

Chabad Pelham, Chabad Larchmont-Mamaroneck Present Spectacular Chanukah Celebrations

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Among the many Westchester County Chanukah celebrations, Chabad Pelham presented "Chanukah on Fifth, a Glow in the Dark Spectacular" at the Pelham Town House, and Chabad of Larchmont and Mamaroneck featured "Unite Through Light in Solidarity with Israel Community Chanukah Celebration" at 101 Mamaroneck Avenue, Mamaroneck.

An estimated 175 citizens attended the Chabad Pelham celebration, along with Town of Pelham Councilmembers Kristen Burke and Maura Curtin, Supervisor Dan McLaughlin, Pelham Manor Trustees Tim Case, Maurice Owen-Michaane, and Village of Pelham Mayor Chance Mullen.

Hot latkes, sufganiyot, and cookies were served, along with a spectacular light show by the Neon Circus dancers. There were also glow-in-the-dark dreidel and menorah floor



decorations. The program concluded outside with the lighting of a giant outdoor Menorah.

"The book about tonight was that each and every one of us has a beautiful and bright Neshama or soul to share and one of the messages of Chanukah candles is when we encounter darkness like the Maccabees, what do we do to increase the light?," Chabad Pelham Rabbi Levi Groner asked.

On the seventh night of Chanukah, Chabad of Larchmont and Mamaroneck, 101 Mamaroneck Avenue, Mamaroneck presented "Dreidel House, a Chanukah Wonderland for the Entire Family, Israel Edition," featuring a glow-in-the-dark tunnel, virtual reality experience, crafts, and a Chanukah gift shop. An estimated 150 citizens attended, including Village of Mamaroneck Trustee Nora Lucas.

Latkes, chocolate donuts, and powdered donuts were offered. Many menorahs were on display, including several lighted LEGO menorahs. A Maccabee Photo Booth enabled people to be photographed in Maccabee costumes.

Climaxing the celebration, Rabbi Chaim Pinczower lit a giant outdoor menorah, courtesy of the Village of Mamaroneck Fire Department tower ladder bucket truck, and it



Photo above and top left at Chanukah on Fifth in Pelham.

rained down chocolate Chanukah coins, Chanukah Gelt. Then Rabbi Mendel Silberstein led the participants in songs including "Mao Tzur," "Haneirot Halalu," and "O Chanukah, O Chanukah."

"Tens of Jews in Mamaroneck came out to celebrate their Judaism and Chanukah in an open way," Chabad Larchmont-Mamaroneck Rabbi Silberstein stated. "It is beautiful to see Jews come and celebrate proudly, and we send our love, our blessing, and good energy from here to our brothers and sisters in Israel."

Rabbi Chaim Pinczower;
Shaina Pinczower,
14 months.



Lighted Menorah from the Chabad of Larchmont and Mamaroneck

Birthright Israel Trips to Resume Next Month, With Participants' Security Top Priority

After careful consideration and conversations with its partners, Birthright Israel, the largest educational tourism organization in the world, will restart its free, 10-day trips in Israel the week of January 5, 2024. The organization expects 350 participants, about 80 percent of them from the United States, to visit in January and a few hundred more through March 2024.

Registration for the summer trips will begin by mid-January on Birthright Israel's website at www.birtherightisrael.com/.

Birthright Israel's upcoming trips will operate under strict safety and security standards set by the Israel Defense Forces' Homefront Command. Additionally, all Birthright groups will undergo a pre-trip orientation. In addition to matters covered in previous seasons, the upcoming orientations will cover adjustments to the schedule and



to safety and security parameters.

Birthright Israel is committed to providing participants with a safe and meaningful experience, which they might need now more than ever.

Birthright Israel CEO Gidi Mark said that

while we continue to ensure that the standard sites and insights are visited throughout the program as safety permits, achieving our goals of positive Jewish Identity building, and connecting participants to Israel and Israelis is key. "Alongside a fun and meaningful experience, we want our participants to understand what happened on October 7 and gain meaningful insight into how the events affected Israeli society and Jewish communities around the world, and how our Jewish lives, values, and community help us find hope in these dark times."

Birthright Israel is the largest educational tourism organization in the world that has transformed the lives of 850,000 young Jewish adults ages 18–26 with a gift of a 10-day educational tour

of Israel. Its mission is to ensure a vibrant future for the Jewish people by strengthening Jewish identity, Jewish communities, and connection with Israel. The organization also brings thousands of participants to Israel through its Birthright Israel Onward and Birthright Israel Excel Fellowship and internship Programs.

The gift of a Birthright Israel trip is made possible thanks to the support of tens of thousands of donors to the Birthright Israel Foundation and Birthright Israel Foundation of Canada as well as an innovative partnership between Jewish communities around the world and the Government of Israel. Our partner donors who support our mission see it as an ongoing investment in the State of Israel and its relationship with the Jewish world.

Westchester County's Shine A Light Event

Westchester County Elected Officials, UJA-Federation and the Westchester Jewish Council gathered on Thursday, December 14th at the Westchester County Center for a community-wide Hanukkah event and candle lighting. The Shine A Light initiative raises awareness about antisemitism and partners with organizations to come together across faiths and shine a light against antisemitism and hate. There were over 200 people in attendance and many guest speakers including Westchester County Executive, George Latimer, Rabbi Leora Frankel, executive committee Westchester Board of Rabbis and Rabbi at Larchmont Temple, Rev. Doris Dalton, Chair, Westchester County Human Rights Commission, Minister Mark McLean, Generations Church of New Rochelle and President of the NAACP New Rochelle Branch, and Tizmoret and Queens College Hillel's professional Jewish a capella group. The large menorah was provided by Chabad of White Plains.

