

UJA★JCC greenwich | JEWISH NEWS

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This Moment in Jewish Greenwich



As the global pandemic draws on, Jewish institutions across Greenwich are responding to unprecedented challenges in creative and compassionate ways. *Greenwich Jewish News* reached out to local synagogues and organizations, asking them how they are grappling with the present moment and those to come. The conversation uncovered strategies that have helped establishments foster connection and engagement during these trying times.

Asked what the next three months look like for Chabad Lubavitch of Greenwich, **Rabbi Yossi Deren** voiced a sentiment shared by all: “It’s a

big unknown.” He elaborated, “We’re sensing on the one hand a restart button and at the same time...because of primary concern to everyone is health, paramount in the Torah...we may restart only to have to re-stop.” Take for example the popular summer camp, Gan Chabad. “Parents are eager to see the camp happen, and we’re eager to make it happen for them,” said Rabbi Deren, adding that Chabad is exploring “the safest and most fun way” to do so.

Temple Sholom, for its part, has “tentative plans” to reopen its religious school in some capacity come July. That is, **Rabbi Mitch Hurvitz**

explained, “if the medical professionals...and our political leaders...say it’s the right thing to do.” Other activities, such as the nursery school, bar and bat mitzvah tutoring and worship services will remain online at least through the end of August. Like all of the organizations contacted, the Temple is considering various High Holiday scenarios. Its questionnaire to congregants aims to determine what Temple members find most meaningful in holiday services.

Rabbi Jordie Gerson has assembled a focus group at Greenwich Reform Synagogue to help determine, “What can we jettison and what things are essential for people’s solace?” Rabbi Gerson goes on: “Do they come to High Holiday services for the sermon, or the music, or the liturgy?” One thing for certain is that “people want to be connected to community now,” she observed. “They really want to be connected to their synagogue...to familiar faces...and to a system of ethics and values to guide them.”

At Congregation Shir Ami, **Cantor Jill Abramson** has consulted with members about “how to continue to meet the needs of our community spiritually while keeping everyone safe.” And it seems as if High Holidays at Shir Ami are shaping up to be virtual, according to the Cantor.

Rabbi Deborah Salomon of Congregation Kehilat Shalom and Director of Hebrew Wizards is also “leaning toward Zoom” for the High Holidays. “But it needs to be filmed differently,” she noted. This is why everything from the format and videography to the duration and distribution are under reconsideration. For Rabbi Salomon the shift to virtual life has been relatively smooth: She has been generating online curricula since founding Hebrew Wizards in 2005. Now, 15 years later, sheltering in place has unleashed a wave of reinvention, with young Wizards creating songs together, writing poetry and making musical collages, slide shows and other artistic expressions of spirituality.

PJ Library & Jewish Greenwich Preschools Present: mainstages: LIVE from Bubbe’s House! Thursday, June 18 | 4:00 - 4:45 PM



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mainstages: LIVE from Bubbe’s House is an original, highly engaging online **FUN-IN-AR** for Pre-K students and their families featuring a ton of creative elements. Join us for interactive storytelling, movement, puppets, characters, and creative play—all guaranteed to keep kids entertained!

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Continued on page 2

This Moment in Jewish Greenwich—

Continued from page 1

Of primary concern for Greenwich's Jewish institutions is the well-being of community members amid prolonged stress and isolation. **Rachel Kornfeld**, Executive Director of Jewish Family Services of Greenwich, tells us it has augmented its tele-therapy and enrichment offerings with its twice-monthly Healing Service and weekly Shabbat services.

Chabad's Shabbat "to-go" gift bags; GRS's weekly Tot Shabbats; Temple Sholom's video montage of baby namings, bar and bat mitzvahs and weddings; Hebrew Wizards' Ice Cream Truck Mitzvah Day and TikTok challenge; Shir Ami's FaceTime tutoring of new English speakers in partnership with Building One Community in Stamford; UJA-JCC Greenwich's "COVID-19 and the Startup Nation" webinar and virtual programs with Greenwich Library and ADL Connecticut – these are but a few of the innovations from Jewish Greenwich during the shutdown.

The New Normal

Rabbi Gerson told us that some of her toughest challenges involve pastoral care. Not "putting a hand on a shoulder of someone who has lost a spouse," not visiting sick congregants, not hugging children all feel unrabbi-like to her. Yet just as virtual platforms can best support the imperative of *pikuah nefesh* during a time of contagion, so too engaging in helpful acts must be done in a way that saves lives. To enforce social distancing at funerals, where **Rabbi Gerson** now tears a ribbon herself, rather than having loved ones of the deceased perform the ritual of *Kriah*.

Mourning traditions have also posed some difficult dilemmas for **Cantor Jill**. "Having to hold funerals and *shiva* online has been the right decision for us, but it's also very hard to see our members

deprived of the human comfort that comes with the Jewish ritual of observing *shiva*," she remarked.

All of our interviewees marveled at the outpouring of volunteer assistance during the quarantine. **Rabbi Mitch** commended the youthful cadre of "volunteers who train our seniors to use devices they haven't normally used." Temple Sholom's "lay leadership concentric circles" are also checking in on every congregant, he added.

Gratitude to the Greater Greenwich Community

Everyone we spoke with expressed gratitude about broad participation and engagement coming from various segments of the greater Greenwich community, both Jewish and gentile. As JFS' **Rachel Kornfeld** observed, food insecurity, back-due rent and other emergency needs have sparked town-wide collaboration, of which JFS has been an integral part. With Greenwich United Way's support, JFS has joined a consortium of social service agencies delivering food to seniors and individuals who are immuno-compromised.

