneck dress and commanded the room with such elegance and grace," Pastor Pridgen recalled. "I said to the girl sitting next to me at the event that I am going to be a part of this organization in the future. From that moment I was struck by how she included everyone. We all felt important and respected by her." Indeed, the Pastor Pridgen subsequently became a member of the NFJC board and along with his father, Bishop Darius G. Pridgen and other WNY clergy travelled to Israel with the Benatovichs on that NFJC-Federation Interfaith trip in 2017. "Working with Lana has been a dream come true. She is my Jewish mother and a treasure of Buffalo and Western New York," he added.

A Trip of a Lifetime

In a career spanning over four decades, including countless meetings, programs, events and trips, one that could be seen as a capstone for Lana impact on strengthening ties of understanding and friendship was the interfaith clergy trip to Israel she co-led with the NFJC and Buffalo

Jewish Federation in 2017.

Her deep connections helped enable 25 WNY religious leaders traveled to experience the Holy Land. “It was so special to experience this with leaders from across the communities, it has given new perspective to Michael E. Hill of the Chautauqua Institution, it inspired Bishop Pridgen to travel with his church to Israel and fulfilled a dream of my dear friend, [St. Bonaventure University President Emeritus] Sister Margaret Carney,” Lana fondly recalled. Sister Margaret concurred, recalling the trip as “the dream of a lifetime.”

A Bridge for Bonaventure

Over her career, Lana not only lead the way to greater understanding and collaboration, she did even more. One personification of this can be seen in her dedication to St. Bonaventure University (SBU), where she served as a Trustee for a total of 18 years. Sister Margaret recalls working with her on addressing various challenges the university faced.

“Her heart is as big as she is. She has so much compassion, concern and worry for others. She knew everyone and introduced



Traveling in Israel together were, from left: Rev. Craig Pridgen, Lana Benatovich, Sister Margaret Carney, Rev. Darius Pridgen and Rob Goldberg.

me to everyone,” said Sister Margaret. “Lana not only would integrate our students into NFJC events like Dash for Diversity, but she helped introduce SBU to more diverse students in Buffalo. Lana was not just a Trustee, but active on critical needs well beyond the regular board meetings.”

A Queen of the Queen City

In 2019, Lana was honored with the Buffalo Jewish Federation’s Ann Holland Cohn Award Community Leadership Award. “The Federation was honored to present this award to Lana. It was created with people like her in mind,” said Buffalo Jewish Federation CEO Rob Goldberg. “Lana is a proud Jew who leads with passion. In her roles, she has had a profound impact on Western New York. Personally, my highlight was

working with her on the Interfaith clergy trip. The energy from that trip led to the rebirth of our Jewish Community Relations Council, which she had led years before. It is a legacy we are proud to celebrate.”

Lana D. Benatovich Day

As Lana begins her retirement, she is excited to enjoy more time with Howard and the family, who reside in Buffalo, New Jersey, and New Hampshire, respectively. “Today and always, my greatest source of pride is my family: Amy and Michael, Marnie and Louis and our six grandchildren,” she beams.

In a show of appreciation for Lana, Mayor Byron W. Brown declared October 30, 2020—her final day with the NFJC—as Lana D. Benatovich Day in the City of Buffalo, stating, “Lana D. Benatovich is a good friend and one of our City’s most accomplished leaders. As NFJC President, she has earned high praise for her

work and dedication to overcome racism, bias, and bigotry by building a just and inclusive community through education, advocacy, and engagement. Under her direction, numerous diversity programs, cultural awareness sessions, multi-faith community events and other initiatives helped to pull people together and foster a positive spirit of unity in our community. On behalf of a grateful community, we are pleased to express our sincere appreciation to Lana for displaying the highest example of character, professionalism and dedicated service to the National Federation for Just Communities of Western New York and wish her great happiness and good health as she retires and begins this exciting new chapter in her life.”

Ezra N. Rich is marketing communications manager at Uniland Development Company and proudly serves on the boards of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, Temple Beth Tzedek and the Hebrew Benevolent Loan Association of WNY. He was fortunate to witness Lana’s leadership firsthand when she presented Gordon R., z”l, and Gretchen S. Gross with a Citation Award at the 2018 NFJC Citation Banquet.



In Commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day

The TELL Fund

Invites You to this LIVE Zoom Event

Thursday, January 28th

7:00 p.m.

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Dr. Edith Eva Eger

“The Ballerina of Auschwitz”

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To register please go to:
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Registration is FREE but your donation to the TELL Fund for events such as these is greatly appreciated.

For more information or to co-sponsor this event, email: TellFund@gmail.com or call: 917-584-0440








We Are So Blessed

BY SUSAN BERGMAN



October 5781

The number of our losses is over 211,000 now
So many more the world over, it is difficult to fathom,
People have lost loved ones, jobs, opportunity and their health.

We are still relatively healthy and live in a lovely home
We have a new refrigerator well stocked with food,
And a pantry bursting with bags, boxes and cans of edibles.

We have the time and energy for outside exercise whenever we choose
With so many choices for shopping for food, wine and clothing,
All within a five or ten minute drive.

I totaled an eight year-old car and within three weeks we had a replacement
Which is a pleasure to drive with many updated safety features,
I say hello to beautiful, cool blue SUV "Count Basie" every day.

How can we complain about the bad reception on a Zoom meeting
When we can turn to another similar connection within a few minutes?
Sometimes you make amazing discoveries finding new offerings.

How can we complain about a little fireworks noise at night
When our neighborhood usually feels safe and friendly?
How convenient to have a skilled beautician in the house across our street.

How can we complain when no one calls us?
We can pick up the phone and talk to old friends or family at any time,
Email and internet is readily available to send messages and renew friendships.

A thoughtful friend arranged for dinner and jazz outside in a garden
During our days of Awe...it was awesome, relaxing and unique,
Live streaming Central Synagogue services in NYC was awesome, too!

As we enter the Jewish New Year, we will let go of the past
Count our blessings daily and remind ourselves,
How fortunate we are to be in the "Here and Now."

Susan Bergman and her husband, Jerry, still live in the East Amherst home they have occupied for more than 43 years. She enjoys duplicate bridge on-line when not writing with the ladies in "Word Weavers," a group started by Susan, with nine members originally joining, Hadassah as sponsor, and Dr. Howard Wolf as their mentor/moderator in September 2016. Howard led another year of memoir, or life writing, in the Fall of 2017, again meeting at the JCC. After that, Dr. Gunilla Kester or Susan ran the group independently, still called "Word Weavers." Presently, there are eight ladies meeting every other week. In May 2018, they participated in Jewish Book & Arts Fair, seven of them reading our personal stories.

Buffalo Hadassah at Hanukkah

Buffalo's Hadassah Chapter is now part of the Northern New England Region, which allows the group to participate in virtual programs planned by other chapters in the region. Buffalo Hadassah has continued to hold monthly board meetings, with each member of the board running a different monthly meeting.

Book Club continues to hold lively monthly discussions with different members facilitating the discussion. November's book club meeting discussed *A Terrible Country* by Keith Gessen and was facilitated by Phyllis Steinberg. In December, Marna Burstein will lead the discussion on *The Quiet Americans* by Scott Anderson. This book has received glowing reviews and the author is Marna's son-in-law. Since the book club has started meeting on Zoom, attendance has increased, because members can attend even when they're not in Buffalo. **For more information about book club, email phyllismksteinberg@gmail.com**



The annual Hanukkah party will allow the group to gather together December 10 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom to wish each other a happy Hanukkah and tell about special menorahs owned by members. Perhaps members will munch on potato latkes in their own homes while sharing the holiday as best they can with Buffalo Hadassah members. (See story on pg. 30)

Happy Hanukkah

חג חנוכה שמח



From:
The Kadimah Scholars

5 THINGS You Can Do in December to Repair the World

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1» Give a year-end gift or pay your 2020 pledge to the Buffalo Jewish Federation's Campaign for Jewish Buffalo and get a 2020 tax deduction and the feeling of making a difference for your Jewish Community, because you have! **Go to www.buffalojewishfederation.org or call Assistant Executive Director Randi Morkisz at 716-628-3431** before the end of December.