The Westchester Jewish Council connects 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. The Westchester Jewish Council is a proud Core partner of UJA-Federation of New York. For more information about the Westchester Jewish Council, visit us online at www.wjccouncil.org.



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Special Panel Discussion on College Campus Antisemitism Held at Hebrew Institute of White Plains

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

A special panel discussion, “Navigating the Hallowed Halls: Antisemitism on College Campuses Today,” was held at the Hebrew Institute of White Plains (HIWP) on December 17. Panelists included Shaya Lerner, Director of Israel Affairs, Associate Director of Middle Eastern Affairs, Anti-Defamation League (ADL); Michah Gottlieb, Associate Director of Jewish Thought and Philosophy, New York University, and Lawrence Askowitz, Managing Director, Bank Street Group Board Advisor, Xchange Telecom Board Director, StandWithUs New York. Joining the panel were students Shai Goldberg-Kellman; Michaelah Hirshon; Yadid Orlow and Benjamin Rosen.

The moderator, Michelle Biller-Levy, Associate Director of College Counseling Director of Post-Graduate Initiatives, Machon Siach SAR High School, Riverdale, began by noting that some people believe that, in Israel, people walk around with guns, “when actually it is safer than my own neighborhood in New York.” She stressed that college applications have not changed. “I don’t think that we are going to see a huge movement of people saying, ‘We are abandoning all secular campuses. We are abandoning all schools that have antisemitism on their campuses.’”

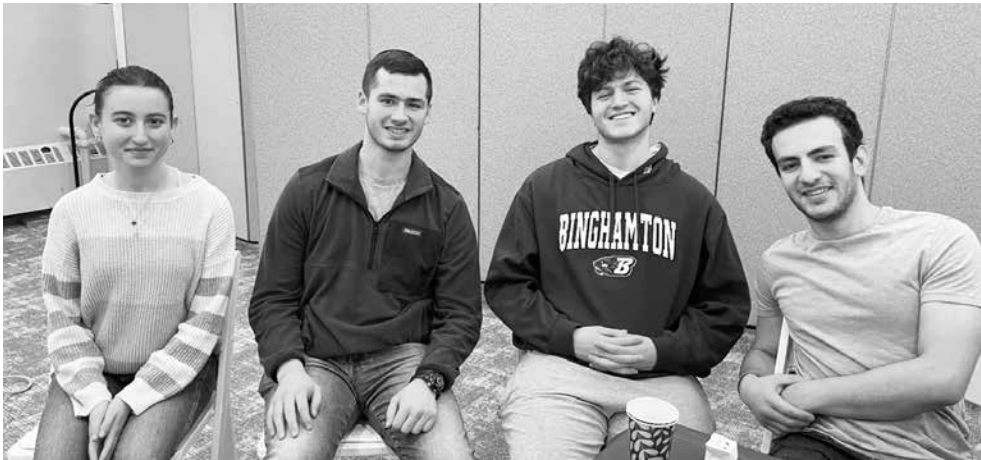
Biller-Levy called on students to relay their



Moderator, Michelle Biller-Levy

campus experiences. Most of the students found that in spite of some antisemitic incidents on their campuses, their Hillels and Chabad were welcoming and very supportive.

Lerner stressed that the highest number of antisemitic incidents were reported to the ADL



Students at Navigating the Hallowed Halls: Antisemitism on College Campuses Today, left to right: Michaelah Hirshon; Benjamin Rosen; Yadid Orlow; Shai Goldberg-Kellman

last year. “From October 7th to December 7th there have been 2,000 incidents alone, a 337% increase, compared to 2022. Most significantly, one-fifth were on college campuses, 400 antisemitic incidents compared to 33 last year.”

It was pointed out that some Jews do not

know their basic history, especially when it comes to Zionism. They are told that Zionism is racism; Israel is a colonial state, and they do not have enough information, based on their own education. One of the biggest challenges is to equip and educate high school students on their own history.



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Alpha Epsilon Pi International Hosts Virtual Summit with College Administrators to Discuss Antisemitism on Campus and Strategies to Confront It

Alpha Epsilon Pi International (AEPi), the world's largest and leading Jewish college fraternity, hosted a virtual summit and panel discussion with college administrators to discuss the burgeoning crisis of antisemitism on college campuses and suggest strategies to confront it.

As a part of the Shine A Light campaign, AEPi hosted a panel discussion on Thursday, December 14, 2023 with more than 150 college administrators discussing challenges for Jewish students on campus and how to properly address antisemitism and create a meaningful dialogue that contributes to the construction of a campus community that values diversity and prioritizing the well-being of all its students. The panel was moderated by AEPi CEO Rob Derdiger and also features Avi Gordon, the executive director of Alums for Campus Fairness, Lauren Suriel, the national field director of the Israel on Campus Coalition and Candice Perilstein, ADL's associate director of Jewish and campus partnerships.

"Confronting antisemitism on college campuses is not new to AEPi. We have been doing this every day on hundreds of college campuses for decades. We've chosen to directly work with a wide variety of campus educators and administrators in a positive and proactive manner. We provide them with concrete action items they can take – like adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism or including Jewish narratives in DEI initiatives – and with resources that they can use to make a difference on their campus such as our 5-R Antisemitism Response E-learning module." said AEPi's Derdiger.



Rob Derdiger

"Obviously, this year the topic of campus antisemitism has received a lot of attention. Through our ongoing relationships with campus administrators, we were able to pull together this discussion which has already resulted in several confidential discussions with administrators about changes they wish to implement on their campus and challenges that they face in creating that change," said Derdiger. "At this dangerous point in time, we need to be fierce advocates for enforcement of existing codes of conduct on campuses which will help to ensure that Jewish students feel as safe and heard as other minority student groups."