Rabbi Mitch, who currently serves as president of the Greenwich Fellowship of Clergy, has been working with numerous partners, including Neighbor to Neighbor, in a combined effort to address critical needs. He noted how eager and forthcoming everyone has been, which is also what we heard from others, including **Cantor Jill**. Acknowledging the "very high attendance" during Zoom calls among Greenwich's interfaith clergy, she commented, "The sense of community was as strong as it was beautiful."

Emerging Strategies

Strategies are still emerging for how human service agencies and institutions can best support a situation in near constant flux. That's because,

according to **Pam Ehrenkranz**, "The complete set of needs is not yet apparent." Each week the UJA-JCC Greenwich CEO joins "with Federation leaders of like-sized communities across the country, where the majority are holding off on emergency campaigns because the greatest needs are yet to come." Ehrenkranz further reported that UJA-JCC Greenwich "has heard from members in the Greenwich Jewish community who needed immediate help, which we were able to meet because of all those who volunteered to help on demand. From prescriptions to food deliveries to help with technology, everybody who called received prompt assistance."

Ehrenkranz also underscored the extraordinary response from many members of the community, who "called with proactive ideas for making a difference. These included organizing us to deliver meals to hospital workers, bringing plants for isolated seniors, volunteering to make sandwiches with their children and dropping them off at the kosher food pantry of JFS in Stamford – as well as raising money for the pantry. There was no lack of members of our Jewish community standing up to say, *Hineni* (Here I am)." Thoughtful coordination has proved key for how the community, in **Rabbi Mitch's** words, "not only survives but thrives."

The View from UJA-JCC

Reflecting on the view from UJA-JCC Greenwich, Ehrenkranz offered, "We were able to help because we were here, organized and connected. We see it as our responsibility to be here to help over the long stretch ahead, until we can say this is behind us. We stand by the Talmudic adage that every Jew is responsible for one another, while at the same time, we keenly feel our responsibility to the greater community around us."

Talent and Diversity on Display as UJA-JCC "Zooms" Its Events This Spring to an Unprecedented Size Audience



Gretchen Rubin



Talia Reese

UJA-JCC Greenwich never blinked an eye! The moment it became clear that we needed to bring our programming online, we turned to Zoom. And people signed on, hundreds of them, from all over the globe. We were able to deliver a dazzling array of online events beginning April 1, and continuing on as we move forward. We are very, very grateful to the following expert presenters who generously gave of their time, talent, and expertise to make our programming so informative, diverse and entertaining:

Ron Agam

Gus Bottazzi

Talia Carner

Stacey Delikat

Alec Ellison

Aimee Elsner

Frimet Goldberger

Dr. Morris Laster

Daniel Levner

Talia Reese

Gretchen Rubin

Laura Seltzer-Duny

Vegas Tenold

Michael Zegen

Carl Zimmer

Alan Zweibel



Carl Zimmer



Frimet Goldberger



Michael Zegen



Aimee Elsner



Ron Agam

The Woman Behind the Zoom Curtain

You might not know it, but Anne Casher has kept you connected during Covid. The UJA-JCC Greenwich marketing and communications director creates the emails, makes it possible to register for events and posts events on Facebook and Instagram. Thanks to her talent and toil, you've learned about our Zoom events such as *Outer Order*, *Inner Calm with Gretchen Rubin*, *An Evening with the Marvelous MR. Maisel* and programs including *Storytime* and *Lunch & Learn*. Casher joined the organization in 2018 and has generated hundreds of outreach messages since – all of which have continued into the Zoom era. And she might be the only single mom on earth who has time for sky diving.

The former English major and Art History minor discovered her love of marketing communications by fluke. As an undergrad, Casher “dreamed of being an editor at *Rolling Stone*.”

But after a fact-checking stint at *Parents* magazine and several years as assistant managing editor with Simon & Schuster's Pocket Books, she joined the New York design firm TPG Architecture on the strength of her word skills. “Wow, I'll be able to write!” she recalls thinking, but soon realized that meant penning marketing collateral. Fortunately for her – and now for UJA-JCC Greenwich – the strategic communications field won her heart, as has the Greenwich community.

“The great people here” is her first answer to the question, What do you like best about your job? “I really appreciate feeling like I'm doing something that's useful and that people need – especially now,” she elaborates. “Plus it's never boring!” How could it be, when the toughest aspect of her role is “juggling so many things at the same time”? Not that



Casher's complaining: She knows it's an occupational hazard of “creative work where I get to design social media and learn so much about so many things.” Thank you, Anne, for your hard work during the pandemic and beyond!

Christine Toback to Be Women's Philanthropy President in 2021

UJA-JCC Greenwich is delighted to share the news that Christine Toback has accepted the position as next year's Women's Philanthropy President, beginning January 2021. Christine has served on the Women's Philanthropy Board for almost a decade. She brings to the position a wealth of knowledge and experience. Her passion for helping others and her dedication to the Greenwich community have long inspired her fellow WP Board members, friends and colleagues.

Christine and her husband Jeff moved to Old Greenwich in 2005 from the Philadelphia area. They have two sons, Zachary (14) and Nathan (13), both of whom attended Carmel Academy. They are members of Temple Sholom and are also actively involved in Chabad of Greenwich.

We know you will join us in wishing a hearty *mazel tov* to Christine.



COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

- UJA-JCC Greenwich (203) 552-1818
- Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy
Lower School (203) 329-2186
High School (203) 357-0850
- Carmel Academy (203) 863-9663
- Chavurat Deevray Torah (203) 637-9478 or (203) 637-5877
- Chabad Lubavitch of Greenwich
Camp Gan Israel of Greenwich (203) 629-9059
- Gan of Greenwich Preschool (203) 869-1742
- Congregation Shir Ami (203) 900-7976
- Greenwich Reform (203) 629-0018
- Congregation Kehilat Shalom Hebrew Wizards (203) 249-4036
- Jewish Family Services of Greenwich (203) 622-1881
- Jewish Senior Services (203) 365-6400
- Temple Sholom (203) 869-7191
- Temple Sholom Selma Maisel Nursery School (203) 622-8121

SHABBAT & HOLIDAY CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

- Fri., June 12 8:10 pm
- Fri., June 19 8:12 pm
- Fri., June 26 8:13 pm
- Fri., July 3 8:13 pm
- Fri., July 10 8:10 pm
- Fri., July 17 8:06 pm
- Fri., July 24 8:01 pm
- Fri., July 31 7:54 pm
- Fri., Aug. 7 7:46 pm
- Fri., Aug. 14 7:36 pm
- Fri., Aug. 21 7:26 pm
- Fri., Aug. 28 7:16 pm
- Fri., Sept. 4 7:04 pm
- Fri., Sept. 11 6:53 pm

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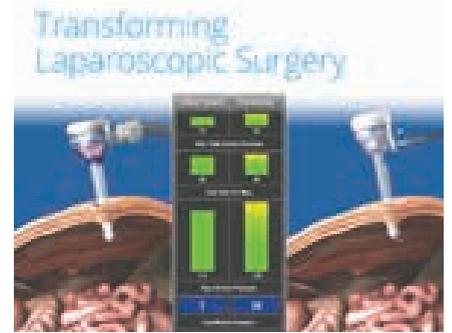
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UJA-JCC Greenwich's Emergency Allocation Responds to Urgent Needs Arising from the COVID-19 Virus in the Afula-Gilboa Region



Right before Passover UJA-JCC Greenwich, as part of the SNEC consortium, authorized emergency support. The funds provided for the following:

- \$30,000 to **HaEmek Medical Center** for purchase of AirSeal Medical equipment, a unique life-saving medical device used in complex laparoscopic abdominal surgery. It protects surgeons and attending staff from harmful infection.
- \$5,000 to the **Gilboa Regional Council** for public health. A special team has been created for virus protection in disadvantaged settlements. Efforts supported by this grant include disinfecting materials and services and helping assist local settlements in attending to quarantined individuals and carriers of the virus. Funds are also used to disinfect homes, trash bins, and public places, such as the local mosque, clinic, synagogue, grocery store, pharmacy, playgrounds and more. Support is provided for equipping workers for the above operations with protective gear.
- \$5,000 to the **Haifa Rape Crisis Center** to help prevent sexual assaults during the lockdown period when a victim remain in the same home as the assailant, and immediate action becomes necessary. Such action saves lives.
- \$5,000 to the **Afula Community Center Food Program** to purchase some 100 food packages for families in distress. The baskets included beverages, pastries, rice, basic products, hygienic products and more. The packages were distributed according to lists supplied by social welfare services in Afula by volunteers, soldiers and staff from the Community Center over the course of a week after the Passover holiday.



Applications Available for the Weitzman Youth Award for Jewish Philanthropy

The Weitzman Youth Award for Jewish Philanthropy was founded by Jane and Stuart Weitzman, whose hope it is to ensure that the next generation is inspired to become involved with helping their fellow Jews in need.

The award will be given to those who exhibit the most creativity and personal commitment to Jewish philanthropy. UJA-JCC Greenwich is available to advise potential applicants on suitable projects. Applicants must be in the fifth through twelfth grades and residents of Greenwich or children of families active with UJA-JCC Greenwich. All funds raised from the projects must be donated through UJA-JCC Greenwich. Projects may not be political in nature. The award committee will make all final decisions regarding recipients of the award.

For more information, contact Pam Ehrenkranz at 203-552-1818 or pam@ujajcc.org.

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Jewish Life Goes On (Mostly Online) at Greenwich Reform

It's hard to believe that the Greenwich Reform community hasn't been able to gather in our beautiful synagogue since early March. It's a challenge to stay connected and supportive of our fellow congregants, while safely maintaining social distancing. But we are meeting the challenge with both online services and programming for everyone in our community.

Here's how GRS congregants describe it: "A virtual Shabbat experience does really check a lot of the boxes for our family. Being able to continue to celebrate the end of the week, with Shabbat, even though now only virtually, but still with our friends, our family, our rabbi and cantor, provides an enormous amount of support. It's important for me to hear the familiar songs. We are making do; it's fun, and we're grateful." (Dr. Michael and Jenna Goldman)

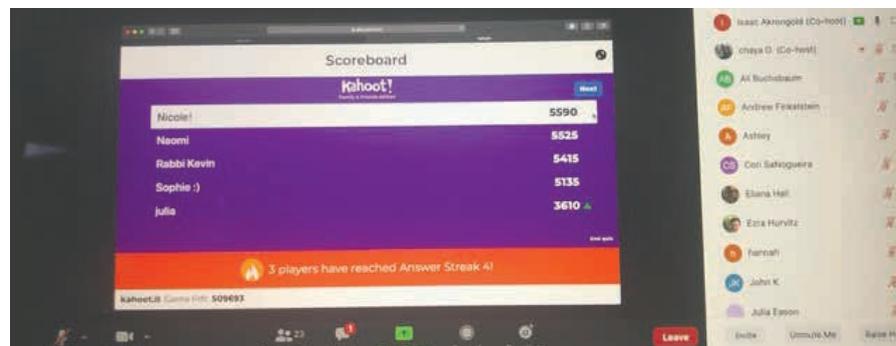
GRS holds weekly Friday night Shabbat services for little kids at 5 pm, and for adults at 7 pm, supplemented by everything from sing-alongs and story-time to matzah making, from meditation to Torah, Talmud, and Introduction to Judaism classes. Special cooperative programming with area synagogues includes events like the "Inside Story of the Netflix Series 'Unorthodox'" with David Rappoport to "Your Brain and Body in Quarantine" with Dr. Betsy Stone, to "From the Back of the Bus to the Top of the Agenda" with Anat Hoffman, to a worldwide Tikkun Leil Shavuot at the end of May. Summer programming will continue a balance of online worship, study, educational programs and entertainment with the gradual re-introduction of services and social events both at GRS and at the homes of our congregants, as circumstances permit.



