

The Award Winning

THE JEWISH JOURNAL

A publication of The Buffalo Jewish Federation

Happy Hanukkah 5782!
November 28-December 6

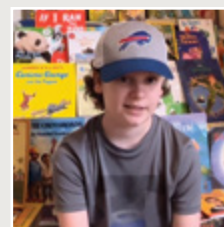
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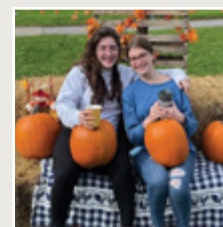
HAPPY HANUKKAH 2021!



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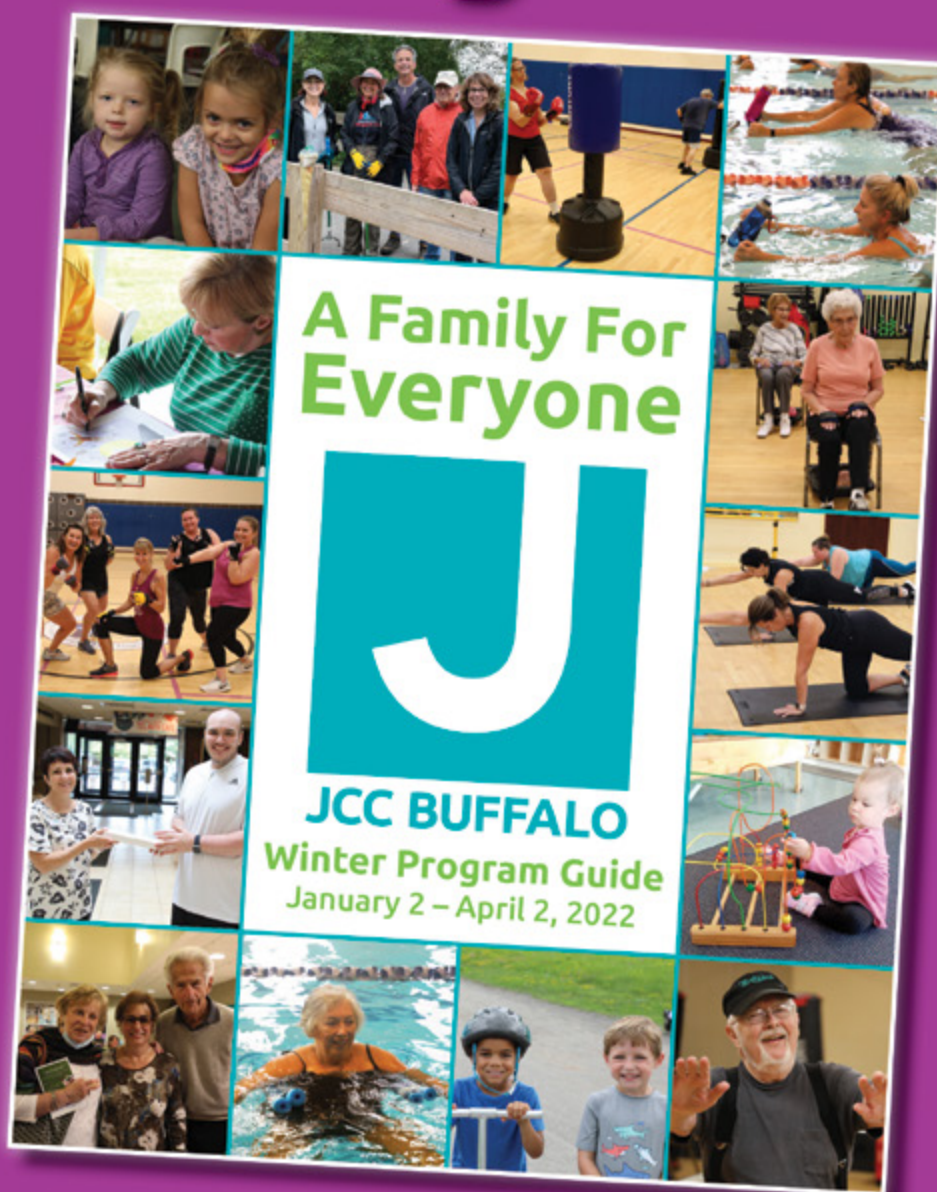
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Winter Program Guide Coming Soon!



Our Program Guide is returning, and will be available for pickup in either lobby at the beginning of December!



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December 2021

Editor's Note



Ellen Goldstein, Editor

As we begin the month of December, we are well into Hanukkah, our Festival of Light. I love sharing food with family and friends and lighting *hanukkiot* (menorahs)—as many as I can. I own a few, including one I will be lighting that belonged to my mother, another one given to me by my sister, and one or two I purchased in Israel in the Cardo. As I light them, I sing the blessing and I think of my mother, my sister, and my time spent in Israel and how all three have brought light into my life.

Speaking of light, this month's issue is overflowing with community stars, beginning with the stellar cover photo taken of a menorah sculpted by Buffalo artist Ellen Steinfeld. It is a radiant doorway that opens December's community celebration and excellence.

Next, we have a story about our two Emerging Leadership Award Winners—Merredith Levin and Ezra Rich—on page 4, an event that's part of Federation's and Foundation's first joint Annual Meeting (see page 3). LiNK's Teen Leadership Council made up of seven outstanding teens is highlighted on page 7, and five of the Jewish Communal Professionals who attended KOLOT Pro in October share what they learned (pages 8-9). Rabbi Levi Greenberg's Hanukkah message (page 10) is all about light and *mitzvot*; photos of Gary Ginsberg who brought his own special light back to Buffalo through **Made in Buffalo**, are on page 13. Community Superstars Shira Brown, Elad Levy, Mickey Osterreicher and Larry Rubin shine on page 16, and we can enjoy some of the honor and glory our Jewish War Veterans (JWV) have earned by visiting the new JWV bench in Amherst Veterans Park (see page 20).

Finally, a heads up that we'll be combining the January and February issues of the *Jewish Journal* into one magazine that comes out in late December, so if you have any January or February news or events, be sure to send them to us later this month. Please join me in sharing your light with others this month, and stay well.

Ellen Goldstein - Editor

On The Cover



Sculpture courtesy of Ellen Steinfeld ©2021, steel, Samara's Menorah

The hand-crafted menorah which graces this month's cover was designed and created by artist Ellen Steinfeld. Its magic enhances the glowing light created during the month of December.

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Foundation and Federation Team Up for Joint Annual Meeting on December 6

Focus is The Future of Jewish Buffalo

For the first time in their history, the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies and Buffalo Jewish Federation will gather together on the last day of Hanukkah for a joint annual meeting and celebration of the LIFE & LEGACY@ Buffalo initiative. Beginning at 5:30 pm on Monday, December 6, leaders of both organizations will broadcast the event via live stream from Temple Beth Zion's Sisterhood Chapel on Delaware Avenue.

The 45-minute program will include remarks by Temple Beth Zion's Rabbi Sharon Sobel, nominating reports from each organization, presentation of the 2021 Emerging Leadership Awards to Merredith Levin and Ezra Rich (read more about the award recipients on page 4), recognition of the Foundation's Leadership Endowment Award to David Feuerstein (the Award will be presented at the Foundation's Annual Meeting in 2022), and a moving video sharing stories from



Alison Keane

Jewish Buffalonians who have made legacy commitments this fall through the LIFE & LEGACY® program.

"LIFE & LEGACY® will ensure a strong future for our community," explains Alison Keane, Chair of LIFE & LEGACY® for the Foundation. "Many Jewish organizations and agencies in Western New York are coming together in this groundbreaking and historic way to ensure our community's rich heritage is preserved and carried into the future." Alison adds: "Combined, the



Howard Rosenhoch

Foundation and Federation have served and strengthened Jewish Buffalo and the general community for more than 200 years, and the Foundation, as the longest established public charitable foundation in Western New York, is leading the charge."

This unique gathering will be the first time that the two organizations are collaborating for what traditionally have been separate stand-alone annual meetings. "The Foundation and Federation are working together on so

many fronts, especially on the LIFE & LEGACY® initiative," notes Howard Rosenhoch, Chair of LIFE & LEGACY® for the Federation. "Our coming together to focus on the future of Jewish Buffalo is not only natural but a testament to the strong partnership that has been forged between our two organizations."

The Foundation and the Federation are partnering with the following organizations in the LIFE & LEGACY® initiative: Center for Jewish Life, Congregation Shir Shalom, Hillel of Buffalo, Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo, Jewish Discovery Center, Jewish Family Services of Western New York, Kadimah Scholars, Temple Beth Tzedek and Temple Beth Zion.

There is no fee to attend the Annual Meetings and Celebration but registration is required. Please register online at bit.ly/celebratejewishbuffalo2021. Several days prior to the event you will receive details about accessing the program via Live Stream.

For more information on the meeting or LIFE & LEGACY®, contact Mandy Weiss at legacy@jewishphilanthropies.org or 716-463-5065.

Please Join Us

Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies AND Buffalo Jewish Federation
Present:

The Future of Jewish Buffalo

Monday, December 6
5:30 - 6:15 PM
Live-Streamed Event

Featuring:

- LIFE & LEGACY® Video Showcase
- Annual Business Meetings
- Emerging Leadership Award Recipients: Merredith Levin & Ezra Rich
- Foundation Endowment Leadership Award Recipient: David Feuerstein

Register: bit.ly/celebratejewishbuffalo2021

Celebrating Jewish Buffalo's Emerging Leaders on December 6

Merredith Meyers Levin and Ezra N. Rich will be honored as the 2021 Emerging Leadership Award winners by the Buffalo Jewish Federation on Monday, December 6 at 5:30 p.m. at their Annual Meeting, held jointly this year with the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies. The event will be live-streamed from Temple Beth Zion's Sisterhood Chapel. The award has been recognizing emerging leaders who demonstrate a commitment to the growth and sustainability of our vibrant and caring Buffalo Jewish community since 1964.

Merredith Meyers Levin is the Ruth & Dr. Milton E. Kahn Emerging Leadership Award honoree. A real estate broker with Howard Hanna Real Estate Services in Williamsville, Merredith is a 1999 graduate from SUNY Geneseo with a degree in Fine Arts & Design. Merredith loves to help sellers stage, market, and sell their homes and help buyers envision what a home could look like – whether it's changing the decor or knocking down walls. She specializes in residential real estate in the Buffalo

area and surrounding suburbs and has locally been nicknamed "The House Matchmaker."

Born and raised in Buffalo, Merredith was thrilled to come back home to Western New York 18 years ago after brief stints in Las Vegas and Boston where she taught art and worked in residential and commercial art sales. Prior to entering the real estate industry in 2009, Merredith served as the Assistant Director of the Bureau of Jewish Education, Children's Program



Merredith Levin

Supervisor at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo and as the Assistant Director of Camp Centerland.