Calendar of Events

JCCMW

999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale

Monday, January 15, 10:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m.

MLK Day of Service

On MLK Day, help pack full, non-perishable meals—blizzard boxes—for our neighbors who are food insecure. Join us and make a difference in people's lives! For more information and to RSVP, visit www.jccmw.org/events/list/page/7/.

JCCMW

999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale

Monday, January 15, 9:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Mad Science Blast-off Mini Camp

Explore the science involved in space rocket construction as you build your own Skyblazer Rocket™ that you can take home! Marvel at all sorts of cool physics and see the principles of propulsion at work in a real-life launch! This program will take place in our Friedland Makerspace. For more information, visit www.jccmw.org/events/list/page/7/.

JCCMW

999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale, NY

Ten Mondays: January 22 and 29; February 5, 12, and 26; March 4, 11, 18, and 25; April 1

Hebrew Reading for Beginners: 6:00–7:30 PM

Conversational Hebrew 2: 7:30–9:00 PM

Visit www.jccmw.org/winter-hebrew-classes/ to learn more and to register.

For all events at JCCMW, visit <https://jccmw.org/events/>.

Harrison Public Library

Meet the Authors Heather Dune Macadam and Simon Worrall for Holocaust Remembrance Day Saturday, January 27, 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

(For Adults & Teens)

Registration is required.

Bestselling authors Simon Worrall and Heather Dune Macadam discuss *Star Crossed: A True Rome and Juliet Story in Hitler's Paris* in honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day. They will also be in conversation about "999," a newly released documentary based on Macadam's book, 999: The Extraordinary Young Women of the First Official Jewish Transport to Auschwitz. Both works encompass the first Jewish and first women's transport and the first French, Jewish Women's Transport to Auschwitz.

For more information or to register online, visit www.harrisonpl.org/events/11459600.

Open House Hanukkah Event for Displaced Israeli Families Hosted by The JCC Mid-Westchester



On December 11, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., the JCC Mid-Westchester, in partnership with the Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration, welcomed a contingent of displaced Israeli families—who have found respite in Westchester over the past two months. The special celebration began with the community lighting of the giant JCCMW LEGO menorah and was followed by an open house where the Israeli families connected with one another and shared their experiences while their children played together and made new friends. Kosher pizza and sufganiyot (jelly donuts) were served for Hanukkah; donated toys were given to each of the children in attendance. The families were excited about the opportunity to come together and celebrate the holiday. This event was free of charge.

Rabbi Dahlia Bernstein, senior director of Jewish Engagement and Care Services at the JCCMW, has been working tirelessly with the JCCMW team to create meaningful programming and events for these families. When asked about the open house, Rabbi Bernstein replied, "Having to leave your home abruptly is unsettling and anxiety-provoking. The JCCMW and WJCI want to provide a comfortable space for displaced Israeli families to relax and find comfort and connection."

December's Hanukkah event was the second open house hosted by the JCCMW and WJCI for Israeli families. In addition to these events, the JCCMW offers support and resources to help families during this difficult and challenging time of transition. A group chat was formed to facilitate connection and communication. It shares information about Hebrew-speaking meetups and playdates and provides answers to questions about the local Westchester community. The JCCMW offers programs and activities free of charge to displaced Israeli families; they also offer lap swim for adults, open and family swim opportunities, and options for preschoolers in their nursery school at both the Scarsdale and White Plains locations. There

is a gym, wellness/exercise classes, and social programs for adults, including lectures, author talks, and holiday celebrations. The JCCMW also houses a modern Hebrew library with books written in Hebrew for adults and children and offers classes in conversational Hebrew and Hebrew reading.

JCCMW CEO Elise Dowell has led her team in prioritizing the needs of these families and creating safe spaces for them. "The JCCMW has always been a place for people to connect. The ability to provide this experience for our Israeli friends and families who have lived through such a difficult period is both rewarding and meaningful. We are so fortunate to be in a position to open our doors widely and warmly to welcome them into our community."

Members and patrons of the JCCMW community have reached out to get involved. Many have opened their hearts and homes to these families, helping to welcome and acclimate them to the community and connect them with resources, activities, and new friends. The kindness and generosity also extend to families in Israel. Two weeks ago, over 500 toys were collected from the local community and delivered by one of our patrons to displaced children from the kibbutzim closest to Gaza.

The JCCMW has partnered with various agencies and organizations in Westchester that provide resources and support with housing, food, and health and legal services. A full list of resources can be found on the JCCMW website at jccmw.org/byachad-westchester.

The JCC Mid-Westchester is a nonprofit organization that supports the community by offering outstanding recreational, cultural, educational, and human services programming to all people regardless of age, background, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Programs are grounded in Jewish values and are open to all! The JCCMW enriches families, connects friends, strengthens community, and helps people lead joyful lives.

The Silence About Attacks on Israeli Women is Deafening



BY MYRA CLARK-SIEGEL,
AJC WESTCHESTER/FAIRFIELD REGIONAL DIRECTOR

SILENCE.

Awful, unacceptable silence.

That is what the Jewish community has heard from UN Women, the ICRC (International Red Cross/Red Crescent), and national and global women's groups.

NOTHING for over 50 days despite the evidence.

Since Hamas's depraved terrorist attack against Israel on October 7, it seems the world has turned upside down.

The American Jewish community is reeling not just from the shock of Hamas's Oct. 7 attack but also from the explosion in domestic Jew hatred it has provoked. And from the abandonment of the Jews. Again.