Greenwich Reform featured on CNN about online religious worship during the pandemic.

Teen Fun at Community-wide Lag Ba'Omer Event

Our group of teens from local synagogues enjoyed a JEWISH GREENWICH hour together via "Kahoot," a great format to share on Zoom. Issac Akrongold served as an excellent emcee. Teens engaged in sharing music, the meaning of holidays and even letter writing. Sophie Citron led a "cooking" demonstration. Most of the participants actually made their own coffee cup cakes while on screen. Sounds of mixers and microwaves accompanied teen laughter and music. Everyone ate while the program continued. We all went "outside" (iPads in tow) to light a candle. It was a really sweet moment to end the program outside under the same sky, and a really great way to share time with one another!





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Temple Sholom Celebrates Milestones Even in Difficult Times

Despite the challenges caused by Covid-19, families at Temple Sholom continue to celebrate *simchas*. Rabbi Mitch and the Temple Sholom clergy team have facilitated eight backyard b'nai mitzvahs, and several more are planned as we head into the summer season. Temple Sholom's President, Alexandra Hochman, was the first to sign on for this unusual way to mark her daughter's milestone. Hannah Hochman's bat mitzvah was scheduled for April 4th. When the pandemic first hit, the family considered postponing the entire event. Hannah who had been preparing for months was understandingly disappointed. Rabbi Mitch suggested the service continue, albeit in a completely different setting. Rabbi Mitch brought a Torah to the family's home, and with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins present via Zoom, the bat mitzvah went on on a computer screen.

Rabbi Mitch believes that for these teens the b'nai mitzvah rituals are taking on a new and deeper meaning, including the virtual passing of the Torah from one generation to another. "Every individual is a link in our chain of tradition and love," he says. "We can imagine those in the past and those who will come in the future."

Temple Sholom is also running weekly Shabbat services via Zoom. The upcoming b'nai mitzvah students are participating each week by leading a prayer or two. "This gives them the opportunity to get comfortable with the digital medium," says Rabbi Mitch. "We hope to be back in the sanctuary soon," said Rabbi Mitch. "In the interim, I am happy we are still able to help these families celebrate something good during these challenging times."



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Thank you to our erudite Lunch & Learn speakers this spring for their flexibility in delivering talks in a virtual format: Michael Feldstein, Rabbi Zachary Sitkin, Rabbi David Silber and Rabbi Aviva Richman. Lunch & Learn continues June through August.

JUNE 11

Rabbi Moshe Edelman

Why Do Jews Pray for a Good Month?

What does the monthly prayer say? Who wrote it? Does it work?

JUNE 18

Rabbi David Silber

King David: Messianic Dream, Harsh Realities

For today's exploration of Israel and Judah's third monarch, we'll consider David and Batsheva.

JUNE 25

Rabba Dr. Carmella Abraham

Working 9 to 5

Jewish ethics in the workplace.

JULY 2

Chaim Lauer

Pigs, Plagues and the Rabbis: A Talmudic Response

How did the Talmud understand and react to the intermittent plagues and epidemics that struck the Middle East?

JULY 9

Rabbi Howard Goldsmith

Love Your Neighbor

...as yourself, through history and today.

JULY 16

Rabbi David Silber

Human King and Divine Kingship: A Picture of David as an Ideal King

Our exploration takes us to the Second Book of Samuel, chapters 6 and 24.

JULY 23

Rabbi Oran Zweiter

Medical Students, Body Snatchers and Jewish Law in 19th-Century America

A post mortem on post mortems, using a Halachic probe.

JULY 30

No Class, Tisha B'Av

AUGUST 6

Rabbi Lester Bronstein

Vayikra: And So-and-So Called

The Book of Leviticus begins with a mysterious word – a verb with no subject. Who is the hidden

subject in our lives that calls us to be fully present, to engage in the woes of the world and to be a moral person?

AUGUST 13

Rabbi Moshe Edelman

The Kotel / The Shema

Let's sleuth out two mysteries: a) why the Western Wall has stones with hearts; and b) why the *Shema Yisrael* prayer is shrouded in mystical emphases, pronunciations and spellings.

AUGUST 20

Rabbi Greg Wall

Free Will, Free Willy

What choices do we really have? How can we gain freedom? Is our destiny pre-ordained? A whale of a topic, to be sure.

AUGUST 27

Rabbi Moshe Edelman

Light Is Sown for the Righteous / Rabbi Akiva vs. Rabban Gamliel

For today's twofer, we'll explore: a) why Psalm 97 says the *tzaddik* has light, but the *yashar* (the upright) is blessed with joy; and b) how two great Talmudic Sages clash in their approaches to resolving disputes – and why we should care.

Check UJA-JCC Greenwich calendar at ujajcc.org for updated schedule. • You must register to receive Zoom link.

With Their Israel Trip Scuttled by the Pandemic, BCHA Eighth-Graders Go Zoom

The 25 eighth-graders who make up this year's graduating class at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Lower School had their bags packed for their trip to Israel, when their plans came to a screeching – and heartbreaking – halt. Just as the class was ready to embark on an eagerly anticipated rite of passage, it became clear that owing to the rapidly spreading virus, the month-long "Israel Experience" trip would have to be cancelled. Needless to say, the eighth-grade students were devastated. The "Israel Experience" is the capstone of their years at BCHA; a chance for students to strengthen their bond not only to the land of Israel – but also to one another, as they get set to move on to the next stage of life.

