County Marks International Holocaust Remembrance Day

On January 27, Westchester County Executive George Latimer announced that this day was the first time the County has marked International Holocaust Remembrance Day with five yellow panels across the Westchester County Center in White Plains.

“It’s important to know the horrors inflicted in the Holocaust, which have been well-documented, must never be forgotten. This story must be told from generation to generation, so we never repeat the acceptance of hatred and genocide. We must make sure this never happens again,” Latimer said.

Executive Director of the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center Millie Jasper said, “This is so important to bring awareness and we are grateful to the County Executive for supporting proper Holocaust education in

Funding for Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Mobile Museum of Tolerance

On January 6, the NYS Assembly proudly announced $1.5 million capital funding for the construction of the Simon Wiesenthal Center’s New York based Mobile Museum of Tolerance (MMOT).

This state-of-the-art mobile education center will utilize innovative technology and interactive lessons becoming a critical expansion of the Simon Wiesenthal Center’s educational resources in New York State. The MMOT will allow easy access for tens of thousands of students, educators, law enforcement agencies, faith groups and professionals to critical educational training on issues such as antisemitism, racism, bullying, stereotyping, hate and intolerance and to promote diversity and human dignity.

The NYS MMOT will represent the third such initiative for SWC who currently operate highly successful Mobile Tolerance Museums in Illinois and Canada. Since its launch, Tour for Humanity Mobile Tolerance Center has educated over 150,000 students at 750 schools and communities across Canada. MMOT in Illinois, launched in February 2021, has educated almost 4,000 students in person and 2,000 students virtually.

"The Simon Wiesenthal Center’s New York based Mobile Museum of Tolerance will educate New Yorkers on the importance of tolerance and acceptance and illustrate the detrimental effects hatred has had on the global community," said Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie. "I want to thank Assembly Ways and Means Committee Chair Helene Weinstein and Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright for their leadership in bringing this innovative museum to New York so that people of all ages can learn from the past and celebrate our diverse communities," said NYS Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie.

“The Simon Wiesenthal Center has been successful in spreading a message of acceptance and open-mindedness for decades,” said Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein, Chair of the Assembly Ways and Means Committee. “The simple truth is that hate is not something we’re born with, and with the ever-rising tide of hate-related crimes, the Mobile Museum of Tolerance engages visitors and presents an interactive curriculum on culture, race, ethnicity, and religion; all things which make us unique and beautiful in our own right. One day I hope we won’t need this wonderful program, but right now it couldn’t be more crucial and I thank Assembly Speaker Heastie, Rabbi Mayer May and Michael Cohen for allowing us to partner with the Simon Wiesenthal Center on this program."

“The Mobile Museum of Tolerance is a traveling source of information to teach tolerance and the perniciousness of hate,” said Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright, the sponsor of legislation requiring counseling for persons convicted of hate crimes. “I commend Speaker Carl Heastie for his leadership in prioritizing Holocaust education and tolerance, and Ways and Means Chair Helene Weinstein for her support. Michael Cohen, the Eastern Director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, is working diligently to keep the history and the lessons of the Holocaust alive with interactive exhibits that will now be available for the benefit of neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area and beyond. I look forward to the van visiting the Upper East Side, Yorkville and Roosevelt Island.” Said NYS Assembly member Rebecca Seawright.

“This state-of-the-art Mobile Museum of Tolerance will be available for the benefit of neighborhoods throughout the metropolitan area and beyond. I look forward to the van visiting the Upper East Side, Yorkville and Roosevelt Island.” Said NYS Assembly member Rebecca Seawright.

Visit www.westchesterjewishlife.com
In Commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day

BY STEPHEN E. UIPKEN

The 2022 International Holocaust Remembrance Day Virtual Commemoration was presented by Harriet and Kenneth Kupferberg Holocaust Center at Queensborough Community College on Thursday, January 27th, featuring Dr. Robert Williams, Deputy Director for International Affairs at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The discussion, "From Awareness to Action: Confronting Antisemitism at Home and Abroad," was locally co-sponsored by The Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center along with others.

Remembrance Day is observed each January 27th, the date Auschwitz was liberated in 1945.

City University of New York Chancellor Felix Matos Rodriguez referred to the recent struggle in Colleveryville, Texas, “in which Jewish people were held hostage in their House of Worship.

“We must acknowledge that antisemitism is with us today.

“We must stand in unity against all prejudice, racism and stereotyping. As Chancellor of this great and diverse University I am here to emphasize with strongest conviction that we will not condone religious, racist or ethnic hatred on any of our 25 campuses.”

“First, antisemitism is persistent. It is called the oldest hatred for a reason,” Williams began. “Antisemitism is not unique to any one religion, society or culture. It has multiple influences that include but are not limited to religious bias; white nationalism; neo-Naziism; communism; populism; anti-Zionism; anti-Globalism; post-Colonialism; anti-Americanism and conspiracy thinking.”

Williams pointed out that antisemitism in America included General Ulysses S. Grant trying to expel Jews from Paducah, Kentucky in 1862 during the Civil War and lynching of a Jewish man, Leo Frank in Marietta, Georgia in 1915. “Attacks against Jewish communities became even more common with the rise of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950’s-’60’s. Between 1957 and 1958 there were at least 8 actual or attempted bombings of Jewish institutions in the United States.

“In 2020 the FBI determined that 58% of all religious-based hate crimes were directed at Jews.

“The decline of 60.2% in 2019 was due to the COVID lockdown.” Williams then traced the path of antisemitism in Europe, from Roman times to blood libel and conspiracy theories.