2» Celebrate Hanukkah virtually this year with Buffalo friends. Check out pages 6-7 of this issue of *The Jewish Journal* to see Hanukkah events around town.

3» Donate Gift Cards to Jewish Family Service for needy families and individuals this holiday season. Gift cards from Tops, Wegmans, Walmart, Price Right and Walgreens are preferred. **Mail or drop off at JFS, 70 Barker Street, Buffalo NY 14209- ATTN Matt Stewart.**

4» Donate toys or cash to the Buffalo News Neediest Fund for those in Buffalo who need our help during this difficult year. **Find information or donate online at www.BuffaloNews.com/newsneediest.** Unwrapped toys may be donated at the Buffalo News, Wegmans, and more places. **Check out the website for complete information or call 716-849-5522 to schedule your donation.**

5» The Town Square Food Pantry located at Weinberg Campus needs donations of food. The organizers are looking for donations of in-date, non-perishable canned and boxed goods. You can deliver the goods to Town Square Tuesday and Friday mornings.

WHERE IN JBFLO ?



Where is this found in Jewish Buffalo?

The first 5 people to correctly identify the location will be mentioned in next month's *Jewish Journal* because the JCC's Buffalo Kosher Gourmet at the Myers Family Tel Aviv Café is closed due to COVID-19.

Last month, several people offered possible locations for the Jewish War Veterans plaque, which is in the first floor lobby at the JCC/ Benderson Building, but no one had the correct answer.

There is still time to make your pledge to the 2020 Campaign for Jewish Buffalo.



During this critical time,
The Federation is here for you, as it has been
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Randi Morkisz at
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Eight Spiritual Lessons From Covid-19

BY RABBI YEHOShUA GREENBERG
JEWISH DISCOVERY CENTER

On Chanukah we celebrate the light that illuminates and transforms the darkness. As we're living through a pandemic that is casting a shadow over our lives, it would be appropriate to reflect and shed light on the positive and insightful lessons we can learn from very darkness itself. Here is a list of eight spiritual lessons – corresponding to the eight lights of Chanukah – that we may learn from the virus and its treatment.

LESSON ONE:

Miniscule is HUGE

The virus demonstrated the effect of the tiniest particle. It gives us a vivid appreciation of the power of a barely visible and seemingly trivial particle to change the landscape of the entire world. This lesson is poignantly expressed in the words of Maimonides (*Laws of Teshuvah Chapter 3*): “Accordingly, throughout the entire year, a person should always look at himself as equally balanced between merit and sin and the world as equally balanced between merit and sin. If he performs one sin, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of guilt and brings destruction upon himself.

[On the other hand,] if he performs one mitzvah, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of merit and brings deliverance and salvation to himself and others.”

LESSON TWO:

We're Not in Control

Western civilization with its advanced understanding of science and nature provided us with a false sense of security. Living in the 21st century, after reaching the moon, decoding the genome and the mind-boggling progress of medical science, most people relegated the thought of a pandemic to the memories and pages of ancient history. Many boasted: “We no longer have to rely on the primitive crutches of prayer and faith in G-d; we have it, more or less, figured out.” Reality has painfully taught us otherwise. It is foolhardy and, yes, primitive to think that we humans can be in control of everything; we are mightily struggling to contend with something as small as a viral particle. The pandemic has given us clear perspective to realize that we are not gods of our destiny but rather depend on G-d more than ever.

LESSON THREE: Overreaction

One of the things that makes this virus



Rabbi Yehoshua Greenberg

novel, is the way our immune system reacts to it. “Most of the damage in COVID-19, is caused by the immune system carrying out a scorched earth defense to stop the virus from spreading (sciencealert.com)”. This phenomenon can serve as a lesson in how to address and react to negative experiences. In attempting to defend ourselves we often overreact, employing all our emotions and resources to fend off the attack, but in the process become embroiled and enflamed in the negativity rather than focusing on the healing and repair thus magnifying the damage of the original negativity. Of course, we ought to respond to intruding negative elements, but in a measured way, reserving our full energies for positive and constructive purposes.

LESSON FOUR: Strong Immunity

The effects of the virus are largely commensurate with the state and wellbeing of the immune system. People with weak and compromised immune systems are bearing the brunt of disease. Their defenses, while adequate to deal with some of the usual attacks on the body's wellbeing, are woefully inadequate in this case. The lesson should also be applied to our spiritual health. Learning Torah every day is an essential booster to the soul's immune system, ensuring that the soul's energies not fail us when we need it most. We must endeavor that our spiritual immune system be at the highest level at all times, never feeling content with the spirituality and Torah resources we have accumulated thus far.

LESSON FIVE:

Quarantine

In order to limit the spread of the disease, we are encouraged to “social distance” and in some cases, quarantine and isolate ourselves. In normal times, this would be considered a severe infringement on individual freedom. Under these conditions however, it is seen as an important measure to save lives. What is ordinarily an ideal and a source of enjoyment – engaging in community life and social behavior – has become an anathema. Sure, we have found alternative avenues for social interaction, but no one can deny that the pandemic has put a severe damper on the social dimension of life. But as long as we are in this less than ideal situation, we must take advantage of the opportunities of isolation: (1) Introspect and develop our inner character; (2) Devote More time and brain space to Torah study and prayer; (3) Devote more time to family and the true priorities of life. Simply stated: We should take advantage of the restrictive measures to develop our individuality and discover our particular, individual purpose of existence.

LESSON SIX:

It's Not Just About Me

This disease has a sliding scale of severity. Some people bounce back quickly. Others suffer from its severe and dangerous effects. Some may be tempted to relax their caution due to their belief that they are less vulnerable. However, that would be foolish and reckless, as we are being reminded: Don't determine your behavior merely on how it may affect you; think how it may affect others who are vulnerable and may suffer as a result of your behavior. The lesson is obvious. We must always be cognizant that our actions have consequences that reverberate beyond ourselves. No one lives a self-contained life; G-d created us as connected and social creatures and our actions impact others. This lesson is illustrated in a parable quoted in the *Midrash*: A group of people were travelling in a boat. One of them took a drill

and began to drill a hole beneath himself. His companions said to him: “Why are you doing this?” Replied the man: “What concern is it of yours? Am I not drilling under my own place?” Said they to him: “But you will flood the boat for us all!” (*Midrash Rabbah, Vayikra 4:6*).

LESSON SEVEN:

Wash Your Hands

The CDC guidelines instructs us to clean our hands regularly in order to wash away any potential virus particles. The spiritual lesson from this directive maybe the loftiest of all. The hands are one of our primary points of contact with our environment. They provide us with the ability to touch and bond with others in a deep way. Washing our hands represents a two-pronged approach to our relationship with others and the world around us. (1) When we engage our environment, we must ensure that we have not picked up any negative or inappropriate influences. (2) Conversely, when we relate to others, we must strive to remove any extraneous elements, such as insincerity and self-interest that may creep into the relationship.

LESSON EIGHT:

Thinking Outside the Box

After all is said and done, the pandemic and its corollary societal convulsions have brought us to the realization that status quo solutions will not bring us to the “promised land.” The lesson is clear: We have to look and think “outside the box” of the physical dimension and call out to G-d in prayer to bring us the Redemption we have been waiting for so long. We have become accustomed to living in a world of pain and suffering and this state of affairs has become “baked in the cake”-- embedded into our exile mindset and “normalized.” But now we are at the point when we cry out to G-d: We've had enough of exile! Bring us *Moshiach* and take us into your embrace!