In the face of testimonials – both first-person witnesses and recordings that the Hamas terrorists recorded themselves about the physical violations and rape that Hamas raged on October 7 against Israeli women and girls – one would expect world leaders, women's organizational leaders, social media celebrities, and the United Nations to stand up on behalf of Israeli women. But they are silent. Or worse, skeptical. Demanding evidence. And when the evidence is produced, they call for “an investigation.”

No condemnation, but greater investigation?

Really?

This is not a “women's issue.” This is a humanitarian issue and the very organizations purported to represent women have utterly failed women.

But because they are Israeli, because they are Jews, the response is skepticism and silence.

Finally, after more than 50 (!!) days, on November 25, UN Women called for a “rigorous investigation...into reports of gender-based violence”.

Having worked at a national women's organization, let me be clear. Rape and sexual violence against women is NEVER acceptable. And silence by women's organizations on this issue is NEVER acceptable.

So, Me Too. Unless You Are A Jew.

Let's be very clear: antisemitism, or Jew-hatred, is a tangible threat to Jews and the very fabric of democratic societies. It is not up to the Jewish community to address it alone – it is an issue for all of society. And by the silence of so many, society is failing.

Women's organizations, find your voices again, and stand up for Israeli women. UN Women and ICRC, find your spines and stand up for Israeli women.

We must continue to stand up against hatred against Jews and Israel.

And let's be clear – it does NOT depend on context. Ever.

The enemies of the Jews have tried for millennia to cower us, to use fear and depravity. This is nothing less than good versus evil and Israel and the Jewish people are on the side of right against Hamas, a terror organization. Make no mistake, we mourn all innocent civilians. But Hamas is to blame.

Stand with Israeli women.

Am Yisrael Chai.

Myra Clark-Siegel is AJC Westchester/Fairfield regional director. Please join us at: westchester@ajc.org.

Robert Martin's Greg Berger Honored by Jewish Business Network at Breakfast Gala

Greg Berger, President of Robert Martin Company, was honored at the Jewish Business Network of Rivertowns-Westchester Annual Breakfast Gala & Business Forum held December 14. More than 175 business leaders attended the event held at the Tarrytown House Estate, Biddle Mansion.

The JBN Gala featured a celebratory breakfast and honoree recognition of JBN leaders Greg Berger, President, Robert Martin Company, Robert Glazer, EVP, ENT & Allergy Associates and Robert Friedland, Chairman, Westrock Development.

A special tribute was held for The Friedland Young Leaders and a Rising Star Award was presented to Molly Selin, Product Marketing Manager, LightBox. A keynote address was delivered by Mario J. Gabelli, CEO, GAMCO Investors and Master of Ceremonies was Larry Gottlieb, Managing Director, Robert Martin Company. The event also featured a special Menorah Lighting and Shine a Light for Israel ceremony.

The JBN, Jewish Business Network, based in the Rivertowns section of Westchester, NY, assists Jewish business leaders, C-Suite executives, and young professionals with developing meaningful relationships and business growth enhanced with Jewish values and traditions.

Since its founding by the late Robert F. Weinberg and Martin S. Berger 65 years ago, Robert Martin Company has flourished into a pioneering, fully integrated real estate company with an unmatched record of successfully acquiring, developing, and managing investment properties primarily in Westchester and Fairfield counties, but with a reach now extending across the country into new markets and business categories. Led today by CEO Tim Jones and President Greg Berger and a team of highly skilled industry professionals, the firm (and its affiliates) has acquired and developed real estate totaling over 20 million square feet of industrial, residential, retail and office properties.



Pictured (l to r): Sam Berger, Tara Berger, Janelle Berger, Greg Berger (honoree, President of Robert Martin Company), Rabbi Levi Levitin (Executive Director, JBN), Chayale Levitin (Marketing Director, JBN)

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In His First Labor Endorsement, CSEA Throws Support Behind George Latimer for Congress

CSEA, the Civil Service Employees Association, today announced the union's endorsement of Westchester County Executive George Latimer in his campaign for the Democratic nomination for New York's 16th Congressional District seat.

"As a progressive Democrat, I have always believed that government must be a force for good with real results. And as an elected official, I know that I could not have achieved the results I have without the hard work of CSEA's members, the women and men in public service who make government function," said Latimer. "Together, the members of CSEA and I have made Westchester the most progressive county government in New York, and it is an honor to receive their endorsement."

CSEA President Mary E. Sullivan said, "George Latimer has a proven track record at every multiple levels of government, with a history of consistent leadership and success throughout his career. It is clear that George will best represent the needs, not only of CSEA members residing in the 16th District, but of all middle and working-class families."

CSEA Southern Region President Anthony M. Adamo said, "As current Southern Region president and former chair of the CSEA Statewide Political Action Committee, I've interacted with George in his roles as assemblymember, state senator, and now county executive. There is no doubt that George is the most qualified candidate to represent the 16th District and will hit the ground running, no learning curve required."

CSEA Westchester County Local President Hattie Adams said, "In working with George in his role as county executive, he has been a true partner who has advocated strongly for county workers and residents. Sending him to Congress will benefit the 16th District and the country at large."

CSEA is Local 1000 of AFSCME, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which in turn is one of the largest affiliates of the AFL-CIO. In Westchester County and the Bronx, CSEA represents thousands of union members providing vital services.



George Latimer

FIDF Concludes Emergency Winter-Clothing Operation

Late last month marked the culmination of a monumental, five-week initiative organized by Friends of the IDF (FIDF) in which 150 tons of essential winter clothing and gear, totaling \$10,128,940, was shipped to the courageous soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on the front lines fighting to restore peace and security in Israel following the barbaric attacks by Hamas on October 7.