Merredith currently serves on the Board of Governors of Federation and she and her husband Ken are the co-chairs of the 2021 and 2022 Super Sunday fundraising initiative. Merredith feels fortunate to have had the opportunity to be one of the inaugural participants in the MOMentum Program which culminated in a 2019 trip to Israel with other women from Jewish Buffalo and in partnership with cities around the world.

The Levins reside in Williamsville and are the proud parents of three children: Parker, Charlie, and Archie. They are also members of Congregation Shir Shalom and are thrilled that their children share their love of Jewish life and culture through their involvement with the Buffalo Jewish Teen Initiative, Camp Seneca Lake and the *Madrachim* program at the Community Religious School.

Ezra N. Rich is the Ann S. & Dr. Meyer H. Riwchun Emerging Leadership Award recipient. He is the Marketing Communications Manager at Uniland Development Company. In this role he supports the marketing communications, social media, and public relations initiatives for projects such as Uniland's transformation of the Eastern Hills Mall into a town center and the launch of HANSA workspace, a co-working and shared office facility. Ezra began his career working in Manhattan for two global public relations agencies and added marketing to his skillset at the Princeton office of the technology research firm SRI International.

A CUNY Brooklyn College alumnus, Ezra grew up in a small Jewish community in Fairfield, Conn., and later



Ezra Rich

lived on Manhattan's Upper West Side. His community involvement is inspired by his parents and late grandparents who were active in their local Jewish communities, from the synagogue and day school to Israeli charity work.

Ezra and his family moved to Buffalo in 2017 when his wife, Rabbi Sara L. Rich, accepted the role of Executive Director at Hillel of Buffalo. In the ensuing years, he has embraced his adopted home with gusto. Ezra currently serves on the boards of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, Temple Beth Tzedek, and the Hebrew Benevolent Loan Association of WNY. He is also involved in the Buffalo Niagara Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and the Amherst Chamber of Commerce Toastmasters Club.

Some of Ezra's most rewarding work in Jewish Buffalo has been on the Federation's Overseas Allocations Task Force with a focus on the Jewish aid organizations supporting Jews in Israel and across the globe, supporting the Youth Education Committee at Temple Beth Tzedek, and writing community leader profiles for *The Jewish Journal*. A lover of history and tradition, he is a member of the Jewish Buffalo History Center Work Team and the Federation's LIFE & LEGACY® committee, working to promote after-lifetime giving to provide perpetual financial stability to Jewish Buffalo's sacred institutions.

The Rich family lives in Williamsville—in a house *shidduch* (match) made by Merredith!—with their three daughters, Miriam, Sivan, and Naomi. Ezra is excited for the Jewish education and experiences his daughters have with the Community Religious School, TBT's Binah enrichment programming, PJ Library® literature, and Camp Centerland.

Hello Gorgeous

Virtual Tour Presented by
Women's Philanthropy
BUFFALO JEWISH FEDERATION

**Thursday
December 16
7 - 8 PM**

For more information,
contact: Stacey Block
Stacey@buffalojewishfederation.org
716-463-5053

Register: bit.ly/WP_HELLOGORGEIOUS

Hello Gorgeous, an eclectic exhibition of costumes, photos, videos, record album covers and other objects, celebrating the life and work of Barbra Streisand. JMOF-FIU, the exclusive Southeast presenter, is proud to pay tribute to the iconic singer, actress, director, and producer, in an original exhibition and series of events. Exhibit organized by Bernard Museum, Temple Emanu-El, with a special thanks to Lou Papalas of Palm Springs, CA.

CJEL is now LiNK Jewish Buffalo!



Connecting People to Jewish Life

The Center for Jewish Engagement and Learning (CJEL) is now LiNK Jewish Buffalo. LiNK Jewish Buffalo's vision is for all Jews, their friends and life partners, and those exploring Judaism to have access to Jewish living and learning experiences that help them thrive; and to welcome all regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or ability.

The word *link*, means to connect – or – the relationship between two things. You will see in our brand a small “i,” which represents the individual, who is always at the center of our work. The rounded letters evoke an openness, a feeling of being surrounded by others – and *b'tzelem elokim* – one of our guiding

values, that underscores how everyone has something of value to contribute and everyone has the right to belong.

Our brand and our name are new— but our mission, vision, and purpose remain the same: to serve individuals families through PJ Library, PJ Our Way/ Middle School Engagement, the Buffalo Jewish Teen Initiative (in partnership with the JCC), Nickel City Jews, Adult Engagement and Learning, Women and Men Gathering, Belonging, and the Buffalo Israel Experience.

To learn more about the work of LiNK Jewish Buffalo, or to get connected, contact Miriam Abramovich, Chief Experience Officer at the Buffalo Jewish Federation at miriam@buffalojewishfederation.org.

Kahn Emerging Leaders Honor Newest Members



Past Emerging Leadership awardees gathered this fall to welcome new members Brenda Feldstein ('20) and Meredith Levin ('21). Standing from left: Stacey Block, Brenda Feldstein, Meredith Levin, Randi Morkisz. Seated from left: Linda Pollack, Susan Katz, Rise' Kulick, Jessica Altman. Not pictured: Leslie Shuman Kramer.



Bonnie is Buffalo!



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Get cozy and warm in front of two fireplaces; one in the privacy of the main bedroom. This home is wonderful for entertaining, featuring French doors, tiled backsplashes, and more. The fenced-in yard features a waterfall pond, trellis, and spacious deck, the perfect setting for a BBQ. The slate roof, air conditioning, forced hot air, and efficient radiant heat are additional amenities in this beautiful home.



BONNIE CLEMENT

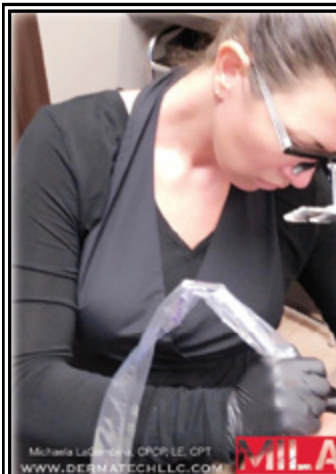
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Presenting the next chapter in our story. CJEL is now LiNK Jewish Buffalo.

Meet the 2021-2022 Teen Leadership Council

A talented group of young Jewish leaders make up the new Teen Leadership Council. A part of the Buffalo Jewish Teen Initiative, Council members serve as representatives from various teen groups across Jewish Buffalo, including TBAZY, Gilgool USY, and Park Kadimah Scholars. The Council, that also includes teen leaders who do not represent any formal program or institution, provides a platform and support system for these teen leaders to vision and plan community-wide collaborative programs for their peers, including the upcoming Teen Hanukkah Party on Sunday, December 5 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at TBZ's Broder Center. The free event will feature a live DJ, Hanukkah games, snacks, and the event is free.



Elliott B

(he/him, Council Chair)

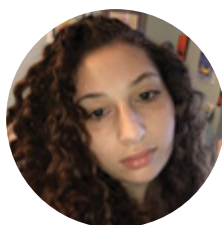
Elliott is a senior at Amherst High School and is the TBaZY Religious and Cultural VP. Elliott is a graduate of Youth Leadership Buffalo and an athlete representative for the Buffalo Area Aquatic Club. He serves as the chair of the Teen Leadership Council, leading monthly meetings and overseeing Council projects.



Honey L

(he/they, Recruitment Chair)

Honey is homeschooled and is in 11th grade. Outside of schoolwork, they like to dance and help with their mom's Etsy business. As the recruitment chair, Honey oversees recruitment strategy for Council events.



Shaina P

(she/her, Program Chair)

Shaina is an 11th grader at the Park School of Buffalo in the Kadimah Scholars program. She is involved in Student-to-Student, theater, volleyball, chorus, and is part of the student diversity conference. As program chair, Shaina is responsible for the logistics of Council programs.



Anya W (she/her)

Anya is a senior at Williamsville South High School. She is the Tzafon USY Israel Affairs Vice President and is on the USY Israel Affairs International General Board Committee. She also plays soccer, is in Orchestra, and loves art.



Sofia R (she/her)

Sofia is a 9th grader at Park School of Buffalo. She is financial Vice President of TBAZY, and is a longtime camper at Camp Centerland. Sofia is very involved in sports, including basketball, flag football, swim, as well as rock climbing and archery over the summer.



Sarah H (she/her)

Sarah is in 11th grade at Williamsville North High School. She loves to bake, cook, and do yoga.



Ryan H (he/him)

Ryan is in 10th grade at Williamsville East High School. He plays soccer, basketball, and baseball.

To learn more about the Buffalo Jewish Teen Initiative contact Ben Wolfson, Manager of Jewish Teen Experience at ben@buffalojewishfederation.org

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Questions? Contact Ben Wolfson
ben@buffalojewishfederation.org

BJTI is a joint project of LiNK Jewish Buffalo and the JCC



KOLOT Pro Retreat Reflections

In October of this year, twenty-three professionals from across Jewish Buffalo gathered for KOLOT Pro, the Buffalo Jewish Federation's 2021 women's leadership retreat. The multiple-day experience was focused on building and strengthening cross-agency professional relationships and the important work of exploring what it means to bring one's authentic voice to leadership.

KOLOT Pro was a powerful few days of contemplation, exploration, and connection with facilitator Maya Dolgin, CEO of BraverMe. The photos and reflections from some of the women who participated in the retreat will provide a window into this leadership learning experience. The KOLOT Pro planning team included Miriam Abramovich, Molly Carr, Macie Clawson, Jill Komm, and Rochie Shanowitz.

To learn more about KOLOT Pro and other leadership development opportunities, contact Miriam Abramovich, Chief Experience Officer at the Buffalo Jewish Federation at miriam@buffalojewishfederation.org.



Rabbi Sara Rich

Executive Director- Hillel of Buffalo

A meaningful moment of the KOLOT Pro experience for me was at the beginning, when we reflected in a journal about the impact of COVID-19 on our organizations and on our own lives. On one hand, it feels like we have been talking non-stop about COVID-19 since March 2020. It comes up in conversations on a daily basis, both on a strategic and programmatic level at work, and in our personal lives as we

continue to navigate safety precautions and avoid illness. Talking about COVID seems to have replaced the weather as go-to small talk.