Dr. Williams sits on the steering committee of the Global Task Force on Holocaust Distortion and served for four years as chair of the Committee on Antisemitism and Holocaust Denial at the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

In late November, Dr. Williams was honored by running for the position of President of the Global Task Force on Holocaust Distortion and Denial.”

The Westchester community is excited to have a true pioneering hero visit us,” said Diana Sklar, President of JNF-USA's Westchester and Southern Connecticut Regional Board of Directors. “Yedidya is a shining example of the Zionism spirit in all Israelis, and JNF-USA's support is a reminder of what we can accomplish on the American side.”

The event will also be streamed online.

The support comes, in large part, from Jewish National Fund-USA and generous donors. With JNF-USA’s help, Halutza’s pioneers built roads, brought in prefabricated temporary housing, erected hundreds of greenhouses, planted crops, and built fields of solar energy panels. “JNF-USA truly is a great friend of ours,” said Harush. “They understand we are building something incredible, and they have been with us every step of the way.”

Recent JNF-USA projects in the Halutza communities include the Halutza Medical Center, the Halutza Student Program, the Naveh Synagogue Project, and the Young Farmer’s Incubator Project, which trains young Israelis to become farmers.

Today, Halutza has grown from its 30 founding families to over 2,500 families. “It’s amazing how our ‘little’ community has developed and flourished,” said Harush. “We embrace the pioneering spirit of our forefathers, and I’m so excited to continue creating a home in the desert for more families.”

On February 26 at 7:30 pm, JNF-USA together with Beth El Synagogue Center will host “Against All Odds: Building the Desert,” a community event featuring Yedidya Harush. Community members will learn about life as a pioneer on Israel’s frontier and how they have made the desert bloom. The event will also be streamed online.

"The Westchester community is excited to have a true pioneering hero visit us,” said Diana Sklar, President of JNF-USA's Westchester and Southern Connecticut Regional Board of Directors. “Yedidya is a shining example of the Zionism spirit in all Israelis, and JNF-USA’s support is a reminder of what we can accomplish on the American side.”

There is no cost to attend. To register or for more information, go to jnf.org/WestchesterDesert or contact Rebecca Zimilover, JNF-USA Director, Westchester at rzimilover@jnf.org or 212.879.9305 x510.

The Modern-Day Pioneers: Transforming Israel’s South

BY JD KREBS

In the early days of the Zionist movement, Jewish pioneers like David Ben-Gurion trekked the length of the Jewish Homeland, building communities out of swampland and desert plains until it turned into the thriving country it is today. However, there’s still much work to be done. And residents in Halutza, an emerging town led by Israel’s modern-day pioneers on Israel’s southern frontier, are following in the footsteps of their ancestors by once again turning the desert into an oasis, with help from Jewish National Fund-USA (JNF-USA).

Located in the Northwest Negev Desert, less than a mile from the Gaza border, Halutza was formed by families that were evacuated from several Gush Katif communities during Israel’s disengagement from Gaza in 2005.

“We wanted to create something new,” said Yedidya Harush, JNF-USA’s liaison to the Halutza community and local resident. “We took what could have been a devastating loss and turned it into the creation of another beautiful, flourishing community despite the harsh environments.”

Those harsh environments include a barren desert landscape, a lack of rainwater, and incendiary balloons sent from terrorists in Gaza. “The conditions can be tough,” added Harush. “However, with grit, innovation, and support from our friends, we are tougher.”

Food Assistance Hotline Now Available Through DSS

Westchester County is prepared to offer food assistance for residents and families having difficulty getting access to food while under isolation from COVID-19. The food assistance service is available to any Westchester County resident. To find out more information, call the Westchester County Department of Social Services at (914) 995-5366. Assistance is available from Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Westchester County Executive George Latimer said, “The COVID-19 pandemic continues to effect each and every one of us. Westchester County is dedicated to providing assistance to residents affected by COVID-19 and having access to healthy, nutritious food is not something we want our residents to struggle with. If you have been advised to isolate or quarantine due to a positive COVID-19 test result or an exposure, please do not hesitate to reach out to get the food that you and your family need.”

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Historic UN Resolution Rejecting and Condemning Holocaust Denial

On January 20, 2022, the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) welcomed the passage of a historic resolution by the United Nations General Assembly (A/76/L.30) which “Rejects and condemns without any reservation any denial of the Holocaust as an historical event, either in full or part.” The measure, submitted by Israel, together with Germany and 69 other countries, was approved by consensus (without a vote).

“The adoption of the resolution by the United Nations General Assembly on the 80th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference is a powerful statement by the international community in combating Holocaust denial and distortion,” said Mark Weitzman, Chief Operating Officer, World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO). “As one of the lead authors of IHRA’s Working Definition of Holocaust Denial and Distortion, I applaud the commitment of the UN and its international membership to uphold the integrity of the historical record to ensure that we can seek justice for Holocaust survivors and Jewish communities whose property was brutally taken by the Nazis and their allies as an integral part of the genocide.”