The massive effort, dubbed the "Winter Clothing Operation," involved the purchase of 2,647,013 items and their delivery to Israel on two chartered 747s on November 22 (585,132 items) and December 4 (368,951 items), along with cargo flights containing 103,764 items, and El Al flights carrying 429,836 items.

Essential items sent included: 200,136 warm hats; 47,556 neck gaiters; 184,093 gloves; 327,179 thermal pants; 320,926 thermal tops; 30,823 fleece blankets; 500,000 t-shirts; 479,994 long socks; 483,296 men's underwear; 50,010 women's underwear; 10,000 sleeping bags; and 13,000 tactical gloves.



Last month, in anticipation of the cold months ahead, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) approached FIDF with an urgent request for essential winter items for the hundreds of thousands of soldiers and reservists in active duty. FIDF swiftly raised funds, sourced and purchased the requested gear, and organized its shipment to Israel, ensuring each item aligned with the IDF's requirements and specifications.

"Through our daily communication with the IDF, we understand their greatest needs recognize that these essentials can make all the difference for combat soldiers, who are making the most incredible sacrifices, during this war," said Steve Weil, Chief Executive Officer of FIDF. "As the IDF's sole designated partner in the US, FIDF prioritizes every single request, and we are grateful to our generous supporters who

allowed us to fulfill this and every other IDF need.

One hundred percent of current donations to FIDF are going towards the war effort and can be made at: www.fidf.org.

Photos from Ben Gurion Airport below. Photo credit: Ori Shemesh, courtesy of FIDF.

White Plains Hospital Launches Structural Heart Program with First Minimally Invasive Heart Valve Replacement Procedures

On December 6, White Plains Hospital announced the launch of the Montefiore Structural Heart Program at White Plains Hospital with the successful completion of its first three minimally invasive heart valve replacement procedures, known as Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacements (TAVR). The procedures, performed by Dr. Azeem Latib, a leading expert in interventional cardiology and Director of the Montefiore Structural Heart Program at White Plains Hospital, were performed in one of the Hospital's state-of-the-art cardiac catheterization laboratories and marks a key milestone in the growth of the Hospital's advanced cardiac services.

More than five million Americans are diagnosed with heart valve disease each year, including 1.5 million with aortic stenosis – or the narrowing of the aortic valve. This condition often appears in those 65 and older and deteriorates with age. Older patients with aortic stenosis and other congenital heart diseases can often benefit from a TAVR.

The procedure, which typically takes less than an hour, involves specially trained cardiac interventionalists, in collaboration with world-class cardiac surgeons, using advanced imaging techniques to guide a flexible tube called a catheter through a small needle hole



in the groin, up through the blood vessels, to the diseased aortic valve. The team then uses the catheter to deploy a new valve, immediately restoring function and blood flow. Patients are cared for by highly trained cardiac intensivists in the Hospital's Cardiac ICU, and many of our patients go home the next day.

White Plains Hospital is one of just two healthcare facilities in Westchester offering this life-saving procedure to patients in Westchester County. Every patient is fully evalu-

ated by a cardiac surgeon, interventional cardiologist, cardiologist, and radiologist to determine the ideal course of treatment, whether that is a TAVR procedure or open-heart surgery. Also, with advanced imaging technology on-site, including high-resolution CT scanning, fusion imaging, and cardiac MRI, patients can undergo convenient, same-day pre-operative testing at the Center for Advanced Medicine & Surgery (CAMS) in White Plains prior to the procedure.

The addition of the Montefiore Structural Heart Program at White Plains Hospital builds on the success of the Montefiore Cardiac Surgery Program at White Plains Hospital, which has exceeded national benchmarks for quality with exceptional patient outcomes in the two years since its launch. The program was recently recognized with a distinguished 3-star rating, the highest available, from The Society of Thoracic Surgeons, a designation that places it among the top 10% of programs for heart bypass surgery

in the United States and Canada. White Plains Hospital's cardiac care capabilities are further strengthened by its world-class Interventional Cardiology program and Cardiac Electrophysiology department, which is focused on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of arrhythmias and other emergent cardiac issues. White Plains Hospital's experts work closely with a network of cardiologists and specialists throughout the Hudson Valley to ensure each patient receives the specialized care they need, close to home.

"This program underscores White Plains Hospital's commitment to growing its advanced cardiac services for patients across the Hudson Valley," said Dr. Latib. "These expanded capabilities allow us to provide the most appropriate treatment based on our patients' needs, whether they require open-heart surgery or a minimally invasive procedure like a TAVR. We are excited to begin performing these procedures and look forward to continuing to advance the Structural Heart Program at White Plains Hospital."

To learn more about the Montefiore Structural Heart Program at White Plains Hospital, call (914) 849-4200.



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Israelis are on the front lines, and we're continuing to mobilize vital, lifesaving relief.

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In these unsettled times, being there for our worldwide Jewish community is more urgent than ever.

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Senators Mayer and Harckham Announce Legislation to Establish State Office to Combat Climate Change Effects

On December 14, New York State Senators Shelley B. Mayer and Pete Harckham announced major legislation they have introduced to help combat severe storm flooding statewide and resulting financial burdens on residents and business owners. The announcement was made at the Community Resource Center, which has been under reconstruction and repair for over a year because of previous storm damage.