And yet, when given the opportunity to sit with pen and paper and answer journal prompts about my experience with COVID and the impact it has had at work and in my life, I found that I had a lot more to say. The catharsis of putting my unfiltered thoughts on paper and articulating the emotional toll of 18 months of uncertainty, loss, and fear was powerful. More importantly, in the safe and supportive space fostered by the KOLOT facilitator and organizers, I felt like I could be honest about these challenges. At the end of the exercise, I also felt hopeful. I felt like having 20 local professionals taking part in an activity like this could impact the culture of our agencies to make more space for reflection, whether about the pandemic or other major issues that we will experience in the future. I am grateful for this opportunity and am committed to bringing the experience back to Hillel to provide more support for our staff, students and leadership.



Cortney Heitzman

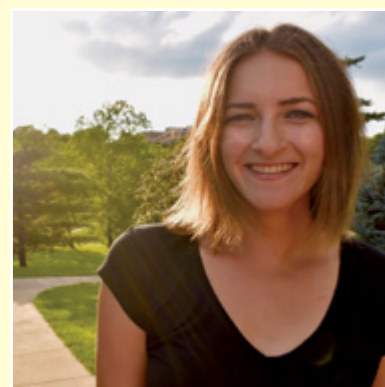
Controller, Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies

This was a wonderful experience with a lovely group of women. The experience gave me more of a connection to the work we do for the community, and knowing that there are people who support each other regardless of their background is a wonderful thing.

and exercises, and in a space that felt safe and supportive, we explored and identified our own leadership qualities.

I especially appreciated the visioning exercise in which we imagined our future retirement parties. I thought about who would be there, what their gifts would be, how they would remember the work I had done, and what aspects of my career would be most celebrated. Painting this mental picture guided me to recognizing the most meaningful aspects of myself as a leader.

It was so valuable to share this process of discovery with other women professionals in the Buffalo Jewish community. While the participants came from disparate religious backgrounds, represented a wide range of ages and stages of life, and whose talents and interests are quite dissimilar, we found much in common and much to appreciate in one another.



Macie Clawson

Springboard Innovation Fellow at Hillel of Buffalo

When I was asked to sit on the KOLOT planning committee by Miriam Abramovich, I felt similar to Moses with the resounding question of "why me?" echoing through my head. I had only been in Buffalo a little over seven months after moving here to work for Hillel of Buffalo post-college. While I had felt nothing but welcomed by the Buffalo Jewish community, imposter syndrome still plagued me as I logged on to my first Zoom call with the planning committee.

How would I, a first-year out of college 23-year-old, be able to provide insight and commentary that was meaningful? I barely had time to ponder this before Rochie, Molly, Jill, and Miriam were asking for my input... and not only asking for it, but listening to it and using it. Before I knew it, I was building something amazing with them while feeling so heard. Before the conference even started, I felt part of something larger than myself and knew that just the experience of planning KOLOT was a gratifying experience in itself.

Meeting our facilitator, Maya, only added to the hype as I realized the profound wisdom and insight she has to offer through BraverMe. By the time the first day of the conference came around, I knew the only step left was to let go and experience KOLOT. Walking away from KOLOT I feel inspired, connected, and fulfilled in ways that pulled from my professional, personal, and spiritual experiences. But mostly I just feel grateful to have had the opportunity to work with the amazing planning committee and know that I will carry this experience with me for many years to come.



Beth Steinberg

TBZ Religious School Director and Community Religious School Co-Director

When I was invited to participate in KOLOT Pro I was honored, of course, but extremely curious as to what this retreat

would be all about. How much time would it require of me? Would there be preparatory work or outside assignments? Who else would be participating? Would I know them? Would I feel comfortable with them? And what was the purpose of this experience?

I needn't have been so concerned. KOLOT brought together almost two dozen women, all powerhouses in their own professions and organizations, but who all share similar concerns about their personal and professional lives: How do I make my voice heard? How do I balance my work life and my home life? How does being (or not being) Jewish influence my work? How does my age impact the impression people have of me? And, am I focusing my time and energy on what is truly important to me?

Through a variety of conversations



Dr. Molly Carr

**CEO Jewish Family Services
of Western New York**

In early 2021 I was asked to participate in the planning of a conference for women who work in Jewish organizations throughout WNY called KOLOT. I was a little skeptical on what I could bring to the planning process. While I am the CEO of Jewish Family Services of WNY, I am not Jewish, and I wasn't sure how I could help build an authentic Jewish experience for conference participants. I said yes and within moments of starting the first Zoom planning meeting I was happy with my decision to be part of the planning team.

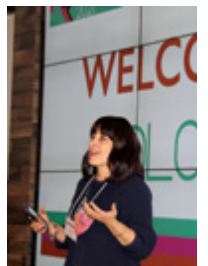
This year's KOLOT brought together an amazing group of women, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who do vital work to support and enhance Jewish Buffalo through our synagogues, non-profits, and philanthropic organizations. The conference wove together Jewish traditions, teachings, and values with an eye to sharing universal lessons through Jewish stories. The highlight of this year's conference for me was getting to better know so many dedicated female leaders who help make Buffalo and Western New York a stronger community.

As a member of the planning team, I was asked to facilitate a working group that discussed how we bring our best selves to work in Jewish organizations, even if we are not Jewish. This small group discussion reminded me that regardless of our faith, or the degree that we may practice Judaism, we are all able to connect deeply with the values our Jewish organizations hold dear. We all bring our best selves to work each day to help others in need and to work hard to help our organizations succeed.

I am grateful for having the opportunity to lift my voice at this year's KOLOT conference. I have gained new friendships, stronger partnerships, and an even deeper appreciation for the Jewish values and traditions we share throughout Jewish Buffalo.

KOLOT Pro in Buffalo

These photos of KOLOT Pro, which took place in October at the HANSA Shared workspace, offer glimpses of the energy, creativity and *ruach* that happened during the retreat.



Chanukah Light

BY RABBI LEVI GREENBERG

They tell a story of this couple who had two little mischievous boys, ages 8 and 10. They were always getting into trouble, and their parents knew that if any mischief occurred in their town, their sons would get the blame. The boys' mother heard that a Rabbi in town had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The Rabbi agreed and asked to see them individually.

The mother sent her 8-year-old first, in the morning, with the older boy to see the Rabbi in the afternoon. The Rabbi, a huge man with a booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, "Where is G-d?" The boy's mouth dropped open, but he made no response. The Rabbi repeated the question. "Where is G-d?" Again, the boy made no attempt to answer.

So, the Rabbi raised his voice some more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, "Where is G-d!?" The boy screamed and bolted from the room. He ran directly home and dove into his closet. When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked, "What happened?" The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied: "We are in real big trouble this time! G-d is missing, and they think we did it!"

Let's take a deeper look into the story of Chanukah. The Greeks were on a mission to secularize Judaism and create a world in which "G-d is missing." And in order to accomplish that, they had a plan—they outlawed various *Mitzvot*.

What is a *Mitzvah*? A *Mitzvah* is G-d saying that He wants a relationship with us. Even before we perform the *Mitzvah*, the mere fact that He asked us to do something for Him already creates a connection. And when we actually perform that *Mitzvah*, the connection is that much stronger, creating a powerful energy in this world.

While every *Mitzvah* brings spiritual light into this world, the light is most apparent in a *Mitzvah* that is physically connected to light, like when we light the Shabbat candles. And yet, even with Shabbat candles, being that they're lit before sunset, when it's still light out—their impact of dispelling darkness isn't so obvious. However, the Chanukah candles are lit **after** sunset (except for Fridays), when it's already dark, highlighting their immense power in dispelling the darkness. The message of the Chanukah light is an illustration of every *Mitzvah* and how its light illuminates the darkness.

The story of Chanukah is about the Greeks prohibiting the observance of the commandments **just because** they were **G-d's commandments**. It wasn't the act itself that bothered them – like if a Jew wanted to do a



Mitzvah because they appreciated its culture – but rather the fact that they were observing the *Mitzvot* in order to connect and forge a relationship with G-d.

This is also illustrated in the miracle of Chanukah. After the victory over the Greek army, the Jews entered the Temple and found it desecrated. When they wanted to light the Menorah, they were looking for oil that was not contaminated, with a seal intact. On the surface, there was truly no difference between the pure oil and the contaminated oil—what's a seal anyway. The only difference was G-d's will—one that G-d deemed Kosher vs. the other one that was not. It was all about G-d's will.

The problem was that there was only enough oil to last one day. The Maccabees expressed to G-d: "We want to connect to You and do this *Mitzvah* in a way that emphasizes that we are doing it just for You! And so, we will give it all we got, even if we only have enough to last one day!" In return, G-d showed them that if you go with that attitude and truly try your best even when the odds are against you, you will experience the miracle that even a small flame can last eight days.

And this is the powerful message of Chanukah. It's the realization that every *Mitzvah*, because it's G-d's commandment, has the ability to turn darkness into light, even when we don't see it with our physical eyes. Let us not get discouraged. So as we look at the flames of Chanukah, let this be a reminder that we too can experience miracles in our own daily lives when we perform a *Mitzvah* with G-d in mind and thereby hasten the coming of *Moshiach*, a time when G-d will no longer be "missing." May this be our reality even before Chanukah 5782.

Rabbi Levi Greenberg is a rabbi and educator at the Jewish Discovery Center.



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Eclectic Israeli Pianist Kicks Off Hanukkah 11/28

In partnership with Temple Beth Zion, the Jewish Community Center will kick off the eight days of Hanukkah with a celebratory concert starring Israeli pianist, composer, vocalist, and educator Guy Mintus.

Coming from a mixed heritage of Iraqi, Moroccan and Polish Jews, Guy's music is a meeting point between different rivers of inspiration flowing freely into each other. He is a trained concert pianist with the energy of a rock star and a jazz musician's sense of adventure, who's unafraid to throw into the mix his native Middle-Eastern scales and rhythms. *The New York Times* said, "Mintus, a 27-year-old pianist who hails from Israel, pours together a mixed brew of influences — Arabic maqam, Jewish folk song, Eastern European dance rhythms and, especially, classic hard bop — with such ebullient grace that you'd think they all originated in the very same place."

Guy's awards include the "Leonard

Bernstein Award" by ASCAP and the Bernstein Family Foundation, and the Prix du Public at the Montreux Jazz Festival's solo piano competition. His debut record, "A Home in Between," has been selected as *DownBeat Magazine's* Editor's Pick.

We look forward to welcoming Guy to Buffalo and gathering together safely to celebrate the Holiday through music and Community. The concert will take place in the Temple Beth Zion Sanctuary at 805 Delaware Ave, Sunday, November 28, the first day of Hanukkah, from 1:00-2:30 p.m. Check-in will begin at 12:30 p.m. **Tickets can be purchased on the JCC website at www.jccbuffalo.org. Proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test will be required, and all participants must wear masks.**

A special Thank you to miriam treger-honig and Howard Hanna Real Estate Services for their support as a Community Sponsor.