In addition, the resolution: Urges all Member States to reject without any reservation any denial or distortion of the Holocaust as a historical event, either in full or in part, or any activities to this end; Commends those Member States which have actively engaged in preserving those sites that served as Nazi death camps, concentration camps, forced labor camps, killing sites and prisons during the Holocaust, as well as similar places operated by Nazi-allied regimes, their accomplices, or auxiliaries; Urges Member States to develop educational programs that will inculcate future generations with the lessons of the Holocaust in order to help to prevent future acts of genocide, and in this context commends the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance; Urges Member States and social media companies to take active measures to combat antisemitism and Holocaust denial or distortion by means of information and communications technologies and to facilitate reporting of such content; Requests the United Nations outreach program on the Holocaust as well as all relevant United Nations specialized agencies to continue to develop and implement programs aimed at countering Holocaust denial and distortion, and to advance measures to mobilize civil society and invites all relevant stakeholders, including States, parliaments, the private sector and academia to educate their societies truthfully about the facts of the Holocaust and the importance of its lessons as a countermeasure against Holocaust denial and distortion, in order to prevent future acts of genocide.

The vote was held on the 80th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference organized by the Nazis to coordinate the implementation of Hitler’s Final Solution.

Genealogy Researchers Can Now Tap into Yad Vashem’s Collection of Pages of Testimony

The Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust and its affiliate JewishGen have announced a new partnership with Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, whereby researchers will be able to access Yad Vashem’s Pages of Testimony data as part of a genealogical search on the JewishGen website – the largest online Jewish genealogy resource of its kind, which includes a Holocaust collection of nearly 3.6 million records.

“By making available these precious records via JewishGen, the broader Jewish community can more easily research names of family and friends who were murdered during the Holocaust,” says Museum of Jewish Heritage President and CEO Jack Kliger. “The agreement facilitates access to the resources of our Museum and Yad Vashem, two of the most prestigious Holocaust memorial institutions in the world.”

“Yad Vashem’s Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names brings the millions of faceless victims into the light and returns to them their identity, so the world can remember,” states Yad Vashem Chairman Dani Dayan. “This is part of Yad Vashem’s mission to gather all forms of documentation from the Holocaust, including the collection of names of our brethren who were murdered during the Shoah. We owe it to them to know that they lived, what they looked like, what they dreamed about and at the very least – what their name was.”

Since the 1950s, Yad Vashem has collected “Pages of Testimony,” in which members of the public memorialize family members and friends who were murdered during the Holocaust. In many cases, these Pages – that comprise the collection of names, biographical details and if possible, photographs – might contain the only evidence of continued on page 5
Proposed Increase to Nonprofit Security Grant Program Comes in Wake of Attack on Texas Synagogue

On January 26, The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America – the nation’s largest Orthodox Jewish umbrella organization, applauded Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer’s announcement proposing to double funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) to $360 million to better protect synagogues, other houses of worship and other nonprofits at risk of terror attacks.

The event comes just days after a rabbi and worshippers were taken hostage by a gunman during Sabbath services at a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas.

Orthodox Union Executive Director for Public Policy Nathan Diament spoke alongside Sen. Schumer and other faith leaders at the press conference in midtown Manhattan, calling for the increase to the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

“We did not imagine living through a nightmare in the United States of not one, not two, but three synagogues being the sites of domestic terrorist attacks, and that’s what we’ve now experienced since coming on board as ADL CEO in 2015. I’m heartened to see the outpouring of support for Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker and Congregation Beth Israel as well as the larger Jewish community during this alarming time.

The Colleyville crisis drove home many points all too well. Dangerous tropes about Jewish power, as the gunman espoused, are putting Jewish lives at risk as these conspiracy-minded ideas continue to spread. We cannot wait a moment longer for another house of worship to be taken hostage before Congress takes our protection seriously and increases support for security. And stepping up to show leadership, as Rabbi Charlie and other Jewish leaders do every day, can be both necessary but also terrifying.

All in all, I would say that this has been one of the most intense weeks that I’ve ever experienced since coming on board as ADL CEO in 2015. From the moment we heard about the unfolding hostage situation on Saturday afternoon when the FBI called, ADL was activated and mobilized. Our team from Dallas was on the scene in Colleyville by mid-afternoon, aiding the authorities and counseling the families. Our law enforcement, to city officials and others.

As FBI Director Wray and Rabbi Charlie explained, two vital steps in helping to improve your safety are embracing security training and building strong bridges within your community before a crisis happens — to other faith groups, to law enforcement, to city officials and others.

Here are ways you can take action: Report an incident of antisemitism or bias to ADL; Join ADL in calling on Congress to increase funds to secure our houses of worship and religious institutions; Download ADL and URJ’s Toolkit on responding to antisemitic incidents and best practices for your congregation; Urge your Senators to confirm Deborah Lipstadt to serve as the US Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism; Contact your regional ADL office to get support; Get security training for Jewish institutions from Secure Community Network and Community Security Service; Stay informed about the Colleyville crisis, its roots and its aftermath.

Reflections on Colleyville

BY JONATHAN GREENBLATT
CEO AND NATIONAL DIRECTOR ADL

I want to take a moment to look back on the hostage crisis in Colleyville, TX that happened January 15. I’m heartened to see the outpouring of support for Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker and Congregation Beth Israel as well as the larger Jewish community during this alarming time.

The Colleyville crisis drove home many points all too well. Dangerous tropes about Jewish power, as the gunman espoused, are putting Jewish lives at risk as these conspiracy-minded ideas continue to spread. We cannot wait a moment longer for another house of worship to be taken hostage before Congress takes our protection seriously and increases support for security. And stepping up to show leadership, as Rabbi Charlie and other Jewish leaders do every day, can be both necessary but also terrifying.

