Governor Announces $25 Million Available to Strengthen Security at Non-Profit Organizations

In October, Governor Kathy Hochul appeared at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Battery Park City and announced the availability of an additional $25 million to help nonprofit organizations improve the security of their facilities to better protect those at risk of hate crimes or attacks because of their ideology, beliefs, or mission. Available to those organizations that have not previously received state funding for this purpose, the allocation builds on nearly $43 million awarded to 362 nonprofit organizations to help boost security infrastructure and enhance preparedness against potential hate crime attacks.

“By their very nature, hate crimes strike at the heart of our democratic values and threaten to undermine the very tenets of our society,” Governor Hochul said. “By helping these nonprofit organizations protect themselves against these cowardly acts of violence, we continue to make public safety a top priority. Bigotry and hate have no place in our state, and we will do everything in our power to protect vulnerable people from those who would lash out against them due to their ideology, belief or mission.”

In total, the state funding will support 872 projects across the state. These projects will bolster security at community centers, schools, museums, and day camps.

Governor Hochul also announced an expanded online reporting form that will allow New Yorkers to report bias and hate incidents occurring in New York State. The new online reporting form improves data collection capabilities and bolsters the state’s efforts to track and respond to acts of hate and discrimination.

The announcement comes as hate and bias incidents continue throughout the state, many targeting Jewish and Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. While the number of hate crimes reported to police in the state represents a small fraction of total crime, these incidents are significant because they instill fear in the greater community of the victim.

This fall, the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) will seek proposals for the $25 million, which is expected to fund approximately 500 projects across the state. Nonprofit organizations that previously received grants may apply for a new grant to bolster security at different facilities. Applications for grants must be submitted to DCJS by January 7, 2022.

DCJS will accept applications for up to $50,000 per facility; each eligible organization may submit up to three applications for a maximum of $150,000 per year. Applications must include detailed plans to improve security and a detailed budget. The state funding will be distributed to organizations that have experienced a recent bias incident.

In total, the state funding will support 872 projects across the state. These projects will bolster security at community centers, schools, museums, and day camps.

UJA-Federation Westchester, WJC Hosts Conversation with NYS Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

UJA-Federation Westchester Government Relations Committee and Westchester Jewish Council (WJC) hosted a virtual conversation with NYS Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins on Wednesday, October 13, 2021.

Karen Everett, Chair UJA Westchester Government Relations Committee and WJC Interfaith/Intergroup Committee Chair welcomed Stewart-Cousins, noting that she was present at opening of the first HOPE Kosher Food Pantry on Friday, September 10th in New Rochelle and opening of the first HOPE Kosher Food Pantry on Wednesday, October 13, 2021.

Stewart-Cousins addressed underfunded school districts, working with Senator Shelley Mayer, her Education Chair “to inject millions of dollars to repair damage to school districts and create 800 Universal Pre-K Slots.”

Senator Stewart-Cousins said that Attorney General Letitia James joined with other AGs in an opioid settlement against pharmaceutical companies, gaining $13 million to fund rehabilitation and education.

Everett noted that NYS contains one-half of 80,000 total Holocaust survivors; 40% live in poverty with COVID Crisis placing greater stress on food insecurity, mental health issues and given their age and status, social isolation. She said the FBI reported that hate crimes are at their highest level in 12 years. Attacks against African and Asian Americans led this spike with huge upsurge of violence against Jews. Stewart-Cousins suggested reporting hate crimes online at ny.gov.
Night of Jewish Learning and Celebration 2.0, The Virtual Edition

The Night of Jewish Learning and Celebration 2.0, The Virtual Edition, presented by The Westchester Board of Rabbis and The Westchester Jewish Council, is scheduled virtually for Saturday, November 20, 2021. There will be two zoom sessions, one beginning at 7:30pm and the other at 8:30pm.

The evening will feature 20 Westchester Rabbis from different branches of Judaism who will come together to share their wisdom with members of the community in over 20 different sessions on a variety of topics including, “What Happened to the Hanukkah Feast”, “Yo Ho Ho and a Bottle of Manischewitz: Jewish Pirates of the Caribbean” and “The Jewish People as 'Ivrim': Becoming Active Participants in a Complicated World”.

A list of participating Rabbis is as follows: Rabbi David Schuck/Beth El Synagogue Center; Rabbi Zack Sitkin/Beth El Synagogue Center; Rabbi Eran Hoffman/Anshe Sholom; Rabbi Joshua Strom/Anshe Sholom; Rabbi Howard Goldsmith/Anshe Sholom; Rabbi Ben Goldberg/Anshe Sholom; Rabbi Jay Stein/Greenburgh Jewish Center; Rabbi Shoshana Leis/Hebrew Congregation of Somers & Pleasantville Community Synagogue; Rabbi Jennifer Goldsmith/Jewish Education Project; Rabbi Harry Pel/Leffell School; Rabbi Solomon Hoffman/Mishkan Ha'am; Rabbi Daniel Sayani/Plaza Jewish Community Chapel; Rabbi Jeffrey Brown/Scarsdale Synagogue-Temple-Tremont and Emanu-El; Rabbi Sara Freidson/Temple Beth Shalom Mahopac; Rabbi Josh Lovenstein/Westchester Day School; Rabbi Corinna Dalton-Westchester Jewish Center; Rabbi Jonathan Blake/Westchester Reform Temple; Rabbi Fredda Cohen/White Plains Hospital; Rabbi Nuriel Klinger/Young Israel of Scarsdale; Rabbi Molly Karp.

“I am always eager to hear from so many respected and learned rabbis and very much enjoy participating in community learning,” commented an attendee from the previous Night of Learning program.

This event is free and open to all. Visit https://conta.cc/3GoBTKC to register.

To make a donation for this event, visit www.wjcouncil.org/donate-now/

For more information about the Night of Jewish Learning and Celebration 2.0, contact Donna Bartell via email at donna@wjcouncil.org or call (914) 328-7001. Information about the event is also available on the Westchester Jewish Council website at www.wjcouncil.org.

The Westchester Jewish Council connects, convenes and safeguards Westchester’s Jewish communities and strengthens relationships among Jewish organizations and other ethnic and faith-based groups, elected officials, Israel and the community at large.

Celebrating the Life of Activist and Community Organizer Rabbi Rachel Cowan

This December 2, the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust will present a special screening of the documentary film, Dying Doesn’t Feel Like What I’m Doing, chronicling the life and legacy of civil rights activist and community organizer Rachel Cowan.

The screening will be followed by a panel discussion, moderated by Rabbi Marc Margolius, Senior Program Director at the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, with filmmaker Paula Weiman-Kelman, Khary Lazarre-White, Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Brotherhood Sister Sol, and Jeannie Blaustein, Founding Board Chair at Reimagine End of Life.

The event is co-sponsored by the Museum of Jewish Heritage and The Institute for Jewish Spirituality, with presenting partners B’nai Jeshurun, Tricycle Foundation, and the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan.

Rachel Cowan was a civil rights activist, community organizer, the first female Jew by choice ordained as a Rabbi, and a beloved and influential mindfulness teacher. After she was diagnosed with aggressive brain cancer, her years of mindfulness practice enabled her to model living well while dying.

The film provides an intimate portrait of Rabbi Cowan, a beloved and influential mindfulness teacher, stalwart in New York City’s Jewish community and the first female convert to be ordained a rabbi at Hebrew Union College. She was a civil rights activist who taught people how to “sit” with themselves and stand up for others. She and her late husband, Village Voice writer Paul Cowan, were instrumental in encouraging support of intermarried couples.