Rabbi Yehoshua Greenberg can be reached at rabbigreenberg@jewishdiscovery.org

Dr. Edith Eva Eger - “The Ballerina of Auschwitz”

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROB GOLDBERG AND RUS DEVORAH (DARCY) WALLEN

Federation CEO Rob Goldberg spoke with Rus Devorah (Darcy) Wallen about a powerful virtual event on January 28 that she has organized in commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day. At 7 p.m. that evening, Rus Devorah will interview Dr. Edith Eva Eger, *New York Times* Bestselling Author and Auschwitz survivor.

ROB: This event is made possible by the TELL Fund. Can you tell us about its origin and purpose?

RUS DEVORAH: The TELL Fund was established in memory of our parents, Dr. Samuel and Mrs. Joan Ellis Shatkin to provide Jewish educational and cultural programming and materials for the Western New York Jewish community. After our father passed away in 2010, my mother and my sister, Cindy Oppenheimer, helped me establish the TELL Fund through the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies. Mom actually coined the acronym for the fund; TELL is Torah Experience for Life-Long Learning. She was totally supportive, and since she was frail and down because of our father's passing, I wanted to get her involved and tried to keep her engaged and motivated through TELL Fund activities.

ROB: Can you share some of the past programs that the TELL Fund has sponsored?

RD: We had a very early TELL Fund event in Mom's home at Canterbury Woods with a renowned graphologist. Then, when she passed away in 2011, The TELL Fund was in both of our parents' memories. We've had some wonderful events including last year's chazzan/opera singer/sommelier with a wine and cheese pairing, scholarly lectures, concerts, honoraria for local Jewish programs, and the publishing of *Faith Lifted*, which will be offered as a premium for a small donation for this event. I feel fortunate, that in this short time of only about 10 years, we have been able to accomplish so much with this modest fund.

ROB: Tell us more about this upcoming event on January 28.

RD: We're hosting a live Zoom conversation beginning at 7:00 p.m., with a remarkable trauma therapist and new friend, Dr. Edith Eva Eger. She was called, “The Ballerina of Auschwitz” because known as a ballerina before the War, she was forced by Dr. Josef Mengele to dance in front of him for a loaf of bread that she then was able to share with her barrack mates.

Before and while at Auschwitz, she suffered many horrors. Considering all the trauma and tragedies she endured, it's miraculous that she not only survived, but came to America and rebuilt herself completely. She developed a close relationship with Dr. Victor Frankl who inspired her in his modality called “Logotherapy.” Subsequently, she



Dr. Edith Eva Eger

developed her own therapeutic approach, working with survivors of trauma. Currently, at the age of 93, she still maintains a private practice.

ROB: Tell us about your personal connection with Dr. Eger.

RD: About 2 1/2 years ago, when a friend of mine introduced me to Dr. Eger's book, *The Choice*, I immediately devoured it in one sitting. It's a memoir of her life and how she found meaning in the challenges she endured. I felt I needed to meet her and connect with this special, sensitive soul. I reached out to her on Facebook and her assistant set up an appointment for me. When I found that it was too difficult for her to do an online appointment (B.C. - Before COVID), I told her I would be in California soon, and we set up a face to face meeting. My dear friend and colleague whom I was visiting, joined me in meeting Dr. Eger in her home office in La Jolla. We met, then she invited us for lunch. Since we keep kosher, we picked up lunch, and joined her. Then after lunch, she invited us back to her office to stay and schmooze! It felt like we were just having an afternoon with our very wise “Bubbie.” Since then, I pre-ordered her newest book, *The Gift* and



Providence, that's why we're having it in January.

ROB: Tell us a little bit about the plans for the event and whether there is a fee to participate.

RD: It's going to be a live Zoom event for anyone and everyone, anywhere around the world. It will be free of charge. But for us to be able to provide these kinds of activities and programming we need funding. We appreciate donations of any amount. On the ad in this issue of *The Jewish Journal* on page 17, there is a link for signing up to receive the program Zoom link. Then, for anyone who is able to donate, we have premiums! Participating at the \$18 level, donors will receive a book of my Grandfather's humorous poetry: *Come on in and Have Your Faith Lifted: The Torah Wit and Wisdom of Michael Franklin Ellis*. This book was published by the TELL Fund, and my company, Toratherapeutics®, last year around this time. Then, donors at the \$36 level will get their choice of either of Dr. Eger's books *The Choice* or *The Gift*. Finally, anyone donating \$100 or more will receive all three books!

ROB: That sounds very exciting. Who else is helping to promote the event?

RD: There are four sponsors for the event along with the TELL Fund and Toratherapeutics®. Firstly, I know you're quite familiar with the Buffalo Jewish Federation, The JCC Book and Art Fair, the Holocaust Resource Center, and the Jewish Discovery Center's Book Club facilitated by Brocha Leah Greenberg. I'm really excited about this dynamic collaboration of co-sponsors.

ROB: Thank you Rus Devorah. Federation is delighted to be among the co-sponsors.

For those interested in participating, you can register using the following link: http://bit.ly/TELLFUND_EGER. Should you have any questions, please email: TELLFund@gmail.com.

heard her online a few months ago. I reached out to learn more from her and just last week had a consultation regarding personal and professional matters.

ROB: She sounds like a great new friend and colleague. I'm curious, why is this event happening next January?

RD: It's happening in January because of sheer Divine Providence! I wanted her to speak for my mother's Yahrzeit which was in November, but she wasn't available. Her first open date was January 28th. Unbeknownst to me at the time, and something I learned from Elizabeth Schram from the Holocaust Resource Center, the 28th is the day after the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. So, by Divine

Recipes by Chef Michael Solomonov

Apple Shrub *Yields about 1 Quart*

Ingredients:

- 1 quart of apple cider
- 1 pod of star anise
- 1 ½ tsp cardamom pods
- half of a vanilla bean
- zest of 1 lime
- 1 cup sugar in the raw
- ½ cup unfiltered apple cider vinegar 2 oz fresh lime juice



Make Ahead:

- Put the apple cider, star anise, cardamom, vanilla bean, lime zest, sugar, and apple cider vinegar into a medium stock pot over medium-high heat, bring to a boil.
- Once the mixture begins to boil, reduce heat and let simmer for 15 minutes.
- Strain out all of the solids.

To Prepare:

- Allow the mixture to cool to room temperature and add the lime juice.
- Refrigerate.
- The shrub should keep for up to two weeks.
- Enjoy over ice with seltzer water or mix it with bourbon!



Read more about a cooking demo with Michael on pg. 25

Sfenj with Cinnamon Sugar *Serves 8-10*

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon dry active yeast
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 4 tablespoons plus ¾ cup warm water
- 2 ½ cups plus two tablespoons flour
- Zest from 1 orange
- ½ teaspoon Kosher salt
- 2 cups canola oil
- 1 cup honey
- ½ cup ground pistachios



Make Ahead:

- Dissolve the yeast and sugar in a medium-sized bowl with the 4 tablespoons of warm water. Let the yeast starter stand for approximately 15 minutes until it is frothy and blooming so the yeast starter doubles in size.
- Sift the flour into a large mixing bowl, then add the orange zest and salt. Make a small well in the middle of the flour and pour the yeast starter into the well. Incorporate the yeast mixture by making a swirling motion with your fingers in the middle of the well, while slowly streaming in the remaining ¾ cup of warm water. Knead the mixture inside of the bowl with palm of your hands for approximately 15 minutes until the dough is very smooth.
- Cover with a clean towel and set aside in a warm place to rise until it's roughly double in size, approximately 1 hour.