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Funding for Simon Wiesenthal Center’s Mobile Museum of Tolerance

The Simon Wiesenthal Center is a Jewish global human rights organization researching the Holocaust and hate in a historic and contemporary context. The Center confronts anti-Semitism, hate and terrorism, promotes human rights and dignity, stands with Israel, defends the safety of Jews worldwide, and teaches the lessons of the Holocaust for future generations. With a constituency of over 400,000 households in the United States, it is accredited as an NGO at international organizations including the United Nations, UNESCO, OSCE, Organization of American States (OAS), the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO) and the Council of Europe. Headquartered in Los Angeles, the Simon Wiesenthal Center maintains offices in New York, Toronto, Miami, Chicago, Paris, Buenos Aires, and Jerusalem.
Genealogy Researchers Can Now Tap into Yad Vashem’s Collection of Pages of Testimony

Genealogy Researchers Can Now Tap into Yad Vashem’s Collection of Pages of Testimony

continued from page 3

what happened to their loved ones. Dr. Alexander Avram, Director of Yad Vashem’s Hall of Names, observes: “More than one million Holocaust victims have yet to be memorialized at Yad Vashem. It is our expectation that by widening the exposure of our endeavor through JewishGen, the genealogical community will be able to play an important role in helping us add a large number of Pages of Testimony in the years to come.”

“Researchers will now be able to retrieve Pages of Testimony data through a direct search within JewishGen,” notes JewishGen Executive Director Avraham Groll. “This common access to data from both institutions will directly benefit researchers by increasing the likelihood that they will find useful information. Without this new agreement, many Jewish genealogists may otherwise not have been aware of this vital resource.”

Yad Vashem has been running their Names Collection endeavor for over six decades, with the aim of restoring the personal identities and recording the brief life stories of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis and their accomplices. The names documented in Yad Vashem’s Central Database of Shoah Victims’ Names are sourced from many different sources, including Pages of Testimony. To date Yad Vashem has gathered some 2,700,000 Pages of Testimony. The Names Database currently commemorates over 4,800,000 Jewish men, women and children who were murdered in the Holocaust.

The records can be freely accessed via the JewishGen Holocaust database (https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/holocaust/). JewishGen was founded in 1997 and serves as the global home for Jewish genealogy. Featuring unparalleled access to more than 30 million records, it offers unique search tools, along with opportunities for researchers to connect with others who share similar interests. There is no charge to access JewishGen’s resources.

JewishGen is an affiliate of the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, NYC. Website: www.jewishgen.org

HJAH, WJCI Sponsors Refugee Shabbat

Refugee Shabbat 2022, which will take place on March 4–5, is a moment for congregations, organizations, and individuals in the United States and around the world to dedicate a Shabbat experience to refugees and asylum seekers.

HIAH, a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) refugee protection organization, conveys that, “This past year our hearts have swelled at the massive global effort to evacuate and find safe homes for Afghans fleeing for their lives; and they have broken seeing people whose lives are in danger being turned away at border crossings around the world. This is a critical moment for all of us to reaffirm and redouble our support for refugees and asylum seekers.”

Whether you sign up to participate on behalf of your congregation or as an individual hosting an event in a home, there are many options for a Refugee Shabbat. It could be the culmination of a week of action on refugee issues, a moment to simply focus on learning more about the global refugee crisis in a Jewish context, or an opportunity to convene Jewish (or interfaith) congregations to learn and chart a course of action together.

Congregations might consider including a liturgical reading on the theme of the refugee crisis in Shabbat services and/or dedicating a sermon or text study to the topic. If you have a relationship with a refugee or refugee professional in your local community, consider inviting that person to speak during services. You might also plan an educational program after Friday evening services or after Saturday morning services.

For individuals and congregations alike, HIAH can provide programming resources that include a liturgical reading, sermon/D’var Torah talking points, a text study, and a list of ways that people can take action on their own or as a group.

HIAH encourages one to think through which of these options would be the most appealing to an individual and/or to your community. Congregations and organizations may also want to begin identifying possible community partners (e.g., other synagogues, local organizations, etc.) and finding the right space for the program.

Given the uncertainty around COVID-19, HIAH is preparing resources that will work either online or in-person (in accordance with public health guidelines in place in March 2022).

Co-Sponsors (list in formation):
- Anti-Defamation League (ADL); American Jewish World Service (AJWS); European Council of Jewish Communities (ECJC); Jewish Council for Public Affairs (ICPA); HIAS Toronto; National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW); Network of Jewish Human Services Agencies (NJHSA); Pae dea - The European Institute for Jewish Studies in Sweden; Religious Action Center (RAC); Reconstructing Judaism; Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association (RRA); Repair the World; True: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights; and Union for Reform Judaism.

Contact HIAH at 301-834-7300 or 212-967-4100 with any questions or Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration, wjci.org.

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The Hebrew Language is the native tongue to millions of diverse people residing in Israel, who came from all over the world and adopted Hebrew as their mother tongue, a language that unites Israelis and bridges many of this multicultural and multiethnic nation.

Books will include a variety of topics as they pertain to culture, history, economics, agriculture, fiction, homemaking, fashion, exercise, and more. All will be available to the public as part of the ongoing growth of the library and its book collections as well as continuing programs via zoom for now, where the public can tune in and learn more about Israeli culture and many topics pertaining to our diverse world.

One example in the Children's Israel Forum Collection is *Havdalah is Coming!* by Tracy Newman. Published in 2020 by Kar-Ben Publishing, the book describes how the family prepares for Havdalah, the weekly ritual celebrating the end of the Sabbath and welcoming the new week, a board book story told in rhyme.