Widowed at 48 years old, she had a powerful second act. As the first director of Jewish Life at the Nathan Cummings foundation, she transformed Jewish philanthropy. As a founder of the Jewish Healing Network, The Institute of Jewish Spirituality and The Wise Aging movement, she transformed Jewish life by bringing mindfulness and meditation into the mainstream.

After she was diagnosed with aggressive brain cancer and used her spiritual practice to navigate her death while looking back on her full life, she used her spiritual practice to help others navigate their deaths.

May the light of the Season Shine Throughout the Year.

Happy Hanukkah

George Latimer
Westchester County Executive

Rescued Torah Scroll Finds New Home at Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center (HHREC), a nonprofit organization that offers education programs in partnership with local schools to enhance the teaching and learning of the lessons of the Holocaust, has received a Rescued Holocaust Torah from the Yorktown Jewish Center. The HHREC will safeguard it at their library and education center in White Plains. The Yorktown Jewish Center recently closed after 68 years in operation serving their congregation in the greater Yorktown Heights area.

“We are incredibly honored and humbled by the generosity of our dear friends at the Yorktown Jewish Center to become caretakers for this Torah,” said Millie Jasper, Executive Director, HHREC. “And while we are saddened to learn of the closing of the synagogue, we will work very hard to help them achieve their mission in sharing this unique artifact with teachers, students, and the public at large, as a living document to help us educate and inform.”

“It’s both gratifying and heartening to know that this precious item, our Torah, will continue to be used as intended, to educate and elevate the spirituality of all who partake of it,” said Marvin Medow, one of the Co-Presidents of the Yorktown Jewish Center. “Our Torah has found a new home and the gift of its teachings will continue.”

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center is a not-for-profit organization based in White Plains New York that serves Westchester, Fairfield, and neighboring counties. Their Mission is to enhance the teaching and learning of the lessons of the Holocaust and the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect. They encourage students to speak up and act against all forms of bigotry and prejudice. Their work with students and teachers helps schools fulfill the New York State mandate that the Holocaust and other human rights abuses be included in their curriculum. Since 1994, they have brought the lessons of the Holocaust, genocide, and human rights crimes to more than 1,500 teachers, and through them to thousands of middle and high school students. Through their volunteer Educators Program Committee, the Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center gives teachers the unique opportunity to develop programs for themselves and others. These programs not only enrich teachers’ knowledge about the Holocaust and related issues, but they also provide the lens through which to view all other human rights violations. For more information call 914.696.0738 email info@hhrecny.org
AJC Releases 2021 “State of Antisemitism in America Report”

American Jewish Committee (AJC) has released its 2021 State of Antisemitism in America report based on new national polling of the U.S. Jewish and general adult populations. The surveys, the largest and most comprehensive of their kind ever conducted, confirm that hatred of Jews remains a severe problem in the United States, requiring urgent attention—and that American Jews and the U.S. general public, view the problem very differently.

Both Jews and non-Jews were asked about their perceptions and experiences of antisemitism over the past 12 months, including during the conflict between Israel and Hamas in May of this year. The AJC study provides insights into the views within each group and comparisons between the two on key issues regarding antisemitism.

“This critical report confirms that American Jews are deeply concerned about antisemitism in America—and many are limiting their behavior as a result,” said AJC CEO David Harris. “That one in four American Jews has been the target of antisemitism over the past year alone, and that four out of ten have taken steps to conceal their Jewishness or curtail their activities as a result, should alarm all Americans. Now is the time for American society to stand up and say ‘enough is enough.’ American Jews see antisemitism on the far right and the far left, among extremists acting in the name of Islam, and elsewhere throughout America. It is 2021, and a disturbing number of Jews in America are afraid of identifying openly as Jewish for fear of attack. Where is the outrage? Where is the recognition that antisemitism may begin with Jews but, ultimately, targets the fabric and fiber of any democratic society?”

One in Four Jews Have Been the Victims of Antisemitism Over the Past Year

Approximately one in four (24%) American Jews has been the target of antisemitism over the past 12 months, including during the conflict between Israel and Hamas in May of this year. The AJC study provides insights into the views within each group and comparisons between the two on key issues regarding antisemitism.

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Latimer Signs Anti-Discriminatory Harassment Bill

When County Executive George Latimer first took office in 2018, he made it a priority to strengthen and revitalize the Westchester County Human Rights Commission in an effort to combat discrimination and harassment incidents throughout the County. On October 8, Latimer fulfilled his promise by signing into law the Anti-Discriminatory Harassment Bill, legislation that expands the type of harassment that can be prosecuted under the law.

Latimer said, “When I sign this bill into law, we do away with any further reference to ‘other’ and ensure that there is only a ‘we’ in our County. Westchester is very diverse, and we should all embrace any differences that exist between us. Today, I stand together with each and every one of you, solidifying our message that harassment and discrimination must end in Westchester County.”

Under the current Westchester County Human Rights Law, it is unlawful to discriminate in relation to employment, public accommodations, housing accommodation, commercial space and land transactions, and the issuing of credit – but what the Human Rights Law does not currently protect against is discriminatory harassment outside of these specific actions.

The change initiated by Latimer makes it an unlawful discriminatory practice for a person to by “force or threat of force, knowingly injure, intimidate or interfere with, or threaten any other person in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to such other person by the constitution or laws of the United States, the constitution or laws of this state, or by local law, or by this chapter.”

With the new law in place, individuals are prohibited from interfering with a person’s right to the enjoyment of their home or residence, or to utilize and enjoy public transportation free from threats, intimidation, harassment, coercion or violence because of the person’s actual or perceived membership in a protected class.

Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission Tejash Sanchala said, “This new law is a timely and proactive approach to combating discrimination in venues that are not otherwise covered by the County’s Human Rights Law. With this expansion of the Commission’s jurisdiction, the County’s Human Rights Law is a leader in affording anti-discriminatory protections to residents and visitors in Westchester.”

Chair of the African American Advisory Board Barbara Edwards said, “Westchester County has the proud distinction of having a progressive statesman in County Executive George Latimer, who is committed to fostering a policy that prohibits discrimination and harassment, and encourages appropriate conduct among all citizens. The law that he will sign reflects the requirements of federal, state and local policy, which governs the prevention of discrimination and harassment.”

President of the Westchester Jewish Council William H. Schrag added, “It’s gratifying to know that hate not only has no home in Westchester, but that any attempt to change that will not be tolerated in Westchester.”

Fun, Family-Friendly Resources from PJ Library

This year, Hanukkah, the holiday of lights, runs from November 28 through December 6. PJ Library, long a leader in providing engaging ways for families to connect with Jewish life, offers a wealth of free resources including kid-friendly Hanukkah stories, printable recipes and activity ideas, book lists, as well as two new story-based podcasts that help kids learn more about the traditions behind the festival of lights.

PJ Library is a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation which delivers more than 680,000 free Jewish storybooks to kids around the world each month. Jewish families of all backgrounds, including interfaith households, and at all levels of Jewish knowledge and observance may sign up every child in their home for a free subscription to receive a new, age-specific book each month. What could be a better Hanukkah gift than to receive a delightful, beautifully illustrated book arriving in the mailbox each month? PJ Library’s team of experts and educators curate the book lists to provide the very best children’s stories that celebrate Jewish values, traditions, and culture to engage all Jewish families.

Beyond the books, PJ Library’s experts have updated their Hanukkah Hub, which offers child-friendly versions of the Hanukkah story along with myriad craft ideas, delicious holiday recipes, and printables. For example, check out these 10 Easy (and Kid-Approved) Hanukkah Recipes, The Ultimate List of Books about Hanukkah or The Easy Hanukkah Guide: Recipes, Gifts and Activities For Each Night.