To Prepare:

- When the dough has almost finished rising, fill a large pot with the canola oil and heat until it reaches 350°F on a thermometer. With wet hands, lightly punch down the dough to deflate.
- Pull off a piece of donut batter that is approximately the size of a small egg. Use your thumb to make a hole in the center of the piece of batter. Open the hole with your fingers to form a donut that is approximately 4 inches in diameter.
- Drop the donut away from you into the pot. Be careful not to crowd the pot (three donuts at a time is about right). Fry the donuts for 2 minutes on one side, then flip and finish cooking on the other side for 1 ½ minutes.
- Remove the donuts to a cooling rack lined with paper towels to drain. Cool for approximately 4 minutes and then drizzle each donut with honey, sprinkle with pistachios. Serve immediately.



Rabbi Isaac Klein Scholar in Residence Month

Featuring Dr. Rafael Medoff

Author of: *The Jews Should Keep Quiet: Franklin D. Roosevelt, Rabbi Stephen Wise, and the Holocaust*

**Saturday, February 6
7 p.m.**

**FDR and The Holocaust:
New Research, New Controversies**

**Saturday, February 13
7 p.m.**

**The Jewish Vote:
Myth and Reality**

**Saturday, February 20
7 p.m.**

**Babe Ruth and the Holocaust:
Unlikely Allies of the Jews,
Then and Now**

**Saturday, February 27
7 p.m.**

**Multi-media presentation:
Cartoonists Against
the Holocaust**



TEMPLE BETH TZEDEK

**These virtual events are Free and Open to the community.
RSVP to KleinSpeaker@btzbuffalo.org**

Donations can be made to the Klein Fund online at btzbuffalo.org or mailed to:
Temple Beth Tzedek, 1641 North Forest Road, Williamsville, NY 14221

Robin's Potato Latkes

BY ROBIN KURSS

There's nothing like a delicious potato latke. These are just a little different. These fry up with a thin crust and a delicious oniony mashed potato middle. I like to serve these with applesauce that has been spiced up with 1Tbsp of pomegranate molasses per cup of applesauce and a dollop of sour cream too. Wishing everyone a bright, beautiful and happy Hanukkah!

Ingredients:

2 lbs Yukon gold potatoes, peeled
2 medium onions, chopped
Oil for frying
1 egg
1 tsp baking powder
Salt and pepper to taste



Cut 1/3 of the potatoes into large chunks, boil till tender, drain and mash. Sauté onions in 2 Tbsp of oil until golden. Season to taste and add to mashed potatoes. Grate remaining potatoes by hand or with food processor. Wring out in clean dish towel to remove all moisture and add to mashed potatoes along with egg and baking powder, add more salt and pepper to taste. Heat oil in saucepan and form latkes using 1/4 cups measure. Latkes should be formed into 1/2" patties about 3" wide. Fry on each side till golden and crispy.

Roman Artichokes with Arugula and Olive Oil Poached Salmon *Serves 2*

Ingredients:

2 4-ounce salmon filets
4 medium artichokes
juice of 2 lemons
4 cups of baby arugula
8 cloves of garlic, peeled
½ cup of olive oil
Kosher salt
Coarse ground black pepper



To Prepare:

- Season the salmon filets with salt and pepper, allow fish to sit at room temperature.
- Peel leaves off of artichokes until its yellow heart is exposed.
- Using a peeler, peel the outer fibrous layer of the stem off.
- Slice the artichokes as thin as possible and place into a small sauce pot with the olive oil and garlic over medium heat.
- Stirring frequently, cook until artichoke pieces are golden brown.
- Remove artichokes and allow to drain on paper towels. Sprinkle salt and lemon juice onto the artichokes as they cool.
- Place the fried garlic along with 4 tablespoons of the warm olive oil and the rest of the lemon juice into a mixing bowl. Reserve the rest of oil for salmon.
- Place salmon in the pan and cook at medium/ low heat for 4 minutes per side. Remove, drain, and plate.
- Mash the garlic and mix the lemon and oil together.
- Toss the Arugula and Artichokes together in the bowl with the dressing and season with salt to taste.
- Plate salad next to salmon, serve immediately.

DINING GUIDE

Karen Goodman
CATERING
Well seasoned!

Happy Hanukkah!

Order Your Hanukkah Favorites Now!
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Jewish Repertory Theatre presents *Holiday Shorts*, by Hank Kimmel

The Jewish Repertory Theatre is proud to present a filmed staged reading of *Holiday Shorts* by Hank Kimmel, available for digital download, December 10-30, 2020. This is the second selection in a series of Five Staged Readings, performed on the JRT stage and seen, through the magic of video, wherever audiences choose to enjoy. Subscribers and ticketholders have the option to watch this production live on Thursday, December 10 at 6:00 p.m. or any time after until December 30, 2020.

In a new series of hilarious Woody Allen-esque short plays, Atlanta playwright Hank Kimmel delights with a new set of offbeat, comic 10-minute plays featuring themes of the holiday season in an evening that will also include music, monologues and jokes. *Holiday Shorts* stars Buffalo acting favorites Brian Brown, Melinda Capeles, Steve Copps, Max Goldhirsch, Lisa Ludwig, and David Marciniak with music direction by Joe Isgar and direction by

Steve Vaughan.

Hank Kimmel is a founding member and Board President of Working Title Playwrights, an Atlanta-based theatre company dedicated to the development of playwrights and new plays. He has written more than 200 full-length, one-act, 10-minute plays and monologues available through the New Play Exchange. Among his full-lengths, *Confessions of a Hit Man* was recently selected by the Alliance Theatre for a Reiser Atlanta Artists Lab developmental grant, *Divided Among Themselves* selected as one of the best new plays by the Jewish Plays Project, was recently showcased through Theatre Ariel (PA) and the Academy Theatre (GA); and *A Little Room at the Inn* was recently produced by Onionman Productions (GA). Hank also consults as a dramaturg/teacher and through Woodward Academy has developed two high school shows for production (*Goodness Gracious* and *Our Not-So-Perfect Town*.) He also serves as the Board President of the Alliance for Jewish Theatre which connects Jewish

Theatre for Everyone
JEWISH REPERTORY THEATRE
of Western New York, a program of the JCC of Greater Buffalo

**FIVE
STAGED
READINGS**

theatre to the world. JRT is proud to bring Kimmel's new work to our theater after introducing his plays at last season's successful staged readings.

Holiday Shorts will be filmed and edited by Full Circle Studios, a Buffalo video production company. In addition to the filmed performance JRT will present a live interview with Hank Kimmel streaming on YouTube, Thursday, December 3 at 7:30 p.m. This event is free and can be accessed with a link that will be posted on the JRT website and Facebook page.

The Jewish Repertory Theatre of Western New York



Hank Kimmel

is a program of the JCC of Greater Buffalo. Five play season subscription is \$80 and individual tickets are \$20. Each of the five plays will be available for 21 days through March 2021. Unique links to the online video performances will be sent to subscribers and ticket holders shortly before "opening nights."

All productions are professionally produced and video recorded in The Maxine and Robert Seller Theatre, JCC Benderson Family Building at 2640 North Forest Road, Amherst, NY. For more information on JRT, productions, dates and tickets, visit www.jewishrepertorytheatre.com. Tickets also at JRT Box Office: 716-650-7626.



Friday, December 11, 2020

7:00pm Erev Shabbat Hanukkah Service with live stream via Boxcast, Facebook and YouTube
7:30pm A Hanukkah Special on YouTube

A Hanukkah Special featuring:

- Hanukkah Nights Concert excerpts
- Performance by singer/songwriter Beth Styles
- Storytime by Rabbi Alex
- Release of Virtual Sanctuary Hanukkah Event
- Animated Hanukkah Video
- Watch our Latke Cam
- Special Guests

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

6:45pm Candle lighting in the CSS parking lot
7:00pm Drive Thru Latke Lane for your Latke Box and sufganiyot

RSVP for the complimentary Latke Box and sufganiyot by 12/10/20 to joanne.marquisee@gmail.com.

You must wear a mask and maintain social distancing.