While nothing BCHA staff could conjure up would come close to actually setting foot on Israel's holy ground, still, they were determined to come up with a viable – and, of course, virtual – "Israel Experience." And, so they did. Conceived of and coordinated by BCHA Judaic studies teachers, Morah Elana Friedman and Rabbi Tzachi Posner, the "Israel Zoom Experience" kicked off in early May with a social distancing home visit to each and every eighth-grade student by the school's *shlichim*, Israeli emissaries, Rabbi Ofir and Adi Yarchi, who came bearing Israel-themed gift bags.

Led by tour guide Elli Shashua, the virtual experience began with a Monty Python-like portrayal of a typical encounter in an Israeli *shuk* and the stereotypically aggressive bargaining which ensued. Elli went on to explain to the students that unlike the parody, the Torah's first description of buying land was all above board; indeed, Avraham purchased Maarat Hamachpela in Hebron, the first Jewish-owned city in Israel, at full price,



Rabbi Ofir and Avi Yarchi – the school's *shlichim* – delivering an Israeli-themed gift bag to BCHA eighth-grader Jason Kwalwasser to kick off the virtual "Israel Experience" trip.

refusing any and all discounts. Though occasionally addressing heavier topics such as the ins and outs, or rather ups and downs, of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the group's primary goal was to engage in entertaining educational activities, that mixed fun with fact.

In collaboration with their tour guide, Morah Elana and Rabbi Tzachi created an experiential curriculum from the ground up. Students participated in a zoom scavenger hunt through the sacred Old City of Yerushalayim, a practical demonstration of life-saving army techniques,



Using cups of salt water and various food coloring, students learned about the importance of water to Israeli policy.

and an exploration of Israel's world of high-tech ventures.

With home-made Israeli iced-coffee in hand, students encountered the role of Jewish values in their personal lives, as they virtually undertook the steep trek up Masada. In celebration of Lag Ba'Omer, and despite pandemic induced closures, Elli managed to produce a Go-Pro adventure through ancient caves used during the Bar Kochba revolt. The day culminated with a Zoom session connecting Israeli teens with BCHA students.

The tour guide wasn't the only adult to get in on the fun and learning. During an examination of Southern Israel, BCHA science teacher Christopher Graseck conducted a science lab on salinization and the Dead Sea. *Ivrit* (Hebrew language) teacher Morah Iris led an Israeli Master-Chef level cooking class, recreating the famous breakfast dish, *shakshuka*. According to anecdotal reports, the results were delicious! A major highlight of the experience including Zoom visits with BCHA's Banot Sherut volunteers, both past and present. (Banot Sherut come to America to spend the school year educating students about Israeli life and helping to foster a love and appreciation for Israel.)

"Our trip to Israel may not have been what it was supposed to be; nonetheless, I'm in awe of Morah Elana [Friedman] and Rabbi Tzachi [Posner] for the ways in which they conceived and orchestrated a meaningful program for our stellar eighth-grade graduates," said BCHA Head of School Jackie Herman. Rabbi Tzachi and Morah Elana summed up the experience saying, "We would never attempt to actually replace the Israel trip with a Zoom call; it's simply not possible! Rather than a replacement though, we sought to find solace through uniting as a class and engaging with the history, culture, and land of our people."

Nancie K. Schwarzman

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Welcome to Greenwich!

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We are delighted to welcome and introduce you to Greenwich. If you know of newcomers in town who would like to learn more about our vibrant and exciting Jewish community, please contact us at 203-552-1818. We will extend a hearty "Welcome!"

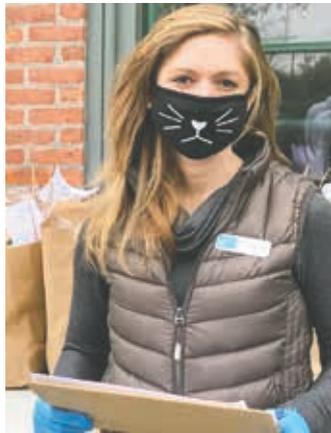
Bonnie Citron, Chair, UJA-JCC Greenwich Newcomer Committee

JFS of Greenwich, The Good Snowball Effect!

by Rachel Kornfeld

For 37 years JFS-Greenwich has been a small staple in the community providing services to those in need and cultivating a community of compassion within Jewish Greenwich. Most people have interfaced with JFS at some point in their lives whether through an event, volunteer opportunity, or service need. Over the past year JFS has seen significant growth in the type of services provided and the scope of those served.

As the COVID-19 pandemic began to unfold, there were endless calls for support. Our volunteer base grew exponentially as the community rallied to help us manage the endless needs of those who were now isolated in their homes. JFS jumped into action, tripling the number of clients served overnight between tele-therapy and food deliveries to seniors.



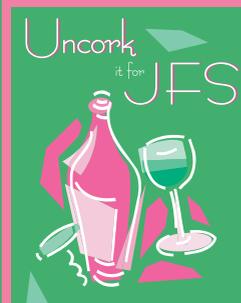
Out of the blue came a call from a long-time member of the Greenwich Jewish community. The conversation began with a story of sincere gratitude for services rendered a decade earlier through a JFS support group. The compassion offered during this woman's time of need left an imprint on her heart that compelled her to reach out to JFS in support of our COVID-19 efforts. This time around it was not as someone in need, but one who had the ability to provide. As the conversation unfolded it was decided that the most emergent need was for families managing food insecurity in the Greenwich community. A financial commitment ensued.