New for 2021 are the two new PJ Library Presents podcasts for kids: “Afternoons with Mimi” and “Beyond the Bookcase.” The November episodes will be perfect Hanukkah listening (on your favorite podcast platform): Grandma Mimi prepares a delicious plate of sufganiyot and tells her grandchild the story of Judah Maccabee. Then, on “Beyond the Bookcase,” follow Miri and Michal as they are transported back to Maahel to help Jack Be Nimble find the courage to jump over a hanukkiah full of candles. When they launched, the two new story-based audio series climbed to the top 10 of Apple’s podcasts for kids.

Long a valuable resource for interfaith families, PJ Library also offers guidance this year, including their list of Hanukkah Books for Interfaith Families. They are co-presenting two webinars with 18Doors, an organization dedicated to empowering interfaith families and individuals to engage in Jewish life and make educated Jewish choices. For those balancing both big end-of-year holidays, these webinars will be engaging and informative: What to Do in December: A Live Q&A for Grandparents Balancing Hanukkah & Christmas and What to Do in December: A Live Q&A for Parents Balancing Hanukkah & Christmas.

For more Hanukkah gift ideas, PJ Library has set up shop at amazon.com/pjlibrary where families can find colorful aprons for cooking and crafting and books from the PJ Library imprint, PJ Publishing, including recent additions Havdalah Sky and Laila Tov, Moon.

The PJ Library is a free program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. PJ Library sends engaging storybooks and activities that provide fun and easy ways for families to connect with Jewish life. PJ Library’s high-quality books have become everyday favorites of kids from birth through age 12, whether the stories serve as first introductions to Jewish values and culture or inspire families to create new Jewish traditions at home. More than 680,000 books are delivered to families worldwide each month. To find out more, visit pjlibrary.org.
Guitar Virtuoso to Release New Holiday Album

As the nights get longer and days get brisker, the feeling of the holidays descends upon us... and with all holidays come the traditions, reflections, smells, sights and sounds that uplift the season, help us greet the familiar time of year.

This year, musician Jeremiah Lockwood presents a Chanukah record that is sure to become a standard in holiday’s lexicon. The Great Miracle: Jeremiah Lockwood’s Guitar Soli Chanukah Record is a beautiful solo guitar tribute to the holiday. With heartfelt appreciation of the 1968 classic The New Possibility: John Fahey’s Guitar Soli Christmas Record, Lockwood has sweetly crafted eight songs, one for each night of Chanukah, to celebrate the dancing candlelight with his new, blues-inspired takes on the most beloved melodies of the holiday’s canon. From the prayers for lighting the candles, to the kids’ songs that are sung around the burning menorah, Lockwood paints the light through the darkness with his instrumental creations.

Lockwood’s career has followed a unique path, with deep musical inspiration coming from two mentors. His grandfather Cantor Jacob Konigsberg infused in him the melodies of the Jewish liturgy, with Lockwood performing in his choir. Lockwood credits his career as a guitarist to a decade-long apprenticeship with the legendary blues musician Carolina Slim, a.k.a. Elijah Staley, who passed down to Lockwood the Piedmont blues tradition of Brownie McGhee and Buddy Moss. Jeremiah Lockwood is a scholar and a storyteller; a singer, guitarist and composer with an expansive knowledge of musical traditions and techniques that stretch from the Piedmont blues to the cantorial synagogues of his youth. His work engages with issues arising from peering into the archive and imagining the power of “lost” forms of expression to articulate keenly felt needs in the present. His music career began with over a decade of apprenticeship to Carolina Slim, playing in the subways of NYC and he also trained under his grandfather Cantor Jacob Konigsberg. Lockwood’s band, the Sway Machinery, seeks inspiration from diverse realms of experience related to the cultural geography of NYC. Lockwood received his PhD from the Stanford University Graduate School of Education with a concentration in Jewish Studies.

The album will be released on CD and digital by Reboots Records on Nov 22. It will be streaming on Spotify and other major music platforms. To buy a download visit rebooting.com/article/a-great-miracle/

Reboots is an arts and culture nonprofit that reimagines and reinforces Jewish thought and traditions. To attend the release party on Nov, 30 at 7pm at Relix Studio, 116 E. 27th St., NYC, find out more at Rebooting.com.

View Unique Menorahs at the Jewish Museum

Celebrate Hanukkah with the Jewish Museum! Highlights include an exhibition of the Museum’s renowned collection of Hanukkah lamps; special family programs, including an in-person Hanukkah hunt; and unique menorahs, dreidels, and gift items available for sale in the Jewish Museum Shop. Hanukkah begins on the evening of Sunday, November 28, and runs through Monday, December 6.

The Jewish Museum’s collection of Hanukkah lamps is the largest in the world at nearly 1,050 pieces. Visitors can explore the lamps in their collection online, or in person in the exhibition Accumulations: Hanukkah Lamps, featuring over 80 Hanukkah lamps from North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa, ranging in date from the Renaissance to the present.


On Sunday, December 5 from 10:30 am to 3 pm ET, an in-person drop-in program will explore striking Hanukkah menorahs from around the world at the Jewish Museum. Embark on a playful hunt, draw your discoveries in a sketchbook, experiment with whimsical shapes, and touching replicas of artifacts, and chat with Jewish Museum Educators about what you encounter in this special opportunity to see treasured works of art in person during the holiday. For ages 4 & Up. Free with Museum Admission; children 18 & under are free. Advance timed tickets required.

On Friday, November 26, 10 am ET, there will be a free YouTube Concert Premiere. Jump to the roots-reggae-pop tunes of Josh & The Jamtones with sounds that uplift the season, help us greet the familiar time of year.

Join us at American Jewish Committee (AJC) to build a safer, more secure future for the Jewish people, Israel, and all humanity. Email us at westchester@ajc.org to learn more.

Happy Hanukkah!

May the lights of Hanukkah usher in a better world for all humankind.

Wishing you and your family a Happy Hanukkah!

Join us at American Jewish Committee (AJC) to build a safer, more secure future for the Jewish people, Israel, and all humanity. Email us at westchester@ajc.org to learn more.

On behalf of your friends at AJC Westchester/Fairfield,
Legislation Prohibits Fire Districts, Volunteer Fire Departments, Police Departments, and School Districts from Selling or Displaying Symbols of Hate

On November 2, Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation (S.4615-A/A.5402-A) amending general municipal law to prohibit any municipal corporation such as fire districts, volunteer fire departments, police departments and school districts from selling or displaying symbols of hate.

“The recent and disgusting rise in racist, homophbic, and hateful behavior will never be tolerated in New York,” Governor Hochul said. “Symbols of hate have no use other than to spread ignorance and incite violence. As New Yorkers, we must remain united and actively fight to eradicate these attitudes, and this legislation bolsters those efforts. There is no reason for a symbol of hate to ever be on display, let alone by a police or fire department charged with protecting their community. With this law now signed, we aren’t only doing away with this deplorable behavior, but also ensuring that every New Yorker, no matter their background or identity, feels welcome in their community.”

This legislation was introduced following a pair of incidents on Long Island last year— one where a Confederate flag was displayed on a fire-truck during a parade, and two, when it was discovered that a fire department in Nassau County had a Confederate flag on display in their window. The law is patterned off and extends similar legislation signed in 2020 that banned displaying symbols of hate or the Confederate battle flag.

Senator Anna Kaplan said, “With hate on the rise around the world and in our own community, it’s more urgent than ever that we take action to eradicate it wherever we find it. You would think it was common sense that taxpayer-owned property couldn’t be used as a platform for hate, but shockingly there was no law on the books saying so— until now. Public property belongs to all of us, and this measure is critical to ensure that our public property isn’t being used to promote hatred. I’m grateful to Governor Kathy Hochul for signing this measure into law and for her leadership to ensure that hate has no place in our State. I’m also thankful for my partnership with Assemblymember Michelle Solages on this measure and others to our community safe from hatred.”