To learn about the Israeli cuisine, *Israeli Soul: Easy, Essential, Delicious* by authors Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook, perfected and adapted recipes for the home kitchen from Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa and small towns, with step-by-step instructions and pictures of finished dishes.

The majority of the books in this collection, written originally in Hebrew and provided now in its English/Spanish version to give one an opportunity to get closer to this beautiful language and culture.

StandWithUS Releases a Primer on Understanding and Adopting the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism

Due to the rise in antisemitic hate crimes, the confusion about what constitutes antisemitism, the lack of reporting of anti-Jewish acts of bigotry and the misinformation about the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance IHRA Definition of Antisemitism, StandWithUs has created a 16-page primer addressing the need for a unified consensus-driven definition, provides a snapshot of antisemitism today and highlights antisemitism on social media. It examines how antisemitism has changed in its manifestations over the centuries, the perpetrators who have attempted to camouflage their own antisemitism with a definition that excludes their own conduct, and the dire consequences of not having an operational definition.

The Guide also provides links to the ever-growing number of countries, states, municipalities, sporting clubs, and religious institutions which are adopting the IHRA Definition as a guide for their own members.

Although the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is a proven and effective definitional tool in the hands of law enforcement, government monitors, educational administrations, and many other entities, the definition has too often been misrepresented by its opponents, thus creating controversy and confusion. The Guidebook informs about the six major arguments being made against adopting the IHRA Definition and factual responses to those claims.

StandWithUs (SWU) is an international, non-profit and non-partisan Israel education organization that works to inspire and educate people of all ages about Israel, as well as challenge misinformation and fight against antisemitism.

Through university fellowships, high school internships, middle school curricula, conferences, materials, social media, educational films and missions to Israel, StandWithUs supports people around the world who want to educate their schools and communities about Israel. Founded in 2001 and headquartered in Los Angeles, the organization has programs on five continents with chapters and offices throughout the U.S., in Israel, the UK, Canada and Brazil.

For the last nine years, SWU has consistently received the highest possible ratings from Charity Navigator (4 stars) and Guidestar (Platinum). Visit www.standwithus.com to learn more.

Community Trip to Germany & Poland
June 18-29, 2022

Join Steve Goldberg, Co-Director of Education, and Gerrit Book, professional tour guide, formerly of the Goethe Institut, on the first HHREC Community Trip to visit Holocaust museums and sites in Berlin, Warsaw, and Krakow.

- Learn about the history of the Jewish community in Germany and Poland.
- Trace the origins of the Holocaust
- Explore Monuments and Memorials.

For more information, contact Steve Goldberg at sgoldberg@hhrecny.org or call (914) 696-0738.
The Leitner family announced the launch of their campaign, Donor4Sue, to spread the word about Susan Leitner’s need for a living kidney donor. Susan, Robert, and Matthew Leitner, members of Scarsdale Synagogue Temples Tremont and Emanu-El, have been living with focal segmental glomerulosclerosis since 1992. Donor4Sue’s goal is to spread the word about Sue’s need for a living kidney donor for transplant. Sue is registered with New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Transplant Medical Center in New York City.

To learn about Sue’s story, visit: Website: www.donor4sue.com; Facebook: @Donor4Sue; Instagram: @donor4sue; Key Hashtag: #Donor4Sue

Q: What drew you to interfaith/intergroup work?  
Rev. Dalton: As an ordained Methodist minister and Deacon, I’ve always been drawn to anti-racism and interfaith work and their intersection. As Westchester Human Rights Commission Chair, I believe that our county is very diverse and unique and want to further engage people to dialogue and discuss how we grow stronger together and give each other mutual respect and dignity.

Q: Please address some areas of strong interfaith/intergroup dialogue? Areas for improvement?  
Rev. Dalton: Westchester has very strong interfaith groups and dialogue and cooperation; something I have not seen at this level elsewhere. There is a strong desire in Westchester to stand with and for one another.

Areas we could improve include standing together when we are not in times of crisis, “when the weather is fair”. Despite COVID, we can still engage in conversation and dialogue.

Q: We at AJC are deeply committed to interfaith/intergroup dialogue and standing together, ensuring pluralism and equality for all. What steps can address both antisemitism and hate aimed at minority communities?  
Rev. Dalton: Great question! I’ve become clearer on the need to be very definitive about the dangers of white supremacist ideology that is antisemitic, anti-black, racist, sexist, and toxic, and permeates society.

If there are policies or practices that exclude and don’t work towards equity, we’re not working for justice for all. Truth-telling about history is key to us moving forward well. If we’re not honest about our past and how we failed in history – slavery, antisemitism, the Chinese Exclusion Act, children in detention centers on the Southern border – we are destined to repeat those mistakes. We can always do better.

Q: In AJC’s report on the State of Antisemitism in America, we found striking differences on views by the Jewish community and general society about the level of antisemitism in the U.S. What can be done to help the Jewish community feel safe?  
Rev. Dalton: It’s not up to the Jewish community to say, “please be empathetic with us”. It’s a choice we all have to make as a Community of Conscience to stand with our friends who are American Jews. That is the call for all of us to carry.

Q: What would you say if you had 5 minutes with the President of the U.S. to address interfaith/intergroup issues?  
Rev. Dalton: We’re facing the retirement of a Supreme Court justice. I would urge the President to think about a justice who would not be afraid of taking a definitive stance on free speech versus hate speech. We see the danger of white supremacy. I would urge him to think about how we create laws and put in place decision makers who will move our democracy forward.

Myra Clark-Siegel is AJC Westchester/Fairfield regional director. To join our efforts: westchester@ajc.org.