With great excitement the JFS team reached out to Greenwich Public Schools (GPS) to identify families who were struggling with the effects

of COVID-19 and to provide a \$200 family food card. As our board members were busy addressing fifty envelopes to the identified families, the phone rang again. Someone connected to GPS caught wind of the initiative at JFS to support families in need and matched the original donation to provide another fifty \$200 food cards. The generosity was both unexpected and unparalleled.

We began to take phone calls and receive emails from dozens of families in need. They were scared, overwhelmed, and desperately in need of various supports. It became clear that the end of the story was not only the generous donation of food support to those most in need in the Greenwich community. Rather, we at JFS needed to let the "snowball" of good keep rolling. We have begun to search for grant opportunities to provide transitional support to families who have suffered traumatic emotional, medical or financial effects from COVID-19. In turn JFS will be providing intensive case management services transforming lives from despair to rebuilding hope during and after COVID-19.

I will never forget that one phone call and all those that have and will continue to benefit from that connection. One act of compassionate care more than a decade ago has created a snowball effect of good!



UNCORK IT FOR JFS!

Support a great cause while having fun at home. Join us for a delightful evening of wine tasting!

Wednesday, June 17 at 8 pm

Enjoy three carefully curated wine selections from the wine experts at Cap, Cork & Cellar of Greenwich. Learn what wines are perfect for your table and how best to pair them with food. Do the tasting on your own or invite your friends to share the socially distanced fun.

[Click here to register now!](#)

Each \$100 Wine Tasting Party Pack includes:

- Secure Zoom admission code
- Wine tasting notes
- Suggested recipes
- Three 750 ml bottles of wine

Pick your preferred Party Pack:

- Party Pack I: 1 bottle each red, white and rose
- Party Pack II: 1 bottle each red, white and prosecco

Party Packs include reusable CapaBunga wine preservers.

Want to help JFS even more? Sign up as a *Sponsor* (\$180 - 2 entries) or *Connoisseur* (\$360 - 10 entries) and automatically get a chance to win:

- A \$300 gift certificate to Cap, Cork and Cellar
- A gift basket featuring Cowgirl Creamery Cheese and one bottle each of top-rated red and white wine (*retail value over \$125*)
- A fabulous bottle of Quintessa Napa Valley Red (*retail value over \$150*)

You can also purchase additional entries at \$25 for one, \$100 for five! Winners need not be present to win.

It's so easy! Your Party Pack will be delivered for free, right to your home (contact free) in the Greenwich area (including Stamford, Rye Brook, and Port Chester).

Can't make the wine tasting, but still want to support JFS? [Click here](#) to purchase Prize Entries and/or a Party Pack to drink at your convenience.

For details, contact JFS at 203-622-1881 or visit www.jfsgreenwich.org.

[Click here to register now!](#)

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I am pleased to announce the launch of my investment company providing investment strategies and planning services to families, individuals and businesses.

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I look forward to servicing my friends in the community from my new company.

Beth F. Cutler
President, Co-Founder
203-344-2400
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Notes of Appreciation to the Jewish Community for Donation of Dinners to Hospital Staff

On behalf of Greenwich Hospital, we thank you for your thoughtful donation to provide meals for hospital staff on the frontlines of care during this COVID-19 pandemic. Your generosity helped our clinical staff to sustain their resilience and to continue to provide safe, high quality care to our patients and community. As Greenwich Hospital works diligently to keep our neighbors and employees safe, we look to partners like you to continue your vigilance in helping to lessen the impact of this pandemic. Our commitment to you is unwavering; your partnership is greatly appreciated.

We are thankful for your continued generosity and partnership in support of the important work of our hospital.

With gratitude,
Noël Appel,
SVP and Chief Development Officer

Yale
NewHaven
Health
Greenwich
Hospital



From UJA-JCC Board Chairs

We want to thank all members of the community who participated in our sending dinners from the Six Thirteen Restaurant to Greenwich Hospital on Mother's Day.

It was a small gesture of kindness and gratitude on behalf of the Jewish community to all the workers on the front lines, and it was very much appreciated.

Sincerely,
Bryanna Kallman & Michael Delikat
Co-Presidents

Shir Ami Embraces Online Community

by Nancy Collamer

In his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl observed, "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." Indeed, the coronavirus crisis has forced us all – individuals and institutions alike – to change the way we live, work and lead our lives. Much of the disruption has been painful. And yet, the crisis has also pushed us to innovate in ways that would not have happened otherwise.

Like other religious institutions, my own Congregation Shir Ami was "forced" to become a remote congregation in March. Admittedly, it took congregants a while to get the hang of Zoom ("How do I mute again?"), but overall the transition was remarkably seamless. Rather than mourn the loss of in-person gatherings, our congregants responded with resilience and a can-do spirit. We ran a lively community Seder online, an event attended by family members and friends living in different states. In preparation for Shavuot, a congregant hosted a virtual cheesecake-making demonstration from her kitchen, complete with downloadable recipes. And on a regular basis, we enjoy virtual Shabbat services, book groups, adult learning classes and social action projects.

One of the perks of being a virtual community is the convenience factor – a benefit I especially appreciated after my husband and I contracted the coronavirus. Thanks to the wonders of technology, we were able to attend Shabbat services, schmooze with friends and be comforted by the prayers for *Refuah Shlema*, without ever having to leave the couch. Of course, we eagerly await the day we can gather again in person. But until such time, it's wonderful to know that our community is thriving with a full, innovative and robust menu of online events. If you'd like to learn more, please visit us at congregationshirami.org. We'd love to have you join us.