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Mozart's The Magic Flute
Sat Jan 22, 7:30pm | Sun Jan 23, 2:30pm
JoAnn Falletta, conductor
SUNY Fredonia School of Music Hillman Opera program
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HANUKKAH CONCERT
Starring Guy Mintus

Join the JCC in partnership with Temple Beth Zion to see Israeli pianist, composer, vocalist, and educator. Guy has the energy of a rock star and a jazz musician's sense of adventure who's unafraid to throw into the mix his native middle-eastern scales and rhythms.



Sunday, November 28 | 1:00 pm
Temple Beth Zion Sanctuary

Tickets \$8 each | Family \$18

Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo

Duo Mantar performs “Music from the Promised Land”

JCC Buffalo Cultural Arts and the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) were proud to work with Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York Inc. (HHC) and Dr. Ricardo Saeb to bring the beautiful sounds of Duo Mantar to Buffalo last month. Duo Mantar features American classical guitarist Adam Levin and Israeli Mandolinist Jacob Reuven. They provided a masterclass at the JCC Holland Family Building for young musicians before their afternoon performance at Karpeles Manuscript Museum.

Levin and Reuven began playing together in Fall 2017 and share a passion for Israeli Music, Hebrew and Jewish songs. Both of them are committed to expanding the repertoire available for mandolin and guitar by actively commissioning today's most sought-after Israeli composers. *To learn more: adamlevinguitar.com and jacobreuven.com.*





Made in Buffalo was Marvelous!

First Friends author, attorney and native son Gary Ginsberg returned to Buffalo last month for the third installment of Buffalo Jewish Federation's **Made in Buffalo**. **Made in Buffalo**, funded by the William & Lenore Godin Fund, is a way for Jewish Buffalo to engage the larger community by celebrating former Buffalonians who have had an impact on the broader culture. *To watch his talk, go to: buffalojewishfederation.org/watch-gary-ginsberg.*



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Hanukkah in 716



Below are all the Hanukkah events in Buffalo as we went to press this month. Please check with each agency or synagogue for Hanukkah events, dates and times.

November 28

**JCC & TBZ Present
A Hanukkah Concert
with Guy Mintus**

1:00 p.m.

805 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo
\$8 single tickets, \$18 family ticket

**Center for Jewish Life
Community Hanukkah Party**

4:00-6:00 p.m.

757 Hopkins Rd., Williamsville
*Questions? Call Rabbi Laizer
Labkovski at 716-639-7600
jewishbuffalo.com*

**Chabad Grand Menorah
Lighting**

5:00 p.m.

Tops International Parking Lot,
Williamsville

- Latkes, donuts, kid's prizes and more

*For more information,
call 716-688-1642*

December 1

Hillel of Buffalo

Sufganiyot Social

12:00 noon

UB Commons, Suite 101 B, Amherst

**Jewish Discovery Center
Outdoor Hanukkah
Celebration**

Drive through and enjoy treats and festivities in your car

6:00 p.m.

831 Maple Road, Williamsville
*Questions? Call Rabbi Yehoshua
Greenberg 716-400-1550,
jewishdiscovery.org*

December 3

Congregation Shir Shalom

Buffalo Billikkah Hanukkah

7:00 p.m.

4660 Sheridan Drive, Williamsville
• Communal Menorah Lighting

- Consecration of new Religious School students
 - Latke Boxes to Go
 - Buffalo Bills Menorah Contest
- RSVP by 11/29 to Joanne Marquisee at
joanne.marquisee@gmail.com**

Temple Beth Zion

Erev Shabbat Service and 6th Night
of Hanukkah

7:00 p.m.

805 Delaware, Buffalo and via livestream

- Bring your own *chanukiyah* (Hanukkah menorah) and 7 candles
- Special Hanukkah treats!
- Consecration of 2020 & 2021 new Religious School Students
- December birthday or anniversary in December blessings

December 4

Temple Beth Tzedek

Havdalah, Hanukkah & Hash Browns

5:15-6:45 p.m.

1641 North Forest Rd., Williamsville

December 5

The Community Religious School

Hanukkah Celebration for students
during school

4660 Sheridan Drive, Williamsville

PJ Library & PJ Our Way

Hanukkah Happening in the Parking Lot

4:00-6:00 p.m.

TBZ Broder Building parking lot,
Amherst

Register for free at:

bit.ly/HANUKKAHHAPPENING

Jewish Teen Initiative

The JTI Hanukkah Party, open to all
teens in grades 8-12

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Temple Beth Zion Broder parking lot,
Amherst

- Fun games, engaging activities, a live DJ, and much more!

Register: *bit.ly/JTIHANUKKAH*



LOS ANGELES PIANO TRIO

DECEMBER 14 at 8 pm

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Mary Seaton Room, Kleinhans Music Hall

Tickets \$30



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The Exhibitions are Coming!

BY CHANA REVELL KOTZIN, PH.D.

Over the next few years as the Jewish Buffalo History Centers adds more sections and biographies, we will be including unique online exhibitions as well. These curated stories range in scope from recollections of the East Side, to Campaigns for Soviet Jewry, from summer camping to a focus on architecture in *Building Jewish Buffalo*.

Our first exhibition, *William Street Worlds* will debut in 2022. It will include explorations of Jewish living on and around William Street, on Jefferson Avenue and across to Broadway, highlighting this diverse and dense neighborhood on the East Side. Through religious, business, cultural, organizational and most of all family stories, in images, sounds and remembrances, this exhibition plans to bring the feel of this area from the 1880s to 1940s back to life and onto your desktop and in a pop-up physical exhibition and concert too!

We are anxious to hear from as many family descendants who lived on the East Side through these decades who have memorabilia they'd like to share. Memorabilia



Ahavah Achim, Temple Picnic of the Young Men and Women's Club, c.1920s.
Courtesy of Joyce Greenspan.



Clothier on the East Side, photographer unknown, c.1900s.
Courtesy of the Benjamin and Dr. Edgar R. Cofeld Judaic Museum.
Temple Beth Zion, NY.



Beth Jacob Synagogue in Oscar Israelowitz, ed. *Synagogues of the United States: A Photographic and Architectural Survey*, Israelowitz Publishing, NY, 1992, p. 69. Reproduced with the permission of the Oscar Israelowitz.

might range from family portraits, wedding invitations, bar mitzvah announcements, business cards, storefront photographs and inside images of homes, synagogues or businesses. They might include advertising fliers, home-made materials for a festival or recollections and genealogies. They could include event related materials like ticket stubs, records of old businesses and even services, such as the circumcision records of a *mohel* or even a music teacher. The memorabilia can already be in digital form or we welcome loaned materials which we can scan or photograph and return.

Music is a strong sub theme as we also celebrate the artistry of Harold Arlen and Jack Yellen and other local composers. We need your help in locating recordings of performances across all types of music from klezmer to the contemporary tunes of the era.

Some of the East Side institutions and

a tiny fraction of the lives connected to this densely interconnected place.

In a new section of the website named "Seeking Sources" we have begun a listing of business names but this exists as a starting point only. We've included many well-known bakeries, butchers, poultry sellers, fishmongers, confectionery stores, groceries, fruit stands, and delis, automobile supplies, barbers, bookstores, cigar stores, clothing, drug stores, furniture, furriers and leatherwear suppliers. There are services too, from doctors and dentists, to music teachers, printers and tailors.

If you know of more businesses that are not on the list, or other aspects of East Side living that you've noticed are under researched and can help with documentation, please email me at chana@buffalojewishfederation.org. We already have a growing list of acknowledgements on the website for current materials we have added and we'd love to add your name too!

Chana Revell Kotzin, Ph.D., is the coordinator of the Jewish Buffalo History Center website, which you can find at jewishbuffalohistory.org.

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Mazel Tov!

Congratulations to these four community members who have been recognized for their commitment to Western New York and beyond.

Dr. Shira Brown

Honored Nationally as Top EMBA Student



Dr. Shira Brown

Dr. Shira Brown, an active member of the local Jewish community and of the Young Israel of Greater Buffalo synagogue, is among the top 102 “Best & Brightest” Executive MBA graduates from across the world by Poets & Quants for Executives. Dr. Brown completed the Brown University and IE Business School Executive MBA program earlier this year. “The Best & Brightest” recognizes graduates who personify excellence through their contributions to the class, academic performance, extracurricular involvement, professional achievement, and personal intangibles. Students from 49 top-ranked Executive MBA programs globally were nominated this year.

Dr. Brown is the Deputy Chief of Emergency Medicine for Niagara Health and provides leadership and frontline care to patients and their families at the system’s Niagara Falls, Port Colborne, Ft. Erie, and Welland, Ontario sites. Dr. Brown has also been instrumental in Niagara Health’s COVID-19 pandemic response.

Lawrence Rubin

Awarded UB Law Distinguished Alumni Award



Lawrence Rubin

Lawrence K. Rubin was recently recognized by the UB Law Alumni Association with a Distinguished Alumni Award for Community Service for his contributions to the legal profession and the legal community. The award is given to alumni who enjoy the respect and admiration of fellow practitioners and members of the public, and who have devoted service in granting their time and assistance to charitable and/or community organizations.

A 1977 UB law alumnus, Larry is a partner at Kavinoky Cook LLP focusing in the areas of public and private development, real property law, and municipal law. Committed to community outreach, he has provided *pro bono* legal services to the Concordia Cemetery Foundation, Niagara Falls Underground Railroad Heritage Commission, Michigan Street African Heritage Corridor Commission, Theatre of Youth, and the Colored Musicians Club. He has also served in leadership roles for Temple Beth Zion and Jewish Family Services of Buffalo and Erie County.

Mickey Osterreicher

Inducted into 2021 Buffalo Broadcasters Hall of Fame!

Attorney and photojournalist Mickey Osterreicher was recently inducted into the 2021 Buffalo Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame at its 25th Anniversary celebration. Mr. Osterreicher has a wide-ranging journalism career that has culminated in being a nationally-known expert on the media and first amendment issues, including the use of drones. He is General Counsel of the National Press Photographers Association (NPPA) and Of Counsel to Finnerty Osterreicher & Abdulla.

Mickey began his career path at UB in the 1970’s, first at WBFO and as the photo editor of *The Spectrum*, and later as a staff photographer at the *Buffalo Courier Express*. Mickey joined WKBW-TV Eyewitness News in 1982 covering such events as the OJ Simpson trial, all four Bills’ Super Bowl’s, and national political candidates including Jack Kemp. He is known as a true champion and fundraiser for the “Ride for Roswell” raising more than \$100,000 after his own diagnosis of a brain tumor.