Celebrating the Life of Activist and Community Organizer
Rabbi Rachel Cowan
continued from page 2

Rabbi Rachel Cowan, life, using her terminal illness to teach others how to die well. She passed away on August 31, 2018.

American born, Jerusalem based, documentary filmmaker Paula Weiman-Kelman was a close friend of Rabbi Cowan. She has produced and directed dozens of films which have been screened in Jewish Film Festivals throughout the world.

The event is being held in-person on Thursday, December 2nd starting at 6:45 PM, and seating is limited. Tickets are $10 and more information, visit https://mjhnyc.org/events/the-light-and-legacy-of-rachel-cowan/

All in-person events this season will be livestreamed and available virtually for audiences around the world. For more information and safety requirements due to COVID-19, visit https://mjhnyc.org/visitor-information/. And for more information, visit mjhnyc.org.
New Book Investigates Anti-Zionist Conspiracy Theories in Academia

In a world of fake news and hype, what distinguishes theories from conspiracy theories? Do certain issues and rhetoric, such as anti-Zionism, receive a protected platform on university campuses around the United States? Is there an anti-Jewish bias in academia, and if so, does that create problems in other areas of society? Is there a universal standard by which theories and ideologies can be examined in the quest for truth?

In his timely and powerful new book, *Conspiracy U: A Case Study*, author Scott Shay gives an in-depth analysis demonstrating that both his alma mater and academia in general have sacrificed academic integrity and trustworthy scholarship in favor of conspiracy theories.

“Conspiracy theories have definable parameters. They claim to be explanations of political or social phenomena that are the result of a covert conspiracy by powerful and secret actors.”

To say something is a conspiracy theory should not be some general rhetorical charge,” explains Shay. “Rather, conspiracy theories have definable parameters. They claim to be explanations of political or social phenomena that are the result of a covert conspiracy by powerful and secret actors.”

While writing a tribute to his father, a survivor of the Holocaust who educated him on the importance of faith and Jewish values, Shay was disturbed and dismayed to discover the presence of far-right and far-left anti-Zionist professors on the faculty of his alma mater, Northwestern University. As a student of Jewish thought, history, and current events, who has written extensively on contemporary Jewish issues, he was compelled to take a deep dive into the world of anti-Zionist conspiracy theories and academia.

“I learned that Northwestern University, my beloved alma mater and a jewel of American academia, has enabled some of its professors to openly promote conspiracy theories,” says Shay. “Sadly, many academics can no longer even identify conspiracy theories. Professorial proponents insist that far from being conspiracy theorists, they are brave truth tellers.”

These two faculty members become a specific case study by which Shay examines the more general proliferation of anti-Zionist conspiracy theories. He precisely defines the differences between theories and conspiracy theories and shows how the views of Zionism held by these scholars fall into the latter category. He provides an overview of the political and historical lineage of anti-Zionist conspiracy theories, demonstrates how they are connected to currently popular academic theories such as decolonialism, and takes note of the central role they hold.

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ReportCampusHate.org Enables College Students to Report and Address Antisemitism on Campus

Hillel International, ADL (the Anti-Defamation League) and the Secure Community Network are launching ReportCampusHate.org, an online portal that allows Jewish students and their allies to report antisemitic incidents on college campuses and receive immediate support.

Through the website, the three organizations will ensure that Jewish students are supported and empowered to appropriately address the growing antisemitism on college campuses. The portal will also ensure proper tracking and reporting of antisemitic trends.

Jewish college students often say they are unsure where and how to report antisemitic incidents on campus, and they fear being targeted or isolated by reporting bias incidents and/or hate crimes. A recent poll found 74 percent of Jewish college students who personally experienced an act of antisemitism did not report the incident and only three percent said they reported it to local or campus police. In addition, 41 percent of students said they did not know how to report an incident if it were to occur.

“It is essential that Jewish college students and their peers have access to tools and resources to address antisemitism and hate on campus so they can live and study in safe and welcoming environments,” said Adam Lehman, President and CEO of Hillel International. “ReportCampusHate.org will empower students to report antisemitic incidents, knowing they will get the support they need and the response they deserve. Through this tool, Hillels will also be better equipped to address antisemitism with campus administrators and improve the campus climate.”

All incidents reported through ReportCampusHate.org will be reviewed by a trained professional.
FIDF Gala Supports Israeli Soldiers


The program featured Lt. Col. Y, Israeli Air Force veteran and his son Corp. J. from the Iron Dome Unit, a veteran of Operation Guardian of the Walls. Among the other guests was Sgt. Ayala, a young soldier who grew up as an at-risk youth in a troubled environment and eventually got the opportunity to attend the IDF Mivchav Alon Educational program – a program she says, turned her life around.

Other distinguished guests included FIDF CEO Steven Weil; FIDF National Director Major General (Res.) Nadav Padan; and FIDF National Chairman Peter Weintraub of Scarsdale.

FIDF was established in 1981 by a group of Holocaust survivors as a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization with the mission of offering educational, cultural, recreational, and social programs and facilities that provide hope, purpose, and life-changing support for the soldiers who protect Israel and Jews worldwide. Today, FIDF has 24 chapters throughout the United States. FIDF proudly supports IDF soldiers, families of fallen soldiers, and wounded veterans through a variety of innovative programs that reinforce the vital bond between the communities in the United States and the soldiers of the IDF. For more information visit: www.fidf.org

Hidden Veggie Latkes for Hanukkah

Ingredients:
- 1 large russet potato, peeled
- 1 large zucchini, peeled
- ½ head of cauliflower
- ½ yellow onion
- 1 clove of garlic, finely minced
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- Vegetable oil for frying

Preparation:
- grate together potato, zucchini, cauliflower, and onion. Use a food processor to make this step faster.
- Wrap the vegetable mixture in a cheesecloth or a lightweight kitchen towel and squeeze out as much liquid as possible.
- In a large bowl, combine vegetables with garlic, flour, baking powder, eggs, salt, and pepper.
- In a frying pan heat ½ inch of oil on medium-high. Carefully drop a heaping tablespoon of latke mixture into oil.
- Fry for roughly 2 minutes, then flip and fry the other side.
- Transfer each latke to a paper towel-lined platter.
- Serve while warm.

In support of ALYN Hospital, Israel’s only pediatrian and adolescent rehabilitation center, more than 70 cyclists gathered on the Eastern Shore of Maryland for the Wheels of Love charity bike ride from Oct. 24 – 26. Riders who participated in the multi-day ride cycled over 130 miles each throughout the three-day period on a carefully curated route through the scenic backroads of Cambridge, including the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge.

Several supporters of ALYN who were not able to commit for all three days joined the Wheels of Love ride for one day each, contributing to an event that held deep meaning for many involved. Participating local riders in the Maryland bike ride included Stu Seltzer of Mamaroneck and Nate Eisler and his two daughters, Lauren and Jennifer from Scarsdale.

While many supporters attended the event in Maryland, some ALYN supporters rode on Long Island in tribute and memory of a dear friend. The fundraising team “Friends of Kevin” consists of riders who knew long-time board member and ALYN supporter Kevin Leifer, who lost a battle with cancer two years ago. Kevin dedicated himself to ALYN’s cause, and his friends and family continue to honor his memory by supporting the hospital.

“Kevin was truly a special person,” remembered Sandy Nissel-Horowitz, a member of his fundraising team. “Everyone who knew him knows just how much he loved and supported ALYN and their mission.” The team of over 15 dedicated fundraisers has raised more than $40,000 for ALYN with this event alone, eclipsing their $20,000 goal. The group has pledged to ride every year in Kevin’s honor—no matter where they may be.