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Ruth's Lesson for All of Us from Congregation Kehilat Shalom/Hebrew Wizards

by Rabbi Deborah Salomon

This year surely will be remembered forever. The year the world stopped and people paused. A year that we were flipped upside down from our busy lives and told to stay home safely with our families. Stunned by the set of circumstance, many of us resisted at first. The shadow of darkness was cast over all of us. People were separated. Friends were calling and Zooming just to stay in connect. If you were among the lucky ones not to know someone in the hospital, you were not stricken with intense worry. Sadly I was worried for four straight days. My 27 year-old daughter, Micole Leah, had corona pneumonia and was in and out of the hospital. I was forbidden to enter the hospital room to help her. But, thankfully, we were the lucky ones, and she emerged back into a healthy state after three weeks of isolation. She is now immune and not contagious. Our reunion was heartwarming. My empty-nested house is filled with my baby birds, as we isolate together as a family of six.

That's my personal story. As Rabbi of Congregation Kehilat Shalom and Director of Hebrew Wizards, I had to get creative. We immediately designed Zoom classes for all our students. We gathered our teachers, and all came to the same conclusion. We need powerful short sessions of 20 minutes each with no more than one hour on a Wizards Zoom call per day. We reached out to our teens and assigned them three students each to tutor privately for Hebrew learning.

We utilized our HEBWIZ You Tube channel and our online resources. We gathered our musicians, all seven of them, to provide weekly music and teachings for our community. We added a Rocking Shabbat Zoom every Friday from 6-6:40pm, highlighting various classes to provide poetry and prayer. We employed guest musicians from around the country every Shabbat, offering them a stipend to help them in this time of need. In return they share a song or two. We collaborated musically, thanks to the wonderful apps out there.

We also raised funds for weekly breakfasts for our local homeless shelters. We met with our community service partners on Zoom and made them signs and sang songs to the elderly. We had a Passover Picnic for the 2nd Seder by Zooming our Congregants, who were so happy to celebrate together. We are thankful and grateful for our community of loving and compassionate people. Like all of the beautiful communities in Greenwich, we participated, we joined, we created and we tried hard to see the silver linings. The Jewish people have always faced hardships. We are survivors and we will leap into action to help our neighbors. We know what it is to shine light on each other and see the light grow bigger and brighter. The words, "We are all in this together" echo daily.

It doesn't matter our zip code, it doesn't matter our faith. We all bleed when we are cut and cry for another's pain. We are people bonded by compassion, empathy and love, accepting, and willing to share our stories, our trials and tribulations. We move elegantly beyond our physical being and embrace our spiritual connection as people who help people.

As our holiday of Shavuot approaches, we heed Ruth's beautiful words to her mother-in-law Naomi when Naomi's son and Ruth's husband was killed in war. Ruth never left Naomi's side. "Wherever you go, I shall go, and your people shall be my people." Ruth will always represent beauty, loyalty and compassion. She was a faithful woman who above all understood the essence of humanity. I hope we are all blessed with a Ruth in our lives.

Here are a few more words of wisdom from a young congregant:

How Do We See the Goodness in the World When We Are Faced with Challenges?

by Sasha Peterson, 2020 Postponed Spring Bat Mitzvah, May 13, 2020

We take time to see the doctors and nurses who are risking their lives to save others. Nurses are comforting and FaceTiming patients with their love ones.

People are gathering their supplies and offering their time.

Musicians are playing music and Zooming concerts.

Employers are offering people jobs and still paying them, even if they aren't able to work.

Friends are organizing car parades for loved ones' birthdays.

People are coming together and communicating their feelings.

Leaders are creating communities.

We are all coming together.

People are being more patient and understanding.

People are being more resourceful and creative.

People are more conscious of the world and gracious.

Families are gathering and spending more time together.

People are seeing the light, even in the darkest days.

People are focusing on the good that other people are doing.

People are reaching out and touching someone with their eyes and kind words.

People are rallying together,

People need people to survive.

We all need each other, and nothing can divide us.

We are strong. We are capable

We are in this world to love one another.



Dignity Grows™ is a program of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford and is supported by Federation's Women of Impact.

We are excited to introduce **Dignity Grows™**, an initiative that provides assistance to women in need of menstrual products and toiletries by providing a pre-packaged, one month's supply. We know that the lack of menstrual supplies and other hygiene products can negatively affect a person's quality of life, making it difficult or even impossible to do things we often take for granted, like attending school or going to work. What's more, *federal grant programs don't cover these items*, and people often don't think to donate them to food pantries.

Started by the women of the Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford, Dignity Grows™ has been on our radar prior to the pandemic—and there is no better time than now to bring this to our local Greenwich community. In this first phase, UJA-JCC Greenwich will be partnering with **Neighbor To Neighbor** who will distribute the bags on our behalf.

All it takes is \$18 to impact someone's life for 30 days! Please consider donating a Dignity Pack. And as this project grows both locally and nationally, we hope it will cost even less per pack in the future.

With gratitude,
Margie Black, Stephanie Esquenazi & Andi Fern

[Click Here to Participate](#)



DAVIS FILM FESTIVAL (at Home) “The Other Story”

Available to Stream for FREE

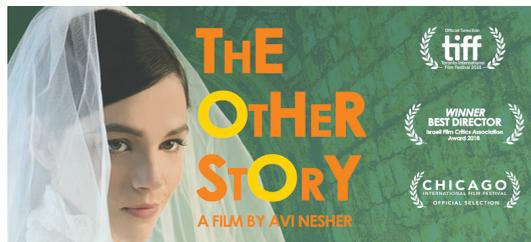
Sunday, June 7 at 5 pm - Tuesday, June 9 at 11 pm

Register to receive the Vimeo link & password

Renowned filmmaker Avi Nesher’s latest film tells a suspenseful, poignant and humorous story through the eyes of two rebellious young women from two troubled families that tangle in the most unexpected ways in Jerusalem. As the characters’ warring personal convictions and intimate anxieties clash, the secular and religious world views they hold dear also come to embody the struggle for identity reflecting present-day Israel.