Mickey Osterreicher

Dr. Elad I. Levy, MD, MBA, FACS, FAHA

President-Elect of the Congress of Neurological Surgeons

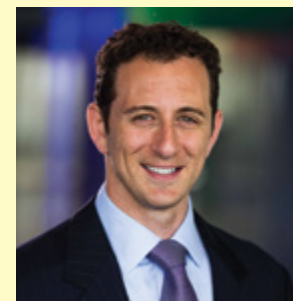
Dr. Elad Levy, Professor of Neurosurgery and Radiology, L. Nelson Hopkins, MD and Chairman of the Department of Neurological Surgery, Jacobs School of Medicine at Biomedical Sciences, University at Buffalo, was elected president-elect for the national Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) in October.

Dr. Levy has a national and global reputation in the field of neurovascular disease, and has co-authored over 400 peer-reviewed publications, including several in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

He is also the Director of Stroke Research and Director of Endovascular Stroke Treatment and Research at the Department of Neurosurgery, SUNY at Buffalo, Co-Director of Kaleida Health Stroke Center at the Gates Vascular Institute, and Co-Director of Cerebrovascular Surgery at the Department of Neurosurgery, SUNY at Buffalo. In 2020 Levy received his appointment as Distinguished Professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo due to his prolific contributions to research, innovation, leadership and academia.

In 2017 he was appointed as one of 12 National Directors to the American Board of Neurological Surgery. In 2018 he was appointed Secretary to the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) Executive Committee and appointed to the 2018 American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) Ethics Committee for a two-year term. In 2018, he also received the “2018 Drake Lectureship” at the CV Section at CNS.

He has been a primary investigator in several clinical international research studies on carotid artery revascularization and stents, and served as the US Principle Investigator for the SWIFT PRIME trial published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Additionally, he has trained several physicians in using complex endovascular neurosurgical techniques, who now hold leadership positions in academic institutions in the United States and around the globe.



Dr. Elad I. Levy

Happy Hanukkah



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NYS Grants \$50,000 for WNY Holocaust Survivors

On September 23, 2021, NYS Majority Leader Crystal Peoples-Stokes, Assembly Member Jon Rivera, and Assembly Member Karen McMahon announced that the Jewish Community Center was chosen as one of the recipients of \$50,000 from the 2021-2022 State's Fiscal Year Aging budget for the Holocaust Survivors Initiative. Peoples-Stokes emphasized, "As a representative of the city of good neighbors, it is imperative in WNY that we look after our community's Holocaust Survivors."

The grant is designated to support local Holocaust Survivors with services and socialization opportunities ranging from meal deliveries, transportation needs, cultural art events, in-home services and medical necessities. Michael Rawl, CEO of the JCC said, "As the grandson of a Holocaust survivor, I have witnessed the pain and trauma that many of these survivors carry with them. In order to provide the broadest spectrum of in-depth engagement possible, the JCC will be working alongside our partners at the Holocaust Resource Center and Jewish Family Services."

If you have any questions, please contact Lauren Bloomberg at lauren@buffalojewishfederation.org or Matthew Stewart at mstewart@jfswny.org.



During the press conference, Holocaust Survivor Dr. Sol Messinger shared his story and spoke of his gratitude to NYS for this grant. From left to right: Assembly Member Jon Rivera, Assembly Member Karen McMahon, Dr. Messinger and JCC CEO Mike Rawl.

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Shalom Jewish Buffalo

The Park School Kadimah Scholars have been working diligently on Judaics since the new school year has begun. Dedicated and caring teachers, Michal Shmuel-Lewis and Nirit Weiner, teach the program together across all levels.

During the month of September, grades K-4 learned and reviewed the *Alef Bet* with and without the vowels. Each letter is being taught or practiced by an activity booklet so the students

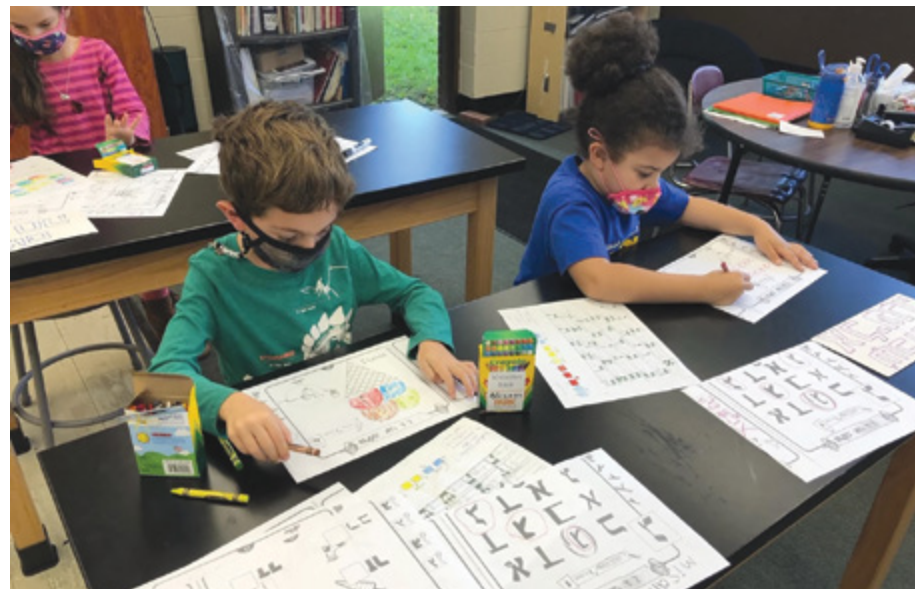


can use the letter in different forms and contexts. Learning Hebrew through singing is a big part of Hebrew class as well. Students sing the number, color, days of the week, and weather song. Classes also learn and reinforce parts of the body using the song “*Yadayim Lemala - Hands Up*” – a very popular Israeli children’s song.

Students sing “*Hatikvah*,” Israel’s National Anthem, and pray at the

beginning of each class based on the class level. The Middle and High School students focus on speaking, reading comprehension and Tier 2 vocabulary. They review Israeli newspaper headlines and practice Hebrew conversation using the *Ulpan Or* Program.

the story of creation. In 2nd grade, the students are practicing prayers, learning about their meanings and how to pray to God. The 3rd graders are learning about Joseph and his brothers, and the 4th graders are learning about Sodom and Gomorrah.



In Kindergarten and 1st grade, students are learning about Shabbat and

The 6th and 7th graders learned about the binding of Isaac and the connection to the Shofar. The story of how the Israelites conquered the city of Jericho and caused the walls of the city to fall was connected to the holiday of Simchat Torah and the tradition of seven *Hakafot*.

The learning process is always combined with works of art and writing pieces, and the halls are filled with evidence of the creativity that is on display for all Park School students, teachers and faculty to enjoy.

Currently, the Kadimah Board is developing an after-school enrichment program to connect Jewish leaders and educators in the Buffalo community with Kadimah Scholars at Park. *If you have any questions about Park Kadimah, please reach out to us at office@kadimah.org.*



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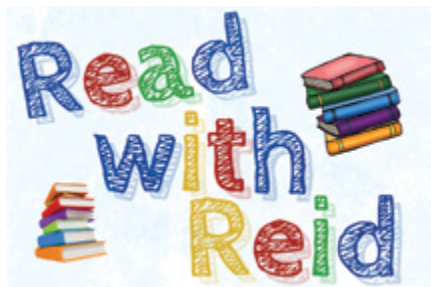
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www.OneGatesCircle.org

Reading with Reid

BY MARLOWE BLOOMBERG

On November 6, my brother, Reid, celebrated his Bar Mitzvah at Congregation Shir Shalom (CSS). Learning his Torah portion and service was definitely a different experience than I had two years ago when I prepared for my Bat Mitzvah. All of his tutoring took place virtually over Zoom. With the assistance of the amazing teachers and clergy at CSS, Reid was finally ready to become a Bar Mitzvah.

Choosing a Bar Mitzvah project was a challenge as well, in the midst of the COVID pandemic. Volunteering at various places was not permitted due to COVID restrictions, so Reid had to be creative. We all worked together and helped him create a great idea, "Read with Reid." Reid's Torah portion, "Vayeitzei" discusses Jacob's journey



memory she will never forget.

Reid's Bar Mitzvah is very bittersweet for our family. We are so proud of Reid for all of the hard work and dedication he has devoted to preparing for his special day. Unfortunately, our extended family was not in the sanctuary to witness Reid being called to the Torah. Both sets of grandparents, some of our

aunts, uncles, and cousins live in Canada and could not yet cross the border. They therefore streamed the service from their homes. We are all so proud of Reid and all that he has accomplished for his Bar Mitzvah. Mazel tov Reid!

Marlowe Bloomberg, Reid's proud sister, is a Sophomore at Williamsville North High School.



Reid Bloomberg

leaving his family in Beer Sheba and travelling to Haran.

We reached out to the principal at the Buffalo Academy of Science, a public charter school in Buffalo. The Kindergarten to 4th grade students at the school have limited access to new books, especially since this is the first year of 4th grade education at the school. With the generosity of friends and family, Reid collected over 500 books to contribute to the school's library. Unfortunately, due to school policies, Reid was unable to go to the Buffalo Academy of Science personally to present the books; but thankfully, my mom Lauren was allowed to go.

Reid wanted to be able to interact with the students, so he made a video in which he explained a Bar Mitzvah, how he collected the books, and even read a story to them. The video was shown to the entire school. My mom was so fortunate to meet a few of the students in person when she delivered the books, and the excitement and joy she witnessed from the students is a



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Recognition of Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America

Buffalo-Niagara Post-25

The dedication of a park bench at the Town of Amherst Veterans Memorial in recognition of Jewish War Veterans - Post 25 took place in late October at the Memorial, located in Williamsville.

The Post, whose membership included many veterans from Amherst and Western New York, was organized in 1927 and chartered in 1929. Formally known as the Buffalo-Niagara Post #25, it served our veterans and the broader community until 2020. The Post held annual commemorative events on Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Yom HaShoah,



volunteered at the Veterans Affairs Hospitals, and participated in a range of other service and educational programming for the wider community.

The parent organization of the Jewish War Veterans of The United States of America Post 25 is the Jewish War Veterans of the USA (JWV). This organization was founded in New York in 1896 by American Jewish



Civil War veterans, when it was known as the Hebrew Union Veterans Association. The Union was organized to raise awareness about the military service of Jews and to combat antisemitism in the Armed Forces and the general public. As the

oldest active national veterans' service organization in America, it has 126 continual years of service.

The event was sponsored by Jacqui Berger, Deputy Supervisor of the Town of Amherst, and the Amherst Veterans Committee. Attendees included Herb Falk, Larry Itzkowitz, Harvey Schiller and Nathan Sull.