American Friends of ALYN Hospital Executive Director Maayan Aviv said, “ALYN’s supporters care deeply about the hospital, and I am deeply touched and honored that so many people have chosen to ride in memory of their loved ones.”

Wheels of Love is the largest fundraiser for ALYN hospital and has been a tradition in Israel for 22 years. This was the first year the multi-day ride also occurred in the U.S. To date, the ride has raised almost $2 million, and the fundraising efforts of the riders will continue into December. All funds raised go directly towards the hospital, helping to provide ALYN’s patients with innovative and attentive care.

Aviv added, “I’m so thankful for all the riders and board members who joined us in Maryland. What we are doing here makes a huge difference for children with disabilities in Israel and worldwide. The children of ALYN are so grateful for everyone's support.”

Since 1932, American Friends of ALYN Hospital has supported ALYN Hospital in Israel, which helps children with diverse disabilities by providing tools that increase their independence and mobility. The nonprofit organization focuses on increasing awareness of ALYN’s life-changing work and raising funds to support it. Learn more about ALYN Hospital, upcoming events and giving opportunities online at alynus.org.

Established in 1931, ALYN Hospital is Israel’s only pediatric rehabilitation facility providing innovative care and individualized treatments for children with a wide range of congenital and acquired conditions, including cerebral palsy, neuromuscular diseases, spinal cord injuries, brain injuries and burns. Learn more at https://www.alyn.org.

Cyclists Raise Nearly $2 Million for Israel’s ALYN Hospital

Stu Seltzer Blowing Shofar at Bike ride

Lauren Eisler

Nate Eisler

Jennifer Eisler

Lauren Eisler

Kevin Leifer

Nate Eisler

CREDIT: PJ LIBRARY- VISIT HTTPS://PJLIBRARY.ORG/HANUKKAH FOR MORE FREE, CREATIVE RECIPES
Immigrant Rights Through a Jewish Lens

On Sunday, December 5, 2021, at 7:30 pm, Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration (WJCI) will host a countywide zoom conversation about immigration focusing on Jewish tradition, values, and solidarity as powerful forces bringing the community together with others to work for the freedom of refugees. The event will also include a Chanukah candle-lighting to celebrate the last night of the holiday and music from a local Klezmer singer Jay Elliott to celebrate Jewish culture.

Jewish tradition places great importance on the humane treatment of immigrants. WJCI's guiding principles are to welcome the stranger and protect refugees and asylum seekers. Immigrant Rights Through a Jewish Lens invites Westchester community members and leaders to an educational and compelling dialogue between local and national leaders who are at the forefront of immigrant rights and advocacy. Panelists will discuss the Afghan refugees and the Afghan Adjustment Act, Haitian and other refugees at the border, the pathway to citizenship, and other refugee issues.

Reimagine What’s Possible: What “No Hate in Our States” Means for the Jewish Community

BY MYRA CLARK-SIEGEL
AJC WESTCHESTER/FAIRFIELD REGIONAL DIRECTOR

When I was 13, I awoke to “Merry Xmas” spray painted on our lawn with X’s in the shape of swastikas. Earlier this year, during the Hamas-Israel conflict, “Hitler was right” was posted across social media some 17,000 times in one week.

Three years ago, the murderous attack on Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life shocked Americans in the deadliest attack on Jews on American soil. The commonality between all three is the hatred of Jews simply due to our religion.

Three years ago, the support from every faith and background following the horrific Tree of Life attack was encouraging, with many attending synagogues and participating in AJC’s “Show Up For Shabbat” initiative. This demonstrated the solidarity the Jewish community provides the Muslim, Asian American Pacific Islander, Black, and Latino communities, to name a few minority groups.

At the time, the Jewish community felt support in acknowledging and addressing antisemitism. There was an understanding that this hatred required all of society to stand together; that we are not alone.

And yet... The FBI’s Hate Crimes Statistics Report shows that Jews are disproportionally the target of religiously-based hate crimes, with nearly 60% against Jews.

And yet... When Jews were physically attacked in the streets this Spring, from New York to Los Angeles, we heard a deafening silence.

And yet... The Jewish community is proudly diverse and engaged in our communities. We are multi-generational Americans and recent immigrants. We are Latino, Black, Asian, Persian, straight and LGBTQ+. We are America.

Indeed, Jews have lived in Westchester since colonial times.

And yet... As Jews, we often feel alone.

That might explain why 90% of American Jews believe antisemitism is a problem in the United States, with 82% saying it has increased over the past five years, according to the just-released 2021 American Jewish Committee State of Antisemitism in America Report. (Read it at ajc.org)

Indeed, 39% of Jewish adults – 48% between the ages of 18 and 35 – said they changed their behavior over the past 12 months for fear of their safety. This includes avoiding wearing items that outwardly identify them as Jewish, avoiding certain places, or posting social media identifying them as Jewish.

In the United States. In 2021.

Per AJC’s report, the general US population lags behind the Jewish community in recognizing the severity of antisemitism in America. Only 60% think antisemitism is a problem, and 44% think it has increased over the past five years.

Disturbingly, 34% of the general American population has never heard the term “antisemitism” or has heard it and does not know what it means. A year ago, 46% were equally unaware of the term, so this may indicate progress. But all of society should worry that only 66% of non-Jewish Americans say they know what antisemitism means.

There is much work to do. Certainly, officials and interfaith/intergroup partners denounce antisemitism and work to ensure the Jewish community feels protected and included. It begins with education and dialogue and we are proud of our AJC Community of Conscience which does exactly that.

To truly ensure “No Hate in Our States”, more needs to be done. Together.

Myra Clark-Siegel is Regional Director, American Jewish Committee (AJC) Westchester/Fairfield. To learn more, please email: westchester@ajc.org.

UJA’s Annual Gift of Chanukah

Westchester Young Families invites you to share the spirit of giving through their annual Chanukah volunteer program. They will brighten the holidays for local children and families in need together with UJA nonprofit Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS).

Join for a gift drive and wrapping party in your community. Gift and gift card donations will be accepted on November 4 - November 29 at the following locations: Bet Torah Synagogue, Mt. Kisco; Community Synagogue of Rye; Jewish Community Center of Harrison; Young Israel of Harrison; Young Israel of New Rochelle; Young Israel of Scarsdale.

For questions or to register contact Chani Kovaes Zweiter at zweiterc@ujafedny.org or 212.836.1118.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAININGS

Are you a teacher, parent, first-responder, counselor, or case worker?

WJCS offers a nationally recognized certificate course to equip adults to help youth experiencing a mental health crisis.

For details, please contact Paula Santa Donato: psantadonato@wjcs.com

www.wjcs.com
JCC of Mid-Westchester Establishes the Karen Kolodny Center for Jewish Culture, Heritage and Diversity

The JCC of Mid-Westchester (JCCMW) on Thursday, October 21, announced its establishment of the Karen Kolodny Center for Jewish Culture, Heritage and Diversity, a fund dedicated to bringing together through educational and culturally immersive experiences people of all backgrounds and faiths to experience the joys of Judaism. Named for JCCMW’s outgoing CEO Karen Kolodny and inspired by her passion for sharing the beauty, richness and plurality of Judaism, the Center has raised more than $600,000 to date from JCCMW patrons and supporters.

JCCMW drew inspiration for the Center from Ms. Kolodny’s passion for the richness of Jewish tradition and customs beyond the synagogue walls. It was further influenced by realities affecting the modern Jewish community, including the trend of interfaith marriage that is currently diminishing the rate at which Jews retain their traditional, religious connections to Judaism.