Mayer's legislation (www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/S3335) will create an Office of Flooding Prevention and Mitigation tasked with coordinating existing state work on flooding, supporting municipalities in their efforts to prevent and mitigate flooding, and researching flooding impacts and mitigation in New York State. Harckham's legislation (www.nysenate.gov/legislation/bills/2023/S7764) establishes an annual \$500 million fund for state water-related resiliency projects, such as flood mitigation and stormwater mitigation, under the joint custody of the State Comptroller and the Commissioner of Taxation and Finance.

"Since I have been in the legislature, residents across my district have been the victims of increasingly severe and frequent storms. From Hurricanes Sandy to Ida and smaller storms before and after, New Yorkers have lost their homes and experienced devastating losses. While I am pleased my office has been able to help individuals after these terrible storms, New Yorkers need a strong, coordinated, and strategic approach to tackling the problem, requiring all levels of government and agencies within government to work together to identify and execute mitigation and resiliency plans," said Senator Shelley Mayer. "The Office of Flooding Prevention and Mitigation will help provide municipalities, counties, and individuals with the tools we need to tackle the scale of the work ahead. I thank my colleagues, Senator Harckham, for introducing complementary legislation and for his leadership as chair of the Senate Committee on Environmental Conservation, and Assemblymember Catalina Cruz, who is championing this legislation in the Assembly. I look forward to its passage this coming legislative session."

"Our residents and business owners want meaningful action on flood and stormwater mitigation—and my bill to create an annual \$500 million fund for these projects shows that the State legislature is serious about the devastating climate-driven storms impacting our cities, towns, and villages across the state," said Senator Pete Harckham. "We cannot keep talking about the same areas around the state, year after year and storm after storm, that are savaged by weather-related floods. This legislation, which complements Senator Mayer's bill, stands as a major effort, centralized and overseen by the State, that will initiate proactive approaches to storm preparations and infrastructure resiliency to mitigate the effects of each new crisis-level weather event."

The two legislators were joined by State Assemblyman Steve Otis, County Legislator

Catherine Parker, Mamaroneck Supervisor Jaine Elkind Eney, Mamaroneck Deputy Mayor Nora Lucas, Executive Director of Community Resource Center Jirandy Martinez, and Village of Mamaroneck resident Giamilte Barrera.

New York State is facing intensifying climate change-related hazards, including alarming and recording breaking rainfall and dangerous floods. New Yorkers across the state, particularly in the lower Hudson Valley and New York City, know the long-term devastation of extreme weather events all too well, from mudslides destroying homes and impacting railroads to flooding in homes and businesses. These regular storms result in significant financial hardship for many communities, businesses, and families, reminiscent of the horrific damage caused by Hurricane Ida a few years ago.

Mayer's legislation will also assess the areas of the state and populations at greatest risk, identify the best current emerging practices in flood management and preparedness, and make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature to help develop a high-level strategy for addressing flooding in our state.

Harckham's legislation will draw on financial resources created by the state's Cap and Invest program to provide funding for critical mitigation projects that will protect homes, businesses, transportation services, infrastructure, and human lives from increased funding.

In May 2023, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued a State of the Science Fact Sheet that notes, "Future projections include increased risk of coastal inundation during storms due to sea level rise, likely increased hurricane rain rates and wind intensities, and possible increased numbers of Category 4-5 hurricanes, along with decreased numbers of tropical storms and hurricanes (all categories combined)." The report also states that rainfall rates within tropical storms and hurricanes are projected to increase as well.

"The importance of meeting the ambitious goals set in the Scoping Plan of the state's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act cannot be overlooked," said Senator Pete Harckham, "but we must be ready to deal with these storms. Residents, commuters, business owners—they've had enough. It's time for us to face the effects of our climate crisis and be better prepared. I thank my colleague Senator Mayer for her strong leadership in this effort and hope our colleagues in the Legislature support these initiatives."

"Community Resource Center strongly supports Senators Shelley Mayer's flood mitigation legislation and Senator Peter Harckham's legislation for \$500 million in annual funding for state water-related resiliency projects such as flood and stormwater mitigation. The dev-



State Senator Shelley B. Mayer

astating impact of Hurricane Ida in 2021 underscores the critical need for proactive measures. We commend Senators Mayer and Harckham for their leadership in protecting our community and stand ready to collaborate to implement these vital flood mitigation measures successfully," said Jirandy Martinez, Executive Director of Community Resource Center.

Assemblyman Steve Otis said, "These legislative proposals provide for increased strategy, policy coordination, and dedicated funding to support

flood prevention and mitigation efforts. New York State agencies have been working with local governments in assessing, addressing, and funding local flood projects. One example, important here in Mamaroneck, is the \$17.5 million included in our 2023-24 state budget to support the Mamaroneck-Sheldrake Army Corps of Engineers project. These two new bills will enhance statewide efforts with a unified approach to planning and state funding support."

Assemblymember Catalina Cruz said, "By establishing the Office of Flooding Prevention and Mitigation, Senator Mayer and I aim to enhance state-wide flood resilience through coordinated and comprehensive efforts. This initiative is not just a response to recent devastating flood events but a proactive measure to bolster long-term resilience against the growing challenges posed by climate change. The bill's focus on coordination, transparency, and municipal support exemplifies a forward-thinking and integrated approach to flood mitigation, demonstrating a commitment to safeguarding our communities against future flooding risks. I thank Senator Mayer and Senator Harckham for taking critical legislative steps to address the escalating threats of flooding in New York State."

County Legislator Catherine Parker said, "New York is vulnerable to Climate Change's violent bi-product, flooding. I commend Sens. Mayer and Harckham for recognizing that flooding must be prioritized and thank them for the introduction of bills to address the need. Sen. Mayer's bill, if passed, will create a cabinet-level office and position to share best practices, expertise, and opportunities for collaboration on funding. Sen. Harckham's bill to create a dedication of \$500,000,000 annually to help municipalities meet the stormwater infrastructure needs to the right size for proper drainage is critical to our collective success. This is the one-two punch needed to help communities win the fight against flooding caused by Climate Change."