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JCC People of the Book Highlights Local Authors

The Jewish Community Center presents two local authors, Vickie Rubin and Dr. Gerhard Falk, concluding the People of the Book Author Series in December.



Vickie and Mitch Rubin with Jess

Vickie Rubin will share her first published book, *Raising Jess: A Story of Hope*, at the JCC Benderson Family Building on Thursday, December 7 at 7:00 p.m. *Raising Jess* is the powerful story of one family's survival when faced with adversity. Written with compassion, honesty, and humor, it tells of a family changed forever by the birth of a child with special needs and their courageous decision to choose hope. A book signing and dessert reception will be available after the presentation.

The final presenter in the series is Dr. Gerhard Falk who will present a Zoom lecture on *The American Jewish Community in the 21st Century*, on Monday, December 13 at 7:00 p.m. A Holocaust survivor who came to the United States during the Second World War, Dr. Falk's book demonstrates how a small, impoverished group of immigrants rose from the slums of America's big cities to wealth, education, and political power in the course of one century. It describes the challenging and rewarding path taken by American Jews throughout the twentieth century. The



Dr. Gerhard Falk

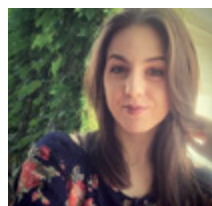
author of thirty books, numerous journal articles, and essays, Dr. Falk served as a professor at Buffalo State College for 59 years. He was awarded The State University of New York Chancellor's Award for Excellence, the State University College President's Award for Creativity and Scholarship, and the State University of New York Research Foundation Award for Scholarship.

Registration is required for both events. For more information, visit www.jccbuffalo.org/arts-culture/people-of-the-book/ or contact Katie Wzontek at kwzontek@jccbuffalo.org.

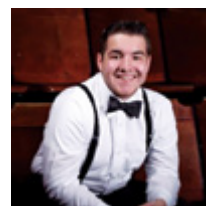
Register Today for the JCC School of Dance



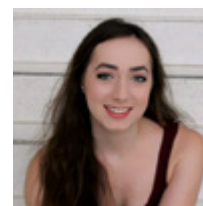
The JCC School of Dance which launched in October 2021, is now accepting registrations for the second session beginning in January. The School of Dance offers classes in Ballet, Jazz, Tap and Hip Hop for students age 3 to adult at both the Benderson Family Building and the Holland Family Building. No dance experience is necessary and classes are open to everyone. To view the complete schedule of classes and register visit jccbuffalo.org/schoolofdance/.



Katie Brauer



Jeremiah Martinez



Jessie Miller

Classes are led by Katie Brauer, Jeremiah Martinez and Jessie Miller. Brauer is a graduate of Brockport with a BFA in dance. During her time there she served on the production committee and stage-managed thesis performances, one of which was presented in NYC. Martinez danced with David DeMarie Dance Studios under Leonard Castilone for 13 years where he competed regionally and nationally, as well as winning numerous titles and placing 4th overall Teen Male Dancer of the Year. Jeremiah also studied under Maris Battaglia at the American Academy of Ballet for 9 years. Miller is a graduate of University at Buffalo with a degree in BFA Theatre Performance. She is a professional dancer and actress and can be seen performing with companies such as The Brazen Faced Varlets, The Francis Bacon Experiment, Second Generation Theatre, and more. Additionally, all three instructors are assistant teachers in the Early Childhood Department at the JCC!



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Hanukkah at Temple Beth Tzedek

Temple Beth Tzedek is thankful to be safely celebrating Hanukkah as a community in 2021! Please join us as we light the Menorah in our sanctuary.

- **First Candle:** Minyan and Menorah lighting at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 28
- **Second Candle:** Lighting, TBT's Keshet Outstretched Arm Hanukkah film and minyan starting at 5:15 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 29
- **Third Candle:** Lighting with Binah students and minyan at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 30.
- **Fourth Candle:** Lighting and minyan at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 1
- **Fifth Candle:** Lighting, minyan, and dreidel competition at 6 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 2
- **Sixth Candle:** Lighting and Shabbat night services at 4:45 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 3
- **Seventh Candle:** Havdalah, Hanukkah & Hash Browns (a.k.a. latkes) on Saturday night, Dec. 4 at 5:15 p.m.
- **Eighth Candle:** Lighting and minyan at 6 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 5



Dr. Tova with Dr. Robert Ablove

Beyond nighttime festivities, the TBT Women's Network will be hosting a Rosh Chodesh service on **Sunday, Dec. 5 at 10 a.m.** Special thanks to Myra Werbow, Ellis Werbow, and members of the Youth Education committee for their work assembling and distributing Hanukkah packages to the synagogue's college students.

Laugh with Women's Network

Women's Network will be hosting a fun filled evening of Jewish comedy on Dec. 21 at 7:30 p.m. This virtual event will feature Lois Silverstein of Women's League as Mistress of Ceremonies.

Bob Bakes Babka

Join Dr. Robert Ablove on Thursday night, **Dec. 2 at 8 p.m.** as he bakes babka and shares funny stories along the way. *You can find the Zoom link at btzbuffalo.org.*

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1» Give a year-end gift or pay your 2021 pledge to the Buffalo Jewish Federation's Campaign for Jewish Buffalo and get a 2021 tax deduction and the feeling of making a difference for your Jewish Community, because you have! *Go to buffalojewishfederation.org/donate and click on Campaign for Jewish Buffalo or call Assistant Executive Director Randi Morkisz at 716-463-5051 before the end of December.*

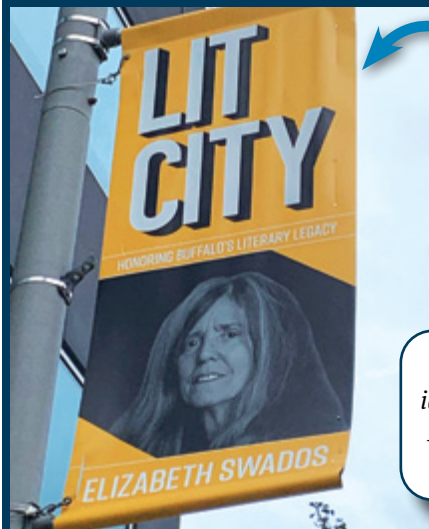
2» Afghani evacuees fleeing from the Taliban will be arriving in Buffalo soon, and Jewish Family Services of Western New York will be part of the resettlement group. And you can help! *Make your donation to support their lives in WNY at jfswny.org.*

3» Celebrate Hanukkah this year with Buffalo friends. Check out page 15 of this issue of *The Jewish Journal* to see Hanukkah events around town.

4» Join your friends from PJ Library and PJ Our Way for "Hanukah Happening in the Parking Lot, Sunday, December 5 from 4:00-6:00 p.m. at Temple Beth Zion's Broder Building, 700 Sweet Home Rd. It's ideal for families with kids 12 and under. *Any questions contact mike@buffalojewishfederation.org.*

5» The JCC will welcome authors Vickie Rubin (in-person event December 7, 7:00 p.m.) and Dr. Gerhard Falk (virtual event December 13, 7:00 p.m.) as part of the People of the Book Series in December. Registration is required. *For more information, visit jccbuffalo.org/arts-culture/people-of-the-book/ or contact Katie Wzontek at kwzontek@jccbuffalo.org.*

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*.

In November, **Bill Sidel** correctly identified the menorah created by David Derner at Congregation Beth Abraham on Elmwood Avenue in Buffalo.

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Carrying on their Father's Legacy

BY TODD GEISE



Recently, I had a warm conversation with Marjorie Godin Bryen. Some may know her as a board member of the Buffalo Jewish Federation, or as the leader of Federation's Made In Buffalo series (see page 13), or CEO of Hard Manufacturing, a Buffalo

manufacturer of pediatric hospital cribs and youth beds. Her father, William Godin, had purchased the 160-year-old business in the early 1980's. Upon his death in 2015, the family kept the business, with Marjorie taking on the key management role.

Marjorie's story is about family and carrying on a legacy of support for refugees. During our conversation, I learned how her father employed Jewish refugees from Russia the 1980's. Her father's acts of kindness left an impression on Marjorie, particularly when she reflected on how these individuals filled their home at Passover.

In 2019, Marjorie was introduced to JFS CEO Dr. Molly S. Carr. Molly shared her vision of new programs to expand refugee services by adding a focus on refugee trauma. Not coping with trauma would continue to create a barrier to successful acculturation. Trauma Systems Therapy for Refugees (TST-R) would be the programming answer and Marjorie was interested.

Marjorie and her siblings agreed that supporting the program planning and implementation process would carry on their father's



Lenore & William Godin

legacy of refugee support. "To us, it's about being involved in service and being good people," Marjorie said when I asked her about guiding values.

In 2020, TST-R became a reality. A program manager was hired and in 2021, the first cultural broker was hired who would serve as a liaison between the agency, agency partners, and specific refugee communities. Lafayette International High School in Buffalo became an instrumental partner to reach refugee youth from several refugee communities. Focused on youth, and by extension their families, none of this would have been possible without the

Godin family's support of the vision.

To understand, consider that a child was born in a refugee camp in Tanzania in 2004 after her parents fled a conflict-ridden Democratic Republic of Congo. Her world as she knew it was confined to the camp. At the age of 12 in 2016, she and her family finally left the camp for America, arriving to Buffalo.

Five years later, now 17, she is confronting and working through the trauma of her comparatively short life. JFS' TST-R program has facilitated a slow introduction to counseling, peer development, communications, and other types of skill building. She is learning and incorporating the tools she will need as she moves forward in life in America.

Under normal circumstances adolescence is difficult, let alone the added trauma of leaving behind all you have known. You do not know the language, the customs, or if you will be welcomed. Therapy is something that we are accustomed to as a culture. But for refugees, it is a strange concept. So too is trust.

As we close 2021, we are proud to be an agency that helps people through some of their most difficult experiences. We are also proud to be part of a community that has such a clear sense of its values that lifts others up. Marjorie and her family are an example of such clarity of purpose, and we are grateful to them for helping us along our path of service.

Todd Geise is Jewish Family Services of WNY Director of Marketing.

Thank You

from Jewish Family Services of WNY
for your support over the past year.

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Evacuee Fund, we
appreciate your help
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community.



If you'd like to support JFS,
please visit jfswny.org/donate



**“As my forefathers
planted these carob trees
for me so I too plant
these for my children.”**

– Talmud (Ta'anis 23b)

**Total legacy commitments
received: 61**

**Total dollar amount:
\$3,448,000**

**through October 31, 2021*



LIFE & LEGACY® is a partnership with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation that promotes after-lifetime giving to benefit Jewish synagogues and organizations. Legacy giving ensures that *you* will be remembered by those who directly benefit from your generosity as well as those who will be inspired by your example for future generations.