**LIGHT HANUKKAH CANDLES WITH US
EVERY NIGHT ON ZOOM AT 6:45PM!**



"We're spending Hanukkah in Santa Monica" – Jews and the Art of Song Parody



Join the JCC in partnership with Congregation Beth Abraham for a virtual Hanukkah Celebration Monday, December 14 at 7 p.m. **"We're spending Hanukkah in Santa Monica" – Jews and the Art of Song Parody**, produced by Marty Kerker examines a subset of the phenomenon of Jews and the art of song (musical) parody. Whether it's in the work of celebrated Jewish parodists like Allan Sherman, Tom Lehrer, Mel Brooks, Victor Borge, Danny Kaye, Frank Jacobs, The Capitol Steps, Two Live Jews, Randy Rainbow, et al – or in the do-it-yourself parodies included in Purim spiels, Passover seders, private parties/simchas or even during Shabbat services (Adon Olam, anyone?).

You are invited to take a trip down memory lane during Hanukkah and share a few laughs to usher in 2021 with special musical guests Grant Golden and Yonina Andrea Foster. **This is a free event, registration required. Contact Katie Wzontek, kwzontek@jccbuffalo.org for more information or to register.**

Hanukkah at the JCC



Hanukkah is the Festival of Lights. The Jewish Community Center is getting ready to shine an array of entertaining programs for every age during the eight days of the Hanukkah, December 11-18.

JCC staff are working together to provide you with a one-stop Hanukkah resource site. Join Fitness staff for an 8-minute Maccabee Warrior intensive training, with workouts posted daily. Mystery teachers from the Early Childhood department will share their favorite Hanukkah stories, with a new story posted each night. Can you guess who the reader is? Savor cooking tips with Nechama Okonov, owner of Buffalo Kosher Gourmet, through a virtual cooking demo of holiday favorites. Try



Children at the JCC's Benderson Building Preschool celebrate Hanukkah with singing and music, arts and crafts and social activities to encourage creativity, curiosity and imagination. "There is nothing more exciting than watching children as they make friends with others, develop new skills and grow to be their best selves," said Betsy Abramson, director of the Amherst JCC PreSchool program.

the posted recipes or place an order to pick-up delicious treats from the Myers Family Tel Aviv Café. "Lighten" your mood with holiday humor in our Ha-Ha-Hanukkah section, direct from the mind and mouth of Jewish Repertory Theatre's upcoming (running December 10-30) *Holiday Shorts* playwright Hank Kimmel with other guest appearances. View community members' *Hanukiahs* (Hanukkah menorahs) and shared memories in a virtual photo gallery. All activities will be pre-recorded and posted so you can participate and enjoy at your convenience.

Visit www.jccbuffalo.org daily during Hanukkah to enjoy these holiday experiences. You might find some surprises along the way!



Chanukah Cooking Class



**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8 @ 7 PM
WITH MICHAEL SOLOMONOV**



Join Michael Solomonov, Executive Chef and Co-owner of Zahav, for a virtual cooking class on some Chanukah favorites. The menu includes Apple Shrub, Abe Fisher's Potato Latke, Roman Artichoke with Arugula & Olive Oil Poached Salmon, and Sfengi with Cinnamon Sugar.



**FOLLOWED BY A ZOOM TALKBACK WITH CHEFS:
COREY KADISH & STEPHEN FORMAN**

Corey and Stephen are the co-owners of Thyme-N-Honey, a food consultant company specializing in teaching and demonstrations of classical and modern cooking techniques.

REGISTER: [BIT.LY/CHANUKAHCOOKINGDEMO](http://bit.ly/chanukahcookingdemo)

THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO EVERYONE!

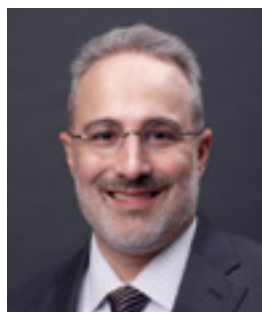
QUESTIONS? NEED HELP REGISTERING? Contact stacey@buffalojewishfederation.org

RECIPES WILL BE AVAILABLE IN ADVANCE IF YOU WISH TO COOK ALONG!

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FJP Announces Officers and New Members to the Board of Trustees for 2021

At its October Annual Meeting, the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies elected new board members and officers. The following slate of officers was elected for a one-year term expiring in 2021.



Jonathan Schechter
President



Gretchen Gross
Vice President



Alison Keane
Vice President



Peter Weinmann
Vice President



Daniel Kester
Treasurer



Kenneth Shuman
Secretary



Justin Reich is a graduate of Syracuse University and received his MBA from UB School of Management and his Juris Doctor at UB School of Law. He is a Partner at Lorraine Capital. He has served on the UB Foundation's Board of Trustees. Justin resides in Amherst.



Kenneth Rogers is an Executive Consultant. A graduate of SUNY Binghamton (BA) and UB (MBA) Ken is the Chair of the Weinberg Campus Board, serves on the board of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, and is past president of Temple Beth Zion. He resides in Buffalo.



Alan Rosenhoch is a graduate of University of Toronto and earned his MBA at the UB School of Management. He works at Endeavor WNY as the Entrepreneur Selection & Growth Account Manager. He serves on the Board of Kadimah Academy and SABAH (Spirited Athletes Bold at Heart). He resides in Buffalo.



Lorne Steinhart is a health care business professional, most recently the Business Development Director at ECMC. He graduated from SUNY Albany and earned his MBA at Canisius College. Lorne resides in Williamsville.

The following slate of Board Members were elected for a three-year term expiring in 2023. Here are their names and biographies.



Michael Joseph is a graduate of SUNY Binghamton and earned his MBA from Boston University. He has been President of Clover Group Inc. for over 30 years. He returns to the Foundation's Board of Trustees, also having served on the Boards of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, the UB Foundation, and Chair of Roswell's Park Cancer Center's Board, among others. He resides in Buffalo.



Dr. Joel H. Paull received his BA from SUNY Buffalo followed by his DDS, MD, and JD all from the same University. He earned his Master's Degree in Health Law from Loyola Chicago and an MBA from UB. He returns to the Foundation's Board, having also served on the boards of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, Weinberg Campus, Temple Beth Tzedek and Amherst Symphony in the past. He resides in Williamsville.



Esther Quartarone is an Attorney, specializing in International Trade Compliance at FLIR Systems. She graduated from University of Michigan and received her Doctor of Law at the George Washington University Law School. Esther came to Buffalo in 2014. She has served on the Board of Directors for Journey's End Refugee Services and recently joined the Allentown Association Board. She resides in Buffalo.

Hillel Harvests Joy with a Pop-Up Pumpkin Patch

BY RABBI SARA RICH

Few items evoke fall more than a giant orange pumpkin. A favorite childhood pastime for many is to go to a pumpkin patch and pick out the perfect pumpkin to paint, carve, or display on the front steps. This fall symbol represents the bounty of the harvest and the joy that comes in the period between the hot summer and the chilly winter to come.

In a normal year, Hillel would plan a trip to a local farm for apple picking and other fall activities. However, COVID-19 restrictions prevented us from encouraging students to share cars or take Ubers to off-campus destinations. Knowing that the students were suffering from boredom, social isolation, and the challenge of online classes, we sought to create a safe way for students to experience the joy of spending time



outdoors in the fall.

What better way than to create a pumpkin patch...on campus! Hillel partnered with Campus Living and Campus Dining to order three giant bins of pumpkins which we scattered across a grassy field outside of the dining hall. As students emerged from their rooms to eat lunch on a lazy Sunday afternoon, they were surprised to find this field of



pumpkins, and overjoyed when we told them they could go pick one and take it back to their room.

Students being students, they quickly got into the fall fun. They took selfies with their pumpkins, dressed the pumpkins in hats and gave them nicknames, and more than one student transported their pumpkins back to their dorm

rooms on their skateboards to lighten the load. In the end, 140 students picked pumpkins from the pop-up patch.