According to a study released in May 2021 by the Pew Research Center, 42 percent of married U.S. Jews have non-Jewish spouses, a number that rises to 61 percent among those who have married since 2010 and further increases to 72 percent when one excludes Orthodox Jews, who marry other Jews at very high numbers. The study further shows that Jews in interfaith marriages are less likely to raise children who retain their Jewish identities into adulthood, and points to growing numbers of Jews who express their Jewishness in non-religious ways.

“As someone who embraces the beauty of Jewish tradition and cares deeply about the longevity of Judaism, I am honored that a Center bearing my name will bring together those within and beyond the Jewish community, engaging those interested in learning more about Judaism,” said Ms. Kolodny.

The Karen Kolodny Center for Jewish Culture, Heritage and Diversity is in the process of hiring a senior, full-time professional responsible for creating and delivering the Center’s culturally focused programming and initiating interfaith dialogues. JCCMW will also continue fundraising efforts for the foreseeable future.

“JCCs nationwide have the opportunity to play a pivotal role helping connect those outside the Jewish faith as well as non-religious Jews with the cultural aspects of our beautiful Jewish heritage,” said Ellen Reinheimer, President of the Board of Directors of JCCMW. “We are proud to be leading an effort in mid-Westchester that is focused on this specific need in our community and are thrilled to be simultaneously recognizing Karen for her numerous contributions to JCCMW.”

Ms. Kolodny has led JCCMW since 2013, helping transform it into a more established, financially sound, culturally relevant local institution during extremely challenging times. Notably, her tenure was marked by a significant rise in antisemitic threats and a pandemic that threatened to shut its doors. Yet under her leadership, JCCMW enhanced its operations; expanded programs for patrons, notably adult programming and early childhood education; increased collaboration with other community, social service and Jewish agencies; and significantly enhanced philanthropic support.

The Jewish Community Center of mid-Westchester is a multi-generational center in Westchester. They support the community by offering outstanding human services, educational, cultural and recreational programs within and beyond their walls. Their programs are grounded in Jewish values and they welcome all. JCCMW enriches families, connects friends and strengthens community.

Dr. Ilana Ressler Spearheads 6th Annual Local Pies for Prevention Program with Proceeds to Benefit Sharsheret

For the sixth year in a row, local New Rochelle resident and board-certified Reproductive Endocrinologist from RMA of Connecticut, Dr. Ilana Ressler, spearheaded Pies for Prevention, a charitable program to help promote ovarian cancer awareness. All proceeds from the sale of the pies benefit Sharsheret, the nonprofit organization that supports young women, men, and their families facing breast and ovarian cancer.

This year marks the 13th annual Sharsheret Thanksgivng Bake Sale, where pies are baked within the community right before Thanksgiving and then distributed to those who have purchased them just in time for the holidays. Pies for Prevention is a program started in 2008 by two sisters, Adeena Sussman and Sharon Wieder, who lost both their mother and grandmother to ovarian cancer. To honor the memories of both women, the sisters decided to memorialize their mother’s and grandmother’s love of baking while raising money for a great cause.

Dr. Ressler, who oversees RMA of Connecticut’s new Harrison office, launched the program in Westchester six years ago, after she was driven to get involved as she continued to meet women faced with breast and ovarian cancer through her job as a reproductive endocrinologist at RMA of Connecticut.

“I’m honored to once again be involved in the Pies for Prevention program through Sharsheret, a wonderful non-profit organization that supports young women and their families with breast and ovarian cancer,” says Dr. Ilana Ressler. “We love to celebrate another successful bake sale.”

Purchase Resident Honored with National Award for Heroic Service Activity

Ellie Zimmerman, age 16, of Purchase, has been named an honoree of the 2021 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes. Each year, the Barron Prize celebrates 25 inspiring young leaders – fifteen top winners and ten honorable mentions – who have made a significant positive impact on people, their communities, and the environment. This year’s Barron Prize honorees are an outstanding group of young heroes chosen from more than 700 applicants across the U.S. and Canada.

Ellie created Interns 4-Good to connect tech-savvy teens with nonprofits in need of their skills. In three years, she has matched more than 12,000 remote volunteer interns with nearly 300 nonprofits to help with projects like website design, social media, and Photoshop. When the pandemic hit, Interns 4-Good was overwhelmed by homebound high schoolers looking to volunteer. Ellie put them to work helping families and teachers struggling with online learning. She organized hundreds of high schoolers as virtual tutors for underserved students. In New York City, she paired bilingual volunteers with overwhelmed parents to connect their children with online school.

Other volunteers launched a technology hotline, created educational videos, and organized a virtual summer camp for 250 kids in need. Ellie hatched the idea for Interns 4-Good during the summer after her freshman year. She crafted a business plan, won $400 for it in a competition, and used the prize money to file for nonprofit status. Since then, she has built a Leadership Team of twenty high schoolers from across the country. “This experience has sparked my passion for social change through entrepreneurship,” says Ellie. “It has also reminded me that doing something important is hard, but that the true measure of success lies in the decision to keep trying.”

The Barron Prize was founded in 2001 by author T. A. Barron and named for his mother, Gloria Barron. Since then, the Prize has honored more than 500 young people who reflect the great diversity of America. All of them demonstrate heroic qualities like courage, compassion, and perseverance as they work to help their communities or protect the planet.

“Nothing is more inspiring than stories about heroic people who have truly made a difference to the world,” says T. A. Barron. “And we need our heroes today more than ever. Not celebrities, but heroes – people whose character can inspire us all. That is the purpose of the Barron Prize: to shine the spotlight on these amazing young people so that their stories will inspire others.”

For more information, visit www.barronprize.org

Mazel Tov
that may be vulnerable because of their ideology, religious beliefs, community centers and cultural museums. Non-profit day care centers, 24-hour stands, and senior citizens centers are all potential targets of hate crimes against non-profit day care centers.

The Governor announced the availability of $25 million in funding to strengthen security measures and prevent hate crimes against non-profit organizations. The funds, which will be awarded through the Governor’s Against Hate Crimes Grant Program, will provide up to $25 million in funding to non-profit organizations across the state to enhance security measures and prevent hate crimes.

The program is designed to support organizations that have been the victims of hate crimes. The funds will be used to help organizations implement measures to prevent hate crimes, such as installing security cameras, hiring additional security personnel, or hiring experts to analyze the risk of hate crimes.

The program is one of several initiatives that the State of New York has launched to combat hate crimes. The Governor announced the program in response to rising hate crimes in the state, including a recent surge in anti-Semitic incidents.

Governor Announces $25 Million Available to Strengthen Security at Non-Profit Organizations

Rachel Greenspan Joins Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center Board of Directors

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center (HHREC) of White Plains, has announced that Rachel Greenspan has joined their Board of Directors. Greenspan is Senior Director at GHP Office Realty, where she focuses on Sales, Acquisitions and Financing of GHP’s commercial portfolio throughout the greater Westchester area. Since her start at the company two years ago, she has been involved in closing transactions totaling over $140 million. Additionally, she works closely with GHP Asset Management on Major Capital Improvement projects across their properties.

“I am honored to be working with Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center and the Board of Directors to help promote these important societal messages,” said Greenspan. “Now more than ever we need to bring light to these issues as well as work together to learn from the past and educate for a better future.”

“HHREC is excited to have her join us in our efforts to promote human rights and serve as an education leader here in the greater Westchester County area and, increasingly, across the U.S.”

Greenspan graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication and a concentration in Marketing. She was a member of Sigma Delta Tau, where she served on the Executive Board and Treasurer of the chapter. Greenspan is on the March of Dimes Real Estate Committee. A native of Westchester, she grew up in Chappaqua.

Greenspan resides in New York City.