In 2021, the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies, in collaboration with the Buffalo Jewish Federation, was selected to join more than 70 other communities across North America in this Jewish legacy giving initiative. To-date, the initiative has secured **more than 30,000** permanently endowed commitments amounting to more than **\$1 Billion**. The four-year LIFE & LEGACY® program provides coaching, training, and resources to ensure that a culture of philanthropy and legacy giving becomes an integral part of the Buffalo Jewish community. Together, the Foundation and Federation are committed to helping secure the future of Jewish Buffalo. Each month, please visit this *LIFE & LEGACY® @ Buffalo* section to learn about the local agencies and synagogues partnering in this effort.

For more information, please contact Mandy Weiss, LIFE & LEGACY® Coordinator for the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies at legacy@jewishphilanthropies.org or 716-463-5065.

ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT

CONGREGATION SHIR SHALOM

This month, we are pleased to highlight Congregation Shir Shalom, one of the collaborating partner organizations in the LIFE & LEGACY @ Buffalo initiative.

Congregation Shir Shalom is the first Reform-Reconstructionist Synagogue in the nation, dedicated to handling life cycle events that are important to your family and future family. CSS is strong because of their diversity in belief and membership: they welcome congregants from many backgrounds, including all branches of Judaism. CSS has many members in mixed-faith marriages or partnerships. Jews-by-choice and Jews-by-birth both find a welcoming home at Shir Shalom. CSS supports multigenerational families in life, and they mourn together as a family when they lose loved ones in death.

Congregation Shir Shalom recognizes that a contemporary synagogue is more than a place to pray; it is also necessary as one of the few places that can provide Jewish education and a sense of Jewish community. In addition to hosting adult education, Torah study, cultural events, and speakers on a wide range of topics, Shir Shalom now hosts the new Community Religious School. CSS also integrates music into services and their members are active in social action and in charitable causes such as the annual Walk-Off-Hunger.

Their legacy donors are people like you, who believe that there is an ongoing need for an active, relevant Reform/Reconstructionist synagogue in western New York. Your Legacy gift ensures CSS can continue to be a *Beit Kneset* (house of Gathering), *Beit Tefilah* (house of Prayer) and *Beit Midrash* (house of Study) for generations to come.

For any questions about Congregation Shir Shalom, please contact Joanne Marquisee at joanne.marquisee@gmail.com.

The following organizations are partnering in the *LIFE & LEGACY® @ Buffalo* collaborative effort:

- Buffalo Jewish Federation
- Center for Jewish Life
- Congregation Shir Shalom
- Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies
- Hillel of Buffalo
- Jewish Community Center of Greater Buffalo
- Jewish Discovery Center
- Jewish Family Services of Western New York
- Kadimah Scholars
- Temple Beth Tzedek
- Temple Beth Zion

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Learn more about Life & Legacy® by visiting jewishphilanthropies.org/life-and-legacy

Learn more about Life & Legacy® by visiting jewishphilanthropies.org/life-and-legacy

A program of the HAROLD GRINSPOON FOUNDATION

Hillel's Pop-Up Pumpkin Patch Returns to Campus

BY RABBI SARA RICH

Fall means pumpkins! To help UB students enjoy a fun dose of fall, Hillel of Buffalo partnered with UB's Campus Living to create a Pop-Up Pumpkin Patch on campus. In mid-October, just as the weather was starting to cool, hundreds of students left their dorms on a Sunday morning to find a pumpkin patch had materialized outside of the campus dining hall. They had the opportunity to select a pumpkin for free, and bring it back to their dorm to paint, carve, or simply to bring a burst of autumn joy to their room.



By the middle of fall, students have moved past the initial joy of returning to campus, and are dealing with the

challenging reality of the semester. They are taking midterms, working on projects, and juggling classes with work and extracurricular activities. At Hillel, we see our role as supporting students through these challenges and balancing out the stress of college with the joy of community.

The Pop-Up Pumpkin Patch was also an opportunity to raise awareness about food insecurity at UB. We collected canned food and monetary donations for Blue Table, which is UB's on-campus food pantry. Taped to pumpkins throughout the field were statistics about food insecurity. As students selected their pumpkins and celebrated the abundance of fall, they also had the chance to think



about how they could do more to help their peers. We are motivated by the quote in *Pirkei Avot* from Ben Zoma: "Who is rich? The one who is happy with his lot." Gratitude is an essential Jewish value and a known antidote to feeling anxious or inadequate.



on campus. She worked the day of the event to help set up the pumpkin patch and to greet students as they arrived to explain the program and the ways that they can help address food insecurity on campus. Kayla reflects, "The Pop-Up Pumpkin Patch was the perfect way to kick-off the fall season! I had so much fun seeing everyone, especially after the long year of virtual events. I am thankful to all of the students who donated to the food drive and helped us reach our collection goal this year."

Kayla Sabag is a member of this year's Serve the Moment Campus Corps, which is a project of the national Jewish social justice organization Repair the World. Kayla and her fellow Corps members were given grant funding to create volunteer initiatives

Rabbi Sara Rich is the Executive Director of Hillel of Buffalo and a lifelong fan of pumpkin patches.

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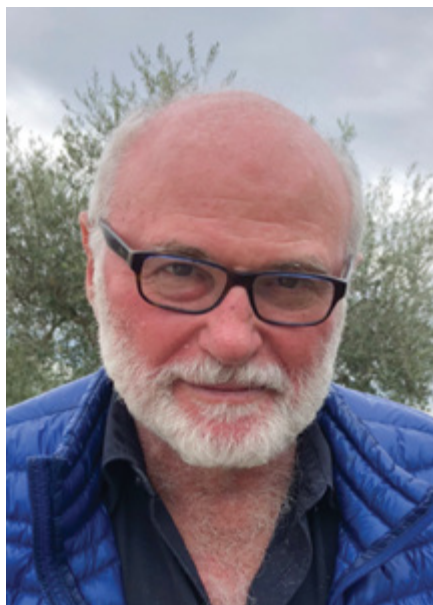
Poet Paul Nemser Visits Buffalo via Zoom on 12/16

Congregation Shir Shalom's Buffalo Corner Reading Series welcomes brilliant Jewish American poet Paul Nemser together with our very own poet Ansie Baird December 16 from 7:00 -9:00 p.m.

Nemser's third book of poetry, *A Thousand Curves*, won the Editor's Choice Award from Red Mountain Press and appeared this past April. It is a collection from a lifetime of writing poems. He grew up in Portland, Oregon where he fell in love with poetry while reading in the storage room in back of his family's tool store. His book *Taurus* (2013) won the New American Poetry Prize. A chapbook, *Tales of the Tetragrammaton*, appeared from Mayapple Press in 2014. His poems appear widely in magazines. He lives with his wife Rebecca in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Harborside, Maine.

He describes his Jewish upbringing as a mixture of family, food, language, culture, and music. "I was raised in a Jewish family in Portland, Oregon. My parents worked in my Russian grandparents' tool store, and we lived near each other. My grandparents often took care of me. My grandmother made Jewish food for us every week, and we often ate together. My grandparents told me stories about Jewish life in Russia (now Ukraine)—my grandmother in a shtetl, Chernobyl, and my grandfather in a larger city, Ekaterinaslav. They spoke Yiddish to each other and to my parents. When the *Jewish Daily Forward* arrived from New York, my grandparents would sometimes translate one of the stories for me."

Most of Paul Nemser's poems lead somewhere, a landing place, which in



Paul Nemser

turn asks the reader to go back and read the poem again with this new insight, through a new lens. A true hermeneutic exercise! For example, his poem "What I Knew and What I Had to Say" describes a young boy who hears his grandparents speak Yiddish and his parents English, but he himself cannot find the words to speak. Until he does. And the words come straight from Torah and out of the prophet Isaiah's mouth. The poem ends with these lines:

*Here the mouth of a boy
learning where to stand,
who just learned to say
Here I am.*

To join the event, please go to Shirshalombuffalo.org or contact Gunilla Kester: Gunilla@thekesters.net.

TBZ Celebrates Hanukkah with Consecration Friday, 12/3

The community is welcome to join TBZ on Friday, December 3 in the Temple Beth Zion Sisterhood Chapel, 805 Delaware Avenue, to celebrate the 6th night of Hanukkah and the consecration of the 2020 & 2021 new Religious School Students. Bring your own hanukkiah (Hanukkah menorah) and 7 candles for a light-filled and festive celebration.



Antisemitism - The Oldest Hatred

Series of classes with Rabbi Sharon L. Sobel
Wednesdays, December 1, 8 & 15, Noon - 1 p.m.
Via Zoom

Almost 80 antisemitic incidents happen every month around the country, many of them involving children, teenagers and young adults (according to the most recent audit of the Anti-Defamation League). They take place in our schools, sports fields, our government buildings, our congregations, our cemeteries. Antisemitism is known as "the oldest hatred." Antisemitic incidents and crimes have increased and become more violent over the last few years. What can we do to "stop the hate?"

Join TBZ for online discussions which examine the issue in depth. Advance Registration is required. Go to tbz.org for the registration link.

TBZ Sisterhood Making Strides



On October 16, members of the Sisterhood of Temple Beth Zion participated in the annual Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk. The day began with a blessing for the group given by Clergy Associate Judy Henn. The weather was not cooperative so the walk took place indoors at the Boulevard Mall. Samantha White coordinated the walkers and more than \$1,500 was raised!

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buffalojewishfederation.org
Rob Goldberg - CEO & Executive Director
Shelly Yellen - President

Buffalo Vaad of Kashrus

49 Barberry Lane
Williamsville, NY 14221
716-534-0230
bvkkosher.com
buffalo@yahoo.com, bvkkosher@gmail.com
Rabbi Eliezer Marcus - Rabbinic Administrator
Michael Paskowitz - President

Center for Jewish Life

Suburbs: 757 Hopkins Road
Williamsville, NY 14221
716-639-7600
jewishbuffalo.com
Rabbi Laizer & Chani Labkovski
Downtown: 1016 Lafayette Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14209
716-545-6806
Rabbi Mendy & Chaya Mushka Labkovski

Chabad House of Buffalo

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Getzville, NY 14068
716-688-1642
chabadbuffalo.com
Rabbi Moshe Gurary

Chai Early Childhood Center

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Chani Labkovski - Director

Department of Jewish Thought

712 Clemens Hall - University at Buffalo
Buffalo, NY 14260
716-645-3695
jewish-studies@buffalo.edu
jewishstudies.buffalo.edu
Dr. Noam Pines - Chair

Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies

2640 North Forest Road
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716-204-1133
jewishphilanthropies.org
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Hadassah

2640 North Forest Road
Getzville, NY 14068
716-929-6504
buffalohadassah@gmail.com
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jccbuffalo.org
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716-632-0467
jewishdiscovery.org
Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

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buffalojewishfederation.org
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Rabbi Laizer Labkovski
716-639-7600

Young Israel of Greater Buffalo (Orthodox)

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yibuffalo.org
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Avrom P. Sterman: 1926-2021

The following are excerpts from Bruce Karpati's eulogy of his step-father, Avy Sterman, delivered on October 11, 2021.