In the spirit of gratitude and appreciating abundance, we collected donations and canned goods from students to donate to Blue Table, the UB on-campus food pantry. We also distributed flyers to each student with information about how to order food from the pantry if they are in need. The reverse side of the flyer shared Jewish teachings about gratitude that could be appreciated by all students.

Hillel will continue to seek ways to bring joy to students during this difficult academic year and to raise up moments of positivity and gratitude to support their emotional well-being.

Rabbi Sara Rich is the Executive Director of Hillel of Buffalo. To learn more about ways that Hillel has adapted to serve students this semester, please contact her at rabbisara@hillelofbuffalo.org.

Join the JFS Family.



When you donate to JFS, you join our family, meaning you're joining a special community committed to improving the quality of life of thousands of individuals and families each year.



This year, the need is greater. We need help. We need hope. Our community is resilient, but many of our friends and neighbors are feeling the impacts of COVID-19: **physically, emotionally, and financially.**

This Hannukah, you can help JFS create change and provide hope throughout Western New York. Funds are urgently needed to care for:

- **Children and teens** struggling with anxiety and depression
- **Seniors** living in isolation
- **Parents** coping with homeschooling
- **Displaced workers**, including immigrant workers dealing with job insecurity
- **Holocaust Survivors** dealing with PTSD & re-traumatization
- **Healthcare workers** and essential staff carrying the emotional burden of the pandemic
- **Single mothers** struggling to make ends meet after losing hours at work

jfsbuffalo.org/donate

TBZ Religious School Students Explore Jewish Values!

BY BETH STEINBERG

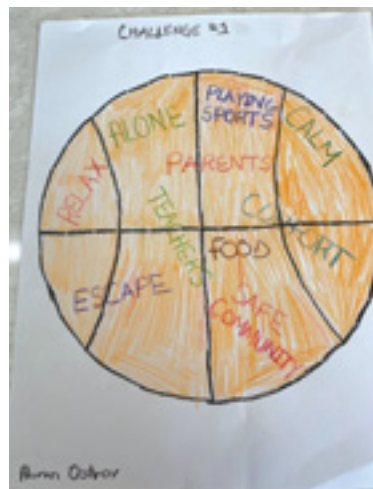
During the first few months of 2020-2021's TBZ Religious School year, almost 50 of our students from Kindergarten through 6th grade will have participated in five weeks of discovering "*Sukkat Shalom*" (shelter of peace) through the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland's "*La-Bri'ut*: To Our Health and Wellness" curriculum. We are proud to be one of several hundred Jewish schools in North America to have implemented this innovative values-based curriculum. *La-Bri'ut* was developed during the first months of the pandemic to develop our children's resiliency and skills for managing life's challenges via Jewish texts and teachings.

Our *La-Bri'ut* learners meet weekly in small multi-age online cohort groups for synchronous (everyone together) learning and are offered activities or challenges to pursue independently (asynchronous learning) during the week. During the "*Sukkat Shalom*" module, some of the kids decorated their own shelters of peace using



colorful fabric markers to draw on wide strips of muslin fabric. They sketched pictures explaining what in their lives provides them with *sukkat shalom*. They interviewed people they knew to find out what makes others feel safe and protected. They looked at mosaics by Jewish artists and then created collages depicting *sukkat shalom*. They searched around their homes for objects (stuffed

animals, photos of loved ones, etc.) that make them feel safe. They colored and baked Shrinky Dink plastic keychains to give out as reminders to others that they are cared for. They blew soap bubbles with and without glycerin (which strengthens the fragility of the bubbles) to think about the fragility of safety and contemplate what might strengthen our sense of security. And they wrote personal blessings of peace,



safety, and protection.

The *La-Bri'ut* learners have now begun their next module, "*Ometz Lev*," in which they will learn how to use their own inner strength to identify difficult emotions and develop strategies to handle those feelings healthily. (*Ometz Lev* literally translates to "strength of the heart.")

During their online cohort sessions and through pursuing their activities and challenges, they will confront many of the following questions: What are BIG FEELINGS and is it okay to have them? Is it okay to boil over when we have BIG FEELINGS? Is it okay to bottle them in? What other choices might we have? Who in Jewish history had BIG FEELINGS? How did they respond, and did they make the best choices? And, what should we do when others around us are losing control of their emotions? Are there ways we can help?

The goal of the *Ometz Lev* module is to be able to recognize when strong emotions are threatening to overpower us and to develop a toolkit of appropriate coping mechanisms. This 2nd module of *La-Bri'ut* will empower our children to take action for calming themselves in the moment. And who couldn't use a little of that?

Beth Steinberg is Temple Beth Zion Religious School Director.

December Shabbat Services at TBZ

Links for all services at Temple Beth Zion can be found at www.tbz.org. All are welcome!

Kulanu Service

Friday, December 4, 7 p.m.

One of TBZ's two annual services celebrating our LGBTQ+ inclusion and advocacy. Special speaker and liturgy led by TBZ Clergy, with Saul Kaiserman providing music and song.

Hanukkah Shabbat

Friday, December 11, 6 p.m. - at an earlier time for families!

Join us for our special Shabbat celebration of the First Night of Hanukkah with the musical talents of Cantor Rosalie Will, the Director of Worship and Music for the Union of Reform Judaism. Light candles together, sing together, begin Shabbat and Hanukkah together – even over Zoom!

Classical Reform Shabbat

Friday, December 18, 7 p.m.

Dr. Lori Ullman and Dr. David Bond provide the elevated music for Temple Beth Zion's classical Reform service using the Updated Sinai Edition of the Union Prayerbook.

TBZ Sisterhood Judaica Shop Meeting the Needs of the Community

Volunteers for the Sisterhood Judaica Shop at Temple Beth Zion continue to meet the shopping needs of the community through the COVID-19 pandemic. Susan Bruckheimer, Dee Block and members of Sisterhood have taken to Facebook and also direct contact to assist members of the community in a variety of safe and socially distanced shopping experiences. These women are dedicated to providing special and unique items.

If you are looking for a Hanukkah gift or decoration, Bar or Bat Mitzvah or wedding gift, you can call or text Susan at (716) 982-2099 or email at nana4susan@gmail.com or contact Dee at (240) 446-1211.

KOT Classes & More

As the weather has turned colder, Kehillat Ohr Tzion has moved Shabbat services from the parking lot to the shul while limiting the number of participants and maintaining all safety precautions.

Cantor Jeffrey Braverman drove in from New Jersey to lead High Holiday services, which were held in the spacious gymnasium at the Clearfield Community Center. Jeffrey first served as a cantor for the congregation when he was 15 years old and lived in Buffalo. He has continued to enrich Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services here in Buffalo for the last 36 years.

For the last several months the Social Action Committee has been collecting healthy food items that were needed by the pantry at the Lincoln Memorial United Methodist Church, which recently reopened and is serving the community in the old Jewish neighborhood around Masten Avenue. The group is currently collecting winter clothing for Jewish Family Services to help settle new immigrant families in Buffalo.

Rabbi Ori Bergman is teaching weekly virtual classes about **Contemporary Issues on Jewish Thought** on Sunday morning, **A Conversation on the Weekly Parsha** on Tuesday afternoon, and **Stories of Rebbe Nachman of Breslov** on Thursday afternoon. *To find out more about these classes email oribergman@gmail.com*

Congregation Beth Abraham Starts Jewish Heritage Library

Congregation Beth Abraham has started a library with books available for loan. In keeping with Beth Abraham's welcoming policies, the books will be available to anyone who wishes to read them. However the building is only accessible when services and events are held. NOTE: Because most of Congregation Beth Abraham's activities currently are virtual, the library is not yet in operation.