Dr. Ilana Ressler Spearheads 6th Annual Local Pies for Prevention Program with Proceeds to Benefit Sharsheret

Dr. Ilana Ressler is a Reproductive Endocrinologist, board-certified in both Obstetrics and Gynecology and in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility. Dr. Ressler serves as Medical Advisor for Yesh Tikva, which was established to create a Jewish community of support for those experiencing infertility. She also launched the Pies for Prevention program in her Westchester community to benefit Sharsheret, the nonprofit organization supporting Jewish women and families facing breast and ovarian cancer.

Sharsheret is a national non-profit organization, improving the lives of Jewish women and families living with or at increased genetic risk for breast or ovarian cancer. Through personalized support, Sharsheret saves lives through educational outreach. While their expertise is in young women and Jewish families as related to breast cancer and ovarian cancer, Sharsheret programs serve all women and men. Visit sharsheret.org to learn more.

**Beth El Synagogue Center Celebrates Installation of Rabbi Jessica Fisher**

Continued from page 1

Sunday, November 7, 2021, marked the installation of Assistant Rabbi Jessica Fisher at Beth El Synagogue Center, New Rochelle. Prior to Rabbi Fisher’s installation, the public was invited to create a personal or family blessing for the Beth El Community, displaying it on a 2 x 15-inch fabric ribbon, tied onto the Beth El Ladder of Blessings in the Sukkah Garden Patio.

“In Breishit (Genesis), our ancestor Jacob left his home and made camp along the way. While he slept, he dreamt of angels ascending and descending a ladder,” Fisher explained.

“G-d appeared to Jacob and blessed him... When Jacob awoke, he exclaimed, ‘Surely Adonai is present in this place, and I do not know it!’” Fisher said.

Jacob named the site “Beth El” (House of G-d). Numerous references were made connecting Beth El Synagogue Center’s name to that auspicious event.

Music Director Jack Klebanow and his House Band provided instrumental entertainment, while Cantor Gaby Schwartz led the singing.

“I want to extend a warm welcome to Jessica’s parents, Michael and Suzette Fisher and acknowledge a tremendously important tikkun,” Rabbi David Schuck began.

“For over 100 years Jewish communities were deprived of the gifts of religious leadership of women. This has also been true at our synagogue. Today it is critical to recognize that we are correcting that injustice by installing the first woman on our Clergy Team...”

Finally, Associate Rabbi Zach Sitkin read the Torah portion that Joshua receives shemita (transfer of leadership) at Moses’ request, from G-d through the priest Eleazar.

**Rachel Greenspan Joins Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center Board of Directors**

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“I am honored to be working with Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center and the Board of Directors to help promote these important societal messages,” said Greenspan. “Now more than ever we need to bring light to these issues as well as work together to learn from the past and educate for a better future.”

“It is with great pleasure that we welcome Rachel Greenspan to our Board,” said Michael Gyory, HHREC Board Chairperson. “She brings a tremendous level of energy and experience to our organization as a relationship-builder, and we are very excited to have her join us in our efforts to promote human rights and serve as an education leader here in the greater Westchester County area and, increasingly, across the U.S.”

Greenspan graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication and a concentration in Marketing. She was a member of Sigma Delta Tau, where she served on the Executive Board and Treasurer of the chapter. Greenspan is on the March of Dimes Real Estate Committee. A native of Westchester, she grew up in Chappaqua.

Greenspan resides in New York City.

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**Governor Announces $25 Million Available to Strengthen Security at Non-Profit Organizations**

Governor Announces $25 Million Available to Strengthen Security at Non-Profit Organizations

**Westchester Jewish Life • November 2021 • Kislev 5782 • Page 11 • www.westchesterjewishlife.com**
If you and your home are ready to be listed now, in November, and you have the ability to move on to your future residence, this may be an excellent time to list your home for sale, especially since mortgage rates are still low and the inventory of Westchester homes is currently very low. However, if you and your home are not ready, here are some important things to do to make your home marketable next spring. Your home looks great to you, but buyers want to picture themselves living in it - so take a fresh look at it. Jump into your car, drive around the block, and then scrutinize your home as a prospective buyer will see it for the first time. First, consider what’s called “curb appeal.” Does your house need pressure washing or painting? Does the front walk or driveway need repair work? Is the landscaping in good shape? Remember; be very critical because a buyer will be. Believe it or not, buyers will make up their minds whether they like your house from its curb appeal.

Next, start upgrading if you are trying to get the most return on your investment. Upgrades can mean repairing and restoring finishes and appliances, or it can mean replacing your existing finishes with higher quality ones. A vinyl floor upgraded to wood or a standard refrigerator upgraded to stainless steel are examples of well-worth-it upgrades, where you will see a positive return on your investment.

Get rid of clutter in every area. Remember, this is no time to be sentimental. If you do not use it, lose it. Potential buyers are seriously put off by clutter. Get rid of bulky furniture. Furniture should fit the scale of the room, so get rid of any extra or oversized items that could make your space look smaller than it really is.

Open blinds and shades to let in natural light and add floor or table lamps in areas that are dim using 100W or 150W bulbs. Remove heavy dated window treatments that block natural light. To emphasize the brightness of each room, repaint the walls neutral colors. Tones like tans, light gray and off-white allows buyers to focus on the spaces themselves.

Next, it is time to really clean - and I mean REALLY clean. Have the carpets professionally cleaned, strip and polish the floors, scour the bathrooms, polish the furniture, wash the windows, and spiff up the ceiling fans and kitchen appliances. In short, clean everything.

Prior to listing your home, pack up those personal photographs and family heirlooms. Remove all political and religious items. You want buyers to imagine their own photos and belief statements and they cannot do that if yours are there.

If you have not engaged a realtor at this point, now is the time to do so. Have your agent arrange for professional outdoor photos now, while leaves are still on the trees, rather than snow photos. A truly professional real estate agent will help you determine a maximum price for your home that will attract both buyers and offers. Agents know that if the home is priced too high potential buyers will not make offers, and if the price is too low neither the seller will receive a fair price for the home nor will the agent earn the highest commission possible. The fact is, it is both to the advantage of the seller and the agent to negotiate the best and fairest listing price for your home.

Finally, consider listing your home in February, prior to the bulk of listings that start in March.

November is the Perfect Time to Prepare to Sell Your Home Next Spring

BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED ELDERR LAW ATTORNEY

A Power of Attorney is Not Just a Form

A Power of Attorney (POA) is a very powerful legal document which allows a person (referred to as a principal) to appoint another person (referred to as an agent) to assist with the principal’s finances on their behalf. Often, spouses, children or siblings act as agent for the principal. However, many agents accept their role without understanding the responsibilities and potential litigation commenced by an interested party that may arise from their appointment. An interested party can include but is not limited to a monitor, a co-agent or successor agent, a government entity, or someone appointed by the court.

First, an agent owes a fiduciary duty to the principal. This means that an agent must act in the best interest of the principal. The agent is required to act as a prudent person would if it were their own assets but should not co-mingle the principal’s funds with the agent’s funds. If an interested party believes that the agent is not acting in the best interest of the principal or is not acting in a prudent manner, then that person may have the right to bring a breach of fiduciary duty claim against the agent. The person bringing the action will need to prove that the agent breached their fiduciary duty. An interested party can commence a legal proceeding to remove an agent on the grounds that the agent violated, or is unfit, or unable to perform, the fiduciary duties under the POA.

An interested party can commence an action requesting the court appoint a neutral third party to approve and review all of the receipts, disbursements and transactions entered into by the agent on behalf of the principal. It is critical that anyone who is acting as agent keep a detailed record of all receipts, disbursements and transactions.