Avy was someone to everyone — he was a dominating presence who made himself known, whether it was family, friends, community or business. He was determined. He would not take no for an answer. He would say whatever he thought. He cared for people dearly. He was so charitable.

He was always so enamored with every one of you that called him a friend or a family member, or an uncle or a father, or grandfather. We now sit here enamored with you Avy. Your life has so many facets, but any of us here would certainly identify you with these 3 pillars:

- Close family and friends — the foundation of his life!
- Civic and community contributions — Tzedakah was always a part of him!
- A zeal for business and the importance of it to his life!

Family and Friends

Born on July 27, 1926, Avy's father Nathan was a milkman and his mother Pearl was a stay at home mother. For him, Nate and Pearl were the greatest of parents that instilled in him with many of the values I will talk about today. Growing up on Goulding and Butler Avenues, the Stermans were certainly not rich, but the way they led life was rich in values and community.

Joe, Irv, Nettie, Avy — an incredible family that he stayed close with throughout his life and can teach each us about the importance of family. We

know the Stermans stick by each other through and through — from Berdychiv, in Galicia forward — whether it is the Sterman or the 8 Hirshhorn sisters — how they all supported each other to get to this country.

Uncle Joe, who until the end was his best friend, and his kid brother Irv, who he was so proud of, and his sister Nettie and her large family who he remained close — they celebrated and supported each other through ups and downs, family occasion after family occasion — weddings, and births and bar and bat mitzvahs. Extending the family to the Levins and the Blotniks and many others I am sure I will miss to say.

With Uncle Joe, only 2 years apart from Avy, he found a powerful presence and guiding force in his life. The wise sage of the family who Avy adored and relied upon as a rock of stability and counsel. Whether the morning minyan, breakfast afterward, the many trips over the years, or Chautauqua, Uncle Joe was his brother and his best friend. Before I met Avy, he had already had 2 kids. Janet and Lisa whom he loved dearly. I know life was not easy at some points, with separation and divorce, but he always loved you and cared about you deeply, and that extended to his grandson Kyle, Lisa's son.

In 1976, Viola, Arthur and I came when Avy was already 50. They had both lived different lives up to then, but soon enough their lives became one. At times, Avy was 100% American and bold and loud — and



Avy and Viola Sterman

Viola was 100% Eastern European and quiet and private — but they made a spectacular partnership for 45 years.

It is difficult to say in a sentence or two — but Viola and Avy loved each other deeply — they shared many values — their liberal thinking, belief in Jewish values, traveling of course and raising Arthur and I. Avy took Arthur and I in like we were his own kids. The Stermans became our family sharing in every *simcha*. We were given every opportunity in the world with Avy as our father.

He had such a great love for family, and all his nieces and nephews. Of course, he wanted everyone to be like Danny Sterman: “Can you believe what Danny just did? Danny just treated the King of Jordan!”

But of course, he loved all his nieces and nephews — from the oldest Jimmy who he worked with for many years at Hygrade, to the youngest Nancy and Kenny, and everyone in between.

Avy was also a member of the “greatest generation.” In WW II, Avy served in the military in Guam and the Philippines — yes, his knee was grazed by friendly fire — but as I learned only in the last few years, he had to singularly guard over a boat of Japanese war prisoners - and his worry was that he was going to be overwhelmed by them. Needless to say, they did not.

Community Contributions

Serving and being part of the Jewish Community was something he loved. Avy was always busy raising money for Israel, chairing annual appeals — sometimes to the disdain of those who he hit up to “up their pledge.” Israel has real meaning to Avy as the home of the Jewish people. Like most things, it could never be up for debate.

Nothing was going to stop Avy from raising money for the causes he believed in. If he saw you driving a new Mercedes or moving to a brand-new house, you were next on his call list, and he would not stop until you committed to give more.

Kadimah, the Hebrew day school, was a place Avy believed in and many of us here were beneficiaries of. Even when Kadimah was on the edge of being



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defunct, Avy was always one of the ones leading the charge to keep it going, never losing hope... Chabad — yes, Avy was the President of Chabad. Avy was a believer in the Jewish people and Chabad was at the forefront of keeping people Jewish. Temple Shaarey Zedek (now Beth Tzedek) was where he was President and then a very active congregant. The Temple for many years was his lifeblood, going to minyan every day, many times with his brother Joe. Temple was a sacred ritual. It was here that I saw Avy caring for others and leading by example. Whether it was Goldie Zackheim, Goldie Ward or Mildred Siegel, Avy was a helping hand taking them to and from temple.

Being Jewish meant contributing and helping others and Avy exemplified it. At Passover Seder, you didn't really have a choice whether to speak or not, Avy called on you. And of course, he spoke the most. Everyone had to do their part, as we know, from beginning to end. And what he said at Seder always involved family and Judaism and his appreciation for both.

Finally, the community at Chautauqua where Avy spent his summers going to all the events and supporting the Jewish community there. Chautauqua and the community there became Avy and Viola's summer haven.

Business Zeal

Avy was a hard worker, whether it was selling shoes at the beginning of his career, or selling anything at all at the end of his career. Avy was born to sell whatever it was he was going to sell. He had a zest for business. Sitting down for Avy at a family brunch you would learn this within 30 seconds — there was always the next big deal that was bigger than the last.

I don't know if you remember this one — on one of his numerous trips to Israel he sat next to the family owner of Purell — yes, the Purell that none of us could have existed without during this pandemic. In the course of that discussion he convinced the owner to change his business model and the way he distributed product. Well, the rest is history.

Avy made it from a salesman to President of HyGrade Distributors, over many years turning it into one of the biggest paper companies in Western New York. I remember Avy cutting out the latest leads from the newspapers looking for potential customers to give to his sales guys the next day. He loved Hygrade — there were all the guys that became household names for me — Joe

Frawley, Jerry Weinstein, Mike Batchen. Avy started his own business after selling Hygrade — a one man shop where Avy would sell literally anything he was presented with — finding buyers for whatever product was next — coffee, tape, rice, etc. He soon brought Charlie, his former Rabbi into the fold. Charlie has been Avy's partner and a dear and unwavering friend for Avy these last years, supporting him in so many ways.

In conclusion, I think here about the message Avy would want for the grandkids and all the young ones in the family: First, your family and friends are your bond — even at the last moment when he was in physical rehab, he kept saying: "Joe invited me for dinner and I'm going over there when I leave here!" Second, your community holds your values — make your community, cherish those values and spread them far and wide! Contribute, contribute, contribute to your society.

Third, whatever you do, you should be passionate about it — whether it is the big business you run or the one man shop where you sell anything at all. We all love you Avy!

In Remembrance

The following individuals in our community passed away during the period from October 15-November 14, 2021*. May their memories forever be a blessing, and may their loved ones be comforted among the mourners of Zion.

Phyllis Alt
Charlaine F. Archibald
Gloria Birzon
Michael Burwick
Harold L. Cohen
Fay R. Cooperman
Hanna Fink

Sara Fink
Charlie Garfinkel
Dr. Franklin E. Koren
Stephan H. Lewy
Shelley W. Malinowski
Isabel Marcus
Bruce I Sanders
Dorothy Schaktman
Annette (Nettie) Sterman Schwartz
Richard Searns
Sheila H. Shapiro
Gwendolyn Turner
Eric M. Weiner



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Buffalove

BY LORNE OPLER

One of the things that I am grateful for is having found a Jewish community as embracing as Buffalo's. But here's the thing. I don't even live in the Queen City. I pen this love letter to Buffalo's Jewish community from Toronto, where I was born and raised and currently live again. Did I just hear a reader say, "but you live in such a great city with such a big Jewish community!" It's true. Toronto is a great city. And so is its Jewish community — vibrant, large, diverse and blessed with many synagogues, schools, institutions and organizations.

But having previously lived in Buffalo and now back in Toronto, from personal experience I can say Buffalo's Jewish community has touched me in ways I've never quite felt on the other side of the Niagara. While Jewish Buffalo is small compared to Toronto, its outsized generosity and "heimish" warmth has endeared me and welcomed me to the community in unforgettable ways. And that's just from Zoom. Imagine the impression it will leave on me once I can cross the border again.

In full disclosure, I didn't merely stumble by chance onto Buffalo's Jewish community. My Jewish roots



Lorne Opler

are proudly anchored in Western New York. My Dad (of blessed memory) was a Lockportian (yes! Jews lived in Lockport!) and my many visits as a child to visit my grandmother, uncles and cousins, cemented my connection to the city from toddler age. But even if family ties didn't bind me to Buffalo, I am certain I would have developed an emotional connection to Queen City Jews nonetheless.

Because the values I try to live by so closely mirror those that Buffalo, and by extension its Jewish community, represent too: generosity,

friendliness, and an inviting, unpretentious style that is hard to find in big cities like Toronto or New York. That kind of down-to-earth, genuine authenticity is something I have been searching for throughout my adult life. And in Buffalo, I found it.

There's a reason why Buffalo is known as the "City of Good Neighbors". It's not an accidental slogan. It's because it's true. It's what I witnessed repeatedly when I finally made good on a long-awaited wish of mine to briefly live in Buffalo in the late 2000's. Which is why, family roots aside, I felt a part of Buffalo from the moment I crossed the Peace Bridge. And it's why to this day, I still feel that connection, 100 miles away. Only now that connection feels stronger, deeper, more personal and spiritual because of my newfound connection to Buffalo's beautiful Jewish community. I am thankful to have met so many wonderful people in the community in such a short period of time; a thankfulness that extends far beyond a four-day holiday...but stretches long and wide throughout the year.

Lorne Opler is an adjunct Professor of Fitness and Health Promotion at Fleming College in Peterborough, Ontario, a lifetime fan of Rockship 7 and the Commander Tom Show... and can still sing the entire jingle for Kaufman's Rye Bread.

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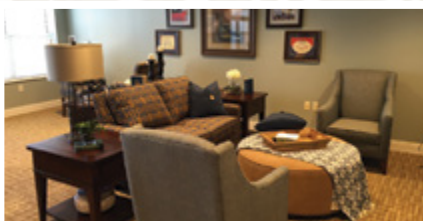
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