Based on an incredible true story, see why “The Other Story” broke box office records in Israel.

Avi Nesher/Drama/Israel/118 min.



RSVP

Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy Teen Accepted into Prestigious Yale Research Program

Ben Marcus, a junior at Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy-Upper School in Stamford, is among a select group of high school students from around the country chosen to participate in Yale University’s Discovery to Cure High School Internship Program.

Only eight percent of eligible students were selected to receive this year’s prestigious paid internship, which carries with it the unique opportunity for students to have their research study published.

“Bi-Cultural is the only school to have had every candidate we’ve fielded be accepted into the program,” notes Bi-Cultural science teacher and college counselor Meghana Fernandez.

As impressive as the Yale Discovery to Cure internship is, says Ms. Fernandez, it becomes even more so when one considers the program’s arduous application process. Working with Ben throughout this process was enormously gratifying, she says. “I’ve never seen anyone as organized and determined as Ben.”

In Ben’s case, the application process started the summer before his junior year when he sat down to discuss with Ms. Fernandez potential internship opportunities for the following summer.

“I had heard of the Discovery to Cure program from previous students and wanted to gain more knowledge of the topic the program deals with, which is cancer research. Ms. Fernandez recommended that I read *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer* by Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee to further my knowledge of the subject. I was extremely motivated by the book, and it bolstered my passion for medicine and cancer research. I was eager to delve deeper,” says the Stamford teen.

“Later that year, Ms. Fernandez mentioned the option of applying to the Discovery to Cure program and I jumped at the opportunity. In applying to such a competitive program, I knew that my application had to be extremely sincere and personal, while also being studious and professional. Using knowledge from my EMT certification, which I received the previous summer, and my AP/ECE biology course, the application started to come together.

On April 22 – after six months of preparation – Ben received notice from Yale that he had been accepted into the program. Unfortunately, the letter also stated that, as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, the program would not be taking place this summer. However, Ben was invited to attend their Elite Young Professionals Medical Conference at Yale in October.

“Although I am disappointed that I will not be able to participate in the



Ben Marcus

program this summer, I did obtain a wealth of knowledge in the application process. I would not have been able to compile such a strong application without the help of the exceptional Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy STEM program and my amazing Bi-Cultural Hebrew Academy advisors,” he says.

Ms. Fernandez calls the Yale Discovery to Cure internship program an “amazing opportunity that allows students to see what happens in terms of research. One of the many great things about it, is that the students are given access to the kind of lab equipment that is simply unavailable at the high school level. It’s truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

Lunch & Learn

A Senior Safety Program for the Quarantine Era and Beyond

Monday, June 15,
12:00 - 1:00 pm



"Now... how do I tell who the bad guys are?"

While life has become more challenging for us due to the pandemic, COVID-19 has presented new opportunities for criminals. There are threats you should be aware of so you can take steps to protect yourself from becoming a victim of crime and fraud. If you think it can't happen to you...think again!

• Do you know how to protect yourself from telephone fraud and internet scams?
Detective Mark Solomon, CCCI Greenwich Police Department CT Financial Crimes Task Force (USSS) will help you understand how to avoid making mistakes that can lead to financial or fraudulent disaster.

• Do you know how to assess potential physical threats?
Gus Bottazzi is a 30 year veteran of the martial arts, holding black belts in Japanese karate and Israeli Krav Maga. As a self-defense instructor, he will show you how to keep your antennae up and stay safe

To access live Zoom sessions go to <https://zoom.us/j/3032051305>
Or listen on your phone by calling (929) 205-6099 and enter 3032051305#
Questions about these Zoom sessions? Call (203) 863-5653



Calling All 20-25 Year-Olds!



jewish
changemakers

fellowship

make a **move.** a big **move.**

We get that Covid-19 changed your summer plans, but that doesn't mean your summer has to come to a standstill. If you're Jewish and 20-25, sign up for 3 weeks of premier leadership training and networking – 100% online and scheduled with flexibility to fit into your busy day.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Calling all Jewish 20-25 year-olds! Looking for a way to turn #BummerSummer into #BestSummerEver?

Parents and Grandparents – are your young-adult live-in roommates looking for an opportunity this summer to build their resumes, meet great people and have an impact on the world? Would they like an opportunity to be mentored, to grow and to gain a competitive edge?

The Jewish Changemakers Fellowship is a three-week online leadership experience for Jewish students and early career professionals, ages 20-25. It is designed for career development, to help learn networking skills and to make a difference in the community.

The Fellowship soon begins on June 28 and concludes July 19.

Young adults may participate in as many or as few sessions as they like over the course of the three weeks. Those who attend a minimum number of sessions will earn a \$500 stipend and a Certificate of Completion. Each participant will join a team and go through the experience as a cohort. They may build their own teams (e.g., friends from college, camp, etc.), or they will be assigned to an existing team when they register.

A Special Project by Women's Philanthropy



This June, help us bring a bit of Spring into the homes of Holocaust survivors and local seniors, who are the most vulnerable members of our community during this crisis. With few visitors, a small gift goes a long way to relieving the feelings of loneliness and isolation.

For just \$18, you can send a potted plant (delivered by the Women's Philanthropy Board Members) to the homes of survivors and seniors at the assisted living facility, The Mews in Greenwich. Enclosed will be a personalized note and a card created by children in the community.

A portion of your donation will also go towards helping with increased needs due to the pandemic, at the Emunah Children's Center in Afula, our sister city in Israel.
Please donate by Tuesday, June 9th.

Let's do this mitzvah as a community!

[Click Here to Participate](#)

STAY CONNECTED AT UJAJCC.ORG