Another often litigated matter is the validity of a POA. An interested party can bring an action to determine if the POA is valid, if the principal had capacity when the document was executed or if there was duress, fraud, or undue influence to sign the POA. As such, it is important to work with an attorney who is experienced with the New York Power of Attorney law, and the requirements of properly executing the POA in order to increase the likelihood that the POA will accomplish its objectives.

In order for an agent to receive compensation, the principal needs to authorize compensation in the POA. The work of an agent can be strenuous, and the agent may want to be compensated for all of the time that they spend. In the POA, the amount of compensation can either be specified or it can say reasonable compensation. Interested parties may contest what reasonable compensation is. There is no set rule for reasonable compensation, rather it is determined based on the amount of work involved, the complexity of the principal’s affairs, and various other factors. One thing is clear, however; if you do not specify in the POA that the agent should receive compensation, then the agent will not be entitled to get paid.

A new Power of Attorney law went into effect on June 13, 2021. This changed the way the POA is drafted and executed, including changes to the witness requirement. Fortunately, all POAs properly executed under prior law will continue to be valid. However, there may be reason you would want to have an updated POA since banks and other financial institutions are now required to honor or reject a POA within 10 business days. Also, there may be circumstances where you are entitled to money damages if the bank unreasonably rejects your POA. Previously, there was no time requirement for banks to review the POA and it often took weeks or longer to get a response. Moreover, sometimes banks refused to honor validly executed POAs because they were not on the bank’s own form or the POA was executed several years ago.

For more information about POAs, visit the website at www.littmankrooks.com and the blog written by Joel Krooks, Esq. at https://www.littmankrooks.com/2021/06/potential-litigation-under-the-general-obligations-law.

Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP. He was named 2021 “Lawyer of the Year” by Best Lawyers in America® for excellence in Elder Law and has been honored as one of the “Best Lawyers” in America since 2008. He was elected to the Estate Planning Hall of Fame by the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils (NAEPC). Krooks is immediate past Chair of the Elder Law Committee of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). Mr. Krooks may be reached at (914) 684-2100 or by visiting the firm’s website at www.littmankrooks.com.
They say that a little light, chases away a lot of darkness. That is certainly the theme of Chanukah, and it also could be used to describe impact of our work, here at Westchester Jewish Community Services this past year.

This has been a year of change, of challenges, and of rising to overcome obstacles. As a non-profit human services organization that was founded in 1943, we have faced many hurdles over the last seven decades. But certainly, the worldwide pandemic, which caused enormous loss, emotional and financial strain, and family and educational challenges right here in Westchester has posed some of the greatest uncertainties in our history. We feel so fortunate and privileged that, thanks to the support of funders and donors, we have been able to deliver vitally important programs and services to all of our clients who had greater needs than ever before.

Whatever problems you may be facing, WJCS is here for you. We offer a vast array of services, literally ranging from A to Z. From our Addressing Alzheimer’s program, which provides support to individuals who are affected with dementia as well as their caregivers, to individual and group counseling groups offered virtually by Zoom, we address people affected by depression, anxiety, autism and other special needs, bereavement, social isolation, job insecurity, and much more. WJCS has four standalone mental health clinics, is a leader in the treatment of trauma, founded the first, and still the only, LGBTQ+ center for youth in Westchester, and cares for over 90 disabled adults in 13 group homes in Westchester. Our client’s range in age from young children to public school age. The dedicated staff of at WJCS hope that everyone realizes they need not suffer alone. WJCS has highly skilled, compassionate professionals to help you overcome problems and build resilience and, when appropriate, guide you to other resources. Stress levels have soared since the Covid pandemic began and WJCS has focused on the many groups affected by it, including youth, parents, college students, essential workers, Holocaust survivors, and seniors. We have expanded our Mental Health First Aid trainings, which now include workshops for those focusing on youth, teens and adults. Even our very active corps of volunteers has expanded. We have an engaged group of Care Call Buddies who are in regular contact with the residents of our group homes and our elderly clients. Our tech-skilled mentors provide computer guidance to students who have had to learn remotely and seniors who were physically isolated and want to stay in close contact with family members, even if separated geographically.

We all hope we’ve turned the corner with Covid and things will look brighter in 2022. WJCS wishes you a Happy Chanukah and a healthy, fulfilling 2022. Please visit www.wjcs.com to learn more about WJCS. We welcome your involvement and support and are here to help you in any way we can.

**Auscus Releases 2021 “State of Antisemitism in America Report” continued from page 3**

every ten American Jews (39%) have changed their behavior out of fear of antisemitism: 25% have avoided posting content online that would enable others to identify them as Jewish or reveal their views on Jewish issues; 23% have avoided wearing or displaying things that might enable others to identify them as Jewish; and 17% have avoided certain places, events, or situations due to concerns about their safety or comfort as Jews.

Four in ten Americans of all backgrounds (41%) have personally witnessed an antisemitic incident in the last 12 months, with 31% having witnessed more than one.

Jews are Nearly Twice as Likely as Non-Jews to Perceive Rising Antisemitism

There is some discrepancy between the Jewish and general populations regarding the severity of antisemitism in the U.S.

90% of American Jews think antisemitism is a problem in the United States today, with 41% saying it is a very serious problem and only 10% saying it is not a problem. At the same time, a far smaller majority (60%) of the U.S. general public says antisemitism is a problem, with 25% saying it is not much of a problem or not a problem at all.

While 82% of American Jews believe antisemitism has increased over the past five years, only 44% of the U.S. general public shares that view, with 15% of Americans saying antisemitism has actually gone down, compared to only 3% of American Jews who say the same.

Regarding the spike in attacks on Jews during the Israel-Hamas conflict in May, the AJC report found that U.S. adults were far less likely than American Jews to have heard about violent antisemitism. While 71% of American Jews said they had heard “a lot” or “some” about Jews being attacked during that period, 40% of the general adults said the same, and 53% said they’d heard “not much” or “nothing at all.”

Significantly, of the large majority of American Jews who heard about the attacks on Jews in May 2021, 72% said it made them feel less safe as Jews in the United States.

Both groups were asked if antisemitism is taken more or less seriously than other forms of hate and bigotry. 46% of Jews and 38% of U.S. adults said it is taken less seriously, 37% of Jews and 47% of U.S. adults said it is considered to be the same as other forms of hate and bigotry, and 16% of Jewish respondents and 15% of the general population said antisemitism is taken more seriously.

Both Jews and Non-Jews Perceive Hostility to Israel as Antisemitic

More than 80% of both Jews and the U.S. general public consider anti-Zionism — as represented by the statement “Israel has no right to exist” — antisemitic. This includes 92% of Republicans and 83% of Democrats. Similarly, large majorities of both Jews and non-Jews view the statement “American Jews are loyal to Israel and disloyal to America” as antisemitic, with 85% of Jews and 73% of the general public saying so.

While most Americans have not heard much or anything at all about the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel, those who have believe it has antisemitic elements: of those who expressed some familiarity with the movement, 82% of Jews and 63% the U.S. general public said the movement is either antisemitic as a whole or has antisemitic supporters, with 87% of Jews and 73% of the general public saying so.

Antisemitism on College Campuses

50% of American Jews believe antisemitism on college campuses has increased over the past five years, compared to 44% of the U.S. general public that also believes it has increased. At the same time, 82% of American Jews believe antisemitism has actually gone down, compared to only 3% of American Jews who say the same.

The surveys of American Jews and U.S. adults were conducted for the nonpartisan American Jewish Committee (AJC) by the independent research firm SSRS. National representative samples of 1,433 Jews, ages 18 or older, were interviewed by telephone and online from September 1 – October 3, 2021, and 1,214 general population adults, 18 or older, via the SSRS Opinion Panel, from September 9 – September 22, 2021. The margin of error for both surveys is +/-3.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

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