To make this library possible, Madalyn Fleisler has volunteered her services as librarian. Madalyn, a member of the CBA board, worked in the Central Agency for Jewish Education of St. Louis as Resource Center Director, which included serving as librarian. She found that her understanding of Judaism was enhanced by working with Jewish materials and providing assistance to Jews of a wide range of affiliation and belief.

People who are inspired by the pandemic to sort out their book collections may consider donating books to Congregation Beth Abraham. This would include books about Jewish religion, philosophy, history, arts, and life; books about Israel; and fiction, poetry, and drama that addresses themes



Madalyn Fleisler

related to Judaism. Judgments about what is suitable will be subjective, but Madalyn will donate books inappropriate to the CBA collection to more appropriate settings--or discard them properly.

If you have books that you would like to donate, please contact info@congregationbethabraham.net with information about the books you wish to donate and your contact information. If you want, someone from the congregation will be happy to pick them up.

The Jewish Discovery Center Presents...

CHANUKAH

DRIVE-IN-THEATRE

All Covid-19 laws will be observed

DRIVE IN CHANUKAH PARTY	
1	MENORAH LIGHTING
2	CHANUKAH MOVIE
3	CHANUKAH BOXED THEATER DINNER
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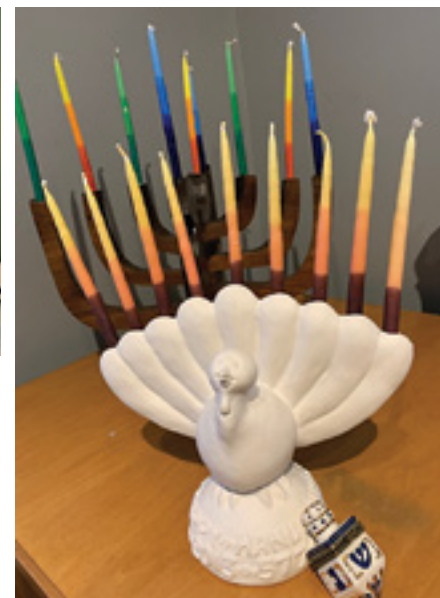
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My Hanukkah Collection & Hadassah

BY MARLENE KATZEL

My *hanukkah* (menorah) collection started when I was very young. My mother gifted me my very own little *hanukkah* that used birthday candles. I would find more to add to the collection as I traveled, adding two from my trip to Israel. After my son was born, I bought him a menorah for Hanukkah. The collection exploded when my husband started buying me a new menorah every Hanukkah. The collection spans the traditional to the silly.

I often show my collection during Hanukkah programs. This year Hadassah will have a virtual Hanukkah party on Zoom, December 10 at 2:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to share their *hanukkah* with a story to tell. I will be showing how I made my Ruth Bader Ginsburg menorah. This will be an unusual and unique Hadassah Hanukkah party.



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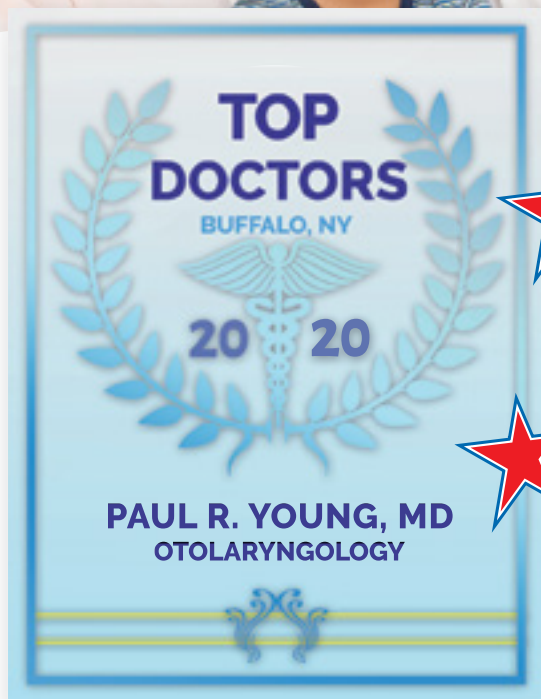
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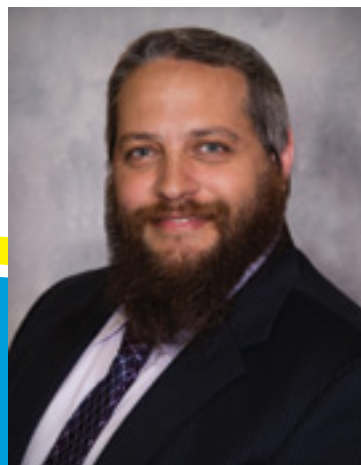


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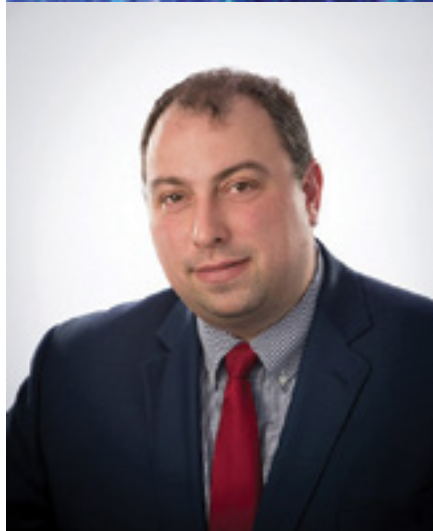


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Remembering Linda Snitzer

1937-2020

This remembrance was compiled by Linda's husband Carl Snitzer, her son Adam Snitzer and daughter Elizabeth (Libby) Zupnik.

Although she's gone, this Shabbat, and every Shabbat, she will bless us. She's been lighting Shabbat candles and blessing us across space and time all our lives. After lighting the candles and lifting her hands to bless all children present, she'd turn in the direction of those who were elsewhere, silently extending her blessings through time zones, over mountains and across oceans.

That carries great comfort for the family of Linda Kardaman Snitzer. In addition to being one of the world's great mothers, she was a beloved wife, mother-in-law, grandmother, sister, aunt, friend, teacher and inspiration.

Born November 4, 1937 to Doris and David Kardaman, Linda came of age on Colvin Avenue in Buffalo, half a block north of where old Temple Emanuel had



been, with her much loved little sister Susan (now Susie Altman). Following elementary School 81, Linda attended Bennett High,

where she found lifelong friends among her Phi Epsilon Pi sorority sisters. It was in a hallway at Bennett that she met Carl Snitzer.

Linda and Carl were married August 10, 1958. Linda was then a senior at Buffalo State College. The poor but happy newlyweds moved into public housing in Langfield Homes. After graduating a year later, Linda became a third-grade teacher at School Eight on Buffalo's East Side.

First son Adam arrived August 5, 1961. The couple celebrated their third wedding anniversary at Millard Fillmore Hospital at Gates Circle, with dinner sent from the Park Lane.

Life became even more wonderful with the arrivals of Jason on March 8, 1963, then Eric on December 21, 1964, after the growing family resettled in North Buffalo. As space got tighter, the couple bought a

home on Ranch Trail in Amherst. Linda shone as homemaker and stay-home mom of three little boys.

In 1968, a career change for Carl took the family to Utica, NY for what was to be just two years. One thing led to another, in this case another job in Utica for Carl and another pregnancy for Linda. On October 15, 1969, the family welcomed Elizabeth (Libby). Finally, a girl!

Years passed; their stay in Utica became thirty-two years, during which Linda and Carl became part of their adopted community, raising their kids, making dear friends and becoming active members of Temple EmanuEL, where Linda taught Sunday school, later becoming its principal.

While teaching during the week, Linda earned her Master's Degree in Reading & Literacy Education. She later became the Early Childhood Program Director for the Cerebral Palsy Center in North Utica, where for five years, she led a team of enthusiastic special educators.