"Flooding, and its devastating effects, is a pressing issue here in Mamaroneck. State Senator Shelley Mayer has been a tireless champion for our community. Her proposed legislation to create a State Office of Flooding Prevention and Mitigation, together with Senator Pete Harckham's proposed legislation to establish \$500 million in annual funding for state water-related resiliency projects will provide critical tools in improving the lives of our residents, as well as many residents throughout New York State," said Mamaroneck Town Supervisor Jaine Elkind Eney.

"On behalf of Mayor Torres, the Board of Trustees, and the Village of Mamaroneck, I thank Senators Mayer and Harckham for their unwavering efforts to mitigate flooding in New York State. While the village is working hard to mitigate flooding at the local level, Senators Mayer and Harckham understand that the problem is beyond local municipalities' ability to fix. Their combined proposed legislation will provide state office and significant funding to combat climate change and promote resiliency which is so necessary in our village which suffers and has been traumatized by flooding," said Mamaroneck Deputy Mayor Nora Lucas.

GRIT, A Special Fitness Studio, Opens

GRIT FITNESS STUDIO, which brings a whole-body approach to the "gym," has newly opened at 558 Halstead Ave. just a few blocks from the Mamaroneck station. Melissa Cherry, GRIT's owner, not only has years of personal training experience but also a master's degree in nutrition and a special certification in Exercise Therapy for recovery from injuries. In addition, associates will be available in the studio's body treatment room for Japanese acupuncture, massage, and cupping. Working together, this team of health professionals can complement each other and better evaluate how best to reach your goals. In this way, GRIT provides in one place all your needs for a healthier, stronger body.

A full array of the most up-to-date strength-

building and cardio equipment can be found at GRIT. In addition, there is a full supply of weights, balls, and bands needed for a complete workout. With none of the equipment (except for the coffee pot) using electricity, Melissa has created a sustainable, comfortable environment.

One-on-one, or group, training services are available for all ages. Flexible membership packages allowing for one-hour or half-hour sessions over a time frame that allows you to work at a pace that suits you best. Whether you are interested in being better at work or sports, recovering from an injury, being trimmer and more limber, or just living a healthier life, GRIT has what it takes to meet your goals.

As the name says, Greater Results Integrative Training.

'Tis the Season



BY BERNARD A. KROOKS,
CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

I find it quite interesting how many articles I have read about how to get along with family members during the holidays. One article even suggested what to say, or what not to say, if someone at the Thanksgiving dinner table says something that upsets you or that you find offensive. While it may not be a news flash that family members sometimes do not see things the same way, it does seem like family relationships are now more strained than ever. In fact, in our law practice, we are seeing an increasing number of families that are not getting along or where one or more relationships are problematic. In fact, it has been reported that a shift in American family values is at least, in part, responsible for growing levels of estrangement between parents and adult children. While it is not uncommon for those who live in the same household or are part of the same family, to have different views; sometimes, the differences are so great that they are causing clients to consider disinherit a child or other family member because of it. Before you proceed with this drastic step, please keep in mind that there may be a better way to accomplish your goals that does not involve disinheriting your child completely.

In our experience, families are generally fairly tolerant of varying views, whether they are political or otherwise. However, in recent years it seems as though things have gotten far more fractured. Typically, parents and children just agree to disagree, and the vast majority of parents leave their property equally to their kids, regardless of differing viewpoints. But some parents might be genuinely concerned about the use of the inherited funds if they leave property to a child with extreme views (in their mind). The assets they have worked hard for may end up funding purposes to which they are opposed.

While almost every state in the U.S. has some protections for spouses, children are generally not given the same heirship rights. In all states except Louisiana (in certain circumstances), children have no inheritance rights. In New York, while you are not required to mention the child you are disinheriting, it may be a good idea to do so to make it clear that the child has been intentionally omitted and that it was not an oversight. You may also consider leaving a reduced amount to this child and

stating that if he or she challenges the will that their share will be reduced to nothing. If done properly, these types of “no contest” clauses can be very effective in making sure that your wishes are carried out after you pass away.

So, now that we know you can disinherit a child if you want to, the question becomes: should you? When clients indicate that they are considering drastic action like disinheriting a child, we often try to dig deeper and ask why they want to do this to get a better understanding. For example, the parents may have been estranged from the child for many years or the child may be abusive towards the parents, or some other reason that might arguably justify a disinheritance. Other times, however, the relationship between parents and children is fine but parents have a concern about how the inheritance might be spent when they are no longer around. The concerns could emanate from a child's bad marriage, poor spending habits, or perhaps divergent political views. The parents think their children have gone too far and do not know what to do and the knee-jerk reaction might be to disinherit the child. Sometimes they consider leaving the child's inheritance to a sibling with instructions that the sibling do the “right thing” if the rogue child comes around. The third, and often better option, is to leave the child's inheritance to a trust.

Leaving an inheritance in trust has several benefits, one of which is the ability to create a plan that is specifically tailored to your needs and the needs of your children. The trust can specify what funds should be used for and when. Parents can add as many specifics as desired. The trust could even provide that if things improve over time, the child could receive the entire balance. Or that, if the child remains extreme, no money is ever disbursed to the child. Someone other than the child should be the trustee and make decisions regarding investments and distributions. Often clients choose other family members, but a family friend or professional (such as a bank or trust company) might also be viable options.