FLOATING WALLS

The Marlene Meyerson JCC is presenting a new exhibition curated by Aya Goshen called Floating Walls, a group exhibition by Dana Levy, Gal Cohen, Lee Tal, Michal Geva, Naomi Safran-Hon, Noa Chavuri and Zac Haemon.

Floating Walls presents a multidisciplinary survey of works made by seven Israeli artists based in New York. The exhibition incorporates site-specific installation, video, painting, and sculpture. By using a variety of materials across media, the artists explore and reimagine the walls that surround them as both material and metaphor.

As Israelis living in New York, the artists in this exhibition are familiar with migration and reconstituting one’s definition of and relationship to home. Additionally, the works on view allow one to reflect on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted our sense of place, as we entered periods of lockdown in our domestic environment and renegotiated our position regarding public and shared spaces.

The exhibition is on view until February 28 in the Samuel Priest Rose Building, 334 Amsterdam Avenue at 76th Street, NYC. For more information call 646-505-4444 or write info@mmjccm.org.

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Mazel Tov

WJCS 2022 Gala Honors Mariquita Blumberg and NYS Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Westchester Jewish Community Services (WJCS) has announced that it will be honoring WJCS Board President Mariquita Blumberg and New York State Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins on April 5th at the Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase, and online at 6:30 PM. Pam Eisinger Zaslaw will give a special introduction to the Senator. Proceeds from the Gala will be used to support programs that serve 20,000 Westchester residents each year, of all ages and backgrounds, who face struggles relating to mental health, trauma, disability, aging, and developmental, educational, and social problems affecting children and youth.

Founded in 1945, WJCS is the largest provider of outpatient licensed community-based mental health services in Westchester and one of the largest human service organizations in the county.

For the past ten years, Mariquita Blumberg has passionately supported WJCS, becoming chair of the Marketing Committee and serving on various other committees including the Children, Youth & Family and Technology Committees. She served as the Treasurer of the board and, for the last three years, as the President of the Board. She was honored to receive the UJA Agency Trustee Leadership Award in 2018 for her work at WJCS.

Mariquita has also served on the board of the Greenburgh Library for ten years and is also currently on the Edgemont Board of Education. Professionally Mariquita is an executive coach and organizational consultant, supporting executives in small and mid-sized companies as they scale their business, their organization and their executive team all at once. She attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology, earning a B.A. in economics and got her Masters in Organization Development (MSOD) from the AU/NTL program at American University.

NYS Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins has been widely recognized as a trailblazer in local and state government and champion for progressive action. In 2012, she became the first woman, and African American woman, to lead a New York State legislative conference. In 2019, she shattered the glass ceiling when her peers elected her as Temporary President and Majority Leader of the State Senate.

Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins oversaw the passage of historic and transformative legislation on issues including voting reforms, gun safety, women’s rights and health care, immigration and DREAMers, the LGBTQ community, the justice system, and sexual harassment in the workplace. Additionally, the Senate Majority under her leadership passed the most comprehensive and aggressive climate change legislation in the nation, and the strongest tenant protections and affordable housing package in state history.

Andrea Stewart-Cousins was born and raised in New York to parents who encouraged a life grounded in education and service. These values, along with her strong belief in advocating for the underserved and championing the needs of working families, have distinguished her as a public servant and progressive leader.

First elected to the State Senate in 2006, Senator Stewart-Cousins currently represents Greenburgh, Scarsdale, and parts of White Plains, New Rochelle, and Yonkers.

“We are delighted and honored to salute Mariquita Blumberg and NYS Senator Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins at our 2022 WJCS Gala,” said WJCS CEO Seth Diamond. Every day Mariquita and Senator Stewart-Cousins demonstrate the power of commitment and the power of the individual to create positive change. It is only because of individuals like Mariquita and the Senator that WJCS can offer 80+ programs, both in-person and virtually, to ensure that no Westchester resident need to struggle alone. We are here to support the community and we are so proud to have such stellar honorees who represent the best of our community.”

On January 19, 2022, The Genesis Prize Foundation announced Dr. Albert Bourla, Chairman and CEO of Pfizer, as the 2022 Genesis Prize Laureate. Dr. Bourla received the largest number of votes in a recently concluded global campaign, during which 200,000 people in 71 countries voted online. The choice of the voters was unanimously endorsed by the nine judges on the Genesis Prize Selection Committee.

The Committee commended Dr. Bourla for his leadership, determination, and especially for his willingness to assume great risks. Unlike CEOs of most other major companies working on developing COVID-19 vaccines, Dr. Bourla declined billions of dollars in US federal subsidies in order to avoid government bureaucracy and expedite development and production of the vaccine. As a result, Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine was ready in record time: months instead of years.

The Committee also noted Dr. Bourla’s pride in his Jewish identity and heritage, commitment to Jewish values and support for the State of Israel.

The annual $1 million Genesis Prize, dubbed the “Jewish Nobel” by TIME Magazine, honors extraordinary individuals for their outstanding professional achievement, contribution to humanity, and commitment to Jewish values. Dr. Bourla becomes the ninth Genesis Prize Laureate. He follows filmmaker and philanthropist Steven Spielberg, who was awarded the Genesis Prize in 2021, and the legendary human rights activist Natan Sharansky, the 2020 Laureate.

The President of Israel Isaac Herzog will present the Genesis Prize to Dr. Bourla at a ceremony in Jerusalem planned for June 29.