Eventually, Linda landed in state prison – Mohawk Correctional Facility, in Rome, New York. There, she taught literacy skills, preparing adult inmates for GED exams. Linda loved that job. "Her guys," as she called them, would be well prepared to take honest advantage of life's second chances.

When Linda retired in June of 2000, she and Carl agreed to return to their roots in Western New York. The Utica house was sold, and they moved into a lovely home on Park Club Lane in Williamsville.

Life back in Buffalo was filled with family, new and long-ago friends, and welcoming neighbors. There was the house to decorate, meals to share, Hadassah meetings, Sisterhood events, volunteering with Habitat for Humanity, and long walks with her beloved cockapoo, Lucy. For nearly eight years there was Linda's mother Doris to assist. It was about that time that Linda perfected her famous saying, "Everything's going to be alright - it'll be just fine."

Life was fine indeed. By then, the four children were married, eventually gracing Linda and Carl with eleven grandchildren. Linda adored each of them, and never missed the chance to celebrate the milestones in their lives, her dazzling smile shining like a beacon of pride.

It was her incredible smile people seemed to mention most often about



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Linda, from her closest family and friends, to members of Buffalo's Temple Beth Zion, who always recall her as one of the congregation's warmest, most welcoming Shabbat greeters.

Linda provided a warm, nurturing environment in which her children thrived, grounded in the comfort of knowing they were deeply loved by her, and would forever have her complete confidence. That loving foundation motivated all of them to face the world head on, embarking on challenges, and achieving numerous personal, academic and professional accomplishments.

Nearing the end of her illness, Linda held fast to her well-known optimism. When Adam phoned her at the hospital during one recent stay to undergo still more diagnostic tests, he asked, "How's it going, Mom?" She cheerfully responded, "Oh, we're quite busy around here," not wanting her oldest son to worry, wanting him, instead, to believe it would all be okay.

Linda died at home on October 11, 2020, surrounded by her husband Carl; her children and their spouses: Adam Snitzer and Rabbi Gayle Pomerantz; Dr. Jason Snitzer and Dr. Rosanne Tedesco;

Dr. Eric Snitzer and Dr. Ellen Rich; and Elizabeth Zupnik and Dr. Eddie Zupnik; as well as her sister, Susan Altman and Dr. Michael Altman.

Linda also left her enormous cookbook collection and countless, delicious recipes, many often enjoyed at her children's and grandchildren's dinner tables. Not to be forgotten are dessert buffets, featuring her frosted marble brownies and snickerdoodles. Her lovingly prepared eggplant parmesan, for example, has been emulated in next generation kitchens on three continents, and is believed to have launched at least one enduring romance.

As we head into our first holiday season without Linda, we recall the centerpiece of our family's Hanukkah gatherings: her unrestrained enthusiasm for her favorite holiday song and dance. "Hanukkah, O Hanukkah, come light the menorah," gathering us into a circle, hand in hand. Throwing back her head, she would sing, "Let's have a party, we'll all dance the hora..."

This year, and in all of our coming years, we know she will be dancing with us in spirit. And as the candles burn low, the sweet light they shed will remind us of her.

In Remembrance

The following individuals in our community passed away during the period from October 21-November 20*. May their memories forever be a blessing, and may their loved ones be comforted among the mourners of Zion.

Rosa Ber
Brian Cohen
Bernice Dubawsky

Dr. Marvin Feuerstein
Henry Goldner
Natasha Kolken
Charlotte Mador
Richard Martin
Ruth Miller
Lenore Rein
Martin Rothschild
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If we inadvertently missed printing the listing of your loved one, please write to ellen@buffalojewishfederation.org and we will include the name next month.



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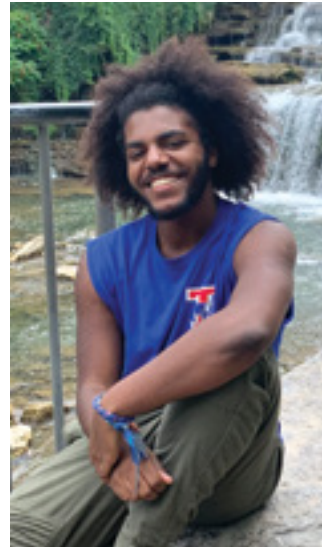
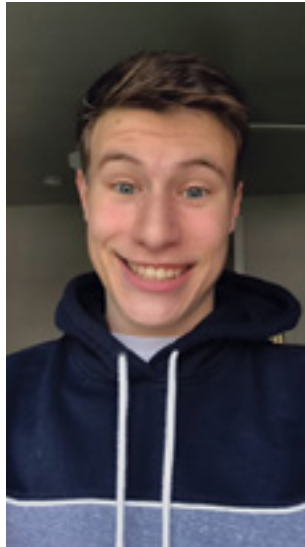
Being a Student during COVID-19

BY HANNAH GABELNICK

It has been eight months since I have been inside of Amherst Central High School. From the March lockdown until now, I have been participating in my sophomore and junior years of high school entirely online from my bedroom. For the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year, Amherst High School decided to stick with asynchronous learning, where students do their school work on their own time with minimal teacher instruction. I watched teacher-created videos, took notes, completed assignments and quizzes, and even took the AP European History exam online. With no live teaching, in-class discussions, or final exams, it was hard to find motivation to keep learning.

This current school year looks much different: students and their families choose between a hybrid model, where students go to school in-person two days a week, or a fully-remote model, where all learning is done at home. Both models are synchronous and have students follow the same schedule with the same teachers, either through Zoom or in-person, depending on the day of the week. Students at home hear the same lectures, take the same tests, and participate in the same discussions as the students in school.

For the beginning of the current



From left to right, Hannah Gabelnick, 16, Max Hodin, 16, Michael Sanders, 17

school year, my family chose the fully-remote plan. Still, I missed going into school, seeing my friends and teachers, playing in the school band and singing in chorus, and being able to get out of the house. Some teachers worked hard to include the fully-remote students by offering extra office hours, but others mainly focused on the in-person students.

As I write this in early November, I am going to school for the first time since March. While I am beyond excited, I'm anxious. The number of COVID-19 cases and positivity rate in Erie County are continuing to increase, and I'm unsure how much longer in-person learning will last.

Unfortunately, many students find it difficult to concentrate while online all day, and technology and internet issues frequently interfere with class. "While this pandemic

has taught me many valuable things, I've felt my academic experience has only been embittered by COVID-19," said 17-year old Michael Sanders, a senior at Williamsville North. "I hadn't realized how much my work ethic relied on a classroom environment, and it's been increasingly difficult to be an efficient and successful student." It is clear from many students I spoke to that while it's nice to have a school routine, staring at a computer screen all day is draining.

Additionally, students in different cohorts are unable to see each other, creating a division in the school community. Even students within the same cohort find it difficult to socialize, as students are masked, separated by plastic dividers, and required to follow social distancing guidelines. Another student remarked, "I miss seeing my

friends in the hallways and being able to learn in a more interactive environment. The teachers are doing their best to make this year as normal as possible, but it's not the same. All in all, going back to school under these circumstances has made me more grateful for my education."

Many students are feeling lost as they attempt to navigate this new world. Max Hodin, a 16-year old junior at Amherst Central High School, said, "The way I interact with my education completely changed. [I have] less mental space to deal with regular life problems. It really takes a lot to function in this strange world, and I wish more people gave themselves credit for that."

Listening to other students' perspectives has made me realize how much the COVID-19 pandemic has transformed the way students see their education. Students all across the country are experiencing the stress of the pandemic and the uncertainty surrounding school, but I am optimistic that we will come out of the pandemic as strong, independent young adults. We will emerge more resilient, more educated, and more appreciative than ever before.

Hannah Gabelnick is a junior at Amherst Central High School and an intern at the Buffalo Jewish Community Relations Council.



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- Sing-a-long or dance to fun Hanukkah songs
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