As you can see, a trust might be just what is needed if you and your children don't see certain things the same way and you are concerned about how your money will be spent when you are gone. With a trust, you do not have to disinherit your child and you can control how the funds are spent after your death.

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 a 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.

Caring For Our Community

The holiday season is meant to be a joyous time but, as we all know it can be challenging for some. Everyone deserves to feel cared for and special, and the holiday celebrations we, at Westchester Jewish Community Services, host each year for people of all different ages and backgrounds, are aimed at doing just that. We get so much joy from celebrating holidays with our clients and their families. Here are just a few of the ways we have celebrated this season.

Our holiday celebrations for Holocaust survivors are always special and meaningful. Our survivors suffered so much loss in the Shoah and are now seeing the tragic, unimaginable devastation wrought by the October 7 massacre and an alarming rise in antisemitism. For many, their greatest comfort is in being together. Our Holocaust Survivors Hanukkah Luncheon on December 14 was a remarkable celebration of joy, strength, and resilience. Dozens of survivors, along with their family members and/or aides, enjoyed the lighting of the Chanukah candles, singing, dancing the hora, and munching on delicious sandwiches from Seasons in Scarsdale, and chocolate “gelt.” We were thrilled to have New York State Senator Shelley B. Mayer and New York State Assemblyman Chris Burdick join us for the festivities. Our Sukkot celebration for Holocaust survivors was equally as well-attended and joyous. We are so grateful to the UJA-Federation of New York, Claims Conference, and the Westchester Reform Temple for partnering with us in our mission to create opportunities

that bring happiness to Holocaust survivors.

Our annual holiday celebration for the residents of our thirteen WJCS group homes and their families took place at Sleepy Hollow Hotel in Tarrytown. Great food, music, laughter, and lots of dancing, along with a wonderful film montage of photos taken of residents throughout the year, filled the room with smiles and laughter. WJCS Shelanu, a membership community for Jewish young adults, ages 18–35 with autism spectrum disorders and their friends, enjoyed two-holiday get-togethers, including one for Thanksgiving in which each person shared their feelings of gratitude. WJCS Center Lane hosted a terrific holiday party for LGBTQIA+ youth, which included crafts, games, music, and a gift exchange.

WJCS's Annual Have a Heart for the Holidays Drive was a huge success. Thanks to our very generous donors, including Flames of Giving, Cuddy & Feder, Congregation Emanu-El, and The Leffell School, we distributed toys to young children and gift cards to older youth, bringing smiles to over 1,000 children from under-resourced communities in Westchester. We are so grateful to WJCS Board members Linda Plattus and Carol Richards Mermey who hosted beautiful luncheons to support the drive.

They say, “It takes a village.” We, at WJCS, are so grateful to our village of supporters. It's your kindness and thoughtfulness that makes this all possible.

To learn more about Westchester Jewish Community Services, go to <https://www.wjcs.com>.

Nominations Needed for 2024 Westchester County Public Health Awards

The Westchester County Board of Health is now seeking nominations for the 2024 Public Health Service Awards. The Board wants to recognize adults, young people and not-for-profit programs whose volunteer efforts have demonstrated creativity and compassion, and who helped improve public health in Westchester.

The Board encourages community leaders, healthcare professionals, educators and residents to nominate worthy people or programs by January 9 using the nomination forms at <https://health.westchestergov.com/news/public-health-awards>.

The following forms can be downloaded3d from the link above: 2024 Dr. Harold Keltz Distinguished Public Health Service Award Nomination Form, and the 2024 J.R. Tesone Youth Public Health Service Award Nomination Form.

President of the Westchester County Board of Health Robert Baker, MD, said: “Every year, we are humbled by the creative and innovative contributions to public health in our community by busy teenagers, adults and organizations in Westchester. The Board looks

forward to learning about and acknowledging the extraordinary people and programs who make our County such a great place to call home. We hope their example of selfless volunteerism inspires others to help us promote and protect public health in our County.”

The Dr. Harold Keltz Distinguished Public Health Service Award is presented annually to a person or community-based organization, whose efforts have made an extraordinary contribution to the public health of Westchester residents but who is not professionally engaged in public health work.

The J.R. Tesone Youth Public Health Service Award is an annual award to a student up to age 21 for his or her creative contribution to public health in Westchester. The award was created in 2014 in memory of J.R. Tesone, a Board of Health member with a lifelong commitment to Westchester children.

The awards will be announced and presented in April to spotlight National Public Health Week, and the honorees and their achievements will be featured on the Health Department's web pages.

www.westchesterjewishlife.com

Drive-Thru Vaccine Center Opens at Westchester Medical Center

The drive-thru vaccine center at Westchester Medical Center, 100 Woods Road, Valhalla is open on the following days and times: Fri, 1/5/2024: 9am – 1pm, and Mon, 1/8/2024: 9am – 1pm.

The Westchester Medical Center Health Network (WMCHHealth) is a 1,700-bed healthcare system headquartered in Valhalla, New York, with nine hospitals on seven campuses spanning 6,200 square miles of the Hudson Valley. WMCHHealth employs more than 13,000 people and has nearly 3,000 attending physicians. The Network has Level I (adult and pediatric), Level II and Level III trauma centers, the region's only acute care children's hospital, an academic medical center, several community hospitals, dozens of specialized institutes and centers, Comprehensive and Primary Stroke Centers, skilled nursing, assisted living facilities, home-care services and one of the largest mental health systems in New York State. Today, WMCHHealth is the pre-eminent provider of integrated health care in the Hudson Valley. For more information about WMCHHealth, visit WMCHHealth.org or follow WMCHHealth on Facebook.com/WMCHHealth or Instagram.com/WMCHHealth.

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