In line with the tradition established by the inaugural Laureate Michael Bloomberg, all Genesis Prize honoraries have chosen to forgo the monetary award to philanthropic causes. Dr. Bourla has asked The Genesis Prize Foundation to direct his $1 million prize award to projects aimed at preserving the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, with a particular emphasis on the tragedy suffered by the Greek Jewish community.

Born in Thessaloniki, Greece, Dr. Bourla was raised in a family that knew the horrors of the Holocaust first-hand. His parents were among only 2,000 survivors out of a once-thriving, ancient Jewish community of 50,000, almost completely wiped out by the Nazis.

“I am delighted to welcome Dr. Albert Bourla to the distinguished family of Genesis Prize Laureates,” said Co-Founder and Chairman of The Genesis Prize Foundation Stan Polovets. “Dr. Bourla personifies two of the most fundamental Jewish values: the commitment to the sanctity of life and to repairing the world. We could have imagined that I might one day receive the profound honor of the Genesis Prize and stand alongside my extraordinary fellow nominees,” Dr. Albert Bourla said. “I accept it humbly and on behalf of all my Pfizer colleagues who answered the urgent call of history these past two years and together bent the arc of our common destiny. I was brought up in a Jewish family who believed that each of us is only as strong as the bonds of our community and that we are all called upon by G-d to repair the world. I look forward to being in Jerusalem to accept this honor in person, which symbolizes the triumph of science and a great hope for our future.”

In announcing the selection of Dr. Bourla, The Genesis Prize Foundation noted the wide-ranging contribution of numerous Jewish scientists, doctors, and healthcare officials in helping to save lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Foundation specifically highlighted the contributions of the following individuals: Drew Weissman, Professor of Vaccine Research at the University of Pennsylvania, whose discovery of a novel nucleoside-modified mRNA platform enabled the creation of pioneering mRNA vaccines; Mikhail Dolsten, Chief Scientific Officer, Pfizer, who guided the development of the Pfizer vaccine in record time; Tal Zaks, Chief Medical Officer of Moderna during the development of the successful mRNA 1273 vaccine; Ioann Waldstreicher, Chief Medical Officer of Johnson & Johnson, who led the development of the Sputnik vaccine; Anatoly Altstein, Chief Scientist at the Gama-leya Institute for Epidemiology and Microbiology, who developed the Sputnik vaccine; and the late Rochelle Walsky, Director, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who coordinates the US public health response to the pandemic; Jeffrey Zients, the White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator, who oversees the US federal government response to the pandemic, including vaccine distribution.

Genesis Prize Chairman Stan Polovets said, “This is a very proud moment, not just for Dr. Bourla, but for the entire Jewish community. A people so small in number, are having such an outsized impact on this global effort to save lives.

“Dr. Bourla is a bright star in the constellation of outstanding Jewish scientists and doctors at the forefront of fighting the pandemic. We hope that these extraordinary individuals, and their colleagues, join us in Jerusalem to further unite in our common resolve to save lives and honor our heritage.”

The Genesis Prize is a global award that celebrates Jewish achievement and contribution to humanity. Launched in 2013, the Prize is financed through a permanent endowment of $100 million established by The Genesis Prize Foundation.
The Multiplier Effect: Impacting the Community Through Trainings and Workshops

Planning for Family Members with Special Needs

BY: BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

Estate planning is very important. If done properly, you can make things easier for yourself and your loved ones. Without proper planning, there is the potential for unnecessary court involvement, increased legal fees, higher taxes, and other complications. If you are the parent of a child with a disability, the stakes go up exponentially. It is critical that your estate plan addresses a number of issues that could arise as a result of your child’s disability. For example: (1) Does your child have the capacity to manage any inheritance you might leave him? (2) What effect, if any, will the receipt of the inheritance have on any government benefits, such as Social Security or medical coverage, the child is receiving or is expected to receive in the future? and (3) Who will replace you? We know that no one can truly replace a parent; however, we still must have a successor in case you are no longer here. Figuring out this piece of the puzzle could be the most important thing for you to do!

One crucial step in helping you accomplish your objective of providing the best quality of life for your child in the most financially secure way is the establishment of a trust. While we have often stressed the importance of utilizing trusts in your estate plan, they have particular value when you have a child with a disability. If you leave your property to the trustee of a trust instead of leaving the property outright to your child at the appropriate time, Selection of the proper trustee is critical to ensure that your estate plan is carried out the way you envisioned it. Another benefit of a trust is that, if drafted properly, the assets owned by the trust will not disqualify your child from any government benefits he receives or might receive in the future.

One of the many benefits of trusts is that they can be specifically tailored to meet the individual needs of your child. Other times, it makes sense to give the trustee broad discretion to do what is best for your child in terms of when and what types of distributions may be made. Importantly, the trust must be drafted as a “special needs trust.” This will help ensure that your child will have access to government benefits and the trustee will also be able to pay for things that will improve the quality of life of your child that are not provided by the government programs.

Every special needs trust will be different since each child and his situation is different. To the extent possible, your child may be engaged in the decision-making, and a good trustee will encourage that. In fact, the trust can even provide that the trustee can make an annual contribution (currently limited to $16,000) to an ABLE account for the beneficiary — giving even more autonomy and direct benefit to your child with a disability. ABLE accounts are not subject to income tax and do not adversely affect the beneficiary’s access to government benefits.

It is critical that you work with an experienced attorney who is knowledgeable in special needs trusts and special needs planning. While there are many lawyers who do this type of work, many of the best-known and most experienced belong to the Special Needs Alliance (www.specialneedssalliance.org), an invitation-only group of lawyers who have met the rigorous requirements in order to become members. They are from the only choice, but they are often a good place to start.

Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Litman 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 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.elderlawnyc.com.
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New York/Israel Smart Energy Challenge

Governor Kathy Hochul announced on February 3, the launch of the 2022 New York Power Authority (NYP A) & Israel Smart Energy Challenge, which seeks start-up technologies from companies headquartered in Israel to help meet the needs of New York’s utility operations and advance the State’s clean energy transformation. The winner of the $1 million competitive award will collaborate with NYP A, the nation’s largest state utility, on smart energy innovation projects that may be deployed by NYP A or other large utilities to support the efficient delivery of affordable, clean and reliable electricity statewide.

“New York and Israel have a long history of collaboration and a common interest in developing new clean energy solutions that will address climate change and mutually benefit our power systems,” said Governor Hochul. “The Smart Energy Challenge will give small start-up firms the opportunity to work with a large utility and allow New York State to maintain its lead as an innovator as it moves aggressively toward a 100 percent zero-emissions electric grid by 2040.”

The competition was announced during an international virtual webinar and panel discussion where attendees learned award details and heard from several Israeli companies that have partnered with NYP A.

NYP A is collaborating with EnergyCom and the Israel Smart Energy Association (ISEA) to launch this second competition among innovative firms headquartered in the State of Israel to support the next generation of the clean energy evolution. One or more innovative companies will be identified and given the opportunity to work with NYP A to scale up their technology in pilot demonstration projects to meet the specific needs of power utilities operations.

Ambassador Asaf Zamir, Consul General of Israel in New York said, “Israel is internationally recognized as a high-tech center powered by cutting-edge innovation and the ideas of Israeli entrepreneurs and companies with can-do attitudes. We share many of the same goals and values as New York State when it comes to addressing climate change and promoting green energy. Our collaborations have benefited us both and resulted in lasting gains to the energy industry around the world. The 2022 New York / Israel Challenge will provide resources to a promising start-up that is poised to turn a great idea into a practical solution that brings benefits to the energy field in New York and on a broader scale.”

In December, Governor Hochul and Zamir announced that Tel-Aviv-based Prisma Photonics, a provider of smart monitoring solutions for physical infrastructure, won NYP A’s 2021 challenge for its real-time transmission line issue detection system.

Interested companies can learn more about the challenge and submission details and deadlines on NYP A’s website, or by emailing Manuel.Hamalian@nypa.gov. Director, NYP A Procurement Applications will be accepted through April 11. Award selections are expected to be announced in June.

New York State’s nation-leading climate agenda is the most aggressive climate and clean energy initiative in the nation, calling for an orderly and just transition to clean energy that creates jobs and continues fostering a green economy as New York State recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. Enshrined into law through the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, New York is on a path to achieve its mandated goal of a zero-emission electricity sector by 2040, including 70 percent renewable energy generation by 2030, and to reach economy wide carbon neutrality. It builds on New York’s unprecedented investments to ramp-up clean energy including over $33 billion in 102 large-scale renewable and transmission projects across the state, $6.8 billion to reduce buildings emissions, $1.8 billion to scale up solar, more than $1 billion for clean transportation initiatives, and over $1.6 billion in NY Green Bank commitments.

Combined, these investments are supporting nearly 158,000 jobs in New York’s clean energy sector in 2020, a 2,100 percent growth in the distributed solar sector since 2011 and a commitment to develop 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind by 2035. Under the Climate Act, New York will build on this progress and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 85 percent from 1990 levels by 2050, while ensuring that at least 35 percent with a goal of 40 percent of the benefits of clean energy investments are directed to disadvantaged communities, and advance progress towards the state’s 2050 energy efficiency target of reducing on-site energy consumption by 185 trillion BTUs of end-use energy savings.

NYPA is the largest state public power organization in the nation, operating 18 generating facilities and more than 1,400 circuit-miles of transmission lines. More than 80 percent of the electricity NYPA produces is clean renewable hydropower. NYPA uses no tax money or state credit. It finances its operations through the sale of bonds and revenues earned in large part through sales of electricity. For more information visit www.nypa.gov.

NYC Mayor Eric Adams Delivers Leadership Briefing

On January 31, New York City Mayor Eric L. Adams gave a Leadership Briefing to the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY) Assembly during the organization’s meeting to elect a new President and Chair.

At the briefing Mayor Adams noted, “I am not a new friend, I’m an old friend - I’m on familiar ground whenever I visit JCRC. It’s built into your culture to show respect to all human beings - to make the city a safe place to raise children and families.”

On discussing responses to the rise in antisemitism in New York City, the Mayor said, “It breaks my heart – when I look and see the increase in antisemitism in this city and how much people don’t really appreciate the beauty of our diversity and as the Mayor, we want to put in place some real tangible short-term and long-term ways of how to come together as a City. No one understands this better than JCRC. In your interfaith and intercultural activities – you intentionally reach out and ensure that people come together and collaborate – I like to say cross-pollinate our cultures and ideas.”

While commenting on the increase in hate crimes, Mayor Adams said, “We also must be clear on those who participate in hate crimes. We are going to make sure every crime is investigated and as fast as possible, make an apprehension. It is crucial to send the message that hate has no place in our city.” The Mayor continued, “I want to hit reset with my police department. We’re going to build back support for our police. A safe city from gun violence, hate crimes, a safe city from antisemitism.

The Mayor also commented on the necessity to
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